GOOD WRITING: INTEGRATING CREATIVE WRITING ELEMENTS IN UNDERGRADUATE COMPOSITION

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ABSTRACT

The English field has long been fragmented, with the subfields of creative writing and composition separated due to their different pedagogical approaches and goals. Even so, in an effort to encourage better student writing, scholars from as early as the 1960s have explored the benefits of integrating techniques from the creative writing class for use in the composition class. Composition writing instructors, tempted to encourage students to experiment with creative ways of writing, have had to do so behind the closed doors of their classrooms so as not to detract from the composition class’s purpose to teach the traditional conventions that follow the strict standards for academic writing. However, current writing scholars are calling to reform academic writing to appeal to a general audience by changing traditional writing conventions to integrate and accept the use of creative writing elements in formal academic writing. Consequently, popular composition textbooks should reflect this modern trend through their treatment of creative writing elements in composition instruction. This project will examine five commonly used composition textbooks to determine if current composition instruction answers the call from recent scholars to create academic writing that is appealing to a wide audience, through the use of creative writing elements. Although all of these textbooks include instruction and explanation regarding the use of creative writing elements, they differ in their treatment of the elements and their pedagogical implications in the composition class, suggesting that composition instruction must evolve to reflect the reformed expectations of academic writing.
I dedicate my work to the amazing Grace, who provided me with the challenge and inspiration for good writing.
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CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers’s *Job Outlook 2014* survey, potential employers rank the importance of communication skills a 4.48 on a 5-point scale. It is a skill imperative to job placement and achievement, for being able to fluently join the discourse community propels a candidate up the proverbial career ladder. And, after reading scholarship from the wide field of English studies, it appears scholars from the different subfields agree that the most important objective in undergraduate English education is to develop students into effective written communicators. But before we can expect our undergraduate students to recognize, appreciate, and produce good writing, they first need to join the conversation of what exactly constitutes “good writing” through their introductory composition class.

The structure of the modern-day undergraduate composition class depends largely on its writing instructor’s educational background and interests. Career expectations in the field of writing often require extensive study and advanced degrees, and while scholars of composition attend graduate programs or PhD programs within their field, creative writers instead attend pedagogically different MFA programs. Ultimately, writers from both subfields instruct student writing in basic undergraduate composition classes, and the difference in the training and education of the writing instructors directly influences their classroom instruction. Traditionally, the curriculum of English studies separated the study of composition from the study of creative writing. The irony of this separation is that much of the scholarly work studied in the subfield of composition was, in fact, written by creative writers such as Patrick Bizzaro and Wendy Bishop, suggesting a natural merging of the two subfields. However, for English scholars entering the
world of academia, there is a recognizable pressure to label themselves within their area of focus and assumed expertise, thereby limiting their own transference of knowledge.

Scholars must decide the most effective path to emphasizing good student writing, which raises the question of whether we should continue to separate the areas of writing study and encourage specialization within English studies’ fragmented infrastructure, or instead incorporate the subfields’ strengths and develop cohesive areas of study. Considering how large and encompassing the field of English studies is, it is easy to wonder how rhetoric, creative writing, and even literary scholars could possibly use techniques and ideas learned within their respective MA, PhD, and MFA programs to strengthen their composition classes, and, in turn, their students. Unfortunately, there are significant generalizations and suppositions that these subfields hold over one another, erecting barriers that block this transference of information. However, before we decide where to redraw the barriers and where to lower them, we need to understand the pedagogy and process of each subfield within English studies.

To create a standard pedagogy in composition instruction seems like a daunting task, considering the years of specialized study and scholarship involved with earning the MA, PhD, or MFA degrees in English. The challenge is a little bit easier to accept if we follow the advice of scholar Tim Mayers and separate the subfields into two groups. The first group involves the areas of text interpretation, which includes all of the literature studies, literary criticism and literary theory areas of study. The second group would be for the areas of text production, which would involve all of the creative writing and composition/rhetoric classes. I set aside the literary studies portion of English at this time, although as we will see in the literature review, some composition scholars do suggest textual analysis as a model to be used to improve first-year instruction. This project will instead focus on the second group, examining the writing studies
portion of the English field. Of course, leveling the field of English is different than accentuating particular programs. But perhaps the start of the examination of English studies as a whole needs to happen without the subfields’ familiar predispositions and connotations. In his book *(Re)Writing Craft* (2005), Mayers argues that creative writing and composition classes should join together to create a stronger writing curriculum, even going so far as to suggest that the writing concentration should separate from the rest of English studies to be recognized as its own field, as he sees their traditional separation as a hindrance to the students. Mayers asks us:

Has the institutional separation of composition and creative writing, with literary studies wedged between them, prevented or forestalled potentially productive developments in the study and teaching of writing? Have the two fields grown so far apart that fusing them now would do irreparable harm to both, or would some sort of merging of the two fields actually create a much stronger and more institutionally viable entity than composition and creative writing currently, and separately, are? What are the theoretical, pedagogical, historical, and institutional points of overlap between composition and creative writing, and what kinds of work might be done to bring these points of overlap into sharp relief? (Mayers 28)

Mayers’ questions force us to rethink the structure of the writing curriculum and our intentions and objectives for the composition class. He sees the need to address the “points of overlap” less as notable conflicts, creating instead a convergence of ideas not meant to be so mutually exclusive. And we must explore the advantages of intermingling different writing studies programs to restructure the traditional pedagogy of the composition class.

To fully understand why Mayers believes a focus solely on text production is critical at this time, we must understand the history of English studies and how composition has earned its
place as a separate subfield of writing. Bruce McComiskey’s *English Studies* (2006) provides the background for composition, explaining where and when the subfields established themselves as worthy areas of study. McComiskey explains that the importance of composition during the 1950s and 1960s was that it kept English programs funded when the government instead supported research areas of study. At the time, the humanities were “rapidly declining in importance (again), and with the disciplines associated with science and technology reaching nearly superhero status in the academy, it was no longer sufficient to declare that English (or at least its dominant discipline, literature) was theoretical, not practical, that it was instruction in the best that has been thought and said, not training in workaday technology” (McComiskey 18).

Since first-year composition was a required course at a majority of colleges, English was kept afloat, as composition-- to put it bluntly-- paid the bills. During those decades, the humanities as a whole were devalued as a result of the shift in educational emphasis on inductive reasoning and from theory to practice. Composition reunited with rhetoric in the 1970s as renewed attention to invention, audience, structure, voice, discourse, and style grew, and so composition used rhetoric as its foundation to address these concepts in student writing. It is no coincidence that these are the same concepts that make up the foundation for study in creative writing classes, leading to the logical assumption that composition/rhetoric and creative writing might be able to share instructional techniques.

