

CREATIVITY AND THE WRITING PROCESS: STRAYING WITH A PURPOSE

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Dedication

I would like to thank the many people that helped me along this journey.

My love and gratitude to my parents, Duncan and Ann Robertson, who taught me how to laugh and learn.

To Rod Osiowy, my greatest thanks for getting me involved in the Master's program at the University of Lethbridge. It has been an honour to work with you.

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And finally to Lynnette Wray, my partner: I look forward to many voyages ahead with you at my side.

Abstract

The project Creativity and the Writing Process: Straying With a Purpose examined different creative thinking techniques that can be used to improve the writing process. Too many students at the high school level have lost the ability to wonder, to risk, to dream in their writing. The intent of this project was to provide students with creative thinking strategies. For this project, I adopted an open definition of creativity, “A creative act is usually defined as one that has a valuable or interesting product that is in some way original or surprising” (Carey & Flower, 1989, p. 283). The major measurement used for this project was a pre-intervention essay and a post-intervention essay. The students were given a one-word prompt and they had the freedom to attack the writing assignment in a narrative, persuasive, expository, or descriptive style. This project focussed upon utilizing five different creative thinking techniques: Gardner’s Multiple Intelligence theory (Gardner, 1983), de Bono’s Six Hats Theory of Creativity (de Bono, 1985), metaphors in prose, free-writing, and mind-mapping. After all the theories had been introduced, the students were given the post- intervention prompt essay. This writing was compared to the first prompt essay to see if any changes were evident in the degree of creativity. Other factors were also considered when determining the impact of the study. First, all students were given a pre and post intervention Likert scale to determine whether their attitudes toward creativity had changed. In addition, students were asked to fill out a short-answer questionnaire about creativity at the end of the process. Finally, the teacher made field-notes about the progress of the project. The results indicate that teaching creative thinking strategies did have an impact on the class. A majority of the class began to use some sort

of pre-writing activity; moreover, the level of creativity improved in 36% of my students. After the study, many students revealed that they felt more confident about their creative thinking skills. It was a remarkable, wonderful voyage.

Preface

Exploring the realm of creativity has taught me many lessons, but one I hold dear is that creativity is a skill that must be exercised if it is to be effective. I have learned a great deal about creativity, so to write up my project in a traditional essay format would, it appears to me, be rather hypocritical. Therefore, I have decided to use the metaphor of a sea-voyage to bind my essay together. Although I have lived most of my life far from the sea, it has always held a strange fascination for me. Through this project, I tried to encourage my students to find their voice. Through the metaphor of a journey, I hope to rediscover and develop my own.

The journey begins with “Searching For Meaning in a City by the Sea.” Here I explore the rationale behind this project and why I wanted to embark on this particular journey. The second section “Adventure on the High Seas” examines the process of the project and details my observations about the intervention. In “Judgement Day” I defend my observations and my conclusions about what I discovered on the journey. The italics represent the metaphorical journey toward understanding; the normal font represents my analytical research.

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Searching for Meaning in a City by the Sea

I knew this old town well. I grew up here and I had become a part of this city. I knew the cobblestone streets that meandered through orchards of cherry trees. I knew the beautiful mountain vistas which defined the town. I knew the jagged cut of the coastline which was pounded by the unforgiving sea. I knew the people that walked too fast down the paths; they did not see the trees, the mountains, or the ocean. All they saw was the immediate future. I used to be one of them.

I suppose this project was a quest: a search for something elusive. And so it became a voyage into the realm of curriculum development. But it also became a search for myself. I had become discontent with my teaching practices. They were fine in that they satisfied the basic demands of my job: I taught the students the core material, I kept them out of trouble, and, if time permitted, I entreated them to think for themselves. Perhaps I am being a little too hard on myself, but I don't think so. I was much more concerned about what I was going to cover in the next class than how the students developed their higher thinking skills in relation to English and life in general.

Now I am not about to change the world. This project was never meant to solve all of the problems that I face everyday. Simply put, this project began because I found myself sitting at my desk asking myself two important questions: Is there a better way to improve my students' writing? Was there a way to break them out of formulaic essays so they could write with freedom and joy? I began to wonder how I could stimulate their

creative nature and so I began a voyage of discovery.

I was determined to get out of this town; the atmosphere stifled me. I couldn't breathe or think straight anymore. I needed to find a new place, to start fresh. However, as impulsive as I was, I still couldn't silence the practical side of my nature. Before I did anything, I needed information.

I sought out the sagacious people in town. Amazingly, they all congregated at a bar on Wednesdays. I believe the tavern was called Asnem. I had never been invited, although I am told I was a topic of discussion from time to time. It was never exactly clear why I was held in such contempt. Didn't I always try to fit in? Didn't I always do what was expected of me? Brushing aside such thoughts, I ventured up to the opening and knocked.

"Who's there?" growled a voice as the door cracked open, revealing only a blood shot set of eyes. "Oh, it's you. Push off, lad. You've no business here."

I was about to leave, but for the first time in my life I defied authority. "No, I won't! I have to get in there. I have questions that need answers!" In response the individual who held the door narrowed his eyes for a moment and studied me like a lost memo in the great archive. No words of acknowledgement were spoken, but the door slowly swung open and I was allowed into the foreboding establishment.

As my eyes adjusted to the dimly-lit interior, I noticed this was a place set up for conversations and debates. In each corner there was a large table with several candles giving off light. Around each glowing wick sat a circle of men and women. Some of the circles were quiet and introspective, others were boisterous and lively. I sought out the

closest group and listened over a low shoulder until I was noticed. To my surprise, I was invited into the circle.

I gazed around in the candlelight and noted the faces I saw before me. Here were five of the village elders, renowned for their wisdom. The leader, it seemed to me, was an old woman who smiled little, but had eyes that danced like the northern lights. I began to give my name, but she cut me short. "We know you, sir. Oh we've been watching and waiting. Waiting for what you might ask? Well, you haven't quite fit into the city have you?" I shrugged, remaining noncommittal. "Oh yes, I know. We watched you seem rather uncomfortable in your dress." I started to protest as I wore very fine threads, but she cut me off. "Not your clothes, no not them, in your philosophy, your rationale, your beliefs." I nodded my assent in astonishment - was I so transparent?

I gathered the will to speak, "Can you help me?" I pleaded. The circle broke into a bout of hysterical laughter.

Affronted, I got up to leave, but the old lady grabbed my wrist. "No, stay good sir. You have chanced upon an old argument that we often discuss: Can anyone help anyone?" She snorted the words "Free will" under her breath as I sat back down. "Now then, what is troubling you, boy?"

I told them of my restlessness, my belief that I was shortchanging myself and my students, and of my desire to break from the traditional curriculum. To my surprise, the group began to seriously debate the matter and soon I was swept up in advice and warnings. By the end of the evening, my mind was reeling, and not just from the alcohol. It had been decided that I should learn everything I could about creativity and report

back to them in one month. I fled to the library, informed the clerk that I would become the new resident book worm, and got to work.

At the end of four weeks, I was ready to present my findings. I returned to the bar and found my corner waiting expectantly. No sooner had I sat down and made myself an acquaintance of a bottle of grog, when they demanded to know what I had accomplished, and what I had planned. I explained to them that I envisioned teaching creative thinking strategies to my students to see if there was a measurable impact upon the students' writing. The group grunted (collectively it is a frightening sound) and demanded my rationale for my project. After taking a long sip of grog, I began to tell them what I had found:

I learned that creativity is an attractive subject that has inspired many people to investigate the concept, although the bulk of the research is devoted to stimulating initial creative thought in young children as opposed to stimulating creativity in young adults or adults. Throughout my readings, I identified five central themes. First, creativity is a skill that can be nurtured and developed. All researchers believe that there are some people who are naturally skilled in the art of making something unique; however, they also believe everyone can learn to improve his or her skills. One of the leaders in creative thinking, and the person who coined the phrase "lateral thinking," as he is so pleased to point out, is de Bono. He insists that anyone can learn to think using his methods: "Being a thinker is a totally different self-image. It is an operating skill. You can do something about it. You can get better at thinking just as you can get better at playing football or cooking" (de Bono, 1985, p.17). I also like his idea about how lateral thinking works. He argues that

original thinking is nothing more than learning to access information in a different way: “It can be shown that lateral thinking can make people generate more ideas and by definition gifts cannot be taught. There is nothing mysterious about lateral thinking. It is a way of handling information” (de Bono, 1985, p. 50). Other researchers echo his ideas about the universal notion of original thought. Raudsepp responds with a note of warning to an allegation that only those that have a complete “Aha!” moment are creative:

Unfortunately, this romantic notion of complete vision has become firmly rooted among contemporary investigators of, and writers on, creativity. Its perpetuation only serves to convince those who have failed to experience such inspired visions that they really do not have creative talent, when, in fact, they may possess it to a remarkable degree (Raudsepp, 1980, p. 190).

After reviewing the literature, I felt confident that I could teach my students how to improve their creative thinking skills.

The second theme I discovered is that writing offers a unique way to explore imagination. My students had to create an original work out of a single word. Thankfully, the prompt process allows the writer a wide scope to work within. Creative researchers Moxley and Sabro argue that giving the writer freedom to explore is quite important, “Admittedly, student writers need experience with a variety of forms and genres, but we can design course requirements in a portfolio format that gives students more control over the shape of their writing” (Moxley & Sabro, 1994, p. 135). It was my goal to provide students with a proper creative outlet through the prompt exercise.

The process required more than simply setting up the students with a topic and letting them go. I had to be vigilant in teaching my class how to utilize this freedom, “Having a repertoire of strategies may not be sufficient to ensure success in solving ill-

defined writing problems; a writer must know when to use a particular strategy and be able to monitor and test its effectiveness” (Carey & Flower, 1989, p. 287). Indeed, creativity entails much more than simply coming up with a unique idea. I had to teach a variety of approaches and carefully discuss the pros and cons of each technique.

The third theme in the research revolved around the fragile nature of imagination. Torrance, a giant in the field of creativity, writes about the importance of stimulating creativity in all students. Indeed, he laments the missed opportunities to inspire students:

The creative child who abandons his creativity sometimes becomes a very conforming, too obedient child. As a consequence, he is likely to grow up with a lack of confidence in his own thinking, be uncertain of his self-concept and be overly dependent upon others in making decisions (Torrance, 1988, p. 126).

Most writers also lecture at length about the pre-conditions necessary for an individual to be able to integrate the creative thinking techniques. The research tends to suggest that if a setting is not conducive to fostering creative thought, the greatest teacher will struggle to pull creative material out of his or her students. In fact, the word “pull” is perhaps incorrect; “induce” is a better word. “But, in order to enhance learning and learning to learn, in order to nurture each student’s creative abilities, educators must design a climate that recognizes and responds to individual concerns” (Isaken, Selby, Treffinger, & Powers, 1993, p. 234).

In addition, Smith delivers a caution about trying to foster the creative process. I had to allow my students to find their own path because if I influenced them too much, the students might simply reflect of my own ideas:

These consistent results indicate that creative thinking, which involves

generation of divergent ideas, can be restricted if priming draws the generative search down common branchings of a plan's road map. Furthermore, even when the subjects were told to create new ideas that would be as different as possible from the examples, their ideas still conformed to the examples (Smith, 1995, p. 147).

Building on Smith's warning about the delicate nature of the process, Moxley and Sabro argue it is not enough to simply teach creative strategies in a classroom; they argue a paradigm shift must take place, "To foster this mode of thinking, we can make the creative writing class a safe place for experimentation and self expression, a place where unconventional solutions are sought and rewarded" (Moxley & Sabro, 1994, p. 136).

Domina echoes this sentiment. However, she argues that an accepting class does not mean an simple or bland class, "Stafford suggests that one condition of a successful writing class is that students be confident of a respectful reception (by which I do not mean uncritical)" (Domina, 1994, p. 30). My standards for evaluating the prompts had to be very clear to the students so that they were well aware of what I expected.

The fourth theme in the readings is that creativity cannot be fostered overnight. Indeed, this truism worries me as I attempted to instill a creative spirit in a class in less than three months. However, I was working with my class for two and a half hours a day. There was ample time to spread out the development of this skill. "By far the greatest amount of agreement is the statement that creativity takes time" (Sternberg & Tardif, 1988, p. 430). I had to be patient about the process. I found that I had to leave some time for each of the creative thinking techniques to absorb before moving on to another strategy. Several researchers note that the process may not develop in a linear fashion, "...namely, that as writers attempt new rhetorical functions and new strategies for

structuring texts, unexpected regressions may occur at certain points in the development of their writing abilities” (Murphy & Ruth, 1988, p. 225). Patience had to be a part of my process.

The importance with which all of the researchers treat imagination and creativity is the final theme I uncovered. Indeed, for some of the researchers there is no more important question than what are we doing to stimulate the minds of our students. Ford and Harris rail against the meager attention given to imagination, “The initial problem in defining creativity reflects the fact that our society respects creativity less than intelligence and academic ability, a bias evident in our schools” (Ford & Harris, 1992, p. 186).

Moreover, de Bono (1985) asserts that creativity demands more attention than the other higher processes. This is due, in part, to the paradigm shift that technology is having on our society. Anyone can get information - it is what we do with it that is important: “More and more creativity is coming to be valued as an essential ingredient in change and in progress. It is coming to be valued above knowledge and above technique since both of these are becoming so accessible” (de Bono, 1985, p. ii).

And it is not just for the sake of interesting essays or good grades that we are trying to develop imagination in children. Buckles, an Alberta educator who did her thesis on creativity, argues that the issue of creativity has many ramifications: “If the development of creative ability can assist young people to become successful in their vocations or help them to use their leisure time profitably, educators cannot neglect this area of training” (Buckles, 1968, p. 7).

Moxley and Sabro also argue that even though the difficult process of teaching

creative writing may cause the writer and the teacher some headaches, the results are worth the effort, “Finally, we can take comfort in the conviction that thinking creatively is a learned process, and that while the journey from the trite to the startling may be a long one, it can be made” (Moxley & Sabro, 1994, p. 137). Furthermore, in the forward to Mental Gymnastics, the authors deliver an ultimatum to teachers everywhere:

Many experts and researchers suggest workable techniques for promoting divergent thinking in children, young people, and adults. Fairly reliable means for measuring aspects of creative thought exist. Now the task remains for teachers to actually provide opportunities for divergent thinking in their classrooms (Cliatt & Shaw, 1984, p. 23).

I believe I met this challenge by designing this project.

For a moment the group sat back. I could see they were digesting what I had told them. After a few moments, an elderly man with, it appeared, only one tooth muttered: “Very good. Now what do you plan to do with your information. You will need a crew to assist you in your investigation. I have two questions: who and how?”

This study took place in a secondary school in Cranbrook, B.C. I chose one English 12 class for the purpose of this study. This age group was selected because they are the group I am interested in assisting. Most of the literature discusses the need for nurturing creative thought at the elementary level; however, there seems to be a dearth of information about what can be done to stimulate creative thought at the secondary level.

As well, this late teenage group has passed through the junior high phase of desperately trying to be like the “norm” as opposed to speaking with an original voice. I have found that students at this age group are receptive to innovative ideas and are grateful for any instruction on how to improve their thinking skills.

These students were approximately 17 years of age and all were entering their final year of school. Academic ability ranged from gifted (most will pursue some form of post-secondary education) to those who struggled with school and may not continue their education past grade 12. There were no English as a Second Language (ESL) students in the sample group.

A great majority of the students in my school must take English 12. There are approximately 14 classes of English 12 each year. However, one class is reserved for those taking Honors English. This means that those students who excel in English will not be part of this study. Conversely, those students who also struggle greatly with English are placed into a remedial class called Communications 12. Thus, those individuals who may need creative instruction the most will not be a part of this project. Once the project was completed, I shared my work with my department so that others might benefit from the insights I uncovered.

This project took a qualitative approach to exploring creativity. As noted in one book on qualitative research, “The goal is to discover patterns which emerge after close observation, careful documentation and thoughtful analysis” (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994, p. 21). The emergent research design allowed me to get involved in the process and I became an active participant in the learning that took place. Instead of teaching sterile, lifeless lesson plans, I worked with the students to create a suitable atmosphere for creativity. As Eyo and Litterst, two writers on subject of imagination urge, “‘Let your imagination run wild!’ This [classroom atmosphere] suggests a mind set in which imagination is given license. Students are encouraged by the teacher to use all their tools

for discovery, and vision is rewarded” (Eyo & Litterst, 1993, p. 277). I do not believe that a teacher can sit back and impassively try to stimulate creativity. My students saw my enthusiasm for the concepts and thus we established a positive environment for imaginative thought.

Moreover, I preferred a qualitative approach because creativity is an elusive subject and one that is difficult to define. “Human situations and human beings are too complex to be captured by a one-dimensional instrument” (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994, p. 27). Indeed, there is nothing more fundamentally human than the gift of creativity. It is what allows a block of marble to become a breathtaking sculpture or a collection of words to become a devastating poem.

The qualitative approach also allowed me to submerge the unit into the daily fabric of my classroom. Instead of creating artificial situations, the concept of utilizing one’s imagination was at the heart of all of my lessons. This emphasis provided me with a much more realistic view of how creativity is nurtured, developed, and explored.

Because creativity is such a difficult topic to analyze, this project utilized several measurements. Participants had a chance to state their ideas and points of view through a Likert scale and a short-answer questionnaire. In addition, I also took extensive field notes and kept a personal journal about the process.

The project relied upon several different writing assignments, but the most important measuring device was how the students responded to several one-word prompts. A prompt asks the student to write a 300-500 word composition in one hour. Expository, descriptive, narrative, or persuasive writing can be used. The one - word

prompt strategy is emphasized in British Columbia and is worth 25% of the provincial exam. Thus, most English 12 teachers assign many of these writing prompts throughout the year. It is through this form of expression that I hoped to stimulate creative thinking and creative writing.

The various heads around the table slowly nodded in understanding. They exchanged glances and some whispers until the leader spoke again. "You have not discussed where you want to go. Many islands will give you information and all will teach you something. How will you decide which islands to visit and which you will not?"

Deciding which thinking strategies I would use was the hardest part of my research. I had to sift through the various theories to find strategies that I thought would work with my students. The first creative thinking device I chose was de Bono's Six Hats Theory (de Bono, 1985). I was intrigued by the idea that we have been trained in a logical manner and we tend to over-emphasize that line of thinking (de Bono, 1985). I liked the idea that I could get my students to role - play this theory which allowed them to conceptualize it much easier. In addition, I thought it would be an interesting process for the entire class.

De Bono (1992) takes the concept of divergent thinking and imposes a specific structure and a specific set of rules which he believes can teach anyone to become a creative thinker. People are not creative, according to de Bono, because they feel blocked (de Bono, 1992). His techniques show people how to remove the block in order to let their creativity flow. There is no mystery to the process of creativity; it is simply a logical progression. "I want to emphasize that the tools are deliberate and can be used

systematically. It is not a matter of inspiration or feeling in the mood or being 'high.' You can use the tools just as deliberately as you can add up a column of numbers" (de Bono, 1992, p. 6). He makes it clear that all anyone needs to do in order to think in a creative fashion is faithfully follow his steps.

There are some aspects that de Bono believes are crucial if one hopes to use his theory effectively. First, he believes that the system will work most effectively because people will have to put aside their ego. Instead they will have to play a role which allows them freedom to think of alternatives. Second, the black hat, or negative perspective, can become too powerful. The black hat should be used in moderation. Third, time must be given for the creative perspective. The process will not work as smoothly if the yellow and green hat are rushed for time. The ideas must be allowed space to grow. And finally, de Bono believes that the more people see the process as a game, the more they will fit into their roles. With greater comfort comes the freedom to explore ideas (de Bono, 1992, p. 82). I tried to get my students to see this activity as a game, but I began by explaining the theoretical background of de Bono's research. I think they responded to a theory that is used in businesses around the world.

In his books, de Bono discusses the impact his Six Hats Theory (1985) has had on many people; unfortunately, his examples are drawn from companies instead of schools. Nevertheless, I believe that his ideas will transfer neatly into the classroom. In his book Serious Creativity (1992), de Bono provides a list of companies that have embraced his ideas regarding creativity, including Nippon Telephone (NTT) and Telegraph, IBM, and Prudential. Each of these companies expressed great satisfaction with the Six Hats

Theory, “I met him [Mr. Shinto, head of NTT] again six months later and he told me the method had had a powerful effect on his executives who were now more creative and more constructive” (de Bono, 1992, p. 77). This theory has had a warm reception in business and I was anxious to see if it will work within a school setting.

At the core of the The Six Hats theory (1985) is group interaction. It is hoped that through the interplay of the six members a breakthrough will emerge. “The six thinking hats provide a concrete framework for moving away from traditional argument and adversarial thinking” (de Bono, 1992, p. 313). Although de Bono does acknowledge that the hats can be used by a single person, his preference is clearly for a collective effort. de Bono’s technique is included in my project because it does engage a group of people in a systematic way and allows for an interplay of ideas and insights. It is the only theory or technique I will be using exclusively in groups.

Prominent researchers have attacked de Bono’s belief that the creative process is enhanced within a group. Weisburg in his book Creativity: Genius and Other Myths (1986) openly attacks divergent thinking. Weisburg believes that de Bono and other divergent thinking proponents are wrong to insist that divergent thinking improves within a group. Weisburg discusses the findings of a study which compared the quantity and quality of a group of people compared to an individual. “The results, which were consistent for each problem, indicate that working in groups is less effective than working alone. The nominal groups averaged 30-40 percent more solutions to each problem, and the quality of these solutions was consistently rated higher” (Weisburg, 1986, p. 63). The groups in this study were no bigger than four; I used groups of six so my results may be

different than what the study found. As well, while it may be true that groups do not always perform better than individuals, I feel it is important to encourage people to feel a part of a process. Thus, although a single person may produce better ideas, the interplay of several people will lead to greater ownership of the issue. My students worked on their own quite often and I wanted them to participate in a technique which would build on the strengths of the group.

At the heart of Weisburg's objections is the lack of any sort of guide to what is being produced, "The method of brainstorming was developed to facilitate this "free-form" thinking by eliminating judgement of ideas and by having groups of people work together so that they can build on each other's ideas" (Weisburg, 1986, p. 68). While this criticism may be warranted with other divergent activities, de Bono's theory addresses this concern. In the process, one of the hats is the black hat. This person is to play the role of critic and cynic. Thus, any ideas that are off topic or irrelevant will certainly be commented on and perhaps eliminated by a skilful black hat participant.

The second theory I selected was free writing. I found it interesting to read about the theory I had personally used for years. Free writing allows a writer the freedom to explore a multitude of ideas without worrying about form (Gere, 1985). This approach appealed to me because I have observed so many people who get trapped in the conventional rules of grammar that they become paralyzed. Free writing allows people to break the mental block and perhaps discover one area of interest.

Free writing is a technique that allows for a writer to capture a floating conscience. The concept of writing as fast as possible without conscious guidance gives the writer a

chance to entertain any idea, regardless of merit. However, after the writing is concluded, the real work begins; the writer must examine the product to see if there are any prominent images or themes. Analyzing the finished product is the crucial aspect of the process.

Many teachers build their entire programs around free writing. For most advocates of this tool, free writing is not only a way to break free of the menacing blank page, it also provides other benefits. "Free writing is not a way only a way of finding out what one is thinking but also how, in what rhythms, words, phrases; it is a way for people who are locked into textbook language or other people's thoughts to find their own" (Cumming, 1977, p. 6). This pre-writing activity appeals to me as it allows people to use language in a different way. An English classroom should be a laboratory of words and phrases; students should be given time to experiment with language.

Free writing is also a solitary activity. It is based upon one person alone with a blank page. This individual freedom is highly valued because it allows a writer to discover personal connections and insights without the interference of others (Cumming, 1997). Most of the other techniques or theories I will be using can be done in pairs or groups. Indeed, the Six Hats Theory (de Bono 1985) relies upon the interplay of many people in order to create new ideas. Free writing is for the writer's eyes only (Ruggeiro, 1991). Thus, if a group situation is not effective for a student, perhaps an individual approach will be. After all, diversity is strength: The more tools I can give my students, the more likely they will find one that works for them.

Cumming, an elementary teacher, uses free writing extensively in her classes. She

uses it as a way to create a classroom where writing is valued. For her, free writing set the tone for her classroom,

We'd usually write for twenty minutes or so. When our eyes all met again, we'd talk. Sometimes those who wished to would read what they had written. Other times we'd go on to something else, but on a new level, a cooler, calmer level, more directed, ready to work, ready to write, ready to deal with our writing - to communicate with each other, constructively and creatively (Cummings, 1977, p. 8).

Free writing becomes more than just a tool for her; it is one of the keys to building a creative classroom.

Researchers who have studied free writing in the classroom advocate that free writing is a skill that must be taught. Goldberg believes that the process of free writing allows writers to capture important first thoughts. Although the process is based upon ignoring rules, she suggests six basic requirements for students involved in free writing: "1. Keep your hand moving; 2. Don't cross out; 3. Don't worry about spelling, punctuation, grammar; 4. Lose control; 5. Don't think. Don't get logical; 6. Go for the jugular" (Goldberg, 2000, p. 1). These are the rules that I shared with my class in order to give them an idea of what to follow. They emphasized the paradigm shift that must occur if free writing is to be successful; successful free writers should not allow traditional rules or habits to impede the flow of ideas.

I was somewhat sceptical about the effectiveness of free writing in my project. Due to time constraints, I only used it once. This may not have given students a chance to get comfortable with the theory. They may not see the benefits from so brief an exposure as they may be too unsure, or too nervous to let the internal censor go. I know I find it hard

to shut off the very device that English teachers have tried for years to install. Although I would like to be able to develop the strategy over time, I do not have that luxury. It is my hope that this technique “clicked” with a few students in class who will go on to use it in the future.

The third theory I chose was the Multiple Intelligences Theory (Gardner, 1983). This ground-breaking theory argues instead of one overall intelligence there are eight specific areas that a person may be gifted in. Gardner believes his theory can have an impact in the classroom and beyond:

I cherish an educational setting in which discussions and applications of MI have catalyzed a more fundamental consideration of schooling- its overarching purposes, its conceptions of what a productive life will be like in the future, its pedagogical methods, and its educational outcomes (Gardner, 1995, p. 209).

I strongly believe that people can be talented in many ways and I saw this project as a way to incorporate Multiple Intelligences (Gardner, 1983) into my classroom.

Multiple Intelligences Theory (Gardner, 1983) is predicated on the observation that our society is based on a circumscribed definition of intelligence. “In our society, however, we have put linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligences, figuratively speaking, on a pedestal. Most of our testing is based on this high valuation of verbal and mathematical skills” (Gardner, 1993, p.8). He explains it is easy to see why we have treated intelligence this way: it is easy to measure. Instead, Gardner proposes there are eight different intelligences. Because the definition of intelligence is more inclusive, it allows people to be recognized for gifts outside of the verbal or mathematical regions.

Although most of the literature surrounding Multiple Intelligences has focussed on

the young child, there are some articles devoted to utilizing Multiple Intelligences for adolescents. Gardner himself is a strong proponent of using his theories with high school students,

What I want to urge is that the third seven-year period of life, be a time when relatively wide-ranging exploration is encouraged and narrow specialization is put aside or suspended, at least for most students, and that activities that synthesize, draw connections, or link school knowledge to extra-scholastic concerns be encouraged and even mandated (Gardner, 1993, p. 197).

Multiple Intelligences Theory (Gardner, 1983) allows students to develop those skills they are strong in while exploring other areas that they may not have had a chance to develop. This freedom to explore is both powerful and wonderful.

Many teachers have integrated Gardner's theory into their classrooms. Most of the feedback from researchers is quite positive about the results. However, most researchers do present a list of pre-conditions that must be present if Multiple Intelligences are to be used effectively in class. Haggerty in his book Nurturing Intelligences listed seven qualities that should be found in a classroom supporting MI:

1. Spend the time required to understand what the theory of multiple intelligences actually proposes and the bases for these proposals.
2. Examine your own teaching styles.
3. Begin to understand the intellectual profiles of your students to discover what their intellectual strengths and weaknesses are.
4. Consider specific teaching approaches and methods that appeal to particular intelligences or combinations of intelligences.
5. Approach planning specific lessons or classes with multiple intelligences theory in mind.
6. Recognize the distributed nature of intelligence.
7. Focus on assessment rather than testing (Haggerty, 1995, p. 49-50).

I adopted many of these suggestions. I started the class with a small presentation about this theory and how it has changed the world and I approached the lesson on pride with a

view to utilize as many intelligences as possible. No testing of the various intelligences took place, but I did informally assess the students on how they responded to the various intelligences.

Although I incorporated many of the suggestions of those who have used the theory in their classrooms, I was not able to use all of their suggestions. First, I used the theory as one of many theories or tools to use instead of entirely recreating my class based on the approach. “The introduction of multiple intelligence activities must be accompanied by large changes in the values of the classroom, and the concomitant changes in what students believe to be appropriate and acceptable ways of thinking and communicating in an English class” (Smagorinsky, 1995, p. 25). My challenge was to get my students to buy into the concept of alternative thinking strategies; once I was successful in that, then I introduced a host of interesting devices and strategies, including Multiple Intelligences Theory (Gardner 1983).

I am not alone in adapting this theory to a high school English class. Other teachers have successfully utilized Gardner’s concepts,

My understanding of Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligences led me not only to incorporate more unconventional means of response and expression in my high school English classes, it enabled me to do so with greater confidence that my students were experiencing all of the good thinking that I (and most others) had once considered the sole province of writing (Smagorinsky, 1995, p. 21).

Smogorinsky also argues that using multiple intelligence theory does not damage the children; he argues they benefit greatly from the process.

“My rationale for emphasizing multiple forms of compositions was that the students were, almost without exception, highly engaged in the projects

they would undertake, often far more so than they were when being evaluated through conventional writing. In particular, students who were low achievers were often among the most enthusiastic and productive workers on these projects” (Smagorinsky, 1995, p. 19).

Other researchers, such as Campbell, echo the positive aspects of using theories based on Multiple Intelligences Theory (Gardner 1983) techniques that address other areas of intelligence. While it was obvious to Campbell that his students learned new skills and attributes, he also notes that their academic achievement did not suffer. “Academic achievement has improved as measured by both classroom and standardized tests. CAT scores are at or above local, state and national averages in all areas. Retention is high on classroom year-end tests” (Campbell, 1994, p.165). I know there may be those students or parents that feel uncomfortable with Gardner’s ideas; however, Campbell’s results will give me the chance to present some positive research findings based on the theory. This sort of research makes me feel confident in sharing this concept with my class without fearing for their academic progress.

Some do take issue with the philosophy behind multiple intelligences. Osburg contends that Gardner is selling the public a fantasy. Osburg believes that a classroom based on Gardner’s philosophy will only hurt more children:

My real doubts about the Utopia which is just around the corner - now that we know about multiple intelligences - concern the deep assumptions of assessment in general. Whatever we assess and however we assess it, there will be those who fare better on the assessments and those who fare worse - winners and losers. At the heart of schooling in America is a competitive game that poisons most of our efforts to educate, and it is this competitiveness which eats away at self-esteem, which disenfranchises and disengages (Osburg, 1995, p.13).

Osburg argues in her article that Multiple Intelligences Theory (Gardner, 1983) is simply a

way to perform more tests on students. Implied in every test is that some will pass and some will fail. If the theory were focussed upon testing, she may have a point. However, the theory preaches an need to understand children through assessment instead of testing and grading. Gardner himself responds to Osburg's criticism:

Osburg is completely off the mark. While any approach or method can be misused, both my collaborators and I have gone out of our ways to critique the very practices of which we stand accused. Nowhere in any of our writings do we recommend this kind of characterization of youngsters; nor, in general, are we enthusiastic about assessment, especially of the ranking variety (Gardner, 1995, p. 17).

Osburg claims in her article that the competitive nature of schools is destroying children and I agree with her. However, I see Multiple Intelligences Theory (Gardner, 1983) as an answer to the hierarchical process currently in place.

The fourth device I decided upon was mind-mapping. This appealed to me because of the fact that I used it fairly extensively and liked its ease and visual clarity. I liked the idea of teaching my students how to turn a simple mind- map into a clear essay (Gere 1985). I believed this approach was the easiest of the processes and would be readily adapted by the students.

Mind mapping combines art and brainstorming. It was not created to assist in the creative process, but it has become a popular tool to enhance creative thought. The technique's creator, Buzan, originally developed it as a memory and organizational technique (Barlett, 2000, p.1). The creative benefits of this process soon became obvious and many began to use Buzan's techniques in order to stimulate the imagination.

A mind map lets you rapidly produce an almost infinite number of ideas, and at the same time organize them by placing each idea next to what it is

related to. This makes a very powerful tool for creative writing or report writing, where it is very important to get down all your ideas first (Mind mapping FAQ, 2000, p. 1).

It is this combination of free thinking and organization that makes this tool a popular choice.

Another benefit of this approach is that it can be used alone or in groups. Indeed, the two can be combined in order to get the best of each. According to a web-site devoted to teaching mind mapping, this combination is the preferred approach,

As soon as you write something up on a white board you have immediately lost the creativity which everyone has. So any creative meeting should always start by people spending a couple of minutes individually mind mapping. Then as a way of running the meeting a master mind map on a white board allows every idea or statement to be recorded and placed in an appropriate place so that it can be discussed at a sensible time. Also no one feels ignored as all ideas are placed on the mind map (Mind Mapping FAQ, p. 2).

I liked this procedure because it allows for some individual as well as group contributions. By combining an individual with a group approach, the students were able to do some work on their own before coming to the group. This allowed everyone to contribute ideas and insights.

Most researchers include mind mapping as part of a process called divergent thinking. In a revealing study, Baer studied seventy-nine grade seven students. The students were taught divergent thinking strategies and compared to a control group. In the study conducted to see if divergent thinking strategies were effective in stimulating creativity, he found, "This training appears to have had a significant impact on the creative performance of the seventh-grade subjects of this study" (Baer, 1996, p. 186). Baer does

caution that the impact on the writing creativity was not as powerful as the impact upon the task of poetry writing. Although creative writing was not the focus of the study, there is evidence that divergent thinking can stimulate creative thought.

Not everyone likes this particular technique. For some, mind mapping is simply a fancy way to waste the students' time, "But beware - this can become a great procrastination tool. You can redraw recolor [sic] ad infinitum - and not do any writing" (Bartlett, 2000, p. 2). Other researchers warn against the tendency to drift off topic. "The purpose of the strategy is to help you retrieve information you originally classified too restrictively. Because this strategy involves relaxing mental control and allowing your thoughts to drift, it can slip into aimless daydreaming" (Ruggiero, 1991, p. 132). These are relevant warnings; however, because I will be using them individually and then as a group, I believe the aimless ideas will be somewhat censored by the peers and that the mind maps will not become irrelevant.

Even though Weisburg attacks divergent thinking, he does lay out a well-organized set of rules for how mind mapping is best to be taught:

1. Criticism is ruled out. Adverse judgement on ideas is withheld until later. No judgement is made of any idea until all ideas have been produced.
2. Freewheeling is welcomed. Because it is easier to tame down than to think up, the wilder the idea the better. An idea that is too wild may be modified in a way that solves the problem, but if it is never produced in the first place, nothing will be accomplished.
3. Quantity is wanted. The more ideas the greater the likelihood of winners.
4. Combination and improvement are sought. In addition to contributing ideas of their own, participants suggest how the ideas of others can be made better, or how two or more ideas can be joined into still another idea (Weisburg, 1986, p. 60).

These are the rules I presented to my class in the hopes that they would be able to

approach a subject or idea from a new or exciting position.

The final device I decided upon was the extended metaphor. I believe metaphors give a writer a chance to frame information in an alternative manner that allows for new ideas and insights. I found myself reading a collection of essays devoted to metaphors by Sabro and Moxley (1994) in the book, *Colors of a Different Horse*; I enjoyed how the various contributing authors played with language. These people were able to express themselves in an interesting and evocative manner. I want my students to be able to write like these people.

“Metaphors be with you!” is a bad pun for a noble idea. One joy of developing a metaphor is that the further one continues or investigates the two objects, the more ideas are discovered. Many writers and researchers praise the metaphor as a way to develop more interesting pieces:

Why does this work? One reason is the discovery of the metaphor to represent what we already know is an exciting discovery; it therefore responds to our basic need for “novelty”; another reason is that students are able to associate intellectually the “big picture” (the concept) with the details to be learned (the information or facts of the lesson at hand). Emotionally, students are experientially involved; the new knowledge fits into the experiences of their lives, and self-motivation naturally results (Sanders, 1984, p. 51).

Sanders obviously feels that metaphors are more than just a comparison. Metaphors engage the interest of the writer. New and unusual ideas can be developed from a curious individual.

Metaphors do more than just generate ideas; they also allow a writer to compare and contrast ideas in a fairly logical way. Anne Gere advocates using metaphors as a pre-

writing activity. She has found that students create insightful work when using metaphors. She asked her English students to compare their essay topic to an unusual object before they began to do any writing. One student decided to create as many metaphors for tornadoes as she could. She compared them to trains, candy bars, and dining room tables. “Although the whimsical answers to the metaphorical questions did not themselves contribute to her eventual paper, the process of divergent thinking helped this student evaluate the material she had gathered and decide how to use it effectively (Gere, 1985, p. 208). The process of creating a viable metaphor forces students to find new connections.

In a book devoted to teaching creativity through metaphors, the authors take issue with divergent thinking proponents such as de Bono who take the position that creativity can be a lock-step process, “Creativity is not sequencing ‘A’ to be followed by ‘B’ to be followed by ‘C’; it is the ‘aha!’ moment” (Sanders, 1984, p. 35). This implies that creativity follows a somewhat mystical process and can not be readily explained or taught. I disagree with the position that the process consists of basically waiting for a thunderbolt from on high. I tend to believe that creativity is a combination of learning different thought patterns and the latent intuition within all humans. It is this combination which produces creative thought.

Even though they argue that creativity is an “aha!” (Sanders, 1984) process, they do give a useful set of guidelines for those who want to learn how to use metaphors to enhance their creativity. They suggest four steps. First, the students are given a fairly easy concept and an accompanying metaphor. Second, the students are invited to find a personal connection with the group’s metaphor. Third, students should try to experience

or capture the object of the metaphor so that they can reach a deeper level of understanding. Last, the student is asked to look at the image and the concept again, develop a series of questions regarding the metaphor, and try to build a complex understanding of the issue (Sanders). This process appeals to me because it allows for an extended period of time for contemplation of the image. Reflecting upon how I have taught metaphors in the past, I see I have sped through too many interesting metaphors. Too often I have led a class discussion about a worthy metaphor from a poem, only to move on to another topic before the class can really appreciate the poet's vision.. After all, learning is a worthwhile journey that is best not hurried.

Several researchers have found that using metaphors can improve creative writing. In 1994, Jampole, Mathews, and Konopak conducted a study testing the creative ability of 140 academically gifted students. The group that was taught how to think using metaphors or guided imagery did better than the other two groups who were taught other thinking strategies or left on their own.

Based on the results of this study, guided imagery appears to be a viable strategy to enhance originality in creative writing. While the three groups made some gains across the three testing periods, those subjects given imagery training significantly outscored the other two groups (Jampole, Mathews, & Konopak, 1994, p. 11).

His results make me feel secure about teaching metaphors to my students.

However, other researchers caution being too excited about metaphors. "Generative metaphors based on mundane or expected comparisons will probably not provoke much insight" (Holt, 1992, p.106). I do not agree with this position. Although it can be said that comparing two vastly different objects may produce more creative

material, I believe that a tremendous amount can be gleaned from the most ordinary of objects.

The bar was silent and I realized with a shock that I had commanded the floor for the last hour. No one spoke for a moment until the old man leaned forward and whispered in my ear, "Now, son, we can't do anything for you. Now you must change your own life. You must be the captain of the search for truth. Set sail and may you find what you seek."

I nodded with tears in my eyes. I stood and for the first time it felt like I could literally move mountains. I sliced through the boisterous crowd like a clipper ship through a gale and made it outside. I had to work at containing myself. My quest was about to begin.

Adventure on the High Seas

I stood upon the threshold of a great journey. I was not travelling to an undiscovered area whose lines meander forever on an uncertain map. This new area had already been explored. I had read of those daring souls who have journeyed to this place, but I had stayed, rather contentedly I might add, in my safe, predictable world. Until now. Increasingly over the past few years I had grown dissatisfied with the opportunities and rewards offered by my world. Each evening as I tried to evade the clutching hands of sleep, I read of voyagers who had also grown weary of this conventional life and had cast it off in order to look for new truths. Therefore, I made my choice and spent one last night on this safe side of the world - I planned to shake up my existence and try something I had always dreamed about. The next day I set sail for my undiscovered country.

The goal of my project was to teach a class of English 12 students how to generate creative ideas for the most dreaded and statistically important section of the provincial exam: the prompt essay. In order to improve the students' ability to write a creative, original composition, I planned to give them several tools with which to attack creativity. Initially, the students were given a pre-intervention prompt which allowed me to establish their writing ability, their use of voice, and their target audience. Second, the students were each given a Likert scale questionnaire in order to establish their attitude toward the concept of creativity. Third, I administered the intervention - it consisted of five different creative thinking strategies: mind-mapping, free-writing, metaphors, and techniques based on Edward de Bono's Six Hats Theory of Creativity (de Bono, 1985), and Gardner's

theory of Multiple Intelligences (Gardner, 1983). Each theory was taught with special emphasis placed on how to turn unstructured creative thoughts into a well developed, well-organized essay. Each creative thinking theory was followed by a prompt essay that allowed the students to practice their new skills, if they chose. After the final strategy was taught, I administered the post - intervention: The last essay was part of the in-class final exam and it was analyzed to see the degree of change from the pre -intervention essay. A second Likert scale was also distributed to the students to help me determine if any attitudinal changes had taken place. Finally, the students were given the opportunity to give their feedback on the process through a questionnaire.

The first day has passed and I was well pleased with my ship and my crew. They are a polite, cooperative lot, although I must admit they certainly are quiet. To gage their mettle, I tested the crew. We took the ship out on a simple cruise and they performed adequately. There was, however, a bit o' panic in a few mates when they were confronted with the first challenge. Any hesitation or doubts about why I embarked on this voyage were immediately squelched.

On the first day of the project I gave the students a prompt assignment. They were to write a 300 to 500 word essay (narrative, expository, persuasive, or descriptive) on the topic: "Open Your Eyes." Upon observing the class, I noted the tension level was quite high. I was besieged by questions from people who were desperate for a sign of approval. Echoes of "Can I do this...?" or "What do you think about...?" overwhelmed me. I explained that they were free to write in whatever form they wanted (except poetry), but they were ill at ease about the prospect of not knowing what I wanted. They seemed to

have precious little faith in their own abilities; they were more concerned about what I thought than what they believed. Interestingly, only four people used any kind of pre-writing activity. Each of these writers created an underdeveloped mind-map. The students were generally finished within an hour - a testament to their lack of planning and proofreading. One young man, however, needed an extra 30 minutes. Most of the students expressed frustration with the activity and declared, "We want an easier topic next time" (Robertson, 1999, p. 2). It seemed that the students wanted a clear, focussed topic instead of one that gave them an infinite number of choices. This was exactly the kind of frustration my students had expressed in the past, and I was pleased to think that the project might address those concerns.

Mind- Mapping

The night before I embarked on my journey I slipped outside for a time and wandered in the familiar woods until I found a clear view of the pristine mountain range. I have grown up around these granite pillars; they are a part of who I am. Leaning up against the blue sky, they are so majestic and so magnificent they take my breath away. There is much beauty in my world, no one will ever convince me otherwise. But I wonder: After my journey is complete, will my perspective of the mountains change? I hope not and yet I hope so.

The first creative thinking skill I chose to teach to the class was mind-mapping. Because four students had used a mind - map on the pre-prompt, I knew that many of the students had previous knowledge of this skill. However, because the maps were not extensive or detailed, there was certainly much to be learned. As a class we discussed the

rationale behind branching, and I stressed the need to make logical connections between the ideas. We also talked about the different forms a map could take such as a colour coded drawing or a series of symbols or pictures. Working with student input, I did a sample map on the board on the topic of “School.” Once we had finished, I asked the class to form groups of three or four people.

After the students had dispersed into small groups, I gave them the topic for the exercise. I told them to create a mind-map around the word “Confidence” which was a topic that had been on the provincial exam the preceding year. All of the groups quickly got down to work and were finished within ten minutes or so. Most of the groups had nearly identical mind-maps. Each group placed the prompt topic in a central circle and then had four or five branches extending to sub-circles. One group broke the word up into different activities that provide an opportunity to build or destroy one’s confidence including “Sports,” “Theatre,” “Business,” and “School.” Each of these ideas were connected to a few related concepts. For example, “Sports” broke off into “Awards,” “Championships,” “Coaches,” and “Audiences” (Robertson, 1999, p.4). This was an honest first attempt at a mind-map, but there were not any unusual or odd ideas; these were straightforward associations. When I asked this group about how they would create an essay from this mind-map, they chose the “Sport” branch and explained that this was the branch with the most information. I found this to be consistent with all of the groups. The branch which spawned the most information was always the one chosen to be transformed into an essay.

One group did, however, approach the mind-map in a more creative fashion.

Instead of listing ideas related to the word, this group listed storylines that could result from this prompt. The group had five branches from the central word and each had a series of words that they created around the new story idea. The central branches were “Robbers,” “High School,” “Hockey,” “Boxing,” and “Blindness.” Although each branch had some sub - categories, the group had built up quite a set of connections for the “Blindness” branch. “Child,” “Girl,” “Hospital,” “Surgery,” “Sight,” “Flowers,” “White,” “Fear,” and “Mother” (Robertson, 1999, p. 4). When I asked them to focus on how to transform their mind-map into an essay, the group chose the story about the blind girl. While the topics were still fairly traditional, the fact that the group took the prompt in a different direction from the other groups was rather intriguing.

I felt most of the students recognized the benefits from this approach and embraced the philosophy. This technique became the one most frequently used on the prompts that followed because of the freedom, the simplicity, and the visual feedback this process offers. I was disappointed that none of the groups produced any unusual or creative styles. I had hoped to see some pictures or descriptions, but everyone seemed to copy the example that we did on the board. In the future, I will be sure to show examples of all the different forms that brainstorming can take instead of simply mentioning them.

The next day I required my students to write a prompt on “Crime and Punishment.” I did not ask for any sort of pre-writing, although there was a page for planning if they wished to utilize it. A large percentage of the class used brainstorming in this space to generate ideas; however, most of the mind-maps were still rather rudimentary, perhaps because of the time restraint. One student did create quite an

elaborate map. It had five arms: “If a person murders someone, sometimes they only get 10 years,” “Punishment is too lenient,” “Criminals commit horrible crimes and get easy sentences,” “People who commit crimes should have the same thing done to them,” and finally, “Criminals who go to jail often have it easy” (Robertson, 1999, p. 5). The latter arm had six different sub-branches and so became the focus of the essay. By using phrases or short sentences, this student was altering the mind-maps to suit her particular needs; she was taking ownership of the strategy. I was pleased that students were using mind-mapping to generate ideas, but it remained to be seen if the pattern would sustain itself or fall into disuse as other creative approaches were introduced.

Free - Writing

We had overcome our first challenge on our journey. I must admit I had fear in my heart when we neared the moment of truth: would my crew rebel? Would they throw up their hands and ask to return home? Would my efforts change anything? What a joy it is to have one's fears largely dispelled. I climbed on the rigging to be alone for a moment and as I looked over my crew I felt a wonderful sense of calm overtake me. There is no telling what we can accomplish. We left behind the first island and moved swiftly toward the second.

The next writing activity was also one I thought they knew something about. Indeed, judging by their first essay, teaching them to free-write would not be a problem; teaching them to proofread might be a bigger challenge. Nevertheless, since I believe that students learn from great writers, I gave them an example of free writing from Gere's book Writing and Learning (Gere, 1985). The students seemed to embrace the idea of the

internal editor being turned off for a short period of time. As a class we picked one of Gere's suggestions for topics: The students wrote about their favourite place. I was pleased to see the majority of the students begin to write without complaint or difficulty. Instead of being detrimental, the time constraints proved to be quite effective in stimulating ideas. A few students asked for more specific directions, but once they understood that I would not clarify the assignment any further, even they began to write.

At the end of ten minutes they were instructed to stop and we left the writing for a few minutes. After several minutes had elapsed, the students were asked to go back to critique what they had created and mine for "hidden gold." The students were instructed to find a word or phrase that they liked and write it below what they had previously written.

Some students were excited by what they found; others found this activity quite difficult. After everyone had found a nugget, I asked the students to share their discoveries with the class. Most of the students wrote about a special room in a house, or a private place that only they knew about. A few students were able to capture the sights and sounds of a place they had not thought about in years. For example, one young woman discussed a special room that she had in her first house in Yellowknife (Robertson, 1999, p. 5). Some of the students were eager to share their creations while others demurred. I enjoyed listening to what images were recalled; all of them were wonderful in their own way. It was fascinating to see students take pride in what they had created.

Next I asked the students to compose an essay outline from their nugget. The young woman that wrote about her house in Yellowknife created an essay outline which

revolved around change. She constructed an outline which examined how her perceptions had changed over time. Her essay focussed on the house, her friends, and her family. None of the students seemed to have any difficulty converting the free writing into an essay outline.

The next day, I assigned another prompt on the topic of confidence. Many of the students utilized mind-maps (still the pre-writing activity of choice), but a few tried free-writing as a way of developing their ideas. The following is an example of how one student tried to generate ideas:

It is important for people to have confidence. Sometimes being confident in an interview for a job will get you such a job because sometimes employers can detect if that person is confident. People may gain confidence through their achievements in school, job, and other places. Confidence is also a gain[sic] in certain situations. It is important to have confidence, not just in our selves[sic] but also in other people (Robertson, 1999, p. 5).

This individual was able to use the free writing strategy as a way of coming up with several different ideas. The list started with a very common idea about confidence and then lists a few different areas related to the first topic. This was still a rather traditional topic, but the writer at least tried to generate some other ideas instead of seizing on the first and most obvious one that pops into his head.

In contrast to the earlier prompts, I observed that the majority of students were able to move quickly and effortlessly into the idea - generating phase of essay writing. I believe that this was due to the familiarity of the essay as well as the fact that they now had tools with which to attack the prompt. I was also pleased to note that the students' ability to use the mind-map was improving. One individual had a set of arms devoted to

obvious ideas such as “Job”, “Schoolwork” and “Appearance”, but he also include “Hike to Fisher Peak” (Robertson, 1999, p.6). This was significant because instead of simply listing similar words in a particular style, this author was including a narrative example in with traditional essay topics. This individual now has a variety of literary options from which to choose.

The Six Hats Theory of Creativity (de Bono, 1985)

The voyage is going well. Some of the crew are still trying to find their sea-legs, but no one has expressed any dissatisfaction with the course we have plotted. The outlook for this next portion is uncertain: We are about to move into unfamiliar waters. However, I am confident that my crew will meet the challenge with the same vigour and enthusiasm they have shown so far.

Turning free-writing and mind-maps into essays built on skills most of the students already had some knowledge of. The next creative strategy was new to everyone in class. The Six Hats Theory of Creativity (de Bono, 1985) is an interesting process for examining a problem from many sides. We discussed how de Bono developed his theory and the rationale behind his theory. I handed out the following sheet which I based on de Bono’s suggestions from his book on the subject (de Bono, 1985). On each sheet I included a question or idea to get the individuals started:

Question for discussion: “Should people vote in the upcoming civic election?”

White hat:

- Think of yourself as a logical person only interested in facts
- Try to remain calm and factual
- Investigate the facts about the upcoming election
- Constantly be on the look out for differences between fact and

opinion

Facts to ponder:

- Less than 30% of voters usually turn out to civic elections.
- This town has less than 20,000 people, so my vote means something
- There will not be another election in Cranbrook for four years.

Red hat

- Think of yourself as someone who acts impetuously. Someone who plays hunches or feelings.
- You do not need to explain why you believe what you say
- Try to capture the emotion of the moment. Why do people get interested in elections?
- Don't be afraid to show feelings or get upset.
- Use "This is how I feel about..." statements **Or** "This is our chance to show how much we love what they have done to our city," **or** "This is our chance to..."

Black hat

- Think of yourself as the Mr./Miss Negativity.
- Constantly focus on why something won't work
- Be very pessimistic about any plans or ideas.
- Think about the various reasons why someone should not get involved in an election.
- This person points out any errors and dangers.
- Do not argue things that are facts.
- Why vote? Nothing changes. I have one measly vote. It means nothing. Sigh. I could have been a great leader. This election will only put another semi-corrupt official into office. I'm not going to help. I don't know any of the issues, I don't know any of the people running, and I don't care.

Yellow hat

- Think of yourself as the person who is always cheering an idea or person on.
- Focus on constructive reasons for doing something.
- Always be looking to point out the benefits from any idea.
- Try to envision the best possible scenario.
- Think of why people should get involved in an election, especially this one

- Ah, now we can all work together to make this city what we want it to be. This is our chance to be a part of the democratic process. Long live freedom!

Green hat

- Think of yourself as the person who is always thinking of alternatives and new ideas.
- Try to anticipate the “OLD” way of doing things and suggest alternatives
- Always ask: “What happens next?”
- Why do we need a mayor? Why elect one person to “rule over us” when we are perfectly capable of doing it ourselves? I say abolish the mayor and council, ignore the upcoming election, and seize control for ourselves.

Blue hat

- Think of yourself as someone who is in charge of a meeting.
- This person will hold “the conch” and will chair the meetings.
- This is the person who will define the task.
- You are responsible for keeping everyone on task.
- This person will be responsible for summarizing the debate.
- What do the rest of you think of Mrs. Green’s idea to eliminate the council? Why do you think your vote doesn’t matter Mr. Black? What exactly do you want to tell the council, Mr. Red? (Robertson, 1999, p. 23)

The students were intrigued by the theory and were ready to test it out in a simulation. Because our city was in the midst of a particularly heated election campaign for city council, I asked the students to discuss the concept of voting. I observed one group that threw themselves into the simulation and embraced their roles. The student with the white headband talked of the logical need to have everyone involved in an election; the young woman with the green headband argued that society should support the concept of anarchy and do away with voting altogether; a young man with a red headband made impassioned pleas to remember those of our society who do not have a voice. The poor individual in the yellow took the role of the defender of our present

system and found himself under attack from everyone. Meanwhile, the person with the black headband took too much joy in his negativity and was constantly berating the others (Robertson, 1999, p. 7). When I teach this lesson in the future, I will give the representatives of the negative position only five poker chips and tell them they can only speak five times.

Despite the energy which this group demonstrated, the other groups did not fare as well. In retrospect, I should have chosen a topic that teenagers are more informed about. The students complained that after five minutes of debate there was nothing left to talk about. Here I made an error: I agreed with them and allowed them to switch topics - we began to debate the concept of euthanasia. I had fallen into the very trap I was trying to teach my students to avoid: it is not the topic that matters - it is what we do with it that counts. The new debate lasted for another ten minutes and then I closed it off. Most of the participants gamely tried to stimulate a discussion, but the majority of the groups didn't develop a spirited discussion. Overall, I was somewhat disappointed with the lesson. I needed to put more thought into the topic. Also, we could have watched a video of a group modelling de Bono's theory in action. This would have given the students a chance to see how the various hats are supposed to interact with each other.

Multiple Intelligences (Gardner, 1983)

Strong winds and a stormy sea have battered our vessel as we move steadily forward. The crew was heard to murmur and question a little, but morale remains high. I was to blame for encountering the storm; I could have planned our route with more skill. But it is no use complaining now - I must learn from my mistakes, encourage the crew,

and plan for the next challenge. I will not be caught with my sails down again.

I was looking forward to teaching the theory of Multiple Intelligences (Gardner, 1983). Indeed, Gardner's ideas have had a large impact on how I teach my students. I felt that they would be attracted to this theory, and I was correct. The students were quite receptive to the idea that more than one intelligence existed; we had a tremendous debate about what defines an intelligent individual. Many in the class were also interested in how one person's ideas could have such an impact on education and society as a whole.

The next day I separated each of the intelligences into zones based as suggested in The Multiple Intelligences Handbook (Campbell, 1999). I set up the room into eight separate areas, trying my best to keep the intra-personal zone and the kinesthetic zone as far apart as possible. I let the students pick their own groups and those that entered the class early got to pick which zone at which they wanted to start. I observed that most students gravitated toward the kinesthetic and linguistic area and avoided the zones that dealt with math and music. At each region I left a specific set of instructions:

Station 1: Shakespeare Zone:

Gardner believed that the ability to use language to describe events and sequence activities was a separate intelligence.

Directions:

1. Create your own acronym about the word RISK TAKING. (See the sheet provided)
2. As a group, discuss the various risks that Elie Wiesel took in Night
3. Read and discuss the poem by Robert Frost "The Road Not Taken" and discuss the following questions:
 - A. What does the road symbolize in the poem?
 - B. Why does the character pick that particular path?
 - C. How does the individual feel about his decision?
 - D. What does it mean that the person cannot see the end of the roads? (Robertson, 1999, p. 29).

In Station One: The Shakespeare Zone almost all of the students chose to create an acronym; they primarily drew on their own knowledge of risky activities in order to fill in the blanks. For example, one student wrote, “R- Road racing, I- Ice sledding, S- Snowboarding, K- Karate, T- Twirling skaters, A- Attacking hockey K- Kung Fu, I- Ice Fishing, N- Night golf and G- Going without a seatbelt” (Robertson, 1999, p. 8). I observed that the poem was largely ignored in favour of the novel Night (Wiesel, 1982) that we had just completed. The holocaust novel had been warmly received and this station gave the students a chance to discuss their ideas and feelings. The discussions I overheard revolved around what the main character had overcome and how powerful the will to survive can be.

Station 2: The Einstein Zone

Gardner believed that the ability to use and understand numbers was a separate intelligence.

Directions:

1. To do this correctly, the group must have a leader. The leader will use the envelopes and conduct the experiment. In front of you are three envelopes marked A, B, and C. Each envelope has a slip of paper: One has “winner” and two have “Sorry, you lose.” The leader mixes up the slips and then asks the contestant which one of the three envelopes has the winner. The contestant guesses.
2. The investigator looks at the OTHER TWO and then tells the contestant which one does not contain the winner, thereby reducing the odds to 1 in 2. The contestant can then stay or switch. The investigator then can inform the individual whether he/she was right or wrong. Keep track of the percentage right, percentage changed, and the percentage that would have been right if the person did not change (Robertson, 1999, p. 29).

At the second station, the students seemed to enjoy testing their intuition; however, they displayed less enthusiasm for sitting and analyzing the raw data. Some of the students easily did their calculations, while others were frantically calling for a

calculator. I observed that those who were proficient in this intelligence were asked for help more than in any other zone.

Station 3: The Mia Hamm Zone

Gardner believed that physical ability was also an independent intelligence.

Directions:

1. In front of you are three juggling balls and three sets of cloths. Each set can be used as a juggling zone.
2. Begin by throwing the balls(or scarves) in the air and try to go under with the next toss. Do not worry about catching the balls or scarves the first five times. Eventually, try to catch each item and slowly build up the number of catches.
3. Monitor your progress (Robertson, 1999, p. 29).

This zone saw the students risk embarrassment as they tried to learn how to juggle.

Almost everyone tried to learn, although several gave up rather quickly. Most of the students showed admirable determination and a few students even became quite proficient.

Station 4: The Pablo Picasso Zone

Gardner believed that visual-spatial abilities were also a separate intelligence.

Directions:

1. In the next five minutes using the pencils and paper in front of you, sketch an incident in which you took a risk in your life. Take your best shot fellow non-artists (Robertson, 1999, p. 30).

Everyone at least attempted to draw a risk that they had taken. Some of the drawings were little more than stick-men, while others were amazingly detailed considering the limited amount of time. I enjoy watching those who are gifted in this area as I am painfully pedestrian when it comes to being artistic.

Station 5: The Ice Cube Zone

Gardner believed that music was very important and a separate intelligence.

Directions:

As a group, come up with a musical rap (30 seconds or so) about Risk. These will be performed at the end of this class (Robertson, 1999, p. 30).

None of the lyrics were outstanding, but each group made an attempt to compose a short rap. When it came to performing, however, only one group was willing to perform what they had written; while they were willing to write about risk, most were not ready to venture performing in front of their classmates.

Station 6: The Mother Teresa Zone

Gardner believed that the ability to connect with other people was an independent intelligence.

Directions:

Discuss the following questions as a group:

- A. What is necessary for people to take risks?
 - B. Why do people take stupid risks, such as drinking and driving?
 - C. What is the “stupid” line?
 - D. What role does peer pressure have in whether or not people take risks?
- (Robertson, 1999, p. 30).

I observed that most of the groups dealt with the questions in front of them, but did not venture too much beyond them. Most of the groups finished this activity fairly quickly and often began talking about other matters that concerned them. Perhaps a different topic would have been more inspiring.

Station 7: The Emily Dickinson Zone

(She often spent time alone with her thoughts.)

Gardner believed that the ability to get in touch with your own feelings is an important skill and qualifies as an intelligence.

Directions:

On the sheet of paper in front of you, create a short journal about the risks you hope to take in the future (Robertson, 1999, p. 31).

Everyone was able to create at least a half page entry about future risks. The

students were rather protective about what they had written and only a few volunteered to share their vision of the future. Those that did talked about their goal to go to university or to get the job of their dreams.

Station 8: The Jacques Cousteau Zone

Gardner believed that some people have an affinity for classifying material and making a personal connection to the land. (Ideally for this activity we would all look at a clear-cut)

Directions:

1. Rank order the following activities. 1 is the most risky whereas 10 is the least risky activity.

Riding a scooter

Riding the Alpine Slide

Presenting a poem in public

Sky- Diving

Riding with a student driver

Wearing something outrageous

Going travelling in the Middle East

Bungee jumping

Deciding to leave town and move to Halifax

Playing the stock market

2. Separate the list into **high** risk, **medium** risk and **low** risk activities.

Decide how you can separate these examples into groups (Robertson, 1999, p. 31).

This zone spawned a few excellent debates which I listened in on. Some of the groups had some wonderful ideas about the difference between a physical risk and an emotional risk. The students diligently worked to create their own appraisal of the various risks and fiercely defended them. I enjoyed hearing the debates in this zone.

The following day I asked my students to write about risk. As expected, very few people had any difficulty creating an original topic. Several people expressed frustration at having to choose one specific idea because they were mulling over several “good” ones.

This was a happy problem - too many good ideas. It was obvious that the Multiple Intelligences activity class had generated a wealth of topics.

Because this was the midpoint of the project, I have included a few examples of what two students wrote about. One represented the majority of the class still producing a formulaic essay which merely addressed the topic back to the teacher. This essay merely discussed the different risks an individual can take. The second essay was an example of how some of the students were beginning to write about interesting, innovative topics. I have copied the essays verbatim and have made no attempt to correct any errors.

Student #24 - prompt on "Risk"

What do you consider risky? Could it be ski-diving, bungi-jumping, or even lying to a friend? People do things everyday that are risky to themselves and others and don't realize the risk along with them.

For starters, there is the sport of parachuting. The first danger is going up in that plane. How do you know it won't crash? More than likely it won't, but it's still a risk to consider. Moreover, there is the danger of the parachute not opening. There have been so many tragic deaths of even the most experienced parachuter; therefore, it can happen to them, it can surely happen to anyone.

Another danger to consider is the possible chance of hitting a bird. It sounds crazy, but it could happen. A person could be gliding in the air, and all of a sudden a bird comes out of nowhere hitting the parachute, and possibly causing serious injuries. Moreover, what if the bird hit the parachute, therefore, putting a hole in the material? That person would go plummeting to the ground blow to an utterly tragic death. It could happen. Maybe not often, but it could. Why do people put themselves in these positions, you ask? Probably for the rush of falling thousands of feet to the ground. It could also be because a person may feel that you only live once.

Another risk is bunji-jumping. There are many people who enjoy this sport today, and probably don't consider the following risks: The first risk to consider is the danger of the rope snapping. A person could be falling hundreds of feet, then suddenly the rope can't handle the weight so it snaps, sending the victim to an untimely death. Also, there could be the possibility of the rope being too long. As a result, the poor unfortunate soul would plummet into the rocks below, with no chance of escaping death.

Why would anyone want to hurl themselves off a bridge? Maybe they want the thrill of being free from everything or the rush of not knowing if they will survive or not.

Another more common risk anyone can relate to is asking someone out. Most teens have the fear of rejection. The person my think that the person they ask will say no, and therefore, there is no reason to put themself into that awkward position.

Lastly, a risk that is taken often without thinking of the consequences, is lying to your friends. Many people do this without realizing what they are doing in the process. They are possibly throwing away a good friendship and trust. The friend that the person lied to may think that they are not trustworthy, and as a result, not worth calling them a true friend.

If people considered the risks of what they are about to do, many people would not put themselves in that position. By considering the risks involved, people would save themselves the trouble it can cause to themselves, and the people around them (Robertson, 1999, p. 61).

This essay explored very traditional areas associated with risk and simply addresses the concept of risk back to the reader. This was the kind of essay that I wanted to eliminate. However, a few of the students began to explore some interesting and creative ideas. This writer described the many risks taken while visiting a foreign country:

Student # 3 Prompt essay on Risk

With an uncertain step, I emerged from the airplane. Everything was new and unfamiliar to me: the sky, the buildings, the plants, and the people. I entered the airport terminal and passed through customs. After claiming my baggage, I went to find a taxi. Suddenly, I realized that even a task so simple as getting a cab ride would prove awkward - if not downright impossible - in a foreign land. Not only did I not understand the customs of this place, but I might even get lost and end up in a dangerous situation; It could even do worse and make a fool of myself.

Anyways, the first thing I should try to do is call a taxi - there are always taxis at the airport. As I exited the terminal - to my good fortune - a cab driver pulled up in front of me. After loading my luggage into the car, the driver asked me where I wanted to go (since I had honed up on the countries language before I left home, I understood him). I decided to venture a response in the countries native tongue.

“To the Madamark hotel,” I replied.

To my astonishment, the driver exploded with laughter, “ You just asked me to take you to the underwear museum,” he said to my to my surprise - in English. My face flushed red and I sat there for a few seconds sulking in my humiliation. I repeated the question, and the driver obliged my request, chuckling all the way to the hotel.

I paid the driver, stepped out of the cab, and headed with my bags to the hotel, hoping I wouldn't end up embarrassing myself by breaking any unfamiliar customs. As I neared the hotel, a doorman opened the door; meanwhile, a bellhop headed in my direction to take my bags. As I passed by the doorman (unbeknownst to me) held out his hand for a tip; all I saw was a scowl on his face. I went up to the desk, got my room key, and went to my room. The bellhop followed me carrying my bags. After the suitcases were deposited in my room, I thanked the bellhop and sent him away; once again, all I noticed was a frown. It seemed to me that for the rest of my stay hotel employees were scowling at me; I guess I hadn't realized that I was supposed to give them tips.

All that happened up till now was mostly just an embarrassing inconvenience; what was to happen next was frightening. Since I felt unwelcomed at the hotel, I decided to go out for supper. I walked down the street looking for a place to eat. Seeing a man standing at a street corner, I decided to try and ask him for directions to a decent restaurant. As I approached him, he pulled something from his jacket. A blade gleamed under the streetlight. The man said something to me quite quickly. I understood the word money and handed over my wallet. The mugger grabbed it, then disappeared into the darkness. I dashed back to the hotel in terror. Once I got there I had a chance to rest and realize how lucky I had been to walk away alive.

The rest of my trip was, fortunately for me, uneventful. I had an incredible stay, despite the hotel service. Now that I have arrived home, I've had a chance to reflect on my entire experience; however, on my next trip I will be more prepared for the risks and embarrassments involved in visiting a foreign country (Robertson, 1999, p. 62)

This writer moved beyond the “Risks are important to take” essay that is all too common and created a new character and setting. The story took some unusual turns and kept the reader's interest. I was quite pleased with the growth this essay showed.

For future classes I would like to have the time to allow my students to participate in an Multiple Intelligences (Gardner, 1983) activity before every prompt, but the process

does take a great deal of time, unlike a mind-map. I am equally sure that if I followed each activity with a prompt essay, the students would approach each of the areas with only the thought of finding a good topic to write about, not to see what is revealed in each experience. Multiple Intelligences Theory is (Gardner, 1983), in my opinion, a potent tool, but one that should not be utilized too often.

Once again, the mind-map was the pre-writing technique preferred by the majority of students. What is most important, however, is that the essays reflected the amount of thought they had put into the topic the day before. Indeed, the class enjoyed this activity and asked why we didn't do things like this more often. Why indeed!

Metaphors

What a glorious day! I have climbed to the crow's nest to welcome the wandering wind and bid farewell to the simmering sun. As a crew, we learned and applied new knowledge in a way that put the rest of our voyage to shame. We skimmed along the water like a kingfisher. We found new wonders and charted new lands. The crew is in high spirits and, tonight, I too will join the celebrations. The world is not being discovered and mapped; it is being savoured in all its glory. Onward to the last island.

The final creative thinking technique to stir their thoughts was the extended metaphor. Although it can get sometimes a little wearisome, the process does allow students to make several comparisons between two objects. Through this comparison, the students might learn new insights into an object's nature. Although, in my opinion, the extended metaphor is extremely difficult for students, I had high hopes for this class. They did not disappoint me.

We started the class with a discussion about metaphors in poetry. Following our discussion, the students examined Cohen's "A Kite Is A Victim" (Cohen, 1993) to see how a brilliant writer is able to develop metaphors throughout an entire poem. Next we looked at metaphors in prose, specifically Plato's discourse "The Myth of the Cave" (Plato, 1995, p. 354) on the human condition. Several of the students were impressed by the imagery Plato creates, and we had a spirited discussion about the nature of existence.

Now it was their chance to be creative. In order to select a topic that would intrigue them, we had an open discussion about what concerned them. One concept came up twice: graduation. The students were genuinely excited and nervous about the topic. After all, these students had been waiting for this event for twelve long years; however, now that they were approaching the end of their public school experience, several mentioned that they did not want the year to end. I asked the students to compare themselves on their graduation year to another object. The budding flower and the tree were both held up as examples of a metaphor. I then gave the students time to create their own metaphor.

To my surprise, few people expressed much difficulty in the process and the variety of metaphors they created both astounded and delighted me. Instead of the traditional butterflies or flowers, most of the students compared themselves to unusual objects such as the moon:

I am a moon. I come out at night and do my best work when it is dark.
I am always changing and never the same.
I provide a little light for those who know me (Robertson, 1999, p. 32).

Another student compared herself to a house:

I am a house that is under construction. I have many rooms with much that is hidden. My exterior is nice and yet there is so much underneath that no one else sees. I am not sure what the final house will look like, but I like to watch the house change. I am a house that is permanently under construction (Robertson, 1999, p. 32).

My favourite creation came from a young man who compared himself to a car:

I am a '57 Chevy. I don't do very much, I need a lot of money to fix myself up, and I'm sure not going to do very much in the future (Robertson, 1999, p. 32).

I was quite pleased by the variety of metaphors, but I was even more pleased by the fact that most of the class was willing to share their ideas. What a change from the start of the project when I had asked people to share what they had created, and no one volunteered. It was wonderful to see their confidence grow.

After sharing their metaphors, I asked them to create an essay outline based around their metaphor. Many had difficulty doing this step, so we did a few on the board to model the process. The individual who wrote about the '57 Chevy ended up with the following outline:

Introduction: Describe a rusted-out 1957 Chev
 Thesis: I should start making future plans
 Body 1: I have concentrated on other things- car no one has cared for it
 Body 2: I have had a lot of fun - the car has had too many good times
 Body 3: I need to get going before I am useless - the car needs to be fixed or abandoned
 Conclusion: The car and I both need to be fixed (Robertson, 1999, p. 33).

Eventually all of the students created similar outlines. I was curious as to what whether or not they would ever use metaphors in their writing.

The next day I gave my final intervention prompt. Unfortunately, not one of the students used metaphor as a pre-writing activity or in the essay. I asked the class about

this and one fellow argued that creating a metaphor took more time than we were allowed. I agreed with his statement. (Although unrelated to this project, for the final essay of the year based on the novel I Never Promised You a Rose Garden (Greenberg, 1984) this fellow utilized the metaphor of a budding rose to bind his ideas together. I felt humbled by the reminder that some of what teachers say and advocate may have a profound impact on some students.) The prompts as a whole were not as polished as the essays developed from the Multiple Intelligences (Gardner, 1983) lesson, but a majority of the students continued to plan their essays using a variety of creative approaches, the dominant one being mind-mapping.

We had come to the end of the intervention. In order to gauge the effectiveness of the process, I gave the students a post-prompt essay, a post-Likert scale, and a series of short answer questions. The students' responses strengthened my belief that creativity is a critical topic that deserves a place in the curriculum. I will never go back to teaching the way I did before. Indeed, I am very grateful to my students as I have learned as much or more than they did from this unit. I thank them for my lessons.

The journey has come to a close. We journeyed to five remarkable islands and learned a great deal from each place. My crew is weary but I feel that they are capable of continuing their own voyages. I do not think that they will be able to docilely remain in the old world; I believe a part of them will remember this voyage and perhaps this may remind and encourage them when life seems too sterile. I am proud of my crew and of myself. We have cast off the moorings of an old life; we have travelled far and endured much. Our journey has ended; many journeys are about to begin. Farewell and Godspeed

to all those who voyage after us.

Judgement Day

I arrived at my home port exhausted and spent. My mind was filled with the triumphs and adventures that my crew and I had encountered. I remembered the voyage with a smile on my lips and a tug at my heart. As I stepped off the gang-plank, I sighed deeply, glad to be home. Little had changed since my departure, and yet I felt I had changed significantly. I looked to the mountains as I always had, only now instead of admiring their beauty, I found myself wondering what lay beyond them. I gave my head a shake; I had several stops to make.

My first stop was the palace. I had hoped to give a reading there, or perhaps a lecture. I was sorely disappointed. Although the King was reputed to be a wise and generous man, his Chief Secretary was a vain, arrogant individual. I tried to convince her that the King, and indeed the High Council, would be interested in my findings, but I was rebuffed. The best I could get out of her was a promise to tell the King of my request. I was mildly perturbed by my failure, but I knew the palace was not the most important place for me. Indeed, I knew that word of my arrival would have spread to Asnem by now. I grinned to myself, knowing that my findings would soon be put to the test.

I made my way through the seedy streets, always careful to keep one hand on my change-purse, until I once again stood before the bar. A new coat of paint would have been nice. Someone could have fixed the door which hung at a rakish tilt. Some landscaping would have done wonders for the neighbourhood. Yet, the old bar stood as if daring the elements to finally put an end to the ancient building. I knocked on the door, smiled at the gate-keeper, and strode inside.

Once more I found myself in a smoke filled room with a rather unpleasant odour of stale grog. I waded through the slightly tipsy crowd until I found myself in front of the same scholars I had left so many months before. I waited until my presence was noted and then gratefully moved into the space that was offered. After a few pleasantries were exchanged, the old woman fixed her piercing eyes upon me and asked when I would be ready to defend my trip and present my ideas. I replied, rather morosely, that I had failed to gain an audience for the King. The table roared with laughter. "We don't present our ideas to the King. Worry about us instead." And with that she stood up on her stool, grabbed a stout walking stick and slammed it upon the table. "Hear ye, hear ye!" she announced in a ringing voice, "This good master, who has ventured far and learned much, will in a fortnight from now present his findings to Asmen! All are welcome!" A cheer went up from the bar. After the din subsided, she used the stick for balance as she climbed down from the chair and looked me in the eye. "This is your chance to be heard. Make the most of it." I stammered that I would do my best and asked to be excused in order to prepare. I had precious little time to compose my data, and myself, for the most important day in my life.

The time passed quickly and though I enjoyed seeing my old friends and colleagues, I soon grew impatient to set sail again. Despite this fearsome wanderlust, I still had a burning desire to share what I had learned. I hoped that those in the bar would be receptive to my ideas.

The day of the defence soon drew upon me. It seemed as though many were interested in the subject as the bar was filled to over-flowing. Where my circle met, a

crude lectern had been erected. This atmosphere reminded me of an ancient gladiator match: My ideas would have to fight to survive. Before heading on stage, I quickly reviewed my central points that I wanted to cover. I breathed a deep breath and strode boldly onto the makeshift stage. I gripped the lectern with a hold that death could not budge and waited for the signal to begin. Within moments, the old lady thanked everyone for coming and reminded everyone what the intent of my voyage had been. "Now then, young master, tell us what you have learned."

I had one central question for this project: Can teaching creative thought improve the ability of students to write creatively? As a result of this investigation, I am sure that teaching students different ways to conceptualize information has a positive effect on their writing. Once my students had become well versed in different creative thinking models, their writing showed a willingness to move beyond a pedestrian essay with basic support and into interesting new realms. I was quite pleased with the results.

My evidence comes from three different sources: two Likert scales, and my own observations mixed with direct feedback from the students, and most significantly, the students' writing. I will start with the two scales that I used to measure whether or not the intervention changed any perceptions. I gave my students two identical Likert scales - one at the start of the project and one at the end of the intervention. The results are rather interesting....

Before I could continue, a voice rang out from the back of the bar. "Wait a minute! This does not fit with the equipment you used for the rest of your voyage. Please explain yourself."

The Likert scale is often used for quantitative analysis as it involves simply assigning a number to indicate a preference. However, my intent was to use the scales in conjunction with my observations. I felt that a little “hard” data would assist my analysis. I chose the Likert scale as a measurement because of the range of answers that it allows. I wanted to know the general tone of my class and this was a powerful tool at my disposal. My students took the scale quite seriously and most put considerable thought into each question. At the end of the intervention, I used the same scale and looked for differences or discrepancies.

I focussed my attention on three key questions. First, I asked if the individual thought he or she was creative. After comparing the pre and post test Likert scales I found an anomaly I had not expected. Out of the twenty-seven people who completed both scales (one young woman had a family emergency toward the end of the term and only completed one), on the pre-intervention Likert scale twenty people indicated that they agreed/strongly agreed with the statement. However, on the post-Likert scale, only eighteen people would agree/strongly agree that they were creative (Robertson, 1999, p. 1). Now I realize this is not statistically significant change, but the drop did intrigue me. Why would people feel less creative after learning how to think creatively? After much pondering, I think I have a workable theory. As a class we often discussed the topic of creativity and imagination, we had several very intriguing debates about exactly how does one define creativity, and we examined great pieces of creative literature. Perhaps through these discussions, the students were able to better evaluate the degree of creativity in their own work. Perhaps the students became more cautious about calling a piece of work

“creative.” Although this question did not reveal what I had hoped it would (i.e. an increase in the students’ self-perception of their own creative growth), it did produce some interesting data.

The next question asked students to identify their ability to turn a bland topic into something interesting. On the pre-intervention questionnaire, ten people felt that they agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. On the post-intervention questionnaire, thirteen people agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. More importantly, on the first scale five students disagreed with the statement, and one person strongly disagreed. On the second scale, no one strongly disagreed and only three disagreed. I was pleased to see these results (Robertson, 1999, p. 1). From this I concluded that more of my students felt confident about thinking in a creative way.

The feedback from the last question of the Likert scale also intrigued me. I asked the students if they knew several ways to stimulate ideas about an assigned topic. The pre-intervention Likert scale revealed only one person who answered “strongly agree”, with eleven other people selecting “agree.” On the post-intervention scale, six people indicated they “strongly agree” and thirteen more who circled “agree” (Robertson, 1999, p. 1). This represents a marked increase in their perceived ability to stimulate new ideas.

The various listeners in the bar seemed to appreciate the statistics, but I sensed that they were more interested in other sources of information. My thoughts were proven correct as a slightly swaying man brayed at me, “This data is interesting, but it means little in your voyage. This measurement is but a piece of a puzzle. Continue.” I knew that I still had quite a ways to go before I could convince the assembly of my position. I tried

to read their body language. Most people were sitting back in their chairs with their arms folded over their chests. I charitably interpreted this as a willingness to listen.

In addition to the Likert scales I distributed, I kept a daily journal of my observations. My class became my laboratory. My students were not guinea pigs, however, they were my partners in the writing process. As I sit back and review my field notes, I am struck by the change I witnessed; a group of students who wrote essays intended solely for the teacher transformed into students who wrote to express or explore new ideas. I observed students build on their innate abilities, attempt new ideas, and take risks with their writing. It was marvellous.

My class also changed their preparation, form, and support for the final prompt. At the start of the project, the students were more concerned with simply meeting the guidelines of a teacher. Throughout this process, I tried to get the students to discover their own original voice in their work. By the end of the term, students were writing about subjects that they felt passionate about. For example, one person wrote the pre-intervention essay about why confidence is necessary in our world. A worthy topic, but it simply addressed the topic to the teacher. For the post-intervention, the student wrote about the crushing disappointment that was felt when she observed an emergency room first hand and came to the realization that her dream of being an emergency room doctor was not a realistic choice for her. She realized that she needed to find a new direction in life. In the post-intervention essay, this student dealt with the topic of truth creatively by finding a personal connection (Robertson, 1999, p. 34).

Did everyone improve in attitude and achievement? As a class, I would say they

“bought into” the concept of using the creative thinking techniques whenever possible. Most people found the process easier as we went along, but a few winced and moaned whenever the prompt topic was announced. I saw one individual slapping his hand on the desk in frustration during almost every prompt. When I inquired about his peculiar mannerism, he replied, “It [the prompts] never got any easier. The creative thinking ideas were nice, but they did little for me” (Robertson, 1999, p. 35). This individual took extra time for the first three prompts, but finished the last two within the time limit. For this individual, finishing within the time limit was a small victory. Happily, most of the other students seemed quite pleased with their progress.

I found it significant that my role in the writing process diminished as the process moved along. At the start of the project, I seemed to be the sounding board for any ideas. Even though I gave no feedback to any of the requests, I was besieged by “What do you think of . . .” or “I can’t come up with a topic. What do you think I should write about?” At the end of the process, the students did not bother to ask me what I thought about their ideas because they were generating their own ideas. I observed a much more confident classroom as time went on.

I had spoken for quite some time. I scanned the room and noted that my audience still seemed interested in what I had to say. The lecture thus far had dealt with my observations. It was time that I brought allowed other voices who had participated in the journey to lend their voices to mine.

The various responses from the participants of my study made for interesting reading. I was surprised by the findings as I had experienced several moments of doubt

about the entire project. Although the class seemed to enjoy the various lessons and many students used the creative thinking techniques, I was given little verbal feedback about the value of the enterprise. I found myself wondering if I should bother with teaching these methods in the future.

I had tried to stay aloof during the process; I did not feel that being a cheerleader would produce honest results. However, once I received some written feedback from the students and engaged several of them about the process, I discovered that most of my class felt the process was important and worthwhile; a few students professed to be significantly changed. I was not sure what to expect when I sat down to evaluate the responses, but after I read their reflections, I felt very satisfied with the process. It was, in a way, the final piece to a beautiful puzzle.

I was most surprised by the impact the Multiple Intelligences Theory (Gardner, 1983) and, to a lesser degree, the Six Hats Theory (de Bono, 1985) had on students. Many people mentioned that they actually used the various thinking strategies, even though they did not use them to pre-write. It appears that the theories worked best in the quiet recesses of their minds and not on paper. This was a piece of information I would never have known through direct observation.

I also asked my students to rank order the most effective pre-writing activities. It was no surprise that the mind-mapping was listed as most effective, followed by free writing, Multiple Intelligences Theory (Gardner, 1983), Metaphors, and finally the Six Hats Theory (de Bono, 1985). This feedback corresponded with what they had used on the planning pages of their essays. I noted most of the students used brainstorming as their

primary creative thinking device and this was reflected in its high ranking, fourteen people out of twenty-seven (one student was ill for the last week) picked it as the most effective device (Robertson, 1999, p. 36).

However, when asked in short answer form which device helped generate new ideas only six people said that mind mapping generated new ideas and twelve people said that either the Multiple Intelligences Theory (Gardner, 1983) or the Six Hats Theory (de Bono, 1985) was best for generating original ideas (Robertson, 1999, p. 36). This showed the importance of teaching more than one technique: Many students were using other techniques before they began to mind-map. The results could also mean that the time restrictions forced the students to pick the quick method as opposed to the effective method. I would be interested to see if relaxing the time restriction would allow students to use the other thinking techniques.

Also from their feedback, I learned that they felt creativity is an important process. One student stated that, "Creativity is writing. Why write if I can't be creative?" Another student expressed the opinion that the thinking devices had forced him to structure his ideas: "I learned that 'creative' writing takes organization and some thought." A third student felt that the process also allowed him. "to write better" (Robertson, 1999, p. 37).

Several of the students were also aware of the changes that had occurred in their writing. "My writing became more interesting because I started writing about non-traditional topics." Another student wrote: "These activities helped give me new ideas for writing." When asked if the process had any impact on his/her writing, the same student replied: "They showed me different ways on how to get ideas and expand upon them"

(Robertson, 1999, p. 37). Clearly, many of these students felt that their writing had developed as a result of the different thinking strategies the class had learned.

Other students appreciated the freedom given to them as writers by the variety of thinking styles that we covered, “There are many different approaches to writing and some people are better at one way than others. You just have to find out what works best for you” (Robertson, 1999, p. 37). Comments like these cement my belief that many devices must be taught in the hopes that everyone will find a style that fits, “...that every topic is very open ended and you can take them anywhere” (Robertson, 1999, p. 38). The students had learned that a prompt is just a stepping stone that can allow the writer to move in almost any direction.

I was quite pleased to read that they were able approach any topic with confidence at the end of the process. “[I learned] how to put my ideas down on paper and build a good prompt” (Robertson, 1999, p.38). Others felt liberated by the process,

They enabled me to approach my prompts with a more open mind. I don’t draw a blank as much as I used to when faced with a topic. Creativity is important in writing. Creativity is something that isn’t very easy to come by. It can be developed over time by using different techniques (Robertson, 1999, p. 39).

This supports the literature that creativity is indeed a skill that can be taught. Finally, I was thankful that my students were ready for any topic that the provincial government’s exam could throw at them: “It helped me approach the prompt with more confidence” (Robertson, 1999, p. 39).

This is not to say everyone felt inspired. “It [the creative theories] did work in a sense; however, I felt I could do the best prewriting in my head” (Robertson, 1999, p.38).

Obviously not everyone made peace with some of the limitations of the process. "I am not a creative person with a time limit" (Robertson, 1999, p.39). This was echoed by several students, "I am still having difficulty coming up with an idea for a prompt based on one word quickly" (Robertson, 1999, p. 40). However the person went on to note, " that looking at a certain idea from several different perspectives can trigger an alternative, original thought for an essay" (Robertson, 1999 p. 40). I hope this student at least had the necessary tools with which to deal with difficult topics. I also wish I did not need to impose a time limit, but I wanted to make the writing as close to what will be expected of all English students on the provincial exam. Overall, there were many more positive comments than negative ones regarding the various creative thinking interventions.

I formed several conclusions from the written feedback I received. First, as the majority of the literature suggests, creativity is a learned process. The students were given a variety of techniques to use, the time to perfect them, and, most importantly, the opportunity to use the techniques in a meaningful way. The students, I believe, benefited from using the techniques immediately after learning about them. As each device was taught, the prompts allowed the students to try out various ideas and find one or two that worked for each individual. As time went on, I noticed that students were able to integrate the new ideas much more easily. I believe anyone can learn to think more creatively.

At this, one of the old women at the bar lit a new cigarette and asked, "Are you assuming that everyone benefited from the process?"

No. Some people obviously felt that the creative thinking strategies did not work. This was a small proportion of the class, however, but I think it is important to realize that

no system will ever reach everyone, although we certainly must strive for excellence.

The lady with the cigarette nodded, "I see. What else did you conclude from their comments?"

I found the students seemed interested and grateful for learning that went beyond the traditional curriculum. As one student noted, "It didn't make an impact on my writing, but it was usually fun" (Robertson, 1999, p. 40). While "fun" was not an intended outcome for this study, I think that anytime students are actively engaged in the writing process is a positive event.

I also discovered that students are willing to try new ideas, but I think that they need the freedom to choose to adapt a strategy or not. I, myself, am incapable of writing without an outline - I detest the idea of not using a clearly developed plan. However, I tried hard to avoid promoting any one system over another. I think that the way this program was set up allowed students the freedom to take risks and try new ideas.

One of the quietest members of my usual group stood up and addressed me at this point. "Well, you have covered your observations and the data you collected. Now I am interested in the changes you saw. Did the voyage meet your primary question?" It was a very good question. It was up to me to prove that my journey had been worth the effort. I noticed that many in the group were listening intently. Some were sceptical, others had already dismissed me, but most were interested in my results. I had to push on.

Did teaching creative thinking skills to students change their writing? I would state an unequivocal yes. Did it change everyone's writing? No. However, I believe that the intervention had enough of an impact to warrant teaching all of the various theories to all

of my classes in the future.

It is important to remember my definition of “creative” dealt not with creating something completely new, but rather engaging a topic from a fresh perspective. A creative essay was one that fit one or more of the following characteristics: addressed an audience that was not the teacher, presented or explored an unusual interpretation of the prompt topic, or fresh, interesting support for ideas. I examined the pre-intervention prompts and the post-intervention prompts from all the students and determined if they fit into a “traditional” or “creative” category. I found that ten people showed a marked improvement in their creativity. These essays went from merely addressing the topic back to the teacher, to a wide variety of styles and forms. As well, I found that seventeen people showed no noticeable improvement in their creativity. Some of these individuals were quite creative before and continued to be creative. Others were not creative to begin with and did not significantly improve. Sadly, one person wrote more creatively (and better) on the first essay than the last. Perhaps the individual could not connect with the topic, or was simply having a bad day. Nevertheless, a high percentage of people improved their writing.

A man in a long grey cloak snorted: “A high percentage? Less than 50% actually showed improvement.”

True, but I believe this is a significant number of people. If I can teach one student to think creatively, I think the process is worth the effort. The process does not hurt the students; it merely gives them alternatives. Moreover, a high percentage of people felt their writing had improved. When asked on the handout if the thinking processes had

improved their writing, only seven people said that their writing had not improved as a result of this process (Robertson, 1999, p. 38).

It should also be pointed out that the students did a great deal of writing throughout this course. Some may argue that any improvement in creativity is just a matter of comfort and repetition. However, in addition to becoming better technical writers, these students learned how to stretch a topic. I do not think this growth would result from a simple repetition of writing. In that case, the technical quality of the writing would become more and more proficient, but the tone, audience, or support might not change. The student might continue to simply redirect an essay back to the teacher. The multiple creative thinking process, however, gave the students the means to delve into a topic and make the essay an original. If I wanted to I could assign the pre-prompt, teach nothing but creative skills without the accompanying essays for the rest of the quarter (academic suicide I believe it is called) and re-test at the end of the unit. I am sure that creative growth would be proportional to what I found in this study.

It seemed unlikely that this hard-bitten crew would simply take my word for the matter. Before I had a chance to continue, a skinny old man jumped to his feet, "Give me a chance to get more grog, or give me death!" he bawled out. A ripple of agreement swept through the room. The old woman declared a short break to the crowd. I finally had a moment to think. I had to start directly referring to what I had uncovered. After a few moments, the crowd had begun to take their seats again. Several seats were now empty, indicating that a few had decided to move on to other distractions. I was pleased that many decided to stay. At the far end of the bar, it even looked as though a new group

of individuals, all dressed in long, dark cloaks had decided to stay for the remainder of the evening.

One of my personal goals for this project was to raise student achievement on the provincial exams. Although the results of the provincial exams did not provide a breakdown of how my students did on the essay section, the overall numbers for the entire test were rather intriguing. I am pleased to say that my final exam marks were higher than I have had in seven years of teaching grade 12 English. The average mark in the province was 62.03%. I was very pleased to see my class achieve a 70.12% average. Moreover, six in my class of twenty-eight scored an "A", a solid 21.5% (three students scored 90+%). By contrast, only 5.08% of the province achieved a first class mark (86% or more) (Robertson, 1999, p. 75). The test results for my class support my belief that interesting, creative essays are the ones that get the higher marks. At the very least, my project did not have a negative impact on my stronger students.

The benefits were not simply limited to the brightest students. I wish I could report that no one failed the exam. However, the reality is that students may have an "off day" or simply read the question wrong, or have simply not learned enough to pass the exam. For whatever reason, my class had two failures (49% and 45%) on the final exam. This translates into a 7.3% failure rate. Once again, my class did much better than the province which had a failure rate of 22%. Although the exam results are not my main indicators of success, they do tend to support my position.

"Alright," one fellow said, "let's stop dancing around the fire. I want to hear some evidence. I want to see your proof." A sea of nodding heads echoed his sentiments.

It was time for me to use everything I had accumulated in order to convince these people I was right.

The students were allowed on the prompts to select and develop any form of writing, with the exception of poetry. As I somewhat expected, on the pre-intervention prompt essay the majority of the students (21) wrote expository essays compared to narrative essays (seven). Curiously, no one attempted a descriptive or persuasive essay. Furthermore, the students made no attempt to blend styles or forms.

For the final prompt, a majority (16) still used the expository form; ten wrote in a narrative style and two individuals attempted to blend the forms together. I speculate that most writers were comfortable with the expository style. Although we sampled many styles of work throughout the year, due to the fact that many students have to master the expository format for post-secondary survival, we spent quite a bit of time on the expository form.

This does not mean that I consider the narrative style more creative than an expository style. I do like to read the narrative style, but I also enjoy reading essays. I suppose my criticism of expository essays is that too many students tend to write formulaic essays. These essays take an ambiguous stand (usually on several issues), scant support is provided, and simplistic ideas are naively advanced. The result is a bland and boring essay. I do not care what form the student chooses; I only care that some thought, care, and love are involved in the process.

The bar went silent for a moment. I knew I had to press on before they picked me up by the scruff of my scrawny neck and threw me out into the street. Sentimentality has

its place; its place is not in a bar.

I collected all of the essays after I finished the process, I analyzed the essays based on several criteria. The first was whether or not there was any evidence of pre-writing activity. On the pre-intervention essay, only four students attempted any form of brainstorming. However, the post-intervention essay had 24 people attempting some form of pre-writing. This pre-writing is important because it allows the writer to develop several different ideas instead of simply seizing the first, and usually the most obvious idea, that comes to mind. I was quite pleased to see they had, for the most part, incorporated brainstorming, mind-mapping, and free writing into their writing process. As I mentioned before, many students also reported using the Multiple Intelligences theory (Gardner, 1983) and the Six Hats Theory (de Bono, 1985) in order to generate ideas. However, the results are somewhat inconclusive. Some of the most creative essays had little, if any, pre-writing and some of the most traditional essays had copious mind-maps and pre-writing work (Appendix A).

One of the most important aspects of essay writing is the support for the thesis. Although most students did not change the format in which they wrote, the support they used improved considerably throughout the process. I have always found the form of an essay easy to decide upon; however, I have always found it much more difficult to create interesting, distinctive examples to defend my ideas. This is why I was most pleased with this project. I found that the students began to use solid, interesting, even inspiring support for their positions. The ability to develop creative support was where I found the most growth in this project.

I ranked the essays as either using creative support or basic support; I found strong growth had occurred regarding the students' ability to create an interesting foundation for their positions. Creative support might include personal anecdotes, unusual examples, well-developed case-studies, or inspiring connections. This is the heart of writing. Effective writers must be able to support their ideas with relevant, interesting material. I identified basic support as obvious examples or threadbare development of the support.

The results for the pre - intervention showed there were ten essays with creative support and eighteen essays with traditional or basic support. On the post - intervention the results were reversed: nineteen were classified as containing creative ideas whereas only nine were classified as utilizing basic supporting material. To my surprise, I discovered how strongly I feel about creating unique examples: after looking at the data is clear that I value the originality of the supporting ideas more than anything else.

“For the love of all that is holy, give us an example, man! Let us see what you are babbling about,” cried an middle-aged man who was enthusiastically waving his empty cup.

This is an example of one who wrote a rather disjointed, poorly supported essay on the pre-intervention prompt. None of the topics are fully explored and the reader is left to try and follow the essay without much interest. In contrast, the final essay makes some marvellous personal connections that support the thesis. The essays are as I received them.

Student # 11 Pre-intervention prompt

Sometimes in life people find themselves in situations that they'd rather not be in. Many times people are in bad situations and they don't even know it. They aren't aware that they are hurting themselves and might

need help. Turning the page to a new day can be a struggle, but opening your eyes to a new life can be devastating.

Throwing away all that they've known can be an addicts nightmare. Wake up, smoke pot; and every minute in between smoke pot, or at least think about it. Many people believe pot is not addictive and physically it is not. Emotionally, however, many people find themselves attached. Opening their eyes to see this attachment is something most of them never do.

People who have anorexia also have trouble realizing they are hurting themselves. They often seen no change in their bodies and no longer have the desire to eat. It is not all about being thin, it is about being in control of their "out of control" life styles. It is a partner with depression and the sick person can usually see nothing without the help and support of doctors, family and friends.

In most abusive relationships the partner being abused thinks that somehow it is their fault. They feel somehow they've done something wrong. That is never the case. It is hard to understand why people stay in these relationships, most people can think of lots of reasons not to. The people in these relationships often feel they have no where to go. They feel they've lost frinds and family while devoting their lives to pain. To help these people see takes a lot of time and talking. Their eyes need to be opened to what they truely deserve in life.

Helping people see is probably the best way to get them to open their eyes. Most people cannot get through such struggles alone. Sometimes when you know your eyes need to be opened but you still keep them shut, seek help from friends and family who would be happy to help you see your way to better days (Robertson, 1999, p. 54)

Student #11: Post-intervention prompt

Dealing with the truth about people is not easy. Sometimes it takes a long time to recognize the truth about someone or something Facing the truth about the people I cared the most about was one of the most difficult things for me to do.

When I look back at the things I used to do it amazes me. What amazes me more is that I am only 17 and already looking back on life like I am 35. It started mostly after I moved. I'd get phone calls from the friends where I used to live telling me stories of what they had been up to lately. Robbing chip trucks? How sorry I am that I missed that. As I heard more and more stories about the stupid things that they did, I realized that if I was there thats what I would do, too. It all seemed so immature over the phone, but the truth was I was no better than them; I was simply surrounded differently.

I realized later, the truth about my mother. She did (unfortunately)

know what was best for me. In some cases I would be right, but only because I developed this crazy responsibility thing. I didn't recognize the truth about our relationship right away though. That took a long time for me. Admitting that we do kinda get along fairly well, that was a big step. Watching my friends yell at their moms made me realize, mine's not so bad.

The truth about my dad is I see him more when I visit my friends at work than I see him at home. He loves his job and I respect that; I know that he'll always be there to back up my mom if she's mad at me. I've learned to live with talking to him on a "hi" "bye" basis. It seems to work well. Every morning I go down stairs and he's quietly reading the paper and I politely say, "Hello." Sometimes there is even a response. Then after a long silent car ride to school I say "good-bye." Then he smiles and goes to work and the whole process is repeated the next day. On weekends things tend to get confusing but he usually leaves once I get up so we get to do the "good-bye" thing.

It's hard to accept the fact that my friends are crazy and could probably use some AA meetings. Harder still is knowing my mom is my friend. Of course, having to accept a "hi" "bye" relationship wasn't easy, but at least I know that truthfully, it's better that way (Robertson, 1999. p. 54).

The first dealt with solid topics, but did not do justice to any of them. Addicts, anorexia, and abuse are all worthy subjects, but it is impossible to do justice to all of them within a 300 to 500 word essay. The writer did not create any specific examples, but relies on superficial statements. The second essay's thesis, however, was nicely supported by the narrative evidence. The second essay explored the difficulties people have recognizing the truth about those we love; the author explored the various relationships in the family and comments on the significance of each. This essay was a solid example of how to use personal experiences to illustrate an idea. Neither essay was perfect. Remember, the students were only given one hour and are not allowed to use a dictionary or thesaurus. The first essay was a safe essay; the second gave personal, heartfelt support. The writer was taking a risk to share this information with a third party and, I believe, perhaps came

to see the concept of family in a new light. This was a vast improvement from the pre-prompt essay.

One of the cloaked individuals who had joined our gathering at the last break stood up and slowly unwound himself from the chair. A stentorian voice escaped the cowl wrapped around his head. "Now we are to the heart of the matter. Continue." I felt somewhat uneasy with this group, but I had to continue.

Sometimes the support for an idea took an odd twist. Not everyone took risks, but some students were willing to step out of their "comfort zones" of writing to please the teacher. This person took a large risk: he took a possibly unpopular, and certainly politically incorrect position and tried to defend it. Throughout the quarter, I often told my students to avoid obvious or rote responses and instead think of unusual positions or ideas and then prepare to defend them. This individual took up the challenge in the spirit of an essay we covered in class: Jonathan Swift's wonderful essay "A Modest Proposal."

Student # 26: Post-intervention prompt

It is a clear and sunny day in Los Angeles. Pollution is a foggy memory; thanks mainly to the surprisingly prolific growth of the world's rainforest. With the rainforests return, the greenhouse effect no longer affects anyone and the ozone layer is rebuilding. Crime is at an all time low. Unemployment does not exist. Right now, the society above is a dream; however, this dream can come true. All it would take is to recognize a couple of truths and deal with them.

The first truth is obvious: the world is overpopulated. A few days ago, the world population was 6,000,000. Now the world population is about 6,097,142,693. You can add twelve more to that number in the time it take you to read this sentence. Every second that goes by, seven more people are born then people die. If two people die, then nine people are born. This happens every second.

Now look at the problems that this creates. Wildlife habitat is being destroyed at a rate of ten acres every second to create farmland for all

these people. With all their habitat being destroyed at such a malignant pace, it is a small wonder that a species becomes extinct every seven seconds. The world cannot support the teeming mass of humanity that we have built up. This is a fact, a truth. Now that we have recognized this truth, we need to deal with it.

It costs \$100,000 a year to house one prisoner. Now, hypothetically, let us say that this prisoner is a murderer. This individual committed the greatest harm to society he possibly can and we punish him by spending a minimum of 2,500,000 dollars on him. We are punishing ourselves for his crime. He takes away a life in his crime and \$2,500,000 away from society in his punishment. If the punishment were more severe, this individual may have never committed the crime and if he did, it would be much less expensive for society. The most severe form of punishment is death. Society should retaliate against those who attack it, and should retaliate with deadly force. Society would be better for not having a criminal around and not worse for spending money on him, that is the truth.

The unemployable are criminals. Those who do not have the skill or desire to get a job are stealing from society. It is not difficult to get a job. Stephen Hawking, a quadriplegic [sic], is a valued member of society to its intellect. A person should be given the chance for employment and if they lack the skill or mental fortitude for a job then they should be eliminated from society. This is a preventative [sic] measure as the majority of the unemployable become criminals or end up living off society. A retarded person can sweep floors and a quadriplegic [sic] can become a philosopher/author or poet. If a person can not be useful to society, then society should remove them. It is that simple and it is the truth.

People in third world countries around the world are being abused. In Puerto Rico, children that lived down stream of the labs that were working on a birth control pill are entering puberty at the age of five. The chemicals that the labs dump out goes into the childrens [sic] water supply and the hormones in the water effect them. There are five year old boys with breasts thanks to the abuse of the pharmaceutical [sic] company. If we were to eliminate the extremely under-privileged, the abuse and mistreatment would stop. The exploitation and the suffering of the poorer people in Africa would end and the world population would be cut dramatically. The majority of the deforestation occurs in third world countries in a feeble attempt to feed their people. Should we dismantle the majority of the underprivileged population then the world would have a fighting chance and the suffering would end.

The truth is that the world population is out of control. The earth cannot support everyone, that is also the truth. All that needs to happen now is for society to recognize these truths by eliminating criminals, the

unemployable and hopelessly underprivileged. If we do that, then the dream of a utopian society can come true (Robertson, 1999, p. 65).

Is this creative? I believe so. Is it repugnant? Absolutely. However, the search for creativity sometimes means investigating something that may be deemed offensive. Does this mean that someone can be offensive and call it “creative”? As the writer handed this in, he drew me aside and told me that he did not believe anything that he wrote. However, he was quick to point out that he felt good about the risk he had taken. He was sure that I would like his work. And he was right. It is somewhat awful in nature, but he advanced an interesting idea and fully supported it.

Creativity is not merely twisting what people believe is nice or right into something perverse. An essay that argued without wit, style or purpose for the destruction of an object, institution or race would merely be offensive. It would not be creative in the least. This essay took an idea to the extreme, but managed to deftly dance the razor’s edge of respectability.

Another aspect worth investigating about this essay was the fact that it was based on one of the most well-known essays of our time. I believe that it is next to impossible to write about a truly original topic - one that has never been broached before. This individual was merely using his literary experience as a starting point.

The figure in the cloak had stood throughout the last part of the speech as unmoved as a rock. He then bent to his neighbour who whispered into his ear for a moment. The first figure stood again and asked me about my failure, the one whose creativity declined despite my voyage.

Despite the interventions and the practice I had provided, one of my students did not flourish or even maintain the previous level of creativity from the pre-intervention prompt to the post-intervention prompt. I am reminded, however, of one of the fallacies of exams. They measure a slim part of a student's ability on a given day. I cannot be sure that the individual became less creative as a result of the creative thinking intervention. There are many factors at work when one writes; it is possible that any number of problems may have been distracting the individual that particular day. Nevertheless, one individual wrote more creatively before the intervention. Here are the two essays and my thoughts on them.

Student #21 Pre- intervention prompt

Prejudice people should open their eyes and see that blind and diable[sic] people are capable of doing anything they want to. Just because they are disabled doesn't mean they have to stay home and feel sorry for themselves. It really bugs me to see people judge blind people. They should realize that blind people are human too and deserve the same amount of respect.

I have a personal experience with people being prejudice against blind people. My mother was born blind. She has never been able to. Growing up with her, I have seen a lot of rude things happen and a lot of good. To me it's totally normal.

My mother is amazing. She plays the piano wonderfully she bike rides, walks, works and sometimes even drives. Shes even a really good cook. A lot of people are so surprised to hear that because they assume that she is blind and she can't do anything.

When we moved to Cranbrook she got a job at the Health Unit. She was a secretary. They fired her because she was blind, and they used the excuse that they didn't need her anymore. How rude! She now has a great job at CMHA (Canadian Mental Health Association) and she works very hard. She was the citizen of the year last year and she deserved it. When I tell people she works, cooks, etc. they don't understand how she can. It's not that hard when all other four senses are much stronger. My mother is unique. She has a wonderful personality.

I really enjoy opening people's eyes to her disability, letting them know she is not stupid and shes just like me and everybody else. I like the people who ask questions and are curious and don't pre-judge her right

from the start. I get really upset with people who make fun and stare. It is so rude to stare.

I also realize she can't do everything by herself. That's why there is special equipment for the blind. For examples, talking computers and clocks. She reads and types braille, which is like a language by itself. She uses a cane to assist her when she walks by herself. All those things make life a whole lot better for her.

I hope I have opened your eyes to my mother's disability, which to me is not a disability at all. She is as normal as me and I hope those people who make fun of disabled people realize that they have feelings and it hurts them. I hope, in time, people will not be prejudiced anymore (Robertson, 1999, p. 58).

Student #21: Post-intervention prompt

It is a science all by itself to recognize if somebody is telling the truth or lying. Mental thoughts are tied in with physical behavior. The human race expresses there emotions with physical behavior. They're many different ways to be able to tell if someone is lying or telling the truth.

With some males you can tell right away if they are lying to your face. If you are talking face to face with a guy, for example, confronting him with something. When he talks back and is looking you straight in the eyes and there voice is loud and clear, they probably are not lying. Unless they are really good lyers. If a guy is looking around while talking, stuttering words, needing time to think or gets really mad and walks away, you know you hit a button and they are not telling the whole truth. With guys who don't ever really express any emotion it's hard to tell if they are lying. Males should express every emotion they feel. If they are sad, be sad. If they are happy, they should be happy. I know so many guys that are hard to read. I can't tell if they are happy or sad. It shouldn't be like that.

With females it's all whole different story. Females like to or feel totally comfortable showing and expressing their emotions. Most of the time it is a whole lot easier to tell if a girl is lying or not. I can tell if a friend of mine is lying or not. She won't look me directly in the eye or she will look up before she does look me in the eye. She will pause or take time to think before she answers any questions. She will stutter or her words will be confused. I can also tell if she is lying if she answers question too fast or her story seems to perfect. My mother can tell if I lie by the tone of my voice. That means I can't lie to her. It is true your voice does change when you lie.

I think it's great if you can tell if someone lies or not, but why do people lie in the first place. Lying only hurts people in the long wrong. I really don't think there is anything positive about lying. The truth is the

best way to go. When people lie to save somebody's feelings from hurt, is wrong. The person they lied to will be hurt or mad when they find out they were lied to in the first place. Losing someone's trust is the worst thing. Because then you have to gain that person's trust back again. Telling the truth is the best way to go. Truth is a very powerful feeling.

If you are a person who can recognize if someone is telling the truth or not, you are very gifted. We need to get rid of all the liars of the world. Lying can get yourself into so many problems and continuing lying only makes it worse for yourself. I always try to recognize the truth (Robertson, 1999, p. 59).

The first essay dealt with people's insensitivity to those with disabilities. Despite several mechanical errors, the idea was clear and focussed. Moreover, the writer used powerful personal insights gleaned from watching a family member struggle with the disability. I quite enjoyed reading about her perceptions of how the mother has dealt with such difficult obstacles as discrimination, stereotypes, and day to day living. The second essay, unfortunately, explored a simple idea with very basic support. There were no deftly created images or unique ideas. The writer fell back into a "standard five paragraph hand it in and get it over with" mode of writing. I was quite disappointed to see this final essay.

The old woman, my mentor, stood at this point. "Failure is the bitterest drink we tend to linger over. But you have some sweet successes to share as well. Who benefited the most from your journey, in your opinion?"

The most pronounced change was a bright, intelligent individual who wrote less than a page on the first prompt. He wrote about how life was somewhat unfair, but then broke off into a short rant. This individual had potential, but obviously struggled with creating a topic within a strict time-limit. However, the student's post-intervention prompt is wonderful. He created an essay that dealt with how "truth" became a real concept for

him. Within an expository framework, he was able to develop his own narrative story.

There was tremendous growth from the first essay to the last.

Student # 1: Pre-intervention essay

In our society today, we seem to be lacking in purity and decency. Crimes are more frequent and gruesome than they ever have been, and children seem to become more jaded and cynical at an earlier age. As such, adults seem to look for people who reaffirm their beliefs that the world is a good place. While there is a small amount of people who are genuinely innocent and sweet, there seems to be more and more people who are feigning these qualities in order to get ahead. Whether they are called “goody two-shoes” or “suck-ups”, they are a menace to society and they need to be eliminated.

The presence of these people in our world is a “sticking point” for me as a teenager. Students around me continually change their manner from bratty and selfish to happy and bright in the presence of a teacher. They will do something terrible and nasty and then cover it up as to seem eager and pleasant. They are usually attractive, so they can use their good looks to get out of doing something strenuous.

The sad truth is that their manipulations usually work. Teachers fall for their tricks time and time again (Robertson, 1999, p.50).

Student #1: Post-intervention essay

When I was in elementary school, I became entranced by a television commercial for the board game Guess Who? It appeared to be one of the greatest devices ever made, as advertised on television. Upon buying the game, however, I learned that it was not really as fun as it looked. This was the first time in my life that I was duped by a television commercial, and I vowed to never let it happen to me again. I learned that the commercials are often misleading, and that consumers should keep an objective eye when watching them.

For example, a television commercial lasts only thirty seconds, while the consumer will be using the product for much longer than that. For the most part, actors in commercials are always smiling, as they are so enthused to be using the great product being advertised. But in reality, people are never as thrilled to be using the product. Sure, perhaps upon buying the product, the consumer feels excited that something new is coming into their life. But soon the novelty wears off, and the item fades into the back of their lives (unless, of course, it needs to be expensively repaired or upgraded on occasion). While this might not sound like the most intelligent observation from an objective standpoint, the truth is that a

commercial's enthusiasm is often infectious for little kids, who then, of course, have to get whatever's being sold.

Another thing that irritates me is when a commercial doesn't lie, but barely tells the truth. In the example of *Guess Who?*, there were these cartoons who made witty comments and sang funny songs. Even though I remember hearing at the end of the commercial, "Game pieces do not actually talk," I was still somehow shocked upon buying the game to learn they were just boring pieces of cardboard. This type of trickery is quite common in commercials: making the product look more attractive than it is, and then subliminally informing the consumer that they have told a little white lie, and it's not quite that good.

A common practice in commercials is to surround the product with actors who are abnormally good looking. This is understandable for beauty products, perhaps, but even commercials for minivans have gotten out of control. The mother is always young, the father is always vital, the kids are always cute, and everybody has perfect teeth. Why can't they ever show the average family having fun in the minivan? Because even though it's impossible, the company doing the advertising is often trying to show that using this product will make the consumer look better. The sad truth is that it often works.

Trying to find the hidden truths in advertising is not an easy task, and one that people become better at as they get older. I certainly know that the amount of toys and games I begged for as a six-year-old were used once or twice, and then discarded.[sic] The once eagerly anticipated *Guess Who?* Now sits on some shelf somewhere, covered in dust. But if I knew then what I know now, it never would have come through the front of my house (Robertson, 1999, p.51).

This writer obviously went beyond a traditional topic which would be something akin to "truth is very important" or "it is always the best course to tell the truth"; in the post-prompt essay this student found a unique way of demonstrating how people learn about truth. Moreover, I also saw a marked change in how this individual approached the prompt essays. The ideas did not come for the first essay and the person did not start to write for quite some time. Near the end of the class, a desperate attempt was made to create an essay and thus the pitiful, painful essay was created. For the second essay, the person sat and thought for a few minutes and then began to write. In this essay, the writer

found an individual writing style that combined elements of narrative and expository writing. The symbol of the childhood game became a wonderful symbol of the thesis. Reading this essay and then comparing it to the first one gave me a tremendous feeling that the project had been successful. If the process can stimulate this kind of growth from even one or two people, it would be worth it. I saw many people in my class grow in confidence, their writing develop in ways I was thrilled to see, and a positive attitude toward writing was, I believe, achieved in my class.

At this point, the owner of the bar came forward, a barrel-chested man who was reputed to be as mentally agile as he was strong. "The hour grows late. Your presentation has been most interesting. What are your recommendations for the rest of us? What have you learned through this process that you would like to see implemented?"

I believe that creativity must be made a central part of the curriculum at the high school level. Students should be exposed to different thinking processes and models, so that they can experiment with them and pick the one that fits best. The results clearly vindicate the impact this process can have.

Furthermore, this project meets several of the Prescribed Learning Outcomes set out by the British Columbia Ministry of Education, for example, "It is expected that students will employ a variety of effective processes and strategies...to generate, gather and organize information and ideas" (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 48). Obviously the five creative thinking techniques all contribute to organizational skills. Moreover, the project emphasized different forms of writing. "It is expected that students will

demonstrate their understanding of and abilities to use a variety of forms and styles of communication that are relevant to specific purposes and audiences” (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 48). The outcome goes on to state that students should “demonstrate pride and satisfaction in using language to create and express thoughts, ideas, and feelings in a variety of written, oral, visual, and electronic forms” (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 52). Smiling students who handed in a piece of writing they were proud of convinced me that this process helped my students express themselves.

I also think that students who are exposed to the creative thinking strategies will achieve better on the provincial exam. This exam is like the dragons and monsters that were once thought to devour ships that ventured too close to the edge of the world. Parents are curious about them, teachers live in fear of them, and students must face them. I do not believe that any teacher should teach to a sterile exam, and yet, I know this is the reality that most teachers in British Columbia face. I believe teaching children new ways to think will assist them not only on the provincial exam but also in life. In order to standardize the marking, the Ministry of Education publishes a six point scale which is used to mark every exam essay. Poor or adequate papers are characterized as being dull, boring, or predictable. Superior papers are considered creative, interesting, or unusual. Clearly, these creative thinking alternatives will assist students as they try to create a unique essay that will impress the markers. If a process can assist student achievement, we should make use of it.

Although the academic benefits are great, there are many other benefits that accompany the project. The test group enjoyed the various strategies. The students truly

enjoyed the learning that was taking place. They did not see it as a waste of time or effort. Indeed, the students seemed to recognize the logic behind learning different thinking techniques. Along with this learning came confidence. The students were able to approach the provincial exam section of the final with the knowledge that they knew how to approach any topic they were faced with. I often find that after correcting grammar and commenting on coherence, any positive comments are ignored or dismissed by the writer. Teaching students to feel good about writing is absolutely crucial, and often ignored.

Finally, I believe that creative approaches to writing cannot be taught as a distinct unit. The creativity unit should not come after the novel or before the poetry section. It should be woven into the very fabric of the classroom. Gardner puts it well:

We identify three principal dimensions of the creative classroom. These include approaching content creatively, creative teaching and learning practices, and cultivating student creativity. Each of these three dimensions is informed by the overarching characteristics or “creative spirit” of the individual teacher. Rather than existing as a separate dimensions of the creative classroom, the teacher’s creative spirit...infuses and gives life to the three principal dimensions of the creative classroom (Gardner, 2000, p.1).

My classroom, I believe, became a conducive place for creativity.

A polite round of applause signaled the end of my presentation to the circle of learning. I smiled at the kind words offered to me by my friends. Eventually, the patrons separated back into their usual groups. I felt somewhat at a loss. Then one of the cloaked group approached me. He told me he enjoyed my presentation and wished me luck with my further voyages. I caught a glimpse of a brief smile and he held out his hand. As I shook it, I couldn't help but notice the ostentatious rings he wore. In fact, one looked

curiously like the signet ring of the King. Before I could react, he was gone. I stood there with a besotted look on my face for a moment and then I smiled. I needed to find a place for the night. Just one night, for tomorrow I would leave this land, with all its treasures, and return to the seas which I have grown to love.

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Appendix

Essay Analysis:

The pre-essay and the post essay will be analyzed for several items:

- 1. Is there evidence of free-writing?*
- 2. Type of essay?*
- 3. Analysis of support- basic or creative?*
- 4. Was it creative or traditional?*
- 5. Other notes.*

Student #1 Pre-intervention

1. No evidence of pre-writing
2. Expository essay- audience is the teacher
3. Basic support
4. **A traditional essay**
5. The author obviously struggled to find a topic and a voice for this essay. It is quite short and does not really address the topic in a coherent manner.

Student #2 Post-intervention

1. No evidence of pre-writing
2. Combination of narrative and expository styles
3. A symbol of childhood strings this all together quite nicely. His support is quite innovative.
4. **A creative essay**

5. A wonderful essay to read considering it was created in an hour.

Student #2 Pre-intervention

1. No evidence of pre-writing
2. Narrative essay
3. Basic story structure
4. **A traditional essay**
5. The reader can follow the story, but there is no real desire to read the piece.

Student #2 Post-intervention

1. The student used mind-mapping as a pre-writing activity
2. A personal narrative essay.
3. The student uses graphic, heartfelt examples that capture the reader's attention.
4. **A creative essay**
5. The wonderful support makes this a creative essay.

Student #3 Pre-intervention

1. No Pre-writing
2. An expository essay with narrative elements
3. A creative and interesting exploration of blindness
4. **A creative essay**
5. This person has taken a unique topic and developed it nicely. It still has room for development, but this person is willing to take risks.

Student #3 Post -intervention

1. A well developed outline/mind-map
2. A narrative essay
3. Excellent supporting thoughts and ideas. This person has created an intriguing essay
4. **A creative essay**
5. This person started off writing creatively and continued to explore and expand his writing.

Student #4 Pre-intervention

1. No pre-writing
2. Expository essay
3. Basic support for ideas
4. **A traditional essay**
5. This individual struggles to create a coherent essay

Student #4 Post -intervention

1. Pre-writing in the form of an outline
2. Expository essay
3. Basic support for ideas
4. **A traditional essay**
5. This individual is still concerned with mechanics more than originality.

Student #5 Pre-intervention

1. No pre-writing
2. Narrative essay
3. Basic support and development

4. A traditional essay

5. This essay does not go beyond telling a simple story

Student #5 Post -intervention

1. No pre-writing
2. Personal narrative
3. Powerful and creative personal support for the thesis

4. A creative essay

5. This essay looks at very personal issues and how to find the truth within them.

Student #6 Pre-intervention

1. Simple mind-map
2. Expository essay
3. The essay has interesting and varied support for the ideas.

4. A creative essay

5. Although this essay is fragmented and searching for a focus, the author uses some great supporting details.

Student #6 Post -intervention

1. Mind-mapping
2. Narrative essay
3. Several interesting and powerful ideas for support.

4. A creative essay

5. This person was more technically proficient on the post- intervention, but both essays were quite creative.

Student #7 Pre-intervention

1. No pre-writing activity
2. Expository essay
3. This essay uses interesting examples for support
4. **A creative essay**
5. This individual has taken the approach of questioning the way in governments interact, an interesting topic for an essay.

Student #7 Post -intervention

1. Mind-map
2. Expository essay
3. Great supporting ideas- interesting quotes and examples
4. **A creative essay**
5. This individual has remained quite creative throughout the process.

Student #8 Pre-intervention

1. No pre-writing
2. Narrative essay
3. Basic supporting examples
4. **A traditional essay**
5. This essay is describes a simple story with few details or insights.

Student #8 Post -intervention

1. Mind-map to outline
2. Expository essay

3. Basic support for the ideas.

4. A traditional essay

5. The individual has moved from simply addressing the teacher to addressing society as a whole. There was some growth here, but the support was still quite simplistic and traditional.

Student #9 Pre-intervention

1. No pre-writing

2. Narrative essay

3. Great supporting details and ideas.

4. A creative essay

5. This individual is a gifted writer with a creative eye.

Student #9 Post -intervention

1. Mind- map

2. Narrative essay

3. Wonderful supporting details and insights.

4. A creative essay

5. This person is an excellent writer

Student #10 Pre-intervention

1. No pre-writing

2. Expository essay

3. Basic support for the ideas

4. A traditional essay

5. This person writes well but needs to develop his/her ideas.

Student #10 Post -intervention

1. Mind-map to outline

2. Expository essay

3. Quite creative supporting details for each paragraph

4. **A creative essay**

5. The essay is addressed to the world, instead of simply me. The support has greatly improved from the first essay.

Student #11 Pre-intervention

1. No pre-writing

2. Expository essay

3. Basic supporting details and examples.

4. **A traditional essay**

5. This person has taken the shot-gun approach to a topic and has lightly grazed several different aspects. None of the hits were substantial.

Student #11 Post -intervention

1. Free writing

2. Narrative essay

3. Great examples and support

4. **A creative essay**

5. This person has learned to narrow the topic and fully explore it. The examples are interesting and powerful. This person has made great strides.

Student #12 Pre-intervention

1. No pre-writing
2. Expository essay
3. Basic support and examples
4. **A traditional essay**
5. This essay is directed toward the teacher and has no real insights.

Student #12 Post -intervention

1. Mind-map
2. Expository essay
3. The author uses Einstein as a creative example of a way to show what scientists are capable of.
4. **A creative essay**
5. This essay is mechanically unsound, but the author has used some interesting support.

Student #13 Pre-intervention

1. No pre-writing
2. Expository essay
3. Excellent supporting details
4. **A creative essay**
5. This person is obviously a talented writer and has created an interesting, evocative essay

Student #13 Post -intervention

1. Mind-map to outline
2. Narrative essay

3. Excellent supporting details

4. **A creative essay**

5. This individual has switched styles, but has retained the creativity in the work.

Student #14 Pre-intervention

1. No pre-writing

2. Narrative essay

3. Basic supporting details with some nice descriptions

4. **A traditional essay**

5. This individual is struggling with mechanics and is working to churn out an essay

Student #14 Post -intervention

1. No planning

2. Narrative essay

3. Basic supporting details

4. **A traditional essay**

5. This individual's writing did not change much due to difficulties with grammar.

Student #15 Pre-intervention

1. No pre-planning

2. Expository essay

3. Basic support for the ideas. Some of the ideas, however, are interesting.

4. **A traditional essay**

5. This essay has potential to be creative, but the support and development are inadequate.

Student #15 Post -intervention

1. Mind-map to outline
2. Expository essay
3. Basic support
4. **A traditional essay**
5. This essay is mechanically solid, but uninspiring.

Student #16 Pre-intervention

1. No pre-writing
2. Narrative essay
3. Creative and interesting supporting details.
4. **A creative essay**
5. This individual has taken the topic and explored it in an interesting way.

Student #16 Post -intervention

1. Small mind-map
2. Narrative essay
3. Good supporting details and insights.
4. **A creative essay**
5. The individual has explored one aspect of truth and how it relates to relationships. The support he gives is somewhat repugnant, but it is interesting.

Student #17 Pre-intervention

1. Small mind-map
2. Expository essay
3. Creative supporting details and insights

4. A creative essay

5. The individual uses interesting examples to back up his ideas.

Student #17 Post -intervention

1. Mind-map, outline, and a free write

2. Expository essay

3. Superb supporting details that build on what the reader has read in the past.

4. A creative essay

5. This individual has taken a risk and altered the essay to include the novel he was reading at the time.

Student #18 Pre-intervention

1. No pre- writing

2. Expository essay

3. Basic support

4. A traditional essay

5. The ideas are simply expressed with simplistic examples

Student #18 Post -intervention

1. Mind-map

2. Expository essay with narrative elements

3. Unique supporting ideas that are taken from the author's personal history

4. A creative essay

5. This essay created links between the author's ideas and the author's personal experiences.

Student #19 Pre-intervention

1. No pre-writing
2. Expository essay
3. Basic support for the ideas
4. **A traditional essay**
5. The essay addresses the topic back to the reader.

Student #19 Post -intervention

1. Mind- map
2. Expository essay
3. Interesting examples to support the central idea.
4. **A creative essay**
5. This individual is using unusual, interesting examples to support his ideas.

Student #20 Pre-intervention

1. No pre-writing
2. Expository essay
3. Basic examples and support
4. **A traditional essay**
5. This has potential. The author needs to expand some of the examples and develop them.

Student #20 Post -intervention

1. Mind-map to outline
2. Expository essay
3. Basic support for the ideas

4. A traditional essay

5. This individual has not developed the examples or taken any risks in writing the essays.

Student #21 Pre-intervention

1. No pre-writing
2. Expository essay
3. Powerful examples taken from personal history

4. A creative essay

5. This individual uses personal experiences to highlight the thesis. This essay is interesting and heartfelt

Student #21 Post -intervention

1. Outline
2. Expository essay
3. Basic examples and ideas

4. A traditional essay

5. The first essay was much more creative. The second simply addressed the topic back to the teacher.

Student #22 Pre-intervention

1. No pre-writing
2. Expository essay
3. Good support, interesting examples

4. A creative essay

5. Instead of simply agreeing with the essay, the writer takes the negative position and

takes a risk.

Student #22 Post -intervention

1. Mind-map
2. Expository essay
3. Great examples and support. This individual uses facts and examples from all over the world to prove his thesis.
4. **A creative essay**
5. This individual maintained his creativity.

Student #23 Pre-intervention

1. No pre-writing
2. Expository essay
3. The audience is the teacher; the support is basic.
4. **A traditional essay**
5. The essay is fragmented and lacks enough coherence to be creative.

Student #23 Post -intervention

1. Mind- map
2. Expository essay
3. Basic examples and support
4. **A traditional essay**
5. The author is writing much more coherently, but there is little creative growth.

Student #24 Pre-intervention

1. No pre-writing

2. Expository essay
3. Several good ideas, but they are not well supported. Basic examples
4. **A traditional essay**
5. This essay has potential, but the support must be improved.

Student #24 Post -intervention

1. Mind-map
2. Expository essay
3. Great supporting ideas about what a jury must go through.
4. **A creative essay**
5. The author puts himself into a jury to see the process they must go through to find the truth.

Student #25 Pre-intervention

1. No pre-writing
2. Expository essay
3. Inadequate support
4. **A traditional essay**
5. This person obviously struggled to come up with ideas and the result is a poorly developed essay.

Student #25 Post -intervention

1. Free-writing
2. Expository essay
3. Basic support

4. A traditional essay

5. The mechanics of the essay are much improved, but the essay is still addressed to the teacher.

Student #26 Pre-intervention

1. Outline

2. Expository with narrative elements

3. Interesting situations and a strong supporting narrative story

4. A creative essay

5. This individual is able to create an interesting narrative to prove his thesis.

Student #26 Post -intervention

1. Free-write

2. Expository essay

3. Unique and interesting support.

4. A creative essay

5. This individual took a risk and selected a potentially unpopular opinion to develop for this essay. This individual was creative before and built upon that creative base.

Student #27 Pre-intervention

1. No pre-writing

2. Expository essay

3. Basic support

4. A traditional essay

5. The author addresses the essay to the teacher with basic supporting details.

Student #27 Post -intervention

1. Free-write
2. Narrative essay
3. Well developed, interesting supporting stories from childhood to prove the thesis.
4. **A creative essay**
5. The supporting details are interesting and well developed.

Student #28 Pre-intervention

1. No pre-writing
2. Narrative essay
3. Basic examples and support
4. **A traditional essay**
5. The story flirts with important issues, but does not go in depth on any of them.

Student #28 Post -intervention

1. No pre-writing
2. Expository essay
3. Basic examples
4. **A traditional essay**
5. There was no significant development in the writing