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Review of Creativity and The Paris Review Interviews: A Discourse Analysis of Famous Writers' Composing Practices by Rhonda Leathers Dively

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the weekly schedule, the Student Learning Outcomes—provides the opportunity for this deeper level of personal engagement with writing and the resulting growth that can occur for us as writers and as people.

Similarly, *formlessness* here means to not explicitly reveal why students are doing certain writing tasks, but to design the course in such a way so that students stop asking for the reasons or consulting the SLO's on the syllabus, but rather learn by doing instead. As Nelson says, "I always ask myself if I would get bored completing the assignment. Would I have to think critically and creatively to complete it? If the answer is no, I come up with something better" (44). Throughout the book, Nelson not only tells us *that* he comes up with something better, but he *shows* us just what those things are and invites us to adapt them to our classes.

This kind of demonstration is, for me, the strength of *Teaching the Way* and while there are other examples that exist—Thomas Newkirk's wonderful *Nuts and Bolts* comes to mind—this is a welcome addition that also delivers, in Nelson's use of Sun Tzu, a philosophical foundation in a unique way that goes beyond being merely instructional resource material. It is also worth noting here that, in addition to the audience mentioned above, teachers and scholars interested in Barry Kroll's influential *The Open Hand: Arguing as an Art of Peace* might also find this volume a useful companion.

Work Cited

Sirc, Geoffrey. "Resisting Entropy." *College Composition and Communication*, vol. 63, no. 3, 2012, pp. 507–19.



Dively, Rhonda Leathers. *Creativity and The Paris Review Interviews: A Discourse Analysis of Famous Writers' Composing Practices*. Anthem Press, 2022. 204 pp.

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Only by fate and fortune would an apprentice receive the opportunity to review the work of a master. Nearly 14 years after sitting as a doctoral student in her Creativity Theory course, I am pleased to review Dr. Rhonda Leathers Dively's text, *Creativity and The Paris Review Interviews: A Discourse Analysis of Famous Writers' Composing Practices*. Dively has written and published on the topic of Creativity Theory since the late 90s and is notably one of the pioneers for applying Creativity Theory in the composition and expository writing classrooms.

As a former student in her theory class, I recall Dr. Dively saturating the chalkboard with her expertise, while providing her students with plenty of readings, visuals, creative projects, and reflection assignments. *Creativity and The Paris Review Interviews* echoes her voice that I vividly recall, offering extensive qualitative research through in-depth discourse analyses of interviews featured in *The Paris Review* that "work to illustrate and

complicate understanding of the creative process elements as experienced by the featured writers,” while “establishing expository composition as a creative process” (33). Extending an interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary approach, and nodding to neurobiology and cognitive science, this text is designed for creators, writers, and educators.

I identify as a creator, writer, and educator and find the organization of the text a creative move in and of itself. After outlining the “Impetus, Contexts and Methods” in chapter one, and “Composition through the Lens of Creativity Theory” in chapter two, the next six chapters guide readers through the model of creativity that has become prevalent (see Rob Pope’s *Creativity: Theory, History, and Practice* for various definitions of “creativity” through a more historical lens). As such, Dively defines the paradigmatic creative process model through these stages: first insight, preparation, incubation, insight, and verification. Dively then organizes and analyzes portraits of famous composers’ processes from interviews published in the *Paris Review* from the “2006-9 four-volume anthology” (13). Specifically, some of the noted poets and fiction-writers in the study are: Maya Angelou, James Baldwin, T.S. Eliot, William Faulkner, Earnest Hemingway, Ted Hughes, Stephen King, Philip Larkin, Toni Morrison, Philip Roth, Salman Rushdie, Kurt Vonnegut, Eudora Welty, and William Carlos Williams, just to name a few of the 64 total interviews discussed in the text.

The chapter that follows outlines the “Emergent Patterns” from “651 passages” that “ultimately disperse across six subcategories: reasons for writing; role of art, including writing; difficulty of writing; confidence, or lack thereof; conditions for writing; and attitudes toward creative writing courses” (123). These emergent themes not only validate the theoretical framework of the creative process and its intersections with the composing process (invention, drafting, revision, editing), they also substantiate a sense of authentication for creators at any level: even renowned authors labor and struggle while creating a masterpiece. Furthermore, Dively’s text provides plenty of evidence that the creating and writing process is complex enough not to be reductive, and thus the book in no way presumes a one-size-fits-all approach insofar as no two people fit succinctly into one process.

Congruent with Dively’s previous work, *Creativity and The Paris Review Interviews* includes contextualized implications for the research study by offering practical suggestions for composition instructors. The final chapter of the text is a call to action for instructors to assist students in becoming “aware of how incubation, insight, and all other components of the creative process model function and how they can be productively managed” (158). As in the previous chapters, Dively’s analysis spans each step in the creative process model offering recommendations and pedagogical strategies for guiding students through their own writing processes. Chapter nine, in particular, left me thinking about my students and where I position myself within their writing processes. I wondered if I am stifling their creativity by the writing assignments I design, and how I might revise my pedagogical approaches to “include not only teacher-led activities and exercises that compel students to become aware of how incubation, insight, and all other components of the creative process model function” by designing more “scaffolding aimed at helping [students] enact these creative subprocesses on their own” (158).

By implementing the creative process model juxtaposed with the composing process model, instructors will inspire knowledge transfer and creative problem solving, thereby encouraging students to gain “some measure of control over their individual writing processes” in order to “master finer points of rhetoric, genre analysis, style, etc.” (152). I am excited to implement these concepts in my expository writing classes, as I already view my students as incredibly creative, highly intuitive, and inventive. I am also excited to engage in some metacognitive reflection about my own writing and creating processes, and this text is designed for anyone who wishes to do the same.

Work Cited

Pope, Rob. *Creativity: Theory, History, Practice*. Routledge, 2005.

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Jackson, Rebecca and Jackie Grutsch McKinney, editors.
***Self+ Culture+ Writing: Autoethnography for/as Writing Studies*. Utah**
State UP, 2021. 238 pp.

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This volume brings together a compendium of works that explore autoethnography and its emerging applications. A qualitative approach that first appeared in the social sciences, autoethnography has recently gained traction within other disciplines over the last two decades, including rhetoric and composition studies. However, due to its theoretically and methodologically amorphous qualities, over the years researchers have struggled to firmly define autoethnography, especially as the field continues to evolve. Still, many within writing studies have championed the method and now understand it as a recursive tool for studying “the relationship between self and other and all of its dimensions” (Kafar and Ellis 134). As more work has been published in the autoethnographic tradition, so too has the need for a deeper understanding of its current function and future possibilities, a task the editors and contributors take up in this timely collection—the first of its kind in the field.

Writing in their introduction, Jackson and Grutsch McKinney explain the project’s origins and their interest in reframing this method, noting the glaring absence of codified literature in the broader discipline: “We’d both looked unsuccessfully for years for books on autoethnography we could use in our undergraduate and graduate writing studies courses...but there was no robust or sustained discussion of autoethnography in the field of writing studies” (3). Accordingly, the book is separated into three parts, with topics ranging from autoethnographic explorations of the self to autoethnography and multimodal compositions to autoethnography as a method for historical recovery.

As a method historically invested in disrupting conventional narratives focused on dominant social groups, namely white and middle-class, autoethnography is particularly valuable when applied to experiences underrepresented in the mainstream, for it encourages individuals “to engage in various forms of systematic reflection on experiences