# The Art of Making Up Things: Jacques Rancière and Intellectual Emancipation in the Primary Creative Writing Classroom

Phillip William Simpson

A thesis submitted to

Auckland University of Technology

in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

of

Doctor of Education (EdD)

2021

School of Education

Faculty of Culture and Society

Supervisors: Professor Andrew Gibbons

Dr Ruth Boyask

# Abstract

This small-scale qualitative study investigates how Aotearoa New Zealand primary school teachers teach creative writing. In this thesis, I utilise the emancipatory work of Jacques Rancière and his notions of radical equality in the context of the primary creative writing classroom. Through Rancière's work, I make an argument for both emancipatory education through creative writing and the importance of the teacher in this emancipation. Rancière calls for students and educators to question 'explications' from the teacher, and apply their intelligence to objects, which include both texts and art. The work of Gert Biesta (2017a) also supports the position of the emancipatory potential of the teacher and education through the theoretical work of Rancière. Biesta occupies the position that the teacher is indispensable in emancipatory education and that ignorant schoolmasters, even though their role is no longer that of dispensers of knowledge, still have an important role to play in education. The theoretical work of Jacques Rancière (1991), particularly his conceptions of universal teaching, ignorance, the 'third thing', and dissensus, are used to explore primary teachers' practice in creative writing. Results from qualitative analysis were based on interviews with 10 classroom teachers of creative writing as well as my own experience of 20 years of teaching creative writing, guiding professional development in creative writing and being a literacy leader and novelist. Further presentation of the results is conducted through the use of ethnographic fiction based on my own journey as a teacher and writer, and the stories told by my participants. The focus of teacher practices was on the use of brainstorming, collaborative writing, freewriting and the use of new media in creative writing. Such teaching practices position the teacher as 'ignorant', utilising Rancière's universal teaching, where the teachers did not identify as 'writers' and were able to teach without explication or explanation. 'Third things', such as images, books or other artefacts, were utilised by teachers in this study to prompt or encourage creative writing amongst their students, in turn producing 'dissensus' within the classroom. Gert Biesta's (2016) three functions of education (qualification, socialisation, subjectification) were used as a secondary form of analysis. Findings reveal that when teachers focus their creative writing practice on subjectification, they often become 'risk takers', adapting and changing their practice, removing themselves as the 'master explicator' (Rancière, 1991) and acting as the antithesis of what Freire (1970a) regarded as the 'banking model' of education. Such potential removes the necessity of 'teachers as writers' and instead suggests that teachers are more effective practitioners of creative writing when they take risks with their practice, use their educational virtuosity

(Biesta, 2016), and are ‘disobedient’ (W. Ings, 2017). Furthermore, this research suggests that when teachers situate themselves as ‘storytellers’ rather than ‘writers’, such practice can be both emancipatory and accessible. Findings from this study offer new possibilities for policy and practice in creative writing pedagogy.

# Dedication

In memory of my mother, Elaine, and my sister, Michelle.

# Table of contents

# List of figures



# List of abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| AT | Associate teacher |
| BoT | Board of Trustees |
| CoL | Community of Learning |
| ERO | Education Review Office |
| ITE | Initial teacher education |
| LLPs | Literacy Learning Progressions |
| MoE | Ministry of Education |
| NZC | New Zealand Curriculum |
| PD | Professional development |
| PLD | Professional learning and development |
| ST | Student teacher |

# Attestation of authorship

“I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.”

Name: Phillip William Simpson

Signature: _____

Date: 1/12/2021

# Acknowledgements

It was John Donne who said that no man is an island, and this applies doubly so for this thesis. There are many I need to thank for their help and support over the years. First, I would like to thank my wife, Rose, who has given me her unconditional support these last five years. I could not have done this without her. Thank you for your love and patience with me. I would also like to thank my son, Jack, who I acknowledge as one of the driving forces behind completing this work. E kore e ea i te kupu taku aroha mōu (Words can't express how much I love you).

I would also like to acknowledge my parents, Elaine and Mike, for instilling within me a love of reading, writing and learning. Although my mother passed away halfway through this journey, I know she would've been proud.

I would like to thank the staff at AUT's School of Education, who have supported me in many ways throughout this journey, including Professor Nesta Devine and Associate Professor Georgina Stewart. In particular, I would like to extend my thanks to my primary supervisor, Professor Andrew Gibbons, for his patience, advice, long hours of discourse and especially for leading or nudging me in the direction of Jacques Rancière. I would also like to thank Dr Ruth Boyask, for stepping in and supervising in the last year. Her practical advice and feedback have been invaluable. Ehara taku toa, he takitahi, he toa takitini (My success should not be bestowed onto me alone, as it was not individual success but success of a collective).

AUT has been very generous and supportive, and I thank them for my Faculty of Culture and Society Doctoral Scholarship, which gave me the time and means to concentrate on my research. My thanks also to the Ministry of Education, which supported and helped by awarding me study leave in 2020, and thanks also to Dave Bagwell and Dave Wileman at Westbridge Residential School, for being understanding and supportive employers.

Profound thanks to my friends, Dr Michael O'Sullivan, Professor Cliona Ni Mhurchu, Kathryn O'Reilly-Dodd, and Tony Nemaia. Michael, thank you for your invaluable advice and feedback, giving of yourself even when you had no time to give. Thank you Cli, for being my sounding board and shoulder to cry on. Thanks to Kathryn O'Reilly-Dodd for our regular chats, friendship and levity, and for the hundreds of frank and open discussions about educational pedagogy and practice, especially on a Friday afternoon. And to Tony Nemaia for your enthusiasm and passion for any educational discourse. I

very much appreciate your friendship and support and wish you both the very best for your own EdD journeys. Kia kaha! Whaowhia te kete mātauranga (Be strong. Fill the basket of knowledge).

Thanks to Dr David Parker, proofreader, for correcting any errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar and referencing. Any mistakes that remain are entirely my own.

Finally, I would like to thank the 10 primary teachers who gave up their incredibly valuable time to participate in this study. After 20 years in the primary classroom, I am all too aware of how busy you all are and how fortunate I was that you were prepared to participate. I thank you all for your time and honesty and for your ongoing hard work and commitment in the primary classroom. Ka pai tō mahi!

**Narrative break: A new role**

*My Principal sat behind his desk in silence, waiting for my response.*

*"Well?" he said, raising his bushy eyebrows expectantly.*

*"Okay," I said, from the seat opposite, knowing I didn't sound particularly confident and hoping he didn't detect it.*

*I'd just said yes to being my primary school's teacher in charge of Accelerating Learning in Literacy (ALL). The job, the Principal had explained, would entail taking a small group of struggling writers and working intensely with them for a few hours each week in order to achieve 'accelerated progress'. This 'accelerated progress' in theory, would boost their achievement up to 'expected levels' in writing.*

*"Great," said my Principal, smiling. "You're the obvious choice."*

*I nodded, not knowing what to say, but understanding where my Principal was coming from. Before becoming a teacher, I'd had a go being a 'writer', writing my first novel the year before I enrolled at my initial teacher education provider. Since then, I'd written several more novels, chapter books and teacher resources on how to teach writing, squeezing in writing time during the holidays and early mornings before school. So I understood why my Principal thought I was the 'obvious choice' to lift writing achievement amongst struggling writers. In his mind I was a 'writer' and what better person to teach writing than a teacher who was a writer?*

*"This is a great opportunity for you as well as the kids," continued my Principal. "I bet you can't wait to get stuck in."*

*"Yes," I said, smiling weakly, trying to muster enthusiasm I didn't feel. "I'm very excited," I said. But that couldn't have been further from the truth.*

*What my Principal didn't realise is that I didn't really know what I was doing. Just because I had a reasonable grip on my own writing process did not make me any more qualified than anyone else to teach it. If I was being truthful, I was terrified. Terrified that I would be discovered as a fraud, an imposter, someone who had no right to be in such an important position. Terrified that I would fail the children put in my care.*

*And it was this terror, this fear of failure, that acted as a catalyst, that started me along this path, a path that forced me to question everything I thought I knew about teaching writing and, in particular, creative writing.*

*A path that brought me here, to this thesis before you, to my quest to discover how primary school teachers teach creative writing.*

# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This research explores the teaching of creative writing in Aotearoa New Zealand primary classrooms, illustrated by my own experiences and stories, and that of my 10 teacher participants. The importance of this dissertation is its examination of creative writing practices in primary education through the lens of Jacque Rancière's emancipatory views on pedagogy, politics and aesthetics, and to a lesser extent, the work of Gert Biesta and his view that education can and should be risky, and this risk is a weakness not to be overcome, but vital to teaching. Throughout this thesis, I examine the proposition that teaching creative writing in the primary classroom can be emancipatory, and that such emancipation is both possible and desirable.

The motivation for the research stems from my experiences of teaching creative writing in the primary classroom, being a novelist and 'creative writer' myself, and guiding and mentoring other teachers' practices. Indeed, such experiences of teaching creative writing have forced me to question my own practices and their effectiveness, especially in the context of increasing accountability, assessment and the associated paperwork that seems to walk hand-in-hand with teaching in the current climate of the primary classroom. Such paperwork has also been the catalyst for my growing disillusionment within the primary teaching sector, where the ability to 'shuffle' papers has the potential to gradually undermine any creativity that a teacher brings to their classroom.

The primary classroom in which creative writing is taught is an energetic, confusing, lively, chaotic, and exciting environment, an environment where teachers must juggle the demands of accountability and assessment against the need to be inspirational, creative and imaginative. Teachers constantly have to navigate these demands of inspiration and quantification. Moreover, when teachers appear to favour one demand over the other, they are sometimes seen as 'disobedient'. Indeed, to subscribe to the view of Welby Ings (2017), this is entirely what teachers must be if they are to be effective teachers of creative writing. This emancipatory perspective is one that will be examined in depth in this thesis.

In the post-normal context of COVID-19, where schools were closed and students stayed at home, people became bakers, planters and craftspeople, storytellers and authors, connecting with others in new ways. This is significant because, in a recent Aotearoa New Zealand study of creativity in schools, findings indicate that "although schools might not necessarily kill creativity, they also do not actively encourage or foster environments where students might experience the multiple benefits of creativity" (P. O'Connor, 2020,

p. 4). The same report suggests a longer-term solution, "a creative education system that is driven by risk, curiosity and innovation" (P. O'Connor, 2020, p. 12). Risk, creativity and emancipation are interrelated, and such findings should act as a catalyst for a reconsideration of the role of schools and the central role creativity plays within them:

> The questions kept popping up for me: are we teaching our *tamariki* to live, or just to work and consume? Why do we struggle to recognise art's role in innovative and critical thinking that builds confident, collaborative citizens, and put it at the heart of policy? (Amery, 2020, para 12)

In the primary classroom, the teacher must inspire and motivate learners, the needs and learning styles of whom are incredibly diverse: from novice writers unsure how to begin and who may require constant input from the teacher, to the accomplished and confident writers who find opportunities to write every chance they get. The teacher must be willing to adapt their lessons with no notice, to immerse themselves in professional development opportunities, to try different techniques and strategies, and to write creatively themselves, modelling the process for their learners, even when they sometimes feel less than confident. They must scaffold the process so their learners are not overwhelmed, constantly inspiring and motivating by showing that creative writing can be fun, providing students with opportunities to express themselves and to verify their intelligence and creativity. In the course of 20 years in the primary classroom, I have witnessed inspiring examples of teachers' pedagogy and perseverance in the face of student disinterest and boredom. I have seen teachers' perceptions and beliefs undergo startling transformations when students produce magical, amazing and often beautiful work.

Since becoming a teacher, I have held roles as syndicate leader, accelerated literacy leader (ALL) teacher, head of literacy and community of learning (CoL) literacy specialist. I have worked with what the Ministry of Education (MoE) deems 'at-risk' learners and tried many different techniques or practices to lift student motivation, enjoyment and success, finally developing the view that good pedagogy and good practice are good for all learners. My view of 'good' practice has changed over time; this view has developed through classroom experiences, experimentation and, more recently, an outlook, following the work of Jacques Rancière (1991) and Gert Biesta (2016), that teaching creative writing can be emancipatory, that it involves an inherent risk, and that the teacher must be 'educationally wise' – that is, that the teacher must try strategies based on experience and what they think 'might' work. Central to my thesis is that in order to teach creative writing effectively, teachers need not be writers themselves and, in fact,

'ignorant' teaching can be emancipatory for students. Teachers who teach from a position of authority to explicate writing engage in what Rancière regards as stultification of the student. In other words, the student is always indebted to the teacher for their creative writing. Rancière (1991) refers to such a teacher as a 'master explicator', a teacher who is always positioned as more knowledgeable than the learner, and who tries to share this knowledge with them in an explicatory way. Such teaching, according to Rancière, only leads to stultification, which is the opposite of emancipation. Throughout this thesis, these ideas will be explored, drawing on my own experiences and those of my interview subjects to do so.

## What is creative writing and why teach it at primary school?

Creative writing is a debated term (see, for example, Harper & Kroll, 2007). While some researchers, teachers and writers regard creative writing as narratives, poetry and plays, others take creative writing to be any type of writing as long as it is creative, expressive and imaginative (Harper, 2015; Harper & Kroll, 2007; Martin, Tarnanen, & Tynjälä, 2018). This latter view is where the title for this thesis originated, with creative writing defined by one of my participants as the 'art of making up things', suggesting freedom to be as creative as one likes. This view is shared by the other teacher participants in this thesis, where creative writing is:

> "an opportunity to view the world in different ways … capturing thoughts and feelings over time,"
>
> "no limits,"
>
> "thinking outside the box,"
>
> "an individual's voice,"
>
> "original thoughts unique to the individual,"
>
> "personal voice expressing a different perspective,"
>
> "an expressive and creative outlet."

These views speak to the ideas of emancipation, of risk and difference and individuality, with creativity sometimes seen as inexorably connected to notions of freedom (Freire,

1970b; Vlieghe, 2018; White, Lorenzi, & O'Higgins Norman, 2018) – and it is the creative element of creative writing that this thesis seeks to explore.

P. O'Connor (2021) believes that "replanting creativity in schools might be the most important thing we can do to survive the darkness of today" (para. 13). Creativity can be used in order to counter rampaging inequality in the classroom (P. O'Connor, 2020) which the MoE steadfastly refuses to address, "resolutely refusing to allow the imagination and creativity into classrooms" (P. O'Connor, 2021, para. 7). Furthermore, an attitude or belief exists that creative writing is not as important as other forms of writing because it will not be as useful in getting a job (Welch, 1999; H. Wood, 2019) and it is a "distraction from the main endeavour [which is] academic results" (Owen & Munden, 2010, as cited in Bernardes & Menzies, 2017, p. 33). A belief also exists that creative writing is 'useless' and people 'don't use creative writing' unless they are professional writers or teachers of creative writing (Lim, 2003).

However, there are many reasons why primary students should learn to write creatively, foremost among them the emancipatory potential of creative writing that will be explored in detail throughout this thesis. Furthermore, research has indicated that the ability to write creatively can help learners in other areas (Babayigit, 2019; Martin, 2008; Tok & Kandemir, 2015), support writing development in general (Barbot, Tan, Randi, Santa-Donato, & Grigorenko, 2012), increase enthusiasm and engagement (Bernardes & Menzies, 2017) and foster increased collaboration (De Smedt & Van Keer, 2014). Another reason, and possibly the most important one, to teach creative writing in the primary classroom, is because students enjoy taking part in the subject, with narratives and personal recounts (often conflated with creative writing) invariably the most taught genres in the primary classroom (Parr & Jesson, 2016). In other words, learning to write creatively in the primary classroom provides opportunities for students to explore notions of freedom, is enjoyable and engaging, can potentially assist students socially and can help when learning other curriculum subjects.

Creativity in an educational setting has the potential to bring new, different and unexpected responses to a situation. These new, different and unexpected responses are what Rancière (1991) refers to as 'dissensus'; that is, different ways of being, doing, seeing and speaking (Biesta, 2010a) that can provide opportunities for students to experience freedom. Creativity can enhance fluency, flexibility and originality in students and can help facilitate and develop social and interpersonal skills (Blagg, 1991). From an

artistic perspective, J. Kaufman (2016) believes that the study of creativity gives us better art and can improve an artist's life. Creativity can also foster empathy for others. Exploring the personalities of creative writers, Piirto (2009) discovered that "writers, indeed any artists, seem to feel for others' struggles … writers often feel for the rest of the world; they take on the troubles of the rest of the world" (p. 17).

Given these observations about the importance of teaching creative writing arising from my own personal experiences, interviews with teacher participants and the research literature surrounding creative writing, this thesis explores the views of primary teachers in order to identify how teachers inspire, motivate and foster creativity, creative writing and emancipation in such an environment. In this introduction to the thesis, a summary of the issues surrounding the teaching of creative writing is explored, then an overview of the context of creative writing is provided, before outlining the rationale and research questions that will guide and frame this thesis. The last section is a personal statement of how and why I came to this research, followed by an overview of the rest of thesis.

## Creative writing and emancipation

Throughout this thesis, I explore the ways in which creative writing practices, following the work of Jacques Rancière, have emancipatory potential, and that emancipation through creative writing is both possible and more desirable than a focus on measurement and progress. These propositions are not without certain challenges, however – foremost amongst them is the fact that Rancière does not believe schools can be sources of emancipation. Rancière suggests that schooling requires an understanding of the hierarchies of intelligence. This is because schools are often focused on the concept of progress, and such ideas take inequality as their starting point, rather than Rancière's presupposition of the equality of intelligence. Although Rancière seems to regard the concept of education in a positive light, he does not seem to have the same regard for schools. Schools, in Rancière's view, are designed to sort intelligence in terms of greater than and less than, and this whole system of recognition (of intelligence) needs to be suspended (Pelletier, 2012). Furthermore, it is difficult to apply Rancièrian notions to educational settings (Pelletier, 2012). This is because Rancière is not interested in schools becoming better at assessing skills and social roles, nor is he interested in helping how schools are ordered. Schools, in Rancière's view, explain and justify socioeconomic inequality (Pelletier, 2012) and embody notions of stultification (to make stupid), progress and the police order (school management, policies etc.), the conceptions of

which will be explored in Chapter 3. This is because schools, according to Rancière, are based on students progressing through grades (or year levels), controlled by teachers who teach discrete bodies of knowledge in order for the student to earn grades that in turn, determine the students' aptitude for training or entry into their chosen profession. My position is further challenged by the fact that Rancière does not offer a new pedagogy for teachers, nor does he suggest how teachers can change their pedagogy. His ideas, he insists, cannot be applied to systemic school reform (Rancière, 1991).

However, in this thesis I work with the notion that emancipatory potential does exist within schools, and this is a position I will explore throughout this thesis in the context of the teaching and learning of creative writing. Rancière himself acknowledges that schools are places where the aim of social harmony can be challenged (Pelletier, 2012), although, as part of the police order, schools will never be free of stultification. Equality, Rancière (1991) states, can never be achieved but is a concept that can be continually worked towards. Two of Rancière's most important concepts surround the notions of inequality and stultification, and certain creative writing practices can directly challenge the inequality and hierarchical organisation that Rancière argues exists in schools and leads to stultification. I suggest that there are creative writing strategies that can act in ways that lead towards equality and can challenge social harmony. I do not suggest that Rancière's ideas can be applied to school reform. Instead, I offer a different way of thinking or indeed, a different approach to the teaching of creative writing, a weaker way (Biesta, 2016), a way that is not based on determining progress, nor is it controlled by teachers' teaching of discrete bodies of knowledge.

Biesta (2016) argues that education has three functions: qualification, socialisation and subjectification. It is this third function of subjectification that Biesta regards as most important, a function associated with freedom and Rancière's emancipation. Like Biesta and Rancière, I believe that the most important function of education is emancipation. Despite Rancière's insistence that emancipation cannot occur in schools, creative writing can foster notions of freedom in students. In relation to these functions, creative writing is important to society because creative writing can fulfil this third function of education. Both Rancière's and Biesta's philosophies will be explored in greater detail in Chapter 3. How creative writing is taught and how it relates to emancipation and subjectification will be explored in detail in subsequent chapters.

## Issues of teaching and learning surrounding the subject of creative writing

Primary students in Aotearoa New Zealand, and elsewhere around the world, do not perform well in writing, the levels of which are below those of maths and reading (Gadd, 2014; Gadd & Parr, 2017; Parr, 2010; Parr & Jesson, 2016). This focus on measurement is inherently problematic, however (see Chapter 5 for more details). Primary school teachers in Aotearoa New Zealand are required to assess writing in order to determine 'progress', and notions of progress assume a linear progression and inequality, concepts that, in my view, sit uncomfortably with creative writing because they attempt to reduce education to a machine-like process. Creative writing is important because taking part in creative writing activities can foster ideas of freedom and emancipation, rather than help teachers determine whether a student has made progress.

Assessment is used to determine progress and is also used by teachers to inform 'next steps' in teaching. A tension exists here because creativity and creative writing, due to their subjective nature, are difficult to assess (Anae, 2014; Morris & Sharplin, 2013; Weldon, 2009) and the assessment tools designed to measure them were never designed to measure creativity. Creative writing generates further problems because assessment tools are generic for all types and purposes of writing (for example, procedures, explanations, narratives), and there is no specialised tool for measuring creativity, even if it were quantifiable and if it were appropriate to quantify it (Morley, 2007). Moreover, there are those who argue that creativity cannot be measured and should not be measured in any case, precisely because of the subjective nature of creative writing (Morris & Sharplin, 2013). Therefore, why are teachers measuring creative writing and how is the assessment of creative writing even done? If a teacher determines a piece of writing to be 'creative', how then are they to increase this creativity so that, in the next assessment, the piece of writing has better ideas and is more 'creative'?

This focus on measurement and the concept of progress in writing becomes more problematic as students progress through the levels or grades, as more and more writing at some schools is transactional rather than poetic or expressive (Boscolo & Hidi, 2007). As students get older, they write mostly on teacher-given topics and reports, often for assessment purposes (Boscolo & Hidi, 2007). These potentially 'dull' assessment tasks are possibly related to the lessening of interest in creative writing as students get older (Pajares, Valiante, & Cheong, 2006). As such, at high school, most students seem to enjoy creative writing less (Spurr, 2019) and the focus seems to be on assessment and measurement rather than learning how to write creatively. It is not until tertiary level that

creative writing becomes an educational focus again. Perhaps this is because of the subjective nature of creative writing which, in effect, can make the assessment of it riskier, and because secondary teachers are under immense pressure to be objective and accurate with their assessment, which is all but impossible with creative writing. Such conjecture invites other questions: If creative writing is not going to be taught at secondary school, why are teachers teaching it at primary levels? What is the point? Does this suggest that creativity is important at primary level but not secondary and why is that?

But is assessment and measurement really that problematic? Biesta (2016) theorises the risks of 'weak' education, rather than an education system that is secure, predictable and risk-free. Education, in Biesta's view, can never be reduced to a risk-free, machine-like process. The current educational environment of standardised testing and measurement simply generates problems to be overcome. Rather than making education stronger (more measurable), Biesta advocates weakness, where education is slow, unpredictable and full of risks, and it is this weakness that makes education possible. Weakness, according to Biesta, can challenge notions of measurement and progress and is an asset rather than a deficit. Weakness is a gift to teachers because, seen through such a lens, teachers have the potential to foster creativity and emancipation. Because the measurement of creative writing should never be the only goal, the teaching and learning of creative writing can then be seen as a weak and therefore risky approach to education.

The risk in teaching creative writing is always present, in part because teachers at the primary and secondary level find creative writing challenging to teach (Dixon, 2016; Frawley, 2014; Ngo, 2016). Some researchers argue that it takes someone who is a confident creative writer themselves to effectively demonstrate how such writing is composed and those 'writers as teachers' are few and far between, the importance of which is noted by Cremin et al. (2020). Cox (2001) argues that it is rare to find a primary teacher who is a writer at all, possibly as few as 1 in 10, and confident creative writers with the ability to model the process are even fewer. In fact, many teachers of creative writing do not write creatively at all (Bishop, 1993; Locke, 2015) and most have not written creatively since they themselves were at primary school.

Although teachers are often literacy professionals, highly qualified and enthusiastic experts in reading and the analysis of texts, they are not necessarily confident and knowledgeable producers of written text (Cremin et al., 2020). Some would argue that the knowledge to teach and write creatively requires a sense of style, which is a "separate

and distinct skill. It requires attention not only to syntax and word-function but also to euphony, tone and balance – which are aesthetic and pragmatic considerations" (Moon, 2012, p. 38). Some researchers argue that the problem lies not in whether the writing is grammatically sound, but whether it is stylistically sound, implying creative or poetic writing:

> Can they phrase things lucidly, elegantly, and memorably as the situation requires? Can they communicate their ideas without frustrating, boring, or offending their readers? (Moon, 2012, p. 39)

Teachers' apparent lack of knowledge in creative writing appears to be compounded by the fact that teachers do not feel that their pre-service or Initial Teacher Education (ITE) (Anae, 2014; J Gilbert & Graham, 2010; Parr & Jesson, 2016), and some in-service training, prepared them to adequately teach writing (Graham, Gillespie, & McKeown, 2012; Graham, Harris, Capizzi, Hebert, & Morphy, 2014) resulting in a lack of content and pedagogical knowledge in creative writing (Blythe & Sweet, 2005). Furthermore, teachers do not always recognise creativity and their understanding of it is generally not informed by theory and research (Mullet, Willerson, Lamb, & Kettler, 2016). This is significant because teacher practices are key to helping learners, and instructional experiences are acknowledged to be a major contributor to students' performance (Gadd & Parr, 2017; Hornstra, Mansfield, van der Veen, Peetsma, & Volman, 2015; Mainhard, Oudman, Hornstra, Bosker, & Goetz, 2018). However, Rancière believes that students can learn without a 'master explicator', teaching what they do not know, and this is a position I will take in regard to creative writing in subsequent chapters.

An argument also exists that creative writing cannot be taught (Anae, 2014), merely nurtured, suggesting that the teacher's role is to utilise their force of will to motivate students to write, rather than using their knowledge (Rancière, 1991). There are also those who suggest and that being a creative writer is innate (J. Kaufman, 2002; Vakil, 2008). Such a position is reflected in Rancière's presupposition of the equality of intelligence, where every student has the same potential to be as good a creative writer as any other. The motto of the famous Iowa Writers' Workshop, for example, is that writing "cannot be taught but talent can be nurtured". Vakil (2008) also writes of the difficulty in teaching creative writing:

> It's an open secret that you cannot teach someone to be a great writer, or for that matter to be a great teacher. As the man in the pub said, you either have it or you don't. We're obviously talking about talent. Leaving aside where it comes from, or even what it is, any sane discussion about teaching creative

> writing has to begin with the admission that making a great story (credible voice, living characters, universal significance) depends on an ineffable quality – call it timing, a good ear, empathy or determination – that cannot be taught in the way that a skill like riding a bicycle, wiring a plug, frying an egg or laying a brick can be. (p. 157)

Despite this belief or attitude that it cannot be taught, others believe it can be learnt as long as the writer is prepared to work at it. Werbeloff (2019) notes the difficulty of writing science fiction but as long as the writer is prepared to study, work hard and persevere, they can succeed:

> Writing science fiction is awesome. Awe-inspiring. There's nothing more rewarding than creating a universe of your own. Writing makes the soul sing. But writing is hard. So many authors struggle to finish their novel. Why? Because they never learned the most important rule of writing: *Writing is something you learn.* You don't simply know how to write well without guidance. Every great writer has learned his craft by reading other writers. By studying their work. By learning their techniques. Worldbuilding, characterization, dialogue, and style don't just come naturally. They take time to cultivate. (Werbeloff, 2019, para. 2)

Such a position, where a writer learns by doing and by reading the work of others, and not from having the subject explained to them, seems to reinforce Rancière's presupposition that humans are all equally intelligent, and that any subject can be learnt as long as an individual uses their will (Rancière, 1991) and has a desire to succeed.

Overall, according to quantitative data, students at primary level do not write well. This 'data' is problematic as assessment tools used to gather such data may not be appropriate for measuring creative writing. As noted earlier, how can creativity be measured and why does it need to be measured at all? Indeed, to follow the work of Biesta (2016), the fact that creative writing cannot be reduced to an equation in which input matches output makes the teaching of creative writing a weak and risky activity, and, as such, central to teaching endeavours. Although creative writing is taught at the primary level, there is less creative writing being taught at secondary level. Does this suggest that being creative is important while you are young but less so as you age? Teachers also find creative writing challenging to teach. This may be because of a lack of training, knowledge or feelings of self-efficacy, or because they do not know how to foster creativity in the classroom. The teaching of creative writing and how learners learn to write creatively is a subject not well understood. This is important given the inherent potential of creativity and creative writing to develop and grow our young learners, and, following the work of Rancière, the emancipatory potential of creative writing. Finally, there is very little research with a

focus on writing in Aotearoa New Zealand, especially creative writing, and there is a perception among teachers that teaching creative writing is difficult.

## Inside the primary creative writing classroom

The following sections detail some of the common creative writing teaching strategies used or observed in the primary classroom based on the research literature, my own experiences and those of my participants. This is a summary of strategies, and they are described in more detail and examined in relation to the literature and the narratives in subsequent chapters.

### *'Brainstorming'*

Brainstorming is a teaching and learning technique used in almost every subject taught in the primary classroom. A brainstorm or graphic organiser is used to elicit student ideas without judgement. Students simply call out ideas to be written down by the teacher. But applied specifically to the most common form of creative writing – that of narratives – it becomes something different. It is through the brainstorm that stories begin to take shape. Brainstorms are used to get story 'ideas' such as settings, characters and problems which can be useful for both prewriting and drafting. Graphic organisers (for example, a Y chart) can be employed to list settings, characters and problems and to use the senses in writing, that is, asking what it smells like, looks like, feels like, tastes like and sounds like, and so on.

### *Sensory or 'aesthetic' writing*

Observation is a creative writing tool used by many teachers and often used by novelists and short story writers. For instance, some teachers of creative writing encourage their students to use their senses, that is, touch, smell, sight, sound and hearing, to describe their settings. Teachers ask their students to describe objects or people around them and even describe how they move and interact with their environment. Students can be paired up to describe aspects of each other's clothing or appearance and such writing can be conducted individually, in pairs, or part of a group.

### *Visual prompts ('freeze frames' or 'moments in time') and story starters*

Visual prompts, sometimes referred to as 'freeze frames' or 'moments in time', are often used in the primary creative writing classroom. Such images help facilitate students' elaboration of a scene. Observation is further stressed and encouraged where an image is

presented for the student to interpret, focusing on that particular moment rather than what happened before or after. ‘Story starters’ or the first sentence of a story can also be used to prompt, motivate and encourage the creative writing student to continue the story.

***Freewriting***

Freewriting means to write without planning or any preconceived ideas, and to get the words down without thought of spelling, correct words or punctuation. The teacher can initiate a freewriting session by providing a writing prompt such as a story starter or perhaps a visual prompt, but often students are allowed to write what they want, usually based on their own experiences. Students are often given a specific time limit to write. These ideas can be incorporated into other larger pieces of writing or just used as an exercise to ‘limber up’ the writing brain and get the ‘creative juices’ flowing. A freewriting book can be used as a creative outlet at any time with the implicit understanding that it can only be read by the teacher with permission. This book is also free from judgement in the form of marking and is there purely for the enjoyment of writing. Freewriting gives students space to explore new forms of expression which may, in turn, lead to new ideas and feelings.

***Pantsing or planning***

A ‘pantser’ is a writer who writes ‘by the seat of their pants’, without having any idea where the story is going, just writing to see what will happen organically. In this sense, pantsing is similar to freewriting in that it is unrestricted writing but the writer is usually working with an already developed character or plot. The alternative to this is, of course, the writer who plans every step and every detail, indicating ‘sign posts’ or events that must be met or faced in the journey, showing the journey of change for the character. Both of these techniques are used in a primary creative writing class. The creative writer who plans usually does so with the help of brainstorming or graphic organisers.

***Collaborative writing***

Collaborative writing is a creative writing strategy where students write together, co-constructing the same piece of work. Because of the imaginative nature of creative writing and the fact that ideas are often socially constructed, collaborative writing is often used to teach creative writing. By watching others work successfully on a task, group members or partners can be inspired by the belief that ‘they can do it too’. In collaborative writing, students are sometimes grouped into what is referred to as ‘mixed ability’ so that there is always a mix of confident and not-so confident writers in each group. These groups often

have three, four or five members. Each group usually utilises technology in the form of a tablet, laptop etc or even paper and pencils, taking turns to write a sentence. If they do not know how to start, then they can use already prepared story starter prompts, often provided by an online website or the teacher. Essentially, each student takes turns furthering the story. At the end of the process (usually timed), each group selects someone to read it out and then the rest of the class offers feedback.

***The use of new media***

The use of new media in the form of technology such as tablets or laptops can assist writers to compose text. Young writers sometimes judge their success in creative writing (or any writing) in terms of correct spelling and punctuation (surface features). New media can help bridge the gap in surface features, overcoming the limitations of the writer. In addition, using technology to write allows writers to revise and edit texts which would otherwise be a complex, time consuming, frustrating and ultimately demotivating activity on paper. The ability to make changes and revise are done with cut-and-paste functions. Compared to paper and pen revisions, revisions made by using technology are easy to follow and 'track' (using 'track changes' tools). This enables the writer to focus on deeper features such as structure and ideas rather than surface features.

New media can be used to facilitate collaboration in pairs or groups and revisions are made easier with shared documents or by printing the document out for all parties to view. In addition, technology can be used as a way of creating multimodal texts. Multimodality in the context of writing is where the composition uses more than one modality (or mode/medium) to achieve its intended purpose, that is, combining several communicative media, which is particularly relevant and useful in creative writing, for example, providing an audio narrator in the story or a storyboard. Narratives may include audio, video, photographs or drawings, podcasts, blogs, collages, video or audio essays, comic strips, and storyboards. Images for 'freeze frames' or 'moments in time' invariably come from the internet or internet websites designed specifically for those purposes, for example, Pobble 365.

## Current landscape of primary creative writing teaching in Aotearoa New Zealand

In this section, I discuss creative writing within the current context of the Aotearoa New Zealand primary classroom. I explore how creativity and creative writing is represented and framed in the curriculum and other MoE documents related to the primary classroom.

### *The New Zealand primary school context*

In the context of Aotearoa New Zealand, children typically go to primary school from five years of age to approximately 10 years of age (Years 1-6). In Years 1-6, teachers, guided by the MoE and the *New Zealand Curriculum* (NZC) (MoE, 2007), are required to teach all subjects or learning areas, of which there are eight: English, the arts, health and physical education, learning languages, mathematics and statistics, science, social sciences, and technology (p. 16). Writing (and creative writing) falls under the category of English and it is a subject that can be used to facilitate learning in all other subjects in the curriculum.

### *How schools operate and what they are required to teach*

Primary schools operate under the overarching mandate of the MoE. In the current system, primary schools operate autonomously, governed by a Board of Trustees (BoT) which appoints the principal. The principal, in turn, usually selects their own staff, sometimes in consultation with the Board. Schools are free to interpret the education framework provided by the NZC relevant to their local context and are required to report to the Ministry against targets they themselves have set, usually in reading, writing and mathematics (Parr & Jesson, 2016), and they are generally free to choose what those targets are and, indeed, how they are to measure them. This, of course, applies to writing.

### *Ministry of Education (MoE) documents relevant to the teaching of creative writing*

There are three MoE documents relevant to teaching in the context of the primary creative writing classroom. They are: the NZC (MoE, 2007), the *Literacy Learning Progressions* (LLPs) (MoE, 2010), and the *Reading and Writing Standards* (MoE, 2009). These documents frame the teaching (and learning) of creative writing, yet they pay very little explicit attention to creative writing and, as such, give the teaching of creative writing a degree of flexibility.

However, the MoE, as the institution largely controlling the discourse in the field of education and thus knowledge and power (Foucault, 1972), and therefore practice, uses

these official documents to explicate its position. The NZC is the MoE's most visible and powerful document, providing 'guidance' for teaching in reference to creativity, and extolling its desire to produce innovative individuals. All three MoE documents focus on the importance of both writing and creativity, and owing to the statements that are made to that effect, all teachers in Aotearoa New Zealand primary schools must be prepared to teach writing in creative ways.

### *English in the New Zealand Curriculum*

English is one of the curriculum subjects of the NZC. It has two interconnected strands:

- making meaning of ideas or information they receive (Listening, Reading, and Viewing);
- creating meaning for themselves or others (Speaking, Writing, and Presenting) (p. 18).

There are eight levels which students progress through as they get older. In the speaking, writing and presenting strand, the statement that is most pertinent to writing at all levels is that "students recognise how to shape texts for a purpose and an audience" (MoE, 2007, p. 18). In other words, students construct texts that demonstrate an awareness of purpose and audience by selecting the most appropriate content, language and text form.

### *The* Literacy Learning Progressions *and the* Reading and Writing Standards

The *Literacy Learning Progressions: Meeting the Reading and Writing Demands of the Curriculum* (LLPs) (MoE, 2010) is another Ministry professional document for teachers designed to support the NZC. The LLPs break down and examine the processes students need to draw upon in order to create texts for particular purposes. What the LLPs do not provide, however, is specific guidelines for particular genres. In other words, none of the skills are specifically for creative writing and, instead, are generic. The *Reading and Writing Standards* (MoE, 2009) stress the importance of purpose when writing. The purposes defined are recounting, describing, narrating, reporting, or explaining (MoE, 2009) and all of these purposes could apply to the teaching and learning of creative writing.

### *Creativity in the curriculum documents*

Creative writing is not directly mentioned in the three official education documents used to guide the teaching of writing: the NZC, the *Reading and Writing Standards* and the LLPs. On several occasions, however, creativity is alluded to in the NZC, which aims,

amongst other things, for young people to be “creative, energetic and enterprising”, lifelong learners who are “critical and creative thinkers” (MoE, 2007, p. 8) and includes values such as “thinking critically, creatively, and reflectively” (p. 10). The curriculum identifies five key competencies which are seen as vital in order for students to “live, learn, work and contribute as active members of their communities” (p. 12). They are: thinking; using language, symbols, and texts; managing self; relating to others; and participating and contributing. In the key competency of thinking, one aspect intends students to use “creative, critical, and metacognitive processes to make sense of information, experiences, and ideas” (p. 12).

Teachers in the primary classroom are required to help students construct texts for a variety of purposes and audiences every day (MoE, 2007). In writing, teachers help their students write texts for a range of purposes across the curriculum that can be summarised as persuading, informing (explaining) and entertaining (Bunting, 1998; Johnson-Sheehan & Paine, 2012), shaped by the seminal work of John Britton (1972), who proposed that the principal functions of language should be categorised into transactional or poetic, with both having the elements of expressive from which “differentiated forms of writing (or speech) will be evolved” (p. 18). In the NZC, the creative writing aspects most related to Britton’s poetic function are: to inform or entertain through story (imaginative narrative, personal interpretive/expressive) and to inform or entertain through recounting (Parr, Glasswell, & Aikman, 2007).

Creative writing is sometimes referred to as poetic writing. Poetic or creative writing, which is often but not always fiction, usually includes poetry, stories and plays (Harmer, 1998). Creative writing also has the potential to include non-fiction genres, following the view that creative writing is any writing that is creative and expressive and imaginative, and that all writing is potentially creative writing (McVey, 2008). Regardless of perspective or definition, in the Aotearoa New Zealand primary writing classroom, the focus for teachers and learners is on character (describing characters), and personal experience (creative recounts), arguments and explanations. These are the four main genres or text types that teachers are required to focus on and teach.

In order to teach these four genres or text types, teachers are given flexibility in their teaching practice and often attempt to seek out new and more effective ways of teaching creative writing to their students. Many teachers try to change their practice by developing literacy programmes that expand upon traditional conceptions of literacy, thereby shifting their literacy pedagogies and programmes (Sandretto & Tilson, 2017). In order to do so,

teachers are often as innovative as the creative writing they teach, and their strategies have been formulated in a similar fashion to my own practice; that is, through professional development, watching other practitioners, professional readings, and hands-on experience. In this context, teachers can experiment with their creative writing practice, depending on their school and classroom environment: schools are free to teach creative writing in different ways, guided by the principal, senior management and the BoT. Overshadowing these teaching practices, however, are the "discourses of accountability" (Sandretto & Tilson, 2017, p. 228), Rancière's 'police order', and pressures of accountability and assessment driven in part by the MoE. This police order can manifest in the primary classroom as a certain type of writing displayed prominently on the classroom wall, while others are not, and certain writing strategies endorsed by senior teachers with the expectation they are used by other members of the teaching staff. These accountability pressures are a teaching reality for most teachers, and do affect teaching practices in regard to freedom and emancipation.

This police order manifests in other ways. For example, teachers are required to teach and assess creative or poetic writing in a system that can be potentially used to create a productive and conformist workforce, rather than foster creativity for its own sake. When pressures to cover 'all genres' and assess them take precedence over truly creative endeavours, the outcomes are sometimes narrow and prescriptive creativity. In effect, discourses of accountability can play a large part in how teachers teach creative writing, despite the fact that creativity and creative writing are notoriously difficult to quantify and assess given their subjective nature (Anae, 2014; Morris & Sharplin, 2013; Weldon, 2009), which sits at odds with efforts by the MoE and school management to exhort their staff to do just that. Thus, accountability can stifle the possibility of radical change (Sandretto & Tilson, 2017) and this has implications for the teaching of creative writing, which by its very nature supports and encourages change.

## Research question and rationale

This research investigates two main questions in relation to the title:

- How do Aotearoa New Zealand primary school teachers teach creative writing?
- How and why are these practices emancipatory?

In contrast to Rancière's (1991) belief that schools are not, and can never be, emancipatory, the rationale for investigating these questions stems from my supposition

that teaching and learning creative writing in the primary classroom can indeed be emancipatory. Such a rationale and supposition follows the work of Gert Biesta (2016), who believes that education should always have an orientation towards freedom and independence. Biesta also believes that an education system that is weak and difficult or impossible to measure is a positive rather than a negative and is central to teaching endeavours. Throughout this thesis, I will explore the idea that primary school students need creative writing, taught in creative ways, with emancipation and freedom, rather than progress, in mind.

Such research is timely because the teaching of creative writing in the primary classroom is not well researched nor understood. There is a significant body of research that examines how and why teachers teach writing (see, for example, Graves, 2004; Keen, 2017) but research into the teaching of writing at primary school has been neglected (J. Gilbert & Graham, 2010; Parr & Jesson, 2016). Furthermore, the teaching of creative writing at primary schools is a subject that has been largely overlooked by researchers both in Aotearoa New Zealand and overseas (W. Cheung, Tse, & Tsang, 2003; Teng & Yip, 2019). Although both teachers and researchers know that literacy includes both reading and writing, the focus amongst researchers has often been on reading rather than writing. Overall, research into the teaching and practice of creative writing in the primary classroom has been limited, and most existing studies focus on tertiary and secondary rather than primary education (Amabile, 1985; Magnifico, 2013; Parr & Jesson, 2016). There are overseas studies of creative writing (Bernardes & Menzies, 2017; W. Cheung et al., 2003; Y. Cheung & Jang, 2019), but little such research has been completed in Aotearoa New Zealand (Parr & Jesson, 2016). There is Aotearoa New Zealand research about teaching writing in general, but little or none with a specific focus on creative writing (Parr, 2010; Parr et al., 2018; Parr & Jesson, 2016).

Research into the overall pedagogy of writing, however, has increased during the last three decades. For much of that time, teachers have been focused on how to improve children's ability (the cognitive approach) rather than increase their interest in writing. Socio-constructivist research appears to assume that motivation is inherent in writing (Boscolo & Hidi, 2007). Thus, research has focused more on improving students' ability to write rather than find ways to motivate, inspire and promote freedom in writing, and this seems at odds with some teachers' practice, especially in creative writing where teachers attempt to use fun and interesting ways to encourage students to find their own voice. Many teachers are also aware from their ITE and in-service training that their

instruction, in theory, should be underpinned by evidence and research-based practices and theoretical understandings, but they are not often given training in regard to these theories nor how to apply them to reading and writing (T. Hodges, 2017; T. S. Hodges, Feng, Kuo, & McTigue, 2016). Such evidence gives rise to another question: Should creative writing practice necessarily be underpinned by theory and/or evidence-based practice, given the inherent difficulty of measuring it in terms of progress?

The lack of training in regard to the theories behind creative writing is further highlighted by research which reveals that teachers and researchers often have different perceptions of creativity and creative behaviours in students (Mullet et al., 2016). Although teachers value creativity, their understanding of it is generally not informed by theory and research and they feel unprepared to foster or identify creativity within their classrooms (Mullet et al., 2016). In some classrooms, creativity is overlooked because of the rigid atmosphere of authority, which disallows the use of multiple cognitive abilities (Roy, 2012).

The previous sections of this chapter have summarised the issues and tensions surrounding the teaching of creative writing in the context of the primary classroom. Primary students in Aotearoa New Zealand do not do as well in writing as they do in maths and reading. The evidence of this measurement is problematic however, because creative writing has not been analysed separately and, in any case, creativity and creative writing are difficult to measure despite teachers being required to do so. Therefore, I have suggested that measurement is not a useful or valid tool in terms of creativity and creative writing. While it appears that teachers are central in teaching creative writing, it also seems that teachers feel they have not been prepared to teach creative writing during their pre-service training. In contrast to this, creative writing is one of the more popular subjects to teach, possibly because of its popularity with the students and the desire for teachers to engage with their learners. Furthermore, MoE teaching guidelines and documents do not explicitly state how the subject should be taught. Therefore, I suggest that the teaching of creative writing in the primary classroom is, in some ways, a blank slate, and open to interpretation.

As previously stated, I believe that emancipation is both possible and desirable in the primary classroom and such a goal can be worked towards through creative writing practices. Following Biesta and Rancière, I suggest that emancipation is the most important function of education because it is the function that allows learners to come into this world and explore what it means to be human. Rancière (1991) argues that an educational focus on progress will lead to stultification, which is the opposite of

emancipation. Biesta (2016) also questions the limitations of a focus on just one educational outcome such as measuring progress, arguing that education cannot be reduced to such measurements making education weak, risky and capable of bringing something new into the world. If, as I have suggested, measurement and notions of progress are not valid in creative writing, then creativity and creative writing are excellent vehicles with which to move towards emancipation. Furthermore, if teachers lack knowledge in creative writing content and pedagogy, then they are positioned to become what Rancière (1991) calls 'Ignorant Schoolmasters', teaching what they do not know in ways that encourage, rather than restrict, creativity and freedom. The primary classroom is not and need not be a place "where creativity goes to die" (P. O'Connor, 2021, para. 1), because of the emancipatory potential of certain creative writing practices which, following the work of Rancière, can create dissensus and disrupt the police order (Rancière, 1991). The emancipatory potential of creative writing is echoed by P. O'Connor (2020), who believes that "creativity is therefore a tool of political resistance. In fact, creative thinking IS resistance: it insists on the existence of beauty, of imagination, of possibility, beyond an existent order" (p. 10).

These emancipatory creative writing practices are illustrated through the stories of both myself and that of my 10 teacher participants. This research aims to explore emancipatory teaching practice in creative writing, the motivations and justifications that lie behind this practice, and how such practices can lead to dissensus and emancipation. Finding these concepts/practices is the goal of my research questions and these questions drive the methodology, the data analysis and the presentation of subsequent chapters.

## What brings me to this research question?

I have been a primary classroom teacher for 20 years, teaching 5- to 11-year-olds and, recently, teenage students. In that time, I have also written and published 'creatively' in many forms: nine novels, over a hundred chapter books, and numerous articles and resources for teachers. In addition, I have provided professional learning in creative writing (and writing) for many teachers across the Auckland region. It is a combination of all these experiences, rather than being taught by a More Knowledgeable Other (MKO) (Vygotskiĭ & Cole, 1978), that have shaped and guided my creative writing practice today.

Why do I have this interest in writing and, in particular, the teaching of creative writing? Since I was a child, I had always wanted to be a writer. My interest derives from the

rewards of creating new worlds and sharing these worlds with others; from watching students learn and grow, face and overcome challenges, and seeing their self-esteem grow as a result. I have always placed great store in the power of the written word and its ability to inspire, provoke and foster imagination. In 2002, I retrained as a primary school teacher whilst simultaneously writing, often in the evenings, weekends and holidays. By accident, a children's education publisher discovered I was both a teacher and 'writer' and asked me to submit a story for an educational series. I did so, it was accepted and it opened doors I did not know existed. Over the years, I have written for many education publishers in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand and several based in the United Kingdom and the United States.

When I first started teaching, my pedagogy and practice was, like other teachers at the same point in their career, in its infancy. I was, and am still in many ways, what Ranciere refers to as an 'Ignorant Schoolmaster' and knew almost nothing. I was, in effect, a tabula rasa, a blank slate if you will. This, of course, also applies to my creative writing practice. I had only just started on my journey as a novelist and creative writer at the time, so I was learning how to write creatively and how to teach it simultaneously. Some of my practice was (and is) based on my knowledge of general writing practice from my own educational experiences, and other knowledge which I slowly and painfully gleaned from watching other more experienced teachers, attending professional development courses, talking with other teachers, professional readings and of course, in 'the doing' of the work, what is referred to as *mahi* in Māori. Such a journey is reflected in Rancière's philosophy that a student can learn without a master explicator, and a teacher can teach what they do not know.

Researching and writing about my journey and the sometimes similar, and sometimes different journeys of other teachers, has been the most significant challenge I have encountered in my life. In part, this challenge has been intensified because, after 20 years of practical 'hands-on' experience in the primary classroom, I initially resisted the notion that philosophy had anything to do with my thesis, labouring for some time under the fallacy that I could write a thesis without philosophising at all.

The second obstacle I had to overcome was the steadfast belief in the need for teachers to be creative writers themselves in order to be more effective teachers of creative writing, a belief I clung to for at least half my doctoral journey. This was despite my own experiences of learning how to write creatively, where I had not been taught how to write, nor had I learnt from anyone else. I consider myself a novelist and yet none of the teachers

I had at primary or secondary school were writers, and that has not affected my ability to learn how to write, nor did it affect my teachers' ability to teach writing. The irony that my argument completely ignored my own experiences did, however, escape me for some time.

Then, halfway through my thesis, something happened that threatened to derail my journey completely. This was two years in, with several chapters in draft form, my candidature all but confirmed and as I was about to embark on the collection of my empirical data (in the form of teacher interviews). The something was my mother contracting a disease so rare that it was considered an accident, an accident which killed her within a week. My sister, Michelle, had what was deemed an 'intellectual disability', manifesting as something akin to Down syndrome, with a functional age of around eight or nine years. She had lived with my parents her entire life and watched as her mother – our mother – the most important person in her life – had died in a horrible way. Two weeks after my mother died, my sister disappeared into thick Aotearoa New Zealand bush (similar to a tropical rainforest). She was found dead two days later, having drowned in a creek.

I have struggled with depression all my life and these deaths affected me badly, as one might expect, and sent me spiralling into a pit which took me some time to claw out of, thanks to my wife, without whom I might not have escaped, and for that I am truly indebted to her. The situation was exacerbated by the arrival of COVID-19 not long after, and the attendant job uncertainty and stress of home-schooling children whilst working and researching at the same time. I struggled to write, I struggled to work.

Enter Jacques Rancière. My primary supervisor, Professor Andrew Gibbons, introduced me to Rancière, in particular *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, and although I was not immediately struck by his work, it was a slow and powerful smoulder. It was not until I started reading deeply that I realised that Rancière held the key to this thesis, a revelatory and exciting moment where this thesis starting to truly assemble itself into the object you now hold in your hand (or read on your screen). Andrew, true to Rancière's philosophy that explication leads to stultification, did not explain the nuances of Rancière to me, and instead allowed me room to stumble and shuffle forward, to discover the lessons Rancière had for me on my own, and to apply such lessons not only to my own story and practice but to the stories and practices of others. What Rancière taught me is that all of us have learned things, including how to speak our native language, without any explication, without the thing being explained to us, without being educated in the thing. The thing

for me was creative writing. Moreover, I discovered a coincidence, an intersection if you like, in the use of stories. Rancière tells the story of a teacher known as Joseph Jacotot. Jacotot, trying to teach students a language he himself does not speak, uses a translation of the *Télémaque* by François Fénelon. The *Télémaque* is the story of Telemachus, the son of the Greek hero Odysseus, recounting the events that transpired during Odysseus' 10-year absence from the island of Ithaka. Just a few years earlier, I had written a novel called *Argos*, which was the story of Odysseus' dog and the events that transpired during Odysseus' 10-year absence from the island of Ithaka. One of the chief protagonists in that story was Telemachus, Argos' friend and human brother. Coincidence? Probably. A sign that Rancière was the central philosopher that my thesis needed? Probably not. And yet…

Regardless of whether my coming to Rancière was coincidence or not, during the course of this research – the reading, the writing, the interviews – I have gradually, ever so slowly, felt like a deep sleeper finally awoken. After 20 years in the primary classroom, it is only now that I am starting to see, to see the bigger picture, the context and the implications of education policy and the effect it has on teachers' practice. In my innocence and naivety, I had not considered such things very deeply before, immersed as I was in the hands-on practice of day-to-day teaching, with little time to reflect and consider the implications of various forces, chief amongst them neoliberalism. I feel, much like Paul Atreides, the central protagonist in Frank Herbert's *Dune*, in realising, after all that time in the classroom, at the coalface, that I am finally awake. In *Dune,* Paul Atreides' father, Duke Leto Atreides, gives his son valuable advice: "I'll miss the sea, but a person needs new experiences. They jar something deep inside, allowing him to grow. Without change something sleeps inside us, and seldom awakens. The sleeper must awaken" (Herbert, 1965, p. 72). Like the effect of the planet Arrakis on the young and ignorant Paul Atreides, Rancière awoke me and changed me, both as a teacher and a student, and for that I am truly grateful.

Today, my own goals for learners are simple; to foster creativity and freedom, making the writing process fun and enjoyable in order to inspire, mould, shape and motivate students who enjoy coming to school and enjoy reading and writing, who embrace the freedom and pleasure derived from the act of creativity, rather than viewing it as some chore, something to get through or something to make measurable progress in. My own young son embodies my goal, more by accident than design. He is a motivated writer, recently diagnosed with both ADHD and dyslexia, and despite these challenges or, rather, because of them, he is bursting with ideas and creativity, even though he is cusping on

what is considered ‘below expectation’ by the Ministry and the now defunct National Standards. Sometimes we write together. I delight in his ideas, and he relishes the act of creation, watching me with wide eyes as I quickly type his ideas and words into the computer and print them out so that he may proudly take this artefact to show his classroom teacher. Neither he nor I could care less about progress, learning outcomes, achievement, or what level of the curriculum he is writing at. For him and me, creative writing is about freedom, about being human.

Thus, I have come to this research partly because of my own passion and vested interest in the subject of creative writing, but also because it is a subject that requires more investigation, especially in terms of the emancipatory potential of creative writing practices used by other primary school teachers. As a classroom teacher, I have approached this research from an insider’s perspective. This has proved unexpectedly challenging as I have had to set aside my preconceived ideas and judgements about the teaching of creative writing, approaching interviews with my researcher hat on and sometimes leaving my teacher and writing hats at the door. By doing so, I have learnt more from the stories of my participants than I dreamed possible, and it is they who have really made this journey possible.

## Chapter overview

Traditionally, a doctoral thesis is structured with the literature review or theoretical framework coming before the methodology chapter. In this thesis, the methodology chapter comes before the literature review chapters. This was deliberate choice because of the importance and frequent use of narratives in this thesis, and their inclusion and form are discussed and justified in the methodology chapter, creating a context for their appearance throughout.

In this thesis, narratives, with the appearance of verisimilitude in the form of ethnographic fiction, are interspersed, combining and illustrating aspects of my own journey as writer and teacher, and the experiences of my 10 teacher participants. For Rancière, writing is art and art is a form of politics, a disruption in the order of things. In keeping with Rancière’s notions that explication (explaining) leads to stultification and that all interpretations (including those of the ‘emancipated spectator’) are equally valid, these narratives, whilst illustrating aspects of Rancière’s philosophy, are not explained and instead are left open to interpretation, used as both a break and a connection between

chapters. These terms will be fully explored in Chapters 2 and 3. The following outlines the structure and content of the rest of the thesis.

**Narrative break: A new role**

**Chapter 1: Introduction**

In this chapter, the context and background of creative writing in the primary classroom is explored, including my research question and rationale, and positioning as a researcher.

**Narrative break: Old school explication**

**Chapter 2: Methodology**

This methodology chapter explores my theoretical framework for my research, which utilises narrative research methodology and ethnographic fiction, both of which are underpinned by phenomenology – that is, the shared lived experiences of teacher participants as well as my own autoethnography.

**Narrative break: High school explication**

**Chapter Three: Jacques Rancière, Gert Biesta, subjectification and emancipation**

In this chapter, I introduce the work of my key theorist, Jacques Rancière, and also the work of Gert Biesta, and in particular the importance they place on emancipation in education. Rancière's new logic of emancipation is explored along with his presupposition of the equality of intelligence. Other important Rancièrean concepts introduced in this chapter are the idea of the ignorant schoolmaster and master explicator, universal teaching, the 'third thing', the distribution of the sensible, dissensus and politics. Rancière's idea of art as aesthetics is also introduced, along with how Rancière's ideas can possibly be applied to the role of the teacher in the classroom. Finally, Gert Biesta's three functions of education (qualification, socialisation, subjectification) are introduced, in particular subjectification, which is closely related to the concept of Rancière's emancipation.

**Narrative break: University and the 'third thing'**

**Chapter 4: Creativity and creative writing**

This chapter explores key concepts, namely the nature and definitions of creativity and creative writing, including teachers' perceptions. I argue that creativity can be viewed in various ways and an educational tension exists between them, affecting the way creativity and creative writing are taught by teachers.

**Narrative break: The writer**

**Chapter 5: Teaching creative writing in the primary classroom**

Chapter 5 engages with the questions: why should creative writing be taught in Aotearoa New Zealand primary schools, is it valued and how do teachers learn to teach creative writing? Further sections explore the history of teaching creative writing in Aotearoa New Zealand primary schools, tracing its development and significant impacts in the last 100 years. The final section examines the problematic aspects of current creative writing practice.

**Narrative break: Progress is a pedagogical fiction**

**Chapter 6: Brainstorming and collaborative writing**

In this chapter, I explore two of the key practices used in the teaching of creative writing in the primary classroom: brainstorming and collaborative writing. Each practice is introduced, followed by an exploration of how they are used in the primary classroom through the literature and the practices of both myself and the 10 teacher participants. The emancipatory potential of these practices is theorised, illustrating through anecdotes how both practices do not require the teacher to hold the superior position of most knowledgeable and, by doing so, they free both the teacher and student to be creative in their writing.

**Narrative break: Educational virtuosity**

**Chapter 7: Freewriting and new media**

In a similar fashion to Chapter 6, this chapter investigates two other key practices used in the teaching of creative writing in the primary classroom: freewriting and the use of new media. Various uses of each practice are explored through the literature and teaching anecdotes from both myself and my participants. In particular, the potential of these practices to create what Rancière calls politics and dissensus are explored, which requires an individual to take a stand on an issue and a ‘coming into presence’, involving the disruption of the individual’s thinking, which challenges, disturbs or irritates. Such experiences provide students with opportunities to engage in learning experiences, to engage with others, and express a point of view, allowing them to evolve into a unique being.

**Narrative break: Panopticon the robot**

## Chapter 8: Conclusion. Repositioning the teacher as an emancipatory storyteller

In this final chapter, following the work of Rancière, the main findings are summarised, amongst them that teachers of creative writing need not be master explicators and, instead, through the use of universal teaching and positioning themselves as ignorant schoolmasters, can use creative writing for emancipatory purposes. I discuss how creative writing practices align with Biesta's functions of education, particularly that of subjectification, itself closely related to emancipation. I argue against the use of assessment in creative writing and the positioning of the teacher as a writer in the primary classroom. I then examine a future possibility for research and practice in creative writing, that of repositioning the teacher as an emancipatory storyteller, and a possible return to the 'golden age' of progressive education. Finally, I address the limitations of the study, concluding with some final thoughts.

In the next chapter on methodology, I discuss my data collection methods – primarily that of interviews and autoethnography – and explore and justify the use of ethnographic fiction as a form of presentation and analysis.

**Narrative break: Old school explication**

*He's an older man, perhaps as old as fifty, but it's hard to judge. As a ten-year-old child, the girl thinks everyone older than twenty is old, and her judgement in this case is based on his grey hair, which is generously sprinkled through both his hair and beard. His padded wooden chair is capable of swivelling and tilting and it is currently doing both, as he leans back in order to put his feet on the desk before him. In one hand he clutches a thin clay pipe which he periodically brings it to his lips, inhaling sharply and then exhaling in a great cloud of smoke, which swirls and spirals about his head before dissipating throughout the rest of the classroom. It's winter so all the windows are closed, and every child in the class including the girl are well accustomed to the strong, heady reek of tobacco smoke, arriving home with the smell of it infused into their clothing.*

*He's reading from* A Tale of Two Cities *by Charles Dickens:*

> It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way—in short, the period was so far like the present period, that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only. (Dickens, 2011, p. 1)

*It's heavy stuff for a ten-year-old, and the girl struggles to understand the content, her understanding hindered by the fact that Mr Smith, the teacher, has a tendency to mumble and a terrible habit of reading whilst trying to smoke. Moreover, the girl knows what follows, the thought of which fills her with growing anxiety. She feels the familiar sensation of a headache coming on, a headache that the doctor has told her is related to stress and anxiety, the solution of which is to 'relax and not worry so much about things'. That's not particularly helpful given that she knows what is going to happen next. Mr Smith loves the English classics, reading books from predominantly British authors like Dickens whom he holds up as the pinnacle and prime exemplar of outstanding writing. He hasn't read Dickens to the class before but his usual practice is to read a few pages and then get the students to write in 'a style influenced by the author'. In other words, he expects ten-year olds to write like Dickens.*

*As he reads, the girls' headache grows, making comprehension almost impossible. In all fairness, even if she didn't have a headache, she would still struggle to comprehend. The girl fails to understand why Dickens is lauded as such a great writer but then again, what would the girl know? Mr Smith has made it quite clear to the girl that her feeble attempts at writing have little or no merit, especially if her lack is measured by the amount of red marking ink slashed through the pages of her writing book. Mr Smith takes no prisoners and is rather intolerant of failure, and in fact is rather draconian about this, using his belt to punish repeated offences and offenders.*

*The girls' anxiety builds along with her headache. Some days the headaches are so strong that the pages and lines of the book before her become blurred. When this happens, the*

*pain is so intense that she sometimes cries out, an expression of emotion frowned upon by Mr Smith. She feels this one growing and knows that tears will inevitably follow. The girl grits her teeth, willing her eyes to dry before any moisture can leak out.*

*Mr Smith finishes his reading and casts his steely glance around the classroom. He nods once, seemingly satisfied with the silence in the classroom and the compliance of his students. The fact is that not one student will dare speak for fear of retribution.*

*"Copy this out", he says. "Then, once you've done that, write your own introduction using this text as a model", he finishes, concluding his writing lesson.*

# CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY

## Overview

In the introductory chapter (Chapter 1), I briefly explained my rationale for placing this methodology chapter second, rather than the more traditional literature review. This is because of the central role that narratives and storytelling play in this thesis, narratives that are a synthesis of my own and the participants' experiences, and also because these narratives are found throughout this work. Some scholars argue that the use of narrative in educational research is an excellent fit given that humans are inherently storytelling organisms (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Furthermore, Rancière believes that storytelling is one of the key ways with which people can verify their intelligence, an idea that will be fully explored in Chapter 3. Stories are shaped by experiences and one way to encourage teachers to deepen their understandings is to provide opportunities for them to reflect on their own experiences and practice, and to engage in discourse with other educators. This discourse, often as not, takes the form of stories and, as such, storytelling plays an important part in this research.

Using ethnographic fiction or narrative methodology is in keeping with Rancière's strong connection with storytelling, which he employs in *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* (1991) in using story to recount rather than to explain or explicate:

> But now here is another story. The madman – the Founder, as his followers called him – comes on stage with his *Télémaque*, a book, a thing.
> Take it and read it, he says to the poor person.
> I don't know how to read, answers the poor person. How would I understand what is written in the book?
> As you have understood all things up until now: by comparing two facts. Here is a fact that I will tell you, the first sentence of the book. (Rancière, 1991, p. 22)

In *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, Rancière is telling the story of Jacotot, whose story was not selected by chance. Indeed, Rancière chose the story because of the lessons it contains. Jacotot, in turn, is using the story of Telemachus (the son of Odysseus) in the *Télémaque* to teach his students how to read and write French. Morlock (1997) notes that François Fénelon, who in 1689 wrote the *Télémaque,* was a teacher teaching a fatherless prince, the seven-year-old Duke of Burgundy. The *Télémaque* is the story of a tutor, in the form of the goddess Minerva (Athena), and a prince, Odysseus' son, Telemachus: the story of a tutor and a fatherless prince is told to another fatherless prince by another tutor. *The*

*Ignorant Schoolmaster*, the key text used in this thesis, is a group of interconnected stories of learning without explanation or explication. This thesis mirrors the form of *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* in that it also, in part, takes the form of interconnected stories of learning without explanation.

Furthermore, Rancière's storytelling in his work, and in particular in *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, is replete with literary experimentation, dialogue, narrative storytelling and other touches that a reader would more likely expect in a literary novel, rather than an academic work. This makes Rancière's style of writing what I would regard as an aesthetic experience, possibly disturbing academic sensibilities because his work offers new ways of hearing, seeing and thinking about what scholarship means (Morlock, 1997). Because of Rancière's approach, his work, following Biesta's concept of the weakness of education introduced in Chapter 1, could be regarded as 'weak' and therefore risky. This risk is what I suggest the teaching and learning of creative writing entails, and I have tried to emulate Rancière and Biesta by writing narratives in the breaks between chapters, using similar techniques to Rancière, such as using dialogue and the utilisation of 1st and 3rd person perspectives. These narrative perspectives or techniques are discussed in the ethnographic fiction section of this chapter.

In this chapter, I firstly introduce my theoretical framework, followed by a section on study design utilising qualitative research methods. I then explore the concepts and use of ethnography and autoethnography in qualitative research, before discussing my process for recruiting and interviewing participants. These sections are followed by a discussion on postmodernism and how such thinking has led to an increased usage of ethnographic fiction. The use of ethnographic fiction in this thesis is then theorised and discussed, Finally, ethical considerations are discussed.

## Theoretical framework

This research is underpinned by an interpretivist theoretical framework of phenomenology. Phenomenology is a "loosely grouped philosophical tradition" (Käufer & Chemero, 2015, p. 25) or approach to qualitative research that draws on the work of Edmund Husserl (Creswell, 2014) and examines the "structures that make a shared, objective world intelligible" (Käufer & Chemero, 2015, p. 9). It is a method of inquiry, describing the world of everyday human experience as it is lived and described by specific individuals in contextual situations (Pollio, 1997). Käufer and Chemero (2015) believe that "any serious study of philosophy or psychology ought to include at least some

exposure to phenomenology" (p. 11), because of the connection to everyday experience. The relevance and connection of phenomenology to both Rancière and Biesta here is found in human experiences, experiences that Rancière relies on to create his narratives, and the uncertainty of such experiences implied in what Biesta calls 'weakness'.

Phenomenology has the goal of examining lived experiences and looking for themes and commonalities. Phenomenology's relevance to this research is in the idea that through interviews, teachers can reveal the meanings of their personal narratives and teacher journeys that have shaped their approach to teaching creative writing. A phenomenological researcher can characterise the perceptions of participants about an educational phenomenon, and "present the lived world of people in everyday life with clarity and authenticity" (Barnacle, 2001, p. 18). This general goal could apply to any qualitative research involving interviewing.

A phenomenological approach is one in which the researcher tries to understand an event as it is happening so that the participant is reliving the moment, life as we live through it, in the now (van Manen, Higgins, & van der Riet, 2016). Applied to this research, interviewing teachers could generate new knowledge in the form of insights about teaching creative writing. Using interviews enabled me to gather teachers' stories, investigating how their experiences have influenced their strategies and pedagogy in creative writing. Such answers can be difficult to express, but through interviews and the use of stories, teacher experiences and pedagogy can be explored and evaluated. Furthermore, through the teachers' stories, I discovered an intersection of practice, a commonality, where they all shared stories of teaching creative writing that had emancipatory effects.

Teachers' narratives have the power to inform their practice and that of others. Cortazzi (1996) argues that narrative research in teaching practice has been influenced by an increased emphasis on teacher reflection and knowledge and how teachers develop, think and make decisions in the classroom. Researchers in this field encourage teachers to talk about their experiences in order to empower them. They focus on stories in which teachers present their teaching experiences in the context of their life history – stories that are essentially biographical in nature. Teachers construct meaning from their experiences, both about teaching and as a teacher.

I was initially drawn to phenomenology because of its goals of examining shared, lived experiences and looking for themes and commonalities. Phenomenology relies primarily

on interviews for data collection (Creswell, 2014) and its relevance to my own research is that, through stories collected via interviews and my own stories, teachers can reveal meaning through their personal narratives and teacher journeys that have shaped their beliefs, perceptions and pedagogy when teaching creative writing to students. Phenomenology also enables a researcher to characterise the perceptions of many participants about a phenomenon and "to present the lived world of people in everyday life with clarity and authenticity" (Barnacle, 2001, p. 81).

Phenomenological research usually begins with concrete descriptions of lived experiences, often as narrative, first-person accounts. The researcher then reflects on and analyses these descriptions and synthesises them, identifying the general themes or essences of the phenomenon. The researcher then attempts to 'read between the lines' (Finlay, 2009), trying to identify similarities and themes among participants and how they relate to the research questions (Creswell, 2014).

Phenomenologists accept that researcher subjectivity is implicated in research (Finlay, 2009). Further, when multiple methods of data collection are utilised, that subjectivity is sometimes implicated when one of those methodological approaches to research is autoethnography. This interconnectedness between the researcher and the researched is something that characterises phenomenology (Finlay, 2009). Phenomenologists sometimes adopt a 'phenomenological attitude' of being open to the 'other' to try to see the world in a fresh and different way, using disciplined naïveté, bridled dwelling, disinterested attentiveness, and an empathic wonderment in the face of the world (Finlay, 2008). This phenomenological approach is relevant to my own research when one considers that there will often be similarities and shared experiences between my own experiences and those of my participants. Phenomenology as a theoretical position enabled me to generate new knowledge because of the variability of human experience told through stories.

## Study design

### *Qualitative research*

This research used a qualitative approach to collecting information. Qualitative research is research involving conceptual findings collected through questionnaires, interviews, or observation which "crosscuts disciplines, fields and subject matters" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013, p. 3). Qualitative research enables researchers to ask questions in order to discover

‘how’ and ‘why’, and provides more comprehensive and detailed information than quantitative evidence (Elliott, 2005). Qualitative researchers tell stories of their own and others’ experiences:

> Qualitative researchers need to be storytellers. That, rather than any disdain for number crunching, ought to be one of their distinguishing attributes. To be able to tell (which, in academia, essentially means to be able to write) a story well is crucial to the enterprise. When we cannot engage others to read our stories—our completed and complete accounts—then our efforts at descriptive research are for naught. (Wolcott, 1994, p. 17)

This study employed two well-established qualitative research methodologies to collect information: ethnographic interview research (Bochner & Ellis, 2016; Wolcott, 1985) and autoethnography (Chang, 2008; Ellis, 2007). My research followed a qualitative approach to explore how and why teachers teach creative writing, and how such practices can be emancipatory. Through interviews and autoethnography, teacher perceptions and practices can be explored and evaluated.

Compared to quantitative methods, qualitative research offers a deeper insight into teacher attributions of their own and their students’ behaviours and beliefs. My primary method was the use of ethnography (sometimes referred to as school, classroom or educational ethnology), which is centred in the classroom and with individuals in context, that is, teachers. Personal narratives or narrative inquiries form the central plinth of my research and analysis. These dialogues examine how teachers’ practices in creative writing, following the work of Jacques Rancière, are able to be emancipatory.

This type of research is sometimes regarded as “classroom ethnography”, using: “ethnographic and sociolinguistic or discourse analytic research methods to the study of behavior, activities, interaction, and discourse in formal and semi-formal educational settings such as school classrooms”(Watson-Gegeo, 1997, p. 135). Classroom ethnography focuses on the sociocultural nature of teaching and learning, and incorporates participants’ perspectives on their behavior. This, in turn, allows the researcher to analyse the contexts in which interactions and classrooms are situated (Watson-Gegeo, 1997), which emerge as stories. Personal narrative retells the ways in which humans experience the world:

> This general concept is refined into the view that education and educational research is the construction and reconstruction of personal and social stories; learners, teachers, and researchers are storytellers and characters in their own and other's stories. (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 2)

Teachers' narratives have the power to inform their practice and that of others. Cortazzi (1996) argues that narrative research in teaching practice has been influenced by an increased emphasis on teacher reflection and knowledge and how they develop, think and make decisions in the classroom. Researchers in this field encourage teachers to talk about their experiences because such narratives can be empowering. They focus on teachers' stories where they present their teaching experiences in the context of their life history – such stories are essentially biographical in nature. Teachers construct meaning from their experiences, both about teaching and as a teacher. These narratives are always constructed in a given physical context – for example, a school – as well as the context of other wider influences such as social, cultural and socio-political contexts. The narratives are formed by interactions with others such as family, students and other teachers, and these interactions are dynamic from a temporal perspective (Kelchtermans, 1993).

The use of qualitative research methods of interviewing and autoethnography throughout this research enabled me to collect stories from the teacher participants and myself, and use these stories to explore and analyse creative writing practices from an emancipatory Rancièrean perspective.

### *Ethnography*

Ethnography is a broad methodology that investigates people and their cultures and customs based on direct observation. Ethnography can include life stories, analysis of letters and questionnaires, autobiography, and narrative analysis (Gobo & Marciniak, 2011). Wolcott (1985) defines ethnography as being orientated to cultural interpretation, its purpose to describe and interpret cultural behaviour:

> Good, solid ethnographic accounts do the very thing they promise. They help us understand how particular social systems work by providing detailed descriptive information, coupled with interpretation, and relating that working to implicit patterns and meanings which members of that society (or one of its subgroups) hold more or less in common. (p. 11)

Information acquisition methods in ethnography can be both qualitative and quantitative in nature but two of the primary sources are observations and interviews. Through this acquisition of information, "The ethnographer's challenge is to weave the immediacy and rawness of educational experiences into a context from which analytical patterns and insights can be discerned" (Mills & Morton, 2013, p. 1). In essence, the ethnographer attempts to contexualise experiences and look for patterns and new insights. Ethnography does more, however, than just look for new patterns. Because ethnography analyses

people and the way they do things, it invites us to come face-to-face with our own assumptions and ethnocentrisms, pushing the researcher or reader beyond understanding and towards transformation (Campbell & Lassiter, 2014). In other words, the process of ethnography can change us and, for teachers, facilitate the journey of the reflective practitioner. In this thesis, I have used ethnographic methods to collect teachers' stories through interviews, and analysed these stories in order to understand how and why they teach creative writing.

### *Autoethnography*

Autoethnography can be considered a study "of self, of personal experiences shaped by political, social and cultural contexts, relationships and experiences" (Ellis, 2007, p. 13). Studying self is important because my stories have relevance and offer insights, especially when I consider my positionality of teacher, writer and researcher. Chang (2008), writes that autoethnography is "a research method that utilizes the researchers' autobiographical information to analyze and interpret their cultural assumptions" (p. 9). In her book, *Autoethnography as Method*, Chang (2008) notes how far-reaching, personal and encompassing autoethnography is: "It represents my professional interest in anthropology, education, multicultural education, ethnography, and self-narratives. Intermingled with these is my personal fascination with self-reflection, introspection, intrapersonal intelligence, and self-analysis" (p. 11).

Throughout the course of my research, I have reflected on the definition of autoethnography as employed by Chang (2008): "It follows the anthropological and social scientific inquiry approach. … That is, I expect the stories of autoethnographers to be reflected upon, analyzed, and interpreted within their broader sociocultural context" (p. 46).

Autoethnographic texts can be written in a variety of forms such as "short stories, poetry, fiction, novels, photographic essays, personal essays, journals, fragmented and layered writing, and social science prose" (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 739). These texts use common narrative techniques such as action, dialogue, emotion, embodiment and spirituality, stories affected by our history, social structure, and culture (Ellis & Bochner, 2000), and such techniques were used to craft the narratives in this thesis. Because autoethnography can be presented in a variety of ways, it is sometimes viewed as more powerful than autobiography, transcending narration to engage in cultural analysis and

interpretation (Chang, 2008). Autoethnography has multiple layers of consciousness and is able to connect the personal to the cultural (Bochner & Ellis, 2016).

Ellis (2007, p. 25), states that the goal of autoethnography is to make a positive change in the world, to make the world and the researcher better as a result of their research. Making such changes can be challenging however, as the autoethnographer oscillates between the inward and the outward, first focusing outward on the social and cultural nature of their personal experience and then inward, towards the vulnerable self. Because of this constant movement, "distinctions between the personal and cultural become blurred, sometimes beyond recognition" (Bochner & Ellis, 2016, p. 65).

This haziness reflects the fact that autoethnography does not exist in a vacuum – it exists within the concept of culture. As Chang (2008) writes: "The concept of culture is inherently group orientated, because culture results from human interactions with each other" (p. 17). There is a symbiotic relationship between culture and people (the individual) – one would not exist without the other.

When researchers practice autoethnography, "they retrospectively and selectively write about epiphanies that stem from, or are made possible by, being part of a culture and/or by possessing a particular cultural identity" (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011, p. 276). The role of the autoethnographer is to retell their experiences and then analyse them within the context of culture. This then becomes an extremely useful tool for my own stories, where I retell, reflect upon and analyse my own experiences and pedagogy, and those of the participants, in order to gain new insights about myself and other educators in the same field. My research also incorporated reflections on my personal journey as a writer, teacher of writing and literacy leader. Some of the questions to be investigated during the course of my research are:

- How did I arrive where I am as a teacher, specifically one of creative writing?
- Why do I teach students the way I do?
- What experiences were particularly formative and why?

If I am to unpack how and why teachers teach creative writing, I need to take ownership of my experiences and resulting practices in order to determine the how and why. My own story or autoethnography enables me to speak from the inside out, reflecting on my experiences and the changes that I have undergone during my journey of teaching and writing. From that starting point, I try to link my own experiences with those of my interviewees (Reed-Danahay, 2017).

In this research, I have gathered information using memory, reflective journals and reminisces of the student voice, using these rich sources to delve into my experiences and pedagogy. Reflection and introspection enable me to scrutinise my pedagogy when teaching creative writing. I have constructed knowledge about my own teaching practices and have used these to provide insights into the experiences of other teachers of creative writing practices. These reflections will hopefully help and guide other teachers of creative writing who seek to improve, challenge or change their pedagogy. In the postmodern context of research, these reflections are both valid and powerful. One of the shortcomings of using autoethnography is that my subjectivity is embedded within this research. That is, my position as researcher/teacher/writer, in addition to being an insider/outsider (Atkinson, Coffey, & Delamont, 2003; Atkinson, Coffey, Delamont, Lofland, & Lofland, 2000), I was a fellow teacher, but positioned differently to the other teachers involved in this research as my primary role was that of researcher. As a qualitative researcher, I have sought to acknowledge and critically reflect upon these assumptions and biases (Taylor, Bogdan, & DeVault, 2015).

***Recruitment of participants***

Recruitment of participants took place in Auckland, which is the largest city in Aotearoa New Zealand, with a population of approximately 1.6 million, and the city in which I live and work. A list of primary schools (Years 0-6) in the Auckland region was obtained from the MoE. There are approximately 200 primary schools in the Auckland area. Primary schools are divided up into the local board of the Auckland Council in which each school is located. Care was taken to exclude schools from my own sphere of influence or school cluster.

I listed these schools in alphabetical order and then selected every fifth school to generate a random sample of approximately 40 schools. The initial contact was in the form of a **Site Access Form (Appendix 4)** sent to each principal, asking for permission to contact the office administration. Once permission was granted, the office administrator was asked to disseminate an **Invitation to Participate (Appendix 3)** to all teachers at the school who taught creative writing as part of their practice. No other criteria were set and therefore the personal identities of participants (for example, as teachers, as writers, as research students) were not required. In other words, teachers could have identified as writers as well as teachers (in fact, two did), but their inclusion was not purposeful. Interested participants were then asked to contact me directly and were sent

the **Participant Information Sheet (PIS) (Appendix 3).** Participants were required to be classroom teachers who teach creative writing as part of their daily pedagogy.

If the potential participant was willing to participate, I then sent them the **Consent Form (Appendix 3)**, the **Confidentiality Agreement (Appendix 2)**, and the **Indicative Interview Questions (Appendix 5)**. Once the consent and confidentiality documents were signed, we organised a time and place to conduct the interview. The participants were selected on a first-come, first-served basis. The target number of participants was 10, and I continued to send invitations until I reached this number. All 10 participants were were interviewed. Interview participants were asked where they wanted to meet for the interview, which was often a café or similar. I provided refreshments and gave each participant a gift voucher to thank them for their time.

***Interviews***

Interviews in qualitative research typically conform to three types: structured, unstructured and semi-structured (Cachia & Millward, 2011). I decided to use semi-structured interviews because they provide a guide for the topics to discuss, but have the flexibility to allow follow-up on points of interest that may arise. Structured interviews using closed, predetermined questions were never considered, because such an approach does not take into account creativity, freedom and unpredictability, the latter especially being something that is always present in education (Biesta, 2016). Semi-structured interviewing essentially acted as a 'third thing', because I was unsure what this research would produce. Using semi-structured interviewing, the researcher formulates a set of sequential questions as a guide, with the flexibility to ask additional questions in order to explore issues brought up by the interviewee (Moira & Lynne, 2011). With this method, "knowledge is constructed in the inter-action between the interviewer and interviewee" (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 2).

Each participant was interviewed at a time and place of their choosing. Each interview, of approximately one hour in duration, was audio recorded and then professionally transcribed. As a working teacher, I was only too aware of the pressures on teachers, and did not want to take up any more of their time. The option to ask follow-up questions via email or telephone did exist, but was not required. The indicative questions (Appendix 5), were based on the literature around pedagogical strategies, adapted from previous studies (Hornstra et al., 2015; Nutter, 2015) and informed by theories surrounding creative writing. The information I was trying to elicit included experiences leading to:

- personal beliefs or preferences,
- motivational strategies,
- perceptions of students,
- creative writing pedagogy (and sub-categories – for example, visual prompts, story starters, ICT, collaboration), and
- beliefs about the importance of creative writing.

Such information helped answer my research questions about 'how' and 'why' teachers teach creative writing, including how their experiences were formative in regard to their practices.

***The postmodern context of research***

Since the 1980s, there has been a renewed interest in 'human' research which has opened up new approaches to inquiry, challenging the omniscience and objectivity of the social science researcher (Le Grange, 2018). Such a view has been the catalyst for different ways of thinking and undertaking research known as postmodern research. The view of postmodernists is that no method of research has privileged status over another (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2018). In postmodern research, researchers can relay and retell their own situated experiences: "They can eschew the questionable metanarrative of scientific objectivity and still have plenty to say as situated speakers, subjectivities engaged in knowing/telling about the world as they perceive it" (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2018, p. 820).

One type of thinking encompassed by postmodernism is that of post-qualitative research, research characterised by its focus on language and the links to subjectivity, social organisation and power (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2018, p. 821). Experiences and memory can be interpreted differently, depending on the prevailing discourses. The individual is the site and subject for struggles for identity and remaking memory and, as a result, an individual's subjectivity is not fixed (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2018).

The move towards post-qualitative research was also the result of another issue. Richardson and St. Pierre (2018) discovered something else in their reading of qualitative research: they found it 'boring' (p. 818) and, as such, there was a lot of important research that was not being read fully and absorbed the way it deserved to be. As a result, they came upon the idea of 'writing as a method of inquiry' (p. 819) to increase the readability of qualitative research. As Watson (2011) puts it: "A key motivation then for researchers

to present their work in fictional form is to increase reader/audience engagement" (p. 402).

Richardson coined the term 'creative analytic practices', or CAP, which are characterised by an author writing "outside conventional social scientific writing" (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2018, p. 821). CAP ethnography is both creative and analytical and can come in many different forms, including fiction, poetry and stories, where both the writing process and product are entwined and privileged. In 'traditional' research, information is triangulated – in other words, verified by other complementary sources, usually three. Richardson questions this in CAP research, stating that the sources of information are 'crystallised' in form – that is, they have many different sources and forms. This crystallisation deconstructs the 'traditional' concept of validity and means there is no single 'truth' (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2018, p. 822). The stories collected from the participants and retold in this thesis have, in effect, been formulated through this cyrstallisation process, and take various forms including dialogue and even, in one case, science fiction.

### *Ethnographic fiction*

Ingridsdotter and Kallenberg (2018, p. 58) define ethnographic fiction as writing that combines creativity with fact and empirical description. In this thesis, a project informed by autoethnography and post-qualitative approaches, I have used my own experiences as a teacher and writer, and the interview transcripts, as a basis to create 'ethnographic fiction' – sometimes referred to as 'narrative fiction' (Watson, 2011). The process of writing ethnographic fiction drew on my own experiences as a teacher, writer and professional leader of creative writing, thus incorporating an autoethnographic element into the research. Ethnographic fiction aims for the characteristic of 'verisimilitude' or the appearance of being real, convincing the reader that the narrative happened or could have happened (Bruce, 2014), and with the researcher potentially presenting participants' recollections as they would in a novel (Alvarez-Hevia, 2014). The researcher uses their knowledge of the field and experiences to construct narratives that make sense and are believable to informed readers and the participants. Such ethnographic fiction is seen by some as both 'dangerous' and powerful because of the new possibilities and new ways of educational thinking that they offer (Stewart, Tamatea, & Mika, 2015, p. 92). Proponents of ethnographic fiction go further, arguing that such stories represent truths that cannot always be articulated by participants (Bruce, 2014), 'saying the unsayable' (Sparkes, 1997) in order to raise significant questions about educational policy and practice to

enrich ongoing conversations (Watson, 2011). In addition, such narratives can bring new perspectives to ITE and in-service teacher training (Martin et al., 2018).

Ethnographic fiction, whilst grounded in the tradition of creative nonfiction (Sparkes, 2002), is different in that the fiction or story-telling aspect of the research is the focal point. That is not to say that ethnographic fiction is the same as fiction, because it is not. My intention is not to dwell on fiction here, but suffice to say in terms of definitions and distinctions, ethnographic fiction *claims* to draw on actual information gathered by the researcher (Sparkes, 2002). Bruce (2019), writing about faction (she describes ethnographic fiction as a type of faction), notes:

> Thus, faction is a blend of fact and fiction, and of observation and imagination. It is a form of representation that must be methodologically rigorous, theoretically informed, ethically reflexive and interesting to read, see or hear. Its aim is to dissolve the arguably artificial line between fact and fiction. (p. 62)

Although the lines between ethnographic fiction and faction are blurred, I consider ethnographic fiction (rather than creative nonfiction or fiction) as more appropriate for my own research as my 'stories' are based on my own experiences as a primary school teacher and creative writer and those of the 10 primary school teachers I interviewed in the course of this research. In other words, 'I was there' and the writing is a "blend of fact and fiction, and of observation and imagination" (Bruce, 2019, p. 62). By writing ethnographic fiction or fictionalised narratives, I am not bound by what I 'can say' and 'cannot say' "according to the rules of conventional textualization" (Sparkes, 2002, p. 3) and thus "may illuminate more effectively the threads of points I wish to make" (Rinehart, 1995, cited in Sparkes, 2002, p. 4). In other words, by writing ethnographic fiction, I can explore issues that are perhaps more significant than the interview 'data' or my own experiences and memories suggest, and such a way is perhaps in keeping with Biesta's exploration of the weakness in education – that education is not about measurement and matching inputs to outputs, but rather an exploration of what it means to be human.

Inckle (2010) notes that ethnographic fiction is a methodology that allows one to both conduct and represent research, and has the ability to represent that which is complex and messy:

> These are methodologies which can handle the complex and messy realities of corporeal experience; methodologies which reflect the multifaceted, contradictory, ambiguous nature of lived experience and the ways in which it deifies easy categorization; and, more importantly, these methodologies also

> integrate the equally complex ethical issues which pertain to such intimate knowledge. (p. 27)

Lived experience, she says ‘defies easy categorization’, which is perhaps true as lived experience is not just words but incorporates a variety of emotions and forms of non-verbal communication not easily expressed in written form. Inckle (2010) also believes that ethnographic fiction is ethical in terms of not revealing any one particular identity or experience. The characters are ‘composites’, that is, a medley or combination of experiences and memories, and that is true of the narratives and stories shared in this research. Further, Inckle states that such stories are directly applicable to real-life situations such as policy and best-practice interventions (p. 37).

Rinehart (1998) regarded ‘fictional ethnography’ (as he called it at the time) as a more radical type of ethnography, one in which the writer has more room to apply their creative talents: “In fictional ethnography, most authors attempt to replicate the sense of the experience. If something did not necessarily happen the way it was reported, recollection made it feel as if it did” (p. 204).

The word Rinehart (1998) later uses for this replicated experience is “verisimilitude” or the “feel of the experience” (p. 204), a word prevalent in ethnographic fiction and faction. Rinehart goes on to add that sentences taken verbatim from field notes or interviews are less important than what the character/participant meant to say. But how does the writer know what the character/participant was trying to say? Rinehart refers to Geertz (1972) here, saying that the writer is writing from deep immersion within the culture or world portrayed and is able to include both context and detail, their goal being to capture the feel of the experience and the ‘truth’ of it (Rinehart, 1998, p. 204). In ethnographic writing, regardless of the type, Rinehart maintains that methods and intents blur, each writer borrowing or combining different forms. At the time of writing (1998), Rinehart believed that the academic ethnography writers considered fictional ethnography to contain “falsehoods” and have “more flair than substance” (p. 204). This is despite the protestations of ethnographic fiction writers that their observations were authentic and real because they ‘were there’ in the field, basing their fictions on ‘real’ people and ‘real’ events (Sparkes, 2002, p. 3), which is how the ethnographic fiction is presented in this thesis.

K. Frank (2000) asks several questions about the use of ethnographic fiction: Is fiction a partial answer to the problems of objective representation? When should a researcher use ethnographically informed stories? What can they accomplish by doing so, and what is

lost in the process? (K. Frank, 2000, p. 482). Tentatively, she attempts to answer the question of when, that is, when it is appropriate to use ethnographic fiction, suggesting that when "factual representation obscures possible alternative interpretations, the explicit use of fiction might be appropriate and evocative" (p. 482). In teaching, in the course of my 20 years in the primary classroom, I have learnt that there are always many possible alternative interpretations, that a researcher looking in must use their knowledge of context and the spaces in between words, to 'read between the lines'. I am also aware that my interpretation of events, given my 'insider' positioning, might not always be the only interpretation, or indeed the interpretation that others who are positioned differently might make.

Palumbo (2006) wrote her doctoral thesis based on her work and interviews with troubled teens on an island 'institute', presenting her findings as ethnographic fiction, using 'thick' or detailed descriptions:

> enabling the reader to share in the meanings of the day-to-day and mundane activities that the participants themselves may take for granted ... recreat[ing] for the reader the shared beliefs, practices and behavior of the group that resided on the island during the researcher's brief stay. (p. 49)

The use of ethnographic fiction and phenomenology in her research allowed the reader to become immersed in the researcher's and participants' experiences as they unfolded, recreating the social reality of everyday life through fictional conversations and interactions. By making ethnographic research more 'readable', it offers possibilities for effecting social or policy change, reaching readers on a sensory and emotional level, making deep, personal connections with other people's lived reality (Bloom, 2006). Inckle (2010) agrees, noting that if 'change' is indeed the goal, then we should be writing in ways that makes an emotional connection with the reader.

Furthermore, as noted earlier, Richardson and St Pierre (2018) seem to consider 'normal' ethnographic work 'boring' (their word); therefore, by utilising creative writing techniques, the research can be presented in more entertaining (that is, less 'boring') and accessible ways, reaching new audiences and becoming more widely disseminated. The determination of what is 'more entertaining' in ethnographic fiction is, of course, open to interpretation and this, once again, reinforces Biesta's position that this 'weakness' in education (because it is impossible to measure) is not a problem but rather what is central to any educational endeavour. Rinehart (1998) acknowledges that communicating effectively with readers is crucial, stating that "uncommunicative writers in the social

sciences may become so immersed in fact that they fail to realize that they have not engaged their readers" (p. 205). I suggest (and hope) that the narratives found in this thesis will both entertain the reader, and make them consider the implications of this research in new ways.

In addition to the attestation that ethnographic fiction makes the content more accessible to the public, Rinehart (1998, p. 201) believes that fiction and fictional devices may be more effective in relaying lived experiences to academics than using scientific language. He goes on to note that scientific language can lose the 'lyricism' and 'magic' of the real lived experience that can be found in ethnographic fiction. Writers have a certain responsibility and power; as executors of others' stories, what we say has a profound impact on how people feel and interact with others: "effective stories change the reader" (Rinehart, 1998, p. 202). Rinehart also stresses the importance of accurately representing lived experience: "For ethnographic writers who use fictional methods in their writing, representing well and believably is crucial" (p. 205). But how easy is it to represent well, believably and accurately? How does the writer show that they have either been there, done that or can empathise effectively to capture how the experience originally felt? Rinehart states that this believability is dependent on how accurate the description is, how "holistic, evocative, emotionally engaging" the writing is (p. 206). It is, he thinks, all about the details; what to leave in, what to omit in order to keep the reader interested. Regardless of how it is written, however, it must appeal to and engage the reader: "Readers (whether academic colleagues, students, friends, family or the general public) should be able to 'live' their own ways into the experience, finding points of connection that relate to their own lives" (Bruce, 2019, p. 65).

It is a technique that many novelists have mastered, and I, a novelist myself, have sought to aspire to. Rinehart (1998) urges those with an interest in ethnographic fiction to study the craft of writing narratives with master teachers, and to attend workshops and writing groups (p. 207), which is something I have done for the last 20 years, hand-in-hand with my career as a primary school teacher.

Edgington (2013) questions the skills of creative writing and whether writing a story is an act of theorising, tentatively concluding that it is:

> Perhaps because it involves elements integral to researching – in that I am using my skills as a creative writer to organise sequences of events and scenes, provide believable descriptions and characters whom others can relate to, in order for the reader to find it stimulating. But this approach also allows me to undermine the familiar in unexpected ways, indeed, creating the

> unexpected is a crucial part of keeping the reader (and writer!) engaged. (p. 162)

In this, Edgington (2013) notes, once again, the importance of authenticity and engaging with the reader. The question of authenticity emerges again when an ethnographic fiction writer is writing about a group to which they do not belong. This in turn begs the question of whether the ethnographic fiction is relevant to others. Even if you are a member of the group or club, will your experiences be representative of the others or only yourself? Can it be said that a personal story or autoethnography is only valid or representative of the individual that is writing it? Perhaps, but perhaps it is also true that one person's story is representative of others, that their "personal story coincides with parts of the story of the universe, or the story of other people, or of groups" (Rinehart, 1998, p. 217). Therefore, it could be argued that, at first glance, apparently intensely personal or meaningful ethnographic fiction can indeed contain meaning for others. That 'meaning' appears to be fundamentally important. As Rinehart (1998) concludes:

> Whether the stories are called nonfiction, truth, like truth, or fictional matters only by degrees, for if someone gains some small shred of [Umberto] Eco's (1995) "formula to give meaning to our existence" from others' stories, then the stories have met a fundamental goal. (p. 217)

The road to crafting ethnographic fiction is not without its hazards and pitfalls, however. For one thing, it is difficult to do and especially difficult to do it well. Sparkes (2002) suggests caution when using ethnographic fiction. It is not easy to produce such works, especially when they require both excellent creative writing and scholarly skills. The skills to craft such stories should not be 'underestimated' (p. 13) he argues, citing examples where ethnographic fiction writers "frequently stumble and produce materials that read like high-school creative writing exercises or passages from mediocre cyberpunk novels" (Sanders, 1995, cited in Sparkes, 2002, p. 13). Sparkes goes on to say that despite ethnographic fiction's readability and accessibility, policy makers could potentially be less inclined to treat ethnographic fiction seriously and academic colleagues even less so, especially if these academic colleagues write 'creative fiction' which, as defined earlier, is not based on 'real' evidence at all; that is, it is not based on 'being there' in the field, and thus '*the bastards are making it up*!' (p. 15):

> Indeed, in a climate dominated by scientific and realist tales, some colleagues may suspect that those who produce creative fiction as opposed to ethnographic fiction are not really doing "proper" research at all but are really frustrated novelists working in the wrong department. (p. 14)

Whilst creative fiction is not well regarded by many qualitative researchers, ethnographic fiction is 'less worrisome' because the work is based on 'being there' (Sparkes, 2002, p. 16) and that remains a core concern in qualitative inquiry. As long as the work is based on actual events, the qualitative researcher can more confidently move forward with their ethnographic fiction, aware and knowing even as they do so that they are in "highly contested terrain" and must be "prepared" (p. 16) presumably for criticism and accusations of inauthenticity and lack of reliability, validity and truth (Sparkes, 2002, p. 17).

Inckle (2010) questions whether truth, validity and objectivity can be circumvented entirely in ethnographic fiction, arguing that because such fictions draw on the values of creative practices they "privilege evocation over cognitive contemplation" (Denzin, 2003, p. 119, cited in Inckle 2010, p. 38). She concludes that ethnographic fiction is ethically valid and is able to represent the complexities of experience in order to potentially facilitate change: "Overall, then, through their form and content; ethic and orientation, ethnographic fictions offer a means to research and represent the complexities of embodied experience in ways which are ethically salient and which produce manifold possibilities of transformation and change" (Inckle 2010, p. 39).

It is true, however, that not all researchers are creative writers or readers, and therefore cannot easily draw on those skills – although it does not necessarily preclude them. As Richardson (1997) noted, she became a writer by doing so: "the process of writing this book has transformed my identity: the 'sociologist' has become a 'writer'" (p. 2). Mills (1959) urges beginning scholars such as myself to find a way of interpreting information that 'feels' right – essentially finding the 'right fit' between the information and researcher. In addition, a part of my teaching philosophy has always been on the importance of modelling, of 'walking the talk'. In a thesis on teaching creative writing, perhaps it is appropriate to 'walk the talk', that is, use my creative writing abilities?

When using ethnographic fiction, it is vital that the researcher identifies it as such rather than, for example, creative nonfiction, so that both the writer and reader cannot claim it as something that it is not. In the case of the ethnographic fiction in this research, it is based on a combination of my own experiences and 'being there' (Sparkes, 2002, p. 3). In my initial research proposal and subsequent ethics proposal, I wrote that I planned to 'write fictionalised narratives from the interviews and my own experiences of creative writing and teaching creative writing'. Although I was not familiar with the term ethnographic fiction when I set out on this journey, it seems that I had intended to do just

that but did not have the words or knowledge to express it properly. Sparkes (2002, p. 4) notes that ethnographic fiction writers who have conducted research in the same field in which they write have a certain 'authority' and their work can be regarded as 'truth' because they write as witnesses rather than just making it all up. In the course of my research, I have not just been a 'witness' either, but an insider with 'insider knowledge' as a fellow primary classroom teacher. As Edgington (2013) notes about her own doctoral research utilising her experience as a further education teacher:

> My 'insider knowledge' as an FE teacher provided opportunities to draw out aspects of the contexts of my participants' lived experiences that were unspoken but (perhaps because they were) mutually understood. My personal stories, perspectives and interpretations (which in themselves have also changed over time and through their creation) mingle and contradict, empathise and contrast with those of my participants. (p. 154)

According to Edgington (2013), an 'insider' has the potential to draw out or interpret experiences that 'outsiders' would perhaps not be able to. Further, by creating ethnographic fiction, the researcher brings themselves into the research (even if they were not beforehand) by utilising their skills as a creative writer. Edgington notes that she created a "patchwork or 'quilt' from the data" (p. 157), creating the stories by imagining herself in the position of the protagonists, trying to imagine how they would think and feel: what Pierre Bourdieu and Alain Accardo (1999) describe as "making my point of view, a point of view on a point of view" (p. 625).

Interpreted or not, this research is based on real experiences. By explicitly stating that the work is based on real events, real experiences and real people, the researcher, using ethnographic fiction, can create validity and a sense of verisimilitude, generating what for some will be shared experiences and, doubtless, similar experiences for others. The evoking of shared experiences or memories in others seems to be the goal of those writing ethnographic fiction. As Sparkes (1997) writes: "Ethnographic fiction and other kinds of story by their ability to condense, exemplify, and evoke a world, are as valid a device for transmitting cultural understanding and achieving these goals as any other researcher produced device" (p. 38).

Ethnographic fiction seemed to be a 'good fit' for this research because it enabled me to utilise my 'insider knowledge' and my creative writing abilities to convey social complexities not always available via traditional academic writing. I hope that, by using such a methodology, I am able to present and interpret results in a new light and possibly add new layers to analytical interpretations. The novel presentation of ethnographic

fiction has the potential to engage with the reader, opening up a window into the experiences of others, helping them empathise with the characters and situation. Furthermore, ethnographic fiction is a useful methodology to use when factual representation could possibly obscure different interpretations and when there are words left unsaid. What ethnographic writers write has the potential to have a profound impact on how people feel and interact with others. As such, writers have a responsibility to represent others' stories well and believably – in my case, by using my creative writing skills and informed by details gathered from my interviews and 20 years in the classroom. In this thesis, I have used ethnographic fiction to create narratives based on my experiences and those of the 10 participants. In some cases, the stories were woven together to create a shared narrative. In whatever form these narratives took, care was taken to present each with a sense of versimilitude, in order to engage the reader.

### *Ethical considerations*

This interview research involved ethical considerations, namely voluntary participation, informed consent, protection of privacy, and the possible influence of power relationships (Head, 2020; O. C. Robinson, 2014). As I was a working teacher interviewing other teachers, it was altogether possible that I would know or be known to the other teachers. If such colleagues were included in the sampling technique, their inclusion was completely by chance. My study design takes account of each of these aspects using an Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC) research ethics application. The interviews took place only after AUTEC research ethics application (19/168) was granted by AUTEC on 15/5/2019 (see Appendix 1). Participant interviews took place in the period from October 2019 to January 2020.

*Voluntary participation:* Participants only contacted me after responding to the invitation. I then asked them to be part of the study, taking care to emphasise in all communications that their participation was voluntary (D. Smith, 2003). Every participant was free to withdraw from the study at any point without giving a reason. During the interview, the participant had the option to ask for the recorder to be turned off at any point. After the interview had been transcribed, I sent the transcript to the participant for checking. They were free to edit for accuracy or to delete any details. They were able to withdraw their contribution from the study without giving a reason, up to a set date about one month after receiving the transcript.

*Informed content:* I took steps to ensure I obtained the informed consent of each participant (Bhutta, 2004). Each participant was sent the PIS during the recruitment process. The PIS clearly outlined the research as being part of my doctoral study, what I hoped to achieve with this research, and what was involved in their participation. The participants were free to ask any questions about the research, by email, phone or in person. For each participant who agreed to be interviewed for my research, I asked them to sign a consent form (see Appendix 3) prior to the first interview. The signed consent forms were handed to my supervisor for secure storage on AUT premises.

*Protection of privacy:* I protected the privacy of the participants by changing names and other proper nouns (names of towns, schools, etc.) in the stories of each participant, and avoided reference to specific identifying details in the thesis, and in any associated oral presentations, and I will maintain this protection of privacy in future publications based on this research (Nunan, 2021).

*Possible influence of power relationships:* Participants in this study were from schools outside my local cluster of schools. As such, I tried to mitigate against any possible influence or power over these participants (Karnieli-Miller, Strier, & Pessach, 2009). If at any time the participant felt the negative influence of power relationships, they were free to withdraw from the study.

*Autoethnography:* In terms of autoethnography, this 'data' was collected in the past, that is, through my own past experiences, and therefore informed consent, where applicable, would have to be collected retrospectively. This clearly created some challenges, and though it might not be possible to resolve all such challenges, they had to be considered regardless, including the fact that some of the participants (such as those in memories of old teachers) had passed away long ago. This challenge was mitigated by the simple expedience of changing or anonymising names and locations, including my own identity. The utilisation of using third person narration also helped anonymise my own participation and that of the other participants. By combining my own recollections and those of my participants, I endeavoured to create the sensation of verisimilitude, without compromising anonymity.

In this chapter, I have described the design and method utilised in this study in order to address my research questions. The primary collection method was through the use of teacher interviews and autoethnography, the presentation of which is achieved through the use of narratives and direct quotes whilst still preserving the anonymity of both myself

and my participants. The focus on stories was deliberate for a number of reasons, included amongst them my own interest in storytelling, but also because of Ranciere's belief that storytelling is a way to verify intelligence. Moreover, such a research method could be considered 'weak', because such an approach is capable of producing the unexpected. Some of the narratives, following a phenomenological approach, take the form of conglomerations of experiences – that is, shared, lived experiences that the participants and myself had in common. All of the narratives in this thesis were based on real experiences, but presented in different ways and yet with a sense of versimilitude. Finally, I explained how such 'data' was collected and analysed, underpinned by a careful consideration of ethics.

In the next chapter, I examine the philosophies of Jacque Rancière and Gert Biesta, and how these philosophies relate to this research and the research questions of how teachers teach creative writing and how such practices can be emancipatory.

**Narrative break: High school explication**

*"Okay, who wants to read next?"*

*Not one hand raises. In fact, no one moves at all, frozen in fear. Well, not exactly fear but embarrassment or shame or a general unwillingness to draw attention to oneself. The student hunkers down in her chair, hoping that her name isn't called. When it is, she jerks in fright and slithers further down.*

*"Right, Esme it is then," says the teacher. This is her modus operandi – when no-one volunteers, and generally no-one does, then she often chooses Esme. She chooses Esme because she's identified Esme as a good reader. That is, someone who isn't going to get stuck on certain words, and maul them with uncertain decoding skills, slowing down the already interminable Form 6 English class.*

*Sighing theatrically, Esme reads aloud, slowly and carefully, enunciating each word precisely for fear of correction and subsequent embarrassment. The extract is from Shakespeare's* Hamlet*, and despite her best efforts, she gets hung up on a couple of unfamiliar words, words no longer in common usage. Why is she reading this? Esme has no idea. What is the relevance to her or her life? She still has no idea.*

*Esme finishes reading with evident relief that the teacher hasn't stopped her to make corrections. The students then spend the next 10 minutes or so discussing the passage, concluding only when the teacher is satisfied that they have understood – or at least pretend to understand – the various nuances that (she has explained in great detail) are contained within. Regardless, Esme remains stubbornly unenlightened throughout, refusing to engage on the general principle that Shakespeare is an irrelevancy to her.*

*The process is then repeated. This time, thankfully, the teacher chooses another student she's identified as a capable reader. The unfortunate girl finishes, as self-conscious, awkward and embarrassed as Esme was, and then once again, the teacher questions the students in her Socratic question and answer manner until she obtains the answers she already knows. Esme learns nothing. No. That's not completely true. She learns that she dislikes Shakespeare intensely. What has she learnt about writing? She's learnt that she doesn't like the way Shakespeare writes and has determined not to write like him. She's also learnt that she does not enjoy teachers explaining every single aspect or nuance of the text. It makes her feel like she's stupid. Unfortunately, dissecting Shakespeare is the closest the class comes to creative writing all year, and the exam that measures Esme's progress and knowledge of Shakespeare will only reveal that she hasn't learnt much.*

# CHAPTER 3: JACQUES RANCIÈRE, GERT BIESTA, SUBJECTIFICATION AND EMANCIPATION

## Introduction

This chapter introduces the two key philosophers who are central to this thesis, their work and how their theoretical contributions can be applied to the teaching of creative writing in the primary classroom. These theories serve as a lens to investigate my research questions about how teachers teach creative writing, and how and why these practices can be emancipatory. This work engages with many conceptual tools and covers a lot of ground, and so there are elements that, by necessity, are not explored too deeply here, and instead will be explored through later chapters where these ideas are applied to the data (see, for example, Chapters 6 and 7).

The first of these philosophers is Jacques Rancière and his pedagogical and political concepts of education, embodied prominently by *The Ignorant Schoolmaster: Five Lessons in Intellectual Emancipation* (1991). In particular, I focus on Rancière's ideas of emancipation, equality and how teachers can teach what they do not know in the context of the primary creative writing classroom. According to Skarpenes and Sæverot (2018), since the 1960s, education has been regarded as a mechanism for the reproduction of social inequalities (Lefranc, Pistolesi, & Trannoy, 2008) and a product of underlying power structures (Freire, 1985). The school, however, can serve as a tool to reduce inequality and promote emancipation (Skarpenes & Sæverot, 2018). As such, issues of equality and emancipation as presented by Rancière are very relevant in the current educational climate and are particularly important when discussed with reference to teachers' practice.

The second philosopher is Gert Biesta who also argues in favour of the importance of emancipation as a purpose of education, the important role that the teacher plays in that emancipation, and the idea that education is inherently weak and risky. Biesta's main text used in this thesis is *The Beautiful Risk of Education* (2016), in which he argues against the 'learnification' of education, where policy makers and politicians, in their efforts to remove the risk and weakness from education, have attempted to commodify or quantify education instead. Weakness in education, in Biesta's view, is not a problem to overcome, but the embodiment of what it means to be human, rather than an exercise in attempting to reduce education to what can be measured.

Rancière's concept of emancipation is central to this thesis, and will be used in subsequent chapters to interpret and analyse my data, gathered from my own experiences and that of my teacher participants, and argue that certain teacher practices in creative writing can foster subjectification and are, in fact, emancipatory. Rancière's and Biesta's work surrounding emancipation is relevant to the creative writing classroom and the practices of teachers because, I suggest, Rancière's concept of radical equality fosters creativity, a key aspect of the creative writing classroom. Rancière calls for students and educators to question 'explications' from the master explicator. These explications take the form of explanations or knowledge that passes from the teacher to the student; for example, the teacher explicating how to structure a sentence in a piece of prose. Rancière urges students to apply their intelligence to objects, which include both texts and art. Such an approach also follows the work of Biesta (2017a), who supports the position of the emancipatory potential of the teacher and education through the work of Rancière. Biesta occupies the position that the teacher is indispensable in emancipatory education and that ignorant schoolmasters, even though their role is no longer that of dispensers of knowledge, still have an important role to play in education. Biesta (2016) argues that the most important function of education is that of subjectification, a term redolent of freedom, emancipation and equality. In this chapter, I introduce my argument that the teaching of creative writing, facilitated through various practices, has the potential to foster such concepts. My interest throughout is to apply both Rancière's and Biesta's theories to the teaching practices of creative writing teachers in the primary classroom.

In the following sections, I introduce the concept of emancipation, from historical as well as modern and Rancièrean perspectives. The sections that follow explore Rancière's other key concepts related to emancipation and their potential relationship to the teaching of creative writing. In particular, I focus on Rancière's ideas of emancipation, the 'master explicator', 'universal teaching', the 'ignorant schoolmaster', dissensus, the police order and the 'third thing'.

## Modern logic of emancipation

Education in the late 19th and early 20th centuries became focused on the idea of individual autonomy and freedom (Biesta, 2016). In part, this child-centred approach was formulated because of the belief that forcing a child to adapt to an external societal order would, following the work of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, corrupt the child. This did however, lead to the idea that choice for the child meant choice against society (Biesta, 2008). After

the Second World War, educationalists began to argue that individual emancipation could not exist without wider social transformation, and this became a central focus of critical approaches to education (Biesta, 2008). The idea that power relations must be identified and 'demystified' began to play a central role in critical pedagogies (Biesta, 2008). The implication of this work was that in order to be freed from the workings of power, such power had to be exposed. Furthermore, in order to achieve emancipation, someone else not subjected to the workings of power had to help expose the objective condition of the one to be emancipated (Biesta, 2016).

This 'modern logic of emancipation' is that emancipation requires intervention from the outside, by someone not subjected to the workings of power that needs to be overcome. The emancipator must 'demystify' the condition of those to be emancipated, thus emancipation is something that is done to someone rather than something that they do to themselves. This also reveals that emancipation is based on a starting point of inequality (Biesta, 2016). In this situation, the teacher has the knowledge of not only the subject matter to be taught, but also the objective condition of the student. The teacher explains this knowledge to the student to move the student from ignorance to knowledge and understanding. The modern logic of emancipation refers to this as equality (Biesta, 2017a). However, the modern logic of emancipation actually facilitates the dependency of the one to be emancipated, because the one to be emancipated is dependent upon an intervention by the emancipator in order to gain freedom and equality. Moreover, the knowledge of the objective condition of the one to be emancipated must come from the emancipator. This means that the experiences of the one to be emancipated cannot be trusted and thus they have to be told what is really going on (Biesta, 2017a).

## Emancipation

The idea of emancipation plays a critical role in modern educational theories and practices, particularly where the aim of education is focused on emancipating students from oppressive structures in order to foster human freedom (Biesta, 2010a). Rancière (1999) argues that the ideas of emancipation and equality are closely tied together, although equality is not an end product achieved after a series of stages, but confirmed by emancipated individuals. These individuals have 'discovered' their equality, regardless of status, wealth and power. Education is about how to be equal in an unequal society and thus emancipation is always an 'absent present' in schools (Säfström, 2011), a goal often unfulfilled.

Rancière is interested in schools because, according to Bingham and Biesta (2010), "school and society symbolize each other without end," (p. 14) and he is critical of them and their focus on progress. Progress is measured by assessment in order to determine whether students have become 'better' and schools, in Rancière's view, socially rank and sort students, and their subsequent merit is assessed by a measurer (the teacher) (Galloway, 2012). Although Rancière seems to regard the concept of education in a positive light, he does not have the same regard for schools. Schools, in Rancière's view, rather than foster emancipation, are designed to sort intelligence in terms of greater than and less than, and this whole system of recognition (of intelligence) needs to be suspended (Pelletier, 2012). The measurement of progress in schools serves as an explanation and continuation of inequality between student and student, student and teacher and so on. Rancière sees that crisis and reform are the normal functions of the education system. This is because schools are charged with filling the gap between proclaimed equality and de facto inequality (Rancière, 2010) and the efforts to fill these gaps create a continual series of crises and subsequent reforms rather than emancipation and equality.

Rancière himself defines emancipation as "escaping from a minority" (Rancière, 1995, p. 48), in reference to a young person ending a situation where they are a minor – in other words, coming into their 'majority' or adulthood. However, according to Rancière, emancipation isn't just about shifting from a minority position to a majority position – it is about a rupture in the order of things (Rancière, 2004a). Through the use of the word 'escape', Rancière seems to associate emancipation with an activity someone achieves or does to themselves rather than something that is done to them. In western literature, emancipation traditionally means to relinquish authority over someone (Biesta, 2016). The legal use of the term means "the freeing of someone from the control of another, particularly parents relinquishing authority and control over a minor child" (Biesta, 2010a, p. 42). The central question Rancière asks, however, is whether the individual starts from a position of equality or inequality (Rancière, 1991). Traditional education is a process whereby the unknowledgeable receives knowledge from the knowledgeable. Thus, the student starts from a position of inequality and will never achieve the same status as the master or teacher, because the equality and emancipation of the unknowledgeable is dependent on the knowledge of the knowledgeable. Thus, there always exists a fundamental inequality between the one who educates and the one who receives education (Biesta, 2010a) – in other words, inequality between the teacher and the student.

## Rancière's logic of emancipation

According to Rancière (1991), "any man who is taught is only half a man" (p. 21). Through this statement, Rancière questions the logic of emancipation, especially the connection emancipation has with power relationships, and his thinking has provided educationalists with a new understanding of how education might contribute to emancipation, in addition to an awareness of ways in which education might hinder emancipation.

Rancière identifies three major contradictions in emancipation. The first is that even though the goal of emancipation is equality and freedom, the process fosters dependency in those being emancipated (Biesta, 2010a). In other words, the emancipated relies on the emancipator for emancipation and, without this intervention, there can be no emancipation. Second, there is a fundamental inequality between the emancipator and the emancipated. The emancipator is superior and, as such, able to perform the demystification. This superiority only exists because of the existence of the inferiority of the one to be emancipated in the first place (Biesta, 2010a; Skarpenes & Sæverot, 2018). In other words, the emancipator relies upon the inferiority of the one to be emancipated in order to emancipate them. This raises the question of when this inferiority will disappear. As long as the master is a master, the slave can never be a master, and can only ever be a former slave or an emancipated slave, thus always lagging behind the master and reinforcing the existence of inequality.

Third, although emancipation appears to be in the interests of those to be emancipated, there always exists a distrust and suspicion of the experiences and motivation of those to be emancipated (Biesta, 2010a; Skarpenes & Sæverot, 2018). Those who are to be emancipated cannot rely on their own senses or feelings, but instead require someone to correctly interpret their experiences for them, a someone who can lift the veil off the obscurity of things (Bingham & Biesta, 2010).

In Rancière's view, emancipation is a "a rupture in the traditional division assigning the privilege of thought to some and the tasks of production to others" (Rancière, 2004a, p. 219). In other words, emancipation is when change occurs in individuals' roles and this change demonstrates that they are creatures of discourse and reason (Rancière, 1995, p. 48). At the heart of Rancière's idea of emancipation is the notion of the equality of intelligence (Rancière, 1995). People start from the position of equality, but if they instead

choose to start from a position of distrust, assuming inequality, they will continue to reproduce inequality forever (Rancière, 1995).

Rancière's ideas of emancipation are fundamentally different from the modern logic of emancipation, because Rancière's emancipation is *not done to somebody*, but is rather something that a *person does to themselves*. Rather than coming from a position of inequality between the emancipator and the one to be emancipated, Rancière starts from a position of equality (of intelligence) and emancipation is not based on the dependency of the emancipated upon the emancipator. Furthermore, Rancière argues that emancipation is based upon trust in the experiences of the one to be emancipated (Biesta, 2010a), rather than replacing them with 'correct' experiences. Learning is not dependent upon explication or divided into those who know and those who are ignorant.

## Jacotot, the ignorant schoolmaster and the master explicator

The concept of emancipation can be explored through the work of Jacques Rancière in *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* (Rancière, 1991). In this book, Rancière tells the story of teacher, Joseph Jacotot. Jacotot was born in 1770, a French teacher who, in March 1815, arrived in Louvain to teach a group of Flemish students. This was unusual for two reasons: First, Jacotot did not know the Flemish language and, second, his students did not know any French. This was problematic because:

> There was thus no language in which he could teach them what they sought from him. Yet he wanted to respond to their wishes. To do so, the minimal link of a thing in common had to be established between himself and them. (Rancière, 1991, p. 1)

Jacotot had to find something in common between himself and the Flemish students. To facilitate the beginnings of understandings between the two, Jacotot gave the Flemish students the bilingual edition of the *Télémaque* (*Les Adventures de Télémaque – The Adventures of Telemachus*, the son of Odysseus) which was written in both French and Flemish.

Somewhat coincidentally, one of my novels, *Argos*, is a retelling and reimaging of life on Ithaka after Odysseus' departure for the Trojan war, told from the perspective of Odysseus' loyal dog, Argos:

> I was born on the same day as Telemachus, the only son of Penelope and Odysseus. Some would say that this is auspicious. I call it luck. I wasn't so special … Telemachus, so I am told, entered the world in a similar manner to myself—bleating and howling for his mother's teat. We are not so

> dissimilar—man and dog. Four legs or two, we enter and leave this world in much the same way. (P. W. Simpson, 2016, p. 12)

The story of Telemachus, regardless of my interpretation, is an engaging one. Engaging or not, what Jacotot ultimately discovered, however, was surprising: the students were able to learn French without Jacotot speaking a word of Flemish. The teacher did not need to be the source of all knowledge, or what Rancière (1991) refers to as a 'master explicator'. Instead, Jacotot: "proclaimed that one could teach what one didn't know, and that a poor and ignorant father could, if he was emancipated, conduct the education of his children, without the aid of any master explicator" (Rancière, 1991, p. 18).

This reinforced Rancière's (1991) presupposition that that all humans are equally intelligent. The act of explication proves to those being explicated to that they are stupid because they must have things explained to them in the first place. Explication, therefore, divides intelligence into two categories: "knowing minds and ignorant ones, ripe minds and immature minds, the capable and the incapable, the intelligent and the stupid" (Rancière, 1991, p. 6). These two categories can be further reduced to an inferior intelligence and a superior one. Explication, then, ensures what Rancière (1991) refers to as enforced stultification which is the opposite of emancipation. Jacotot, on the other hand, by viewing his students as equally intelligent and by not teaching them anything, ensured that his students learnt without the aid of a master explicator. Rather than teach, Jacotot urged his students to use their will. In other words, if a student wants to achieve something, they must use their willpower to achieve their goals. A teachers' role can then be conceived of as a motivator of students, one who encourages this use of willpower in order to motivate students in their journey and set the ignorant person down a path: "The ignorant schoolmaster exercises no relation of intelligence to intelligence. He or she is only an authority, only a will that sets the ignorant person down a path, that is to say to instigate a capacity already possessed" (Rancière, 2010, p. 2).

By providing such freedom, the student has the power to become emancipated. But this is a problematic concept because, as Bingham and Biesta (2010) note, being what Rancière (1991) described as a 'master explicator' is almost unavoidable, as even the most liberating of pedagogies still remain methods of explication. For Rancière's Jacotot, all explication preserves the gap between the master's knowledge and the student's ignorance. In other words, the process of explication reproduces the inequality it attempts to diminish (Stamp, 2013). Thus, emancipation can lead to what Rancière (1991) calls "stultification". Following this logic, in order for the teacher to avoid stultification, they

should limit the amount of explication in their practice and provide freedom for their students to pursue emancipation. Explication, Rancière argues, is enforced stultification. But, if students learn through their own engagement with other sources of education (for example, a 'third thing' such as a book, the interpretation of which is subjective), rather than through forced explication by a master explicator, then they have learned without a master explicator. This does not mean they have learnt without a master, only without a master explicator.

In the case of Jacotot, even though he was not transferring his knowledge, he still had a part to play in the classroom. Jacotot does not completely withdraw from his students. His class does not become an example of collective learning or collaborative inquiry (Biesta, 2017a). Although the students learn without a 'master explicator', Jacotot still teaches them something without communicating: "Jacotot had taught them something [but] he had communicated nothing to them" (Rancière, 1991, p. 13). The students learn without Jacotot transferring his knowledge.

## Rancière's supposition of the equality of intelligence

According to Rancière, a student can teach themselves if they believe in the equality of their intelligence. The lack of their belief in their intelligence can lead to stultification: "what stultifies the common people is not the lack of instruction, but the belief in the inferiority of their intelligence" (Rancière, 1991, p. 39). In my reading of this, the goal for the teacher, then, seems to be to help or instil within their students a belief in their own equality of intelligence. Biesta (2010a) suggests that, in Rancière's world view, students are quite capable of seeing and thinking for themselves and are not dependent on others to do that for them. Creative writing practices such as moments in time and using the senses to describe material objects seem to embody such an approach. Equally, other creative writing practices, for example the process model, a structured and step-based model of writing (see Chapter 5), suggest the opposite, where students are often highly dependent on the teacher for guidance.

Rancière's anti-elitism manifests as a rejection of authority based on a superior intelligence, especially that of the philosopher, rejecting the notion that academic philosophers are the only ones who can think philosophically. Instead, Rancière offers a supposition that people are all fundamentally equal in terms of intelligence, and intelligence is synonymous with equality (Rancière, 1991). This is because intelligence

is determined by one person being able to communicate and be understood by another. This presupposes an equal capacity of understanding (Galloway, 2012). By viewing intelligence as equal, rather than varied along a linear path, the schoolmaster avoids having to make comparisons of various manifestations of intelligence, freeing him or her from the need to assess these manifestations, disrupting the power disparities (Rancière, 2007).

Rancière argues that there is no difference in intellectual capacity, only in the manifestation of intelligence, such as a task performed with greater or lesser attention (Stamp, 2013), and this can be seen through the efforts made when an individual utilises their intelligence. Rancière suggests that will is indeed about making the effort to use one's intelligence (Rancière, 1991). My reading of Rancière's concept of will is a desire, need or compulsion to achieve or do something. It is the will and how it is applied that makes the difference in how a task is completed: "man is a will served *by an intelligence*" (Rancière, 1991, p. 54).

Rancière, by proposing the notion of the equality of intelligence, does not suggest that all human beings have the same qualities, but by existing as speaking and thinking beings, all humans have the capacity to engage and act in the world (Means, 2011). Thus, for the schoolmaster Jacotot, intellectual emancipation comes about when it can be verified that all human beings think and speak as equals (Rancière, 1991). Rancière is not out to prove or disapprove that all intelligence is equal, but to see what can be achieved by labouring under that supposition. Rancière's presupposition is that humans are equally intelligent and what separates or differentiates them is not intelligence, but strength of will (Pelletier, 2012). This, of course, raises the question of how this differentiation of will comes about, a question that Rancière leaves unanswered.

Jacotot does not replace the intelligence of his students with his own intelligence. Instead, he asks his students to summon their own intelligence. This is where Jacotot uses his will to influence the will of his students, a "will to will" (Rancière, 1991, p. 13). Rancière argues that stultification takes place when one intelligence is subordinate to another. Emancipation occurs when an intelligence obeys only itself while the will obeys the will of another.

Rancière suggests that the knowledge content of the teacher is not important. Rather, the relationship that the teacher has to the student is more important, where the teacher uses their will to, in my words, excite, motivate, inspire, and encourage. The teacher has to be

an ignorant schoolmaster, that is, to be ignorant of the disparity between their knowledge and that of their student. The teacher then fosters dissensus, which is an intentional disruption of the social hierarchy.

For Rancière, emancipation is much more important than education. Rancière argues that learning can take place anywhere in many different ways, including in the stultifiers' school but not so emancipation; there is only one way to emancipate. Rancière seems convinced that emancipation is intensely personal and individualistic in that it can only take place 'man to man' (Rancière, 1991) and no institutions (school, party, government, etc.) can ever emancipate because every institution is the embodiment of inequality. Rancière argues that 'universal teaching' is the only type of teaching that makes emancipation possible, and whilst I agree with this idea (replacing Rancière's 'man to man' with 'being to being' or 'person to person'), I disagree with Rancière's theory that institutions such as schools can never emancipate. Indeed, I argue throughout this thesis that schools and primary creative writing classrooms can emancipate their students by utilising certain creative writing practices underpinned by Rancière's universal teaching.

## Universal teaching

Jacotot's 'universal teaching' was based on the notion that all human beings were equally intelligent, rather than a process beginning with inequality in order to achieve equality (Rancière, 1991). Through this method, Rancière (Jacotot) used a common text (the bilingual edition of the *Télémaque* which was written in both French and Flemish) as a starting point for both student and teacher. Rancière considers such practices exemplary models of universal teaching, where students formulate their own interpretation of a text.

In *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* (Rancière, 1991), the teacher, Jacotot, presupposes that equality exists. There are no epistemological hierarchies. As such, the teacher enables the students to find the answers for themselves rather than transfer their knowledge in what Paulo Freire (1970b) refers to as the 'banking concept' of education, where students are considered to know nothing and are empty vessels to receive, file and store knowledge bestowed upon them by the 'knowledgeable' teacher. Rather than directly transfer knowledge to the students in a presumably didactic manner, Rancière urges teachers to facilitate pedagogical situations where students can use their own intelligence and modes of reasoning.

Universal learning will, in Rancière's view, proceed without method or a particular logic (Bingham, 2015). In other words, it is not possible, says Rancière, to institutionalise universal teaching (that is, use it in a school or classroom) and use it for the purposes of emancipation and equality, and Rancière is suspicious of attempts to do so in schools. Thus, the paradox of Rancière's work is that he seems to encourage the use of universal teaching, whilst at the same time lamenting that it will never work in schools. Rancière is also critical of 'progressives' and their attempts to liberate the masses through well-ordered public instruction. He calls progressive ideas of progress "the pedagogical fiction" because they represent inequality and inferiority as a 'retard' in a student's development (Rancière, 1991, p. 119). Indeed, according to Rancière, an unequal society is exactly what has been achieved under progressivism (Rancière, 1999), and it is schools that contribute to the 'progress' of society (Säfström, 2011). The shift away from 'teacher-centred' education has led to a 'learner-focused' progressive or 'expressive' approach to education. This focus on the learner is presented as a reaction or response to authoritarian practices which place the teacher as a figure of control (Biesta, 2020), what Biesta (2016) calls the 'learnification' of education. A progressive approach to education is problematic, however, in that it always situates the educator as being more knowledgeable, and therefore superior to and more powerful than their students.

## The 'third thing'

In the logic of emancipation, between the ignorant schoolmaster and the emancipated novice, there is always a 'third thing' – a book or some other piece of writing – alien to both and which they can both refer to in order to verify what the student has seen, what they say about it and what they think of it (Rancière, 2009). To prevent stultification and enable emancipation, there must be something between the master and student, an object or 'third thing' that also separates them. Jacotot used the book, the *Télémaque*, as the 'third thing' that was foreign to both master and student and which could be used to verify what the student had seen, reported and thought about. The concept of a 'third thing' has important applications in the context of the creative writing classroom, where the 'third things' could be many things that the teacher uses to inspire and motivate their students, including visual images or a reading from another book. Because such 'things' are subjective and open to interpretation, Rancière argues that they do not stultify and, instead, can be emancipatory. Such a concept will be explored in depth in Chapters 6 and 7.

## Politics, the police order and dissensus

Politics plays an important part in Rancière's emancipatory theories because the concept is closely tied to equality. Politics, in his view, is the disruptive attempt of those excluded from social orders to take their place as equals to those with power. In so doing, the excluded are able to redistribute power in more egalitarian ways. Rancière's 'police' are the rules and conventions that enforce the unequal 'distribution of the sensible' (see below for a definition), as well as the beliefs and values that justify the inegalitarian social order in the first place. The function of the police is to restrict and control politics (Rancière, 2004b).

According to Rancière, schools and teachers are expected to operate within the police order (Park, 2021). Rancière does not mean police as officers in uniform travelling around in squad cars. Instead, Rancière defines police as formal systems that maintain the hierarchical social order. The police order is how being and doing are defined and disciplined through the dominant values of citizenship and the state (Tolia-Kelly, 2019). The police order often determines instructional practices, curriculum, rules and the environment within the school and classroom. In relation to creative writing, the police order can determine what types of writing are on display, what teaching practices are used (that is, approved by the police) while others are not. As such, students and teachers can already have predetermined ideas of the distribution of the sensible to allow for only a particular aesthetics, which is the only one allowed in that space (Park, 2021). Such an aesthetics can be seen in such writing practices as process and genre writing as well as the use of exemplars which display an example of how the end product of students' work should appear. Process and genre writing will be explored in Chapter 5.

Rancière introduces his important concept of 'dissensus'. Politics and art both exist as dissensual acts to destabilise the distribution of the sensible. Dissensus, for Rancière, is the opposite of progress. Dissensus means a "difference between sense and sense: a difference within the same, a sameness of the opposite" (Rancière, 2011, p. 1), implying a difference in the perception of an object by a subject. Dissensus is not a conflict but rather a difference in ways of being, doing, seeing and speaking, and a disruption of the police order (Biesta, 2010a). Real politics involves dissensus and this dissensus is only possible when equality is confirmed. In the normal schooling situation, only inequality can be confirmed because it is measured against the master (Säfström, 2011). Through dissensus, however, the police order and what is normalised can be challenged because it is a "force through which the naturalness of orders is undone" (Säfström, 2009, p. 102).

Emancipation derives from a rupture in the order of things (Rancière, 2004a), a dissensus in the normalised social order. In the kindergarten art class, for example, Park (2021) found that some of the art produced by the students was an:

> accidentally deliberate deviation from the assigned rules and boundaries; their acts were neither entirely involuntary nor planned ahead of time, but they emerged in response to the policing that affects the production of dissensual acts. (p. 17)

These acts could be viewed as a redistribution of the sensible and such a process can challenge the hierarchy of conventional pedagogy. For Rancière, the master explicator is the one who tries to control the will of others. But Rancière's concept of democracy is one that cannot be controlled, a system that is versatile, sporadic and founded on trust (Rancière, 1995), and it is trust that is a prerequisite in the creative writing classroom, a concept that will be explored in subsequent chapters.

## Distribution of the sensible

Rancière argues that social orders are reinforced and reflected in the distribution of the sensible. The distribution of the sensible is made up of people and their voices and how they are seen (or not seen), heard (or not heard) along with assumptions about their natural capacities (Rancière, 1991). For example, the voices of some minority groups may be unseen and unheard in society, because they and their voices are perceived to have no real value. The distribution of the sensible can be understood as a certain way of feeling, seeing, speaking and acting in the world, which is what is "capable of being apprehended by the senses" (Rancière, 2004b, p. 85).

Art (aesthetic products such as novels, photography, films, paintings), according to Rancière, is political because it plays a vital role in the distribution of the sensible (Porter, 2007). Politics, in Rancière's view, is as an opposition to the normalised order (O. Davis, 2010) and involves the redistribution of the sensible. In relation to the arts, Rancière introduces an idea of the democratic distribution of the sensible. This distribution defines what is visible in a common space – for example, a piece of art or writing set up for display in a public place. Rancière argues that it is only the media (journalists, academics, politicians) that is allowed to present their views of the 'sensible' and, as such, their views are the 'right' interpretation. The media then controls what everyone else perceives about the aesthetic. To counter this discourse, Rancière offers the democratisation of the sensible where there is no correct interpretation. Each of the various interpretations are

equally valid and through these interpretations equality begins to emerge (Skarpenes & Sæverot, 2018). The equal validity of interpretations suggests the subjective nature of the arts, where there is no right or best way to interpret the piece. Indeed, this subjective nature also suggests creative writing which varies in interpretation from one to another and, as such, the democratisation of the sensible can be applied to the creative writing classroom.

## Aesthetics

Aesthetics has come to mean the sensual world manifested through art, distinct from perception and rational understanding (J. O'Connor, 2010). This interpretation was a response or rejection by artists and creative professionals of the market and industrial-bureaucratic society, and its reduction of everything to commodities (J. O'Connor, 2010). Rancière examines the potential of aesthetics as a mode of political resistance (Robbins, 2015) and as a way of being, doing and speaking which can operate as forms of exclusion or inclusion, or can be visible or invisible. Politics is when the 'sensible' is redistributed, when new ways of being, saying and doing emerge (Rancière, 2009). According to Rancière, art is politics because it acts to disrupt the police order and the distribution of the sensible in order to create dissensus.

Rancière, in relation to the arts and their connection to emancipation, discusses his theory of the emancipated spectator, where this figure, rather than being a passive observer, is an active observer (Rancière, 2007) and, by being so, creates a symmetry between the artist and the spectator. By art, Rancière implies the visual arts and the theatre (drama), and this definition can be extended to creative writing. The emancipated spectator can see the art's inner secrets, freeing them as spectators from power structures to see the truth or how things really are (Skarpenes & Sæverot, 2018).

Rancière suggests that the emancipated are, by nature, artists (Means, 2011). This is not to say that Rancière is implying that the emancipated are artists in the sense of painters, actors or writers, but merely "fellow-men" (or, indeed, people), each with a soul and feelings to communicate (Rancière, 1991, p. 67). Because the truth is impossible to speak, thought can be translated into poetic works, the veracity of which can be communicated to others. Therefore, poetry can be used for communication where the writer can "communicate[s] as an artisan: as a person who handles words like tools" (Rancière, 1991, p. 65). Thought is a creative and a shared aesthetic practice, of ways of doing and making through words, images, affects and sounds, and, as such, central to democratic

politics (Means, 2011). Using Rancière's three-part question, "what do you see? what do you think about it? what do you make of it? And so on, to infinity" (Rancière, 1991, p. 23), such practices can be seen in the creative writing classroom, where teachers use a 'moment in time' and then question their students on their own interpretation of what they see. Similarly, in the context of brainstorming, the students are not told how to interpret the 'brainstormed' ideas that have been collectively formulated. Such practices can potentially interrupt the traditional hierarchy and ownership of knowledge and these practices will be explored in Chapters 5 and 6.

## The role of the teacher in Rancière's classroom

What then, is the role of the ignorant schoolmaster? Whilst critical of schools as an institution, Rancière does not offer any guidance on how schools and teachers might improve their pedagogy (Pelletier, 2012). Rancière does offer some clues, however; foremost among them is the fact that *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* contains no explanations and instead recounts the story of Jacotot. In fact, Rancière does not even explain why he is telling the story in the first place. Rancière does become more explicit about the role of the teacher, arguing that the teacher is not necessarily ignorant in the sense that they have no knowledge. Instead, the teacher must disassociate their knowledge from their mastery so that they are not teaching knowledge:

> He does not teach *his* knowledge to his students. He commands them to venture forth in the forest, to report what they see, what they think of what they have seen, to verify it, and so on. What he ignores is the gap between two intelligences. (Rancière, 2007, p. 275)

The teacher (rather than the master explicator) has two roles or acts. The first is that the teacher demands speech from their students (the manifestation of their intelligence) and, second, verifies that this intelligence work is done with attention (Rancière, 1991). Here, attention can be seen as working with due care and thought. This is not to say that the teacher operates in a Socratic manner, utilising a question-and-answer format, leading the student down a path to a point already known by the master. The Socratic method, Rancière points out, can lead to learning, but not emancipation because the end point is already determined by the teacher rather than left to chance. Emancipation is seized when one teaches oneself (Rancière, 1991) rather than when someone is taught by another.

Rancière suggests that the role of the teacher in emancipatory education is to work on the student's will, because "man is a will served by an intelligence" (Rancière, 1991, pp. 51-

52). Intelligence in the student already exists and it is observable in the students use of language. The focus of some traditional pedagogy of teachers, for example when a teacher reads from a textbook, is on knowledge transfer from the teacher to the student, from one intelligence to another. Rancière, in contrast, suggests an educational relationship of "will to will" (Rancière, 1991, p. 13). In Rancière's proposition of the emancipatory classroom, the teachers work alongside the students as equals seeking to understand, question and debate, in order for students to improve their self-worth and personal power (Fryer, 2015). The role of the teacher, argues Rancière, is to encourage students to use their intelligence. In order for education to take place, then, the teacher must somehow, using their will, encourage or demand that the individual reveal and use their own intelligence. Rancière is not suggesting a school without teachers but rather a school without master explicators. Authority still exists in such a school but it is based on equality of intelligence or knowledge rather than inequality. The teacher's role is to use their will to set an ignorant (not less intelligent) person down a path and fulfil a potential that they already possess: "the ignorant schoolmaster exercises no relation of intelligence to intelligence. He or she is only an authority, only a will that sets the ignorant person down a path, that is to say to instigate a capacity already possessed" (Rancière, 1991, p. 41).

Even though the student is effectively undertaking 'self emancipation', they are not doing so without the presence of a teacher, whose role is still significant and important. The difference is that this teacher is an emancipatory teacher rather than a stultifying one. Such a teacher can urge or suggest, encourage or motivate students to use their assumed equality of intelligence. Rancière does not see the school as a natural site for emancipation though. He does not suggest emancipation cannot occur in a school but when it occurs, it will appear as dissensus and an interruption in the police order (Biesta, 2010a; Rancière, 1991).

For Rancière, the ignorant schoolmaster assumes equality with their students and guides them using their will into a space of possibility (Rancière, 2007), disruption and dissensus, where unforeseen meaning can erupt at any time. Such a schoolmaster does not have a perceived outcome but rather does not know what may come about. The relevance to creative writing is clear here: creative writing, by its often subjective and chaotic nature, is not produced in a linear process and the outcome can never be predicted.

In Rancière's view, the educator's role is to encourage students to use their own intellectual powers to study objects (the 'third thing'). Rancière's teachers do not necessarily have to have content knowledge because learning requires the student to apply

their own intellectual capacities. Universal teaching requires the teacher to ask questions of the student and such a method invites students to think for themselves, empowering the disempowered, disenfranchised and underprivileged to learn from texts, practices and ideas to which they have been denied access (Bazzul, 2013). In Bingham and Biesta's (2010) reading of Rancière, the role of the teacher is to "remind her students that they can already speak", as a "teacher who refuses her students the satisfaction of admitting that they are incapable of speaking" (p. 154).

In keeping with Rancière's theory that the teacher need not be a master explicator in order to teach, the literature reveals that teachers' depth of knowledge of content has little relationship to attainment levels of students (Hattie, 2009; Hattie & Yates, 2013). In other words, possessing high levels of knowledge about a topic does not necessarily enable teachers to teach it well. In fact, it is altogether possible that the more a teacher knows about a subject, the more difficult it can be for them to see another person's perspective (Hattie & Yates, 2013), which can be restrictive in terms of practice. Teachers with expert knowledge in a subject can be insensitive towards novice learners in that subject, forgetting how hard such a task can be for a beginner. Thus, an 'expert' writer, for example, may have little tolerance for creative writers at the beginning of their learning journey. This is particularly true of creative writing and creative writers such as novelists, most of whom are self-taught, and their skills may be automated and unconscious. Furthermore, in a subject like creative writing where practice varies from one writer or teacher to another, the expert may not be able to fully articulate their process and, as such, expert knowledge can become a disadvantage in a teaching context, known as the "expert blind spot effect" (Hattie & Yates, 2013, p. 13).

Rancière argues that ordinary teacher pedagogy is fundamentally unequal but tries to create knowledge and pedagogical surroundings with the intention of reducing this inequality (Skarpenes & Sæverot, 2018). However, this equality, according to Rancière, will never arrive, despite the best efforts of teachers, so equality is always a promise unfulfilled (Rancière, 2010). This does not necessarily mean that Rancière is suggesting that teachers should never try to create inequality and promote emancipation in their classroom. Instead, Rancière suggests that school should be a place where teachers try to teach people to be equal in a society that is fundamentally unequal. People can be equal because they are all speaking beings, yet this equality sets the stage for the existence of inequality (Skarpenes & Sæverot, 2018).

At the urging of Rancière, teachers of creative writing (and teachers in general) must resist thoughts that their learners can be divided into superior and inferior minds. From a teachers' perspective, in Rancière's view, the position of the teacher is not one of explication. Therefore, if teachers are not required to explicate, then their prior content knowledge is of limited use, which is to say that the value of the 'teacher as writer' can be questioned in the context of the creative writing classroom, because every teacher is equally intelligent in terms of their ability to produce, evaluate and communicate.

As previously discussed, Rancière does not offer a new pedagogy for teachers, nor does he suggest how teachers can change their pedagogy. His ideas, he insists, cannot be applied to systemic school reform (Rancière, 1991). Rancière's assertion, however, that he does not have a philosophy or pedagogical approach, seems congruent with an approach to teaching creative writing that follows the work of Biesta. Biesta (2016) believes that a teacher should use their educational virtuosity or wisdom (akin to experience) when choosing educational practices, with no set conception of outcomes or a need or desire to match input to output. In the next section, I explore the work of Gert Biesta, particularly his ideas surrounding the role of the teacher, teacher virtuosity and the importance of subjectification in education, a concept closely related to Rancière's conception of emancipation.

## Biesta's conception of the role of the teacher in the classroom

Gert Biesta has been an active participant in the discourse surrounding the role of the teacher in the classroom, challenging the concept of the teacher as 'facilitator' (Biesta, 2004, 2010b, 2016, 2017b, 2019). Biesta argues against the role of the teacher as merely a 'facilitator', believing that this is a misconception taken from a constructivist perspective. Such a perspective is based on the assumption that students are responsible for 'constructing' their own insights, understandings and knowledge and teacher cannot do this for them (Biesta, 2013b). Biesta argues that a constructivist perspective does not, however, relegate a teacher to a facilitation role. On the contrary, a teachers' role is to actively participate in student learning by challenging the student, thereby provoking critical thinking. The role of the teacher, according to Biesta, is key because the teacher has mastered educational practices and has accumulated knowledge that the student does not possess. How then, does this position sit with Rancière's concept of a classroom with a master, not a master explicator?

Biesta (2010a) argues that the methodology of Rancière's writing gives clues on what his views on emancipation might entail, particularly in relation to education, educational pedagogy, and the role of the teacher. According to Rancière, as long as equality is seen as something that has to be brought about through an intervention or activities (classroom practices for example), all that will be produced is inequality (Biesta, 2016). Despite this attestation, Biesta sees a way out of this predicament by bringing equality into "the here and now and act[ing] on the basis of the assumption of the equality of all human beings" (Biesta, 2016, p. 96) or the supposition of the equality of intelligence of all human beings. In other words, Biesta believes that teachers can bring Rancière into the classroom by assuming that all students are fundamentally equal in terms of intelligence, and provide opportunities (such as 'third things') for students to verify that intelligence.

Biesta argues against the diminishment of the teacher and their role in the classroom, and suggests that teachers should "bring[s] something radically new to the student" (Biesta, 2013b, p. 249), actively teaching students rather than acting as a 'facilitator of learning'. He wants teachers to be aware of the political work of governments with their focus on measurement and progress which keeps teachers in their place, "and domesticates and stultifies us, rather than helping us to act differently and be different" (Biesta, 2013a, p. 13). Biesta's goal then is to reset educational discourses (Carter, 2019) by focusing attention on teachers providing opportunities for students to "come into the world as singular beings" (Biesta, 2006, p. 27), rather than the pursuit and acquisition of knowledge, skills and values. Biesta argues strongly for emancipation to be the primary function of education and such an approach also seems to correspond with Rancière, where universal teaching can lead to emancipation.

Biesta is critical of the term 'learning', preferring to use education instead, and uses student instead of 'learner', partly as a reaction to what Biesta calls the 'learnification' of education, where the focus of education has changed from teaching to learning. This focus on learning has largely been a reaction to what was deemed an educational focus on the teacher and their knowledge, and a teachers' ability to transfer their knowledge to the student, rather than a focus on how the teacher can help the student learn. Such an instructional paradigm focused on teacher knowledge transferral to the student is exactly what Rancière is opposed to. Instead, what is called for in the learning paradigm is for the teacher to facilitate students' learning, taking into account the students' interests (Guilherme, Steren dos Santos, & Spagnolo, 2017). This conception is insufficient, according to Biesta, to explain the complex educational processes that take place in the

classroom (Biesta, 2013b). The role of the teacher is much greater and calls for the teacher to engage, critically analyse and organise the learning process (Biesta, 2013b, p. 449). Biesta's conception of the role of the teacher corresponds to Rancière's universal teaching, the supposition of the equality of intelligence and the role of will in education. For example, when a teacher provides a 'third thing' (such as a book, piece of prose, or a picture/visual art work), they invite the student to create something radically new, or something that did not exist previously. Such an example could be a picture of a monster or some creature, where the teacher invites the students to write from the perspective of the monster.

Biesta seems to offer a clue or a way forward to interpreting Rancière and the impasse presented by the latter's determination that the classroom and classroom practices can never facilitate emancipation. In *The Beautiful Risk of Education* (2016) where Biesta argues that "education always involves a risk", there is never "a perfect match between 'input' and 'output'", despite the efforts of policy makers and politicians to make education "strong, secure, and predictable" and "risk-free at all levels" (p. 1). By demanding that education be risk-free, policy makers and politicians seem to assume that education can only provide "total freedom or total control" (Biesta, 2016, p. 3), as embodied by the opposition between educational progressivism and educational conservatism. Biesta's ideas seem to correspond to Rancière's view that education should not be focused on the measurement of progress, because such practices can never be measured or assessed in terms of effectiveness. Policy makers and politicians, in their efforts to remove the risk from education, have attempted to commodify or quantify it instead, to make education 'strong', predictable and secure. But it is the weakness in education, offers Biesta, that leads to creativity, to unexpectedness and to 'being human'.

Education has become problematic, according to Biesta, because the process of education has now become an economic transaction, where the learner is the consumer and the teacher or educational institute is the provider (Biesta, 2004). In such a system, education becomes a commodity and the teacher or educational institute "should give the learners value for money, and perhaps even … they should operate on the principle that the customer is always right" (Biesta, 2004, p. 58). An educational system focused on inputs and outputs and value for money is entirely compromised by a need to measure progress, an idea opposed by Rancière. Biesta believes that viewing education in economic terms rather than educational terms is flawed, arguing that learners do not come to education knowing what their needs are. Instead, the process of education involves finding out what

the learner needs, and it is teachers and educational professionals who play a crucial role in that process (Biesta, 2004). In Biesta's opinion, the word 'learning' is meaningless without context, that is, content, direction and purpose (Biesta, 2013a). This context seems to align with Rancière's concept of applying the will in order to motivate intelligence – the teachers' role being to use their will in order to stimulate their students and apply or verify their intelligence.

## Biesta's three functions of educational systems

Biesta argues that there are three functions or purposes (sometimes referred to as domains) of educational systems: qualification, socialisation and subjectification (Biesta, 2006, 2015, 2016, 2017b). These functions are important to this study because it is the third function, that of subjectification in particular, itself closely aligned with Rancière's conception of emancipation, that certain creative writing practices have the ability to facilitate. Biesta conceives of the structure and interaction of these functions as a Venn diagram (see Figure 1) and makes it clear that they cannot be separated (Biesta, 2020). It is at the intersections where teachers face educational challenges and tensions.


**Figure 1**: Biesta's three functions of education (Biesta, 2017b, p. 14)

For example, there is a clear tension for teachers in upholding democratic values and trusting the democratic process and, at the same time, giving students freedom to critically review them (Sandahl, 2015). Such a tension would sit in the junction between subjectification and socialisation. Another tension is between the function of education

to create qualified individuals or citizens and yet, at the same time, to create free and independent individuals capable of autonomous thought, sitting at the junction between subjectification and qualification. These tensions are further highlighted when teachers are faced with the challenge of finding a meaningful balance between these domains, "as a focus on one domain might limit or interfere with the others" (Tone, 2020, p. 5). In other words, too much focus on one domain might stress, for example, the importance of citizenship over freedom of speech. Therefore, one of a teachers' tasks is to attempt to balance these purposes within the context of their classroom, with an eye on both "engagement with and emancipation from the world" (Biesta, 2013a, p. 5). Biesta argues that education should ideally entail a balance of all three functions, where "teachers constantly need to make judgements about how to balance the different dimensions" (Biesta, 2016, p. 129), but is, however, often only focused on qualification and socialisation, such that subjectification and emancipation are forgotten (MacAllister, 2016). Following Rancière, however, I propose that subjectification (and emancipation) is the most important function of education because such a notion allows an exploration of what it means to be human. Furthermore, there are certain creative writing practices that can enable subjectification and these practices will be explored in subsequent chapters.

### *Qualification*

Qualification is largely concerned with how education "qualifies people for doing things" (Biesta, 2016, p. 128) and how these qualifications provide students with knowledge, skills, values and dispositions to give them the ability to perform a particular activity. This could include training for the workplace, which is not only an important rationale for having state-funded education, but is also connected to economic arguments surrounding preparing students for the workforce and the contributions education makes to economic growth and development (Biesta, 2015). This is significant given that democratic governments have criticised "the apparent failure of education to provide adequate preparation for work" (Biesta, 2015, p. 40). Such a function could also be viewed as an understanding that being human means contributing to society by having an occupation or a concrete purpose. Qualification, however, requires the measurement of progress, something that is antithetical to the work of Rancière.

### *Socialisation*

Biesta's second function of education is that of socialisation. This encompasses the social aspect of a student's life and how students become part of existing traditions and ways of doing and being (Biesta, 2016), including becoming members of particular social, cultural and political orders (Biesta, 2015). This function can include, for example, school policies and procedures regarding the transmission of values and norms such as those in faith-based educational institutions (Carter, 2019), or membership of a cultural or sporting group. Socialisation, Biesta (2019) argues, is "inevitable" (p. 264), because if schools focus only on qualification and only teach knowledge and skills, they send out strong messages about life and living together, "about what matters and doesn't matter" (p. 264), which reveals that education is also concerned with "communicating and providing children and young people with access to and orientation in traditions, cultures, ways of being, doing and acting" (p. 264-5). Such a focus will often lead to education, but not to emancipation as Rancière sees it. This is because socialisation seems to incorporate consensus, rather than Rancière's dissensus, or different ways of being or thinking or saying which exist outside present ways of doing and being.

### *Subjectification*

Based on Biesta's previous work on the functions of education, Bingham and Biesta (2010) liken emancipation to subjectification, what Biesta has referred to as "coming into presence" (Biesta, 2005, p. 62). Although Biesta has stated that education should ideally entail a balance between all three functions, Biesta (2016) does stress the importance of subjectification over the other two functions (Sandahl, 2015). Freedom and independence are the central traits of subjectification, concepts that appear to be closely aligned with Rancière's emancipation. Biesta believes that education should always contribute to the processes of subjectification in order to foster more independence in thinking and acting (Biesta, 2010a, p. 41).

Subjectification is ultimately concerned with freedom and independence, with uniqueness and ways of thinking and rationality which require an individual to take a stand on an issue, and enable a 'coming into presence' (Biesta, 2004) involving the disruption of the individual's thinking in order to challenge, disturb or irritate. This 'coming into presence' is related to the German tradition of 'Bildung' or 'education of the self' which has the potential to develop students' innate powers and character (Carter, 2019). Such a concept

seems closely aligned with Rancière's dissensus and political acts which interrupt the police order and the distribution of the sensible.

Subjectification is comprised of uniqueness and how individuals are different and independent from social orders (Biesta, 2015). This uniqueness is displayed through interaction with others, with the development of opinions and ways of thinking and rationality (Carter, 2019). This focus on 'coming into presence' strengthens the individual's capacity for empathy, the development of thoughtful capacities, perseverance and open-mindedness (Carter, 2019, p. 126), traits that creative writing also has the potential to foster.

The process of subjectification does not allow the teacher to predict the outcome (Hasslöf & Malmberg, 2015). In other words, it is an inherently risk-based position, where the teacher tries out techniques or practices and the potential outcome is a complete unknown. Thus, emancipatory practices are both risky and creative and, as such, essential in the creative writing classroom. The concept of risk taking suggests that the more a teacher tries to control something, the less it is likely to happen. In other words, if teachers try to control creative writing, they suppress the very thing they are trying to foster.

> To negate or deny the risk involved in engaging in education is to miss a crucial dimension of education. To suggest that education can be and should be risk free, that learners don't run any risk by engaging in education, or that 'learning outcomes' can be known and specified in advance, is a gross misrepresentation of what education is about. (Biesta, 2004, p. 61)

Risk, freedom, subjectification and emancipation in educational practice appear to be deeply connected. Subjectification gives the student opportunities to engage in learning experiences, collaborative responses, reflection and evaluation for an emerging sense of identity. Furthermore, within this function, Biesta (2019) highlights freedom, a concept closely aligned to Rancière's emancipation:

> what is at stake here is the question of how children and young people can be supported and encouraged to exist as free and responsible subjects of their own actions, rather than as objects of the actions and desires of others. (p. 265)

Such freedom gives the student opportunities to engage in learning experiences, to engage with others and to express a point of view, allowing them to evolve into a unique being. Subjectification is concerned with the subjectivity of those whom teachers educate, and how the educational processes and practices contribute to the emergence of human subjectivity. Subjectification, in turn, is connected to notions of freedom and

independence and has an orientation towards emancipation, towards ways of doing and being that do not accept the given order but try to change the existing order so that different ways of doing and being are possible (Biesta, 2013b, 2016): “Put simply, what is at stake in the idea of subjectification is our freedom as human beings and, more specifically, our freedom to act or to refrain from action” (Biesta, 2020, p. 93).

Following the work of Murris and Verbeek (2014), who argue that the presence of subjectification should be the focus of teacher education programmes, I argue that subjectification is the function that teachers should focus on when teaching creative writing because of the alignment of creativity, freedom and educational virtuosity. Biesta has coined the term “virtuosity” in the context of education as the ability to make “wise educational judgements” (Biesta, 2016, p. 135), and he appears to align educational virtuosity towards educational wisdom or experience, suggesting that teachers rely on this virtuosity to guide their practice (rather than, for example, evidence-based practices), implying freedom. Such practices are organic and develop or evolve *in situ*. As Anae (2014) argues, “creative writing is more than just words on a page; it’s freedom” (p. 123). Creative writing as subjectification can be enacted through students’ writing expressing different viewpoints, for example, arguing a different point of view from other students in the class, or expressing thoughts that run contrary to other students. Subjectification can also be enacted through using critical literacy, where students take on the role or identity of the other, fostering empathy and compassion for others, and in this sense subjectification appears closely related to the concept of emancipation of students as humans, enabling them to have agency as citizens (Sandahl, 2015).

Creative writing is potentially a subject that can be used to strongly foster subjectification and emancipation, because such practices often begin with the supposition of the equality of intelligence. As noted earlier, Biesta argues that the functions of qualification and socialisation are usually visible in educational practices, but subjectification is often the ‘forgotten’ third function (Biesta, 2010b). This is important because, subjectification, where individuals are associated with freedom and independence, appears closely related to the concepts of creativity and creative writing, more so than, I argue, the other two functions of qualification and socialisation.

Subjectification, then, seems primarily concerned with how individuals can remain independent or free from existing orders and this, in turn, is connected to the formation of democratic subjectivity and emancipation, ideas closely related to the work of Rancière and his democratic politics (Rancière, 1991), where orders and inequalities are

interrupted, and those who are invisible and without voice become visible and heard (Oral, 2016).

## Rancière in the creative writing classroom

This chapter has introduced many concepts which will be explored through later chapters, where these ideas are applied to the data. Through the work of Rancière, I have theorised that what is often being done in the name of equality, democracy and emancipation in schools actually achieves the opposite, that is, inequality and stultification. Efforts to achieve emancipation and equality in schools, Rancière argues, will only ever reproduce inequality. However, by assuming that all human beings are equally intelligent, and verifying the assumption constantly in concrete situations, we can see "what can be done under that supposition" (Rancière, 1991, p. 46). This verifying Rancière calls politics, an act of emancipation that demonstrates the contradiction between the logic of the police order and the logic of equality, creating dissensus. Indeed, Rancière is unlikely to endorse the use of 'universal teaching' as a pedagogical method to generate emancipation. In point of fact, Rancière has always been critical of attempts to enact emancipation within the classroom, believing that true emancipation is impossible because of the fundamental inequality between those about to be emancipated and the more knowledgeable emancipator.

Thus, there is a paradox within Rancière's work, one that directly affects teachers because Rancière works to destroy any justifications for pedagogy in a system that continuously sorts students according to ability, whilst at the same time upholding a commitment to equality and social justice (Pelletier, 2012). The two goals do not seem compatible. How are teachers meant to foster equality in a system seemingly designed to continually replicate inequality? What therefore, are the implications for teachers? Rancière is not endorsing the use of universal teaching but frames it as an experiment, one that does not necessarily have to be repeated. Is this because Rancière believes that the experiment cannot be repeated or replicated in the classroom or is it because he believes that notions of emancipation and equality in the classroom are always doomed to fail? If Rancière's Jacotot was able to emancipate his students through the use of an experiment, why can other teachers not utilise other experimental and risk-infused teaching practices to emancipate their own students? Such practices provide fertile ground for the teaching of creative writing. Such risky, uncertain and experimental practices have the potential to

open up teaching and learning as a hopeful endeavour, “concerned not with knowing the world, but with creating it anew” (Pelletier, 2012, p. 115).

There are those researchers who believe, despite Rancière’s attestations to the contrary, that the school can be used as a tool to reduce inequality and promote emancipation (Skarpenes & Sæverot, 2018). In keeping with this argument, I believe that, within the school, certain teacher practices in creative writing are more efficacious for reducing inequality and promoting emancipation and creativity than others. Biesta argues that the most important function of education is that of subjectification – in itself a concept closely related to equality and emancipation – and it is these creative writing practices, the ones that have the potential to reduce inequality and foster emancipation, that are the teacher practices that should be encouraged and supported.

In an educational system, school and classroom, dissensus offers teachers an alternative to what is carefully planned for and designed to be measured. Dissensus makes subjectivation possible (Skregelid, 2020). This does, however, create a paradox: how does a teacher create dissensus in their classroom? Is planning for dissensus even possible and what are the implications for creative writing? Such questions will be explored in subsequent chapters. In the next chapter, I introduce the concepts and definitions of creativity and creative writing.

**Narrative break: University and the 'third thing'**

*There's an image up on the board before us. My first impression is that it looks like Hansel and Gretel's gingerbread house. Seated at the front of the room below the board, the teacher says nothing and begins to write. Following her example, we – the other eleven students enrolled in this year's Master of Creative Writing course – lower our heads and follow suit. I scribble away for five minutes and then sit back and read the product of my labours:*

> Cushioned on a bed of white, the house crouched in eerie silence amongst the barren landscape, a point of stillness disturbed only by the lazy snow that fluttered and drifted from grey skies. Pillars and planks of cinnamon lifted high the roof of sack coloured gingerbread, dusted with vanilla frosting. Toasted raisins and cloves dotted that white surface, like melanomas on healthy skin. Red M&M's plastered to the icing glowered, offering both invitation and warning. Fruit jubes jutted haphazardly; soft, ripe, full of juice and promise. The door, crafted from fingers of gingerbread, stood slightly ajar. Step inside, it seemed to say. Sample my delights, little one.

*We take turns reading our efforts out. Other students make comments, most of them intended to be helpful or complimentary. Occasionally, the teacher offers feedback. Other exercises follow; one where we all have to put our keys on the table, pick one that isn't ours and describe it; another where we describe an object in the classroom. More images.*

*None of the words are wrong, just different.*

# CHAPTER 4: CREATIVITY AND CREATIVE WRITING

> I distrust plot for two reasons: first, because our lives are largely plotless, ... I believe plotting and the spontaneity of real creation aren't compatible. (King, 2000, p. 164)

Stephen King's distrust raises questions about creativity, foremost amongst them whether an author is ever really in control of the creative process. The tension between structure (or control) and creativity is one notion that will be explored in this chapter, where I examine and critique the concepts of creativity and creative writing. This exploration will provide a context for the research questions about how teachers teach creative writing, and the emancipatory potential of such teaching practices.

All primary school children Aotearoa New Zealand are required to engage in creative writing and all teachers are required to teach creative writing (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 279; 2009, 2010). Such a mandate takes on significance when some scholars question whether creativity is being fostered in schools:

> The dearth of creativity across schooling is neither particularly surprising nor, perhaps to many, of great concern. We argue, however, that the particular times in which we live should cause deep and genuine concern over the parlous nature of creativity in school and the wider implications of a system that does not give value to the creative process. (P. O'Connor, 2020, p. 8)

Other scholars believe that schools kill creativity, notably Sir Ken Robinson (2006), *New York Times* bestselling author, and leader of national and international projects on creative and cultural education. His TED Talk, entitled *Do Schools Kill Creativity*, was the most watched in TED's history, viewed online over 60 million times. Berliner (2012) argues that the current education system prominent in many western societies has resulted in "creaticide" (Berliner, 2012). Given these concerns, and in the context of this thesis, the nature of creativity requires investigation. This chapter explores the key terms 'creativity' and 'creative writing', examining their meaning in their social and historical context. I begin by examining perceptions of creativity, noting that the most common definition of creativity is something that is both novel and appropriate.

## Perceptions of creativity

### *Early views of creativity*

Pringle (2013) argues that creativity has been around for millennia, and has its origins with our hunter-gatherer ancestors who "engraved patterns on chunks of ocher; fashioned

bone awls, perhaps for tailoring hide clothing; adorned themselves with strands of shimmering shell beads" (Pringle, 2013, p. 20). In Ancient Greece, there was no term for creativity or even 'create' or 'creator'. Instead, the Ancient Greeks used the word "techne" or art and art was making things that could not be found in nature (Hawkins, 2017). Plato believed that creativity (such as a poet's work) derived from the Muses (Rothenberg & Hausman, 1976, cited in J. Kaufman, 2016). Essentially, the Greeks believed that creativity came from without (the gods), rather than within (as innately human) (Hawkins, 2017). Art was undertaken by skilled practitioners who were seen as divinely inspired imitators of what they saw in nature, rather than as creators themselves (Hawkins, 2017). In medieval times, creativity seemed to be synonymous with the biblical act of creation and, as such, pre-18th century, creativity was interchangeable with the will of the gods or God. This view held sway from ancient times up until the 18th century. Over time, creativity became less synonymous with religion and more human-based, as people took ownership of ideas rather than attributing them to the gods (Hawkins, 2017).

The Enlightenment in the 18th century begat a more scientific interpretation of creativity as a human invention, one that was associated with the arts and which pushed artists to the fore (Pope, 2005). Although the term 'creativity' is ubiquitous today (for example 'create file', 'creative accounting', 'creative thinking' etc.), the first recorded use in English of the abstract noun 'creativity' is as recent as 1875 (Pope, 2005). This creativity became the basis of a new theory of mind, one in which humans were the source of ideas, in direct opposition to the previously held passive/receptive theory of the mind (Hawkins, 2017).

### *Modern views of creativity*

Over the last hundred years, this 'human' turn of creativity has led to many different views of creativity. Some scholars argue that that for something to be deemed creative, it must be different or novel and it must also be of value or "useful," "appropriate," or "effective." (S. B. Kaufman, 2014). Indeed, during the last six decades, the definition of creativity for some researchers has been that, for something to be deemed creative, it must possess two key elements: the first of these is that it must represent something new or different; the second is that it must be appropriate or useful (Beghetto & Kaufman, 2014; Hennessey, Amabile, & Mueller, 2010). Therefore, creativity = novelty x usefulness, or possibly different x appropriate. Other scholars have suggested different conceptualisations of creativity. Rhodes (1961), for example, proposed that creativity be

defined by the four Ps; that is person, process, product and press (S. B. Kaufman, 2014). Furthermore, some scholars have suggested that these four Ps should include persuasion and potential (Beghetto & Kaufman, 2014).

### *Personal traits of creativity*

Over the last few decades, the focus of scholarly research in the field of creativity has been on thought processes and personal attributes that can foster creativity, often exploring creativity as both a personality type and a process by examining the lives of eminent artists such as creative writers (J. Kaufman, 2002) and scientists, or by using controlled experiments and computer modelling (Hocking, 2018). Some scholars argue that certain personality traits can aid creativity. For instance, Galton (1869, as cited in Beghetto & Kaufman, 2014), identified three factors to account for greater or lesser creativity: capacity, zeal, and vigour. Research into other personality traits have explored openness to experience, self-belief, task motivation, knowing when to be creative and knowing when to defy the crowd (Beghetto & Kaufman, 2014).

Amabile (1985) focused on personal attributes, arguing that creativity includes knowledge, technical skills and talent, and personal skills including risk taking and self-discipline. Building upon this model, Sternberg and Lubart (as cited in J. Kaufman, 2002) attempted to quantify the key elements of creativity. They proposed a model of creativity encompassing most of the key components or elements raised by other theories of creativity; that is, motivation, intelligence, personality, knowledge, thinking styles, and environment. Furthermore, researchers have identified that creativity is a result of a combination of both individual and social factors (Amabile, 1985, 1997; Csikszentmihalyi, 1997, 2014).

### *Creativity influenced by individual and social factors*

Creativity based on individual and social factors has sometimes been viewed as being associated with the ‘arts’ and the individual (Galloway & Dunlop, 2007), embracing artistic and personal expression. Interpreted in such a way, creativity is sometimes ascribed to an artist who possesses this attribute inherently (Csikszentmihalyi, 2014). This ‘artistic’ form of creativity was set aside from economic concerns and all but ignored by government and business (Kalin, 2018). Creativity, in the artistic sense, is an inherent ability that some argue exists in everyone (W. Ings, 2017). Such creativity is perceived to be more ‘risky’ (Amabile, 1985) because production of it does not follow any specific rules or criteria in order to be assessed. This interpretation of creativity seems

emancipatory because it can be regarded as political; political in the ways it disrupts the distribution of the sensible. Such a view of creativity does not pay attention to notions of progress but, instead, provides opportunities for individuals to express themselves. Rancière views art as creativity because of its ability to encompass the concepts of uniqueness, originality, free thinking and imagination (Raymond, 2018). Using this interpretation, creativity is sometimes associated with the arts and artists, in areas such as the visual arts, music, dance and drama (Galloway & Dunlop, 2007). Creativity viewed in artistic ways does not focus on measurable outcomes, or value as perceived by others, but rather whether it has original or novel value to the individual (Raymond, 2018). In other words, creativity focused on artistic production is difficult to quantify, define or measure because it is unique to individuals – and that is where its true value lies, rather than creativity that can be measured in terms of progress, a view opposed by Rancière (1991).

### *Economic benefits of creativity*

In the mid- to late-20th century, creativity and artistic production was viewed as something that could be taught according to standardised outcomes and formulised curricula (Hocking, 2018). Since the 1980s, creativity has also been linked to economic benefits, and defined as an ability or skill that people can earn a living from and which makes a contribution to the economy (Howkins, 2005). Some scholars have labelled this type of creativity "functional" (D. H. Cropley & Cropley, 2005) and "down-to-earth" (A. Cropley, 2016). In the last decade especially, such a view has seen a burgeoning of interest in creativity across professional and educational settings (Hocking, 2018).

Today, both business and educational sectors stress the importance of creativity as crucial for economic success, as an asset or resource that can provide a competitive advantage and financial gain (Amabile, 1997; Urbancova, 2013). In the European Union, the importance of creativity is recognised for social and economic development (Gralewski, 2016); businesses all over the world recognise the power of creativity. Some of the biggest and most successful businesses practice the 20% rule where employees spend 20% of their time thinking creatively (Hicks, 2015). Further, a survey of leading executives found that creativity was the most valued and important skill employers look for (Hicks, 2015). Being creative in a business context can result in subsequent economic benefits (Harper & Kroll, 2007). In Canada, for example, more people are employed in the creative arts than in the auto industry (Whetter, 2017). In Aotearoa New Zealand, the Institute of Economic Research recently estimated that the creative sector contributed $17.5 billion

to Aotearoa New Zealand's GDP and translated into 130,000 jobs, which means more than 6% of our workforce is involved in creative activity (Moynahan, 2019).

The importance of this type of creativity and the subsequent economic potential it represents are seen, for example, in the field of creative writing, which has experienced extraordinary growth in the tertiary education sector (Fenza, 2000, 2011). In North America, creative writing programmes generate hundreds of millions of dollars of revenue each year (Fenza, 2011). Furthermore, with the emergence of web-based technology (a loosely defined and complex variety of technologies in rapid development, collectively known as Web 2.0) and the emphasis on social networking and creative production, student creativity has become a focus of educational policy and curriculum design (Zhang, 2009). A view of creativity as something with economic benefits, however, has the tendency to shift the focus away from creative processes and the individual, to the outcome or benefits that creativity can provide for everyone (Fillis, 2006).

### *'Levels' of creativity*

Csikszentmihalyi (2014) focused on the personality traits and cognitive processes of creative people. He examined the work of important creators, suggesting different levels of creativity. Csikszentmihalyi distinguished between two types of creativity: little-c creativity and Big-C Creativity (Botticchio & Vialle, 2009; Csikszentmihalyi, 2014). Big-C Creativity is genius-level (J. Kaufman, 2016) forms of creativity that have profound effects on others, which includes, for example, the works of Mozart, Jane Austen, Louis Armstrong, and Einstein. Big-C creativity lasts for generations. By way of contrast, little-c is everyday creativity which most people possess and includes activities like making birdhouses, cooking interesting meals or telling stories (J. Kaufman, 2016). J. C. Kaufman and Beghetto (2009) took this concept further, arguing that the little-c was too broad. In the context of creative writing, for example, unless you are a well-regarded novelist, you would be characterised as a little-c writer. To accommodate this distinction, J. C. Kaufman and Beghetto (2009) proposed a third category, mini-c, where the creative idea or product has personal meaning but only to the individual. They also argued for a fourth category, that of Pro-c, for professional creators, where a professional novelist, for example, although not in the same category as Big-C, is still producing quality novels. This Four C model (J. C. Kaufman & Beghetto, 2009) could represent a creativity trajectory (J. Kaufman, 2016) where a child's early writing would start out at mini-c and after nurturing and encouragement by teachers and parents, could become little-c. Later

in life, as an adult, the child becomes a professional author and is thus Pro-c (J. Kaufman, 2016) whose work could possibly aspire to be Big-C. The individual has the potential to progress from mini-c to little-c to Pro-c and then to Big-C with feedback, practice and time (Beghetto & Kaufman, 2014).

To summarise these views, over time, the genesis and source of creativity has gone from external (for example, God, or the Gods) to internal (an individual), and this internal creativity manifests in various ways. Some scholars believe that, for something to be deemed creative, it must be both novel and useful. Other scholars such as Rhodes (1961), for example, proposed that creativity be defined by the four Ps; that is person, process, product and press. Some scholars argue that a person must possess certain attributes to be creative, whilst others have suggested that creativity requires a combination of both individual and social factors, a form of creativity most often associated with the arts. Since the 1980s, creativity has also been linked to economic benefits, and defined as an ability that makes a contribution to the economy and is a skill that people can earn a living from. Finally, different levels of creativity have been proposed, differentiating creativity that has profound effects on others from everyday creativity that has personal meaning for the individual. All these conceptions of creativity appear to be situated either in the individual or as a combination of individual and social factors, and are relevant to, and can possibly be found in, the primary classroom.

### *The learning environment and creativity*

In the study of creativity, there is also interest in the effect of the learning environment. Davies et al. (2013) found that the learning environment can also affect creativity, where the learning environment encompasses not just the physical environment but also psychosocial and pedagogical features. In terms of the physical environment, their findings reveal that the flexible uses of spaces, time and materials can foster student creativity. Psychosocial and pedagogical features include the use of novel, exciting and realistic tasks, fostering student voice and control, where the teacher strikes a balance between providing structure and freedom. Beghetto and Kaufman (2014), investigating how the classroom environment plays a part in creative expression, found that an environment incorporating psychosocial and pedagogical features supports students, whilst simultaneously encouraging risk taking (Beghetto & Kaufman, 2014). This balance between structure and freedom in the production of creativity has been acknowledged by other researchers (Haught-Tromp, 2017; Johnson-Laird, 1988). Some scholars argue that this tension between freedom of choice and constraint is perceived as crucial for the

process of creativity (Hocking, 2018). In other words, an individual must have both freedom and constraint – or the perception of both those things – in order to be 'creative'.

Learning environments conducive to creativity are characterised by mutual respect between teachers and students, open dialogue and collaborative activities. Outside 'experts' (for example, authors or visual artists) and class visits to museums and art galleries can also provide rich ground for creativity (Beghetto & Kaufman, 2014). The learning environment can support students to take the intellectual risks necessary for creative expression and development (Beghetto & Kaufman, 2014). Such an environment can, however, do exactly the opposite, especially when there are externally imposed time restraints, social comparison, competition and public evaluation (Beghetto & Kaufman, 2014). Furthermore, the freedom versus constraint argument seems to be implicit in Rancière's conceptions of the master explicator. Two questions arise out of such an implication: Does a classroom where the master explicator dominates stultify creativity and emancipation? And in the classroom of the Ignorant Schoolmaster, is creativity and emancipation encouraged and enabled? Such questions are explored in Chapters 6 and 7 through the practices and stories of myself and the participants in this study.

### *Teachers' perceptions of creativity*

Teachers have various perceptions of creativity, and these perceptions can affect the way creativity manifests in the classroom. Some teachers have limited, vague or confused perceptions of creativity and creative behaviours in students (Mullet et al., 2016). These findings are not necessarily replicated by the work of Khan (2012), who found that in focus groups with in-service teachers, some teachers' responses included "creativity is one's mental ability to create something new" and "creativity is giving opinions about various issues by making use of observation". Other teachers in the study believed that "creativity involves imagination and originality" and it is artistic, unique and involves thinking (Khan, 2012, p. 62). The teacher participants in this study expressed similar views of creativity, which were:

> "different thinking or a different perspective,"
>
> "freedom of expression,"
>
> "designing and doing things differently,"
>
> "uniqueness expressed by a different voice,"
>
> "individuality and imagination,"

"a person's own original thoughts,"

"doing something differently,"

"expression and originality,"

"solving or looking at things differently … original thought."

These participant views are strongly suggestive of freedom, self-expression and individuality, and from a Rancièrean perspective could be perceived as emancipatory. These views and their effects on teaching practices will be explored further in Chapters 6 and 7. However, despite this emancipatory perspective, fostering creativity in the classroom is not as easily defined and practiced. de Souza Fleith (2000), for example, found that even though teachers were aware of the characteristics that enhance creativity in the classroom, the transference to practice was intuitive, and such intuition does not necessarily position the teacher as more knowledgeable than any other. In other words, ignorance can potentially foster creativity, and this idea will also be explored in Chapters 6 and 7.

In Mullet et al.'s (2016) research, teachers felt unprepared to foster or identify creativity within their classrooms and, in other classrooms, creativity is neglected altogether (Khan, 2012). In some classrooms, creativity is overlooked because of the rigid atmosphere of authority (Roy, 2012). Furthermore, some research suggests that there are teachers who find students with creative characteristics less desirable in class, and these teachers would rather suppress creativity in a classroom so that they can maintain order and obedience (Kettler, Lamb, Willerson, & Mullet, 2018), suggesting the control and policing of students' behaviour and ability to express themselves. The issue is complicated, however, because although teachers appear to value creativity, some teachers associate creativity with chaos (Kettler et al., 2018) and the idea that creative students can be disruptive students (Scott, 1999). As such, if teachers are concerned about disruption, then they may be less inclined to foster or encourage creativity (Beghetto & Kaufman, 2014).

Furthermore, Mullet et al. (2016) found that teachers in their study believed that creativity was an innate quality evident in some students but not in others, despite a belief that it can be taught (S. B. Kaufman, 2014) and this suggests that teachers do not always view their students as equally intelligent, a notion at odds with Rancière's supposition of the equality of intelligence. Starting from such a position, emancipation, according to Rancière, is impossible. The inequality of intelligence is seen through teachers'

perceptions of creativity as a single moment or insight, associated with intellectual ability or divergent thinking.

In sum, teachers' perceptions of creativity vary; some are vague while others associate creativity with freedom of expression. The transference of perceptions to practice is sometimes intuitive whilst other teachers feel unprepared to foster creativity, or are reluctant to foster creativity for fear of inviting chaos. Furthermore, research reveals that there are teachers who believe creativity exists in some students and not in others.

***Teaching creativity in the primary classroom***

Models of creativity, such as the Four C model, can help teachers understand and recognise that mini-c and little-c levels of creativity are most likely to be found in their classrooms (J. Kaufman, 2016; J. C. Kaufman & Beghetto, 2009). Strategies and techniques exist to foster mini-c and little-c creativity in the classroom, predominantly modelling, feedback and practice, but most other strategies are "disconnected from the academic subject matter of the classroom" (Beghetto & Kaufman, 2014, p. 4), especially in the context of improving mandated achievement test results. In any case, teaching techniques that can instantaneously foster creativity do not exist (Beghetto & Kaufman, 2014). Some scholars argue that developing creativity takes time, and that it may take up to 10 years for a creator to reach their full potential (S. Kaufman & Kaufman, 2009). This does not suggest that teachers cannot foster creativity, especially when they explore their current teaching techniques to identify what practices can and cannot develop creativity (Beghetto & Kaufman, 2014). Beghetto and Kaufman (2014) offer concrete suggestions for teacher practices that foster creativity, such as explicitly teaching for creative thinking, providing opportunities for choice and discovery, encouraging students' intrinsic motivation, establishing a creativity-supportive learning environment, and providing opportunities for students to use their imagination while learning (Beghetto & Kaufman, 2014). Such strategies are explored through the creative writing practices of teachers in Chapters 6 and 7.

One of the more concrete suggestions for teacher practice is that in order for teachers to foster creativity, they must model it themselves (Beghetto & Kaufman, 2014). If teachers view themselves and their teaching as a creative act that constantly undergoes flux and change and incorporates elements of freedom, they will then be in a position to model, encourage and support their students' risk taking and creative ideas. As Carol and Lisa, two of the participants in this study, note:

> Yeah, but I don't model a great piece of writing. I will model a piece of writing where there's aspects, where there's bits of it that are good, but then other bits that I need help with because I think that's what writing is all about as well – Carol.

> I am conscious of not modelling too much anymore. I felt when I was modelling heaps, they would copy. I understand, I'm not against it and I give them a starter and get their brains, a bit more verbally than actually writing up on the board old school, because I was just finding that even my really capable writers would start with that. Whereas now I just give them a bit more freedom, not that I tell them to copy, but I kind of leave it up to them a bit more – Lisa.

Teacher practices like modelling, feedback and providing opportunities to practice have the potential to be emancipatory, supporting Rancière's notions that the teacher need not be a master explicator, and the supposition of the equality of intelligence and these practices will be explored in Chapters 6 and 7. The school environment, culture and senior management have a part to play here, because they act as the police order, which Rancière defines as those formal systems that maintain the hierarchical social order (Rancière, 2005). Rancière argues that we can never fully escape police orders. However, that is not to say that educational structures and systems cannot be transformed through creative collaboration in order to enact human freedom. Such change requires teachers to develop emancipatory forms of pedagogy that start from the point of equality. That being said, Means (2011) argues that such change can only appear through institutional and social change and would require reconsidering pedagogical authority and the system of value in the current educational system. By providing teachers with curricular flexibility and freedom, school administrators can encourage teachers to teach for and with creativity. Furthermore, teachers can find support through collaboration with other teachers and by inviting experts into their classrooms (Beghetto & Kaufman, 2014).

In the school environment, however, creativity, accountability and assessment can be difficult to separate. In an environment where creativity is measured, there is a tendency to focus on "measurable learning outcomes, with league tables, with comparison and competition" (Biesta, 2017c, p. 11), which has produced "insurmountable hierarchies and inequalities where few could win and many would lose" (p. 11). Creativity in such an environment becomes synonymous with 'innovation' and 'efficiency' and key competencies like 'thinking' and 'problem solving', and is shunted away from notions of art (Kalin, 2018). Creativity associated with progress is also antithetical to Rancière, where "progress is the pedagogical fiction built into the fiction of the society as a whole" (Rancière, 1991, p. 119), because progress is then based on the inferiority of the student versus the superiority of the masters. Such a system will continually replicate inequality because "never will the student catch up with the master" (Rancière, 1991, p. 120).

When a classroom is focused more on artistic expression, however, creativity embraces personal expression, implying freedom and emancipation. In keeping with Biesta's (2016) view that education should not be about matching inputs to outputs (that is, learning intentions to success criteria), teaching practices that foster freedom are inherently risky because a teacher does not know how such creativity is fostered and, indeed, what type of creativity might be produced. Again, this type of creativity is in opposition to notions of the master explicator and schools as locations of progress (Rancière, 1991).

Biesta laments how the arts have been redefined as creativity and how this creativity has been redefined as a skill and, as such a 21st century skill (Biesta, 2017c), important for survival in today's world. In other words, the arts have been redefined as a skill rather than an opportunity for self-expression and an exploration of being human. This redefinition of creativity has affected and potentially limited the emancipatory potential of creative writing in the primary classroom. Such concepts have potentially devalued creativity, removing what made creativity unique and creative (Gahan, Minahan, & Glow, 2007). This devaluing potentially leads to some teachers, in effect, 'explicating' creativity in order to meet a learning outcome, where creativity is a skill to be taught because it can produce useful economic outcomes, rather than an attribute that has its own inherent value. This has implications and creates tensions within the teaching of creative writing, where teachers must consider the merits of educational risk over economic value.

In conclusion, there are practices that teachers can use to teach creativity in the primary classroom, predominantly modelling, feedback and practice. However, the pressures associated with accountability, including dictates from senior management, where creativity is focused on concepts of progress and matching learning intentions to success criteria, can potentially stultify efforts to foster creativity in the classroom. The next section explores how the concept of creativity can be applied to creative writing.

## What is creative writing?

What is creative writing? The term itself is debated in the literature (Harper & Kroll, 2007) and, as such, there exist different perceptions of creative writing amongst researchers and teachers. Scholars seem to be divided on their definitions of creative writing. Typically, however, regardless of whether it is a teacher or researcher, creative writing is perceived in one of two ways:

As narratives (stories), poetry and plays

Or

Any type of writing as long as it is creative, expressive and imaginative.

***Creative writing as narratives (stories), poetry and plays***

There is a group of scholars who believe creative writing to be narratives (stories), poetry and plays (Babayigit, 2019; Barbot et al., 2012; Harmer, 1998; Nettle, 2009). These researchers tend to discuss teaching techniques and ideas that teachers can use in the classroom when teaching creative writing (see, for example, MacLusky & Cox, 2011). Freud (1908/1991) likened creative writing to fantasy and imaginative stories, suggesting that creative writing was emotive and removed from reality: "The creative writer does the same as the child at play. He creates a world of phantasy which he takes very seriously—that is, which he invests with large amounts of emotion—while separating it sharply from reality" (p. 144).

Freud notes the importance of emotion, which is something generally agreed upon by authors: that creative writing should engage with their audience on an emotional or perhaps spiritual level. Any form of writing has this potential but Freud is careful to note that creative writing, for him, is separated from reality. Nettle (2009) defines creative writing as fictional, not, he hastens to point out, to judge or undermine, but purely because his interest lies with "imaginative literature and its authors" (p. 103):

> I take creative writing to mean the production of nonveridical (fictional) representations and narratives, and creative writers to mean people who produce such representations and narratives. By this definition, science writers and historians would not be creative writers. By this I mean no judgment about the relative merits of these different types of writing, and indeed, some of the points I make here would apply to factual writing, too. However, my primary interest is in imaginative literature and its authors. (p. 103)

With this view, creative writing can be interpreted as stories, told through narratives, poetry and plays; stories that provide opportunities to explore and create new worlds; stories that draw upon our imagination (Barbot et al., 2012). These stories are part of humanity's shared ancestry and are something that binds humans together. This ancestry manifests as origin stories, stories about where humans came from, what they did and how these stories connect them (Nettle, 2009). Because these stories are so familiar, humans understand the structure and use of stories. Humans recognise that there are certain elements that all stories need to have in order to make it entertaining: characters,

place, events, a beginning, middle, and an end, and coherence among the parts (Ferguson, 1982). Moon (2012) frames it slightly differently in '*orientation-complication-reorientation-resolution*' (p. 45).

In tertiary education and scholarship, creative writing is often defined as narratives, poetry and plays. Creative writing programmes established a foothold in universities in the 1970s with varying degrees of attachment to academic departments (especially English and literary studies) (Gupta, 2019). According to Morrison (2013), the demand for and popularity of creative writing programmes is growing, despite the fact that creative writers are finding it harder and harder to make a living from their writing. Today, most universities around the world now offer creative writing programmes. Morrison (2013) suggests that their popularity, in part, derives from the fact that those participating in a creative writing course are more likely to capture the attention of a literary agent. There is a great deal of scholarship at this level focused largely on teaching creative writing to university students (see, for example, Anderson, 2006; Bishop, 1993; Blythe, 2005; Chestek, 1986; Fenza, 2000, 2011; Harper, 2015; Harper & Kroll, 2007). This viewpoint or definition of the term creative writing seems to be guided by the popularity of the subject. Those students who enrol often have aspirations of being a novelist, short story writer, poet or playwright, with little interest in other genres or forms of writing.

***Broader definitions of creative writing***

Other definitions of creative writing provide for a broader understanding of the term. Graves (1983), for example, seems to have considered all writing as a creative act, given he did not differentiate according to genre or purpose (Frawley, 2014). Graves was also one of the first developers and proponents of the process model of writing, a student-centred model in which writing is viewed as a series of stages (prewriting, drafting, revising, editing and publishing), providing more structure to the writing process (see Chapter 5). Such a structured process, even though it embraced a broader conception of creative writing, does not, paradoxically, suggest increased creativity, possibly because of this control.

Some researchers consider that all writing could be deemed 'creative' (Martin et al., 2018) because writing has been created and filtered by human interactions with the world. Harper (2015), for example, defines creative writing as:

> the action of writing creatively, informed by the human imagination and the creative and critical understanding of the creative writer, influenced by personal history and by culture, guided by forms and types of individual

> knowledge that so often do not stay within the disciplinary boundaries of colleges or universities or schools as they have been defined in the late modern period. (p. 1)

This definition of creative writing highlights the importance of history and culture, and that creative writing is not produced in a vacuum and seeks to break boundaries. Others note the power that creative writing has to bring something new into the world:

> any writing, from the published instructions for using a power drill to the most esoteric literary poetry, uses the raw materials of language, experience, knowledge, textual sources and the author's own ideas and imaginings to bring something into existence that did not exist before. In other words, all writing is creative writing. (McVey, 2008, p. 289)

Such a conception of creative writing suggests greater freedom for both student and teacher, where the position of the more knowledgeable expert teacher is not necessarily required because of the hazy nature of writing. Such a position suggests that the teacher is relinquishing their authority, resisting the need to fill their students up with knowledge. Any piece of writing is 'creative' given that it was subjected to the act of creation, and this creation did not exist in a vacuum.

Myers (1993) argues that creative writing in the United States arose during the period 1880 to 1940 as a deliberate effort to reform the study of literature, and defines it as, "the name that might be given to any effort that undertakes to restore the idea of literature as an integrated discipline of thought and activity, of textual study and practical technique" (Myers, 1993, p. 279). Creative writing, argues Myers, was never a scheme for turning out creative writers but an "institutional arrangement for treating literature as if it was a continuous experience – rather than a mere corpus of knowledge – as if it were a living thing, as if people intended to write more of it" (Myers, 1993, p. 279). The goal of such an arrangement was to produce human beings, not poets.

Finally, Anae (2014) has the view that autoethnography is also creative writing, arguing that such writing should be taught at pre-service institutions to extend the scholarship around "creative writing as freedom, education as exploration" (p. 135) and that pre-service teachers should tap into their own stories when writing creatively.

### *Teacher perceptions of creative writing*

In terms of teachers' perceptions of creative writing, in Pakistan for example, teachers thought "creative writing is an expression of personal feelings, thoughts and experiences" (Khan, 2012, p. 62). Other teachers thought that it involved originality and novelty and

"encourages discussion of social problems prevalent in society" (p. 63). Regardless of definition, all the participants Khan's study believed that creativity and creative writing had a close affinity, a view similar to that of the teacher participants in this study, who, as introduced in Chapter 1, viewed creative writing as:

> "an opportunity to view the world in different ways … capturing thoughts and feelings over time,"
>
> "no limits,"
>
> "thinking outside the box,"
>
> "an individual's voice,"
>
> "original thoughts unique to the individual,"
>
> "personal voice expressing a different perspective,"
>
> "an expressive and creative outlet."

In some Australian high schools, research suggests that creative writing is characterised by being 'imaginative', suggesting stories or narratives, and that teachers view it as such, arguing that:

> for most teachers, creative writing is seen as the most risky of the three writing styles (expository, persuasive and imaginative), in that it either tends to let students produce extremely successful compositions, or the sorts of poor quality compositions that either do not meet the assessment criteria, or are simplistic retellings of the text. (Frawley, 2014, p. 20)

Some teachers in the same study admitted that there are some styles of writing that are 'hybrid' (Frawley, 2014, p. 22), noting that there are elements of exposition and persuasion in any creative piece, and that expository and persuasive pieces also required creativity. It also appears that other teachers prefer to keep to a less prescriptive concept or idea of creative writing for fear of crushing their students' creativity (Frawley, 2014; Moon, 2012). In other words, these teachers do not provide restrictive definitions of the concept of creative writing, so that their students are free to explore technique and voices. This potentially less prescriptive teacher view that all writing is creative and that "all classroom writing has a significant imaginative component" (Misson, 2004, p. 37) is shared by others:

> Paradoxically for many students, the kind of writing that is not labelled 'imaginative' or 'creative' takes a much greater feat of imagination and creativity than the writing we usually label that way. Imagining themselves as someone who would actually have the passion to write a Letter to the Editor

> on the Government's handling of refugees, or as someone who would be interested enough in a book (or paid enough) to write a review of it is often calling on much more creativity than a personal piece on their favourite possession or a narrative about a haunted house. (Misson, 2004, p. 37)

In sum, there appear to be valid arguments for creative writing to be both narratives (stories, poetry and plays) and to also be any type of expressive writing in any genre. Does the term require clarity? Does the way it is defined prescribe the way it is taught and, if it is not clearly defined, does that serve to free it from any restrictions? The term 'creative' seems to imply lack of restrictions, and therefore freedom and emancipation.

***Implications for teaching creativity and creative writing***

Creativity is a large and complex subject, explored by scholars from many different schools. As such, there is a great deal of scholarship surrounding the subject. There is a view that for something to be deemed creative it must be both novel and useful, where others define creativity by the four Ps (person, process, product and press). Some scholars argue that a person must possess certain attributes to be creative, whilst others have suggested that creativity requires a combination of both individual and social factors, a form of creativity most often associated with the arts. Creativity has also been linked to economic benefits and a skill that people can earn a living from. Finally, different levels of creativity have been proposed, where everyday creativity is that which has personal meaning for the individual, a level of creativity possibly most relevant to the context of the primary classroom.

There are other factors that affect creativity in the classroom. Learning environments, for example, are conducive to creativity when they are characterised by mutual respect between teachers and students, open dialogue and collaborative activities. Some learning environments balance structure (control) and freedom, something that has been acknowledged by researchers as vital to the production of creativity. Such characteristics are explored through the creative writing practices discussed in Chapters 6 and 7. Teacher perceptions also play a part in how creativity is taught. Teachers have varied and sometimes limited or vague perceptions of creativity which are often associated with 'imagination' and 'originality'. Some teachers do not foster creativity for fear of losing 'control' within the classroom, associating 'chaos' with creativity. There are also some tensions between those teachers who believe that creativity is innate and those who believe it can be taught.

Perceptions of creative writing differ as well. There are some teachers who view creative writing as narratives (stories, poetry and plays) and then there are those teachers who view any form of writing ‘creative’ as long as it is expressive. Such views and perceptions can, in effect, make the teaching of creative writing both challenging and risky, and also steer teachers away from a role as ‘master explicator’ (Rancière, 1991), where teachers can foster emancipation within their classrooms. Although different views and perceptions of creativity and creative writing exist, those perceptions that are less restrictive and more embracing of variety suggest that the teacher can position themselves as no more knowledgeable than the students, in order to teach or foster creative writing within their classrooms.

Using these definitions, the next chapter traces the history of primary creative writing within the Aotearoa New Zealand social and political context, exploring the current practice of creative writing, and examining how and why teachers learn to teach creative writing.

**Narrative break: The writer writes**

*I sit at the keyboard, fingers poised, waiting for inspiration to strike. When it doesn't, I let out a long sigh and lower my hands, slumping back into my chair. Despondent, I distract myself with thoughts of the classroom, mentally ticking off things that need to be done by Monday. I wonder what my students would think of my inaction, of my lack of inspiration at the moment. I picture the classroom and my students in my head and put myself in their position, trying to imagine what it would be like to be them, to think like them. I wonder what they have learnt from me about writing. I'm sure it's not very much because I don't think I know enough about my writing process in order to explain it. What motivates me. How to start. How best to form a sentence, a paragraph, a chapter. There doesn't seem to be a right or wrong way. There's not some magic formula that can be transferred from the teacher to the student in a direct linear fashion. Creative writing doesn't seem to work like that. What might work for me, might not work for another.*

*I think back to the lessons I've learned about writing over the years. What some of my teachers have taught me, or not taught me. I think about all the books I've read, how they have taught me more about writing than any teacher. I think of the teachers that encouraged or urged me to read, the ones that suggested certain authors. I think of the way those authors have written and how it has inspired me.*

*I start writing, not sure where I'm going with it but it feels good to get something down – anything. This piece might not go anywhere but it hardly matters and I don't much care. I'll learn from it, even if I have to discard it, and then perhaps next time, I'll do something a little differently.*

# CHAPTER 5: TEACHING CREATIVE WRITING IN THE PRIMARY CLASSROOM

> The teacher of writing brings the children's lives into the classroom and helps them tap into their experiences, finding their significance. Bringing their lives into the classroom implies that we must know, acknowledge, and value the child totally: the cultures and cultural perspectives of home and school working in partnership. We will help children tap into their own lives and experiences by telling our own stories. Shared stories, wonderings, observations, opinions and responses need to be at the heart of writing times. We will be developing trust and sincerity as we exchange stories orally and will also be modelling how these stories can be crafted into writing. (Loane, 2016, p. 4)

The above quote from Gail Loane, a specialist teacher and provider of creative writing professional learning and development (PLD) in the primary classroom, illustrates how deceptively simple the teaching of creative writing can be: that is, to share stories and by doing so, encourage students to share their own.

One of the participants in this study, Mia, also notes the importance of students sharing their stories:

> One of the kids had won a prize where a helicopter landed on the school field, so we all went out to watch it and then when they went back, one of the kids wrote a story about how the helicopter landed on the field and the leaves lifted. This was a Year 1. … just such a beautiful piece of writing from a five-year-old. The helicopter landed on the field and the leaves lifted. It was just the whole focus was not on capital letters and full stops.

The reality of teaching creative writing in the primary classroom can sometimes be different than these accounts suggest, however. In this chapter, I explore the complexity of teaching creative writing in the primary classroom, examining how teachers learn to teach creative writing and the argument for why it should be taught. Then, a history of primary creative writing is provided, tracing the development of creative writing within both social and political contexts, before finishing with a section on current issues in the teaching of creative writing.

## Why should teachers teach creative writing in the primary classroom?

Fenza (2011) argues that, through new media, the 21st century has enabled humans to be more verbose than ever before. Social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram enable people to easily share their ideas, stories and opinions. Never before has creative writing been on display to so many, people spilling words on various matters in

various genres via more media to more commentators (Fenza, 2011). Without the ability or skills to take part in creative writing, does that limit participation in society or what it means to be human? Perhaps the importance of creative writing is illustrated by its ability to produce something 'magical', something that would not exist otherwise, the end result sometimes the holy grail of all creative writing, 'the book':

> What an astonishing thing a book is. It's a flat object made from a tree with flexible parts on which are imprinted lots of funny dark squiggles. But one glance at it and you're inside the mind of another person, maybe someone dead for thousands of years. Across the millennia an author is speaking clearly and silently inside your head, directly to you. Writing is perhaps the greatest of human inventions, binding together people who never knew each other, citizens of distant epochs. Books break the shackles of time. A book is proof that humans are capable of working magic. (Sagan, Druyan, Soter, & Malone, 2000, p. 63).

Do the reasons above provide the justifications for learning to write creatively? Perhaps, but what other reasons are there to teach creative writing in the primary classroom? Introducing students to creative writing at an early age can help them gain experience and therefore more confidence and feelings of self-efficacy when expressing themselves. The ability to write creatively can help learners in other curriculum areas (Babayigit, 2019; Martin, 2008; Tok & Kandemir, 2015), support writing development in general (Barbot et al., 2012) and increase enthusiasm and engagement (Bernardes & Menzies, 2017). Barbot et al. (2012) argue that because teaching and learning creative writing draws upon several creative processes as well as imagination, it may support all aspects (that is, other types of writing) of writing development. It can also foster skill development, help children explore and understand the value of writing, and improve reading and writing skills. Furthermore, the skills of creative writing can help enliven other forms of factual writing, imbuing it with personal meaning (Barbot et al., 2012), making the reading experience more enjoyable and engaging for the reader.

Creative writing can also help students develop empathy; that is, students who consider the needs and thoughts of others. Exploring the personalities of creative writers, Piirto (2009) discovered that "writers, indeed any artists, seem to feel for others' struggles … writers often feel for the rest of the world; they take on the troubles of the rest of the world" (p. 17) In the current climate of uncertainty and apprehension spawned by the COVID-19 virus where, worldwide, many thousands have lost their lives and millions their jobs, being creative and empathetic would seem to be appropriate traits to foster in

the classroom, and creative writing could be a natural reaction to difficult times in order for teachers and students to maintain a sense of wellbeing.

There are other benefits associated with creative writing. Elements contained within stories are formative for young students' development and their own sense of identity, and it is important for them to be able to both listen to the stories of others and tell their own. Stories help us to understand our place in the world (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000); they provide opportunities for imagination and creativity, for individuals to imagine themselves very differently in very different contexts and, as such, help to construct reality (J. Gilbert, Hipkins, & Cooper, 2005). We recognise that there are certain elements that a 'story' seems to have in order to make it entertaining and these stories "foster inventiveness, originality, people skills and empathy with others, and that curious ability to 'think things up' so important to our rapidly changing society" (Weldon, 2009, p. 170).

Creative writing is an act of creativity, self-expression and poetic language. Children are by nature poetic and experiment with language. Some researchers argue that educators should not stifle this experimentation because it limits the educational possibilities for the student (J. Frank, 2012). If educators give students opportunities to write creatively, they can then potentially take ownership of their learning and invest in it rather than inherit it from an adult (J. Frank, 2012), promoting notions of freedom rather than learning from a more knowledgeable and powerful 'other'. Creative writing has other beneficial effects on personal development and well-being. Metaphors, for example, enable creative writers to express difficult emotions or concepts and, through creative writing, students can write stories based on their own personal experiences to explore feelings (Martin et al., 2018); creative writing, in effect, provides new ways of communicating thoughts

Some believe that creative writing should be taught because it says things that other forms of writing cannot. In reference to science fiction, author Iain M. Banks believes, that for him, science fiction "remains the single most socially important genre there is" (as cited in Beauchamp, 2013, para. 14) because it gives him opportunities to make social commentaries and observations that he would not otherwise feel comfortable doing in other forums or genres. Such writing can offer different ways of being and doing, and in defiance of the police, opportunities to be heard that might not be afforded otherwise. Such writing was observed by one of the teacher participants, Regina:

> It helps them connect with their own personal self and their personal experiences. … It's a meditation. It's a meditative class. Beautiful writings. The poetry … one girl, she is a Samoan girl, she is hardly 8 years old and this form of creative writing where

> we talk about memoirs and poetry, she has gone back and she has actually reflected on her ancestors who have passed away and she has written about that. What legacy they have left behind.

Furthermore, research has also indicated that young (primary level) creative writers enjoy the writing process and have strong feelings of self-efficacy (Pajares et al., 2006) which can be inspirational for primary students and has the potential to inspire others:

> Success in writing will then be judged not by whether they accurately represent their thoughts or resist dominant discourses but whether the words they create inspire themselves and those around them to experience the joy of Becoming in the midst of their own writing. (Nathan, 2003, p. 273)

Tompkins (1982) suggested seven reasons as to why children should write creatively: to entertain; to foster artistic expression; to explore the functions and values of writing; to stimulate imagination; to clarify thinking; to search for identity; and to learn to read and write. In addition, creative writing develops children's cognitive and communication skills (Tompkins, 1982). These reasons to write are seemingly embodied by Biesta's (2016) three functions of education: qualification, socialisation, and subjectification. The notion that creative writing can potentially fulfil all three functions of education serves as an apparent justification for the teaching of it. That is, to develop skills in order to get a job (for instance, a copywriter in an advertising firm), to learn to communicate effectively with others (interact with others), and to develop one's own voice and ability to express concepts of self. Furthermore, creative writing is associated with freedom of thought and therefore subjectification and emancipation, which I, along Rancière and Biesta, argue are the most important functions of education.

## How do teachers learn how to teach creative writing?

What is known about how teachers learn to teach creative writing seems to indicate that teachers use an eclectic mix of practices to teach creative writing, practices derived from a number of sources. They can learn through their own practice (Kagan, 1992) and by taking part in teacher research based on their own practice, such as 'action research' (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993). Teachers can also learn by interacting with other teachers, such as mentor teachers and more experienced colleagues (Feiman-Nemser & Parker, 1993). Teachers learn how to teach *writing* from undertaking professional development (PLD, training courses, staff meetings, etc.) (Education Review Office [ERO], 2019; Parr & Jesson, 2016). Other sources of learning include professional associations (for example, the New Zealand Literacy Association), and enrolling in

graduate and post-graduate courses. Such sources can provide general and sometimes specific pedagogy in relation to creative writing.

One of the foremost ways for teachers to grow their pedagogy is to involve themselves in PLD (Darling-Hammond, Hyler, & Gardner, 2017). Other than myself, however, there are few other professional development providers offering guidance to primary teachers specifically in the teaching of creative writing within the Aotearoa New Zealand context. There are some specific resources to help teachers teach creative writing, but they are not particularly numerous and because they have not been centrally mandated by the MoE, teachers are free to choose whatever strategy they like. In other words, there is 'no formula' as to how teachers teach creative writing and no mandated teacher guidelines that must be adhered to, other than the stipulation that it must be taught. Because there is no prescribed formula in regard to 'good' or 'best' practice for teachers of creative writing, creative writing offers different ways of being and doing; in many primary classrooms there is no 'police order' explicitly telling teachers how they should teach creative writing, determining what is acceptable and what is not. This creates a tension whereby teachers' creative writing practice is likely to be variable and inconsistent, whilst simultaneously providing teachers with a great deal of freedom – freedom that they are unlikely to experience in the teaching of other subjects. With other curriculum subjects at the primary level, for example, reading and mathematics, there are established 'ways' of teaching, practices often backed up by academic literature which many teachers adhere to. In reading, most teachers utilise 'guided reading', where the teacher works with a small group of students with the same instructional needs, focusing on decoding, making meaning, and thinking critically (Gadd & Thompson, 2006). Such 'prescribed' practices do not generally exist for teaching creative writing.

In general, teachers do not learn to teach creative writing by reading evidence-based discourses on creative writing. This is because many creative writing practices are not based on evidence-based discourse since, by and large, such evidence does not exist. There is some evidence-based research on writers' workshops, freewriting, using the process model, collaborative writing, and the use of technology (Graham & Perin, 2007) but that research usually targets adolescents, not primary age children, with strategies often too advanced for the novice writer (see, for example, Myhill, 2013, and her discussion on poetry teaching and learning). But, if such evidence did exist, should teachers use it? Arguments that such evidence should replace and overrule professional

judgement have the potential to disempower teachers, veering towards a culture of educational positivism (Biesta, 2016).

In addition, teachers do not feel prepared to teach writing after their ITE (Graham et al., 2014). The teaching of reading strategies at ITE institutions seems to be prioritised, supported by some research indicating that teachers often feel prepared to teach reading after their ITE (Hoffman et al., 2005). Because most teachers are not taught how to teach creative writing by their ITE provider, this absence of prescribed practices in teaching creative writing positions teachers as potentially more open to emancipatory approaches.

Teachers partly form their knowledge and beliefs in classrooms from their own experiences as students (Mansfield & Volet, 2010) and their own writing experiences (Cremin, 2006). For example, some teachers were found to have misconceptions about what composition looked like which were not connected to what they learned during their pre-service teacher education (Yeo, 2007). Instead, their beliefs stemmed from their own childhood experiences of writing and their identities and interests as a writer were shaped by influential others such as teachers (Dyson, 2009). In other words, the writing experiences they had as students themselves influence how teachers perceive and approach the teaching of writing. Teachers enter the teaching profession with personal history-based beliefs about teaching and learning, beliefs based on lived experiences including educational experiences and life experiences from, for example, previous careers and parenting (Mansfield & Volet, 2010). Teachers' knowledge of creative writing in general seems to be derived from their own educational experiences at primary and secondary schools, and many teachers have not written creatively themselves since those times.

From my perspective, teacher experiences play a large part in the shaping of their creative writing practice: teachers teach writing, in part, because of their formative experiences both within and without the classroom. Such experiences can form the basis for stories with which the teacher can then model for their students. Such storytelling has been suggested as an alternative approach to teaching at the primary level (Egan, 1989), but while such stories can be both illuminating and entertaining, they do not necessarily support the position that the teacher knows how to teach writing. This perspective is one that can be taken in opposition to Jacotot's proposition that teachers can teach what they do not know and that learning requires no explanations (Rancière, 1991).

In summary, most teachers do not learn how to teach creative writing from their ITE and most have not written creatively since they themselves were at primary school. Creative writing practices do not appear to be derived from evidence-based research either. From my experiences and the existing research, learning to teach creative writing is developed through PLD, observations of other teachers, online resources and their own writing and teaching experiences. In other words, teachers are largely self-taught in creative writing and have not learnt at the feet of a 'master explicator'. This has implications for the teaching of creative writing, because teachers are less likely to use explication to teach when they themselves have not learnt in such a manner. Because there is almost no 'evidence-based' research or police order controlling how it is taught, teachers are free to try whatever creative writing techniques they like, especially ones that require no or little explication, positioning the teacher as 'ignorant' and thus, following Rancière, leading to emancipation.

## History of primary creative writing teaching in Aotearoa New Zealand

This next section traces the history and development of creative writing in Aotearoa New Zealand, beginning with a skills-based approach, where the purpose was to communicate, and moving on to an expressive approach which was linked with creativity. The process and genre approaches to writing are also discussed in relation to their emergence in the political context of the 1980s.

### *Early beginnings of creative writing in Aotearoa New Zealand*

For over 100 years there has been a tension between educational practitioners who viewed writing as communication and those who viewed writing as expression (Brand, 1980), the latter view being associated with creativity. In Aotearoa New Zealand and elsewhere, communication was the early focus for writing using a skills-based model which had its roots in the subject-centred approach to teaching English that appeared at the end of the First World War (MacLusky & Cox, 2011). Perfectly formed handwriting was the cornerstone and focus of this as pupils spent hours a day copying model texts rather than actually composing texts themselves. Spelling, grammar and sentence structure were also explicitly taught, the idea being to get the mechanics right first, then copy model texts before finally attempting to write a text. Students were also forced to memorise long lists of spelling words (Maddox & Feng, 2013). The mechanics of writing and the ability to communicate was privileged over creativity and creative writing, the goal of education being to teach 'useful' skills rather than to produce poets or novelists (MacLusky & Cox,

2011; Myers, 1993). However, the skills-based model, whilst requiring some explication, did not require the teacher to have any knowledge whatsoever of the writing process and, as such, the teacher was effectively ignorant and teaching what they did not know. In effect, teachers at this time were adhering to some of the tenets of Rancière's future emancipatory philosophy.

Internationally, creativity and self-expression became a focus for education and educationalists in the 1930s and 40s, influenced by progressivism which was characterised by a child- and experience-centred orientation, fostering creativity and shaping children's personalities through creative endeavours. This child-centred approach to teaching fostered a belief that every person was capable of being an artist, a progressive education approach characterised by children learning by doing and interacting socially with teachers and with each other (D. J. Simpson & Stack, 2010). Such an approach was sometimes referred to as an 'open' view and was a reaction against the "technicization" of education (Faigley, 1986), where writing emphasised structure and organisation at the expense of composition and content, meaning and purpose (Cremin, 2006). Progressive education was introduced to the Aotearoa New Zealand schooling system in 1937 and by 1944, its ideas were fully embedded within educational policy and practice (Couch, 2012). In Aotearoa New Zealand, the New Education Fellowship (NEF) advocated schooling which was "liberal, holistic and democratic and valued self-expression, dialogue and creativity" (Alcorn, 1999, p. 80, as cited in Mutch, 2013, p. 103).

The progressive or expressive view was child- rather than teacher-centred and became a focus on writing as creativity and self-expression. The child-centred approach focused on a more open or progressive ideology in education than the skills-based model of teaching English. Such an approach was in keeping with ideals of freedom and self-expression which were prevalent in the social context during the 1930s and 40s (MacLusky & Cox, 2011). In this era, teachers created environments where students could freely disclose their feelings, environments highly conducive to creative writing where students could, using words, share their self-expression (Brand, 1980). Teachers were encouraged to be experimental and risk taking in their teaching practice, taking "pedagogical risks", applying progressive practices within their classes by "trial and error" (Couch, 2012, p. 63). However, the progressive approach, as discussed in Chapter 3, is problematic according to Rancière's philosophy, as it sometimes positions the student as less knowledgeable than the teacher. Indeed, Rancière refers to progressive ideas of progress

as “the pedagogical fiction” because they represent inequality and inferiority as a ‘retard’ in a student’s development (Rancière, 1991, p. 119), where the student will be inferior and less knowledgeable than the teacher.

After the election of the first Labour government in 1935, a broader primary school curriculum was developed under the guidance of Clarence Beeby, who stated that all Aotearoa New Zealand children, regardless of academic ability, status, or location, would have access to free education. Embracing the theories of progressive education, primary schools were expected to offer rich and varied courses to cater for the various learning needs of their students (Couch, 2012). Despite the outbreak of WWII in 1939, and the subsequent tightening of government purse strings, the national emphasis on education was maintained and continued to reform. Beeby was focused on keeping momentum going in educational reforms that had begun before the outbreak of war. Curriculum areas and content were revised in a rolling fashion to avoid overloading teachers with untested and rapid changes (Couch, 2012).

At this time, Aotearoa New Zealand had also taken a certain pride in doing things its own way, trying to be innovative and to take risks. Such progressive practice is synonymous with influential teachers such as Sylvia Ashton Warner and Marie Clay (Dowden, 2011; Griffiths & Hamer, 1992; Mutch, 2013), the former with her use of ‘key vocabulary’ and the latter ‘reading recovery’, both of which were groundbreaking and sometimes controversal practices. Although practitioners such as Warner and Clay were not focused in particular on the teaching and learning of creative writing, they shared important lessons for other teachers – that it was okay to take risks, to innovate and to inspire creativity.

But it was not just innovative, risk-taking teachers leading the way in creative practice. In the 1940s, *The School Journal*, a literacy resource for teachers produced by the then Department of Education, changed its focus entirely to high-quality fiction, providing opportunities for some of Aotearoa New Zealand’s most prominent writers at the time, including James K. Baxter, Maurice Duggan and Louis Johnson, showcasing Aotearoa New Zealand creativity (Stafford, 2013). Such material provided inspirational reading material for 7- to 13-year-olds, relevant to their lives and replete with postcolonial voices. In mid-20th century Aotearoa New Zealand, most imported and consumed literature came from Britain and this new focus on Aotearoa New Zealand authors marked a new flowering of local intellect and imagination, of cultural nationalism, where a growing sense of national pride was beginning to emerge, providing wider outlets for creative

writing, where writers tried to express what it meant to be a Aotearoa New Zealander, thus generating debates over identity and politics (Dowden, 2011; Mercer, 2010; Stafford, 2013). Writing around the world, including in Aotearoa New Zealand, began to question assumptions about the universal features of language, epistemologies and value systems, in order to accommodate the differences in cultural traditions and to compare features shared across those traditions (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2002). This, in turn, encouraged primary teachers to question traditional practices and to become 'risk takers', exploring different techniques in the teaching of creative writing, the war having aroused a "deep sense of responsibility towards the young" (Couch, 2012, p. 69). Furthermore, the influence of early childhood education and the concepts of the 'play agenda' or 'free play' (Stover, 2016) were being felt in the primary education sector, and such concepts embodied freedom. This progressive ideal irrevocably shaped the development of Aotearoa New Zealand's education system, the on-going division between traditionalist and progressivist education, and arguably the nation itself (Couch, 2012).

***Creative writing post-1950s***

In the 1950s, the desire for useful results rather than self-expression prevailed in the United States when, in 1957, Soviet engineers launched the first artificial space satellite, Sputnik I. The Soviets were perceived to be winning the space race and in the United States, explanations were sought:

> This event led to the search for an explanation of how it was possible for US technology to have been defeated. An explanation was found in J. P. Guilford's seminal address to the American Psychological Association … American engineers lacked creativity. (A. Cropley, 2016, p. 242)

The solution: citizens needed to be more creative in order to produce more divergent thinking. Lack of creativity began to be regarded in America as a psychological phenomenon. The relevance of this lack went "beyond fine art, madness, being a messenger of the gods, and uselessness, to encompass engineering and indeed, education in general" (A. Cropley, 2016, p. 242). To resolve this lack of creativity, the National Defense Education Act called for more creativity in schools which set the stage for intense interest in the topic around the world (A. J. Cropley, 2001).

At around the same time, the debate between communicative writing and expressive writing finally came to a head at the Dartmouth (UK) conference of 1966, where educators continued to question what actually constituted 'English' as a school subject (MacLusky & Cox, 2011). In America, creativity was viewed as just one aspect of the

English programme. The subject ‘English’ in American education was about social responsibility and writing was practical and communicative, represented largely by transactional genres or text types. This was in contrast to the British personal growth paradigm, which stressed the importance of psychological growth in writing that should be expressive and poetic (Brand, 1980). By the end of the conference, a study group comprised of individuals from both sides of the debate endorsed a personal growth paradigm for creative writing as an essential part of the English curriculum (Brand, 1980).

In Aotearoa New Zealand, the national supervisor of the arts and craft after World War II, Gordon Tovey, established a bicultural and arts-centred education system from 1946, where arts and science were taught creatively and creative writing thrived. Drawing on progressive ideals of child-centred education, Tovey’s approach followed the work of Canadian educator Arthur Lismer, who believed that children were naturally endowed with a capacity for creativity, which should be nurtured and fostered (Bell, 2010). Arts specialists worked to train other teachers, which inspired post-war artists such as Colin McCahon and Ralph Hotere. Art education received rich institutional support including teacher preservice training and resource support, as well as the training of over 250 primary art specialist teachers between 1938 and 1966 (Bell, 2010). The benefits of such a focus on creativity began to emerge in the late 1960s, with the appearance of a ‘critical mass’ of critical and creative young people (Horrocks, 2016).

### *Creative writing in the 1980s*

The influence of the 1966 Dartmouth conference was felt in Aotearoa New Zealand. The personal growth model of writing focused on its ability to develop students’ imaginative and aesthetic life and was strongly tied to the notion of process writing that became popular in the 1980s (Frawley, 2014). The personal growth model of writing “eschew[ing] formal instruction in favour of a process methodology” (Moon, 2012, p. 40). Process writing gave student-centred values of personal growth a pedagogical focus, shaping text from personal and expressive beginnings (Moon, 2012) and then dividing the process into several stages of writing that Donald Graves (1983) treated as a creative or expressive act. In this, writing was seen as a process or stages that could be broken down into their individual components, an approach that both myself and the participants in this study have used or still use today. Such a process required teachers to possess more knowledge about the writing process than they had previously. Also in the 1980s, the Writer’s Workshop was born, a creative writing method used at tertiary level, and a

creative writing practice also adopted by many teachers in the primary classroom (Berninger & Hidi, 2006).

Teachers of the process approach believed that their students learnt to "write by writing" (Moon, 2012, p. 41), rejecting what was deemed 'artificial' practice. Writing began with the writer genuinely having something to say and, from this need to express themselves, the motivation to shape the writing for appropriate purposes and audience. The process approach had strong associations with the conception of the author as creator. Advocates referenced Vygotsky's psycholinguistic theory, a model which stressed the importance of social language, where the child gathered resources in order to construct more egocentric forms (Moon, 2012). Teachers using the process approach encouraged children to be writers, demonstrating that children could write before they had perfected the skills of handwriting, grammar and spelling (MacLusky & Cox, 2011). Scholars began to examine writing as not a product or text, but as a cognitive process (Parr, 2010), a step-by-step guide to creating a text. Flower and Hayes (1981) argued that writing was not a simple linear process but made up of a fluid and interchangeable sequence of prewriting, drafting, revising, editing and publishing (see Figure 2).

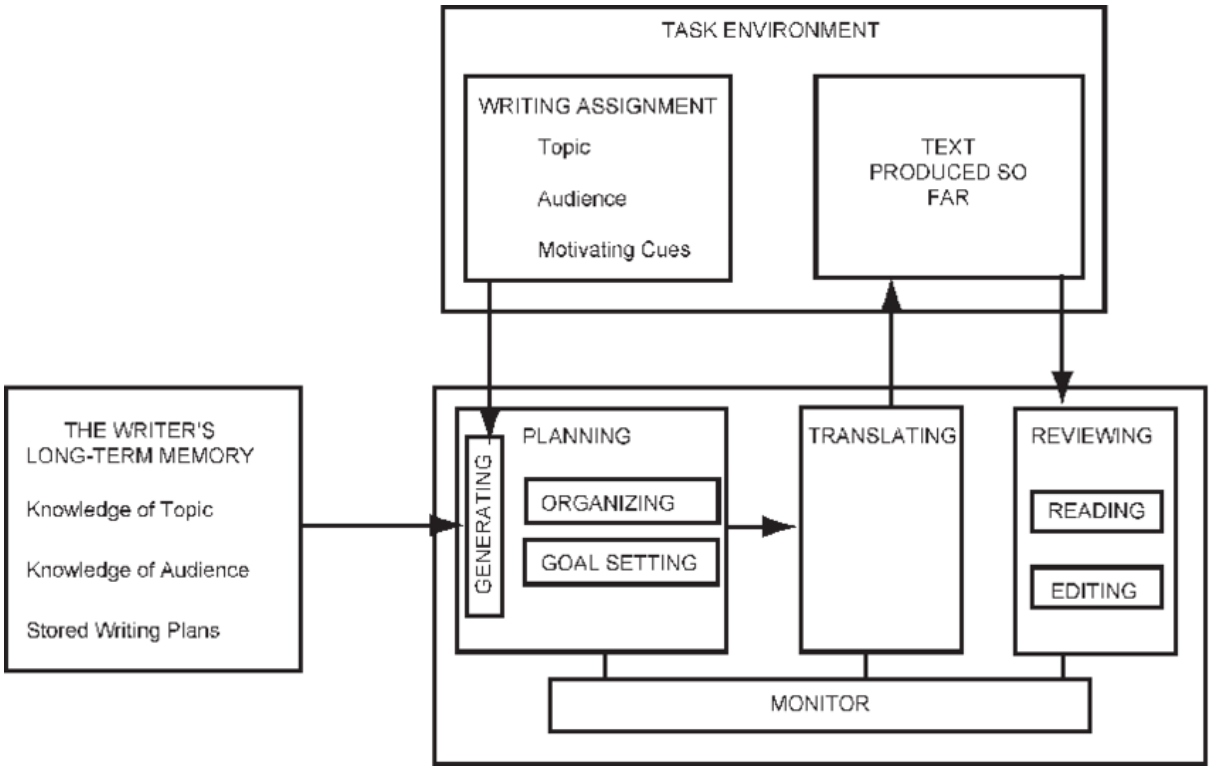


**Figure 2:** Flowers and Hayes' (1981) process model of writing

Donald Graves and the process model had a strong influence on creative writing in Aotearoa New Zealand. Graves visited Aotearoa New Zealand during the 1980s (Griffiths & Hamer, 1992), inspiring teachers who became aware that writing was about developing children as communicators of thoughts and feelings across the curriculum for a variety of purposes. Writing began to be viewed as a vehicle for meaning making and writing processes were a study of mind (Parr, 2010). Writers constructed their own meaning and their response, and, as such, there were strong associations with "the romantic conception of the author as creator, an association further evidenced by the privileging of literary genres in the early process curriculum" (Moon, 2012, p. 41). This approach was conducive to creative writing as it gave both students and teachers freedom and time to write: "This was perceived as a time when teachers set aside space, paper and pencils, typewriters, computers, dictionaries, thesauruses, editing guides and simple book-binding apparatus, supported by unlimited class time, in which children's writing practice could be encouraged" (MacLusky & Cox, 2011, p. 8).

The process approach to writing appeared to reject direct instruction, which was seen as imposing artificial constraints upon experience and learning (Moon, 2012). The personal growth model of writing and the process approach could potentially limit creativity, however, because such an approach assumed all students had the same skills, knowledge and experiences to draw upon and therefore did not require direct instruction. On the other hand, such a position supports Rancière's presupposition that all students are equally intelligent, and that explication is not required in the writing process. However, the process also illuminated existing inequities between children, for example, in what Bourdieu called 'cultural capital' (the definitions of which have been much argued over), an accumulation of knowledge, behaviours, and skills that an individual can use to demonstrate cultural competence (Bourdieu, 1986). Inequities in students could result in children not being able to 'grow' as writers because teachers did not explicitly teach writing skills (Moon, 2012). According to Rancière's philosophy, such teaching could lead to emancipation but not necessarily education. On the other hand, by breaking writing into stages, writing could potentially become more measurable and outcome based, and focused on progress rather than freedom of thought.

Although Donald Graves and other supporters of the process model did not intentionally set out with this goal in mind, the rise of the popularity of the process model coincided with an important educational and political context, an economic movement focused on measurable outcomes. In 1980s Aotearoa New Zealand, neoliberal thinking began to have

a significant influence in education policy, as a movement focused on accountability, market forces and profit, and a paradigm imposed on areas such as education and the arts, where it did not sit comfortably (Horrocks, 2016). In Aotearoa New Zealand, education reforms were ushered in by the fourth Labour government (1984-1990) to deal with the 'crisis' of the welfare state, liberalising the economy – the argument being that the invisible hand of the market would lead to better schools (McMaster, 2013). Today, neoliberalism is the driving economic and political force in Aotearoa New Zealand education and that of other democratic societies, where standardised testing is used to measure both student ability and teacher effectiveness (McMaster, 2013).

By the late 1980s, some researchers such as Bakhtin (1986) started to view language as both a social and a cognitive process (Parr, 2010). Teachers' pedagogy reflected this as they began to focus on writing as constructed within a specific social context for a specific purpose (Parr, 2010). As such, writing began to be taught as genres, known as the genre model (Freedman, 1999). The genre model also influenced the teaching of creative writing in Aotearoa New Zealand. For many classroom teachers, the genre approach represented a competing paradigm to that of process model: the process model privileged self-expression and individual voice in writing whereas the genre model emphasised social functions (Moon, 2012). The teacher provided systematic instruction on how to write specific genres of writing, scaffolding the process with the use of modelling and co-construction until the learner became an independent writer. Such a model was heavily reliant on teacher knowledge and explanation.

Genre theorists conceptualised six genres of writing that each student needed to write: report, explanation, procedure, discussion, recount and narrative (Frawley, 2014). The narrative genre, which was most closely aligned with creative writing, was structured, according to Derewianka (1990), with an orientation, complication and resolution, reducing narrative variety and complexity of stories (Moon, 2012) – essentially quantifying the complexity of a story once again into stages that could be taught and assessed more easily. Knowingly or not, the genre model of writing, like the process model, could potentially meet the goals of an educational system based on measurable outcomes and notions of progress.

Due to the specific nature of teaching in the genre model, teachers had to develop or acquire more knowledge about genres and, as such, they had to have expertise in the subject, which could then be passed on to the students (Rancière, 1991), willing or otherwise. Teacher explication was further highlighted by the critical literacy model,

stressing that a text should be analysed through dominant, alternative and resistant interpretations in order to critique and transform dominant ideologies (Luke, 2018). Creative writing taught as a genre and using the critical literacy model involved teachers knowingly or unknowingly changing narrative viewpoints, making adaptations, re-writing texts and dramatising parts of a novel (Frawley, 2014). Such knowledge positioned the teacher as more knowledgeable than the students and thus in a superior position. This is because, in order to teach genre, teachers needed to have sufficient training and knowledge, which has a range of implications for teacher education, mentoring, and PLD. Is training provided for this method? In my 20 years of teaching, I have encountered PLD providers who have touched on this technique, although the method was not introduced during my ITE training. Furthermore, the participants in this study seemed to be familiar with the genre model, although none of them suggested they were 'experts'.

***Creative writing post-2000s***

Today, the dominant view of writing is still that it is a 'social act' (Bernardes & Menzies, 2017). 'Effective' writing instruction in Aotearoa New Zealand contains aspects of progressive, process and genre approaches, with an emphasis on the sociocultural nature of learning, acknowledging that writing has an audience and purpose (Fitzsimmons, Harris, McKenzie, & Turbill, 2003). However, a social act is always constrained and enabled by changing economics and politics (Luke, 1998), and these forces have placed creativity at the centre of education where it is thriving in the current educational environment, although it may well be creativity of an increasingly narrow kind (Kalin, 2018), linked to progress and usefulness rather than expression of self. In addition, this narrow focus on creativity for accountability and economic benefits has not helped promote the use of creative writing in the primary classroom, where it has been pushed to the back of writing pedagogy in recent years (Cremin, 2006). Primary teachers, responding to the dual pressures of prescription and accountability, have adopted a somewhat technicist approach to teaching writing, emphasising structure over composition and meaning, and this has involved teachers' explicating rather than encouraging thoughts of freedom within their learners. The tensions between freedom (neoliberal ideal) and control (neoconservative ideal) have ensured that the government has adopted a series of accountability measures as a form of balance (Mutch, 2013), and critics have noted that such accountability has stifled creativity.

Although what constitutes quality and equity in education is still contested (Mutch, 2013), progressive ideals are still very much alive thanks to the effects of committed and conscientious educators, and support from parents and school boards of trustees (Mutch, 2013): “It is this collective dedication to the children and young people of today and tomorrow that gives hope that progressive ideals will continue to underpin educational practices in Aotearoa New Zealand for many years to come” (Mutch, 2013, p. 112).

## Issues in teaching creative writing in the primary classroom

In the previous sections, I examined how and why creative writing has been taught from a historical as well as a pedagogical perspective. Primary teachers in Aotearoa New Zealand have had a number of techniques to choose from when considering creative writing in the classroom. Each technique comes with a particular understanding of the nature and purpose of creative writing, has served a particular purpose, and has particular implications for the teacher. In this next section, issues surrounding the teaching of creative writing are considered, noting that there are some key tensions and contradictions which affect how it is taught in the primary classroom.

### *Perception and importance*

Although creativity and creative writing appears to be valued widely in society (Hicks, 2015), and, according to Horrocks (2016), many believe creative writing should be supported in all its forms, within primary education practice, creative writing is just another form of writing that Aotearoa New Zealand primary school teachers must teach. As such, creative writing does not seem to be privileged over other genres. When creative writing is perceived as ‘any type of writing’ as long as it is expressive, it could be argued that such writing is the most important because it is used, practiced and explored in the classroom every day, through every writing activity. If creative writing is viewed as narratives, poetry and plays, such a view is significant because these types of text are the genre both teachers and students prefer to write (Parr & Jesson, 2016), leading to increased motivation and enjoyment.

In wider society outside the school context, however, an attitude or belief seems to exist that creative writing is not as important as other forms of writing because it will not be as useful in getting a job (H. Wood, 2019) and it is a “distraction from the main endeavour [which are] academic results” (Owen & Munden, 2010, as cited in Bernardes & Menzies, 2017, p. 33). A belief also exists that creative writing is ‘useless’ and people ‘don’t use

creative writing' unless they are a professional writer or teacher of creative writing (Lim, 2003). These attitudes have an impact on the way creative writing is taught: if the teacher values creative writing, it seems feasible that they will apply more effort to the teaching of it and the reverse also holds true.

### *Innate vs taught*

Some researchers argue that creative writing cannot be taught (Anae, 2014), merely nurtured, and that being a good creative writer is innate (J. Kaufman, 2002). Students at the Iowa Writers' Workshop, for example, study for two years to gain a Master of Fine Arts. Their motto is that writing "cannot be taught but talent can be nurtured". This is in spite of research that indicates that it can be taught (S. B. Kaufman, 2014). There exists a tension here: if it can be taught, then it can possibly be commodified and measured, and therefore used by business for economic purposes. If it cannot be taught, then are teachers not supposed to teach it, merely 'nurture' it? In the case of the latter, what exactly does 'nurture' entail? This 'nurturing' is in keeping with Rancière's conception of the teachers' role, which is to use their will to encourage students to utilise their intelligence (Rancière, 1991). Furthermore, if creative writing cannot be taught, then such a position sits comfortably with Rancière and ignorant teaching without explication.

### *Achievement*

Although I have made an argument through the work of Rancière and Biesta that notions of achievement and progress are antithetical to creativity and creative writing, it is worth noting that there are concerns amongst teachers and policy makers that students do not achieve well in writing. Under-achievement in writing is not specific to Aotearoa New Zealand either, with significant numbers of students under-achieving in writing internationally. (Parr & Jesson, 2016). As recently as 2014, in Aotearoa New Zealand primary classrooms, achievement levels in writing fall below those of reading (77%) and of mathematics (75%), with only 70% of primary students meeting the now-defunct national standards expectations, which was a tool used to measure achievement in students (Parr & Jesson, 2016).

Average achievement in writing is lower than the expectations set out in the New Zealand Curriculum (NZC) and writing has the lowest median achievement (Ministry of Ministry of Education, 2018). The National Education Monitoring Project (NEMP) notes that students' writing lacks the vividness, personal feeling, and humour that characterises high-quality expressive writing (Parr, 2010). Government efforts to raise standards and

achievement results have been at the expense of cultivating excitement about writing (Bernardes & Menzies, 2017), and such excitement is closely associated with creativity and freedom of expression. Poor results can also potentially affect teachers' self-efficacy in creative writing (Bernardes & Menzies, 2017), which can impact on teachers' taking risks in their practice. Teachers who are focused on achievement are possibly less likely to be innovative and take risks with their practice, instead choosing to 'teach to the test':

> narrative is the only one that seems to get tested on e-asTTle and yet it's the one that very rarely got taught … [the e-asTTle test] did not provide an accurate picture of how my children can write and [as a result] teachers taught to the test because they didn't think the e-asTTle was fair or accurate – Tabitha.

### *Assessment*

The current primary teaching environment is based on centralised curriculums and standardisation, and is assessment-driven (O'Neill, 2016). Such a focus can undermine creativity and disincentivise creative approaches to teaching. During the last decade in democracies around the world, primary school curriculum and pedagogy has been grouped together in the box of standardisation, assessment, accountability, control and surveillance (Garcia, Luke, & Seglem, 2018). In Aotearoa New Zealand, a 'second wave' of educational change at the turn of the century, informed by neoliberal globalised discourses similar to those in other democracies, created an outcome-based, assessment-driven, national curriculum (O'Neill, 2016).

A neoliberal agenda, one that focuses on results from standardised testing, a one-size-fits-all approach (Dobson, 2015a), has the potential to undermine creativity and creative writing in the classroom, a classroom where teachers are under pressure to cover all writing 'genres' – both transactional and poetic – and then assess them. This increasingly assessment-focused climate of education appears to be the antithesis of creative approaches to teaching and learning and the attendant facilitation of creativity and creative expression (Raymond, 2018). A climate of standardisation and quantification forces schools to utilise outcome-based curricula where educational success is measured in terms of achievement (Apple, 2017). This focus on performativity can lead to the failure of schools to meet the pastoral needs of young people (White et al., 2018).

Standards and standardised texts can hobble teachers' best practice (Bushnell, 2003), negatively impacting on teachers and therefore their pedagogy (Raymond, 2018). Teachers are under increasing pressures to conform to school agendas of curriculum coverage and assessment, which results in a suppression of individuality, creativity and

innovation (Raymond, 2018). May, a teacher participant, notes how assessment is 'sucking' the life out of her:

> Because I used to work till 10 o'clock at night or I've done by dint of getting up in the morning at 5 o'clock and doing my school work and I'm over that. That's what I did for the first four weeks of this term. Assessment. Sorry testing, then assessment ... Its impeding. It is sucking the life out of me and impeding my learning and fun– May.

This schooling environment, with its focus on standardisation and assessment, stifles creativity, something that Carol, another teacher participant was conscious of:

> Just to give the kids that chance to be creative individuals because I think if everyone is focused on a very prescriptive model of what education is, then it churns out children that can't necessarily think for themselves. We need people that can see the world from different angles and different perspectives and engage in different ways with the world around them – Carol.

Teachers and schools are under incredible pressure to increase or maintain test results (Ryan & Barton, 2014). The main issue seems to be that standardised testing and accountability does not marry at all with creativity, cooperation and flexibility in education: "the restrictions imposed by standardised testing and accountability impinge on the quality of educational experience and conflict with commonly agreed goals of 21st century education such as cooperation, critical thinking, and creativity" (White et al., 2018, p. 272).

Research suggests that teachers believe that supporting creativity is something they should be doing in the classroom (Beghetto & Kaufman, 2014; Cremin, 2006; A. J. Cropley, 2001). As a reaction to and a coping measure to deal with compliance, in actual classroom practice, however, teachers sometimes dislike traits associated with creativity such as boldness and originality. Some teachers prefer to foster other traits such as courteousness, punctuality, obedience and receptiveness to other people's (the teacher's) ideas (A. J. Cropley, 2001, p. 137), creating obedient automatons for the workforce rather than creative individuals prepared to adapt and change.

Generally, teachers would like to teach creative writing in more detail and spend more time doing so, but they are labouring under pressures of accountability and assessment to teach and assess all genres and text types as quickly as possible (Cremin, 2006). Teachers are also required to show that students have made progress even though research has indicated that creative writing is difficult to assess given its subjective nature (Anae, 2014; Weldon, 2009). There are also some concerns about the ability of teachers to correctly assess writing, calling into question the veracity of this summative data (Morris

& Sharplin, 2013). Moreover, there are those who question the suitability of standardised testing to assess writing in the first place (Warner, 2018). These issues are further problematised by studies generally not discriminating according to genre or purpose. In other words, performance in creative writing has not been isolated and examined separately. It is further problematised by the fact that assessment tools are generic for all genres and there is no specialised tool for measuring creativity, even if it were quantifiable and if it were appropriate to quantify it (Morley, 2007). Therefore, quantitative data arising out of standardised testing must be approached cautiously.

### *Accountability*

A focus on accountability and assessment can pressure teachers to teach creative writing as quickly as possible so they have time to cover other genres or text types of writing (Cremin, 2006). Mark, one of the teacher participants asks, "how do you measure creativity?"

> That's where our conclusion went down the lines of like move away from genre writing and focus on teaching the skills within writing and then obviously like everything just kind of flows from there, so whatever you're writing about. It wasn't necessarily like how can I be creative? It was just like how can we … it was a narrow focus with inquiry because it's all about lifting levels, so how do you measure creativity? There's no… I guess in the asTTle you measure ideas, which I guess is your closest thing on the e-asTTle framework, which has its flaws I guess – Mark.

Such accountability pressures have affected the transformational potential of creative writing. As Paulo Freire (1985) notes: "Teaching kids to read and write should be an artistic event. Instead, many teachers transform these experiences into a technical event, into something without emotions, without creativity—but with repetition. Many teachers work bureaucratically when they should work artistically" (p. 79).

The focus on creativity within education is now tied to the acquisition of useful skills for innovation in a global marketplace. The remnants of progressivism are now used to cover up neoliberal mandates which have created new political tensions (Kalin, 2018) – amongst them emancipation, freedom and democracy and the reshaping of creativity to focus on innovation for the market. Essentially, creativity has effectively been "lassoed" or hijacked by big business for economic impact; this is, on the face of it, unproblematic until one considers that that this view of creativity has been advanced by economists, not artists or educators, and is thus conflated with innovation and shunted away from art (Kalin, 2018). Creativity used for economic growth counters the survival of critical and political forms of creativity (Kalin, 2018). Within this context, tensions exist between

educators wanting to foster creativity and freedom in their classrooms and a neoliberal agenda, one focused on measurable outcomes and accountability for teachers. Politicians and policy creators see creative writing as just another ‘creative industry’ which produces intellectual property as a business, rather than an opportunity to shape artistic forms and explore what it means to be human (Horrocks, 2016). The Aotearoa New Zealand education system has attempted to commodify the fine and applied arts – along with creative writing – which are used to make enormous profits in the tertiary sector (Horrocks, 2016). This commodification has ramifications for creativity in the arts, including creative writing.

***The teacher as a writer***

Some researchers argue that it takes a confident creative writer to effectively demonstrate how such writing is composed and those ‘writers as teachers’ are few and far between, the importance of which is noted by Cremin et al. (2020). It is rare to find a primary teacher who is a writer at all, possibly as few as 1 in 10, and confident creative writers with the ability to model the process are even fewer. In fact, many teachers of creative writing do not write creatively at all (Bishop, 1993) and although they are often literacy professionals, highly qualified and enthusiastic experts in reading and the analysis of texts, they are not necessarily confident and knowledgeable producers of written text (Cremin et al., 2020). Moon (2012) argues that the knowledge to teach and write creatively requires a sense of style, which is a “separate and distinct skill. It requires attention not only to syntax and word-function but also to euphony, tone and balance – which are aesthetic and pragmatic considerations” (Moon, 2012, p. 38). Therefore, there are researchers who call for teachers to ‘become writers’ in order to teach the subject more effectively (Graham, Harris, MacArthur, & Fink, 2002; R. Ings, 2009; Stanley, 2012), although this position is not well supported by research. Furthermore, is such a repositioning of the teacher a realistic or even aspirational goal? If teachers were trained as writers, would the focus then be on student progress rather than ideals of freedom and self-expression? As such, teaching creative writing, following the work of Rancière, would lead to stultification rather than emancipation.

In summary, the history of creative writing in the primary classroom can be traced from a pre-20th century skills-based approach, itself aligned with a non-explicatory and ignorant teaching pedagogy. From the 1930s until the 1970s, an expressive or progressive approach to writing held sway, an approach that, due to its expressive nature, appeared more closely aligned with creative writing and ideas of emancipation and freedom, even

though the inequal nature of progressive education has been noted. In the 1980s, under the shadow of accountability and an outcome-based education system, two of the most important approaches to writing emerged: The process and genre models of writing, focused respectively on the cognitive and social aspects of writing. The process model appeared to favour expression and freedom, while the genre model relied on teacher knowledge to explicate the writing process.

Teachers' creative writing practice is also affected by pressures of accountability which have attempted to commodify creativity for economic purposes in order to measure progress, ideas that are opposed by Rancière's notions of emancipation and freedom. Furthermore, some teachers do not feel prepared for teaching creative writing by their ITE education. This is possibly exacerbated by the fact that most teachers are not creative writers themselves, which begs the question 'do teachers need to be writers themselves in order to teach writing?' The fact that teachers are teaching creative writing without being taught how to teach the subject supports Rancière's position on the ignorant schoolmaster, where teachers can teach subjects they are ignorant of. Such teaching then has the potential to be emancipatory and this has important implications for the teaching of creative writing here because, in the view of Biesta, the current educational system, aspiring to become effective and excellent has instead became an "unsustainable monster":

> doing the very opposite of what education should be doing – serving humanity in its struggle for meaningful and peaceful coexistence within the boundaries of what the earth can sustain – but instead had become an aim in itself, always asking for more. (Biesta, 2017c, p. 11)

Like Biesta, I also advocate for change in the educational system and, rather than expecting more, I suggest that, in some ways, teachers need to do less. In the next chapter, I explore the emancipatory potential of two creative writing strategies, namely brainstorming and collaborative writing, and demonstrate how these strategies can be employed through universal teaching, without explication by 'ignorant' teachers.

**Narrative break: Progress is a pedagogical fiction**

*The Principal brings the visitors into her classroom without notice, but the teacher doesn't mind. She was in the middle of a lesson, but she knows her students will be fine without her. The two visitors are introduced to her: an Education Review Office official, and a member of the Board of Trustees.*

*They look through the classroom, talking to her students, looking at the writing and art on the walls and in their books.*

*"This is great," says the visitor from ERO, pointing to a piece of writing on the wall. Like all the writing on the wall, it was written by her students. This was a story about Minecraft.*

*"Yes, it is", she says. And it is.*

*"Yes," says the Principal. "The students in this class have made excellent progress in writing."*

*"How do you do it?" asks the BoT member.*

*"How do I do what?" the teacher asks.*

*"Get your students to produce such great writing," she says. "The results you get. The progress they make."*

*"I don't know," says the teacher. "What do I know about Minecraft? Nothing." She points to another piece of writing on the wall. "What do I know about the world of Roblox? Also nothing." She points to other pieces. There's a story set in Fortnite, one about using Tik Tok, another about using Mods.*

*"And what do I know about these pieces of writing? Nothing, nothing and nothing," she says again. "My students are writing about things I don't."*

*"But they are doing so well," says the ERO official.*

*"They don't need me to do well," says the teacher.*

*"I think they do," says the Principal. He laughs. "How else would you get them to write so well?"*

*"I ask them to," she says. "I ask them to write about what they like, what they do, what they think. That's all."*

*"I'm sure there's more to it than that," says the BoT member.*

*"No, not really," says the teacher.*

# CHAPTER 6: BRAINSTORMING AND COLLABORATIVE WRITING IN THE CREATIVE WRITING CLASSROOM

In this chapter, I explore two writing pedagogies teachers use in the teaching of creative writing; that of brainstorming and collaborative writing. These pedagogies are investigated through analysis of my own teaching stories and those of the participants. Such stories are further analysed through the theoretical contributions of Jacques Rancière and Gert Biesta. In *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, Rancière (1991) recounts Jacotot's story and adventures in universal teaching. Rancière does this because one of the most important ways of verifying the equality of intelligence is to tell stories, an idea that resonates with my own interest in storytelling:

> "Well," said Eumaeus, blowing out his cheeks, "I hope you like exciting stories, young Telemachus, because this is a good one. One that poets may tell for years to come." (P. W. Simpson, 2016, p. 169)

In keeping with this approach, this chapter recounts, through stories told by the participants and myself, how brainstorming and collaborative writing can be emancipatory. These stories are, in part, taken from the transcripts of interviews with participants that illustrate emancipatory practices. These practices can be taught without 'explication' and yet still recognise the important part teachers play in the primary classroom. These creative writing practices can be utilised to create dissensus in the classroom, a concept explored in Chapter 3 as being both possible and desirable. In this chapter, dissensus is applied to the creative writing practices of brainstorming and collaborative writing, and such practices seem to be consistent with my interpretation of Rancière's philosophy on schooling and education.

These creative writing strategies are also explored in relation to Biesta's three functions of education, particularly subjectification, which is a concept closely aligned to emancipation. According to Biesta, subjectification is the most important function of education because "education is not just about the reproduction of what we already know or of what already exists, but is genuinely interested in the ways in which new beginnings and new beginners can come into the world" (Biesta, 2016, p. 4) which can "help our children and students to engage with, and thus come into the world" (Biesta, 2016, p. 5). Furthermore, I suggest that such creative writing strategies, when used in ways that do not operate under the presupposition of the equality of intelligence, have the potential to promote stultification instead.

There are many other creative writing practices that could be considered using Rancière as a lens, but such practices are too numerous to be included in this dissertation. I have chosen a limited number of creative writing practices that were used by the participants, including myself. Furthermore, such practices seem to be widely used by teachers in the context of the primary classroom (Frawley, 2014; T. Hodges, 2017; Moon, 2012).

The next sections examine the use of two widely used creative writing strategies or practices: brainstorming and collaborative writing. These practices are examined through the concept of emancipatory education and conceptions of the 'master explicator', dissensus and the 'third thing'. In addition, these strategies are viewed through the three functions of education, particularly that of subjectification. Anecdotes or recounts of practice, both my own and those of the 10 participants, are used to examine the emancipatory potential of each and how, if explicated, they have the potential to bring about stultification instead. The next section focuses on brainstorming, followed by a section on collaborative writing.

## Brainstorming

*The students surge into the classroom and crowd onto the mat. The teacher fires up the laptop and the smart TV in preparation, as the students slowly settle. They're engaged and alert after spending twenty minutes sitting amongst the grass and the trees, watching, listening and thinking. Why did they do this? Because the teacher asked them to, urging these children to write down what they saw, what they smelt, what they felt, what they heard and what they thought in order to serve as a creative writing prompt. The teacher says one word to them:*

*"Go".*

*The words and thoughts fly through the air, overlapping, chaotic, but the teacher can make sense of it, having learnt to make sense of it through the years. The teacher types quickly, adding their thoughts to the growing cloud on the screen before us, as every thought is voiced and every voice is heard.*

Brainstorming, sometimes referred to as 'mind mapping' or a graphic organiser, is an ideas-gathering strategy used in almost every primary school curriculum subject, one that is utilised by many teachers and regarded as a powerful addition to learning (Isaksen & Gaulin, 2005). The term 'brainstorming' was coined by Alex Osborn, an advertising executive in the 1940s (Osborn, 1957), and although other names for idea generation have been proposed, they have not achieved the same popularity and use as brainstorming. In the primary classroom, a brainstorming session is one where students offer up ideas related to a topic, regardless of how remote the suggestion may be, and the ideas are

recorded and then evaluated (McDowell, 1999). The teacher usually acts as the recorder, writing the ideas as they emerge on various media, but students can also act as recorders.

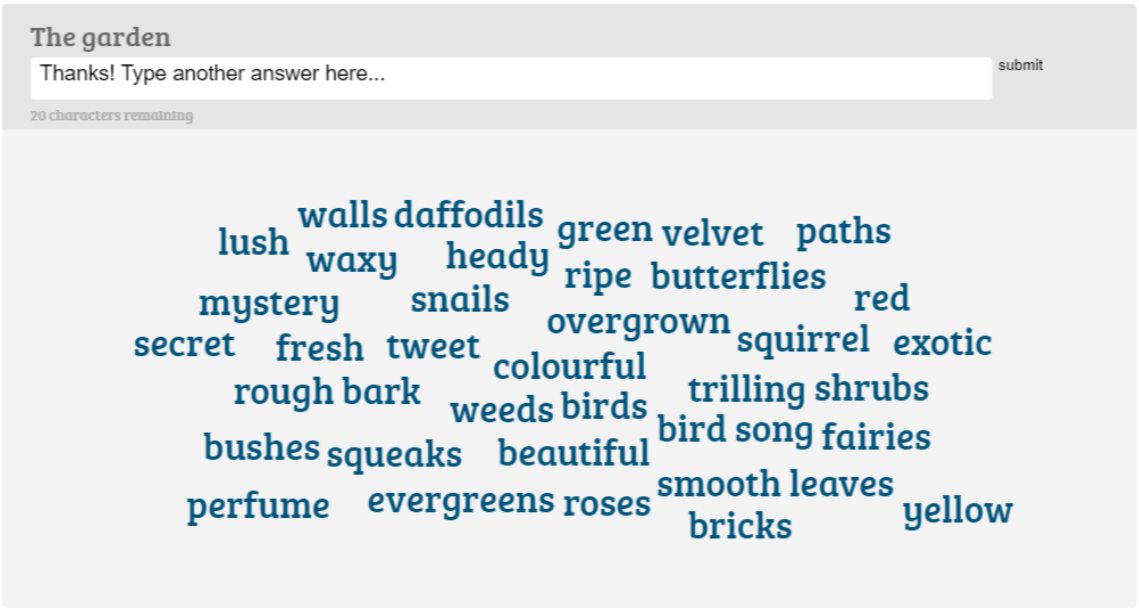


**Figure 3**: An example of a brainstorm on a garden setting

Brainstorming is a teaching technique that has been studied in the context of writing. Abedianpour and Omidvari (2018) found that when learning intentions were measurable and quantifiable through standardised assessment and matched to success criteria, such practices had the potential to improve writing outcomes. Indeed, several scholars have attempted to prove that brainstorming can improve writing outcomes, though with mixed success. Ibnian (2011), and Abedianpour and Omidvari (2018), for example, when assessing the quality of essay writing, found that those students who used brainstorming, received a higher mark, suggesting connection between the use of brainstorming to improve writing outcomes and, indeed, using brainstorming to structure, control and measure creative writing. I have suggested elsewhere that assessment is neither valid nor reliable when measuring creative writing (see Chapter 4), and yet teachers are forced to do it because of accountability and compliance pressures, where inputs seek to match output with progress as the goal. In fact, when assessing writing using the e-AsTTle (the writing test most primary teachers use to assess writing), brainstorming is one aspect that teachers *must* measure. Furthermore, the recent revision of the e-AsTTle now assesses writing with a one-size rubric that fits all communicative purposes (Parr & Brown, 2015).

One of the reasons brainstorming is popular amongst teachers in the primary creative writing classroom is because it can aid in the structuring of writing (Abd Karim, Abu, & Khaja, 2016; W. Cheung et al., 2003; Y. Cheung & Jang, 2019), and it is a commonly

used technique, utilised by many teachers including myself and the participants in this study. For example, I would use brainstorming to gather ideas about settings, characters and problems. In relation to settings, I often encourage my students to use their senses to describe what the setting smells like, feels like and sounds like in order to bring the 'real' world into their writing and create a sense of authenticity.

A paradox exists within this strategy, however, because brainstorming, when used to structure creative writing, is attempting to structure a form of writing that sometimes appears to defy structure – to control something that is sometimes perceived as uncontrollable. Yet, Vass, Littleton, Miell, and Jones (2008), investigating idea generation (akin to brainstorming) in the context of a primary collaborative creative writing session, found that emotions, which sometimes embody the uncontrollable and are associated with creative thinking and free thought (Piirto, 2009), serve as the generator of creative thought, supporting collective free-association. What this reveals is that even when brainstorming is used to control and structure creative writing, the process is always dynamic and organic, where ideas "build on each other and get more and more rich and complex, expanding in all directions like ripples of water" (Vass et al., 2008, p. 201). A tension exists here for teachers trying to structure and control creative writing through the use of brainstorming, because brainstorming can potentially invite chaos, where teachers attempt to control and yet at the same time "accommodate such unpredictability and unboundedness" (Vass et al., 2008, p. 201). Such an approach appears to embrace risk, because risk taking is fundamental to creativity (Cremin, 2006), and both risk and creativity are vital in order to produce Rancière's dissensus, which is concerned with the redistribution of the sensible, where those who are not seen and heard can become so. Yet brainstorming can also be used in an attempt to commodify and quantify a skill – something explicitly taught because it has benefits outside of artistic boundaries.

In creative writing, brainstorming can be used as a graphic organiser to plan or 'brainstorm' writing and is often used as the first stage of the cognitive process theory of writing (T. Hodges, 2017) – or process writing as it is known (see Chapter 5). Brainstorming, when regarded as a type of graphic organiser, can assist in the organisation or structuring of information and details such as characters, setting and problem, which is useful for both prewriting (planning/brainstorming) and drafting (Frawley, 2014; Moon, 2012). Using planning techniques such as graphic organisers helps students understand the recursive nature of writing rather than it being a set of linear steps performed only once in sequence (T. Hodges, 2017).

Emancipatory education assumes that all students can speak (Biesta, 2010a), and it is through brainstorming that all students are invited and encouraged to speak and be heard, and all voices are equally valid. Such practices, where students are engaged in a group activity with no specific learning outcome, are less about the assessment of individual students and more about opportunities for creative thinking and freedom of thought. Emancipatory education can be characterised as education which starts from the assumption that all students can speak and, by doing so, verify their intelligence and equality. Teaching strategies like these do not evaluate students based on their acquisition of knowledge, and the teacher need not be the superior knowledge holder because they are merely recording the collective dialogue, rather than evaluating the content. By avoiding explanation, such practices also minimise stultification and the teacher is then repositioned as an inquirer amongst other inquirers.

When, for instance, students' experiences are used as sources to provoke brainstorming prior to creative writing, such experiences can be used for critical discussion (Worthman, 2008). Such opportunities can challenge and resist dominant voices within the classroom, where students' experiences are used to understand who they and others are, and are validated as something to contemplate and make sense of (Worthman, 2008). For example, folklore tales read by teachers, prior to students writing their own, have important lessons to offer regarding inequality and emancipation. Such tales can serve as a 'third thing', where students interpret the meaning of tales independently or as part of the student group. Brainstorming sessions following such readings promote emancipation (Chandler, 2006) and teachers taking on such roles can also effectively remove themselves from the position of the most knowledgeable and therefore superior. Brainstorming can challenge traditional teacher authority, and the teacher as the sole source of knowledge (Rancière, 1991). Because the teacher is no longer the sole source of knowledge, brainstorming is also very much a social activity, one that requires interactions between students and students, and students and the teacher (Goldenberg & Wiley, 2011). Such interactions often manifest as group work, used by teachers in many curriculum subjects in order to foster social collaboration (Senior, 2002).

Hillmann (2004) suggests that group work such as brainstorming involves a de-emphasis of individual creation and imagination because, in brainstorming, the emphasis is on the group generation of ideas and, as such, impedes personal freedom to be creative. In other words, brainstorming can potentially lead to stultification rather than emancipation, especially when the teacher takes on the role of the one whose knowledge is superior.

Ruitenberg (2011) offers a cautionary note in regard to emancipatory education, where the teacher who strives for emancipation can be so directive and controlling in order to steer students to the 'right' outcome that they leave little room for intellectual freedom. Such teaching can become stultifying rather than emancipatory and thus defeat the purpose of the lesson. To illustrate Ruitenberg's cautionary tale, one of the participants in this study, Ismael, for example, appeared to use strategies like brainstorming to structure and control the creative writing process:

> Then we'd brainstorm a way and I wouldn't let them go back to their tables until they could tell me how they are going to start their piece of writing, or I'd start it for them in some cases. I'd be like – here's your first couple of lines, feel free to use it, and then just add on to it – Ismael.

Ismael recounted how he would not "let them [his students] go back to their tables" until they could tell him what they were doing. In this approach, Ismael provided control and structure in terms of using the brainstorm as a mutual starting point for creative writing. While he began with the plural personal pronoun 'we'd', Ismael then moved to the personal pronoun 'I'. This change in pronoun, shifting from the 'we' to the 'I', appears to be necessary for Ismael to take on a mastery role in terms of his expert knowledge of process and, in particular, in order to get creative writing started. The shift to 'I' seems to position Ismael as the teacher instead of fellow student or writer. Ismael then acts as a gatekeeper, without which it appears creative writing will not happen. The idea that it might happen by itself, to Ismael, appears unlikely. In so doing, Ismael seems to – initially at least – take on the role of the superior knowledge holder, making the assumption that his learners could not figure it out for themselves.

By making such an assumption, Ismael seems to consider students as empty vessels to be filled with the knowledge of the teacher. Ismael appears to be 'filling up' his students with his knowledge rather than letting them work it out for themselves. In this way, Ismael's practice appears to be what Freire (1970a) regarded as the 'banking' model of education, where students are empty vessels to be filled. To avoid this, Ismael could let the brainstorm stand by itself, open to interpretation by his students. By way of contrast, however, in using 'we' at the beginning of the excerpt, Ismael suggests equality and a community of writers, where Ismael was positioning his identity as another writer in the classroom (Dobson & Stephenson, 2017).

Structuring and framing creative writing so strongly, in the sense that the direction of the creative writing is teacher-guided by Ismael, has the potential to limit creativity (Dobson, 2015b), an apparent contradiction which can sometimes be overlooked by teachers.

Dobson (2015a), for example, found that when pupil choice was precluded by strong framing of a text-type pedagogical approach (that is, restricting choice in terms of genre), identity performance in creative writing can be more predictable and stereotyped, where the teacher attempts to match 'inputs' to 'outputs' (Biesta, 2016). In other words, when freedom to write 'what students want' is restricted, so too is creativity.

Ismael used the phrase 'start it for them', indicating that Ismael might have written the first few words or even the first couple of sentences for his students, a practice known as scaffolding writing which is widely used by primary teachers (Parkin, 2003). Control like this, where Ismael 'starts it for them', has other implications, that is, he is potentially helping students to erase their differences, creating a 'universal' narrative, where students contribute to homogenous story telling (see for instance, Cooley, 2003). Such homogenous story telling potentially limits differences in students and their different ways of being, saying and doing. Furthermore, Cooley (2003) found that by starting the text for them, students' desire to remain anonymous often meant omitting important details:

> If they named their native countries, they explained, everyone would know who had written the story. Beyond the aesthetic implications of a lack of setting, therefore, lay something more dangerous: I was helping my students erase their differences, which favored the creation of a "universal" narrative. (Cooley, 2003, p. 101)

Although Ismael is not encouraging such anonymity, by starting students' prose for them, Ismael risks producing homogeneity in his students' work. From an assessment point of view, this potentially makes students' work easier to commodify and assess, thus reducing Ismael's heavy workload and justifying his approach.

Such control seems, at first, to contradict Ismael's beliefs regarding creativity and creative writing that are about "doing things differently" and have "no limits" and yet also align with his belief that creative writing could be both "creative" and "structured". However, Ismael, in trying to control creative writing, is instead immersed in the lived experience of a tension central to an ongoing argument in creativity research; that is, the tension between freedom and constraint in the creative process. Some researchers argue that this tension between freedom of choice and constraint is perceived as crucial for the process of creativity (Haught-Tromp, 2017; Johnson-Laird, 1988). Pope (2005), for example, argues that with too little constraint, nothing happens because there is no pressure. Too much constraint will also cause nothing to happen because the system has seized up. Ismael, using brainstorming to balance freedom and constraint, could therefore

potentially facilitate the production of creative writing in his students. The tension between freedom through choice and constraint through explication requires careful balancing, however. As Vass (2007) notes: “Indeed, fostering children’s creativity is a careful balancing act between teacher control and student autonomy and between the encouragement of emotional engagement and playful thinking and conscientious, mindful reflection” (p. 115).

However, Ismael, like many other teachers, is also labouring under time constraints. Lack of time can effectively curb creative writing practice (Freebody, Barton, & Chan, 2014). Indeed, the process model of writing, for example, with brainstorming as its ‘first step’, is time consuming for teachers (Swandi & Netto-Shek, 2017). As Ismael stated during the interview, ‘time’ is always as issue for him during writing. Ismael does not have the time to wait for students to brainstorm ideas, teaching under pressure not only for students to produce work, but for him to mark it. As teachers like Ismael have noted, there are pressures from ‘above’ that act to control teachers’ practices and behaviour, pressures such as school leadership, rules and expectations, as well as from parents whose expectations are that there will be a certain number of written pieces in books or on display.

School leadership and whānau of students are, in my experience, unlikely to consider a brainstorm on its own as constituting a piece of writing. Indeed, sometimes students will not actually start their piece of prose because they are too bogged down in the brainstorm. This could possibly be a result of what D. Wood and Pickerd (2011) call ‘evaluation apprehension’, where the students think that “If I say this, everyone is going to think I’m stupid. I’d better say nothing at all” (p. 64). As a result, the student writes almost nothing in their brainstorm and believes that without such a prewriting strategy, they cannot begin their ‘actual writing’. Other students find difficulty in accessing, generating and organising the knowledge they possess and this can serve to stall them in the brainstorming process (Graham & Harris, 1993). As a result, the teacher may suffer from accountability and surveillance pressures, because of the police order asking ‘where is the actual writing?’

The emancipatory and creative potential of Ismael’s use of brainstorming is apparent, however, not only because of this tension between control and freedom, but because Ismael did provide students with the opportunity to utilise their brainstorming to write what they liked. Such freedom is evidenced by Ismael inviting his students to “tell me how they are going to start their piece of writing”. Ismael also gave students the option

to use a writing starter provided by himself or not. This suggests freedom of choice and not a prescribed piece governed by the teacher. Furthermore, by asking the students to tell him how they are going to start, Ismael is using his will to persuade students to verify their equality of intelligence.

Freedom and emancipation appear prominently in Tanya's creative writing practice:

> We do a whole brainstorm together with all the vocabulary that we can all think of together. Then they make their own brainstorm choosing those things from that. So we talk about it like a smorgasbord, picking and choosing which things you want to use for your own writing and then adding to that – Tanya.

In a similar way to Ismael, Tanya switched personal pronouns, moving from 'we' to 'you', suggesting different roles, starting out the brainstorm positioning herself as fellow learner or writer, to teacher. The tension between freedom of choice and constraint still exists but here, in Tanya's creative writing practice, it appears diminished or weaker. Neither freedom nor control appears to be dominant in ways which could possibly diminish opportunities for creativity. There is not enough clear tension between freedom and constraint and this seems like a deliberate strategy by Tanya to encourage students' use of a variety of content, and perhaps experimentation. However, balancing the opposing choices of freedom and constraint could also potentially enhance creativity, as discussed in the case of Ismael, above. The 'choices' students make also suggest a skill, that is, the ability to choose between one item and another based on personal preference or perceived value or use, as a skill that is transferable to the workplace or school environment.

The brainstorm, for Tanya, also operates as a 'third thing', in the sense that the brainstorm is a piece of writing that is essentially alien to both the teacher and student:

> In the logic of emancipation, between the ignorant schoolmaster and the emancipated novice there is always a third thing – a book or some other piece of writing – alien to both and to which they can refer to verify in common what the pupil has seen, what she says about it and what she thinks of it. … It is the third thing that is owned by no one, whose meaning is owned by no one, but which subsists between them, excluding any uniform transmission, any identity of cause and effect. (Rancière, 2007, pp. 14-15)

The brainstorm is not owned by any one student and possesses multiple interpretations, none of them more right than any other. What is produced is not a 'uniform transmission' or predictable outcome from a learning intention, where the teacher specifically states what the intention of the lesson is (for example, 'we are learning to use similes in our stories').

Multiple interpretations are also evident in Tanya's perception of creativity as "solving or looking at things differently" or "original thought". The use of the word "solving" does, however, seem to suggest a measurable skill. However, Tanya's emphasis on "choosing" when discussing her brainstorming practice, also seems to suggest a greater sense of freedom – that is, uniqueness, individuality, difference and independence from social orders (Biesta, 2020). By providing choice within the brainstorm, Tanya removes herself from the role of the one who knows 'better and best'. Furthermore, much like Jacotot's students using the *Télémaque*, the students work cooperatively. The phrase "whole brainstorm together" suggests social interaction, where students, as in the vignette below, are often gathered in a circle on the floor, learning from each other, which is perhaps the reason why Tanya chooses to use brainstorming as part of her creative writing practice:

> And summing up like what is it… how do you feel about a season? When you think of this feeling what do you think about? What kind of ideas? What kind of similes. What analogies can you think of? [I] had them all in a circle on the floor doing the brainstorm together and I would let them peel off an onion, so a layer of onion skin. When they said – I'm ready, I don't need any more help. I've got my ideas. I want to go. I have got enough things. Then they would go. Then this one would go and then that person would go – Tanya.

In this manner, the students are not told how to interpret the 'brainstormed' ideas that have been collectively formulated. Such practices can potentially interrupt the traditional hierarchy and ownership of knowledge, because no one individual, including the teacher, can profess ownership of the brainstorm. In Tanya's practice, students (with support) are encouraged to be different and independent because they are given the opportunity to leave the teaching session when they felt like they were ready. Tanya's use of brainstorming also rests on the premise that each participant is equal, because each participant's contribution has equal validity. Such contributions and equality do rely, however, on the teacher being able to relinquish control (Pelletier, 2012). By relinquishing control, the teacher uses their will and provides students with opportunities to explore unknown possibilities, rather than having a set and pre-determined learning outcome to meet (Rancière, 2007). By giving her students the choice to leave when they felt like they were ready, Tanya effectively relinquishes control.

During the brainstorming (and/or planning) session, Tanya does not explain concepts to students. Rather, the teacher joins in as a co-participator in the group and, positioned as such, does not require expert knowledge. The teacher in such a session follows, records and possibly comments on the collective dialogue without explaining the content,

avoiding explication and therefore stultification. Brainstorming does not require the teacher to act as facilitator either. In this pedagogical approach, students take turns to facilitate, engaging in an interchange of roles. This flexibility challenges the traditional authority of the teacher.

Emancipation – if it can or does appear in the classroom – will, according to Rancière, appear as dissensus and an interruption in the police order (Biesta, 2010b; Rancière, 1991). In other words, emancipation will take the form of difference in the way students are seen and heard. In the assessment of narrative writing, one of the e-AsTTle criteria (the assessment tool used to evaluate writing in the primary classroom) is the use of similes. Part of Tanya's lesson involved exploring similes and this could be interpreted as her adhering to the dictates of senior management, or teaching, modelling or explaining an aspect of writing because it was a criterion to be assessed. Similes are one criteria of writing that a student needs to move from one level to the next. If the students do not use similes, progress (in terms of assessment) will be difficult or muted, which is potentially one reason why they are taught. Progress data is then often correlated and analysed by senior management for reporting purposes (school reports, reports to the BoT). An alternative view is that by not explicating what constituted an acceptable simile, Tanya was creating an opportunity for resistance by her students, and this opportunity is supported by Tanya not purposefully setting out with such an objective in mind. Tanya's creative writing practice of brainstorming can then be seen as providing different opportunities to be seen and heard (Biesta, 2009). Creative writing viewed as a critical literacy practice in other creative writing activities, such as hot seating, is where different perspectives are valued equally and, indeed, teachers actively encourage divergent ideas during such activities.

Brainstorming for other teachers seemed more clearly aligned with developing particular transferable skills. Mark, for instance, used brainstorming to create a description or report. The purposeful and specific nature of writing in this scenario can limit the emancipatory potential of writing, where the writers are subservient to the teacher who, in this case, decides what skills and knowledge must be developed:

> We've been focusing on Polynesian way-finders and how they found their way and how they used the sun and the stars, so one piece of writing we did I was like, we're going to write about the stars and all that and we're going to write about how they did it and how they used the Southern Cross. So I was like, what kind of writing is going to be helpful for that? And then we brainstormed that – Mark.

Mark framed and controlled the brainstorming process: “we’re going to write about the stars” in a similar way to Ismael, with Mark appearing at first to intend to take on the role of the knowledgeable authoritative teacher, where his voice is the most important, the one that is heard above all others and must be complied with. Mark’s lesson appeared to have a teacher-centred orientation, where Mark makes clear that he was leading the lesson by making statements such as “we’re going to write about”. He interchanged the use of the pronouns ‘I’ and ‘we’ and, in a similar fashion to some of the other participants. Mark seemed to use ‘we’ to suggest that he was a fellow learner or writer and ‘I’ when he took on the role of teacher.

But this teacher-centred orientation can be misleading. During the interview, Mark revealed that most of his students (and the school as a whole) are Pasifika:

> I’m a Year 5 and Year 6 teacher at … School. I teach at … which is a low-decile, so the majority of our students are Pasifika.

Thus, Mark’s orientation suddenly appeared more student-centred, a classroom capable of redistributing roles. This redistribution allowed for those without a voice to be heard, because knowledge about Polynesian way-finders was reliant on his students’ interest and personal knowledge, not his own. Mark was trying to tap into personalised knowledge given that most of his students and their families have Pasifika ancestry, and possibly ancestral knowledge of Polynesian ocean voyaging, guessing that his students would discuss what they had been writing about at home with their parents. Such writing then becomes student-led and student-directed because Mark is letting or suggesting that his students find their own way to the knowledge of the subject. Furthermore, such writing becomes collaborative as students would share what they had learnt through their own research, inquiries and conversations.

Mark did not position himself as the most knowledgeable during this activity, assuming that his students knew something about Polynesian way-finders and sea voyaging. Neither did he explain the subject, letting his students find their own way:

> we’re writing to learn. Once we did that one about the stars ... now we’re going to write about we’re actually going to be a Polynesian way-finder, so you’re going to write a story about being one, so you’re going to write it like you’re the person on the boat doing the thing. So what’s happening on the boat? What are you seeing? What’s going on? How are you using the stars? We’re kind of using that information we learned from that explanation piece … and I’ve also just done that kind of like you’re that person, so what’s that person going to be like? What are they going to see? What’s going to happen? Is the boat going to crash? Is it going to capsize right over? – Mark.

When the students possess the knowledge (on way-finders in this case), this changes the traditional adult–child relationship, where the adult often assumes the position of dominance, authority and superiority over the child. Ignorance can then challenge traditional adult–child relationships, where intellectual equality is the point of departure. In fact, the point of departure in such an example is where the child is more knowledgeable than the adult and is able to verify this through their creative writing, overturning traditional power relationships. In this creative writing exercise, where the students were writing about way-finders, the teacher appeared to be in a position of ignorance. Describing such a world can be outside a teachers' knowledge and so the teacher becomes dependent on the student for guidance. The world of Polynesian way-finders as a writing prompt or topic became a 'third thing', providing the catalyst for students to verify their intelligence. Furthermore, through Mark's use of questioning, for example, "what are you seeing, what's going on?" he was challenging his students to verify their intelligence. In such a situation, the student, by allowing the teacher to contribute to the production of the writing piece (through comments and feedback on use of language, structure, etc.), repositions both participants as equal – the teacher as knowledgeable about the process, the student knowledgeable about the content.

Mark's use of brainstorming encourages freedom more than first thought, because the students are encouraged to take their investigations and subsequent writing in any direction they see fit, thus freeing them from the teacher-centred orientation. Through such writing, students can discuss and compare notes, not only with their peers, but with their parents. As such, all the students are working on the same topic and, in effect, working together. Biesta (2017a) argues that teaching remains essential for emancipatory education, and that teachers should not be fooled into thinking that when they are not the source of knowledge, "have nothing to teach and can be done away with" (Biesta, 2017a, p. 53). Although Mark is not providing knowledge to his students, his teaching practice is emancipatory because he taps into students' interests to encourage them to collect the knowledge without direct knowledge transfer from the teacher. Furthermore, because Mark did not possess all the knowledge in regard to Polynesian way-finders, his writing lessons became a process of "joint learning, joint discovery, of joint creation of knowledge" (Biesta, 2017a, p. 57), transforming both student (oppressed) and teacher (oppressor), instead of becoming what Freire (1970a) would regard as a direct knowledge transfer from one who knows (teacher) to one who does not (student). Mark interrupts students' denial of their own freedom, where the students realise that they possess

freedom, because they are free to find and interpret information themselves, without explanation or knowledge from the teacher, and that this interruption is the teacher's role in the classroom (Biesta, 2017b). Students in Mark's class realise they are both capable of finding and interpreting information themselves, and as intelligent as the teacher and other members of the class.

For another participant, Tabitha, creativity and creative writing was a form of expression and a creative outlet that had practical, real-world uses because "so many jobs involve storytelling" (Tabitha). Tabitha's teaching of brainstorming and creative writing appeared to be affected by her view of creativity as the "outpourings of artistic individuals" (McWilliam & Dawson, 2008, p. 637), and an innate ability that could not be taught. Tabitha's view that imagination (or creativity) could not be taught is consistent with findings from Mullet et al. (2016), where other teachers voiced a similar stance. This view could potentially restrict the way Tabitha teaches creative writing, especially because such a view suggests inequality, that is, some students are more creative than others:

> I am very big on teaching the building blocks because I don't think you can necessarily teach kids how to have good ideas. You can teach them brainstorming techniques, you can teach them like giving it a go and then coming back to it, but you can't just like – if a kid has no imagination, it's very hard to teach them to have imagination. Some kids just don't and that's not a fault, not everyone has to be a creative writer. There are going to be some kids that will never ever use these skills again because they're going to become accountants or they're going to become whatever else it is – Tabitha.

From Tabitha's perspective, brainstorming could be taught. From this perspective, a creative writing technique such as brainstorming is positioned as a skill rather than an opportunity for social interaction or emancipation. Such positioning is not reflected by Tabitha's description of other brainstorms she did in her class, however, which seemed more emancipatory, offering opportunities to demonstrate equality:

> If we're talking about characters and character development, we use examples from the book that we've read because everyone's got access to it, everyone knows. So like *Series of Unfortunate Events*, great character, Count Olaf, you can talk about that heaps. You can talk about his external description, you can talk about his internal description, all of that kind of stuff – Tabitha.

In this example, Tabitha provided an opportunity for her students to verify their intelligence and equality, because "everyone knows" (her students) about the book and hence, their departure point was one of knowledge equality. What the students did with this knowledge afterwards was entirely up to them. The students verified their knowledge to the teacher through the brainstorm, and although the teacher was seemingly knowledgeable about the topic, it is altogether likely that the students were more so.

Children writing about popular culture, where the teacher is not necessarily the expert, can create a redistribution of the sensible (Rancière, 2004b), where the individuals (bodies) and speech (voices) that are effectively seen and heard are redefined. Writing about something that teachers have no or lesser knowledge of demonstrates students' cultural knowledge and positions them as legitimate sources of information. Rancière (1991) suggests that learning is collective and collaborative, as demonstrated by Jacotot's shared experience, where students were able to self-instruct and yet also obtain help from the environment when required. Such practice can be seen in the 'Hole-in-the Wall' project where children living in an Indian slum were able to learn how to use a computer without explication. The help they received included expertise in the slum in the form of one youth with some knowledge of computer software (Mitra & Dangwal, 2010). Such aid is reflected in collaborative brainstorming practice: following Vygotskiĭ and Cole (1978) and the concept of the More Knowledgeable Other (MKO), students in a collaborative brainstorming group gather ideas, language and sentence structures from others in the group. This supports Rancière's model of language as shared experience (Stamp, 2013).

Learning in such an environment can reposition the teacher as not superior to the learner. In the Hole-in-the-Wall project (Mitra & Dangwal, 2010), 'friendly mediators' such as parents, grandparents and other trusted adults took the place of the teacher, without prior knowledge of the material. In other words, such teacher figures were largely 'ignorant' and not actual teachers – their role was to praise and encourage, rather than instruct, urging the children to use their will and verify their intelligence by using phrases such as "I wish I could do that" and "how on earth did you figure that out?" (Mitra & Dangwal, 2010, p. 680). Such figures were not trained to teach nor did they have specific subject knowledge**.**

Brainstorming in fantasy settings can also reposition the teacher in the classroom, for example, through Minecraft or Roblox worlds, where the teacher is ignorant and the students knowledgeable. Such settings can also invite dissensus or divergent outcomes and can act as a 'third thing', as the link between the teacher and students. In the vignette below, Tabitha illustrates her use of a picture book with no words which has the potential to invite dissensus:

> The same unit that I do every year with my class is there's a great picture book called *Journey*, which has no words. Fantastic illustrations, fantastic story, but there's no words. So we read the book, brainstormed and then each kid gets assigned a different page and they write the words for that page and then we put it altogether as a class.

> It's fun. They always love it. They have to work with the person that's got the page before and after them to make sure it all goes in together, and then we all type it into a shared doc of a PowerPoint, so it kind of looks like a proper book – Tabitha.

*Journey* had no words, just pictures, and such a resource can be regarded as didactic material or codifications (Freire, 1970a). Such codifications were used by Tabitha to generate dialogue, transforming the students' opinion of reality into something more concrete, and thus, argues Freire, could enable emancipation, because such dialogue gives voice to those without voice. Tabitha's use of a shared text (*Journey*) also has a counterpart in the *Télémaque* used by Jacotot because the book was "alien to both" (Rancière, 2007, p. 14) teacher and student. In this way, *Journey* acted as a 'third thing'. In Rancière's view, the educator's role is to encourage students to use their own intellectual powers to study objects ('third things'), and this is exactly what Tabitha is urging her students to do with *Journey*. In *Proletarian Nights: The workers' dream in nineteenth-century France* (2012), Rancière treats the texts composed by workers as equal to any other texts, including those of intellectuals, 'writers' and philosophers. The relationship to this treatment can be seen through Tabitha's brainstorming and subsequent writing activity, where the teacher treated students as 'writers', and their work as equal to any other, not immature or childish but as valid as any other 'adult' writing.

Tabitha did not, however, place restrictions on her students, and instead promoted equality. This equality and valuing of the written output was illustrated by Tabitha insisting that the finished product "looks like a proper book". Furthermore, Tabitha withheld any explanation about the book, demonstrating her ignorance. Explication was the pedagogical practice that Jacotot was opposed to. Indeed, any pedagogical experience without ignorance will result in stultification. Explication is built on a model of a linear path of learning, of progress, and, as such, other divergent outcomes or experiences (dissensus) exist outside this linear path. In Tabitha's lesson, there was no suggestion of learning outcomes or intentions and no discussion of progress but rather multiple and equally valid interpretations of a shared text.

In sum, although practice varied considerably, brainstorming for most of the teachers in the study provided opportunities for emancipation and dissensus, through the use of books and other stimuli which became the 'third thing'. Furthermore, the positioning of the teacher as co-learner rather than master explicator was utilised in brainstorming in a similar fashion to Jacotot's universal teaching. Such repositioning challenged the power relationships in class, where students were just as knowledgeable, than the teacher, or more so, especially when brainstorming activities involved fantasy worlds, books or

personal experiences linked to the student. In the next section, the emancipatory potential of collaboration in creative writing practice is explored.

## Collaborative writing

*In the class of Year 3 and 4 students, there's a quiet buzz of excitement. They've organised themselves into 'collaborative' groups, forming five groups, each one having 5 or 6 members. Each group gets an ipad and the groups begin to cluster around these. Most students are standing. The teacher puts a visual prompt or story starter up on the screen. Today, it's a painting of a creature from Greek mythology. It's actually a picture of the Titan, Typhon, who in this depiction is half snake and half giant, fighting a tiny glowing figure floating in the air. The tiny figure is Zeus, but the students don't know or possibly won't recognise either of them, and the teacher won't tell them either. The only clues as to the identities of these two gods is that Zeus appears to be surrounded by lightning bolts. The teacher has no idea what they will make of it.*

*Some of the students have already started, despite the teacher's instructions to wait until everyone is ready. They've done this before and they are most eager to start. The visual prompt is a moment in time. The students have to create a narrative based on what they think is happening in the picture at that precise moment. The rules are simple: everyone writes. They take turns to write a sentence each and then pass the ipad to the next member of the group. The others are encouraged to advise and suggest changes.*

*The teacher tells them to go for it, starting the stopwatch on the screen. They only have 10 minutes and then a further 5 minutes to edit. The teacher spends most of that time rotating around the groups, prompting, encouraging, jollying them along. That's the teacher's job, the only role in the activity – to motivate or inspire their students.*

Collaborative writing is another creative writing strategy used by primary teachers. This strategy manifests when students work in pairs or small groups to produce a text, sharing responsibility for both the process and final product (Herder, Berenst, de Glopper, & Koole, 2018). Students take turns to write, usually on a topic of their choosing, or students can be assigned different roles like 'writer' or 'editor'. In my own practice, I ask each student to write one sentence and then pass it on to the next writer in the group. Group members are encouraged to comment on the writing of other group members, giving them feedback and feedforward whilst they are writing. Collaborative writing can take place using more traditional methods such as pen and paper, or can be facilitated through the use of new media in the form of notebooks or tablets.

De Bernardi and Antolini (2006), investigating motivation in argumentative writing through pre- and post-discussions with students, found that collaborative writing had a positive effect on learning, interest and motivation to write. Students expressed greater motivation, decreased anxiety and a higher sense of self-efficacy. In the context of

creative writing, Sawyer (2009), approaching the topic from a sociocultural perspective, argues that creative writing as an individual pursuit is a myth, and there exists a bias to focus on the kinds of writing that align with the myth, ignoring other forms that do not:

> the spoken word poems composed for poetry jams; successful romance novels, which some of the best writers can generate several times each year; the script of a successful situation comedy or movie, which is generated by a staff of writers, often in collaboration with the actors; wikis, online texts that are collaboratively generated; and "fan fiction," alternative versions of popular novels (often science fiction) that are written by fans. Theories of creative writing must be capable of accounting for all of these genres, and accounting for these genres requires a fundamentally collaborative theory of writing. (Sawyer, 2009, p. 177)

Social dimensions can also increase students' motivational levels. Included within these social dimensions are curiosity, decision making, sharing of personal beliefs and theories about the world (De Bernardi & Antolini, 2006). Social collaboration can also raise feelings of self-efficacy and motivation in students. By watching others work successfully on a task, group members or partners can be inspired by the belief that 'if they can do it, so can I' (Raedts, Rijlaarsdam, van Waes, & Daems, 2006).

Shared experiences are often used by teachers for collaborative writing. A teacher participant, Alicia, for example, used shared experiences in order to motivate creative writing through the experiential shared aesthetic of tasting lemons:

> we even did breaking down the five senses. I remember we did feel right at the start of the year and my husband has one of those Shakti mats, so I got all the kids to stand on it – of course it hurts – and then write about how that felt. Then we did taste and we all tasted lemons. So it's just about ... because I say to them quite a lot, like I could have shown you a clip of someone eating a lemon and got you to write about it, or I could have got you to actually taste it and what would make it easier to write about it? So giving them that experience – Alicia.

An aesthetic experience such as this is where "the aesthetic educator deploys all the senses to stimulate an aesthetic response" (F. Gilbert, 2016, p. 13). Freire regarded an experience such as this as the "reciprocal relationship between word and the world" (F. Gilbert, 2016, p. 13), where a relationship exists between writing and physical objects and 'hands-on' experiences that provide motivation or inspiration to write. Aesthetic experiences like Alicia's lesson can also highlight the differences in the interpretation of experience. In other words, students will have a unique or different take on the experience of eating a lemon. Some may like it, some may not. As such, creative writing practices such as aesthetic experiences are 'weak' and risky (Biesta, 2016) educational practices because the teacher cannot predict the outcome. For example, F. Gilbert (2015) used the aesthetic

experience of tasting candy (called lollies or sweets elsewhere) to motivate creative writing, noting that the whole lesson "felt risky to me" (p. 76). Risky aesthetic experiences provide opportunities for students to express themselves through their writing, and teachers can do so using a variety of techniques such as drumming or finger-tapping to get students to understand the rhythm of a poem; drawing pictures in response to a narrative passage or acting out the written word (F. Gilbert, 2016).

Other scholars argue that the senses are a natural source of information, one that does not require explanation. For example, one of the arguments that Hattie and Yates (2013) make in regard to how we learn is that we do so naturally from exposure to information derived from our senses. When this argument is applied to certain creative writing strategies, such as a shared aesthetic experience, for example, where students are encouraged to use their senses, the students are doing so 'naturally', without explanation from the teacher. The students are not using the teachers' knowledge, but their own, in effect, taking ownership of their own knowledge, something Tanya describes:

> do physical things with the kids or go and collect leaves. Get the kids to talk about it. Go and sit outside. How does the grass feel? Look at the clouds. That kind of thing.

Some of the teachers in this study, rather than being fearful of utilising risky teaching practices where there was a danger of losing control, utilised collaborative writing in different ways, combining several different creative writing practices. When combined with other creative writing tools or practices, collaborative writing can be a versatile and adaptable tool. For example, Carol used new media in the form of an online document combined with a type of collaborative writing that created a "whole big dialogue" with her students. Using the *Wind in the Willows* as the catalyst for writing, Carol posted questions to clarify understanding of various archaic expressions and phrases in the book:

> I think one of my favourite things that I ever had, and it is relating to reading again, it seems to come back to that, is that I was reading *Wind in the Willows* with a group of students and we had an online document where I put lots of questions up around the story of the *Wind in the Willows* and there was also, because it was quite an old story, there was a lot of words that the kids didn't really understand because different time and different place. So we worked together to uncover a lot of the expressions and phrases within the *Wind in the Willows* and it got to the stage in the document that the kids were going home and continuing it, because it was online they were able to access it – Carol.

After a while, the students continued working on it at home without Carol's input. The students began talking amongst themselves about the story, leaving the teacher out of the conversation altogether. Biesta's (2017a) interpretation of Rancière's work in *The*

*Ignorant Schoolmaster* (1991) is that the teacher, whilst no longer acting as 'master explicator', still has a central role to play in emancipatory education as 'master'. The teacher's role, Biesta argues, is to interrupt the students' denial of their own freedom, making the students realise that they are capable and intelligent (Biesta, 2017a). Carol's use of questioning is an example of the emancipatory potential of creative writing and the repositioning of the teacher as *master* rather than *master explicator*:

> There was one part of the story about Toad being trapped in jail and about some of things that had happened and the kids just went home and they were writing to each other about the whole thing that had happened and why Toad had ended up in jail. A whole big dialogue ended up taking place in this online document between these kids and then just learning together around what had happened and then asking each other questions. When you read it, it was this amazing powerful piece of learning that they then continued to talk about and shape the next day and in fact for weeks later – Carol.

What this vignette illustrates is that the master (*teacher*, rather than the *master explicator*), has two roles or acts. The first is that the master demands speech from their students (the manifestation of their intelligence) and, second, verifies that this intelligence work is done with attention. My interpretation of 'attention' is that the work is done with due care and thought. This is not to say that the teacher operates in a Socratic, question and answer format, leading the student down a path to a point already known by the master. The Socratic method can lead to learning, but not emancipation (Rancière, 1991). Emancipation is seized when one teaches oneself (Rancière, 1991) rather than when someone is taught by another. Even though the students are effectively undertaking 'self emancipation', they are not doing so without the presence of a teacher, whose role is still significant and important. The difference is that this teacher is an emancipatory teacher rather than a stultifying one. The emancipatory teacher is ignorant and teaches without communicating. Such a teacher urges/forces/suggests/encourages students to use their assumed equality of intelligence.

Carol's collaborative creative writing strategy served various functions of education, because it gave students an opportunity to improve their skills, interact socially with others, and pursue ideas of freedom and independence. Storch (2011) has demonstrated that learners embrace collaboration much more readily when using new media in collaborative writing than they would if they were, for example, using pen and paper. Furthermore, Vass (2007), in the context of utilising collaborative writing in the primary creative writing classroom, also notes how collaborative writing can be used for mutual inspiration, collective and imaginative brainstorming.

Another teacher, Tabitha, used her educational wisdom and experience to adapt her collaborative writing practice to give opportunities for her students to share their work:

> You don't necessarily just have to read what you've written; you can just chat about your ideas and what you're going to write about and then again, we'd do the sharing. That was really cool with that class. I had one boy who was writing a chapter book, essentially, and each time he tried to incorporate the picture somehow, and so every week everyone was like, Chad, Chad, you've got to read your next chapter, what happens next, we want to find out. That was really cool – Tabitha.

In this scenario, the other students became spectators, listening to Chad's work as it was read out. In relation to the arts and their connection to emancipation, Rancière (2007) discusses his theory of the emancipated spectator, where this figure, rather than being a passive observer, is an active observer, and in doing so he creates a symmetry between the artist and the spectator. By art, Rancière implies the visual arts and the theatre (drama), and this definition can be extended to creative writing. The emancipated spectator can see the art's inner secrets, freeing them as spectators from power structures to see the truth or how things really are (Skarpenes & Sæverot, 2018).

The experiences of the emancipated spectator are as valuable as the art themselves. When this occurs, emancipation is possible. In reference to creative writing, when others read or listen to other students' creative writing pieces and are then invited to share their thoughts, does this then make the creative writing emancipatory for the spectator? The experiences of the teachers in this study reveal that most, if not all, of the teachers gave their students opportunities to read or listen to other students' creative writing pieces. Furthermore, teachers often asked students to provide feedback on other students' work. As such, do these students become 'emancipated spectators?' Moreover, during the process of creating the piece of creative writing, the writer brings their own perceptions, views, knowledge and emotions to their writing, potentially inviting emancipation as an artist and not just as spectator.

There is a distinction here between the activity of the artist and the passivity of the spectator (Rancière, 2007), where viewing (or, in this case, listening) is an action that can transform the distribution of the sensible, because the spectator can act like the pupil or the scholar and, by doing so, can verify their intelligence. If educators wish to use art (such as creative writing) to contribute to the development of political subjectivity, the work should stand for itself, rather than have layers of interpretation (from a master explicator) lashed to it. In other words, the spectator (or reader), should do their own work rather than let someone else tell them what to think: "Art emancipates or literature

emancipates when it doesn't tell us how to use art or literature— how we have to understand, how we have to see, how we have to read, and what we have to understand" (Rancière, 2008, p. 181). Such a view does not suggest that students' interpretations are thoughtless or banal (Rancière, 2008). Indeed, students' interpretations are just as valid as any other. The teacher, using their will, demands students verify their intelligence by asking questions, and these answers or interpretations will prove to the teacher the equality of the students' intelligence.

The interpretation or meaning of a piece of art by a spectator (the 'third thing' of art) is owned by no one (Rancière, 2009), and is not dependent on knowledge transmission by the artist. This 'third thing' creates an emancipatory educational space because it has the perspective of neither the teacher nor the student (Fryer, 2015). Art – for instance, a piece of creative writing, whether it be a narrative or poem or a play – allows new relationships to be created and the meaning to be open to interpretation (Fryer, 2015). This is particularly true in collaborative writing where the relationship between author and audience becomes blurred, as the participants are both author and audience, artist and spectator. Furthermore, when the teacher is involved as a 'fellow writer' in the classroom, the lines between teacher and student also become blurred. Who then is the spectator and who the artist?

Fryer (2015), in discussing Rancière's 'third thing' in the context of process drama, argues that experimental practitioners offer mutual learning for both spectator and performer by pulling the spectators away from where they have been, and bringing them into the new space created by the practitioners. In such a way: "The spectator is brought face-to-face with a new, artificial world being created from the fragments of the process. The spectator then attempts to assimilate, or 'process', the 'third thing' of the performance and its process into their own world" (Fryer, 2015, p. 333).

Creative writing itself can function as a 'third thing' that opens up a different way of seeing, thinking and being. Such writing may be difficult to define and measure and "remain tantalisingly out of reach for artist, spectator, teacher and student" (Fryer, 2015, p. 335). The creation of a piece of creative writing is both an expression of something to an audience but also an exploration of something for the writer. Through creative writing, the emancipated student/teacher/artist and spectator are exposed to a subjective pedagogical process where not only are their own experiences valued, but they are challenged in regard to what they know (Fryer, 2015), opening up new spaces and ways of thinking. Such a process can challenge the hierarchy of conventional pedagogy.

Conventional pedagogy, where the ‘distribution of the sensible’ is characterised by more easily defined and quantifiable outcomes, where “input matches the output” (Biesta, 2016), can be planned for and both student and teacher know their roles and status.

## Emancipation through brainstorming and collaborative writing

This chapter has focused on two creative writing practices; that is, brainstorming and collaborative writing. These practices were chosen because they are amongst the most popular creative writing practices used by teachers and were used by every teacher in this study, including myself. Throughout this chapter, I have used the stories told by the participants to illustrate how they used the creative writing practices of brainstorming and collaborative to facilitate creative writing.

The questions this research seeks to investigate are how teachers teach creative writing and how these practices can be emancipatory. In this chapter, I have explored the emancipatory potential of brainstorming and collaborative writing. What this chapter revealed is that these teacher practices can be emancipatory and can reduce inequality. Teachers in this study did not act as part of Rancière’s police order, rejecting such policing even though it was evident through requirements from senior management. Teachers were committed to being collaborative, reinforcing equality through disobedience. Participants all noted the effects of accountability pressures, indicating that they did not feel like they had enough time to teach creative writing. Such accountability pressures policed the distribution of the sensible – and yet, teachers were able to use the creative writing strategies of brainstorming and collaborative writing to mitigate against these pressures.

The teachers in this study used brainstorming to gather ideas in writing, but this technique was also used to control and structure creative writing, on the surface trying to structure something that sometimes defies structure. This can create a tension between constraint and freedom, and this tension appears to actually invite chaos, risk, creativity and Rancière’s dissensus, where teachers use this tension to produce creativity and creative writing. Teachers in this study managed to balance these opposing forces in order to foster creativity.

Brainstorming often positioned teachers as ‘ignorant’ in terms of the subject matter, and such practices effectively minimised stultification because the teacher was just another inquirer amongst other inquirers. Students were not evaluated on the acquisition of

knowledge, and teachers were recording the collective dialogue rather than evaluating the content. By knowing less than their students during brainstorming session, teachers were using learning resources (such as books, images, art, stories) as ‘third things’. The use of ‘third things’ appeared to be a commonplace practice amongst teachers in this study, and such ‘things’ are, following Rancière, emancipatory because they are alien to both the teacher and the student. Such practices can challenge traditional teacher authority, and the teacher as the sole source of knowledge (Rancière, 1991).

The stories of the participants suggested that they were using their will to persuade students to verify their equality of intelligence. According to Rancière, this use of a teacher’s will can act in a way that frees students. Brainstorms provided opportunities for multiple interpretations, none of them more right than any other, redistributing the sensible and creating dissensus, rather than a predictable outcome from a learning intention, matching inputs to outputs. Such opportunities Biesta regards as ‘weak’, and they are, in fact, desirable in education, because education should always entail risk and the unknown.

When the students possess the knowledge, the traditional adult–child relationship, in which the adult often assumes the position of dominance, authority and superiority over the child, is changed. Ignorance can then challenge the traditional adult–child relationship where intellectual equality is the point of departure, and the teacher is no longer the source of knowledge. In fact, the point of departure is where the child is more knowledgeable than the adult and is able to verify this through their creative writing, overturning traditional power relationships. Describing fantasy worlds for example, can be outside a teacher’s knowledge and so the teacher becomes dependent on the student for guidance. Such worlds can also operate as ‘third things’. When such knowledge, things or the creation of text are treated as equal, dissensus can arise because such knowledge is in defiance of the police order and traditional ways of examining children (such as cognitive development theories).

Aesthetic experiences were used by teachers in emancipatory ways, where students can naturally derive information from senses, rather than having such experiences explained to them. Using such experiences, children were given opportunities by teachers to read out and share their work, and the students listening took on the role of emancipated spectators who were active rather than passive observers, able to comment on and discuss their interpretation of the work of others. The experiences of the emancipated spectator are, Rancière argues, as valuable as the art themselves. When this occurs, emancipation

is possible. Rancière suggests that the interpretation or meaning of a piece of art by a spectator (the 'third thing' of art) is owned by no one (Rancière, 2009), and is not dependent on knowledge transmission by the artist. This 'third thing' creates an emancipatory educational space because it has neither the perspective of the teacher nor the student (Fryer, 2015).

Emancipatory education can produce the opposite, that is stultification, because the teacher who strives for emancipation can be so directive and controlling, in order to steer students to the 'right' outcome, that they leave little room for intellectual freedom. In contrast to this view, stories from teachers in this study related how students were not told how to interpret the 'brainstormed' ideas that had been collectively formulated. These stories illustrated how such practices can potentially interrupt the traditional hierarchy and ownership of knowledge, because no one individual, including the teacher, can profess ownership of the brainstorm. Such contributions and equality do rely, however, on the teacher being able to relinquish control, which was illustrated in the stories of teachers using their will to provide students with opportunities to explore unknown possibilities, rather than meeting a set and pre-determined learning outcome.

Although I have suggested that brainstorming and collaborative writing can be used for emancipatory purposes in the creative writing classroom, challenges still remain as to how to invite emancipatory education into schools. To encourage a school or classroom programme to instigate emancipation is to enter into the field of the police in terms of both policy and pedagogy (Means, 2011). Rancière argues that we can never fully escape police orders (Rancière, 2015). However, that is not to say that educational structures and systems cannot be transformed through creative collaboration in order to enact human freedom. Such change requires teachers to develop emancipatory forms of pedagogy that start from the point of equality. These emancipatory forms of pedagogy are embodied by the use of brainstorming and collaborative writing, where both practices verify the equality of intelligence because all students speak and are heard.

In the next chapter, I will explore the creative writing practices of freewriting and the use of new media in relation to the work of Rancière and Biesta's functions of education, and how such practices can defy the police order and create dissensus.

**Narrative break: Educational virtuosity**

> The study of the virtuosity of other teachers can take many different forms. It can be done in the classroom through the observation of the ways in which teachers make embodied and situated wise educational judgements – or at least try to do so. We have to bear in mind, though, that such judgements are not always obvious or visible – so there is also need for conversation, for talking to teachers to find out why they did what they did. This can be done on a small scale – teacher students interviewing teachers about their judgments and their educational virtuosity – but it can also be done on a bigger scale for example through life-history work with experienced teachers, so that we get a sense not only of their virtuosity but perhaps also of the trajectory through which they have developed their educational virtuosity throughout their career. (Biesta, 2016, p. 136)

*Student Teacher [ST]: I enjoyed watching you teach writing today*

*Associate Teacher [AT]: Thanks*

*ST: On that note, I have a few questions. You did a moment in time for a warmup writing exercise. Would you normally do that?*

*AT: Sometimes. Sometimes not. It depends on the kids and what mood they are in. The thing I like about the moments in time, is you're never quite sure what will come out of it.*

*ST: What do you mean?*

*AT: I mean, that I can never predict what sort of writing I will get out of the kids. It's dependent on a lot of factors, most of which are hard to keep track of. For instance, in the past, I have helped them brainstorm ideas for starters, worked through possible metaphors and similes, personification and so on. On other days, I'll give them nothing. Some days I'll give them a time or word limit, other days I won't. Some days, I'll give them some vague criteria like their writing has to have the word "sabretache" in it but not tell them what it means. Which will increase their writing vocabulary. Or tell them they aren't allowed to use certain letters or certain words. Or only allowed to use certain words a few times which will tighten their writing up and make them reconsider repetition or alternative words. Or they can make up their own criteria and others have to guess. Some kids need more scaffolding and support than others and there have been days when I'll sit with them to help get them started. Variety keeps the kids interested, but I always bring it back to purpose, like the necessity of producing text quickly, for instance, like they've just been called upon to make a speech. But, equally, you'll be surprised by what they can produce with the right incentive.*

*ST: Incentive?*

*AT: Sure. Which can be almost anything. Getting to read their story aloud. Being class leader for the day. Free choice. Go to lunch early. Go see their favourite teacher and show them their work. Or the Principal. Email it to mum and dad. The list goes on. I try to find things to incentivise them. Sometimes I like to think I encourage them with the force of my personality.*

*ST: What other types of writing warmups do you, would you or could you use?*

*AT: Anything really. I don't plan for them. It really depends, as I've said, on the kids, on their mood, what they want, on my mood, what feels right to do. What the weather is doing.*

*ST: What the weather is doing?*

*AT: Sure. If it's a sunny day, we'll go outside and write about what we see, or hear, or smell or taste. Sometimes I just ask them to write whatever they feel like. It can be a feeling or a thought or a question. I don't put limitations on them. If you limit the input, you limit the output.*

*ST: What else do you do?*

*AT: Some days, they like to pick an object around the class, write about it, describing it without telling anyone what it is and then the rest of the class has to guess. They can pick something of their own too, like something personal if they prefer. Other days, they can describe some aspect of a partner – like their hair for instance. That usually has them descend into fits of laughter but it can take a serious turn too, so I use it with caution.*

*ST: Why do you do these things? Is it because of past experiences i.e. they've worked in the past or do you constantly try out different things?*

*AT: Sometimes I'll base an activity on something that I've tried before, but I'll usually change it up so the kids don't do the exact same thing and therefore, won't produce exactly the same thing they did the last time. Other times, I'll just wing it – make something up.*

*ST: Do you plan for that?*

*AT: I used to when I first started teaching, but now I don't feel I need to. I like to think that my experiences in the classroom have given me a certain judgement. You might even say a 'feeling' about what is the right thing to do.*

*ST: So after your writing warm-up, I noticed you got the students into writing groups for collaborative writing. Do you always use writing groups?*

*AT: Hardly ever. Basically only for collaborative writing because I kind of need to. I've found writing groups don't always work. Don't get me wrong, they can be useful, but you do need to 'read the room'. Some days, I'll know that groups aren't going to work because of the dynamic in the class and so I won't use them. Or they won't work from a time perspective. Or the kids are just tired. Or hot. Or hungry. On the odd occasions that I do use them, it'll be because of something we just did, which will make me think of something that we need to do. It always goes back to purpose – the kids are doing these things for a reason, and we always discuss the reasons.*

*ST: Can you give me an example?*

*AT: Sure. For instance, in a shared book, we might have come across some dialogue. Then I'll ask them what they make of it, who's speaking and so on, and then I act ignorant so they are doing all the thinking am I'm just recording.*

*ST: Do you ever make mistakes? That is, do lessons sometimes go bad?*

*AT: All the time.*

*ST: So what do you do?*

*AT: I change tack. Pivot, if you will. I'll see that something isn't working and either change it or flag it altogether and do something completely different.*

*ST: What do you mean by that?*

*AT: For example, the other day I'd read out a character description from* The Twits *by Roald Dahl. They're very vivid so excellent for character descriptions and we discussed why we were doing this, i.e., it would help them describe their own characters. And we brainstormed the character traits of the Twits such as what they looked like, what their personality was like, what they smelt like etc. But, when the kids went off to start working on these character descriptions, I could tell they weren't fully engaged.*

*ST: How could you tell?*

*AT: The noise levels, the amount of kids walking around, half of them hadn't even got their books out. The ones that had, had only just begun too. So all the hallmarks of a good lesson gone bad.*

*ST: So what did you do?*

*AT: I stopped them and got their attention. I then changed it so they could describe ANY character they wanted to. This could be a character from a movie, TV, a book, a comic – anywhere. Sure, I gave them the option of continuing on with the Twits but only a couple took me up on the offer. The rest really got into it. Someone suggested that they would be better presented as diagrams i.e. pictures with arrows displaying characteristics and I said, sure, why not?*

*ST: Did you get some good writing out of it?*

*AT: Some produced some good work, others I could tell just weren't completely invested in the activity. So next time I'll change it.*

*ST: Change it to what?*

*AT: Don't know yet. It will depend.*

*ST: On what?*

*AT: Don't know that either. It's like how Forrest Gump describes a box of chocolate: "You never know what you're going to get."*

> There are no guarantees whatsoever … that what has worked in the past will also work in the future. Such knowledge can at most give us possibilities for action, but not rules. … While it may therefore have the possibility to inform our judgements, it cannot replace our judgements about what needs to be done. (Biesta, 2016, p. 131)

# CHAPTER 7: FREEWRITING AND THE USE OF NEW MEDIA IN THE CREATIVE WRITING CLASSROOM

> It is thus logically up to me to defend a most unreasonable position: That the most important quality of a schoolmaster is the virtue of ignorance. (Rancière, as cited in Bingham & Biesta, 2010, p. 8)

Through this statement, Rancière expresses his view that the most important quality of a teacher is ignorance, and that this view is unreasonable, challenging an orthodoxy and the modern logic of emancipation where the teacher knows more than the student. In this chapter, utilising the Rancièrean concept of ignorance, I examine the possibility that this view is both reasonable and possible, through exploring how the creative writing practices of freewriting and the use of new media are employed in the Aotearoa New Zealand primary classroom. Other Rancièrean concepts are explored in the same context; that of emancipation, inequality, 'master explication', the 'third thing', and 'universal teaching'. Biesta's three functions of education (Biesta, 2016) and the notion of education as 'weak' act as a second level of theorisation. In a similar fashion to the previous chapter, the practices of the 10 teacher participants as well as my own creative writing practice are theorised through these concepts.

This chapter reveals that these creative writing practices, despite Rancière's attestations that emancipation is not possible in the classroom, can produce what Biesta (2016) regards as 'individuation' and emancipation, especially when the teacher is 'disobedient' and 'takes risks'. The practice of freewriting is examined first, followed by new media and its applications in the creative writing classroom.

## Freewriting

*It's very quiet in the classroom, almost unnaturally so, the only sound the slight tick and tap of a keyboard. The students are at their desks or on the floor or in the library corner. A couple are even under their desks. In every one of their hands is a pen or paper or a tablet or some sort of device. A passer-by or a visitor to the classroom might mistakenly think that the students are taking a test or that the class is being run by some strict demagogue that does not allow talking. The reality couldn't be further from the truth.*

*The students in this class are freewriting.*

*The teacher is freewriting too, occasionally looking up just to make sure everyone is happy. They seem to be. Some of the students are frowning, concentrating hard, others are smiling and the teacher tries to imagine what they are thinking. The teacher puts her head down again and continues to write. What is she writing?*

*This, she is writing this.*

*Out of her peripheral vision, she can see that a couple of her students are watching her, checking to see if she's writing too. She tries not to smile, knowing that they'll want her to read out what she's written in order to confirm her diligence. Not that she minds. This teacher is happy to share, just as she's happy for others not to. Equally, she knows some of her students will want her to read what they've written, even though she will never mark it or judge it in any way, and even though there is an implicit understanding that freewriting is usually not shared or read by others.*

*The teacher checks the time. Still 5 minutes to go. What to write about? Searching for inspiration, she stares out the window. The trees, standing amidst mounds of wet, decaying leaves, are shaking, buffeted by a strong wind. She suppresses a shudder. It looks cold out there. She'd hate to be outside right now, but unfortunately, she knows that she will be shortly. She's on outside duty at morning tea which is only about 10 minutes away. Part of her hopes it will rain. That will mean that the students will be trapped inside at morning tea but it also means that she won't have to brave the elements either. Does that make her selfish, she wonders? Possibly, but also pragmatic as well. She's forgotten her rain jacket today which means suffering in the cold. She wonders idly if her students know what pragmatic means? When she reads this out loud, someone will inevitably ask what it means. Or will they? Perhaps they will surprise her. They often do.*

An important addition to the writing teacher's arsenal and a widely used tool to teach creative writing, is the concept of freewriting. Freewriting is a creative writing strategy where students write for a specified time without stopping or making corrections, and without concern for quality, sentence structure or mechanics of writing (Glynn & Muth, 1994; Grigoryan & King, 2008). The idea of freewriting is to constantly write, without planning or armed with preconceived ideas, getting the words down with little concern for correct vocabulary or punctuation, and paying no heed to the quality of the end result (Glynn & Muth, 1994). Such writing is often conducted for a specified time without stopping or making corrections (Grigoryan & King, 2008).

Freewriting is a form of 'universal teaching' because it does not require a teacher to explain every concept or process, and the locus of authority is decentred, effectively democratising writing instruction, where the students possess the power (Bean & Elbow, 2009) and take control over the process, and who determine the meaning of words:

> Many people are now trying to become less helpless, both personally and politically: trying to claim more control over their own lives. One of the ways people most lack control over their own lives is through lacking control over words. Especially written words. (Elbow, 1998, p. 1)

Rancière reminds us that the functions and meaning of words are often determined by the police order. But such functions and meanings vary from person to person, including children who create their own interpretations:

> The human animal learns everything as he has learned his mother tongue, as he has learned to venture through the forest of things and signs that surrounds him, in order to take his place among his fellow humans – by observing, comparing one thing with another thing, one sign with one fact, one sign with another sign. (Rancière, 2007)

Who then determines what words are correct and whether their usage is appropriate? In some cases, such control is a function of the school, classroom and/or teacher. And yet activities exist that can challenge such control. Freewriting, for example, has the potential to redistribute the sensible because it gives students an element of control over expression and, as such, fosters ideals such as autonomy, liberty, and democracy (Bean & Elbow, 2009). As an extension of this, freewriting can lead to emancipation. Ideas produced in freewriting can be incorporated into other, larger pieces of writing or just used as an exercise to 'limber up' the writing brain and get the 'creative juices' flowing, and such writing gives students space to explore new forms of expression, which in turn may lead to new ideas and feelings (Nathan, 2003).

Without the restrictions of planning or the hindrance of a lack of knowledge of surface features, the writer utilising freewriting can experience fluency and be successful, and this can serve to motivate writers by making the experience pleasurable (Nelson, 2007). Elbow (1989) refers to this fluency as "getting rolling," "getting steaming along," "a door opening," "getting warmed up," "juices flowing" or "sailing" (p. 60). Such a state could be referred to as 'flow', a state of timeless-seeming concentration and happiness when an individual's whole attention is thoroughly absorbed in the act of creation (Csikszentmihalyi, 2014). The acquisition of flow is supposedly a state of mind in which writers are able to exert a considerable amount of effort whilst also being fully engaged and absorbed in the process (S. Kaufman & Kaufman, 2009). Flow in writing is achieved when students attempt "painful, risky, difficult activities that stretch the person's capacity and involve an element of novelty and discovery" (p. 110).

In the primary creative writing classroom, flow and freewriting, I believe, are linked and the teacher can use their will to encourage students to experiment in such practices. My interpretation of the teacher's role in the creative writing classroom, is to provide opportunities for the students to verify their intelligence. They can do so by using creative writing strategies that *invite* and encourage dissensus and new ways of thinking, revealing

voices unheard or marginalised, inviting students to verify their equality of intelligence. Such practices can be emancipatory because they utilise educational practices that do not require the teacher to act in an explanatory manner, a teacher who 'shows' or instructs students on ways to write that lead to emancipation. Like storytelling, Rancière considers writing as an important way to verify intelligence and confirm equality:

> Writing, as I understand it, rests on the presupposition of equality. To write means to consider that anyone and everyone is the legitimate addressee of your discourse and, at the same time, that yours is the discourse of a researcher addressing his peers. (Rancière, 2017, pp. 195-196)

Because writing operates on the presupposition of equality, writing can be viewed as an act of dissension, and freewriting even more so, especially when students are writing about something that teachers have no knowledge of (for example, setting a narrative in the world of Minecraft or Roblox). Such writing demonstrates students' cultural knowledge and positions them as legitimate sources of information. Indeed, fantasy worlds like Minecraft can act as a 'third thing', acting as the link between the teacher and students.

The versatility, popularity, use and potential of freewriting is highlighted by the fact that one of my teacher participants, Tabitha, noted that it was the "only creative writing strategy" that was touched on during her ITE:

> I think possibly the only comment was like, oh, freewriting's good for kids because they get to do whatever they want. That was pretty much it … [we] used prompts to get them to be inspired or engaged by something – Tabitha.

Because freewriting facilitates students writing "whatever they want", the product of this strategy can be viewed as art, which has value in and of itself (Rancière, 2007), rather than considered from the viewpoint that art is only produced by 'professional' artists. Such art rallies against the existing hierarchy of traditional or classical art and, as such, can serve as an analogue of politics. Aesthetic art is neither reducible nor quantifiable (Rancière, 2004b), produced by the emancipated who are merely "fellow-men" (or indeed, people) with a soul and feelings to communicate (Rancière, 1991, p. 67). Such art is political because it can play a key role in challenging traditional power structures, giving voice to those who previously had none. Paradoxically, art can exist both inside and outside the existing order (Fryer, 2010):

> Human beings create, as part of life, moments that can be considered artistic. We can create plates of food that have great visual beauty (and isn't the taste a kind of aesthetic experience too?) … The song sung during work can bring tears to a listener's eye. All of these contain an element beyond their

> immediate utilitarian function, of something that lies beyond the everyday. (Fryer, 2010, p. 9)

Such definitions reposition art to include activities, like freewriting, which are capable of redistributing roles, because freewriting creates opportunities to disrupt what is expected, what is considered 'normal' or part of the normal order created by school management. These activities are capable of creating a new divergent community, a community where people take on roles that they had not otherwise been able to adopt. In Rancière's *Proletarian Nights: The workers' dream in nineteenth-century France* (2012), for example, 19th century French workers rebelled against the traditional order and power structures, taking part in activities that they had previously been excluded from. These workers gathered together at night to write poetry and music, to philosophise and discuss matters, thus verifying their equality and defying the police order. Most of the workers were migrants who were largely unseen and unheard but considered their night-time work as their real life. Like these workers, students who engage in freewriting are verifying their intelligence through the production of art. Art *is* politics because it acts to disrupt the police order and the distribution of the sensible in order to create dissensus (Rancière, 2015).

Through freewriting, the politics of aesthetics are revealed, showing that artworks, such as writing, can produce dissensus precisely because they have neither lessons to give nor destinations in mind (Rancière, 2013). Freewriting produces creative writing as a rupture in the normal ways of doing and being because it defies the standard conventions of writing (such as the process model, for example) and, as such, it produces a redistribution of the sensible.

Possibly because it was the only creative writing strategy that Tabitha received direct instruction in, Tabitha utilised this strategy in her classroom, combining freewriting, like many other teachers, with 'moments in time' or 'freeze frames', using a picture prompt to motivate writing. The picture, in Tabitha's case, acted as a 'third thing'. In the logic of emancipation, between the teacher and student there is always a 'third thing' – a book or picture or other object – alien to both and to which they can refer to verify in common what the pupil has seen, what she says about it and what she thinks of it (Rancière, 2009, pp. 14-15). Tabitha makes it clear, however, that the picture was only used for those who needed it. Those who did not were free to write whatever they liked:

> I did freewriting every Friday morning and I would put a picture up and I would say, you can write about the picture if you need some ideas, but if you want to write

> something else you write whatever you want. I think it is a really important thing – Tabitha.

Using a picture as a 'third thing' is experimental practice because freewriting activities do not always utilise images. Some scholars argue that such experimentation in practice is fundamental to creativity (H. Smith, 2020) as is risk taking. Tabitha experimented with her use of freewriting because, while some teachers insist on their students writing constantly, even if they had nothing to say, Tabitha did not "mind if they think about it a little bit, just so long as they're not just so stuck in their heads that they're not able to put anything down".

As explored later in this chapter, throughout her freewriting practice, Tabitha also uses the 'third thing' to create difference, to give voice to those without voice, to give opportunities to share to those who may not have had a chance to be heard otherwise. The focus on a 'third thing' is common to both universal teaching and freewriting. According to Rancière (1991), providing the 'third thing' is one of the roles of the teacher, as seen through Jacotot providing the *Télémaque* to his students. An image can be used as a stimulus and a starting point for students crafting unique texts of their own, without requiring knowledge transmission from the teacher. This 'starting point' can lead students to discuss and/or craft what they believe will happen next. Perhaps they will create an alternative ending or discourse within their new text? Such opportunities were not wasted by Tabitha's students. Indeed, more and more students chose to share their freewriting, a fairly uncommon practice as freewriting is mostly kept to the student or shared with the teacher only:

> it would be the very start of the Friday morning, so the bell would go, they would sit at their desks, they would get their freewriting books out. I would put the photo up on the board, and they would write for 15 minutes. Then we'd all come down into a circle and if you wanted to share your writing, you could. You didn't have to. No one had to. If no one wanted to that day, we moved on. But what I found was as the year went on, more and more kids wanted to read what they'd written because kids like sharing what they've written – Tabitha.

Tabitha made it clear that whatever had been written could be shared – there were no rules and no consequences for breaking them in any case. In effect, freewriting is not policed. The distribution of the sensible is where schools and teachers are expected to operate by the police order (Park, 2021). The police order often determines instructional practices, curriculum, rules and the environment within the school and classroom, such as the use of the process or genre model of writing, and the utilisation of writing measurement tools such as the e-AsTTle writing test. In relation to freewriting, the police

order can determine what types of writing are acceptable and on display (that is, approved by school senior management), while others are not. As such, students and teachers can already have predetermined ideas about the distribution of the sensible to allow for only a particular aesthetics, which is the only one allowed in that space (Park, 2021). Tabitha let her students know that any of their freewriting was allowed and that they were free to write what they wanted and share what they had written, in order to express their unique voice. Furthermore, Tabitha made it very clear to her students that their writing was free from judgement by her or the dictates of senior management:

> Five minute talk time and then 15 minutes, and the rule was I will never read these books if you do not want me to. I said, if you want me to read them privately, you can hand them in, and I'll read them. I'm never going to mark them, I'm not going to correct your spelling, because I didn't want them to be self-conscious. As a kid who really struggled with spelling, I would not use words if I thought that I was going to spell them wrong. So my thing with them was just give it your best chance. Only you need to know what the word is because you're the one that's reading it. So for me, the freewriting was very much that we didn't talk about editing or revising or any of that. It was just your expression of creativity, enjoying what you're writing and enjoying writing at all – Tabitha.

The fact that Tabitha did not read the students' writing if they did not want her to, and did not mark, edit or revise the writing, corresponds with my own experiences of teaching creative writing through the use of freewriting, a practice that gives students control over their written words and, as such, fosters ideals such as autonomy, liberty, and democracy (Bean & Elbow, 2009). Emancipation derives from a rupture in the order of things (Rancière, 2004a), a disruption to the normalised social order, a redistribution of the normal classroom roles and ways of being seen and heard. For example, when students are writing on a teacher-generated topic using a structured process (such as the process approach to writing), ways of being seen and heard are muted. Freewriting, on the other hand, because it is not teacher generated nor structured, becomes a dissensual act that can destabilise traditional hierarchies.

There was also another very practical reason why Tabitha chose to use freewriting as part of her creative writing practice: her students enjoyed it:

> After that first day where they were all like, nooo, we want more time, and they'd often be like, oh, yes, it's Friday. They always loved seeing what the picture was going to be. You've always got a couple of kids who don't like it because they're reluctant writers, but usually by the end – like I had one boy in one of my classes who by the end, he was actually sharing in the group – Tabitha.

Enjoyment was the same sentiment expressed by students through the use of collaborative writing, suggesting that teachers choose creative writing practices because their students

enjoy them. Perhaps students enjoy freewriting so much because it involves 'breaking the rules' or, indeed, has no rules at all. As Bean and Elbow (2009) note: "Freewriting often brings pleasure. There's an unexpectedly subversive dimension here. First, there is the pleasure in breaking rules. As Bourdieu points out, literacy is continual training in having to do things "the right way"" (p. 19).

'Breaking the rules' is dissensus and politics, where politics is "an extremely determined activity antagonistic to policing" (Rancière, 2004a, p. 30). In other words, politics is when activities that have no place in the order become visible and heard. Politics is about difference and resistance to the police order, encompassing notions of democracy and equality (Rancière, 1999). Democracy, then, is about dissensus or difference rather than consensus (Rancière, 2004a). Skregelid (2020) advocates the use of art and educational practices to disrupt the expected, and freewriting has the potential to do just that.

In creative writing scholarship, there are accepted ways of doing, of teaching and learning, for example Labov's narrative arc, where a story follows an accepted progression of orientation, complication, evaluation and resolution (Labov & Waletzky, 1997). In writing in general, there are 'accepted' ways of teaching and learning writing, (for example, the process or product models of writing explored in Chapter 5) ways that are often backed up by evidence-based practice and associated assessment and measurement. Do these ways of teaching and learning limit creativity? Do these explications, explanations and definitions of creative writing and what it looks like stultify learners? I would suggest that they do. Instead, teachers can open up their practice and utilise techniques like freewriting where they step away from their knowledge and let, as Bazzul (2013) puts it, the "rabbits run loose" (p. 7).

Ruitenberg (2011), in reference to contemporary art and art education, notes that Rancière's critique of inequality in contemporary art offers an important cautionary tale for educators who seek to utilise art for emancipatory purposes. In particular, Ruitenberg cautions educators against trying to establish a link between pedagogical input and learning outcome with the goal of emancipation in mind:

> The biggest mistake a teacher can make, in terms of emancipation, is to be attached to a predetermined outcome, an idea of an emancipated state to be reached, and do everything in her or his might to "help" the student reach that state. (Ruitenberg, 2011, p. 221)

Freewriting is a form of emancipatory practice, given that it does not have a learning outcome, goal or, indeed, emancipation in mind. Rancière reminds us that the role of the

teacher is to exert their will over the intelligence of the student. Such a position does not require the teacher to teach specific knowledge in order for a specific outcome to be achieved. Instead, the teacher is urging students to use their intelligence to bring something new into the world; a new way of thinking or being or doing. Biesta (2009) argues that in a classroom where learning intentions match success criteria, there is no reason for communication because there is nothing to learn, and also no possibility of anything new emerging either. Instead, through freewriting, the possibility of weakness, and therefore newness, always exists.

I propose that students enjoy freewriting precisely *because* it is about dissensus and emancipation. According to Freire (1970b), oppression is an unnatural state, a state that Tabitha's students perhaps recognised. As such, they made it clear they wanted to do more of an activity that involved freedom and self-expression. By using freewriting, Tabitha was creating a 'community of writers' (Dobson & Stephenson, 2017), a safe space for her students where they could give voice to their ideas and thought of themselves as writers. Tabitha also made it clear to her students that she also regarded herself as a writer, one of only two in this study who did so. Tabitha notes that one of her goals is to build a "culture of reading is cool and writing is cool", where students have strong identities as writers and a sense of belonging:

> I think especially when you've got other kids around you who are enjoying it and you see that and you're like, okay, it's not uncool to like doing this. And building confidence and building – I'm really big on building a culture of reading is cool and writing is cool. I'm a writer and I love writing and let me tell you about my book and my process, and so the kids look up to it and kind of go, oh – Tabitha.

Bean and Elbow (2009) also note the power of freewriting to enact identity formation, where it "helps students glimpse ways in which their identities are shaped by social forces—at least it does if the freewriting is paired with a chance for reflection" (p. 15). The sense of belonging to a social order or group is potentially enabled by freewriting, despite its 'private' nature. Taking part in the same activity at the same time gives students a feeling of being 'part of something' or a shared group activity. As Elbow (1989) notes:

> Freewriting is always private – by definition, for the sake of safety. But I have come to feel an intriguing link between freewriting and sociability because I so often do this private writing in the company of others – with a class or a workshop. Thus true freewriting "by the book," never pausing, has come in certain ways to feel like a companionable activity: one sits there writing for oneself but hears other people's pens and pencils moving across the paper-people moving in their chairs, sometimes a grunt or sigh or giggle. (p. 51)

Despite students feeling like they are participating in a communal activity, freewriting is more about dissensus than consensus, freedom rather than restriction. For Regina, creative writing was about freedom – the freedom for students to express themselves with no restrictions. The title for this thesis was partially provided by Regina, where she defined creative writing as "the art of making up things," and she was also the second of the two teachers who identified as writers in this study. Although Regina does not refer to this freedom as freewriting, she implies it:

> But what I have seen with creative writing, children are free to express themselves. It's an expressive form of writing. They can go deep and nothing is stopping them. I don't confine them into genre writing or anything, you write for argument or advertising or narrative or something. Just write, just connect with yourself – Regina.

This 'going deep' implies personal feelings or honesty. Students feel like they can express themselves through freewriting in ways that they normally could not. Through my own use of freewriting in the classroom, I encourage personal expression, urging students to be honest, despite the feeling of exposure and risk it creates in both myself and them, where they can express their 'inner self'. Truth can never be told because of the incomplete nature of language (Rancière, 1999). Bingham and Biesta (2010) tell an anecdote about Barbara, an infant whose words do not necessarily correspond to meaning, illustrating Rancière's point that words can mean something completely different to different people. For example, Barbara uses the word 'Lola' to represent not only her dog, but any dog and any creature vaguely dog-sized. Veracity, on the other hand, provides the will to question and speak outside a position of mastery (Means, 2011). Truth, because it is incomplete, must be interrogated, translated, communicated and shared, and this is the journey of the emancipated. Means (2011) believes that emancipation is dependent on the desire to understand and be understood, and veracity is the will to share this understanding. Rancière suggests that the emancipated are, by nature, artists (Means, 2011). Because the truth is impossible to speak, thought can be translated into poetic works, the veracity of which can be communicated to others. Therefore, writing can be used for communication where the writer can "communicate[s] as an artisan: as a person who handles words like tools" (Rancière, 1991, p. 65). Thought is a creative and a shared aesthetic practice of ways of doing and making through words, images, affects and sounds, and, as such, central to democratic politics (Means, 2011).

Elbow (1989), too, notes the feelings of honesty inherent in freewriting and the opportunity it provides to write things he normally would not:

> Finally, I see a drive toward honesty here. I felt stuck in my life. I was willing to write things I couldn't tell others and, indeed, didn't want to tell myself – in hopes that it would make things more bearable. I still feel this at the root of freewriting: that it invites a personal honesty even in academic writing, and thus helps me pursue feelings or misgivings about my thinking that are not possible when I-m writing a draft for the eyes of others. (p. 46)

This sense of self-expression is what Biesta (2020) calls 'individuation'. Elbow (1989) also notes this potential for 'individuation' in some of his freewriting musings: "People who learn to create privacy for themselves: who learn to be private and solitary and tune out others, write only for selves [and] have no interest in the needs and interests and pressures of audience" (p. 49).

Freewriting thus gives students an opportunity to express themselves as individuals. Regina's strong sense of individual identity as a writer also influenced her students who also "began to see themselves as writers" within a community of writers (Locke, 2015). Individual identity, self-perception and self-efficacy are factors that all teachers need to be aware of and respond to. Such awareness will affect the distribution of the sensible, which can be understood as a certain way of feeling, seeing, speaking and acting in the world – that is, what is "capable of being apprehended by the senses" (Rancière, 2004b, p. 85).

Mark's creative writing practice directly affected the distribution of the sensible because, while his freewriting practice suggested a sense of freedom, this freedom was also dependent on students' individual ability. Those students who Mark perceived as more 'capable' were given more opportunities to write creatively in order to extend their learning:

> Those two girls that I've got, I always give those – I've got two girls that are super creative. I just give them free reign a lot of the time just to do whatever they want because they're just so naturally, just got a vibe. I just widen the sandpit for them. I want them to build and play. It's not that I restrict the other kids, but I know that they can handle a bit more just go with it. I can drop ideas and I can go, can you just make this a bit more this or that? They respond to feedback also real differently. I guess I classify them as like the real creative ones – Mark.

Freewriting has the potential to foster and enact equality because it "helps communicate a crucial assumption: that students walk into our classrooms already possessing the core linguistic resources they need to develop as writers" (Bean & Elbow, 2009, p. 18). In other words, freewriting verifies intelligence and equality because students, by taking part in this activity, will realise that they can write without explanation from the teacher. Mark's view that some students were more capable than others implies different

individual conceptions of intelligence (Stamp, 2013). Rancière (1991) argues that there are two very different views of intelligence: that there are differences in intelligence, which can, in effect stultify emancipation; or that there is only one intelligence, a view that can lead to emancipation. Rancière's presupposition is that there is only one intelligence, that humans are all equally intelligent and that it is only force of will that creates differences.

> There aren't two sorts of minds. There is inequality in the manifestations of intelligence by the will for discovering and combining new relations; but there is no hierarchy of intellectual capacity. Emancipation is becoming conscious of this equality of nature. This is what opens the way to all adventure in the land of knowledge. (Rancière, 1991, pp. 26-27)

According to Rancière, some humans have the will to succeed, others do not, even though all humans have the potential to do so. This will can be defined as a certain desire or strong determination to achieve something. Mark, however, seemed to believe that the two girls in his class were "naturally" more creative, implying they had both greater will to succeed and superior critical thinking abilities than other students in the class. In other words, these two students possessed greater intelligence than the other students. Those students Mark deemed to be more creative, he enabled, or gave them more opportunities for freedom, determining that they were more deserving of freedom than others. Mark thought that some students were "naturally better creative writers", corresponding with research that suggests that teachers believe some students are more creative than others (Kettler et al., 2018; Mullet et al., 2016). Such views seem connected, however, with students' enjoyment and that "some students love to write, while others view it as a painful process," (Bifuh-Ambe, 2013, p. 148).

Alicia used freewriting infrequently, not because she did not find it a useful strategy, but because she already had "so many ideas", for example, urging her students to make up their own mythical creatures. Alicia used what Biesta (2016) calls 'educational virtuosity', based on her teaching experience and wisdom, to choose from her quiver of creative writing tools, of which she had many, some of which had emancipatory potential, such as a form of 'hot seating'. Her trials and use of a wide variety of innovative practices seem to align with her views of creativity which was "different thinking" or a "different perspective" and creative writing as a "risk taking" exercise and an "outlet for expression". Elbow (1989) seems to share this view of risk taking, noting that his freewriting practice "cannot ensure safety":

> The moral of the story is that even though freewriting usually helps us concentrate better and enter more fully into our words (not pausing to reconsider our words or worry about reader reactions), it cannot ensure safety and involvement even for an experienced writer like myself. (p. 47)

Alicia was prepared to take risks with her creative writing practice; in other words, Alicia had many tools which she could use, and just one of them was freewriting. In my own practice, I recognise the risk taking involved in the practice of freewriting, considering it to be "uncontrolled and disorganised" (Elbow, 1989, p. 48). This lack of control, in my experience, has the potential to inspire and motivate artistic creativity because it can produce something completely unexpected:

> Unfocused exploring is probably my main use of freewriting: I have a thought, perhaps out of the blue or perhaps in the midst of writing something else, and I give myself permission to pursue it on paper in an uncontrolled way wherever it wants to go – even if it digresses. (Elbow, 1989, p. 48)

Biesta (2016) also acknowledges this lack of control "that comes from the outside and brings something radically new" (p. 52). This sense of something "radically new" is one of the fundamental components of subjectification and emancipation. Freewriting gives students the ability to speak directly, something that Elbow (1989) expresses as follows: "freewriting sometimes helps me as it were to break free from what feels like the heavy mud and clinging seaweed that are clogging my ability to say directly what I already feel I know" (p. 61).

Elbow also acknowledges that freewriting has the potential to produce something surprising or the "frequency of surprise" (Elbow, 1989, p. 65). This production of "surprise" is what Biesta (2016) calls "an act of bringing something new into the world" (p. 11). This sense of creativity or education as a creative act is central to Biesta's thesis:

> I am interested in education as itself a creative act, or, to be more precise, in education as an act of creation, that is, as an act bringing something new into the world, something that did not exist before. I am particularly interested in seeing education as a process that in some way contributes to the creation of human subjectivity. (Biesta, 2016, p. 11)

Through the "creation of human subjectivity", Biesta is urging teachers to utilise unique, interesting or risky practices dependent on their own personal tastes and opinions – in other words, to be creative in their practice. Freewriting, when used as an embodiment of creativity, also invites critical thinking because it often leads to thoughts that are both surprising and which sometimes have the power to dismay us (Elbow, 1989). Such thoughts have political power (Bean & Elbow, 2009), which none of my participants

acknowledged, possibly because freewriting has now become "commonplace, depoliticized, simply a classroom activity—ignored as often as used, and seldom used for its political force" (Bean & Elbow, 2009, p. 1). The potentiality of freewriting was not fully harnessed by my participants, especially in the context of emancipation. Indeed, Bean and Elbow (2009) note the similarities of free speech and freewriting, both seeking to foster "freedom of thought, inquiry, and expression" (p. 2).

In concluding this section on freewriting, my initial hypothesis at the outset of this thesis was that all creative writing teachers would use freewriting as an outlet for freedom and expression. That, however, was not the case. Not all teachers used freewriting for emancipation, although their lack of such a goal sometimes provoked emancipation, even when it was 'accidental' and not the goal of the activity. Such 'accidental' emancipation can be beneficial because, as discussed earlier, sometimes teaching with the goal of emancipation in mind can result in the opposite instead (Ruitenberg, 2011). Some teachers used freewriting more for other purposes such as socialisation or as a useful skill to learn, and to motivate the production of 'more writing'. The emancipatory potential of freewriting is therefore lost:

> We sense that many teachers now see freewriting not as a mode of political action but rather primarily as a technique or exercise for helping students feel more comfortably fluent and generative in writing and to find more ideas about a topic. … we're insisting that freewriting carries an inherent political effect—an effect that is blunted if teachers use it only as an occasional exercise for fluency or invention. (Bean & Elbow, 2009, p. 15)

Although I argue that freewriting has emancipatory potential, I cannot prove or disprove that it is always used in such ways by creative writing teachers. In my own classroom practice, however, my students have a freewriting book which they can use as a creative outlet at any time with the implicit understanding that I can read it only if they allow me. I employ my will, urging my students to "think it, say it, write it". This book is also free from judgement in the form of marking, its existence and use purely for the enjoyment of writing, providing a "safe space for 'dangerous' thoughts and feelings" (Bean & Elbow, 2009, p. 15), a place where students can write out their confusion and articulate thoughts and feelings that they could not otherwise say, to redistribute the sensible and to create difference.

In the next section, I explore the emancipatory potential of new media in creative writing practices.

## New media

*"Look at the picture, Daisy," says the teacher, "and tell me what you see."*

*The eight-year-old girl swivels to take in the large flat screen TV attached to the wall. The image on the screen is pure science fiction; a bleak landscape filled with jagged rocks, mountains like giant dark spikes stabbing at the shattered sky. In the foreground, there is a tiny figure, clad in what appears to be a spacesuit, staring off into the far distance. Just visible near the horizon is what appears to be a wheeled vehicle, fully enclosed as if to withstand vacuum. Standing next to the vehicle are two figures, also wearing spacesuits. It's a freeze frame, a moment in time, an activity this teacher uses regularly to motivate and stimulate creative writing.*

*"I see a planet," says Daisy. The teacher watches her carefully as Daisy's eyes dart about the screen. "It's dark. The rocks look sharp. There is a little girl there. She's lost. I think she's scared."*

*"Why is she scared?" asks the teacher.*

*"Because she's lost her parents."*

*"How did she lose her parents?"*

*"They went in two different directions and the girl didn't know which one to follow so she got confused and didn't follow either of them."*

*"Who's this over here?" asks the teacher, moving over to the screen and pointing at the two figures in the distance.*

*"That's her parents," says Daisy. "She's going to run over to them and they will save her."*

*"How does the girl feel?" says the teacher, moving back to stand at Daisy's side.*

*"Scared and lonely," says Daisy. "And sad."*

*"Why sad?" the teacher asks.*

*"Because her parents didn't stay together and the girl had to try and pick one to follow and she couldn't. But things will get better after she runs over to them and they will stay together as a family and her grandmother will get better."*

*"Where is the grandmother in this picture?"*

*"In the hospital."*

*"In space?"*

*Daisy shakes her head. "No, on Earth."*

*"Ah," says the teacher. "I want you to use your senses to describe this scene. What do you hear, smell, feel, see?*

*"Okay," says Daisy, nodding her head. "I think I understand now."*

*Daisy moves back to her table and begins typing on her tablet. The teacher watches her closely but carefully, so Daisy is not aware of the scrutiny. She glances from time to time at the screen and then alternates typing with staring into the middle distance as she thinks about what she is about to write.*

New media is an important set of tools used by teachers to teach creative writing (Arndt, 2016). New media can come in the form of hardware (tablets, laptops, cameras, etc.) and software (apps, games, programs, online applications, websites, etc.). As a creative writing tool, new media such as tablets or laptops can help writers by effectively removing obstacles, giving writers the experience of success. Research into writing has demonstrated the positive effects of new media (De Bernardi & Antolini, 2006), including the utilisation of such tools in creative writing. New media can help, for example, bridge the gap in surface features such as spelling and punctuation.

The use of new media can facilitate multimodality, where composition uses more than one modality (or modes/media) to achieve its intended purpose; for example, combining several communicative media such as audio, video, photographs or drawings, podcasts, blogs, collages, video or audio essays, comic strips, and storyboards (Darrington & Dousay, 2014) during the production of a text. Images for 'freeze frames' or 'moments in time' are often drawn from the internet, taking the form of pictures used to stimulate writing. New media enables teachers to utilise multimedia sources such as photographs, films, recordings, or text, etc., enabling objects to be decoded or interpreted to help focus student–teacher dialogues, in what Freire (1970a) regards as didactic material or codifications. For example, Freire used *favela*, the word for 'slum', and inserted this word into a picture (slide) depicting students living in the slum. The picture or slide created a 'discussion group' between the teacher and students. The generated dialogue transformed the students' opinion of reality into something more concrete, and thus, argues Freire, could enable emancipation. Codifications were not just pictures or slides for Freire, they also included films, recordings and illustrations, and each one contained meaning for the students (Freire, 1970a).

New media also facilitates collaboration in pairs or groups, and revisions are made easier by sharing documents or printing the document out for all parties to view (De Bernardi & Antolini, 2006). Studies indicate that the use of new media improves both the production of written texts and the enjoyment of collaborative writing (De Bernardi & Antolini, 2006). Not only do these arguments suggest that some teachers use new media for creative writing because of the functionality of new media but they also highlight the

close relationship between new media and socialisation. As such, new media is often used for pair or group work:

> The computer is indeed very suitable for pair work: doing things together is in itself strongly motivating, because roles and tasks can be shared and swapped, and responsibility for the final product can be distributed. … Participants' attitudes towards collaborative working, Internet-based instruction, and transfer of problem-solving skills were positive. (De Bernardi & Antolini, 2006, p. 190)

New media such as Google docs, for example, enables students to work on texts as a group, sometimes taking turns to write, offering immediate feedback and suggestions to other group members either remotely or in the classroom. This form of writing is well suited to creative writing because there is rarely a shortage of ideas in a group forum. Peer editing is also a strategy based on sociocultural theory, where human learning is a social process (Vygotskiĭ & Cole, 1978). Based on my own classroom practice, I have 'peer editors', students recognised both by myself and their peers as being those who work well collaboratively, and who can edit effectively, students who are viewed as 'More Knowledgeable Others' (MKO) (Vygotskiĭ & Cole, 1978) by the other students in the class. An important distinction to make here is that these peer editors are not necessarily more 'intelligent', than the other students, but potentially possessed of a greater will to succeed or achieve.

New media also assists the production of shared texts in English as a second language (ESL) learning. Recent research into using new media in this context has noted that due to the widespread availability of new media-enhanced writing platforms, such as wikis, blogs and shared documents (for example, Google docs), social collaboration in writing has increased dramatically (Yim & Warschauer, 2017). Although this research has been directed towards ESL learners, the findings suggest that collaborative online writing is beneficial because it provides learners with opportunities to communicate in a non-threatening, engaging environment with few restrictions (Yim & Warschauer, 2017). Learners in such environments experience enhanced writing quality, increased writing fluency, a better understanding of audience, the ability to pool knowledge and ideas and socialisation opportunities (Yim & Warschauer, 2017).

The teachers in this study all used new media as a 'tool' to teach creative writing. But how can such a tool assist in the emancipation of students? I argue that, used in certain ways, new media can illustrate Rancière's presupposition of the equality of intelligence and the use of universal teaching to enact emancipation. Utilising new media in creative

writing can create different ways of being or saying, avoiding the production of prescribed learning outcomes which have the tendency to control students' writing.

Whilst some teachers in this study were clearly skill focused, when examined further, this study revealed that creative writing practices using new media had emancipatory potential. At first glance, Alicia, for example, relied quite heavily on the use of new media in her creative writing classroom in what seemed like teaching her students skills that they could utilise in the classroom and/or workplace. However, by combining new media with other creative writing techniques, her practice served many functions. For example, in the excerpt below, she combined the use of new media with a 'moment in time':

> Yes, [I use] a lot of visual prompts, a lot of clips, like YouTube clips, and then a lot of iPad stuff. For a moment of time, we did heaps of slow-motion filming just so that they could get detail, so that was really cool, actually. I definitely feel with narrative there's a lot of their imagination that kids don't get out. When they play, you can see that imaginative play, so they've actually got a lot to give in that – Alicia.

Alicia's recount suggests creative writing is used as an opportunity for social engagement with others because a creative activity like a moment in time is almost always collaborative, and involves students fitting in to social orders or groups in order to work together. Moreover, a 'moment in time', given its freedom from framing and restrictions, is an illustration of universal teaching, where students are encouraged to write what they want as a form of self-expression without attention to structure or meaning.

Alicia's also uses clips as a 'third thing' because the clips are unfamiliar to both teacher and student and open to interpretation:

> I'll tell you one thing I did do which they loved was they had – I just got a war clip but I didn't show them the screen. I just had the sound on and it was like guns and tanks and stuff, and then I got them all under their tables to write and they were like imagining they were in the war and all of this. It was really cool. They loved it. The girls, some of the girls wrote about a fireworks night. They didn't even realise that it was tanks and guns and things. Some of the boys, it was the most amazing stories. Some of them had even written as if they were playing a video game. There's quite different ways to hear it – Alicia.

In this vignette, Alicia is inviting her students to interpret what Freire (1970b) called a 'codification' in any way they like. Alicia provided images or 'clips' for students to interpret, using these 'third things' as objects to verify students' intelligence to the teacher. This intelligence is verified through the use of teacher questioning. The educator does not 'corral' students' work into predefined outcomes (Ruitenberg, 2011) because that would position the teacher as more knowledgeable and the student as less so, and indicate that the intelligence of the student is mistrusted.

Artistic practices are ways of doing and making that can redistribute the distribution of the sensible, and this redistribution appears when students' interpretation of their own work and others is equally as valid as anyone else's (Rancière, 2004b). Students use their own personal skills and experiences in their writing. Thus, equality can emerge in the creative writing classroom by giving students opportunities to freely interpret the 'third thing' provided by the teacher. Alicia made it clear that she also gave her students opportunities to discuss their own work and that of others in an open forum. In such a classroom, where students are not having their own work or that of others explained to them, emancipation can arise. Creative writing practices such as a moment in time encapsulate this redistribution of the sensible, because the students use their experiences, thoughts and feelings to describe what they see.

Using clips as a 'third thing' invites equality between the teacher and student, especially when the intention is not to produce an observation already predetermined by the teacher. Such an intention can lead to education but not emancipation (Rancière, 1991). However, when the observations are not predetermined, the interpretations of images or clips are constructed through individual experiences and impressions and each interpretation is equally valid. The communication of these interpretations, where students talk about their own writing and their experiences and receive feedback from other students, can be emancipatory. Furthermore, according to Jacotot, storytelling is one of the concrete acts that verify intelligence (Rancière, 1991). The very act of the students telling a story based on their own individual interpretation of an audio clip assumes the equality of intelligence, demonstrating "man is a will served by an intelligence" (Rancière, 1991, p. 55). In *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, Jacotot uses three stages to verify intelligence: To see and compare, to repeat and recreate and, finally, forming words and sentences to tell others what has been seen (Rancière, 1991, p. 55). The students in Alicia's anecdote hear and then recreate what they heard using words and sentences to tell others.

'Third things' in the form of images can be more emancipatory if the student has ownership of the image. For example, when students actually choose the images they wish to use for moments in time, this creates a 'symmetric equality', especially when they can bring their own images to school which they can use as a source of inspiration (Skarpenes & Sæverot, 2018). In the vignette below, Tanya makes it clear that her students get to choose their own image:

> But then we mix it up with doing maybe like a week-long lesson … say if it was descriptive writing, we'd show them lots of different images and they get to choose

> an image that is motivating for them. We got pictures of outer space, pictures of a lizard eating a fly with its tongue out, picture of a Chinese New Year festival and they chose one themselves. Each person gets to choose their own image that they want to write about – Tanya.

Some teachers' use of new media did not have seem to have emancipation as a goal at all, which was perhaps inadvertently beneficial, because such a goal suggests a starting point of inequality which can lead to stultification (Ruitenberg, 2011). Carol, for example, used new media as a tool or a learnt skill to enable her students to 'just write' and 'get the words down', suggesting pragmatic usage. Once again, however, this tool for creative writing blurs the boundaries between Biesta's three functions of education, suggesting that teachers use new media in their practice for more than one reason – or perhaps have a focus on one which inadvertently fulfils another function or, indeed, of all three. In the excerpt below, the social aspect of new media appears where the students are writing to "get their message across to other people":

> Yes and I love using things like storyboard that, where there's the cartoon aspect as well for a lot of our kids that struggle to want to write in terms of just lots of words, but they can tell stories through putting lots of pictures together and coming up with concepts around how they can actually get their message across to other people – Carol.

Emancipation here seems to be an inadvertent by-product, and this 'accidental' teaching is Rancière's universal teaching because, in the example above, the teacher was not explaining, was ignorant of the content, utilised a 'third thing', and students were free to interpret pictures as they chose. In Carol's anecdote, there was no explication and she did not influence the students with her own interpretation. Rancière questions whether the way teachers teach (explication) is useful in education. In other words, are the ways in which teachers describe and explain useful for students' learning? Or are they limiting? An explication by an explicator is only one (the explicator's) interpretation which does not allow for other interpretations. As a result, stultification sets in and, as such, schools and teachers may actually be creating conditions for incapacity and the control (or restriction) of creative powers (Bazzul, 2013).

Universal teaching is the only type of teaching that makes emancipation possible because it is based upon individual emancipation (Biesta, 2010a; Rancière, 1991). In Carol's vignette, students can teach themselves and, by doing so, demonstrate their belief in the equality of their intelligence. The lack of their belief in their intelligence can lead to stultification: "what stultifies the common people is not the lack of instruction, but the belief in the inferiority of their intelligence" (Rancière, 1991, p. 39). The goal for the

teacher then, seems to be to help student's believe or instil within them a belief in their own individual equality of intelligence, to remind students that they are quite capable of seeing and thinking for themselves, and are not dependent on others to do these things for them.

In my creative writing classroom, I use new media for the drafting and creation of creative writing. One of the reasons I use new media is because it facilitates the writing process by helping to overcome difficulties with surface features such as spelling and punctuation (Burnett, Dickinson, Myers, & Merchant, 2006), something that boys in particular seem to struggle with (Daly, 2003; Maynard, 2004). Boys, more so than girls, also have more difficulties in the mechanics of writing, that is, handwriting (Beard & Burrell, 2010), which the use of new media can mitigate. In addition, many young writers confuse writing ability with their ability to spell and punctuate correctly (Kreiner, Schnakenberg, Green, Costello, & McClin, 2002). This ability for students to spell and punctuate correctly is a skill but it is also a function of practicality and motivation. I use new media, not because I think it will help my students function in society and get a job, but because it helps to facilitate the creative writing process. When my students no longer concern themselves with surface features, they have a tendency to focus more on deeper features (such as creative and evocative language, ideas, sentence structure), features that lend themselves more to the production of creative ideas and thoughts. In addition, many students find it easier to write using new media (De Bernardi & Antolini, 2006; Woo, Chu, Ho, & Li, 2011).

However, ease of students' use and developing skills is not the reason why I use new media for creative writing. I use new media because it facilitates socialisation (collaborative writing) and emancipation in my creative writing class, methods that do not involve explication or the utilisation of my knowledge of writing. This is where Biesta (2016, p. 129) notes that there will be "synergy and … conflict" between his three functions of education. The use of new media for creative writing can fulfil all of Biesta's functions of education, namely qualification, socialisation and subjectification, a position that Biesta (2016) acknowledges: "our educational activities almost always 'work' in the three domains at the very same time" (p. 129) and teachers need to make "situated judgments about what is educationally desirable in relation to these three dimensions" (p. 129).

The use of new media in creative writing within my class and that of my participants does not require the teacher to explain concepts. The master explicator controls the origins and

the ends of learning (Bazzul, 2013). In such a classroom, creativity and creative writing will potentially be limited. As such, new ideas or new ways of writing, or thinking – of creating – will potentially be muted. What are the future outcomes of using new media to teach creative writing then? In the future, it is likely that the use of new media in the creative writing classroom will become more ubiquitous (Van Leeuwen & Gabriel, 2007). As a result, will the future use of new media in creative writing be thought of and taught as more of a skill than it is today? It would be easy to skew creative writing towards Biesta's qualification (education focused on skill production for the workforce), especially in the current climate of accountability, quantification and assessment.

However, new media offers emancipatory hope. The use of new media in 'online communities' (for example, online gaming) has embraced the concept of 'communities of practice', where students learn from one another rather than the intellectual hierarchies embodied by teachers. Such thinking has a precedent. In 1971, the anarchist philosopher Ivan Illich suggested ridding the world of schools. Illich advocated replacing institutionalised schooling with community-driven "opportunity webs", where students were in charge of their own learning and teachers provided their services in an "entrepreneurial fashion" (Hart, 2001). Such an idea, pre-internet, was perhaps not feasible but, today, the internet makes such an idea not only feasible, but achievable. Rancière, in *Hatred of Democracy* (2014), notes that ideas where students learn from each other rather than a knowledgeable, superior teacher, have caused a backlash of fear of a world where education has become too democratic, where students believe they are equal to their 'betters' and lack respect for the authority of the teacher and the knowledge that they represent (Pelletier, 2012). Such communities of practice like the online gaming communities, however, bear similarities to *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* (1991), in that there is no leadership and game players learn by watching others and participating in the chat rooms (Pelletier, 2012). Indeed, the gaming community represents an excellent source of creative writing material, for example, setting stories in the world of Minecraft or Roblox, where the teacher is not the sole source of knowledge and is often ignorant or, at the very least, knows less than the student.

## Can freewriting and new media foster emancipation in creative writing?

This chapter has focused on two creative writing practices; that is, freewriting and the use of new media. In a similar way to the last chapter on brainstorming and collaborative writing, these practices were chosen because they were used by every teacher in this

study, including myself. My own stories and those of the participants were used to illustrate how the creative writing practices of freewriting and the use of new media were employed not only to facilitate creative writing, but also to foster emancipation and equality. These practices were explored in order to answer my research questions on how teachers teach creative writing and how these practices can be emancipatory, thereby also challenging Rancière's position that the school and the classroom can never be emancipatory and reduce inequality.

It is not possible to institutionalise universal teaching and use it for the purposes of emancipation and equality, and Rancière is suspicious of attempts to do so in schools (Rancière, 2010). Rancière believes that if we start from a position of inequality, we will never attain equality. He is, however, somewhat paradoxically, supportive of schools trying to educate using 'universal teaching' and cites many pedagogues (and French schools) who do so, and yet he critiques them at the same time, arguing that these same pedagogues taught what they knew and assumed inequality of intelligence, which are the opposite of the two fundamental elements of universal teaching. Findings from this chapter reveal that both freewriting and the use of new media can indeed foster emancipation and equality. Both practices can serve as examples of Rancière's universal teaching in the sense that they rest on the premise of 'ignorance', with neither requiring explication from the teacher, and the teacher can teach what they do not know.

Freewriting as an aesthetic art form can be used to verify intelligence, and art, according to Rancière, is politics. Freewriting defies the police order as defined by the standard conventions of writing (such as the process model, for example) and, as such, produces a redistribution of the sensible and dissensus. Freewriting 'breaks the rules', acting as politics and dissensus, where the "rabbits run loose" (Bazzul, 2013, p. 7). Furthermore, the use of pictures, media clips or passages from a book can act as a writing prompt in freewriting, operating as a 'third thing'. Freewriting can be viewed as an act of dissensus, especially when students are writing about something that teachers have no knowledge of (for example, setting a narrative in the world of Minecraft). Such writing demonstrates students' cultural knowledge and positions them as legitimate sources of information. Indeed, fantasy worlds like Minecraft can act as a 'third thing', acting as the link between the teacher and students. Not all teachers used freewriting as an exploration in freedom, however, and, yet, emancipation was still possible in accidental or incidental ways because the teacher was not striving for it.

The use of new media can illustrate Rancière's presupposition of the equality of intelligence and the use of universal teaching to enact emancipation. Uutilising new media in creative writing can create dissensus, avoiding the production of prescribed learning outcomes which have the tendency to control students' writing. For example, the use of pictures or media clips, which Freire called a 'codification' (Freire, 1970b), acted as 'third things', as objects to verify students' intelligence to the teacher, rather than 'corral' students' work into predefined outcomes (Ruitenberg, 2011). 'Third things' in the form of images can be more emancipatory, especially when students use their own images (Skarpenes & Sæverot, 2018). Emancipation was sometimes an inadvertent by-product, and this 'accidental' teaching is 'universal' in the sense that teachers did not act as superior knowledge holders, were largely ignorant of the content, and utilised a 'third thing', and students were free to interpret pictures as they chose.

Park (2021) argues that teachers' efforts to engage with students, including activities designed to promote creativity, sometimes produces an end result demonstrating progress and obedience to expectations, accompanied by fear of disapproval and disappointment. Creative activities in the classroom are often controlled by teachers and classroom culture and, as such, students are accustomed to the distribution of the sensible which is seen as a typical way of learning. In relation to creative writing, the teacher explaining everything to the student constitutes what actually defines and controls creative writing and creativity. In such a classroom, creativity and creative writing will potentially be restricted. As such, new ideas or new ways of writing or thinking – of creating – will potentially be muted.

In this chapter I have suggested that two creative writing practices or tools, freewriting and new media, when used in particular ways dependent on the educational virtuosity of the teacher, are in keeping with Rancière's views of educational equality and emancipation. These practices rest on the premise of 'ignorance' and do not require the teacher to be a 'master explicator' or the one with knowledge, and can be utilised as 'universal teaching', where students learn with the assistance of a 'third thing', and without a powerful intervention from the teacher. Such 'universal writing' is possible in the primary creative writing classroom. The task then, for the teacher of creative writing, is to find or develop practices that can potentially foster emancipation and subjectification in their students. Rather than focus on or privilege either the teacher or the student which, as Biesta has noted, maintains inequality, perhaps the 'third way' is to focus on Rancière's 'third thing' (the subject matter, the object of study) (Vlieghe, 2018).

Teaching creative writing, using as a starting point the presupposition of students' intelligence, requires risky practice, something not always encouraged or supported in the current educational climate of accountability and assessment. Such an environment requires students to make 'progress', a notion Rancière is opposed to, because the student is always positioned as less than the teacher. Risky practice was evident though: all the teachers in this study used freewriting and new media that in some way was untried and untested – a practice that had emancipatory potential – with little positivism or evidence-based practice to rely on, prepared to adapt it to their own ends. This sort of 'weak', risky practice, requires teachers to be disobedient (W. Ings, 2017) and to use their educational virtuosity (Biesta, 2016).

In the next chapter, I summarise the findings of this research and, in keeping with a Rancièrean approach to education, suggest an emancipatory repositioning of the teacher as storyteller, rather than writer.

**Narrative break: Panopticon the robot**

*Panopticon waits inside the classroom, unmoving, perfectly composed, robotic eyes fixed on the door that will soon admit a surging mass of children. Something stirs inside its metallic body. Perhaps it is some emotion or shadow of an emotion that it has been programmed to feel. Is it fear? Is it anticipation? Panopticon does not know. It does not know what it is. Emotions are complex; its processor struggles to interpret them, to give them meaning. They are without context and are confusing. Is this how humans feel, it wonders?*

*To distract itself, it reviews today's lessons. It has prepared well, far more meticulously than necessary and far more than the few organic teachers that still work in his school. Panopticon looks at its compliance checklist on the screen embedded into its eyes, and notes that every item has a green tick next to it:*

*Testing. Check.*

*Marking. Check.*

*Reporting. Check.*

*Data entry. Check.*

*Reflections. Check.*

*Appraisal. Check.*

*Empathy. Check.*

*Positive feedback. Check.*

*Nurturing. Check.*

*Inspiration. Check.*

*Lesson planning. Check.*

*Resources. Check.*

*Panopticon feels another surge of something. Is it pride? All it knows is that it is a 'good feeling'. What is a 'good feeling' though? For a human, it is a chemical process but for it…*

*Before it can analyse it further, the bell rings and the children burst into the room. Panopticon waits for them to settle on the mat before it, as it has been programmed to do. Finally, they do so and then it begins.*

*Today, Panopticon is teaching the students to write a description of a setting. If that goes well, it will move onto characters and problems in the coming days, giving its students the framework necessary to write a story. But today is just about the setting.*

*Panopticon brings up a landscape on the screen from its files. There is a field of green, sprinkled with red dots. It enhances the image and sees that the red dots are flowers – poppies in actual fact. It cross-references them and sees that they are associated with war*

*and death. Beneath the blue sky stands a solitary tree, surrounded by a verdant sea of crimson and green. Underneath the tree sits someone, something? Panopticon enhances the image again, but it does not become clear. Complex algorithms give it a best guess. Probably a figure, they suggest. Most likely a soldier.*

*Panopticon nods. Its analysis of the image has taken less than a second. It turns and sees that the students are still in the process of putting their hands up.*

*Where is this? Panopticon asks the class.*

*In a field, one child offers.*

*How can you tell? it asks.*

*Because of the colours and the tree.*

*What is sitting beneath the tree? it asks.*

*A dog, one child ventures.*

*Panopticon shakes its head. No, it says. It is most likely a soldier. It is not a dog.*

*But I think it's a dog, says the child again, adamantly.*

*No, says Panopticon, red flagging the child in its files as problematic, a dissenter. It is a soldier.*

*It moves on, ignoring the child's protests.*

*What are the red dots in the picture? it asks.*

*Strawberries, says one child firmly.*

*No, says Panopticon. They are flowers. They are poppies.*

*Nah, says the child. They're strawberries.*

*I love strawberries, says another child. This statement is met with enthusiasm by the other children.*

*I love them too, says another. I love that squishing feeling when you bite down on one.*

*All juicy and sweet, says another. Delicious.*

*I love how the juice runs down my chin, says another.*

*No, says Panopticon again. They are flowers. They are poppies. They are not strawberries. This topic is not within lesson parameters. Please desist with your erroneous nomenclature.*

*What's erroness nomen clot? asks the dissenter.*

*It means you have the wrong name for the object, says Panopticon.*

*But we don't, says the dissenter. They're strawberries. Strawberries are called strawberries. You've got the wrong name. Not me. You.*

*I do not make errors, says Panopticon. The visual data does not lie. I do not lie. I cannot lie.*

*I'm gonna make a strawberry milkshake when I get home, says another child.*

*The rest of the children burst into animated discussion of the relative merits of strawberries and their favourite use. The classroom becomes loud, chaotic; filled with happy voices and ludicrous suggestions.*

*I'm going to make a strawberry sandwich, says another child.*

*Statements are flung out by various children in an unruly mess, joining the general cacophony:*

*I'm going to throw some at my little sister.*

*I'm going to put some in the bath tonight and see if they float.*

*You could bob for them, suggests another child. You know, like apples.*

*I don't understand, says Panopticon. It looks up 'bob' and 'apples' and sees humans apparently trying to eat apples floating in water without using their hands.*

*That is illogical, it says.*

*A subroutine is flashing warning signs. The lesson plan is no longer on track. The students are no longer contained within the parameters of the learning intention and success criteria. Panopticon has less than a minute to steer the conversation back to something more conventional. If it does not, an error will be logged and noted and reported to the school AI.*

*The flowers in the field smell of something, it says to the class, cutting through the growing hubbub by raising his voice 25%. What do they smell like?*

*My underpants, says one child with a huge grin. The rest of the class bursts into laughter. Panopticon red flags her in his files as another dissenter.*

*That is illogical, says Panopticon. Flowers do not smell like underpants. The children laugh.*

*A 'logic error' note flashes before its eyes. Another error flashes red. It says 'lesson plan diversion. Error noted'.*

*I reckon they smell like dog, says the original dissenter. You know? The dog that's under the tree.*

*Panopticon feels something then. It's not sure what it is, but it suspects that if it was human, it would be panic.*

# CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION: REPOSITIONING THE TEACHER AS AN EMANCIPATORY STORYTELLER

> As I grew, so did Telemachus. I played with the infant every day. Even when Odysseus was away, Penelope would ensure that the two of us bonded. Our play developed a new dimension when he started crawling, then he would chase me around the main hall. I always let him catch me, even though catching inevitably meant painful pulling on my tail or ears. (P. W. Simpson, 2016, p. 38)

The above quote from my novel, *Argos*, serves as an illustration of how learning can take place through play and, indeed, without direct knowledge transfer from the teacher to the student. In this final chapter, I summarise the findings of this research, amongst them that students (or infants, or dogs) can learn without instruction, and teachers can teach what they do not know. Throughout this thesis, I have explored the idea that teachers of creative writing need not be master explicators and, instead, through the use of universal teaching and by positioning themselves as ignorant schoolmasters, they can use creative writing for emancipatory purposes. I have discussed how creative writing practices align with Biesta's functions of education, particularly that of subjectification, itself closely related to emancipation. In this chapter, I revisit my argument against the use of assessment in creative writing and the positioning of the teacher as a writer in the primary classroom. I then examine future possibilities for research and practice in creative writing, including the repositioning of the teacher as an emancipatory storyteller, and a more 'progressive approach' of inviting artists into schools. The limitations of the study are also addressed before the chapter finishes with a section on final thoughts.

This research sought to answer the questions:

- How do Aotearoa New Zealand primary school teachers teach creative writing?
- How and why are these practices emancipatory?

In order to answer these questions, this study employed a variety of qualitative research methods, including individual semi-structured interviews and narrative research. These methods have been presented in Chapter 2, Methodology, and the outcomes discussed in subsequent chapters.

Rancière suggests that what is being done in the name of equality, democracy and emancipation in schools actually achieves the opposite – that is, inequality and stultification. Efforts to achieve emancipation and equality in schools, Rancière believes,

will only ever reproduce inequality. However, by assuming that all human beings are equally intelligent, and verifying it constantly in concrete situations, we can see "what can be done under that supposition" (Rancière, 1991, p. 46). This verifying Rancière calls politics, an act of emancipation that demonstrates the contradiction between the logic of the police order and the logic of equality, creating dissensus, where dissensus is not a conflict but rather a difference in ways of being, doing, seeing and speaking and a disruption of the police order (Biesta, 2010a). By teaching under the presupposition of the equality of intelligence, the creative writing practices of brainstorming, collaborative writing, freewriting and the use of new media have revealed that they are capable of creating dissensus (rather than consensus) and disrupting the police order.

Throughout my analysis chapters, I have explored creative writing practices as emancipatory when taught in particular ways, in a manner in keeping with a Rancièrian approach, while at the same time challenging Rancière's belief that emancipation and equality can never exist in the classroom. At the forefront of this analysis, I tried to answer the question of whether certain creative writing strategies can be emancipatory and create dissensus, avoiding the production of prescribed learning outcomes which have the tendency to restrict and control students' writing. Furthermore, I have tried to demonstrate that when teachers are ignorant schoolmasters and do not explicate and instead take risks, are disobedient and use their educational virtuosity (Biesta, 2016), their creative writing practices are what Biesta describes as 'weak', and such weakness can be emancipatory.

There are many other creative writing practices that could be considered using Rancière as a lens, but such practices are too numerous to be included in this dissertation (see Chapter 1). Instead, I chose a limited number of creative writing practices – brainstorming, collaborative writing, freewriting and the use of new media – because they were used by all of the participants, including myself, and because of the emancipatory potential of such practices. Furthermore, such practices are widely used by teachers in the context of the Aotearoa New Zealand primary classroom.

In the next section, I summarise the work of Rancière and its relationship to the creative writing practices explored in this thesis.

## Summary of findings

This section summarises the key findings from the study, based on data produced by the 10 participants, from my own experiences, and from the literature.

***Creative writing without a master explicator***

Rancière (2011) acknowledges that his philosophical ideas are difficult or challenging to understand and are non-systematic. Rancière has also elaborated on his beliefs surrounding the inherent problems with schools even while encouraging the pursuit and possibility of dissensus within the classroom. Although Rancière states that he does not have either a philosophical or pedagogical approach, his philosophy has been described as emancipatory (Hallward, 2005) and anti-elitist (Sayers, 2005).

Rancière's assertation that he does not have a philosophy or pedagogical approach seems congruent with an approach to teaching creative writing, following Biesta, where education is weak, where the teacher uses their educational virtuosity, with no set conception of outcomes or a need or desire to match input to output. Findings from this research suggest that this approach, when applied to the teaching of creative writing, where the teacher does not assume the position of being more knowledgeable, can be emancipatory.

***The problem with measurement and conceptions of progress***

Another point of intersection between the work of Rancière and the teaching of creative writing is the notion of progress and achievement. According to Rancière, the aim of schools is to help students achieve academically, therefore the starting point for schools is that students have inferior knowledge which the teacher within the classroom will help grow. In other words, the student always starts from a position of inferiority. However, this approach does not allow for uncertainty; teachers cannot predict outcomes, despite efforts to the contrary, and this, in turn, does not allow for uniqueness. Pedagogies focused on academic progress assume linear development and an end goal. As discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, progress and achievement in creative writing is inherently difficult to gauge, and I have suggested that assessment tools are neither helpful nor appropriate for creative writing given its inherently subjective nature. Many teachers of creative writing do not have an end goal in mind, often choosing practices because they are 'fun' rather than because they possess a linear learning trajectory. In any case, Rancière considers standardisation and assessment as examples of the police order, particularly where progress is measured by learning outcomes and success criteria. Biesta takes a similar position, in that education cannot be reduced to a machine-like process of inputs matching outputs. Biesta believes that the 'weakness' of education with no set outcomes

is not a deficit but a positive, because such weakness allows teachers and students to explore what it means to be human.

Progress and achievement are easily verified outcomes, and are what some argue are the result of rising university fees, where education is a financial investment and a career move (aligned with Biesta's qualification function), rather than a creative, epistemological voyage of discovery for its own sake (Fryer, 2015). As such, university students are increasingly choosing vocational courses that have the best job potential (Griffiths & Lawson, 2013, as cited in Fryer, 2015). Such choices, where students are choosing 'skill-based' professions, have serious ramifications for 'artistic' subjects like creative writing, and for creativity as a whole.

***Creative writing provides opportunities for students to verify their intelligence***

In this thesis, I have explored the idea that the artistic practice of creative writing is a way of doing and making that can redistribute the distribution of the sensible, providing opportunities for those who are not seen and heard to become so. Further, this thesis has revealed that creative writing can operate as politics and lead to dissensus, remoulding what is visible and reconfiguring the distribution of the sensible. In turn, this reconfiguring leads to emancipation, and it is through children's everyday activities of creative writing that resistance and dissensus can occur.

Politics and aesthetics provide opportunities for emancipation in children's creative writing, because of the ways in which creativity is framed; that is, creativity defined as unique or new and appropriate to purpose (Beghetto & Kaufman, 2014). This sense of newness suggests freedom and emancipation, but what about appropriate to purpose? If the purpose (as defined by either the teacher or students) is to create a piece of writing that offers a new insight or a different perspective (which any piece of writing always has the potential to do), does that imply that it is appropriate to purpose? Furthermore, how does that fit with Rancière's idea that emancipation is something that people do to themselves? Creative writing practices, for example, freewriting, where students or teachers have no preconceived learning outcome, are used, I believe, to verify their intelligence to themselves and others, rather than achieve some form of goal.

***Biesta's three functions of education in relation to creative writing practice***

Four creative writing practices – that is, brainstorming, collaborative writing, freewriting and the use of new media – were chosen for investigation in more detail. The stories told, by both the participants and myself, were suggestive of one of Biesta's central ideas: that

external social, political and economic pressures sometimes force teachers to focus on the educational functions of qualification and socialisation rather than subjectification. Applied to the teaching of creative writing, findings from this study reveal educational tensions arising at the intersection of these functions. This can be demonstrated through the creative writing practices of the participants, where teaching an important and useful skill had to be balanced with creating opportunities for students to engage socially with one another and to explore what Biesta calls 'individuation' and emancipation.

Although Biesta stresses the importance of subjectification over the other functions, he also suggests that the 'ideal' educational environment is one where the three functions are in balance, or all three functions are explored during a lesson or educational practice. In creative writing, findings from this study suggest, even when teachers seem to focus on the qualification and socialisation functions of creative writing, their practice often fulfils the function of subjectification, sometimes purposefully, sometimes as an inadvertent by-product of the lesson, and this 'accidental learning' can foster the ideals of freedom and emancipation. Biesta's other assertation is that subjectification is the most important and overlooked function of education, a function that I suggest creative writing can and has the most potential to enact. Evidence from this study suggests that creative writing practices, especially those without an evidence base, ones where teachers are ignorant, do not explicate lessons and use their 'educational virtuosity' to adapt their practices, have the most potential to enact subjectification and emancipation.

***Teachers of creative writing need not be writers***

As discussed in Chapter 1 (Introduction) and Chapter 5 (Teaching Creative Writing in the Primary Classroom), an argument exists that in order to effectively teach creative writing, the teacher must be a writer themselves and some scholars argue that teachers are unprepared to teach creative writing for precisely this reason (Reid, 2009; Shortis & Blake, 2010). In order to ameliorate this issue, it has been suggested that creative writing should be taught as part of ITE programmes. Anae (2014) notes that "there is a critical gap in the scholarship about creative writing research specific to teacher-education" (p. 125), especially in regard to the 'teacher as writer'. Developing teachers' creative writing skills is "the exception rather than the rule in teacher education programs" (Anae, 2014, p. 125). Combined with the view that teachers at primary level find creative writing challenging to teach (Frawley, 2014), it seems a significant oversight that creative writing is often not taught in ITE programmes. Or is it?

Do schools and teachers need to teach creative writing? Does creative writing need to be taught in ITE programmes? Furthermore, does a teacher of creative writing need to be a writer themselves? In this thesis, I have suggested that schools need to teach creative writing because creative writing gives opportunities for students to explore what it is to be human, the most important aspect of which is freedom, rather than 'progress'. Such a notion does not suggest that other subjects cannot be emancipatory and, indeed, other researchers have explored the emancipatory potential of philosophy for children (J. Davis, 2019), and visual art (Park, 2019, 2021). This thesis also suggests that a teacher need not be 'filled', rather like the banking model described by Freire (1970b), with creative writing strategies at their ITE, and teachers need not be creative writers in order to teach creative writing effectively. Instead, perhaps ITEs should provide opportunities for student teachers to engage in creative writing for the emancipatory benefits, exploring what it means to be human?

Significantly, only two of the participants identified as 'writers' as well as teachers. The other participants did not seem to be unduly affected by their identities as 'teachers' rather than 'writers'. Therefore, this question still remains unanswered: would teachers be more effective at teaching creative writing if they were creative writers themselves? A number of problems arise out of this question, foremost amongst them is the argument that, in order for teachers to teach *any* subject, they should be an expert in it (Draper, 1998). However, the quantitative and summative work of Hattie (2009) revealed that teacher subject-matter knowledge was not as important as, for example, feedback. In keeping with Rancière's notion that the teacher need not be a master explicator in order to teach, the literature reveals that teachers' depth of knowledge of content has little relationship to attainment levels of students (Hattie, 2009; Hattie & Yates, 2013). In other words, teachers possessing high levels of knowledge about a topic does not necessarily enable them to teach it well. In fact, it is altogether possible that the more a teacher knows about a subject, the more difficult it can be for them to see another person's perspective (Hattie & Yates, 2013), which can be restrictive in terms of practice.

Teachers with expert knowledge in a subject can be insensitive towards novice learners in that subject, forgetting how hard such a task can be for a beginner. Thus, an 'expert' writer, may have little tolerance for creative writers at the beginning of their learning journey. This is particularly true of creative writing and creative writers such as novelists, most of whom are self-taught and whose skills may be automated and unconscious (S. Kaufman & Kaufman, 2009). Furthermore, in a subject like creative writing where

practice varies from one writer or teacher to another, the expert may not be able to fully articulate their process and, as such, such high knowledge can become a disadvantage in a teaching context, known as the "expert blind spot effect" (Hattie & Yates, 2013, p. 13).

In addition, the teacher as an expert in every subject at primary school is simply not practical. Does that mean that each primary teacher should therefore be an expert in science, in maths, in physical education, in the arts and so on? Does it mean that, to teach swimming, the teacher must be a competitive swimmer? That each primary teacher should be a scientist, a mathematician, an athlete, or an artist? There is considerable scholarship indicating that teachers as professionals should, of course, continue to learn through PLD opportunities and that they do (see, for example, Parr & Jesson, 2016). To be an 'expert' teacher in a subject, however, takes a significant amount of time, time that teachers often do not possess due to a multitude of accountability pressures such as assessment, reporting and planning. Despite arguments for teachers needing to have comprehensive subject knowledge in the subjects they teach (Thornton, 2001), for primary teachers to be an expert in every subject is, quite simply, not a realistic expectation (Gerretson, Bosnick, & Schofield, 2008).

What, then, is a realistic expectation? The 'teacher as writer' approach has been criticised, partly on the basis that there is little evidence to suggest the 'teacher as writer' makes a significant impact on students' learning (Cremin & Oliver, 2017). One implication for teaching creative writing is that teachers can be 'ignorant'. The teacher does not always need to take on the role of Rancière's master explicator and explicate the lesson, because students can figure it out for themselves. This applies to creative writing strategies such as freewriting, brainstorming, etc. Thus, many creative writing activities reinforce the notion of self-emancipation, emancipation seized when one teaches oneself. Lessons learned from *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* also imply that a teacher does not have to be a creative writer to teach creative writing. By using creative writing activities and strategies that do not explicate or require a master explicator, the teacher stresses the equality of intelligence in all human beings; that is, there is no master explicator and therefore the genesis of emancipation does not originate from inequality. Such a position is supported by Rancière's critique of the field of philosophy and philosophers as well, arguing that their claims to have a better understanding of philosophy is elitist and false, which follows his position supporting the supposition of the equality of intelligence (Rancière, 1991). This same critique can be applied to teachers of creative writing who are also creative

writers themselves in arguing that, just because they are writers, it does not necessarily make them more knowledgeable than other people.

Throughout this thesis, I have demonstrated that certain creative writing practices, namely brainstorming, collaborative writing, freewriting and the use of new media, require no explication whatsoever. I have argued that the teacher of creative writing does not need to employ didactic teaching and is not required to be the master explicator, a writer, or an expert in creative writing. Instead, teachers can choose strategies that enable the student to teach themselves. By freeing themselves from the 'oppression' of the teacher, the students become emancipated, which also fulfils Biesta's function of subjectification. Certain creative writing strategies can foster – or have the potential to foster – emancipation and therefore subjectification. Subjectification in creative writing is more likely to be enacted in environments where teachers are 'ignorant', can take risks, be disobedient and use their 'virtuosity'. The current climate of evidence-based practice, or visibility, has marginalised the idea "that education can and perhaps also should be an adventure of which the outcome is fundamentally unknown" (Biesta, 2019, p. 264). I have argued that the true potential of creative writing lies in its 'weakness', its emancipatory ability to enact subjectification, and that such a goal is advocated by others, particularly through the work of Rancière and Biesta.

Rancière's ideas of emancipation are fundamentally different from traditional accounts, because Rancière's emancipation is not done to somebody, but is rather something that a person does to themselves. Rather than coming from a position of inequality between the emancipator and the one to be emancipated, Rancière starts from a position of equality (of intelligence) and is not the dependency of the emancipated on the emancipator. Furthermore, Rancière argues that emancipation is based upon trust in the experiences of the one to be emancipated (rather than replacing them with 'correct' experiences) (Biesta, 2010a), and trust has been evident throughout the analysis chapters, where teachers trusted their students to write whatever they wanted and, indeed, the students trusted the teacher, revealing sometimes private information through practices like freewriting. Through the exploration of creative writing strategies, I have demonstrated that these practices are not dependent upon explication or divided into those who know and those who are ignorant. Rancière is not suggesting a school without teachers but rather a school without master explicators. Authority still exists in such a school but is not based on inequality of intelligence or knowledge. The teacher's role is to use their will to set an ignorant (not less intelligent) person down a path and fulfil a potential that they already

possess: “the ignorant schoolmaster exercises no relation of intelligence to intelligence. He or she is only an authority, only a will that sets the ignorant person down a path, that is to say to instigate a capacity already possessed” (Rancière, 1991, p. 41).

This thesis has revealed that through certain practices in the primary creative writing classroom, students undertake ‘self-emancipation’; they are not doing so without the presence of a teacher, whose role is still significant and important. The difference is that this teacher provides opportunities for freedom in teaching without communicating. Such a teacher urges/forces/suggests/encourages students to use their assumed equality of intelligence.

At the urging of Rancière, teachers of creative writing (and teachers in general) must test the possibility that their learners can be divided into superior and inferior minds. Rancière’s view is that the position of the teacher is not one of explication. If teachers are not required to explicate, then their prior content knowledge is no longer the most important characteristic or quality, which is to say that the ‘teacher as writer’ is no longer necessary in the creative writing classroom, because every teacher is equal in their ability to produce, evaluate and communicate.

***Validity and appropriateness of assessment in creative writing***

Creative work is difficult to measure using assessment criteria because such work often possesses innovative characteristics that cannot be predicted in advance (Fryer, 2010). Assessment of creative writing is problematic, given that creative writing is extremely difficult to assess. Indeed, trying to measure creative writing in such ways can restrict both the process and the outcome. Assessment pressures have, however, also forced teachers to adopt quicker, untested methods which can have emancipatory potential.

As discussed in Chapter 5, there are problems inherent in the measurement of progress in creative writing. Foremost amongst them, from a Rancièrean perspective, is the idea that concepts of progress do not lead to freedom because such ideas are based on the assumption of the inferiority of the learner. Creative writing is also difficult to quantify (Warner, 2018) and subjective because of the hazy nature of ‘creativity’ (Anae, 2014; Weldon, 2009). Indeed, as discussed in Chapter 4, the concept of creativity itself is not easily quantified or evaluated (Gustina & Sweet, 2014). Furthermore, W. Ings (2017) argues, in relation to assessment in general, that comparative assessment leads to a view that education is about the production of a product rather than a process – and it is through the process that creative writing can lead to opportunities for emancipation. Indeed,

Lather (2012) suggests that Rancière's work can be used to explore the limitless potential of individuals in terms of their ability to learn and create, rather than through the use of assessment used to measure progress.

As noted in Chapter 1, students in Aotearoa New Zealand primary schools write at levels below those of reading and mathematics (Parr & Jesson, 2016). Government efforts to raise achievement have resulted in a teacher focus on results and assessment, often at the expense of excitement about writing (Bernardes & Menzies, 2017). As such, the lack of excitement can also affect levels of creativity produced by both the teacher and student. Poor achievement results by students can also result in low levels of teachers' self-efficacy in creative writing (Locke, Whitehead, & Dix, 2013). In other words, some teachers may have lost confidence in their ability to teach creative writing.

A focus on comparative assessment, results and achievement has also affected the way that creative writing is taught in the Aotearoa New Zealand primary classroom. Participants in this study, as well as myself, noted that assessment and results play a part in the way creative writing is taught, acting as the police (Rancière, 2004b) to control and limit creativity. In other words, some teachers will 'teach to the test' because of the way writing assessment is structured in the creative writing classroom. Some teachers, faced with such accountability pressures, teach all genres of writing as quickly as possible in order to 'maintain genre coverage' (Cremin, 2006). As such, the quality of creative writing instruction can suffer and yet, at the same time, can force teachers to be innovative, to adapt and change their practice and to experiment and take risks.

Prescribed and scripted creative writing techniques, such as process or genre writing, offer little room for teacher experimentation and risky or disobedient practice (W. Ings, 2017). I argue against the reduction of creative writing as something that can be measured and as an instrument to meet learning outcomes. I argue for a pedagogy of disruption in order to allow the beautiful risk of education (Biesta, 2016) to come to the forefront. Creative writing offers possibilities for dissensus, for difference, for different thinking, different teaching, resistance, and pedagogical disobedience.

## Future possibilities for research and practice in creative writing

In the next section, I examine an area of interest which emerged during this research, an area that has potential for future research, where teachers of creative writing could potentially reposition themselves as an 'emancipatory storyteller'. Such repositioning

does not require the teacher to become more knowledgeable than their students, they need not be the "one who knows better and best", largely because some creative writing practices employed by primary teachers fall into the 'unknown' category. In other words, the teacher has no idea what is going to be produced and therefore does not, and fundamentally cannot, know better or best.

***The teacher as emancipatory storyteller***

Rather than teachers being creative writers, perhaps the focus of ITE and PLD should be on teachers developing the ability to tell stories, that is, for teachers to be 'storytellers'. There is some scholarship surrounding teachers and their 'storytelling' (Clandinin & Connelly, 1996; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990), but it is often in connection to teacher identity, rather than teachers' actual ability to tell stories in order to motivate and model creative writing to their students. Egan (1989), for example, suggested teaching as storytelling as an alternative approach to elementary teaching. This ability to tell stories was a consistent theme amongst the participants in this study, all of whom commented on their ability to tell stories in one way or another as being a significant part of their creative writing practice.

According to Jacotot, storytelling is one of the concrete acts that verify intelligence (Rancière, 1991). The teacher as storyteller, I suggest, has limitless potential, is unrestrictive, does not have a particular knowledge set and is therefore filled with emancipatory potential. Many of the participants in this study had or were beginning to position themselves as storytellers rather than writers. Furthermore, storytelling appears to be a fundamental part of human nature, something that all humans possess, an ability that has evolved with us (Nettle, 2009). Nettle (2009) goes on to posit that the need to navigate social situations correctly is essentially a survival trait and that sociocultural factors in our evolutionary history are responsible for humans evolving as storytellers:

> our evolutionary history as primates with exceptionally large and complex social groups has driven an expansion of the human brain and provided it with the capacity to simulate the mental states of others; a linguistic system for trading information, especially about the social world; and a deep interest in and adeptness at handling social information. These are the building blocks for a theory of the evolution of creative reading. (Nettle, 2009, p. 105)

As a result, the teacher positioning themselves as a storyteller rather than creative writer is a more realistic and achievable goal because it is a universal form of expression. Storytelling can be taught through universal teaching because human discourse is something that all humans can do:

> The telling of tales is often thought to be characteristic of all human discourse, and it is fashionable to speak of narrative as a universal form of expression, one that is applied both to the life experiences of individuals and to the dramas of social interaction. Storytelling in oral cultures in turn is seen as the foundation on which the novel is built in literate ones, and the activity is regarded as the focus of much creativity. (Goody, 2006, p. 4)

Teachers sharing stories based on their experiences can engage, motivate, and inspire students, something that F. Gilbert (2016) discovered during his own classroom practice, where students willingly wrote, rather than writing out of a sense of obligation or obedience. Such stories can foster a culture of reciprocity, where students write because they are intrinsically rather than extrinsically motivated. This is significant as research has revealed that intrinsic motivation is more powerful than extrinsic motivation (Amabile, 1985; LaSalle, 2015; Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Storytelling can also have an emancipatory effect. Following on from the work of Biesta (2016), Rancière (1991) and Freire (1970b), a teacher of creative writing can potentially employ storytelling as a function of critical literacy and subjectification. To do so, teachers can encourage their students to 'put themselves in the place of the narrator' and imagine what it would be like to be in their position. As part of my own creative writing practice, I tell stories to my students on a regular basis. Often, these stories are autobiographical in nature. By sharing such stories, teachers can invite critical literacy, form a connection with their students and embrace the identity of fellow learners.

Storytelling can also be used as a focus for inequality, a concept closely tied to emancipation. My stories are often designed to illustrate a problem and to engage my students in critical literacy. Some of my stories, for example, illustrate the lack of money my parents had in my youth. One such story is when my parents could not afford a popular sort of shoe, so I had to make do with a 'rip off' or counterfeit version which was extremely obvious to my friends. As a result, I was teased. Inevitably, such a story provokes discussion and sharing of my students' own stories of inequality. I've also told stories of how my father, on the rare occasion we ordered pizza, would not let us buy any more than one for a family of five. Instead, he would make us stick a slice of pizza between two slices of bread to make it go further. Then there was my old leather bag that I had when I went to primary school, a bag that had been passed down by my grandfather. Its sheer age and decrepitude once more made me a target of ridicule.

Whenever I narrate stories to my students, it sparks animated discussion which also manifests in their writing, something that F. Gilbert (2016) noted in his own classroom

practice, particularly the notion of *praxis* – when a lesson is realised. The lesson in one of my stories is that I got punched in the eye because I called another boy 'ugly'. I made a bad choice, did the wrong thing, and got punished for it. A confession like this will often result in 'honest' moments from my students, a realisation that is usually embodied by emotional students' stories involving consequences for bad choices: the boy who did not get to go to a birthday party because he had had a tantrum; the girl who got so angry, her body locked up and she could not move and, as a result, missed out on a special treat; the student who refused to be friends with another because he perceived the other as 'mean'. Stories like these provide opportunities for students to explore their feelings and what it means to be an individual. Such writing can be emancipatory, fostering Freirean critical literacy (Freire, 1970b, 1985) and Biesta's subjectification, which is concerned with uniqueness and ways of thinking and rationality, requiring an individual to take a stand on an issue, and a 'coming into presence' (Biesta, 2004) involving the disruption of the individual's thinking in order to challenge, disturb or irritate (Biesta, 2020). This disruption occurs when the normalised social order or power is dismantled by those who have no part in the community and who redistribute the sensible (Park, 2021).

For Rancière, the master explicator is the one who tries to control the will of others. But Rancière's concept of democracy is one that cannot be controlled, a system that is versatile, sporadic and founded on trust (Rancière, 1995). Trust is a prerequisite in creative writing strategies such as brainstorming, hot seating and freewriting, where any group or class member is free to write or contribute based on their own perspective. This same trust can be applied to the repositioning of the creative writing teacher as storyteller, where the teacher tells students stories from their own life and then invites students to counter with their own stories. Such strategies bear similarities to communities of philosophic inquiry (CPI) (J. Davis, 2019) and Rancière's *veracity* or truth that cannot be directly expressed through language. Individual truth is only revealed through discourses (and/or stories) which are made up of the sameness in and inherent differences between people. Through shared stories, all perspectives are considered and valued and thus can be emancipatory.

Rather than teachers using their knowledge to assert control over students, Rancière urges teachers to encourage students' use of their will, because it is will that differentiates us, not intelligence. The teacher as storyteller does not necessarily have to contribute stories but, by doing so, inspires and encourages the will in others to share their own stories.

***A return to progressive education?***

Some scholars have suggested a return to the 'golden age' of education of the 1930s and 40s (Bell, 2010). During this period, arts specialists worked to train other teachers and art education received rich institutional support including teacher preservice training and resource support, as well as the training of over 250 primary art specialist teachers between 1938 and 1966 (Bell, 2010). Using this framework, could such a programme be adapted to creative writing? Could schools benefit from a specialised creative writing teaching in much the same way as schools once had specialised art teachers? Such a role seems to contradict my central premise that the teacher of creative writing need not be a master explicator, but I suggest that it does not, because having a specialised creative writing teacher on staff would add a different voice to the discourse within the school and avoid "original egocentrism" (Biesta, 2016, p. 3). Arts specialists in school would partially address arguments that how the arts have been neglected in the Aotearoa New Zealand education system for decades (P. O'Connor, 2020).

One practice that emerged from progressive education was that of inviting 'real' artists into the classroom, which included children's authors. Whilst I have argued that teachers do not need to be creative writers themselves to teach creative writing, students witnessing 'real' artists and listening to their process and their work can be both motivational and emancipatory experiences, where students take on the role of Rancière's emancipated spectators, with art acting as politics and politics leading to dissensus. Furthermore, the art itself can function as a 'third thing' (Rancière, 2007).

Correspondingly, and in an echo of progressive education, the MoE has initiated a programme known as 'creatives in schools' (MoE, 2020). Such programmes encourage 'creatives' (the definition of which includes creative writers, visual artists, dancers, actors, and musicians) to form a partnership with schools and deliver 100 contact hours. The programme also allows for release time for teachers, project materials and travel costs (MoE, 2020). The current government, then, seems committed to promoting the arts in schools, where students can have an 'aesthetic experience', and in creative writing, as I argued in Chapters 6 and 7, such an experience can also be an emancipatory experience. Moreover, there are those scholars who argue that 'creatives' in schools can only be a good thing: "Given that educators must develop curricula and exercises that enhance creative thinking and problem solving, it would seem that Creatives would be the obvious candidates to lead the charge" (Gustina & Sweet, 2014, p. 49).

It is not just ‘creatives in schools’, however, that those in favour of progressive education seek. P. O'Connor (2020), for example, suggests a return of the arts to Aotearoa New Zealand schools, harking back to the ‘golden’ educational era of Clarence Beeby and Gordon Tovey, especially in the current climate of COVID-19, where the arts are used by thousands of Aotearoa New Zealand teachers to facilitate the return of children to the classroom during the pandemic (P. O'Connor, 2020).

## Limitations of the study

It is impossible to claim that my findings from this research can be generalised across the wider population of primary teachers in Aotearoa New Zealand schools, given the relatively small number of participants, and a methodological approach that never set out to generalise findings. However, despite this limitation, this research provides some insights and implications for classroom practice.

The limitations of this study were, firstly, that the sample size was small, focusing only on 10 teachers with various writing abilities, backgrounds, and experience. The results of this research must be addressed with that basis in mind, where the insights provided reflect only the experiences of a few teachers (including myself), providing an opportunity for discussion rather than a clear picture of any reality. Despite these limitations, the findings provide an insight into how teachers in Aotearoa New Zealand primary schools teach creative writing and how such practices can be emancipatory.

I approached my research from the position of an insider-teacher researcher interviewing fellow primary school teachers, who were approached with sensitivity, empathy, and compassion. Ethics governed all aspects of this research, which included the data which was included or excluded. As an early career researcher, my research skills continued to develop during the course of my research. When interviewing the participants, with hindsight, my questioning skills, at times, lacked focus. Sometimes, my questioning of participants went off on a tangent, and I perhaps did not dig as deeply as I would do now, at the end of the research. Often my questioning was guided by hunches, interest and excitement for the topic, leading the conversation in directions in which the participants might not have travelled otherwise.

A focus group of teachers, where conversation could flow between participants, I believe, could have been a fruitful source of information. I would hesitate to suggest observing actual classroom practice, as I know from experience that teachers often put on ‘an act’

or model lesson when they are being observed. Moreover, teachers are under almost constant threat of surveillance which is not a conducive environment for creativity. Honesty, I believe, is produced when teacher participants do not feel pressured by thoughts or the threat of surveillance, and any research that adds to surveillance pressures for teachers is, in my opinion, research that is anything but productive.

In this research, I have engaged with European philosophy and philosophers, specifically the philosophical work of Jacques Rancière and Gert Biesta, analysing creative writing practices through their theoretical contributions in regard to equality and emancipation. As such, my research approach was influenced by western ideas in regard to ethics, power, positionality and reflexivity within the research process (Mangat, 2018). Such an approach required me to reflect and examine my own positionality in terms of identity (writer, teacher, PLD provider), ethnicity, education and gender, which may have affected my data collection, interpretation and analysis.

By focusing on such practices and then analysing them through western philosophy, I acknowledge that other philosophies were not included. These other philosophies include Māori perspectives such as kaupapa (collective vision or philosophy) and mātauranga Māori (knowledge) (Mane, 2009; G. H. Smith, 1997). Creative writing techniques were not informed by, for instance, pakiwaitara (storytelling) (Whaanga, 2005), nor did I specifically attend to Māori concepts of ako (teaching and learning) and/or tauira/ākonga (student) and kaiako (teacher) (Bracefield & Woodgate, 2020). I acknowledge that using these latter concepts, terms and approaches for this research would have been both fruitful and appropriate, given the importance of oral history and storytelling in traditional Māori culture, and also because this research was conducted in Aotearoa New Zealand. Furthermore, following my central premise that certain creative writing practices can be emancipatory, kaupapa and mātauranga Māori approaches would have been appropriate because such approaches resonate with equality through "revitalisation of culture, and the assertion of rights and recognition" (Hoskins, 2012, p. 85). Such concepts take on significance, especially because of the importance I place on storytelling throughout this thesis. The reason I offer for focusing on European and western philosophies (rather than Indigenous ones), was, following my introduction to Rancière and Biesta during the formative stage of my thesis, their philosophies resonated with my own ideas and growing philosophical approach. This is not to say that kaupapa and mātauranga Māori concepts would not have been as useful as the work of Rancière and Biesta. In any research, however, it is impossible to adopt and/or consider all approaches, but I suggest that future

research in creative writing practices utilising kaupapa and mātauranga Māori approaches should be utilised in order to understand the emancipatory effects of creative writing from a different perspective, creating, in effect, a redistribution of the sensible.

## Final thoughts

At the beginning of this journey, I strongly believed that teachers needed to be creative writers themselves in order to teach it more effectively. This is despite my own experiences. This belief had been forged, in part, by my own creative writing experiences and because of one important fact: no-one ever taught me how to write creatively. I was not taught at primary, intermediate, or secondary level. I taught myself. I learnt from making mistakes. I learnt from watching and reading others, from risk taking and experimentation. What this belief blinded me to is the sense of opportunity and hope incumbent in this message – that teachers can teach themselves creative writing, that they need not be subservient to the one who controls and contains the knowledge. They need not be passive recipients of knowledge. The thread that pulls that through this assertion is that teachers should take risks. Teachers do not need to be master explicators, and by resisting that calling teachers can potentially foster emancipation and subjectification in their classrooms. My writing journey replicates and vindicates Rancière's philosophy, a philosophy based on the removal of the master explicator from the classroom. I am the embodiment of this theory in that I have taught myself to write. Teachers have certainly played a part, especially by using their will and providing objects to motivate and encourage creative writing, but there has been little or no explication during this journey.

Teachers do not need to be creative writers themselves to teach creative writing because creative writing is about freedom, about risk taking, about trying different things, about being in the learning pit. Teaching creative writing is about making mistakes. There is no other subject teachers teach that is so pregnant with risk, since there is no right way of teaching or learning creative writing, precisely because it is so subjective. Teachers can afford to take risks without necessarily concerning themselves with pressures of accountability and measuring students' progress. This is because, in my opinion, such pressures have no place in creative writing. They are neither useful nor relevant.

It is now 2021. My 2020 study leave is over and, this year, I have been back in the classroom as a part-time teacher. It was a luxury to focus on my studies rather than juggle teaching and study at the same time. I was incredibly fortunate to win study leave from the MoE to finish this thesis, but unfortunately did not foresee COVID-19 and the

implications that it had for work. During the year, my now 10-year-old son was home for approximately three months, and, for any parent who endured the same situation, I empathise – you will understand how difficult it is to conduct research and home school at the same time.

However, despite these challenges and upon reflection, my research and the completion of my thesis have changed the way I not only view creative writing, but have also opened doorways into new, different, and exciting practices. My understanding of the creative writing process has undergone some startling transformations, and I now understand that there is no easy way to teach creative writing, nor is there any right way. It is challenging and fraught with risk, pregnant with emancipatory possibilities. Creative writing is also an intensely complicated subject, one that is moulded and shaped by environmental, social, political, and individual factors. Teachers are shackled by accountability but are also set free by there being no mandated approach to creative writing. Therefore, teachers, I argue, effectively learn how to teach creative writing by risk taking.

My argument that teachers should take a weaker approach to education and be risky in their creative writing practice is juxtaposed with an educational setting where teacher judgement often seems to carry less weight than that of standardised assessment. As such, teachers have become, in some ways, powerless as their professionalism and professional opinions have been undermined. Allan Luke (2004), borrowing from Pierre Bourdieu, asks "How would we begin to redefine and reframe, rebuild and rework the cultural and social capital of teachers at this particular historical moment?" (p. 5). Luke argues that teaching has become a "spectator sport" where:

> bureaucrats and senior public servants like Lyon, teachers' unions, professional organisations, policy-think tanks, academics, journalists and politicians, and conservative lobby groups conduct a free-for-all over standards, 'research-based' evidence, claims of decline, "market share" and the overall credibility of public schooling. (Luke, 2004, p. 5)

Although Luke wrote this passage almost 20 years ago, some of these observations are still relevant today. Such an environment, I suggest, is not conducive for teachers of any subject, and not conducive to the teaching of creative writing, where the greatest innovation in practice, as seen through the recounts of the 10 participants and my own experiences, appeared when the teacher was free to be innovative and creative, and ignore research-based evidence, took risks and was disobedient. Such practice then had the potential to fulfill Biesta's most important function of education, that of subjectification, closely related to the notions of emancipation and freedom, notions that are central to the

work of Jacques Rancière. In order to do that, however, teachers must regain trust so they are at liberty to take risks. As Luke (2004) notes, trust in and the status of the teaching profession must be rebuilt: “The task is in part a matter of honour, of rebuilding and maintaining the status of the profession in the face of reductionist attempts to remove any remnants of industrial and intellectual autonomy of teachers” (p. 5).

It is important in the teaching of creative writing that teachers regain the trust and professionalism needed to do their job without interference, to be open to risk taking and be disobedient in their practice, to be more than just “one who adds value to students’ test scores” (Ell & Grudnoff, 2013, p. 78). Creative writing practices can be emancipatory for both teachers and students. Teachers and students must feel free to take risks because “creativity embodies risk” (Wragg, 2005, p. 186) in order to enable emancipation and foster creativity in their classroom. In a recent report on creativity in Aotearoa New Zealand schools:

> although Sir Ken Robinson’s idea that schools are killing creativity might be overstated, clearly New Zealand schools are not valorising or encouraging creative dispositions, nor are they building skills and knowledge in the creative process. We further argue that in failing to do this we incur several major risks. We fail to optimise potential for economic recovery, we risk damage to democratic institutions and we fail to use the power of the arts for individual and community well-being. (P. O'Connor, 2020, p. 28)

O’Connor suggests that, by not fostering creativity in schools, education will potentially fail to enact any function at all, that is qualification, socialisation or subjectification. This situation is complicated by the fact that teachers can teach what they do not know, but they are not employed to teach what they do not know. And yet, all teachers have learned without being taught, for example, learning how to speak or tell stories, or teach creative writing, which is not taught during teachers’ initial training.

Finally, I believe teachers can encourage creative dispositions through creative writing practices, and that creative writing can serve many functions of education, particularly those associated with freedom and creativity. In order to do so, teachers should be given opportunities to discuss their own emancipatory creative writing practice, to tell stories and to learn from the ‘virtuosity’ of others, and share their own ‘virtuosity’, but, mostly, to have opportunities to be creative risk-takers.

# References


Abd Karim, R., Abu, A. G., & Khaja, F. N. M. (2016). Brainstorming approach and mind mapping in writing activity. *Proceedings of EEIC, 1*(2), 423-429.

Abedianpour, S., & Omidvari, A. (2018). Brainstorming strategy and writing performance: Effects and attitudes. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research, 9*(5), 1084-1094.

Alvarez-Hevia, D. (2014). Micro-ethnography and fiction narratives: Teachers' emotionality in alternative education. In *SAGE Research Methods Cases*. https://www.doi.org/10.4135/978144627305013509183

Amabile, T. (1985). Motivation and creativity: Effects of motivational orientation on creative writers. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 48*(2), 393.

Amabile, T. (1997). Motivating creativity in organizations: On doing what you love and loving what you do. *California Management Review, 40*(1), 39-58.

Amery, M. (2020, June 27). The debasement of art in schools. *The Spinoff*. Retrieved from https://thespinoff.co.nz/art/27-06-2020/turning-stem-to-steam-how-to-turn-around-the-crisis-for-the-arts-in-schools/

Anae, N. (2014). "Creative writing as freedom, education as exploration": Creative writing as literary and visual arts pedagogy in the first year teacher-education experience. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education, 39*(8), 7.

Anderson, L. (2006). *Creative writing: A workbook with readings.* Place?: Routledge & The Open University.

Apple, M. W. (2017). What is present and absent in critical analyses of neoliberalism in education. *Peabody Journal of Education, 92*(1), 148.

Arndt, P. A. (2016). Computer usage for learning how to read and write in primary school. *Trends in Neuroscience and Education, 5*(3), 90-98. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tine.2016.07.003

Ashcroft, B., Griffiths, G., & Tiffin, H. (2002). *The empire writes back: Theory and practice in post-colonial literatures* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.

Atkinson, P., Coffey, A., & Delamont, S. (2003). *Key themes in qualitative research: Continuities and changes.* Walnut Creek, California: AltaMira Press.

Atkinson, P., Coffey, A., Delamont, S., Lofland, J., & Lofland, L. (2000). *Handbook of ethnography.* New York, NY: Sage.

Babayigit, O. (2019). Examining the effect of creative writing activities on reading, writing and language lesson attitudes of elementary school fourth grade students. *European Journal of Educational Research, 8*(1), 213-220.

Bakhtin, M. M. (1986). The bildungsroman and its significance in the history of realism. In C. Emerson & M. Holquist (Eds.), *Speech genres and other late essays* (V. W. McGee, Trans.*) pp. 167-179*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.

Barbot, B., Tan, M., Randi, J., Santa-Donato, G., & Grigorenko, E. L. (2012). Essential skills for creative writing: Integrating multiple domain-specific perspectives. *Thinking Skills and Creativity, 7*(3), 209-223.

Barnacle, R. (2001). *Phenomenology.* Melbourne, Australia: RMIT University Press.

Bazzul, J. (2013). Emancipating subjects in science education: Taking a lesson from Patti Lather and Jacques Rancière. *Cultural Studies of Science Education, 8*(1), 245-251. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11422-013-9481-z

Bean, J., & Elbow, P. (2009). Freewriting and free speech: A pragmatic perspective. *Journal of Teaching Writing, 25*(1), 1-23.

Beard, R., & Burrell, A. (2010). Writing attainment in 9- to 11-year-olds: Some differences between girls and boys in two genres. *Language & Education: An*

*International Journal, 24*(6), 495-515. https://doi.org/10.1080/09500782.2010.502968

Beauchamp, S. (2013, January 16). The future might be a hoot: How Iain M. Banks imagines utopia. *The Atlantic*. Retrieved from https://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2013/01/the-future-might-be-a-hoot-how-iain-m-banks-imagines-utopia/267211/

Beghetto, R. A., & Kaufman, J. C. (2014). Classroom contexts for creativity. *High Ability Studies, 25*(1), 53-69.

Bell, D. (2010). Visual arts education in New Zealand: Curriculum, promise and challenge. *Curriculum Matters, 6*, 28-47.

Berliner, D. C. (2012). Narrowing curriculum, assessments, and conceptions of what it means to be smart in the US schools: Creaticide by design. In D. Ambrose & R. Sternberg (Eds.), *How dogmatic beliefs harm creativity and higher-level thinking* (pp. 91-105). New York, NY: Routledge.

Bernardes, E., & Menzies, L. (2017). *Creative writing in schools: Literature review*. Retrieved from https://cfey.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/CWIS-Literature-Review-FINAL.pdf

Berninger, V., & Hidi, S. (2006). Mark Twain writers workshop: A nature-nurture perspective for motivating students with learning disabilities to compose. In S. Hidi & P. Boscolo (Eds.), *Writing and motivation* (pp. 161-182). New York, NY: Brill.

Bhutta, Z. A. (2004). Beyond informed consent. *Bulletin of the World Health Organization, 82*, 771-777.

Biesta, G. (2004). Against learning. Reclaiming a language for education in an age of learning. *Nordic Studies in Education = Nordisk Pedagogik, 23*, 70-82.

Biesta, G. (2005). Against learning. *Nordisk Pedagogik, 25*(1), 54-66.

Biesta, G. (2006). *Beyond learning: Democratic education for a human future.* New York, NY: Paradigm Publishers.

Biesta, G. (2008). Toward a new" logic" of emancipation: Foucault and Ranciere. *Philosophy of Education Yearbook*, 169-177.

Biesta, G. (2009). Good education in an age of measurement: On the need to reconnect with the question of purpose in education. *Educational Assessment, Evaluation and Accountability (formerly: Journal of Personnel Evaluation in Education), 21*(1), 33-46.

Biesta, G. (2010a). A new logic of emancipation: The methodology of Jacques Rancière. *Educational Theory, 60*(1), 39-59.

Biesta, G. (2010b). *Good education in an age of measurement: Ethics, politics, democracy.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Biesta, G. (2013a). Interrupting the politics of learning. *Power and Education, 5*(1), 4-15.

Biesta, G. (2013b). Receiving the gift of teaching: From ‘learning from’ to ‘being taught by’. *Studies in Philosophy and Education, 32*(5), 449-461.

Biesta, G. (2015). *Good education in an age of measurement: Ethics, politics, democracy.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Biesta, G. (2016). *The beautiful risk of education*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Biesta, G. (2017a). Don’t be fooled by ignorant schoolmasters: On the role of the teacher in emancipatory education. *Policy Futures in Education, 15*(1), 52-73.

Biesta, G. (2017b). The future of teacher education: Evidence, competence or wisdom? In M. A. Peters, B. Cowie & I. Menter (Eds.), *A companion to research in teacher education* (pp. 435-453). New York, NY: Springer.

Biesta, G. (2017c). What if? Art education beyond expression and creativity. In C. Naughton, G. Biesta, & D. Cole (Eds.), *Art, artists and pedagogy: Philosophy and the arts in education* (pp. 1-10). New York, NY: Routledge.

Biesta, G. (2019). Reclaiming teaching for teacher education: Towards a spiral curriculum. *Beijing International Review of Education, 1*(2-3), 259-272.

Biesta, G. (2020). Risking ourselves in education: Qualification, socialization, and subjectification revisited. *Educational Theory, 70*(1), 89-104.

Bifuh-Ambe, E. (2013). Developing successful writing teachers: Outcomes of professional development exploring teachers' perceptions of themselves as writers and writing teachers and their students' attitudes and abilities to write across the curriculum. *English Teaching: Practice and Critique, 12*(3), 137-156.

Bingham, C. (2015). On the logic of learning and relationality. *Philosophy of Education, 2015,* 183-186.

Bingham, C., & Biesta, G. (2010). *Jacques Rancière: education, truth, emancipation.* Place?: Bloomsbury Publishing.

Bishop, W. (1993). Crossing the lines: On creative composition and composing creative writing. *Writing on the Edge, 4*(2), 117.

Blagg, N. (1991). *Can we teach intelligence? A comprehensive evaluation of Feuerstein's Instrumental Enrichment Program*. Place?: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

Bloom, E. (2006). *Down in the scrub club: Exploring the possibilities in ethnographic fiction* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global database. (304929795).

Blythe, H., & Sweet, C. (2005). Creative writing and an overlooked population. *New Writing, 2*(2), 116.

Bochner, A., & Ellis, C. (2016). *Evocative autoethnography: Writing lives and telling stories*. New York: Routledge.

Boscolo, P., & Hidi, S. (2007). The multiple meanings of motivation to write. In S. Hidi & P. Boscolo (Eds.), *Writing and motivation* (pp. 1–14): New York, NY: Elsevier.

Botticchio, M., & Vialle, W. (2009). *Creativity and flow theory: Reflections on the talent development of women.* Retrieved from https://ro.uow.edu.au/edupapers/998

Bourdieu, P. (1986). The forms of capital. In J. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education* (pp. 241-258). New York, NY: Greenwood.

Bourdieu, P., & Accardo, A. (1999). *The weight of the world: Social suffering in contemporary society.* Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press.

Bracefield, C., & Woodgate, F. (2020). Early literacy and the teacher's role. *He Kupu–The Word, 6*(3), 14-19.

Brand, A. (1980). Creative writing in English education: An historical perspective. *The Journal of Education, 162*(4).

Britton, J. (1972). The present state of theory and knowledge relating to English teaching. *English in Australia, 22,* 9-24.

Bruce, T. (2014). A spy in the house of rugby: Living (in) the emotional spaces of nationalism and sport. *Emotion, Space and Society, 12,* 32-40. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.emospa.2013.12.002

Bruce, T. (2019). The case for faction as a potent method for integrating fact and fiction in research. In *Innovations in narrative and metaphor* (pp. 57-72). Springer, Singapore.

Bunting, D. (1998). From process to genre to strategy: recent developments in the teaching of writing. *Writing Under Control.* Great Britain: David Fulton Publishers.

Burnett, C., Dickinson, P., Myers, J., & Merchant, G. (2006). Digital connections: Transforming literacy in the primary school. *Cambridge Journal of Education, 36*(1), 11-29.

Bushnell, M. (2003). Teachers in the schoolhouse panopticon: Complicity and resistance. *Education & Urban Society, 35*(3), 251.

Cachia, M., & Millward, L. (2011). The telephone medium and semi-structured interviews: a complementary fit. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*.

Campbell, E., & Lassiter, L. (2014). *Doing ethnography today: Theories, methods, exercises*. Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell.

Carter, D. (2019). Restoring purpose: Applying Biesta's three functions to the Melbourne Declaration. *Curriculum Perspectives, 39*(2), 125-134.

Chandler, K. M. (2006). Paths to freedom: Literacy and folk traditions in recent narratives about slavery and emancipation. *Children's Literature Association Quarterly, 31*(1), 3-26.

Chang, H. (2008). *Autoethnography as method*. Walnut Creek, Calif: Left Coast Press.

Chestek, V. (1986). Teaching creative writing: An emphasis on preparation. *Freshman English News, 15*(1).

Cheung, W., Tse, S., & Tsang, H. (2003). Creative writing practice in primary schools: A case study in Hong Kong. *The International Journal of Creativity & Problem Solving, 13*(2), 55-65.

Cheung, Y., & Jang, H. (2019). Teaching writing to elementary school students: An activity theory perspective. *Irish Educational Studies, 38*(4), 451-466. https://doi.org/10.1080/03323315.2019.1645720

Clandinin, D., & Connelly, F. (1996). Teachers' professional knowledge landscapes: Teacher stories. *Educational Researcher, 25*, 24-30.

Clandinin, D., & Connelly, F. (2000). *Narrative inquiry: Experience and story in qualitative research.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Cochran-Smith, M., & Lytle, S. L. (1993). *Inside/outside: Teacher research and knowledge.* New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Connelly, F., & Clandinin, D. (1990). Stories of experience and narrative inquiry. *Educational Researcher, 19*(5), 2-14. https://doi.org/10.2307/1176100

Cooley, N. (2003). Literary legacies and critical transformations: Teaching creative writing in the public urban university. *Pedagogy, 3*(1), 99-103.

Cortazzi, M. (1996). Narrative analysis. *Discourse & Society, 7*(1), 139-141.

Couch, D. (2012). Progressive education in New Zealand from 1937 to 1944: Seven years from idea to orthodoxy. *Pacific-Asian Education Journal, 24*(1).

Cox, R. (2001). *Knowledge about language: System and pedagogy* (Unpublished PhD thesis). James Cook University, Australia.

Cremin, T. (2006). Creativity, uncertainty and discomfort: Teachers as writers. *Cambridge Journal of Education, 36*(3), 415.

Cremin, T., Myhill, D., Eyres, I., Nash, T., Wilson, A., & Oliver, L. (2020). Teachers as writers: Learning together with others. *Literacy, 54*(2), 49-59.

Cremin, T., & Oliver, L. (2017). Teachers as writers: A systematic review. *Research Papers in Education, 32*(3), 269-295. https://doi.org/10.1080/02671522.2016.1187664

Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Cropley, A. (2016). The myths of heaven-sent creativity: Toward a perhaps less democratic but more down-to-earth understanding. *Creativity Research Journal, 28*(3), 238-246.

Cropley, A. J. (2001). *Creativity in education & learning: A guide for teachers and educators.* Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge/Farmer.

Cropley, D. H., & Cropley, A. (2005). Engineering creativity: A systems concept of functional creativity. In J. C. Kaufman & J. Baer (Eds.), *Creativity across domains: Faces of the muse* (pp. 169-185). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1997). *Creativity: Invention, flow and the psychology of discovery and invention.* New York, NY: Perennial & Harper.

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2014). *The systems model of creativity: The collected works of Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi.* New York, NY: Springer. Retrieved from https://link.springer.com/10.1007/978-94-017-9085-7

Daly, C. (2003). *Literature search on improving boys' writing.* London, UK: Ofsted.

Darling-Hammond, L., Hyler, M. E., & Gardner, M. (2017). *Effective teacher professional development*. Retrievd from the Learning Policy Institute website: https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/product-files/Effective_Teacher_Professional_Development_REPORT.pdf

Darrington, B., & Dousay, T. (2014). Using multimodal writing to motivate struggling students to write. *TechTrends: Linking Research and Practice to Improve Learning*, *59*(6), 29-34.

Davies, D., Jindal-Snape, D., Collier, C., Digby, R., Hay, P., & Howe, A. (2013). Creative learning environments in education—A systematic literature review. *Thinking Skills and Creativity*, *8*, 80-91.

Davis, J. (2019). *The possibility of philosophy in schools: Jacques Rancière and community of philosophical inquiry* (Doctoral dissertation, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, NY. Retrieved from academiccommons.columbia.edu

Davis, O. (2010). *Jacques Rancière.* Cambridge, UK: Polity.

De Bernardi, B., & Antolini, E. (2006). Fostering students' willingness and interest in argumentative writing: An intervention study. In S. Hidi & P. Boscolo (Eds.), *Writing and motivation* (pp. 183-201). New York, NY: Elsevier. https://doi.org/10.1163/9781849508216_011

De Smedt, F., & Van Keer, H. (2014). A research synthesis on effective writing instruction in primary education. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences, 112*, 693-701. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.01.1219

de Souza Fleith, D. (2000). Teacher and student perceptions of creativity in the classroom environment. *Roeper Review*, *22*(3), 148-153.

Denzin, N., & Lincoln, Y. (2013). *Strategies of qualitative inquiry.* New York, NY: Sage.

Derewianka, B. (1990). *Exploring how texts work.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Heinemann Educational Books.

Dickens, C. (2011). *A tale of two cities: A story of the French Revolution.* Philadelphia, PA: Andrews UK Limited.

Dixon, M. (2016). Creative writing in the 7-10 classroom. *Metaphor*(4), 31.

Dobson, T. (2015a). Developing a theoretical framework for response: Creative writing as response in the year 6 primary classroom. *English in Education, 49*(3), 252-265. https://doi.org/10.1111/eie.12075

Dobson, T. (2015b). The mad genie in the attic: Performances of identity in Year 6 boys' creative writing. *Gender & Education, 27*(1), 37-52. https://doi.org/10.1080/09540253.2014.978744

Dobson, T., & Stephenson, L. (2017). Primary pupils' creative writing: Enacting identities in a community of writers. *Literacy*, *51*(3), 162-168.

Dowden, T. (2011). Locating curriculum integration within the historical context: Innovations in Aotearoa New Zealand state schools, 1920s-1940s. *History of Education Review, 40*(1), 47-61.

Draper, S. (1998). *Should teachers be expert in the subject matter?* Glasgow, UK: University of Glasgow.

Dyson, A. H. (2009). Writing in childhood worlds. In R. Beard, D. Myhill, J. Riley, & M. Nystrand (eds.), *The Sage handbook of writing development* (pp. 232-245). New York, NY: Sage.

Edgington, U. (2013). *Performativity & affectivity: Lesson observations in England's further education colleges* (Doctoral thesis). Canterbury Christ Church University. Retrieved from https://repository.canterbury.ac.uk/item/8733q/performativity-affectivity-lesson-observations-in-england-s-further-education-colleges

Education Review Office. (2019). *Keeping children engaged and achieving in writing*. Wellington, New Zealand: Author.

Egan, K. (1989). *Teaching as story telling: An alternative approach to teaching and curriculum in the elementary school*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Elbow, P. (1989). Toward a phenomenology of freewriting. *Journal of Basic Writing, 8*(2), 42-71.

Elbow, P. (1998). *Writing without teachers.* Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Ell, F., & Grudnoff, L. (2013). The politics of responsibility: Teacher education and "persistent underachievement" in New Zealand. *Educational Forum, 77*(1), 73-86. https://doi.org/10.1080/00131725.2013.739023

Elliott, J. (2005). *Using narrative in social research*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Ellis, C., Adams, T., & Bochner, A. (2011). Autoethnography: An overview. *Historical Social Research / Historische Sozialforschung, 4*(138), 273.

Ellis, C., & Bochner, A. (2000). Autoethnography, personal narrative, reflexivity: researcher as subject. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed.) (pp. 733-768). Walnut Creek, CA: Sage.

Ellis, C. (2007). Telling secrets, revealing lives: Relational ethics in research with intimate others. *Qualitative Inquiry, 13*(1), 3-29. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800406294947

Faigley, L. (1986). Competing theories of process: A critique and a proposal. *College English, 48*(6), 527. https://doi.org/10.2307/376707

Feiman-Nemser, S., & Parker, M. B. (1993). Mentoring in context: A comparison of two US programs for beginning teachers. *International Journal of Educational Research, 19*(8), 699-718.

Fenza, D. W. (2000, March/April). Creative writing & its discontents. *Writer's Chronicle*. Retrieved from https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED462703.pdf

Fenza, D. W. (2011). The centre has not held: Creative writing & pluralism. *New Writing: The International Journal for the Practice & Theory of Creative Writing, 8*(3), 206-214. https://doi.org/10.1080/14790726.2011.615399

Ferguson, S. C. (1982). Defining the short story: Impressionism and form. *Modern Fiction Studies, 28*(1), 13-24.

Fillis, I. (2006). Art for art's sake or art for business sake: An exploration of artistic product orientation. *The Marketing Review, 6*(1), 29-40.

Finlay, L. (2009). Debating phenomenological research methods. *Phenomenology and Practice, 3*(1), 6-25.

Fitzsimmons, P., Harris, P., McKenzie, B., & Turbill, J. (2003). *Writing in the primary school years.* Sydney, Australia: Social Science Press.

Flower, L., & Hayes, J. (1981). A cognitive process theory of writing. *College Composition and Communication, 32*(4), 365. https://doi.org/10.2307/356600

Foucault, M. (1972). *Truth and power.* New York, NY: Vintage

Frank, J. (2012). The significance of the poetic in early childhood education: Stanley Cavell and Lucy Sprague Mitchell on language learning. *Studies in Philosophy and Education, 31*(4), 327-338.

Frank, K. (2000). The management of hunger: Using fiction in writing anthropology. *Qualitative Inquiry, 6*(4), 474. https://doi.org/10.1177/107780040000600404

Frawley, E. (2014). No time for the "airy fairy": Teacher perspectives on creative writing in high stakes environments. *English in Australia, 49*(1), 17-26.

Freebody, P., Barton, G., & Chan, E. (2014). Literacy education: "About being in the world". In C. Leung & B. V. Street (Eds.), *The Routledge companion to English studies* (pp. 449-464). London, UK: Routledge.

Freedman, A. (1999). Beyond the text: Towards understanding the teaching and learning of genres. *Tesol Quarterly, 33*(4), 764-767.

Freire, P. (1970a). The adult literacy process as cultural action for freedom. *Harvard Educational Review, 40*(2), 205-225.

Freire, P. (1970b). *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (M. B. Ramos, Trans.). New York, NY: Continuum.

Freire, P. (1985). *The politics of education: Culture, power, and liberation.* New York, NY: Greenwood Publishing Group.

Freud, S. (1991). Creative writers and day-dreaming (A. Freud, A. Strachey, & A. Tyson, Trans.). In *Complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud* (Vol. IX, pp. 141-153): Hogarth Press. (Original work published 1908.)

Fryer, N. (2010). From reproduction to creativity and the aesthetic: Towards an ontological approach to the assessment of devised performance. *Research in Drama Education, 15*(4), 547-562.

Fryer, N. (2015). The 'third thing': Rancière, process drama and experimental performance. *Research in Drama Education, 20*(3), 331-336.

Gadd, M. (2014). *What is critical in the effective teaching of writing? A study of the classroom practice of some Year 5–8 teachers in the New Zealand context.* (Doctoral thesis, University of Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand). Retrieved from http://hdl.handle.net/2292/23491

Gadd, M., & Parr, J. (2017). Practices of effective writing teachers. *Reading and Writing, 30*(7), 1551-1574.

Gadd, M., & Thompson, L. (2006). *Effective literacy practice in years 5 to 8*. Wellington, New Zealand: Learning Media.

Gahan, P., Minahan, S., & Glow, H. (2007). A creative twist: Management theory, creativity and the Arts. *Journal of Management & Organization, 13*(1), 41-50.

Galloway, S. (2012). Reconsidering emancipatory education: Staging a conversation between Paulo Freire and Jacques Rancière. *Educational Theory, 62*(2), 163-184.

Galloway, S., & Dunlop, S. (2007). A critique of definitions of the cultural and creative industries in public policy. *International Journal of Cultural Policy, 13*(1), 17-31.

Garcia, A., Luke, A., & Seglem, R. (2018). Looking at the next 20 years of multiliteracies: A discussion with Allan Luke. *Theory into Practice, 57*(1), 72-78.

Gerretson, H., Bosnick, J., & Schofield, K. (2008). A case for content specialists as the elementary classroom teacher. *The Teacher Educator, 43*(4), 302-314. https://doi.org/10.1080/08878730802249866

Gilbert, F. (2015). *Who do you love? The novel of my life (creative writing thesis) and Building beauty: The role of aesthetic education in my teaching and writing lives (commentary on the creative writing thesis)* (Doctoral thesis, Goldsmiths, University of London, London, UK). Retrieved from http://research.gold.ac.uk/id/eprint/14858/

Gilbert, F. (2016). Aesthetic learning, creative writing and English teaching. *Changing English, 23*(3), 257-268.

Gilbert, J., & Graham, S. (2010). Teaching writing to elementary students in grades 4–6: A national survey. *The Elementary School Journal, 110*(4), 494-518.

Gilbert, J., Hipkins, R., & Cooper, G. (2005, May-June). *Faction or fiction: Using narrative pedagogy in school science education*. Paper presented at the Redesigning Pedagogy: Research, Policy, Practice Conference, Singapore. Retrieved from https://www.nzcer.org.nz/pdfs/14292.pdf

Glynn, S. M., & Muth, K. D. (1994). Reading and writing to learn science: Achieving scientific literacy. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching, 31*(9), 1057-1073.

Gobo, G., & Marciniak, L. T. (2011). Ethnography. *Qualitative Research, 3*(1), 15-36.

Goldenberg, O., & Wiley, J. (2011). Quality, conformity, and conflict: Questioning the assumptions of Osborn's brainstorming technique. *The Journal of Problem Solving, 3*(2), 5.

Goody, J. (2006). From oral to written: An anthropological breakthrough in storytelling. In F. Meoretti (Ed.), *The Novel, Volume 1: History, Geography, and Culture* (pp. 3-36). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Graham, S., Gillespie, A., & McKeown, D. (2012). Writing: Importance, development, and instruction. *Reading and Writing, 26*(1), 1-15. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11145-012-9395-2

Graham, S., & Harris, K. R. (1993). Self-regulated strategy development: Helping students with learning problems develop as writers. *The Elementary School Journal, 94*(2), 169-181.

Graham, S., Harris, K. R., Capizzi, A., Hebert, M., & Morphy, P. (2014). Teaching writing to middle school students: A national survey. *Reading and Writing, 27*(6), 1015-1042. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11145-013-9495-7

Graham, S., Harris, K. R., MacArthur, C., & Fink, B. (2002). Primary grade teachers' theoretical orientations concerning writing instruction: Construct validation and a nationwide survey. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 27*, 147-166. https://doi.org/10.1006/ceps.2001.1085

Graham, S., & Perin, D. (2007). A meta-analysis of writing instruction for adolescent students. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 99*(3), 445.

Gralewski, J. (2016). Teachers' beliefs about creativity and possibilities for its development in Polish high schools: A qualitative study. *Creativity. Theories – Research – Applications, 3*(2), 292. https://doi.org/10.1515/ctra-2016-0019

Graves, D. (1983). *Writing: Teachers and children at work.* New York, NY: Heinemann.

Graves, D. (2004). What I've learned from teachers of writing. *Language Arts, 82*(2), 88-94.

Griffiths, R., & Hamer, B. (1992). *Dancing with the pen: The learner as a writer.* Wellington, New Zealand: Learning Media & Ministry of Education.

Grigoryan, A., & King, J. M. (2008). Adbusting: Critical media literacy in a multi-skills academic writing lesson. *English Teaching Forum, 46*(4), 2-9.

Guilherme, A., Steren dos Santos, B., & Spagnolo, C. (2017). Teachers' lifelong learning: Emerging dialogues from Gert Biesta's philosophical views. *Policy Futures in Education, 15*(7-8), 861-873.

Gupta, S. (2019). Creative writing programmes and patronage. *British Journal of Educational Studies, 67*(3), 321-336.

Gustina, C., & Sweet, R. (2014). Creatives teaching creativity. *International Journal of Art & Design Education, 33*(1), 46-54.

Hallward, P. (2005). Jacques Rancière and the subversion of mastery. *Paragraph, 28*(1), 26-45.

Harmer, J. (1998). *How to teach English: An introduction to the practice of English language teaching.* New York, NY: Longman.

Harper, G. (2015). *Creative writing and education.* Bristol, UK: Channel View Publications.

Harper, G., & Kroll, J. (2007). *Creative writing studies: Practice, research and pedagogy.* New York, NY: Multilingual Matters.

Hart, I. (2001). Deschooling and the Web: Ivan Illich 30 years on. *Educational Media International, 38*(2-3), 69-76.

Hasslöf, H., & Malmberg, C. (2015). Critical thinking as room for subjectification in education for sustainable development. *Environmental Education Research, 21*(2), 239-255.

Hattie, J. (2009). *Visible learning: A synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement.* London, UK: Routledge.

Hattie, J., & Yates, G. (2013). *Visible learning and the science of how we learn.* London, UK: Routledge.

Haught-Tromp, C. (2017). The Green Eggs and Ham hypothesis: How constraints facilitate creativity. *Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts, 11*(1), 10.

Hawkins, H. (2017). *Creativity.* London, UK: Routledge.

Head, G. (2020). Ethics in educational research: Review boards, ethical issues and researcher development. *European Educational Research Journal, 19*(1), 72-83.

Hennessey, B., Amabile, T., & Mueller, J. (2010). *Consensual assessment.* New York, NY: Elsevier.

Herbert, F. (2005). *Dune* (40th anniversary ed.). Ace Books.

Herder, A., Berenst, J., de Glopper, K., & Koole, T. (2018). Nature and function of proposals in collaborative writing of primary school students. *Linguistics and Education, 46*, 1-11.

Hicks, K. (2015, March 17). Why creativity in the classroom matters more than ever [Blog post]. Retrieved from https://blogs.svvsd.org/tdswinter2016/2016/02/03/why-creativity-in-the-classroom-matters-more-than-ever/

Hillmann, P. J. (2004). *Fostering creativity, individualism, and the imaginative spirit: Are collaborative thinking and cooperative learning overemphasized in education today?* Retrieved from https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED490611.pdf

Hocking, D. (2018). *Communicating creativity: The discursive facilitation of creative activity in arts.* London, UK: Springer.

Hodges, T. (2017). Theoretically speaking: An examination of four theories and how they support writing in the classroom. *The Clearing House, 90*(4), 139-146. https://doi.org/10.1080/00098655.2017.1326228

Hodges, T. S., Feng, L., Kuo, L.-J., & McTigue, E. (2016). Discovering the literacy gap: A systematic review of reading and writing theories in research. *Cogent Education, 3*(1), 1228284.

Hoffman, J. V., Roller, C., Maloch, B., Sailors, M., Duffy, G., & Beretvas, S. N. (2005). Teachers' preparation to teach reading and their experiences and practices in the first three years of teaching. *The Elementary School Journal, 105*(3), 267-287.

Hornstra, L., Mansfield, C., van der Veen, I., Peetsma, T., & Volman, M. (2015). Motivational teacher strategies: The role of beliefs and contextual factors. *Learning Environments Research, 18*(3), 363-392.

Horrocks, R. (2016). The arts in New Zealand: A changing field of forces. *New Zealand Sociology, 31*(7), 132.

Hoskins, T. K. (2012). A fine risk: Ethics in Kaupapa Maori politics. *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies*, *47*(2), 85-99.

Howkins, J. (2005). The mayor's commission on the creative industries. In J. Hartley (Ed.), *Creative industries* (pp. 117-125). Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Ibnian, S. S. K. (2011). Brainstorming and essay writing in EFL class. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies, 1*(3), 263-272.

Inckle, K. (2010). Telling tales? Using ethnographic fictions to speak embodied 'truth'. *Qualitative Research, 10*(1), 27-47. https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794109348681

Ingridsdotter, J., & Kallenberg, K. S. (2018). Ethnography and the arts: Examining social complexities through ethnographic fiction. *Etnofoor, 30*(1), 57.

Ings, R. (2009). *Writing is primary: Action research on the teaching of writing in primary schools.* London, UK: Esmee Fairbairn Foundation.

Ings, W. (2017). *Disobedient teaching: Surviving and creating change in education.* Dunedin, New Zealand: Otago University Press.

Isaksen, S. G., & Gaulin, J. P. (2005). A reexamination of brainstorming research: Implications for research and practice. *Gifted Child Quarterly, 49*(4), 315-329.

Johnson-Laird, P. N. (1988). Freedom and constraint in creativity. In R. J. Sternberg (Ed.), *The nature of creativity: Contemporary psychological perspectives* (pp. 202-219) Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Johnson-Sheehan, R., & Paine, C. (2012). *Writing today*. Boston, MA: Pearson Higher Ed.

Kagan, D. M. (1992). Implication of research on teacher belief. *Educational Psychologist, 27*(1), 65.

Kalin, N. M. (2018). *The neoliberalization of creativity education: Democratizing, destructing and decreating.* Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan.

Karnieli-Miller, O., Strier, R., & Pessach, L. (2009). Power relations in qualitative research. *Qualitative Health Research, 19*(2), 279-289.

Käufer, S., & Chemero, A. (2015). *Phenomenology: An introduction.* Place?: Polity.

Kaufman, J. (2002). Dissecting the golden goose: Components of studying creative writers. *Creativity Research Journal, 14*(1), 27.

Kaufman, J. (2016). *Creativity 101* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Springer

Kaufman, J. C., & Beghetto, R. A. (2009). Beyond big and little: The four c model of creativity. *Review of General Psychology, 13*(1), 1-12.

Kaufman, S., & Kaufman, J. (2009). *The psychology of creative writing.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Kaufman, S. B. (2014, May 12). The philosophy of creativity. *Scientific American*. Retrieved from https://blogs.scientificamerican.com/beautiful-minds/the-philosophy-of-creativity/

Keen, J. (2017). Teaching the writing process. *Changing English: Studies in Culture and Education, 24*(4), 372-385. https://doi.org/10.1080/1358684X.2017.1359493

Kelchtermans, G. (1993). Getting the story, understanding the lives: From career stories to teachers' professional development. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 9*(5-6), 443-456.*Kettler, T., Lamb, K., Willerson, A., & Mullet, D. (2018). Teachers' perceptions of creativity in the classroom. *Creativity Research Journal, 30*(2), 164-171.

Khan, H. (2012). English teachers' perceptions about creativity and teaching creative writing in Pakistan. *American International Journal of Contemporary Research, 2*(3), 57-67.

King, S. (2000). *On writing: A memoir of the craft.* London, UK: Simon and Schuster.

Kreiner, D. S., Schnakenberg, S. D., Green, A. G., Costello, M. J., & McClin, A. F. (2002). Effects of spelling errors on the perception of writers. *The Journal of General Psychology, 129*(1), 5-17.

Kvale, S., & Brinkmann, S. (2009). *InterViews: Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing*: Los Angeles: Sage Publications. Second edition.*Labov, W., & Waletzky, J. (1997). Narrative analysis: Oral versions of personal experience. *Journal of Narrative & Life History, 7*(1-4), 3-38. https://doi.org/10.1075/jnlh.7.02nar

LaSalle, D. (2015). Intrinsic motivation and the five-paragraph essay: Lessons learned on practitioner research, the role of academic research in the classroom, and assessing changes in student motivation. *Penn GSE Perspectives on Urban Education, 12*(1).

Lather, P. (2012). *Ranciere as post-Foucauldian.* Paper presented at the meeting of the American Educational Research Association., Vancouver, Canada. Retrieved from http://www.aera.net/.

Le Grange, L. (2018). What is (post) qualitative research? *South African Journal of Higher Education, 32*(5), 1-14. https://doi.org/10.20853/32-5-3161

Lefranc, A., Pistolesi, N., & Trannoy, A. (2008). Inequality of opportunities vs. inequality of outcomes: Are Western societies all alike? *Review of Income and Wealth, 54*(4), 513-546.

Lim, S. (2003). The strangeness of creative writing: An institutional query. *Pedagogy, 3*(2), 151-169.

Loane, G. (2016). *Developing young writers in the classroom: I've got something to say.* Place?: Taylor & Francis.

Locke, T. (2015). *Developing writing teachers: practical ways for teacher-writers to transform their classroom practice*. Retrieved from http://ebookcentral.proquest.com

Locke, T., Whitehead, D., & Dix, S. (2013). The impact of 'writing project' professional development on teachers' self-efficacy as writers and teachers of writing. *English in Australia, 48*(2), 55.

Luke, A. (1998). Getting over method: Literacy teaching as work in "new times". *Language Arts, 75*(4), 305-313.

Luke, A. (2004). Teaching after the market: From commodity to cosmopolitanism. *Teachers College Record, 106*(7), 1422-1443.

Luke, A. (2018). *Critical literacy, schooling, and social justice: The selected works of Allan Luke.* New York, NY: Routledge.

MacAllister, J. (2016). What should educational institutions be for? *British Journal of Educational Studies, 64*(3), 375-391.

MacLusky, J., & Cox, R. (2011). *Teaching creative writing in the primary school: Delight, entice, inspire!* Place?: McGraw Hill Open University Press.

Maddox, K., & Feng, J. (2013, October). *Whole language instruction vs. phonics instruction: Effect on reading fluency and spelling accuracy of first grade students.* Paper presented at the meeting of the Georgia Educational Research Association, Savannah, GA. Retrieved from http://search.ebscohost.com/

Magnifico, A. (2013). "Well, I have to write that": A cross-case qualitative analysis of young writers' motivations to write. *International Journal of Educational Psychology, 2*(1), 19-55.

Mainhard, T., Oudman, S., Hornstra, L., Bosker, R. J., & Goetz, T. (2018). Student emotions in class: The relative importance of teachers and their interpersonal relations with students. *Learning and Instruction, 53*, 109-119. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.learninstruc.2017.07.011

Mane, J. (2009). Kaupapa Māori: A community approach. *Mai Review, 3*(1), 1-9.

Mangat, S. S. (2018). Othering the Other: Explorations in identity and positionality of the transnational researcher. In B. Clift, J. Hatchard, J. Gore & A. Jordan (Eds.), *How do we belong? Researcher positionality within qualitative Inquiry*: *Proceedings of 4th Annual Qualitative Research Symposium* (pp. 7-16). Bath, UK: University of Bath.

Mansfield, C., & Volet, S. (2010). Developing beliefs about classroom motivation: Journeys of preservice teachers. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 26*, 1404-1415. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2010.04.005

Martin, A. (2008). Enhancing student motivation and engagement: The effects of a multidimensional intervention. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 33*(2), 239-269. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cedpsych.2006.11.003

Martin, A., Tarnanen, M., & Tynjälä, P. (2018). Exploring teachers' stories of writing: A narrative perspective. *Teachers & Teaching, 24*(6), 690.

Maydell, E. (2010). Methodological and analytical dilemmas in autoethnographic research. *Journal of Research Practice, 6*(1), M5.

Maynard, T. (2004). *Boys and literacy: Exploring the issues.* New York, NY: Routledge.

McDowell, D. (1999). Process guide #1: Brainstorming. Retrieved from http://webquest.org/sdsu/processguides/brainstorming.html

McMaster, C. (2013). Working the 'shady spaces': Resisting neoliberal hegemony in New Zealand education. *Policy Futures in Education, 11*(5), 523-531.

McVey, D. (2008). Why all writing is creative writing. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International, 45*(3), 289-294.

McWilliam, E., & Dawson, S. (2008). Teaching for creativity: Towards sustainable and replicable pedagogical practice. *Higher Education, 56*(6), 633-643.

Means, A. (2011). Jacques Rancière, education, and the art of citizenship. *The Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies, 33*(1), 28-47.

Mercer, E. (2010). As real as the Spice Girls: Representing identity in twenty-first century New Zealand literature. *Journal of New Zealand Studies*(9), 99.

Mills, C. W. (1959). *The sociological imagination.* Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Mills, D., & Morton, M. (2013). *Ethnography and education*: Sage.

Ministry of Education. (2007). *The New Zealand curriculum*. Wellington, New Zealand: Learning Media.

Ministry of Education. (2009). *Reading and writing standards for years 1-8*. Wellington, New Zealand: Learning Media.

Ministry of Education. (2010). *The literacy learning progressions: Meeting the reading and writing demands of the curriculum*. Wellington, New Zealand: Learning Media.

Ministry of Education. (2018). *Achievement and progress in mathematics, reading and writing in primary schooling*. Wellington, New Zealand: Learning Media.

Ministry of Education. (2020). *Creatives in schools*. Retrieved 30th October, 2020, from https://www.education.govt.nz/our-work/publications/budget-2019/creatives-in-schools/

Misson, R. (2004). What are we creating in creative writing? *English in Australia*(141), 32-40.

Mitra, S., & Dangwal, R. (2010). Limits to self-organising systems of learning—The Kalikuppam experiment. *British Journal of Educational Technology, 41*(5), 672-688.

Moon, B. (2012). Remembering rhetoric: Recalling a tradition of explicit instruction in writing. *English in Australia, 47*(1), 37.

Morley, D. (2007). *The Cambridge introduction to creative writing*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Morlock, F. (1997). The story of the ignorant schoolmaster. *Oxford Literary Review, 19*(1), 105-132.

Morris, G., & Sharplin, E. (2013). The assessment of creative writing in senior secondary English: A colloquy concerning criteria. *English in Education, 47*(1), 49.

Morrison, B. (2013). The rise of creative writing programmes. *Changing English: Studies in Culture and Education, 20*(1), 23-28.

Moynahan, M. (2019, November 1). Starting a national conversation about arts and creativity [Blog post]. Retrieved from https://www.creativenz.govt.nz/blog/starting-a-national-conversation-about-arts-and-creativity

Mullet, D. R., Willerson, A., Lamb, K., & Kettler, T. (2016). Examining teacher perceptions of creativity: A systematic review of the literature. *Thinking Skills and Creativity, 21*, 9-30.

Murris, K., & Verbeek, C. (2014). A foundation for foundation phase teacher education: Making wise educational judgements. *South African Journal of Childhood Education, 4*(2), 1-17.

Mutch, C. (2013). Progressive education in New Zealand: A revered past, a contested present and an uncertain future. *International Journal of Progressive Education, 9*(2), 98-116.

Myers, D. G. (1993). The rise of creative writing. *Journal of the History of Ideas, 54*(2), 277. https://doi.org/10.2307/2709983

Myhill, D., & Wilson, A. (2013). Playing it safe: Teachers' views of creativity in poetry writing. *Thinking Skills & Creativity, 10*, 101.

Nathan, C. (2003). Composition as experience: John Dewey on creative expression and the origins of "Mind". *College Composition and Communication, 55*(2), 254. https://doi.org/10.2307/3594217

Nelson, N. (2007). Why write? A consideration of rhetorical purpose. In S. Hidi & P. Boscolo (Eds.), *Writing and motivation* (pp. 17-30). Place?: Elsevier.

Nettle, D. (2009). The evolution of creative writing. In J. C. Kaufman & S. B. Kaufman (Eds.), *The psychology of creative writing* (pp. 101-116). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Ngo, T. T. B. (2016). Developing a differentiated model for the teaching of creative writing to high performing students. *English in Australia, 51*(2), 63-73.

Nunan, D. (2021). Collection: Privacy and research ethics. *International Journal of Market Research, 63*(3), 271–74. https://doi.org/10.1177/14707853211015445

Nutter, B. (2015). *A phenomenological investigation of teachers' beliefs, expectations, and perceptions of classroom practices* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Northern Colorado, Greely, CO). Retrieved from https://digscholarship.unco.edu/dissertations/41/

O'Connor, J. (2010). *The cultural and creative industries: A literature review.* Newcastle-upon-Tyne, UK: Creativity, Culture & Education.

O'Connor, P. (2020). *Replanting creativity during post normal times.* Auckland, New Zealand: Centre of Arts and Social Transformation, University of Auckland.

O'Connor, P. (2021, April 19). *Schools - where creativity goes to die*. Retrieved from https://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/news/2021/04/19/schools-where-creativity-goes-to-die.html

O'Neill, A.-M. (2016). Assessment-based curriculum: globalising and enterprising culture, human capital and teacher–technicians in Aotearoa New Zealand. *Journal of Education Policy, 31*(5), 598.

Oral, S. B. (2016). Complicating Gert Biesta's account of subjectification: Žižekian negativity and Buddhist Śūnyatā. *Interchange, 47*(2), 211-227.

Osborn, A. F. (1957). *Applied imagination: Principles and procedures of creative thinking* (2nd ed.). New York: Charles Scribner's Sons

Pajares, F., Valiante, G., & Cheong, Y. (2006). Writing self-efficacy and its relation to gender, writing motivation and writing competence: A developmental perspective. In S. Hidi & P. Boscolo (Eds.), *Writing and motivation* (pp. 141-159). New York, NY: Elsevier.

Palumbo, C. M. (2006). *Family literacy in a quasi family environment: A phenomenological perspective presented in the genre of ethnographic fiction* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global database. (304959737).

Park, H. (2019). Painting "out of the lines": The aesthetics of politics and politics of aesthetics in children's art. *Visual Arts Research, 45*(2), 66-79.

Park, H. (2021). Bad hands and big black dots: Dissensual politics in the kindergarten classroom. *Studies in Art Education, 62*(1), 10-22. https://doi.org/10.1080/00393541.2020.1858262

Parkin, B. (2003). *The wishing crystal: Joint construction in the junior-primary classroom* (PEN134). Retrieved from https://search.ebscohost.com/

Parr, J. (2010). *Supporting the teaching of writing in New Zealand schools. Scoping report to the Ministry of Education*. Wellington, New Zealand: Ministry of Education

Parr, J., & Brown, G. (2015). Learning about writing: A consideration of the recently revised asTTle: Writing. *Curriculum Matters, 11*, 134-154. https://doi.org/10.18296/cm.0008

Parr, J., Gadd, M., Carran, L., Robertson, J., Watson, K., Gendall, L., & Ali, Z. (2018). *Generating positive outcomes by Year 5 to 8 priority learners in writing: An inquiry into effective teacher practice*. Retrieved from http://www.tlri.org.nz/sites/default/files/projects/TLRI%20Summary%20Report_Parr%20and%20Gadd.pdf

Parr, J., Glasswell, K., & Aikman, M. (2007). Supporting teacher learning and informed practice in writing through assessment tools for teaching and learning. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education, 35*(1), 69-87. https://doi.org/10.1080/13598660601111281

Parr, J., & Jesson, R. (2016). Mapping the landscape of writing instruction in New Zealand primary school classrooms. *Reading & Writing, 29*(5), 981.

Pelletier, C. (2012). No time or place for universal teaching: The Ignorant Schoolmaster and contemporary work on pedagogy. *Jacques Rancière and the Contemporary Scene*, 99-116.

Piirto, J. (2009). The personalities of creative writers. In J. C. Kaufman & S. B. Kaufman (Eds.), *The psychology of creative writing* (pp. 3-22). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Pollio, H. R. (1997). *The phenomenology of everyday life.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Pope, R. (2005). *Creativity: Theory, history, practice.* Place?: Psychology Press.

Porter, R. (2007, Winter). Distribution of the sensible. *Variant Magazine*(30), 17-18.

Pringle, H. (2013). The origins of creativity. *Scientific American, 308*(3), 36.
Raedts, M., Rijlaarsdam, G., van Waes, L., & Daems, F. (2006). Observational learning through video-based models: Impact on students' accuracy of self-efficacy beliefs, task knowledge and writing performances. In S. Hidi & P. Boscolo (Eds.), *Writing and motivation* (pp. 219-238). Place?: Elsevier. Retrieved from http://booksandjournals.brillonline.com/content/books/b9781849508216s013
Rancière, J. (1991). *The ignorant schoolmaster: Five lessons in intellectual emancipation*. Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press.
Rancière, J. (1995). *On the shores of politics.* London, UK: Verso.
Rancière, J. (1999). *Disagreement: Politics and philosophy.* Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
Rancière, J. (2004a). *The philosopher and his poor*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
Rancière, J. (2004b). *The politics of aesthetics: The distribution of the sensible* (G. Rockhill, trans.). London, UK: Continuum.
Rancière, J. (2005). From politics to aesthetics? *Paragraph, 28*(1), 13-25.
Rancière, J. (2007). *The emancipated spectator.* London, UK: Verso.
Rancière, J. (2008). Aesthetics against incarnation: An interview by Anne Marie Oliver. *Critical Inquiry, 35*(1), 172-190.
Rancière, J. (2009). *Aesthetics and its discontents.* Cambridge, UK: Polity.
Rancière, J. (2010). On ignorant schoolmasters. In C. Bingham & G. Biesta, *Jacques Rancière: Education, truth, emancipation* (pp. 1-24). London, UK: Continuum.
Rancière, J. (2011). The thinking of dissensus: Politics and aesthetics. In P. Bowman & R. Stamp (Eds.), *Reading Rancière* (pp. 1-17). London, UK: Bloomsbury.
Rancière, J. (2012). *Proletarian nights: The workers' dream in nineteenth-century France.* London, UK: Verso Trade.
Rancière, J. (2013). *The politics of aesthetics.* London, UK: Bloomsbury Publishing.
Rancière, J. (2014). *Hatred of democracy.* London, UK: Verso Trade.
Rancière, J. (2015). *Dissensus: On politics and aesthetics.* London, UK: Bloomsbury Publishing.
Rancière, J. (2017). *Dissenting words: Interviews with Jacques Rancière*. London, UK: Bloomsbury Publishing.
Raymond, P. (2018). Terror versus soul: The struggle for creativity in primary initial teacher education. *Research in Education, 100*(1), 130-147.
Reed-Danahay, D. (2017). Bourdieu and critical autoethnography: Implications for research, writing, and teaching. *International Journal of Multicultural Education, 19*(1), 144-154.*Reid, E. S. (2009). Teaching writing teachers writing: Difficulty, exploration, and critical reflection. *College Composition and Communication, 61*(2), W197.
Rhodes, M. (1961). An analysis of creativity. *The Phi Delta Kappan, 42*(7), 305-310.
Richardson, L. (1997). *Fields of play: Constructing an academic life.* New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
Richardson, L., & St. Pierre, E. A. (2018). Writing: A method of inquiry. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* (5th ed., pp. 818-838). Walnut, CA: Sage.
Rinehart, R. (1998). Fictional methods in ethnography: Believability, specks of glass, and Chekhov. *Qualitative Inquiry, 4*(2), 200. https://doi.org/10.1177/107780049800400204
Robbins, D. (2015). Pierre Bourdieu and Jacques Rancière on art/aesthetics and politics: The origins of disagreement, 1963-1985. *British Journal of Sociology, 66*(4), 738-758. https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-4446.12148

Robinson, K. (2006, February). *Do schools kill creativity?* Retrieved May 12, 2021, from http://www.ted.com/talks/ken_robinson_says_schools_kill_creativity.html

Robinson, O. C. (2014). Sampling in interview-based qualitative research: A theoretical and practical guide. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 11*(1), 25-41.

Roy, J. (2012). *Elementary teachers' perceptions of their teaching practises to foster creative thinking in their students* (Honors thesis, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, AR). Retrieved from http://scholarworks.uark.edu/cieduht/1

Ruitenberg, C. W. (2011). Art, politics, and the pedagogical relation. *Studies in Philosophy and Education, 30*(2), 211-223.

Ryan, M., & Barton, G. (2014). The spatialized practices of teaching writing in Australian elementary schools: Diverse students shaping discoursal selves. *Research in the Teaching of English, 48*(3).

Ryan, M., & Deci, E. (2000). Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations: Classic definitions and new directions. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 25*(1), 54-67.

Säfström, C. A. (2009, March). *The immigrant has no proper name*. Paper presented at the meeting of the Nordic Educational Research Association, Trondheim, Norway.

Säfström, C. A. (2011). Rethinking emancipation, rethinking education. *Studies in Philosophy and Education, 30*(2), 199-209.

Sagan, C., Druyan, A., Soter, S., & Malone, A. (2000). *Cosmos*. Retrieved from http://search.ebscohost.com/

Sandahl, J. (2015). *Social studies as socialisation, qualification and subjectification*. Paper presented at the meeting of the European Consortium for Political Research, Montreal, Canada.

Sandretto, S., & Tilson, J. (2017). Discursive constructions of literacies: Shifting sands in Aotearoa New Zealand. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education, 38*(2), 222-234. https://doi.org/10.1080/01596306.2015.1075472

Sawyer, R. K. (2009). Writing as a collaborative act. In J. C. Kaufman & S. B. Kaufman (Eds.), *The psychology of creative writing* (pp. 166-179). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. Retrieved from https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/psychology-of-creative-writing/writing-as-a-collaborative-act/98FB3D2B59BCCBAD234A1D526A28B6A7

Sayers, S. (2005). *Jacques Rancière (2004) The politics of aesthetics: The distribution of the sensible*. Retrieved from https://culturemachine.net/reviews/ranciere-the-politics-of-aesthetics-sayers/

Scott, C. L. (1999). Teachers' biases toward creative children. *Creativity Research Journal, 12*(4), 321-328.

Senior, R. M. (2002). A class-centred approach to language teaching. *ELT Journal, 56*(4), 397-403.

Shortis, T., & Blake, J. (2010). *Who's prepared to teach school English? The degree level qualifications and preparedness of initial teacher trainees in English*. Place?: National Association for the Teaching of English.

Simpson, D. J., & Stack, S. F. (2010). *Teachers, leaders, and schools: Essays by John Dewey*. Retrieved from http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/

Simpson, P. W. (2016). *Argos.* Raleigh, NC: Month9Books.

Skarpenes, O., & Sæverot, A. M. (2018). Symmetry and equality: Bringing Rancière into the classroom. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood, 19*(1), 63-71.

Skregelid, L. (2020). A call for dissensus in art education! *International Journal of Education through Art, 16*(2), 161-176. https://doi.org/10.1386/eta_00024_1

Smith, D. (2003). Five principles for research ethics. *Monitor on Psychology, 34*(1), 56.

Smith, G. H. (1997). *The development of kaupapa Maori: Theory and praxis* (Unpublished doctoral thesis). University of Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand.

Smith, H. (2020). *The writing experiment: Strategies for innovative creative writing*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Sparkes, A. (1997). Ethnographic fiction and representing the absent other. *Sport, Education and Society, 2*(1), 25-40.

Sparkes, A. (2002). Fictional representations: On difference, choice, and risk. *Sociology of Sport Journal, 19*(1), 1-24. https://doi.org/10.1123/ssj.19.1.1

Spurr, B. (2019). The inane expansion of creative writing courses. *Quadrant*(5), 46.

Stafford, J. (2013). *The Auckland University Press anthology of New Zealand literature*. Auckland, New Zealand: Auckland University Press.

Stamp, R. (2013). Of slumdogs and schoolmasters: Jacotot, Rancière and Mitra on self-organized learning. *Educational Philosophy and Theory, 45*(6), 647-662.

Stanley, S. (2012). *An investigation into urban elementary teachers' educational beliefs in regards to teaching writing: Comparing experiences and self-reported beliefs to teacher practices* (Doctoral thesis, Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College, Baton Rouge, LA). Retrieved from https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_dissertations/3765/

Stewart, G., Tamatea, K., & Mika, C. (2015). Infinitely welcome: Education pōwhiri and ethnic performativity. *MAI Journal, 4*(2), 91-103.

Storch, N. (2011). Collaborative writing in L2 contexts: Processes, outcomes, and future directions. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics, 31*, 275-288. https://doi.org/10.1017/s0267190511000079

Stover, S. (2016). The educationalising of early childhood in Aotearoa New Zealand: Tracking "free play" 1940s-2010. *Paedagogica Historica, 52*(5), 525-541. https://doi.org/10.1080/00309230.2016.1170709

Swandi, I., & Netto-Shek, J. (2017). Teaching writing at the primary levels. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*(1), 1. https://doi.org/10.17509/ijal.v7i1.6852

Taylor, S. J., Bogdan, R., & DeVault, M. (2015). *Introduction to qualitative research methods: A guidebook and resource.* Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

Teng, M. F., & Yip, J. W. C. (2019). Exploring identities of novice mainland Chinese teachers in Hong Kong: Insights from teaching creative writing at primary schools across borders. *Applied Linguistics Review*. https://doi.org/10.1515/applirev-2018-0128

Thornton, S. J. (2001). Educating the educators: Rethinking subject matter and methods. *Theory Into Practice, 40*(1), 72-78. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15430421tip4001_11

Tok, Ş., & Kandemir, A. (2015). Effects of creative writing activities on students' achievement in writing, writing dispositions and attitude to English. *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences, 174*(1), 1635.

Tolia-Kelly, D. P. (2019). Rancière and the re-distribution of the sensible: The artist Rosanna Raymond, dissensus and postcolonial sensibilities within the spaces of the museum. *Progress in Human Geography, 43*(1), 123-140.

Tompkins, G. (1982). Seven reasons why children should write stories. *Language Arts*(7), 718.

Tone, S. (2020). Does Gert Biesta's book, The Rediscovery of Teaching, matter to education? *Phenomenology & Practice, 14*(1), 130-140. https://doi.org/10.29173/pandpr29403

Urbancova, H. (2013). Competitive advantage achievement through innovation and knowledge. *Journal of Competitiveness, 5*(1), 82-96.

Vakil, A. (2008). Teaching creative writing. *Changing English, 15*(2), 157-165. https://doi.org/10.1080/13586840802052328

Van Leeuwen, C. A., & Gabriel, M. A. (2007). Beginning to write with word processing: Integrating writing process and technology in a primary classroom. *The Reading Teacher, 60*(5), 420-429.

van Manen, M., Higgins, I., & van der Riet, P. (2016). A conversation with Max van Manen on phenomenology in its original sense. *Nursing and Health Sciences, 18*(1), 4-7. https://doi.org/10.1111/nhs.12274

Vass, E. (2007). Exploring processes of collaborative creativity—The role of emotions in children's joint creative writing. *Thinking Skills and Creativity, 2*(2), 107-117.

Vass, E., Littleton, K., Miell, D., & Jones, A. (2008). The discourse of collaborative creative writing: Peer collaboration as a context for mutual inspiration. *Thinking Skills and Creativity, 3*(3), 192-202.

Vlieghe, J. (2018). Rethinking emancipation with Freire and Rancière: A plea for a thing-centred pedagogy. *Educational Philosophy and Theory, 50*(10), 917-927.

Vygotskiĭ, L. S., & Cole, M. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Warner, J. (2018). *Why they can't write: Killing the five-paragraph essay and other necessities.* Place?: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Watson, C. (2011). Staking a small claim for fictional narratives in social and educational research. *Qualitative Research, 11*(4), 395.

Watson-Gegeo, K. A. (1997). Classroom ethnography. In N. H. Hornberger & D. Corson (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of Language and Education: Research Methods in Language and Education* (pp. 135-144). Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-011-4535-0_13

Welch, N. (1999). No apology: Challenging the "uselessness" of creative writing. *JAC, 19*(1), 117-134.

Weldon, F. (2009). On assessing creative writing. *New Writing, 6*(3), 168-174. https://doi.org/10.1080/14790720903556734

Werbeloff, J. (2019). *Simply write sci-fi*. Retrieved from https://simply-write1.teachable.com/p/simply-write-science-fiction/

Whaanga, M. (2005). Telling our stories: Hapū identity in waiata, pakiwaitara and visual arts. In R. Selby, A. Laurie & The National Oral History Association of New Zealand (Eds.), *Māori and oral history: A collection* (pp. 23-27). Wellington, NZ: The National Oral History Association of New Zealand.

Whetter, D. (2017). Can'tLit: What Canadian English departments could (but won't) learn from the creative writing programmes they host. *New Writing, 14*(3), 316-326.

White, I., Lorenzi, F., & O'Higgins Norman, J. (2018). Fighting words as revolutionary pedagogy: A Freirean reading of young people's experiences of a socially-engaged creative writing centre. *Pastoral Care in Education*, 1-15. https://doi.org/10.1080/02643944.2018.1527389

Wolcott, H. (1994). *Transforming qualitative data: Description, analysis, and interpretation*: Thousand Oaks, Calif. : Sage Publications.

Wolcott, H. (1985). On ethnographic intent. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 21*(3), 187-203. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X85021003004

Woo, M., Chu, S. K.-W., Ho, A., & Li, X. (2011). Using a wiki to scaffold primary-school students' collaborative writing. *Educational Technology & Society, 14*(1), 43-54.

Wood, D., & Pickerd, J. (2011). Problems to avoid when brainstorming fraud risks. *The CPA Journal, 81*(4), 64.

Wood, H. (2019, May 2). Creative writing graduates will 'never make a living as novelists', says Self. *The Bookseller.* Retrieved May 2, 2021, from

https://www.thebookseller.com/news/self-says-literature-becoming-giant-quilting-exercise-1001681

Worthman, C. (2008). The positioning of adult learners: Appropriating learner experience on the continuum of empowerment to emancipation. *International Journal of Lifelong Education, 27*(4), 443-462.

Wragg, E. C. (2005). *The art and science of teaching and learning: The selected works of Ted Wragg*. Routledge.

Yeo, M. (2007). New literacies, alternative texts: Teachers' conceptualisations of composition and literacy. *English Teaching: Practice and Critique, 6*(1), 113-131.

Yim, S., & Warschauer, M. (2017). Web-based collaborative writing in L2 contexts: Methodological insights from text mining. *Language Learning and Technology, 21*(1), 146-165.

Zhang, J. (2009). Toward a creative social web for learners and teachers. *Educational Researcher*, *38*(4), 274-279. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X09336674

# Appendices

## Appendix 1: Ethics approval


### Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC)

Auckland University of Technology
D-88, Private Bag 92006, Auckland 1142, NZ
T: +64 9 921 9999 ext. 8316
E: ethics@aut.ac.nz
www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics

16 May 2019

Andrew Gibbons
Faculty of Culture and Society

Dear Andrew

Ethics Application: 19/168 **Teaching creative writing in New Zealand primary schools: Teacher experiences and pedagogy**

I wish to advise you that a subcommittee of the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC) has **approved** your ethics application.

This approval is for three years, expiring 15 May 2022.

**Non-Standard Conditions of Approval**

1. Please ensure that the Information Sheet includes advice of where the interviews will be held, noting that if this is at the workplace only a limited confidentiality may be offered.
2. Ensure that the Information Sheet and Consent Form have dates that align,
3. Insert the AUT logo on the recruitment advertisement.

Non-standard conditions must be completed before commencing your study. Non-standard conditions do not need to be submitted to or reviewed by AUTEC before commencing your study.

**Standard Conditions of Approval**

1. The research is to be undertaken in accordance with the Auckland University of Technology Code of Conduct for Research and as approved by AUTEC in this application.
2. A progress report is due annually on the anniversary of the approval date, using form EA2, which is available online through http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/researchethics.
3. A final report is due at the expiration of the approval period, or, upon completion of project, using form EA3, which is available online through http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/researchethics.
4. Any amendments to the project must be approved by AUTEC prior to being implemented. Amendments can be requested using the EA2 form: http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/researchethics.
5. Any serious or unexpected adverse events must be reported to AUTEC Secretariat as a matter of priority.
6. Any unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project should also be reported to the AUTEC Secretariat as a matter of priority.

Please quote the application number and title on all future correspondence related to this project.

AUTEC grants ethical approval only. If you require management approval for access for your research from another institution or organisation then you are responsible for obtaining it. You are reminded that it is your responsibility to ensure that the spelling and grammar of documents being provided to participants or external organisations is of a high standard.

For any enquiries please contact ethics@aut.ac.nz

Yours sincerely,

Kate O'Connor
Executive Manager
**Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee**

Cc: phillipwsimpson@hotmail.com; Georgina Stewart

# Appendix 2: Transcriber's confidentiality agreement

## Confidentiality Agreement

*Project title:* ***Teaching creative writing in New Zealand primary schools: Teacher experiences and pedagogy***

*Project Supervisors:* ***Assoc. Prof. Andrew Gibbons, Assoc. Prof. Georgina Stewart***

*Researcher:* ***Phillip Simpson***

- O I understand that all the material I will be asked to transcribe is confidential.
- O I understand that the contents of the tapes or recordings can only be discussed with the researchers.
- O I will not keep any copies of the transcripts nor allow third parties access to them.

**Transcriber's signature:** .....

**Transcriber's name:** .....

**Transcriber's Contact Details:**

.....

.....

.....

.....

**Date:**

**Project Supervisor's Contact Details:**

**Dr Andrew Gibbons**

**School of Education, Faculty of Culture and Society, AUT University, Andrew.gibbons@aut.ac.nz, 09 921 9999 ext 7929**

**Dr Georgina Stewart**
**School of Education, Faculty of Culture and Society, AUT University, georgina.stewart@aut.ac.nz, 09 921 9999 ext 7231.**

***Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 16th May, 2019 AUTEC Reference number 19/168. Note: The Transcriber should retain a copy of this form.***

# Appendix 3: Introductory letters, participant information sheets and consent forms

## *Introductory email to school principals*

**Doctor of Education research into creative writing in Auckland primary schools**

Tēnā koe,

My name is Phillip Simpson and I am a primary school teacher currently employed at a primary school in Auckland. I would like to invite your teaching staff to participate in a research project which is being undertaken as part of my Doctor of Education (EdD) degree at AUT.

*Thesis title:* ***Teaching creative writing in New Zealand primary schools: Teacher experiences and pedagogy***

This study will seek to add to the knowledge base about **how primary teachers teach creative writing.**

I am seeking volunteers who are currently working as teachers in the primary sector in Auckland.

Attached to this email is a **Site Access form** addressed to you, the Principal, asking for permission to contact the office administration (to grant access, simply sign attached sheet and return). The office administrator will then be sent an i**nvitation to Participate** outlining the project and an information **flyer** to disseminate to the teachers at the school.

Interested participants will then contact me directly and will be sent the **PIS (participant information sheet).**

If they are willing to participate, then I send them the **consent form**, the **confidentiality agreement** and the **indicative interview questions.**

Once signed, I will organise a time and place convenient to the participant to conduct the interview.

**Interviews will be no longer than 1-2 hours in duration.**

**$50 koha (in the form of petrol vouchers) as well as refreshments will be provided.**

Additional information is available in the attachments.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to ask or alternatively, contact my supervisors directly.

Ngā mihi nui

Phill Simpson

phillipwsimpson@hotmail.com

0211853293

***Invitation to participate***

To: Primary office administrators in the Auckland region

From: Phillip Simpson, AUT Doctor of Education Candidate

Subject: Teaching creative writing in New Zealand primary schools: Teacher experiences and pedagogy

Tēnā koe,

My name is Phillip Simpson. I am a primary school teacher currently employed at a primary school in West Auckland. I am currently undertaking a research project, as part of a Doctor of Education (EdD) degree. My research seeks to investigate how primary teachers teach creative writing and how their experiences have informed their beliefs and practice. I am writing to seek your help in recruiting participants for individual interviews as part of this research.

I seek volunteers who are currently working teachers who teach creative writing at least some of that time. A range of backgrounds and experiences is sought to give richness to the results.

I am seeking your support in sharing this opportunity with teachers working within your school. I would like to interview participants in an individual interview that will last up to approx. 1-2 hours. The interview will include questions related to the participant's experience working as a teacher of writing. All identifying characteristics about the participant, including their place of work, will remain confidential and will not be disclosed in the findings.

Please could you distribute the flyer to teachers working in your school. Those interested are asked to contact me to discuss being part of this study using the details below:

Contact Phillip Simpson by email: phillipwsimpson@hotmail.com or by telephone: 0211853293

## *Participant information sheet*

**Date Information Sheet Produced:**

20th October, 2019

**Project Title**

Teaching creative writing in New Zealand primary schools: Teacher experiences and pedagogy

### An Invitation

Tena koe. My name is Phillip Simpson and I am a primary school teacher currently employed at a primary school in Auckland. I would like to invite you to participate in a research project which is being undertaken as part of a Doctor of Education (EdD) degree. Participation in this project is voluntary and based on informed consent.

**What is the purpose of this research?**

This study will seek to add to the knowledge base about how primary teachers teach creative writing. Internationally and nationally, how teachers teach and motivate creative writing is not well understood. Most research in this area has focused on the student rather than the teacher. In addition, research in this area is on 'writing' without being specific about genre. Much of it has also been in the form of surveys. This is significant given the importance of the teacher and creative writing within the classroom. The ability of teachers to teach and motivate students in creative writing is critical. My research will examine how teachers teach creative writing in order to support others in this role.

The results from this research will be written in the form of a Doctoral thesis and the findings may be shared through journal articles and conference presentations nationally and internationally.

**How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?**

I am seeking volunteers who are currently working as teachers in the primary sector by contacting Principals and office administrators of primary schools in Auckland and disseminating an invitation to participate in this study.

**How do I agree to participate in this research?**

If you are interested in being a participant, please contact me. You agree to participate by completing the Consent Form when we meet for the interview. Your participation in this research is voluntary (it is your choice) and whether or not you choose to participate will neither advantage nor disadvantage you. You may withdraw from the study at any time up to one month after being sent the interview transcripts for checking. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of your data may not be possible.

**What will happen in this research?**

We will meet face to face for an interview that will last up to 1-2 hours. This interview could be conducted at your workplace or in another location agreeable to you - for example a café. You will be given the opportunity to share stories and experiences of teaching and motivating creative writing. The interview will be audio recorded and transcribed by a professional transcriber who has signed a confidentiality agreement. You will be invited to review and approve the transcript for inclusion in the study.

**What are the discomforts and risks?**

The interview will involve discussion around work experiences and you may feel discomfort if you are discussing challenging or difficult experiences. You can choose the stories or experiences that you wish to share and this will limit the discomforts and risks.

**How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?**

You can ask to stop the interview if you experience any discomfort at the time. If any questions make you feel uncomfortable, you do not have to answer them.

**What are the benefits?**

Participants will gain new insights into their own creative writing practice which will lead to new ways to engage with and motivate learners. By participating, they will be able to reflect upon and talk about their own practice which is known to be extremely beneficial for teachers.

Researcher: The research will give the researcher new insights into his own creative writing practice which will lead to new ways to engage with and motivate learners. He will be able to reflect upon and talk about his own practice which is known to be extremely beneficial for teachers. At the culmination of this research, he will gain his Doctor of Education degree and use this to further his career in education. He will also present his research at conferences and by writing articles and papers.

This research will be disseminated to the education community (through papers, conferences and articles) adding to the knowledge base about teaching and motivating creative writing in Aotearoa New Zealand, and will have the potential to inform teacher education and policy.

**How will my privacy be protected?**

Your identity will remain confidential to the researcher and your contact details will be stored securely in order to maintain privacy. Private settings for interviews will be used, and care will be taken to ensure that your identity cannot be determined from any information you share, however, it is possible that you could be identified by someone within your school. The transcript from the interview will be sent to you for checking and you may request any information that you wish to be deleted.

All data will be kept securely, and consent forms will be stored separately, so that data cannot be associated with specific individuals. The transcriber will sign a confidentiality agreement.

Please note that if interviews are conducted at your workplace, only a limited confidentiality may be offered.

**What are the costs of participating in this research?**

The interview will take up between 1-2 hours minutes of your time. As the researcher, I will seek to conduct the interview at a time and setting that is convenient for you.

**What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?**

Please consider this invitation for up to two weeks from the time of receiving this Information Sheet. I may email the administrator to resend the invitation if I do not receive a response. If you would like to consider participating in the study, please contact me at the email address or telephone number below at your earliest convenience. I am happy to discuss any questions you may have by email or telephone before you agree to participate.

**Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?**

At the completion of the study, I will make a written report available to all participants. If you choose to have a copy of this report, your details will be collected on the Consent form.

**What do I do if I have concerns about this research?**

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisors,

Associate Professor Dr Andrew Gibbons, email Andrew.gibbons@aut.ac.nz; telephone 09 921 9999 ext 7929

Associate Professor Dr Georgina Stewart, email georgina.stewart@aut.ac.nz; telephone 09 921 9999 ext 7231.

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTEC, Kate O'Connor, email *ethics@aut.ac.nz* , telephone 921 9999 ext 6038.

**Whom do I contact for further information about this research?**

Please keep this Information Sheet and a copy of the Consent Form for your future reference. You are also able to contact the research team as follows:

***Researcher Contact Details:***

Phillip Simpson; phillipwsimpson@hotmail.com; 0211853293

***Project Supervisor Contact Details:***

Associate Professor Andrew Gibbons, email Andrew.gibbons@aut.ac.nz; telephone 09 921 9999 ext 7929

Associate Professor Georgina Stewart, email georgina.stewart@aut.ac.nz; telephone 09 921 9999 ext 7231

***Participant consent form***

*Project title:* ***Teaching creative writing in New Zealand primary schools: Teacher experiences and pedagogy***

*Project Supervisor(s):* ***Assoc. Prof. Andrew Gibbons, Assoc. Prof. Georgina Stewart***

*Researcher:* ***Phillip Simpson***

- ○ I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 20th October 2019
- ○ I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- ○ I understand that notes will be taken during the interview and that the interview will also be audio-taped and transcribed. I will be sent the transcript of the interview for checking and can ask for anything to be deleted or changed.
- ○ I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary (my choice) and that I may withdraw from the study at any time up to 4 weeks following receipt of the transcript without being disadvantaged in any way.
- ○ I agree to take part in this research.
- ○ I wish to receive a summary of the research findings (please tick one): Yes○ No○

Participant's signature: .....

Participant's name: .....

Participant's Contact Details :

.....

.....

.....

Date:

***Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 16th May, 2019. AUTEC Reference number*** 19/168

*Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form.*

## Appendix 4: Applications for site access

**APPLICATION FOR SITE ACCESS**
**School Principal**

**Title of EdD Research Project:** Teaching creative writing in New Zealand primary schools: Teacher experiences and pedagogy

**Supervisors:** Associate Professor Andrew Gibbons, Associate Professor Georgina Stewart
**Student Researcher:** Phillip Simpson

Kia ora,

Phillip Simpson is enrolled in the Doctor of Education degree at Auckland University of Technology (AUT). He wishes to investigate what primary teachers think, believe and practice when teaching creative writing and how these practices have been informed by teachers' experiences. We are seeking permission for Phillip Simpson to carry out the research in your school.

Data will be gathered through individual interviews with teachers at your school. The interviews will take approximately 1-2 hours. The interviews will be conducted by Phillip Simpson.

**Interview of teachers**

We seek your permission for the student researcher to contact your **office administrator** and ask them to disseminate an invitation to participate in this study along with a Participant Information Sheet and Consent form (attached) with teaching staff at your school. Those teachers who are willing to be involved contact the student-researcher directly. They will be asked to return the consent form to the student-researcher.

The teacher interviews will be held at the school or at a suitable location determined by the participant at a time convenient for the teacher. All interviews will be audio-recorded and transcribed. The teachers do not have to answer every question and can ask for the tape to be turned off at any time. They may withdraw from the study at any time up to one month after being sent the interview transcripts for checking. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of the data may not be possible. For your information, copies of the information sheets for the teachers outlining the nature of their involvement in the project are included with this letter.

You have the right to withdraw access to your school at any time up until the completion of the last interview. We ask for your assurance that the teachers' employment in the school will not be affected in any way should they agree/not agree to be interviewed, or to support this project whichever may apply.

Consent and assent forms will be kept in a locked filing cabinet on AUT premises in room AR120 for a period of six years and then destroyed. Access to the data will be restricted to Phillip Simpson and the supervisors. During 2019/20, Phillip Simpson will keep the

interview tapes and transcripts in a secure location. On completion of the dissertation (2021) interview tapes and transcripts will be stored in locked filing cabinet for a period of six years. These will be used to inform possible future presentations and publications in peer-reviewed journals. After this time, all data will be destroyed.

The dissertation will be written in a way that protects your school's identity and pseudonyms will be used for all the participants. Once the dissertation has been completed, you may ask Phillip Simpson to present an oral and/or written summary of their findings to interested parties.

Thank you for considering our request.

To grant permission, simply sign, name and date the **Consent to Access the School Site form (attached below) and email this to Phillip Simpson.**

If you would like further information about the proposed research project, please contact the project supervisors:

Associate Professor Dr Andrew Gibbons, email **Andrew.gibbons@aut.ac.nz**; telephone 09 921 9999 ext 7929
Associate Professor Dr Georgina Stewart, email **georgina.stewart@aut.ac.nz**; telephone 09 921 9999 ext 7231.

Ngā mihi

Phillip Simpson
MCW (Hons), MA (Hons), PGDipTchg (primary), PGCE
Ph 0211853293
**phillipwsimpson@hotmail.com**

**CONSENT TO ACCESS THE SCHOOL SITE – PRINCIPAL/HEAD TEACHER**
(This Consent Form will be held for a period of six years)

**Title of Research Project:** Teaching creative writing in New Zealand primary schools: Teacher experiences and pedagogy
**Supervisors:** Associate Professor Andrew Gibbons, Associate Professor Georgina Stewart

**Student Researcher:** Phillip Simpson

***I have been given an explanation of this research project. I have had an opportunity to ask questions and have them answered. I understand what is involved in the project for the school and teachers.***

I consent to the student-researcher coming to the school site to interview teachers.

I understand that I can withdraw access to the school site at any time up until the completion of the last interview.

I understand that the findings will be used in the student-researcher's dissertation and may be used for journal publications and conference presentations.

I understand that the school name will not be used in any reports / presentations.

I understand that at the conclusion of the project I can ask the student-researcher to present an oral or written summary of the findings to interested parties.

I understand that all data and forms will be held securely for a period of six years and will then be destroyed.

I give my assurance that a teacher's decision to support or not support the project will not affect their standing / employment status in the school.

**Signed:**_____ **Name:**_____

**Date:** _____ **School:**_____

# Appendix 5: Semi-structured interview guide

***Teaching creative writing in New Zealand primary schools: Teacher experiences and pedagogy***

**Indicative semi-structured interview questions**

1. Background information about the participant:
   - Number of years working as a teacher
   - Place of work
   - Primary role – classroom teaching, year level

2. Tell me a bit about yourself and your work as a teacher.

3. What led you to become a teacher?

4. What experiences (as a child and an adult) of creative writing did you have prior to becoming a teacher?

5. What are your views of creative writing? Do you believe creativity and creative writing is important? Why?

6. Tell me about your experience of becoming a teacher? Where did you study?

7. What did you learn about writing and specifically creative writing during your teacher education?

8. What have you learnt about creative writing during your time as a teacher? Do you write creatively yourself?

9. Have you been involved with any professional development in creative writing during your teaching career? If so, can you tell me more about it?

10. Do you believe professional development in this area has affected your practice or has the potential to do so?

11. What creative writing strategies do you find more effective and why? How can you tell? Can you give me examples?

12. Give me some examples or tell me some stories about some of these aspects of your work?

13. Is there anything else you tell me about this matter?

**Appendix 6: Participant recruitment**

# WANTED!

# TEACHERS OF CREATIVE WRITING

## Are you passionate about teaching creative writing?

## Would you like an opportunity to talk about and reflect on your practice?

Tena koe. My name is Phillip Simpson and I am a primary school teacher currently employed at a primary school in Auckland. I would like to invite you to participate in a research project which is being undertaken as part of a Doctor of Education (EdD) degree at AUT.

**What is the purpose of this research?**

This study will seek to add to the knowledge base about how primary teachers teach creative writing.

**How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?**

I am seeking volunteers who are currently working as teachers in the primary sector in Auckland

**How do I agree to participate in this research?**

If you are interested in being a participant, please contact me (details provided below).

**What will happen in this research?**

We will meet face to face for an interview that will last up to 1-2 hours. You will be given the opportunity to share stories and experiences of teaching and motivating creative writing.

**Participants will receive koha ($50 petrol voucher) for their time and refreshments will be provided.**

**The researcher will meet you at a time and place convenient to you.**

**Contact:**

**Phill Simpson 0211853293 or phillipwsimpson@hotmail.com**