Though they may value the same concepts, composition/rhetoric and creative writing studies are still separated in the field of English and ranked in a hierarchy based on their service to the academic disciplines, as James Berlin explains in his ground-breaking 1985 *College English* article “Rhetoric and Poetics in the English Department: Our Nineteenth-Century Inheritance”: 
Rhetoric is cut off from its classical roots in its commitment to the new scientific disciplines and severed from poetics because it no longer shares with it a common epistemology. Given these parallel developments, the literary text assumes privileged status, carrying with it the prestige of the liberal arts tradition as well as the attractions of a vital and current set of ideas. Rhetorical texts are relegated to a minor status, concerned only with that which lends itself to the inductive method. (Berlin 530)

Berlin points out that academia views rhetoric as important solely for its service to the scientific fields, as students learn from their composition/rhetoric classes the correct writing conventions for the scientific discourse community. This commitment to the discipline of science writing and other discourse communities outside the field of English explains why creative writing elements are seldom promoted in academic writing and why the two forms of writing are deemed as specialized programs.

McComiskey discusses the advent of specialization, labeling it as a problem in which no one will work together to ensure practicality. Diverging from Mayers’ belief to separate writing studies programs, McComiskey is not sure that specialization is ultimately good for the field of English studies: “Although I do not argue for a nostalgic return to the bygone days of literary generalists, I do think that a certain amount of institutional power is lost when common purpose dissolves” (McComiskey 30). And so McComiskey points out that when the subfields work together, they will strengthen English studies as a whole.

Both within and outside the world of academia, there exists a current movement in which scholars are calling for the use of creative writing elements to enhance their academic writing, recognizing that good writing is writing that attracts a wide audience, enabling the writer’s message to reach more readers. Today’s writers have to adapt to the fact that once their work is
published, they lose control over the size, background, and type of audience who may read their work. Through the use of search engines and hyperlinks, the Internet has allowed readers from all over the world, of all backgrounds and levels of education, access to everything that is published. In the past, the writer wrote to an audience with similar education and experience, and was content for his message and words to exist in his own discourse community. The fact that the modern audience is so vast is encouraging for it enables valuable research to make a bigger impact on the world. However, it also provides a whole new set of challenges for writers. The writer must adjust his language, style, and structure to appeal to this general audience, or he risks misconstruing his message. Current composition theory centers on a context-driven, situational approach to writing, teaching students to write with a specific audience in mind. However, with the growth in the access of multimedia there is a clash between this style of writing and the style of writing that they will be expected to produce in the professional world. As the potential audience of published works grows, current scholars are trying to appeal their writing to both the academic discourse community as well as the general public, inviting newcomers to understand worthy and relevant research and ideas. This shift in the face of academic writing should also cause a shift in current composition theory, to teach students to produce writing that is less situational and more universal. To encourage the end-product of academic writing to be more reader-based is revolutionary, yet it must be suggested in the first-year composition classroom, which is the first time students are exposed to the expectations and conventions of academic writing.

Helen Sword, author of *Stylish Academic Writing* (2012), Steven Pinker, author of *The Sense of Style* (2014), and Kate Evans, author of *Pathways Through Writing Blocks in the Academic Environment* (2013) discuss this growing trend to incorporate creative writing
techniques in academic writing. Sword explains that academic writing limits its scope by adhering to its traditional structure, as she argues “that elegant ideas deserve elegant expression; that intellectual creativity thrives best in an atmosphere of experimentation rather than conformity; and that, even within the constraints of disciplinary norms, most academics enjoy a far wider range of stylistic choices than they realize” (Sword vii). Sword challenges scholars and educators at the undergraduate and graduate level to engage in what she labels “good writing”--writing that is grammatically correct and interesting, two qualities that make it captivating to a wide and general audience. She questions the intentions of educators as she asks, “Why do universities--institutions dedicated to creativity, research innovation, collegial interchange, high standards of excellence, and the education of a diverse and ever-changing population of students--churn out so much uninspiring, cookie-cutter prose?” (Sword 6), the type of prose that we often see in first-year composition courses. It is a question that forces us to examine both how and why the traditional academic style of writing is acceptable in certain discourse communities yet unappealing to the general public.

One would predict that this current trend to create a more stylish form of academic writing would influence the instruction of the undergraduate composition class, likely the students’ first exposure and attempts at academic writing, as they seek inclusion within their discipline’s discourse community. But do our undergraduate composition classes actually encourage “good” writing or encourage what we assume is acceptable within the discipline? Current composition pedagogy, which follows a context-driven, audience-emphasized ideology, should adhere to the advice of Sword, Pinker, and Evans and use creative elements to produce writing directed towards a general audience, and this thesis proves that that is not always the case. My examination of five textbooks produced a conflicting array of findings as to their
treatment of the current trend to incorporate creative writing elements in the finished written product, suggesting that composition instruction must evolve to reflect the reformed expectations of academic writing.

For this work, I focus on the text production classes, and in particular, composition and creative writing. For my research, I ask: how do composition textbooks use creative writing elements to strengthen student writing in the undergraduate composition class? More specifically, I study how creative writing elements such as the use of the narrative, figurative language, and the first person voice are used and taught in the composition textbooks, to prove that by integrating the techniques of creative writing into composition, we ultimately strengthen student writing. If our composition classes reflect the current movement to integrate creative writing elements in academic writing, we will be more efficient at accomplishing English studies’ most important goal: to instruct student writers on how to effectively communicate to a wide audience.

In chapter two, I chronologically review the literature that discusses the separation of creative writing and composition and suggests reasons and methods to integrate creative writing elements in the composition class. In chapter three, I analyze the work of Sword, Pinker, and Evans as I discuss the current trend towards creating academic writing that appeals to a general audience. In chapter four, I describe my methodology to determine if this current trend to produce a stylish form of academic writing is reflected in modern day composition class by examining the following undergraduate composition textbooks, selected primarily for their popularity and marketability: The Brief McGraw-Hill Guide: Writing for College, Writing for Life; The Allyn and Bacon Guide to Writing; The St. Martin’s Guide to Writing; An Insider’s Guide to Academic Writing; and Writing Analytically. I explain the selection process and the
methodology for this examination, using ideological criticism. In chapter five, I discuss my findings of how these textbooks treat the creative writing elements advocated by Pinker, Sword, and Evans; specifically the use of the narrative, figurative language, and first person voice in academic writing. How effective are these popular textbooks when we apply recent calls for a creative approach to academic writing? Are we teaching the students to do what the leading scholars say will produce good writing? As I addressed these questions, I found that while all the textbooks address the same creative writing elements, their treatment in regards to the extent of their discussion varies greatly. The textbooks most applicable for introductory broad-based writing classes present creative writing elements in the same way as the early scholars did—as useful in the process of writing, but not acceptable in the final draft. Interestingly, I found that the two more advanced, scholarly textbooks are more open to the use of the creative elements in the final draft, and I can see how these books, along with a writing instructor’s additional guidance, can comply with the advice of the current scholars to produce more readable academic writing. I summarize my findings and follow with my conclusion in chapter six, and I suggest possibilities to amend the structure of the future undergraduate composition class. Following the conclusion, I include a short coda in which I demonstrate the use of the creative writing elements narrative, figurative language, and first person voice.

Few people would argue that composition is unimportant to the education of an undergraduate student; the ability to write well allows students to join the conversation of the discipline and to establish identity and credibility, and the composition class exposes students, for the first time, to the form of academic writing. Traditionalist members of academia may wonder why, if the goal for academic writing is to appeal to a select and limited discourse community, should it be important to create scholarship that is more interesting to both the writer
and the reader? Evans answers this question as she explains that the process strengthens the product: “Enjoying the writing process, delighting in the textures and tastes of words and how we can slot them together to form […] sentences and paragraphs, releases the potential for invention” (Evans 102). Seeing writing as a process for invention, as Evans suggests, is not a new idea. But if academic writing is changing and expanding to accept diverse structures, we need to make sure that we are teaching a wide range of writing skills and techniques to our composition students. Sword says: “The art of academic storytelling is a complex business, yet it depends on a very simple principle: a good story makes people want to keep reading to find out what happens next” (Sword 96). By suggesting that academic writing adopt a storytelling nature, Sword creates an environment that could potentially excite student writers enough to write with the kind of fervor and passion that their creative writing counterparts enjoy. For students to learn to create reader-based academic writing requires the collusion of creative writing and composition/rhetoric, a process that Berlin assumes to be inevitable: “The possibility that rhetoric and poetics will […] realize their dependence on one another, together addressing the total range of uses to which language is put, is imminent. It is a consummation devoutly to be desired” (Berlin 532). Berlin foreshadowed creative writing’s involvement in the undergraduate composition classroom. And, once undergraduate composition pedagogy meets Berlin’s vision, the way in which students learn academic writing will be reformed as well.

In the next chapter, I examine the chronological history of the relationship between creative writing and composition/rhetoric classes, and I review suggestions from scholars for the two forms of writing instruction to learn to work together.
CHAPTER II. LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to evolve the undergraduate composition class to maintain real-world relevance, scholars must discover the most effective and acceptable writing techniques to prepare students to write for future career discourse communities. After conducting this review of literature, it is clear that most scholars believe creative writing techniques can and should be used in composition classes, and that the separation of the two has hurt writing studies programs as a whole. In the fight to maintain independence from literary studies’ encompassing reach, scholars have isolated writing classes from each other, and, as a result, have hindered growth for the writing half of the English studies field. However, before creative writing and composition can successfully work together, scholars must first recognize the characteristics of both fields to discern ways of overcoming their differences, and, ultimately, create a cohesive curriculum.

While past scholars primarily see the value of using creative writing elements in the early stages of the writing process, particularly the invention stage, current scholars understand that these elements turn the finished written product into prose that is more acceptable to a wide audience. The following works illustrate the chronological evolution of the concept to create a writing studies program that combines both creative writing and composition pedagogy. By discussing the scholarship chronologically, we see that the concept of integrating creative writing elements in undergraduate composition has consistently resurfaced throughout the history of composition studies, preparing for the current movement in which scholars are calling for the use of creative writing elements in academic writing.

Marvin Bell, an advocate for the use of literature and creativity in composition courses, is a scholar who, when read today, seems to have written fifty years ahead of his time. He discusses the use of literary studies and creative writing in composition courses in his essay “Poetry and Freshman Composition” (1964). Bell recognizes the value of studying the process of poetry
writing in composition classes because, as he says, a student “learns that [...] the same
techniques which go into the writing of a good poem are available and/or necessary to the
writing of a decent composition [...] some measure of art may reside in a composition, providing
its author has become a good enough writer” (Bell 1). According to Bell, poetry’s value to
composition students lies in the fact that good writing is artistic, whether creative or academic in
nature. Bell lists many specific reasons why poetry can be useful in the composition class.

Bell favors the use of poetry over the use of fiction because more poems can be read
completely and in less time, and so therefore more lessons can be taught from a wider scope of
samples. Bell discusses which kind of poetry is useful in the composition class, and he stresses
contemporary poems. He recommends using an anthology of poems as a composition class
textbook, and he explains that he favors “acquainting the composition student with as many
kinds of subjects [...] as is possible. Poetry can be used to acquaint him with a great deal, in a
relatively short time” (Bell 5), an idea that connects to lessons learned from literary studies. Bell
goes on to explain exactly what the student has to gain by studying a wide variety of poetry in a
composition class: “The effectiveness of certain techniques [...] in composition are reinforced
when he finds them similar to elements in so-called ‘creative’ writing. The student winds up
feeling that a concern for good writing [...] has an importance substantiated in fact” (Bell 5).
Here, Bell accentuates the importance that a student come to his own realization of the power of
good writing through reading examples of poetry and then writing their own poetry, and explains
why he sees creative writing elements as necessary support for students to understand how to
write and develop academic writing skills.

When discussing composition pedagogy, scholars focus on the invention phase of the
writing process, and many agree that students can be taught to use writing to discover ideas and
to develop self-identity. This notion of “writing for discovery” is first identified by the cognitive compositionist Janet Emig in her essay “The Uses of the Unconscious in Composing” (1964).

Emig explores the act of writing and how it traditionally involves a very conscious act of an already busy student, who puts in minimal effort, guided by traditional process goals that the textbooks outline in three stages: subject (idea invention), preparation (outline and rough draft) and writing (first draft then ending in final draft). This takes away the option of using writing for discovery by instructing the student to plan for the theme. Emig calls for a more intricate process that involves the subconscious, the “sloppy and inefficient procedure for even the most disciplined and long-writing of professional authors” (Emig 7). Creation must instead take place between the pen and paper, not in the forethought but in the actual physical and unconscious process of writing. Emig quotes writers who give control of their writing back to the process. Gertrude Stein speaks for this way of writing, and Edgar Allen Poe claims “The Raven” wrote itself step by step as if a math problem, reinforcing Emig’s notion that creation takes place through the writing process (Emig 8).

To be able to reach into the unconscious and allow writing words to flow naturally, the writer must have pinpoint concentration. Emig differentiates between habit and ritual, saying that rituals put the writer in the clutches of the concentration needed to fully access the unconscious and that habit is “part of the writing self that observes a regular schedule; that finds a room, desk or even writing board of its own […]. Ritual is more elevated, less secular. Where habit is suppressive, ritual is evocative; where habit is eliminative, ritual is initiatory” (Emig 9). By describing habit and ritual in this way, Emig warns against relying on habit and its “suppressive” tendencies. To Emig, writing habits that are encouraged by traditionally taught composition instructors are therefore too confining and limiting to produce the kind of good student writing
that is captivating to both the student and the audience, though it seems today that we encourage students to develop writerly habits and stress habit over ritual in basic composition classes.

Emig’s solution for students who write using total consciousness and lack of creativity or interest is to lengthen the time between assignments, due dates, and discussions, as she says that “we can encourage students to regard themes as entities that evolve and develop by allowing deadlines to be regarded as flexible affairs” (Emig 11). By creating a flexible deadline rather than a stagnant one, students would be more likely to utilize ritualistic behaviors of writing rather than habitual behaviors. Another way to release the pressure that a deadline represents is to encourage students to examine their own writing processes and keep a time-table of deadlines so that they can work backwards to meet their own deadlines.

To define ritualized writing, Emig talks about how some writers focus on the medium, pen/pencil, and what they do before they begin writing-- reading other works or talking to each other about the process. She also alludes to free-writing as she says that the student is instructed that “When mute or in doubt, start generating words on the page; then through examining what you have produced automatically or semi-automatically, you may discern a pattern in the seeming written chaos” (Emig 10). Emig views free writing as a cognitive practice, as a student learns how to rely on his subconscious rather than his conscious, and sees for himself that more ideas are generated through the pattern he unknowingly produced. Interestingly, this article was published before Peter Elbow came out with the term “free writing” and explained its value in the pre-writing and invention phase of the process.

Emig’s argument for the use of free writing in the pre-writing phase of the writing process supports Michael G. Southwell’s views. In his 1977 essay “Free Writing in Composition Classes,” Southwell explains free writing’s importance in a composition class for the invention
and idea generation phase of the writing process, along with the educational experience it provides for students to learn that writing truly is a form of discovery. Southwell is a remedial composition teacher and has found free writing to be an imperative exercise for his students who often have severe writing problems because it “lets them say what they can say instead of forcing them to worry about how to say what they can’t yet say at all […] Free writing can thus teach students that it’s not necessary to know everything they want to say before they start” (Southwell 677). In other words, and similar to Emig, Southwell agrees that writing for discovery, through the roughest draft of free writing, is important to get students through the invention phase of the writing process, avoiding the common pitfalls of early writing stages that prevent students from generating their own novel ideas.

As students get used to free writing without restrictions, Southwell then asks them to stick to one topic, a trivial topic that he may choose, such as writing about a penny, or a shoe. As soon as they begin writing, students learn they have much more to say than they had originally thought. He eventually encourages the students to explain the difference between their free writing and the essay writing for grade, teaching students to differentiate between creative and academic writing. The students usually tell him that the major difference is that the graded essay has standards and will be judged, and that it must stick to a single topic. Then, when he grades their essays and they have some of the same properties of free writing (poor grammar, spelling, lack of paragraphs, no organization, various ideas) he can clearly point out how they are handing in samples of what would be very acceptable as free writing but not to their own standards of essay. Students learn this lesson of invention well since they originally defined the expectations on essay-writing and have practiced writing in both styles.
Southwell discusses other beneficial uses of free writing. He says it generates topics that can be explored for other papers at a later date. He suggests students begin every paper by free writing on their topic, which will make their argument clear to them, finding that “free writing thus lets them find out just what they have to say, without having to worry at the same time about how to say it” (Southwell 680). Southwell implies that the how will come at a later time. Another advantage to free writing is that it enables the teacher to teach the student how to write correct individual sentences rather than focus on an entire essay, which may seem daunting. They can focus on the passage, not worry about writing the essay. Eventually, the student learns that an essay is the collection of many good individual sentences. Finally, by free writing, students learn to care about what they are writing and then also care about how they say it, since it is in their own voice and feeling.

James L. Kinneavy disagrees with both Southwell and Emig and their depiction of the pre-writing stage of the writing process. He does not think that the process of writing begins when the student engages in actual writing, discovering his topic and ideas as he writes, but rather in the important research phase of the process. In his 1987 essay “The Process of Writing: A Philosophical Base in Hermeneutics,” Kinneavy connects composition theory to German theorist Martin Heidegger, saying that Heidegger’s concept of process is relevant to composition and describing his theory of interpretation by starting with the term “forestructure” (Kinneavy 6). Every interpretation is unique because it has everything to do with the thinker’s frame of reference and mindset. A writer’s past enables him “to see the object as a whole separate from other wholes, as a unity, and as a complex structure with interrelated parts” (Kinneavy 6). This describes the interpretive act a writer must make when addressing something new. The meaning is determined by the developing whole. Therefore, “the meaning of the parts depends on the
wholes, and the meaning of the wholes depends on the meaning of its parts” (6), enforcing Kinneavy’s notion that forethought, planning, and research are the necessary first steps of pre-writing, and they occur far earlier than when pen first meets paper.

Using Heidegger’s model of process provides a more flexible approach for writers. This would eliminate the idea that there is just one stage of invention in the writing process. Kinneavy explains that “disciplinary communities think, organize, and discourse differently […] Hopefully, there are also common thinking, organizational, and style behaviors which will still enable us to communicate at some level with other groups and with the public” (Kinneavy 9). This particular statement from Kinneavy explains his goal for implementing Heidegger’s approach rather than the linear approach offered by composition scholars, as he wishes to relate what students learn in composition class to other areas of study so that the skills they use will not just focus on process but will be designed to create a better product.

Like Kinneavy, poet Sherrod Santos also references Heidegger’s approach to composition, yet he disagrees with Kinneavy’s interpretation of the invention phase. In his 1993 essay “Eating the Angel, Conceiving the Sun: Towards a Notion of Poetic Thought,” Santos defends the use of the subconscious in the early stages of the writing process, and he sees the art of poetry as a means to explain and answer questions about thinking, recalling Bell’s use of poetry in composition classwork. Santos’ inquiry of subject choice is another argument for writing for discovery. He goes on to assure us that poetry that is planned or thought out is not as effective as poetry that develops on its own, and the meaning it derives is in a state of discovery. He values “a kind of thinking which thinks about what cannot be thought” (Santos 9) rather than the traditional composition instruction to write about what you already know. Here, Santos personifies the process of thinking and writing as he questions the independence of a poem:
“What do we know beforehand when we sit down to write a poem? […] And when, in advance, we do already have a ‘subject’ in mind, what does it mean, as so often happens, when the poem decides to pursue some wholly different inclination?” (Santos 9). Santos poses these questions to point to the use of subconscious in the writing process, and he likens his experience to Emig’s cognitive theory.

To get to the level of thinking that Emig advocates, according to Santos, is a matter of giving up power to the poem or the prose: “The poem revises the poet, not the other way around” (Santos 11). He addresses the idea concerning pre-existing knowledge and the poem again at the end of his essay in a lyrical way: “It may be that that’s the thing which poets know, the presence of that marked, presiding loss, the thought beyond the reach of thought, the thought toward which our thoughts all turn when we’re in the draught of thinking” (Santos 13). Here, Santos, who undoubtedly lies at the creative writing extreme on the spectrum of composition and creative writing, defends the process of writing for discovery from the view of a writer and derives his theory from his own experiences and work and that of his contemporaries, rather than based on research and scholarly or academic work.

Like Bell suggested earlier, in her essay “Voices from the Writing Center: It’s Okay to Be Creative” (1994), Lea Masiello explains, from a compositionist’s perspective, why it is important to use imaginative, creative writing exercises in basic composition courses. She says that the traditional rules of composition are too binding for most students and limit their abilities to build identity and confidence by experimenting with style and voice, and that most students are successful at being expressive writers but weak as academic writers because of their inexperience with both writing and reading. For this reason, Masiello introduces texts to her students that serve as models and also generate thought for individual topics and ideas. She uses
Annie Dillard’s *An American Childhood* as a model for students to create their own personal essay. This assignment is an example of using creative writing techniques in composition; while a personal essay is a common assignment in basic composition class, the modeling technique is borrowed from the creative writing classroom.

Masiello describes the difference between static writing, in which students follow basic writing rules ingrained in them (such as not starting a sentence with And, not using I, and not writing more than eight sentences in a paragraph) and a new dynamic way of writing in which students discover as they write, which is similar to the concept of free writing. She advocates re-teaching process in a way that focuses on the invention phase by using activities to ignite this invention phase, in which students read articles and write on how the topics may appear in their own lives. Masiello allows her students to write in any medium they choose for their early drafts and then works with them in the writing center to evolve the piece into the required academic essay. This approach allows the student to grow and learn his own identity, as she notes that had she “forced him to change, he would have only decided to write in order to please me, and therefore he would have lost identity rather than gained it” (Masiello 213). Masiello implies that should a student lose his identity as a writer, the quality of his work, through his individual voice, is bound to deteriorate.

Masiello relies heavily on writing center tutors to guide this transition from using a creative medium to formalized academic writing, finding that the distance she puts between herself and the student at this stage is important for the student’s developing voice, because “they are more able to convince my students that they can learn to write academic essays and still maintain their creativity. Many basic writers fear that if they cave in to the structural demands of the college essay, they must abandon the voice and stylistic expression” (Masiello 213), which is
key to the argument to allow the use of creative writing elements in the final draft. In other words, the ability of a writing center tutor to relate to the student as a peer rather than as an authority figure allows the student to feel that he is an equal collaborating on his work, rather than simply writing to please the teacher. Masiello worries that if we do not train writing center tutors to nurture creativity in student writing, we will be unable to develop “strong writing identities, and without such an identity, basic writers will continue to avoid writing and/or remain disengaged from their ideas and expression” (Masiello 216), which would not only be a loss to the student but would make learning and writer development stagnant.

In her 1994 essay “Contact Zones and English Studies,” Patricia Bizzell addresses the struggle between the subfields of creative writing and composition as she focuses on the need to accommodate new English courses and areas of study. She suggests “instead of finagling the new literature and the new pedagogical and critical approaches into our old categories, we should try to find comprehensive new forms that seem to spring from and respond to the new materials” (Bizzell 164). Her idea of developing courses that are rooted in traditional areas of study but involve new material is Bizzell’s solution to the discord between the subfields of English studies which, as these sources show, has been going on for 30 years. According to Bizzell, we may not even need new categories as much as a restructure of how we perceive different directions to go within already existing courses. Bizzell proposes that English studies be restructured by its “contact zones,” which are social grounds that are changing or struggling, using literatures from different cultures that come together. Students would examine the rhetorical success and nature of each writer dealing with the matter at hand. Bizzell acknowledges the value of using literary study as a textual model as se explains that a connective approach to English would “fully integrate composition and rhetoric into literary studies. Studying texts as they respond to contact
zones is studying them rhetorically, studying them as efforts of rhetoric” (Bizzell 168), and by studying literary fields in a rhetoric manner, writing instructors can educate students on the importance of audience awareness and language. Bizzell predicts that by using this interrelated approach of literature and writing, in the future, English studies will change its own classification system. Instead of being a scholar in a specific field like Shakespeare or composition, “people’s areas of focus would be determined by the kinds of rhetorical problems in which they were interested” (Bizzell 169). Using this approach to restructure the pedagogy of English studies would encourage subfields to work together in both the writing and the literacy of each struggling time period. Professors would be able to guide students to a better understanding of how the fields work together, and a better awareness of audience and rhetoric is bound to improve student writing.

Wendy Bishop also examines Bell and Masiello’s idea of combining creative writing and composition’s curricula, observing a disconnection between the student writer and the instructor, and she recognizes reasons why composition instructors fail to relate to their students. In her essay “Crossing the Lines: On Creative Composition and Composing Creative Writing” (1994), Bishop notes a shortcoming in the composition classroom; most writing teachers don’t write with their students, and if they do write, it is not in the same genre or type of writing that students are required to do, as many composition instructors have a creative writing background. Bishop also points out that many writing teachers may have “tested out” of their own first-year composition requirement in college and therefore do not know the struggles their students face. Graduate students in creative writing programs view themselves as writers, Bishop observes, while composition graduate students view themselves as scholars, indicating a split in how the fields view themselves and what they do. She likens the academic writing that is required of such
scholars to the work of first-year compositionists: “Academic writing may be as distinctly unpleasurable for some teachers as composition is for many of their students since academic writing is, to a degree, as compulsory within institutional life as is first-year writing for a first-year student” (Bishop 185). Therefore, according to Bishop, many teachers don’t write and publish their own work, and those who do write either specialize in their fields of interest such as creative writing and write in the form of poems and stories, or produce academic work in the form of classroom handouts. This is not the same type of academic work that is expected of composition students, so the need for the teacher to relate to the student writer is not fulfilled.

Bishop reflects on the familiar debate over what is valued most in English studies, which most scholars agree to be consumption of texts over production. She also writes about the confusion and differences in grading composition work versus creative writing. At first, Bishop used the generic college level rubric to grade the academic work, but found it impossible to grade creative work in the same fashion. Bishop decided it was more accurate to use the portfolio method of grading for all her writing classes, while still abiding by state and university program mandates and constraints. She admits that since she never took a composition class she cannot relate to the student angst. To overcome her lack of sympathy, she then put herself in her advanced composition class as a student, forcing herself to write alongside them, and found it to be “sobering, informative, and tough” (Bishop 189).

Bishop points out that compositionists already borrow techniques from creative writing programs such as the use of the writing workshop as a tool to encourage collaborative pedagogy, and also in its use of the portfolio review for grading purposes. Even so, she finds that the commonalities between writing creatively and writing academically are not often discussed. Should the barriers between creative writing and composition writing be lowered, essays will be
more imaginative and interesting to both the writer and the audience, and may become seeds for future creative projects. Bishop maintains that such boundaries were erected because of the ease they provide the field of English studies to clearly sort and define the different disciplines.

Bishop provides us with her solution for how to combine the two subfields into one curriculum as she advocates that creative writing should be taught to first-year composition students, so that they can utilize important lessons regarding authorship, creativity, and textuality. If writing is seen as all encompassing, student writing will improve because they are more likely to enjoy it and invest themselves in it.

Next, Bishop believes we should treat students like writers first, students second, so that they learn to view themselves that way. In this vein, student-writing research would be just as valuable as testimonial by famous writers because students, as Bishop says, “are writers whenever they write, and they will believe us when we say so only when we acknowledge their rights through our course designs and our attitudes towards their work” (Bishop 193). Here, Bishop emphasizes recognizing student writing not only for the research we can gather from it but also for the confidence the students will gain for their ability to express their thought as writers. Bishop’s last point is to encourage writing teachers to write alongside their students, “composing extensively and gaining an introduction to the many discourses of English studies” (Bishop 193). By sharing in this practice, teachers will experience the same struggles and conquests that the students feel in their classes “as a complex human endeavor, requiring practice and analysis, involving beliefs and emotions, resulting in failure and success” (Bishop 194). In other words, when composition instructors recognize and relate to the same challenges their students face, they are bound to understand the emotions that the process invokes, and this understanding will improve their pedagogical practices and grading policies.
Later, in her 1995 essay “The Literary Text and the Writing Classroom,” Bishop again argues for English subfields to work together to strengthen student writing. In this essay, Bishop discusses the pedagogy, disciplinary tensions and professional allegiances that exist in the first year composition course. She examines the confusion that surrounds different pedagogical ideas and addresses problems that are rooted in the instructional language that teachers use, such as a difference in the relationship between audience and voice. Most importantly, Bishop suggests additional changes moving forward in the field of English studies. She discusses the difference in the experience level and talent of creative writing graduate assistants and literature graduate assistants. While both groups can be successful at teaching freshman composition, the first group consists of aspiring writers, therefore, they may adapt an approach that examines the process. The second group is more interested in being literary scholars and so they may crave the opportunity to teach through literary texts as examples (Bishop 441). Bishop goes on to discuss the ways the department of English studies is arranged. Most schools, hers included, abide by a “field coverage” approach in which every professor is regarded as a specialist and has no need to converse or share ideas with other areas of study. This isolated environment is not helpful for growing and evolving each discipline. Bishop sees the solution to this lack of conversation to be refocusing on the new writing teachers who hope to become part of an English department--graduate students in both the field of composition and creative writing.

Bishop sums up the change she believes English studies must adopt. First, she believes that “we need to be teaching writing” (Bishop 449) in all the areas of English courses, even in upper level and graduate courses. Pedagogy should always be at the forefront of our minds. Second, introductory freshman English courses should be more enticing and interesting to both the students and the graduate assistants who teach them, allowing them to use their backgrounds
and strengths to take the course in the direction they see fit. In this way, students can learn different but effective processes.

Bishop sees the value and the need to teach both reading and writing skills in all English courses. She quotes Hephzibah Roskelley when she says we can refuse to keep writing and reading in “an unnatural partnership [that] obscures the fact that both processes are directed and produced by the force of the imagination” (Roskelley qtd. in Bishop 451). By calling the current partnership “unnatural” and then unifying the areas of reading and writing for their foundation in the imagination, Bishop recognizes and appreciates the importance of using creative reading and writing techniques to teach student writing, as she sees both textual interpretation and production as cognitively connected.

Whereas Bizzell and Bishop provide ample evidence that writing strategies from the different subfields of English can be helpful in the composition class, Patrick Bizzaro labels these different writing strategies as “alternative” strategies. In his essay “Should I Write This Essay or Finish a Poem? Teaching Writing Creatively” (1998), Bizzaro suggests that the use of these alternative strategies is to provide the student with additional methods to be used separate from the traditional composition theory. Bizzaro talks about his background and his own education as a literature grad student. He says he himself never took a creative writing workshop, even though he writes poetry and leads workshops himself. He was discouraged by a panelist on the Associated Writing Program (AWP) who told him that real writers spend their time writing and not presenting essays, which is commonplace for composition scholars. The choice of whether he should aspire to present a scholarly essay or work on his own creative writing perplexed him and inspired the title of this essay.
Bizzaro cites several different scholars who use creative writing elements to teach students how to address language, grammar, and style in their academic writing. To prove the field’s relevance in scholarship, Bizzaro touches on the major works in the field of creative writing such as D.G. Meyers’ *The Elephants Teach: Creative Writing since 1880*, known in the creative writing field as its first chronicled history. Bizzaro outlines three reasons why alternate styles of writing should be welcomed and taught. (1) Creative writing’s use in the composition classroom can follow chronologically as the next step in the history of creative writing. (2) Creative writing can teach students to be more perceptive. And (3) creative writing can provoke better use of the imagination (Bizzaro 296). He connects back to the alignment of creative writing and composition as he notes that “composition instruction has also aligned itself with the usual going-on of the creative writing class in its concern with stimulating the imagination. Perhaps a pedagogy of the imagination […] may have a role to play in the future of education” (Bizzaro 297). Here, Bizzaro points out that composition and creative writing may be more similar in their use of the imagination than they are presumed to be. So, by aligning the two subfields, Bizzaro provides for us a compelling argument for the need to develop a combined writing curriculum.

While Bizzaro notes the similarities that exist between creative writing and composition, Ted Lardner addresses exactly where the barriers between creative writing and composition are drawn. In his 1999 essay “Locating the Boundaries of Composition and Creative Writing,” Lardner discusses which skills and techniques each should “borrow” from the other. In this essay, Lardner discusses Richard Fulkerson’s “Four Philosophies of Composition” (1979) in which he defines the four elements that constitute the theory of composition: conception of writing process, pedagogy, epistemological assumptions, and axiological commitment, and how
the four elements can be used to bring creative writing and composition studies together by explaining the elements’ relevance to composition and their shortcomings to creative writing. Lardner’s argument is that creative writing can learn from composition theory in the first three elements but that composition has to learn from creative writing in the last element. He also argues that all four elements do exist, to some degree, in creative writing.

Process theory has been an important area for both research and inclusion in composition conferences since the 1970s. Lardner points out that there has been some, but not enough, work in creative writing that also acknowledges process. The reason why it falls short of composition in this area is that most creative writers believe in a natural or organic process that is difficult to teach. It is still a field whose pedagogy, at both an undergraduate and graduate level, relies mostly on lore. Pedagogical texts also lag behind composition studies because the process is less outlined and more mysterious. Even in the pedagogical texts that have been published, creative writers rarely cite each other’s work, denying themselves the ability to host a conversation amongst themselves. Lardner observes that “the typical creative writing class may be more conservative than the composition classroom, where the subtext of composing (as a social process mediated through power relations) runs near the surface of classroom discourse” (Lardner 73). Here, Lardner acknowledges that compositionists are more familiar with the composing process than creative writers, and he implies that creative writers do not consider the social perspective, or audience, as well as compositionists do.

Looking at writing from the epistemological lens, Lardner says that “few creative writing classes evince conscious engagement with the philosophical underpinnings upon which foundational notions such as ‘voice’ and ‘point of view’ so thoroughly depend” (Lardner 75). This is in contrast to many of the other writing scholars, such as Bell and Bishop, who praise
creative writing’s ability to evoke voice and point of view, and actually use techniques from creative writing to teach these lessons. However, since this element deals with the way we imagine the activity of writing and its connection between meaning and words, taking an epistemological approach to creative writing study may improve student writing by encouraging students to study and reflect on their writing through the lens of composition theories, rather than leaving the author responsible for producing creative work on his own.

According to Lardner, axiology, or the ability to define good writing, is an area that composition can benefit from creative writing. Creative writing teachers assess growth and development in their students through their writing, while compositionists often do not leave enough room for student interaction and dialog to evolve their writing. He discusses Ann Rugles Gere’s study of writing groups in which each group identified four common goals: “self-esteem, honing the craft, the opportunity for performance, and the perception of writing as an activity which changes the writer’s and others’ lives” (Lardner 76). These are four common identities of creative writers that seem to be left out of the composition studies list of importance when compositionists discuss the important elements of academic writing.

Some scholars believe that the discord in the pedagogies of creative writing and composition evolved from focus, or lack of focus, in its study. In his 2004 essay “Research and Reflection in English Studies: The Special Case of Creative Writing,” Patrick Bizzaro evolved from his earlier essay to claim that creative writers resist study into their own processes to divert attention away from demystifying the imagination so valued and necessary for their craft. He is quick to point out, as well, that “though this resistance exists widely among creative writers, it should not suggest, generally speaking, that writers who teach writing do not want their students to write well” (Bizzaro 295), defending creative writers’ good intentions towards improving
student writing. However, this unwillingness to join the academy in its quest to improve pedagogy and practice based on its research is an attitude that some have called anti-intellectual, as creative writers think “the mere mention of theory or praxis sets off alarms […] Most still view such language as the language of the academic community and […] believe such language to be contradictory at best and dishonest at worst” (Bizzaro 295). Here, Bizzaro shows how effective negative connotations of an entire subfield (composition) can be on one’s own subfield. Bizzaro then suggests that if creative writers were more prone to question long standing practices in their craft, such as the infamous writing workshop, they would be able to evolve stronger and more successful programs, and peer composition scholars would recognize the research’s contribution to evolving the field. He points out that “creative writing’s lack of status in most departments in which it is taught has coincided historically with its subordination […] to literary study, if requirements for graduation are any indication” (Bizzaro 296). Once again, Bizzaro blames creative writing’s unevolved pedagogical practices for its subordination to literary studies, and until its emphasis changes from its finished text production to the process for production, creative writing will continue to be subordinate to literary study.

Anna Leahy, a creative writer who also teaches composition, does not agree with Bizzaro’s claim that creative writers focus on the end-product of writing more than its process, as she uses the freedom associated with creative writing prose and poetry to teach her students valuable lessons in grammar. She discusses this theory in her 2005 essay “Grammar Matters: A Creative Writer’s Argument.” Leahy believes that grammar should be mixed into all parts of English classes so that students understand its role and importance in communication. Similar to Bishop, Leahy uses fictional texts in her classes, rather than the writings of traditional compositionist theorists, to show her students that word choice and language is crucial to the
writing’s meaning and identity. She believes that her “responsibility as a teacher is to help students better realize their ideas in sentences and paragraphs, to become aware of choices they have and to move beyond what they can already do” (Leahy 306). Her emphasis on moving students past what they already do “easily” implies that she intends to challenge students to be better writers than they know they can be. The responsibility to challenge students is the same for all teachers of writing; Leahy proves her point, shared with Santos and Bell, that fiction and poetry used as classroom texts serve as effective models for composition students learning to grasp the power of language.

While writing instructors such as Leahy borrow models and some elements of creative writing to bolster their composition classes, Tim Mayers’ book (Re)Writing Craft, 2005, explains that creative writing and composition classes need to join together to create a stronger writing curriculum for college English studies programs. In fact, Mayers suggests creating writing studies as a new, separate division from the rest of English studies, which he says has been focused primarily on literary studies instead of on writing. A student would have the option of majoring in writing rather than a fully rounded English studies experience. A creative writer and composition teacher himself, Mayers began to notice the unbalance in the specialization of English studies as a graduate student and now experiences it firsthand as an undergraduate professor. Mayers begins his book by giving a historical account that shows that composition and creative writing were separated right at the start of collegiate English curriculum, needlessly, but kept that way because of tradition. He differentiates between institutional methods between the two fields, such as staggering pedagogical differences between MFA programs and PhD programs, and theoretical connections as he explains that “on a basic level, composition studies seemed-- and still seems-- a much more natural ‘fit’ with creative writing, though there are a
number of fissures between these two subdisciplines. Nonetheless, in the border area between composition and creative writing lies the work of several scholars to whom this book owes a great deal” (Mayers xi), after which Mayer’ goes on to list several recognizable scholars such as Bishop, Mary Ann Cain, Bizzaro, and Kelly Ritter, whose work he uses to defend his revolutionary idea of exactly how to combine the two subfields into one large, recognizable program. Although he champions the need for joining creative writing and composition theories, Mayers also acknowledges that while some scholars believe that inviting literary studies to join the alliance would strengthen the English studies program, he firmly disagrees as he says,

compositionists and creative writers currently interested in reforming English studies ought to be very wary of the temptation to reconcile their fields with literary studies, given the probability that such reconciliation is only likely to reinforce the dominance of interpretation as the central methodological focus of the discipline. (Mayers 114)

By reinforcing an already dominant field, Mayers worries that writing studies would be cast even further into its shadow. In other words, for a writing-centered program to emerge, writing instructors of English studies must be focused on strictly text production.

As mentioned earlier, before the subfields of creative writing and composition can productively work together, certain assumptions must be understood and, eventually, resolved. The connotations that each subfield hold about the other are very restrictive; Mayers points out that “many in the field [of composition] do not think of creative writing as a body of knowledge enriched or moved forward by collective contributions so much as they consider it an arena for individual achievement” (Mayers 12). Mayers is referring to the supposed lack of scholarship afforded to the scholars of creative writing. The subfield’s works and the journals in which they appear are of a decidedly less academic nature than scholarly composition journals. He labels
creative writers as possessing a natural shared knowledge of what can be taught as craft and what must be innate in the writer, as he explains that “this institutional-conventional wisdom holds that creativity or writing ability is fundamentally ‘interior’ or ‘psychological’ in nature and that it is thus the province only of special or gifted individuals and is fundamentally unteachable” (Mayers 14), and by labeling creative writing as “unteachable,” scholars can easily dismiss the need to devote study to its pedagogy. While Mayers does not necessarily think that creative writing is unteachable, relying solely on the writer’s innate abilities, he does agree that creativity is mysterious and its practitioners are already engaged in their own internal debate of whether writing can actually be taught, as he quotes the poet Mary Oliver to say: “Something that is essential cannot be taught; it can only be given, or earned, or formulated in a manner too mysterious to be picked apart and redesigned for the next person” (Oliver qtd. in Mayer 16). It is creative writing’s ambiguity towards its writing process that stimulates Mayers to believe that creative writing classes should focus solely on the craft of writing. He then quotes fiction writer Madison Smart Bell: “It’s not that a student’s inner process can’t be influenced from without. It’s that it shouldn’t be”(Mayers 17). He goes on to explain: “An ethical teacher may recommend devices to stimulate the process of imagination, but that is a different matter from participating in them” (Mayers 17). Mayers uses Bell’s own words to further display the resistance to defining the subfield’s pedagogy that creative writers have traditionally held. Because of these assumptions by the creative writers, Mayers concludes that “creative writing seems radically opposed to much of what goes on in composition studies and literary studies at both the theoretical and pedagogical levels” (Mayers 17). And this opposition is nothing more than a self-imposed barrier that isolates creative writing from the world of academia, one that we see consistently addressed and sustained in these articles over the past 50 years.
In the third section of *Re*Writing *Craft*, Mayers engages in an in-depth discussion of Heidegger, and the major influence he had over both creative writers and composition theorists alike. Heidegger, a member of Hitler’s National Socialist Party, held views that are considered controversial and problematic (in many circles) yet, as referenced by Kinneavy and Santos, are useful to those interested in theorizing about poetry, technology, language and thinking (Mayers 73). Mayers explains that the scholars he reviewed in *Re*Writing *Craft* use Heidegger’s theories to answer questions that are at the forefront of both creative writing and composition, such as: “What is the writer’s relationship to language? […] How have received ideas about writing, and the institutional structures in which these ideas are embodied, prevented us from discovering previously unthought possibilities?” (Mayers 95) These questions lie close to the heart of composition and creative writing scholars alike, as their answers will strengthen every writing program. Mayers connects Heidegger’s thinking to today’s composition and creative writing scholars as he briefly describes several who reference Heidegger in their work. He alludes to Kinneavy’s essay in particular, as he says that the significant weakness in composition studies is that it focuses more on the process than on the product of finished writing.

In his fourth section of *Re*Writing *Craft*, Mayers talks specifically about how to develop a possible alliance between creative writing and composition studies. He first discusses Norman Foerster, who is credited with building University of Iowa’s creative writing program. Foerster did not intend for creative writing to be separated from the rest of the English studies program, originally having introduced creative writing to encourage involvement of teachers that would advocate writing over research. He envisioned the creative and critical writing programs working together on equal basis as literary studies, but he had to fight administration at every turn, and when he eventually tired of it and retired, creative writing and literary studies moved in their
separate directions. Mayers reflects on the dominance of literary studies over writing courses as he says, “any attempt to reconsider and reconfigure the operations of English departments now moves within the shadow of literary studies […] reform in English studies today can occur only if composition and creative writing band together to challenge the institutional dominance” (Mayers 101). Hence, Mayers takes the idea of combining the two subfields away from being an attractive future option to instead being a pressing need. Mayers believes that right now is a good time to converge the two disciplines as he suggests that “we are now in the midst of […] another historical moment in which composition and creative writing are passing through each other’s orbits yet again” (Mayers 103). Mayers implies a sense of urgency, calling theorists and scholars to act immediately to resolve the discord in the English studies, which as these articles show, has been inherent in the field for decades.

In an attempt to evolve the academic nature of creative writing to rival that of composition, Alicita Rodriguez suggests using grading rubrics in the creative writing classroom. She discusses this idea in her 2008 essay “The ‘Problem’ of Creative Writing: Using Grading Rubrics Based on Narrative Theory as Solution.” Rodriguez defines the three preconceptions or problems of creative writing that prevent its acceptance to the world of academia. First, that it is unteachable, an idea that she immediately discredits as an excuse to relieve the instructor from reaching every student. