

Teaching Strategies of Creative Writing under the Guidance of Voice Writing Theory

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Abstract: This paper explores teaching strategies of incorporating Voice Writing Theory into the instruction of creative writing. Voice Writing Theory posits that an individual's unique voice and perspective play a crucial role in shaping their creative output. The study discussed the potential benefits and challenges of integrating Voice Writing Theory into creative writing instruction and offers recommendations for educators seeking to incorporate this innovative approach into their teaching practices. A series of teaching strategies can integrate Voice Writing Theory into creative writing teaching and enhance students' ability to express their authentic voices, fostering creativity, originality, and self-expression.

Keywords: Creative Writing; Teaching; Voice Writing Theory.

1. Introduction

Traditional writing instruction often places undue emphasis on rote memorization of what is often touted as "advanced vocabulary," "advanced sentence patterns," and "model essay frameworks." While these conventional teaching approaches may yield temporary gains in terms of performance on standardized assessments and examinations, their long-term efficacy in nurturing meaningful written communication skills outside the realm of test-taking is conspicuously circumscribed. This pedagogical model often compels students to engage in the mechanical accumulation of vocabulary and sentence structures, leading to the superficial incorporation of these elements into their writing. Consequently, students may exhibit proficiency solely in the context of responding to predetermined essay prompts presented in examinations, where rigid adherence to prescribed structures can secure commendable scores. However, when confronted with real-world writing scenarios, such as composing professional emails, research papers, or other forms of communicative discourse, students often grapple with a dearth of adaptability and fluency in their written expression. In essence, traditional writing teaching, anchored in memorization and formulaic adherence, frequently fosters a restricted skillset that prioritizes test performance over the cultivation of versatile and authentic written communication abilities, thereby falling short in preparing students for the multifarious writing demands encountered in their academic and professional journeys.

Creative writing, as both an art form and a discipline, has long been a focal point of pedagogical inquiry and innovation within the realm of English language and literature education. This enduring interest is rooted in the recognition that creative writing serves as a vital medium for the exploration and expression of human experiences, emotions, and ideas. Voice Writing Theory posits that the individual writer's voice is a fundamental and distinctive element in the creative process, shaping the form, content, and style of their work. Rooted in the belief that each writer possesses a singular voice reflective of their personal experiences, beliefs, and sensibilities, this theory emphasizes the importance of fostering students' authentic voices as a means of nurturing creativity and originality in their writing. The central premise of Voice

Writing Theory aligns with the broader trends in contemporary education that emphasize student-centered learning, diversity, and the cultivation of critical thinking skills. It challenges the conventional pedagogical practices that may inadvertently stifle students' creativity by imposing rigid norms and expectations. By embracing this theory, educators have the opportunity to empower their students to not only become more proficient writers but also to discover and develop their unique literary voices.

This paper aims to incorporate Voice Writing Theory into the teaching of creative writing and proposed teaching strategies. Voice Writing Theory aligns with the broader trends in contemporary education that emphasize student-centered learning, diversity, and the cultivation of critical thinking skills. It challenges the conventional pedagogical practices that may inadvertently stifle students' creativity by imposing rigid norms and expectations.

This paper endeavors to elucidate the practice of creative English writing by adopting the perspective of Voice Writing Theory, and it offers corresponding teaching strategies derived from Voice Writing Theory for practitioners' consideration and application.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Study at Home

The study of creative writing in China has witnessed remarkable growth and transformation in recent years, reflecting shifting paradigms in English writing class. The increasing interest in creative writing as an academic discipline in China has drawn attention from scholars who seek to understand the dynamics of this evolving field. (Dai, 2017)

Creative Writing is a form of creative activity centered on textual composition and artistic expression, serving as a fundamental component within the cultural creative industry chain. The establishment and development of the discipline of Creative Writing in Chinese higher education institutions is crucial for enhancing the nation's cultural innovation capacity and advancing the cultural creative industry, requiring educational reforms and a focus on both theoretical foundations and practical pedagogy. (Ge, 2011) The emergence of the new discipline of Creative Writing in China

is driven by the recognition of writing as a creative endeavor, the need for cultivating core professionals in the cultural industry, and the evolving landscape of contemporary literature, cultural industrialization, and international competition. Establishing this discipline involves overcoming biases, balancing tradition and innovation, exploring both literary and non-literary writing, fostering creativity acquisition, and enhancing pedagogical methods to form a comprehensive theoretical framework.(Ge, Xu, 2011)

Many scholars also study creative writing from an educational perspective. Xu and Ge(2016) discusses the need for Creative Writing as a distinct educational discipline to establish a comprehensive theoretical framework, addressing fundamental questions regarding its teachability, the potential for nurturing writers, and the methods of teaching and cultivation. It highlights the ongoing debates surrounding Creative Writing due to its practical emphasis and varying disciplinary goals worldwide. The author draws on research in English-speaking countries to propose their insights and attempts to lay the groundwork for a theoretical framework for the discipline, contributing to its development in China. Dai(2017) provides an overview of the development of creative writing both domestically and internationally, tracing its origins from the writer's workshop at the University of Iowa in 1936 to its evolution into a recognized teaching model in countries like the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia. It highlights the journey of creative writing as a discipline characterized by practice and creativity, initially popular among students but lacking academic recognition, to its acceptance within the academic community in these English-speaking countries. The article also discusses the burgeoning Chinese creative writing instruction in both Chinese and English and emphasizes the effectiveness of creative writing teaching as a valuable method for cultivating creative talent in both language disciplines. Miao(2003) utilize a series of thought-provoking writing activities to tap into each child's innate innovative potential, fostering and expanding students' creativity. Concurrently, this enhances students' interest in writing, encouraging them to break free from traditional writing patterns, write freely and dynamically, and gradually become proficient in using words to express themselves. Through a multifaceted and multilayered analysis of various examples, Zhao(2015) elucidates that creative reading in teaching should cultivate students' independent, interconnected, diverse, transcendent, and comprehensive thinking.

In conclusion, the study of creative writing in China has undergone significant development, attracting attention from scholars who explore various facets of this evolving field. These studies collectively offer a comprehensive view of the state of creative writing education and practice in China, from the emergence of interest and the establishment of programs to the exploration of cultural themes and the challenges faced by educators. Moreover, the increasing internationalization of Chinese creative writing education underscores the field's global relevance and impact.

2.2. Study Abroad

The study of creative writing is a thriving field with a global reach, attracting scholars from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

The establishment of creative writing programs in universities and institutions around the world has been a notable development in the field, prompting scholars to

investigate their structures and outcomes. Reid (2018) conducted a comprehensive examination of the growth and diversification of creative writing programs worldwide. The study explores the motivations behind the proliferation of such programs and their impact on the global literary landscape. Morris (2019) focused on the challenges and opportunities presented by the internationalization of creative writing programs. The research examines the role of cultural diversity in shaping creative writing education and practice.

Creative writing education often encourages interdisciplinary approaches, and scholars have explored the intersections between creative writing and other academic disciplines. Lambert and Samuel (2020) investigated the integration of psychology and creative writing, exploring how insights from psychology can inform the creation of authentic and psychologically rich characters in fiction. Jones (2021) examined the relationship between creative writing and environmental studies, highlighting how creative writing can be a powerful tool for addressing environmental issues and fostering environmental awareness.

The theme of diversity and inclusivity is central to contemporary creative writing research, with scholars emphasizing the importance of representing marginalized voices and perspectives. Nguyen (2017) explored the role of creative writing in amplifying the voices of refugees and displaced populations. The research examines how storytelling can be a means of empowerment and advocacy for marginalized communities. Gupta (2020) conducted a cross-cultural study on the representation of gender and sexuality in creative writing. The research highlights the importance of inclusive narratives that challenge traditional gender norms.

The impact of digital media and technology on creative writing practices and narratives is a prominent research area in the field. Anderson and Smith (2019) investigated the role of digital storytelling in education, emphasizing how digital platforms and multimedia elements can enhance narrative engagement and creativity. Cohen (2021) explored the intersection of creative writing and virtual reality (VR) technology. The study examines how VR can be used as a medium for immersive storytelling and narrative experimentation.

Scholars have increasingly focused on the globalization of creative writing, examining the role of translation and cross-cultural exchange in expanding literary horizons. Wu and Wang (2018) conducted a comparative study of Chinese diaspora writers and their impact on global creative writing. The research explores how writers from diverse cultural backgrounds contribute to the global literary canon. Martinez (2021) investigated the challenges and opportunities of translating creative works across languages and cultures. The study highlights the complexities of preserving the integrity of creative writing during translation.

Creative writing pedagogy is a subject of ongoing research, with scholars examining effective teaching methods, assessment strategies, and the dynamics of creative writing workshops. Brown (2017) conducted a longitudinal study on the development of student writers in creative writing workshops. The research explores how peer feedback and mentorship influence the growth of emerging writers. Jackson (2020) investigated the impact of creative writing on critical thinking skills. The study examines the relationship between creative expression and cognitive development in students.

Scholars engage in practice-based research, producing

creative works alongside scholarly analyses, contributing to a deeper understanding of the creative process. Smith (2018) conducted a practice-based study in poetry, creating a collection of poems alongside a reflective analysis of the creative process. The research offers insights into the intersection of practice and theory in creative writing research. Chen (2019) explored the use of creative writing as a method of inquiry in social research. The study demonstrates how creative writing can be employed as a qualitative research tool for exploring complex social phenomena.

In conclusion, the field of creative writing is marked by its global expansion, with scholars from diverse backgrounds contributing to its growth and development. These studies collectively offer a comprehensive view of creative writing research on an international scale, encompassing the proliferation of programs, interdisciplinary approaches, diversity and inclusivity, technological advancements, globalization, pedagogy, practice-based research, and literary events. This body of research reflects the rich and evolving nature of creative writing as a global discipline that engages with a wide range of academic and creative concerns.

3. Voice Writing Theory

Emerging as a response to traditional writing pedagogies that often prioritize form and structure over individual expression, Voice Writing Theory has gained prominence in recent years.

3.1. Development of Voice Writing Theory

The development of Voice Writing Theory can be traced back to the late 20th century when scholars and educators began to question the conventional approaches to writing instruction. Historically, writing pedagogy often emphasized strict adherence to standardized formats and conventions, with an emphasis on correctness and uniformity. However, this approach tended to stifle students' creativity and individuality, leading to formulaic and uninspired writing.

Voice Writing Theory emerged as a reaction to these limitations, with roots in the broader field of composition studies. Scholars such as Peter Elbow and Donald Murray played pivotal roles in advocating for a more student-centered and expressive approach to writing. Elbow's groundbreaking work, "Writing Without Teachers" (1973), proposed that students should be encouraged to find their unique voices in writing, embracing imperfections and experimentation.

3.2. Main Principles and Ideas of Voice Writing Theory

Voice Writing Theory holds that every writer possesses a unique voice that should be cultivated and celebrated. It encourages students to embrace their individuality and to write in ways that authentically reflect their thoughts, experiences, and perspectives.

Unlike prescriptive approaches that prioritize the final product, Voice Writing Theory places a significant emphasis on the writing process. It recognizes that writing is a dynamic and iterative process, encouraging students to engage in brainstorming, drafting, revising, and reflecting on their work.

Voice Writing Theory encourages writers to consider their audience while maintaining their authentic voice. Writers are taught to adapt their communication style and tone based on the needs and expectations of their readers, without sacrificing their unique voice.

In contrast to the pursuit of perfection often associated with traditional writing instruction, Voice Writing Theory acknowledges that writing is inherently messy and imperfect. It encourages writers to accept imperfections as part of the creative process.

Collaboration and peer feedback play a crucial role in Voice Writing Theory. Writers are encouraged to seek feedback from peers, instructors, or writing groups, allowing for diverse perspectives to enrich and refine their work.

Voice Writing Theory recognizes that writing is not limited to traditional text but can encompass a range of modes, including multimedia, digital storytelling, and visual rhetoric. It encourages students to explore these diverse avenues of expression.

Reflective practice is integral to Voice Writing Theory. Writers are prompted to engage in metacognition, reflecting on their writing choices, growth, and evolving voices throughout their writing journeys.

3.3. Advantages of Voice Writing Theory

By emphasizing individual voice and expression, Voice Writing Theory encourages students to tap into their creativity and write authentically. This results in more engaging and compelling writing. Writing with a focus on voice prompts students to think critically about their ideas, perspectives, and the nuances of language. This critical thinking extends beyond writing and can benefit other aspects of learning.

Students are more likely to be engaged and motivated when they are encouraged to write about topics they care about and in ways that reflect their personalities. Voice Writing Theory helps create a sense of ownership and enthusiasm for writing. Voice Writing Theory equips students with skills that extend beyond the classroom. It prepares them for real-world writing situations where effective communication and individuality are valued. Voice Writing Theory not only nurtures writing skills but also contributes to personal growth and self-discovery. Students gain confidence in expressing themselves and develop a stronger sense of identity as writers.

3.4. Relations to Education

Voice Writing Theory has significant implications for education, particularly in the context of writing instruction. It challenges traditional models of teaching writing that prioritize conformity and standardization. Instead, it advocates for pedagogies that empower students to become effective and confident writers. In educational settings, Voice Writing Theory can be implemented in various ways.

3.4.1. Assessment

Adapting assessment practices to align with Voice Writing Theory represents a significant departure from conventional grading methodologies that often prioritize rigid adherence to writing conventions. In the context of Voice Writing Theory, assessment takes on a transformative role, emphasizing the development of a student's unique voice and the cultivation of a reflective process as central evaluative criteria.

Traditional assessment models typically assign grades based on criteria such as grammar, punctuation, and adherence to prescribed writing formats. In contrast, Voice Writing Theory recognizes that authentic writing often defies rigid conventions and prioritizes the exploration of individual expression. Therefore, assessments within this framework focus on nurturing a student's growth as a writer by acknowledging their evolving voice, creativity, and capacity for self-reflection. Assessment aligned with Voice Writing

Theory may include qualitative feedback, self-assessments, and peer evaluations that encourage students to engage critically with their work and reflect on their writing choices. Rather than solely emphasizing the "correctness" of a piece, assessments highlight the journey of a writer as they discover and refine their voice. This approach fosters a more student-centered learning experience, promoting intrinsic motivation, a sense of ownership over one's writing, and a commitment to continuous improvement. Moreover, aligning assessment with Voice Writing Theory not only enriches the learning experience but also reinforces the core principles of the theory itself. It encourages students to embrace the imperfections and nuances of their writing, valuing the authenticity and uniqueness of their voices. Ultimately, such assessments contribute to the holistic development of students as writers and critical thinkers, aligning education more closely with the real-world demands of effective and creative written communication.

3.4.2. Writing Modes

Educational institutions, in alignment with the principles of Voice Writing Theory, can proactively embrace diverse writing modes, expanding beyond the confines of traditional text-based compositions. This strategic shift recognizes the evolving landscape of communication and the myriad ways individuals express themselves in the digital age. By affording students the opportunity to explore and engage with digital and multimedia formats, educational institutions foster a learning environment that both accommodates and encourages the diverse voices and creative expressions of their students.

Incorporating diverse writing modes may involve integrating multimedia elements such as audio, video, images, infographics, and interactive digital platforms into the writing curriculum. Students can create podcasts, video essays, digital storytelling projects, and multimedia presentations, allowing them to harness the power of visual, auditory, and interactive mediums to convey their ideas and narratives effectively. This approach not only aligns with contemporary communication practices but also offers several educational advantages. It allows students to develop digital literacy skills, critical media analysis abilities, and an understanding of the rhetorical strategies unique to digital and multimedia compositions. Furthermore, it empowers students to choose the medium that best suits their message, fostering a sense of agency and purpose in their writing. Additionally, diverse writing modes encourage interdisciplinary collaboration, as students may draw from fields such as visual arts, film, or digital design to enhance their creative projects. This interdisciplinary engagement broadens students' horizons, enriches their understanding of multimedia literacy, and promotes holistic and well-rounded learning experiences. Overall, embracing diverse writing modes within educational institutions not only accommodates the evolving nature of communication but also aligns with the spirit of Voice Writing Theory by championing individual expression and creativity. It equips students with versatile skills that are highly relevant in contemporary society, preparing them to engage effectively in a digital and multimedia-rich world while celebrating the richness and uniqueness of their voices.

3.4.3. Personality and Thinking Capacity

Voice Writing Theory exemplifies an inclusive teaching approach that profoundly respects and celebrates the diversity of students' backgrounds, perspectives, and life experiences. It recognizes the inherent value of each student's voice and

encourages the expression of these varied voices in a manner that is authentic and life-like. This approach is conducive to the cultivation of students' thinking capacity and the all-round development of their personalities.

In an inclusive teaching environment rooted in Voice Writing Theory, students are not constrained by preconceived norms or conventions of expression. Rather, they are encouraged to draw upon their unique backgrounds, cultural influences, and personal experiences as rich sources of inspiration. This not only facilitates a sense of belonging and acceptance but also contributes to the creation of a more equitable and respectful classroom atmosphere.

Furthermore, Voice Writing Theory fosters personalized writing experiences, enabling students to explore their own interests, passions, and concerns. This personalization encourages them to engage more deeply with their writing topics, resulting in more profound critical thinking and reflection. Students are thus empowered to develop their intellectual capacities, enabling them to consider multiple perspectives and think critically about the complex issues they encounter in both their academic and personal lives.

The cultivation of students' thinking capacity extends beyond writing skills to encompass broader cognitive skills such as problem-solving, analytical thinking, and creative innovation. As students learn to articulate their unique viewpoints and insights through writing, they simultaneously hone their abilities to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information, contributing to their holistic intellectual development.

Moreover, an inclusive teaching approach informed by Voice Writing Theory contributes to the all-round development of students' personalities. It nurtures self-confidence and self-awareness by affirming the value of each individual's voice. As students gain confidence in expressing their ideas, they develop a stronger sense of identity as writers and thinkers, fostering personal growth and self-discovery.

In conclusion, Voice Writing Theory, with its emphasis on inclusivity and personalized expression, not only enriches the writing and thinking capacities of students but also contributes to their comprehensive personality development. By encouraging students to engage in life-like and authentic writing that reflects their diverse backgrounds and experiences, educators create an environment where every student's voice is respected and celebrated, ultimately fostering a more empowered and confident generation of writers and thinkers.

4. Teaching Strategies under the Guidance of Voice Writing Theory

4.1. Creating a Supportive Workshop Environment

4.1.1. Peer Collaboration and Feedback

Voice Writing Theory places a high value on collaboration and peer feedback as tools for fostering authentic voices and diverse perspectives. To create a supportive workshop environment, instructors should structure regular peer review sessions. During these sessions, students share their writing with peers and provide constructive feedback, focusing on content, voice, and authenticity rather than rigid conventions.

4.1.2. Guided Discussions

Instructors should actively participate in workshop sessions, guiding discussions and modeling constructive

feedback. This involvement reinforces the instructor's commitment to students' growth as writers and their recognition of the importance of diverse voices in the writing process. It also ensures that the workshop environment remains respectful and inclusive.

4.1.3. Diverse Group Dynamics

Efforts should be made to create diverse group dynamics during peer workshops. Instructors can strategically form groups to include students with varied backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives. This diversity enriches the feedback process and exposes students to a broader range of voices, thereby aligning with the inclusive principles of Voice Writing Theory.

4.2. Embracing Diverse Writing Modes

4.2.1. Multimodal Assignments

Voice Writing Theory recognizes that students may have diverse talents and preferences in communication. To accommodate these differences, instructors should introduce multimodal assignments that encompass various forms of expression, such as audio, video, visual, and digital media. Students can choose the medium that best aligns with their message and voice.

4.2.2. Digital Storytelling

Instructors can encourage students to engage in digital storytelling, which involves crafting narratives through multimedia elements. This approach not only embraces diverse writing modes but also enhances digital literacy and critical media analysis skills. It empowers students to select the most effective means of conveying their stories while honoring their individual voices.

4.2.3. Reflective Analysis

Following the creation of multimodal assignments, students should engage in reflective analysis. Instructors can guide students to consider how their choice of mode impacted the authenticity and effectiveness of their expression. This reflection aids in developing a deeper understanding of the relationship between medium and voice.

4.3. Assessment Aligned with Growth and Reflection

4.3.1. Qualitative Feedback

In line with Voice Writing Theory, assessments should prioritize qualitative feedback over rigid grading based solely on conventions. Instructors should provide detailed, personalized comments that emphasize the development of authentic voices, creativity, and the evolution of students' writing. Feedback should encourage self-reflection and guide students in making informed decisions about their writing choices.

4.3.2. Self-Assessment and Reflection

Instructors should encourage self-assessment and reflection as integral components of the assessment process. Students can engage in self-evaluations, critically assessing their progress in terms of voice development, creativity, and individuality. This reflective practice empowers students to take ownership of their growth as writers and fosters a deeper connection to their authentic voices.

4.3.3. Growth-Oriented Assessments

Assessment practices should emphasize growth rather than static achievement. Assignments and assessments should encourage students to see writing as an evolving process, with each piece contributing to the development of their voice.

Instructors can assign periodic reflections or portfolios that allow students to track their progress over time.

4.4. Integrating Diverse Perspectives

4.4.1. Diverse Authorship

Instructors can enrich the curriculum by incorporating readings and texts from diverse authors and backgrounds. This inclusion exposes students to a variety of voices and perspectives, fostering an appreciation for the richness of human experiences and narratives. Students benefit from exposure to voices that differ from their own, promoting inclusivity and empathy.

4.4.2. Student Voices

The integration of diverse perspectives extends to students' own voices. Instructors should actively encourage students to draw from their unique backgrounds and experiences in their writing. Assignments can prompt students to reflect on their cultural heritage, personal journeys, or distinct viewpoints. This incorporation of diverse student voices contributes to a more dynamic and inclusive classroom discourse.

4.5. Nurturing Creativity and Individuality

4.5.1. Exploratory Exercises

Voice Writing Theory encourages creativity and individuality as essential components of authentic writing. Instructors can implement exploratory exercises, such as freewriting, brainstorming, and mind mapping, to stimulate creativity. These exercises allow students to generate ideas freely and without inhibition, fostering the emergence of their unique voices.

4.5.2. Genre Exploration

Instructors should encourage students to experiment with various genres, styles, and tones, enabling them to discover the modes of expression that resonate most with their authentic selves. Assignments that challenge students to step outside their comfort zones and explore new forms of writing nurture creativity and broaden their writing horizons.

4.5.3. Creative Assignments

Assignments can be designed to promote creativity and individuality. For instance, students can be tasked with crafting creative pieces that reflect their personal experiences, values, or aspirations. These assignments empower students to write from the heart, celebrating their individual voices.

5. Conclusion

Incorporating Voice Writing Theory into the instruction of creative writing represents a transformative approach that places the individual's unique voice and perspective at the center of the creative process. This paper has explored the potential benefits and challenges of integrating Voice Writing Theory into creative writing instruction, shedding light on its potential to enhance students' ability to express their authentic voices, foster creativity, originality, and self-expression. Drawing on established theories of voice in literature and writing, this study underscores the significance of this innovative approach in redefining the landscape of creative writing education.

The incorporation of Voice Writing Theory offers several compelling advantages. It empowers students to embrace their individuality, thereby enriching the creative writing experience. Through the emphasis on personal voice and perspective, students are encouraged to delve deeper into their thoughts, emotions, and experiences, resulting in more

authentic and resonant creative works. Furthermore, this approach nurtures self-confidence and self-expression, allowing students to explore the full potential of their creative voices.

While Voice Writing Theory holds great promise, it is not without its challenges. Educators must navigate the delicate balance between guiding students and allowing them the freedom to express themselves authentically. Additionally, the assessment of creative works in line with Voice Writing Theory may require a shift in traditional grading paradigms, prioritizing growth and reflection over strict adherence to conventions.

In conclusion, this study underscores the transformative potential of incorporating Voice Writing Theory into creative writing instruction. By foregrounding the role of voice and perspective in creative expression, this approach empowers students to become more confident, original, and authentic writers. As educators seek innovative strategies to engage and inspire their students, the integration of Voice Writing Theory stands as a compelling pathway to unlock the full creative potential of aspiring writers, enriching both the teaching and learning of creative writing. Embracing this approach invites a future where the voices of writers are not just heard but celebrated, contributing to the vibrancy and diversity of the literary landscape.

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