

Preparing for the Workshop: Flexible Learning in Creative Writing

Enabling Participatory Learning

Online Learning Modules

We created learning modules for three Creative Writing Courses: CRWR 305A (Creative Non-Fiction), CRWR 306A (Writing for Screen) and CRWR 309A (Writing Fiction).

Each module consisted of:

- Craft-based lecture material.
- Video interviews to support the lecture.
- Short examples of the craft discussed, shown in use in published work.
- Critical questions for students to consider.
- Downloadable examples of exemplary uses of craft for further reading.
- Weekly written assignment requiring students to practice craft, forming the text for discussion in-class.

Project Evaluation

We carried out a three-part evaluation consisting of student surveys, face-to-face meetings between students and instructors and a series of meetings between course instructors, GRAs and the TLEF project proposers. Results indicated that the project worked extremely well, enabling effective large-group interaction. Students responded particularly well to the opportunity to do more in-class work through the 'flipped classroom' model and a majority of them asked if there could be more of this in future classes. Instructors noted that the improvement in student work from 200-level classes, as well as the improvement during term, was significant, and greater than seen in non 'flipped' classes at a similar level. Student engagement was similarly improved, with higher than average attendance figures for all three classes.

Project Team: Andrew Gray, Steven Galloway, Annabel Lyon. **Instructors:** Nancy Lee, Martin Kinch, Kevin Chong,

In-Class Workshop

The writing workshop is at the core of Creative Writing pedagogy. Use of the online learning modules allowed us to focus on our pedagogical objectives:

- Participatory learning.
- Critical reading skills.
- Writing and revision skills.
- The use of student-generated work to serve as the focus of the class.

During the workshop in class, students discussed the sample videos and manuscripts, but primarily used the time to give and receive critical peer feedback on the written assignments, and looked as a group at ways of improving their writing in further revisions.

Video Interview Series



Short interviews with writers such as Nancy Lee and Joseph Boyden provide intimate and direct examples from highly respected working writers.

The video interviews were all shot at UBC using professional video and sound equipment in a studio with a green screen to enable custom backgrounds to be used. They were edited to highlight themes set out by instructors, with material from multiple writers used in each clip.

Examples include:

- **How do you develop an antagonist and antagonism?**
- **How do you create effective dialogue?**
- **Can writers of Creative Non-fiction use the same tools as novelists?**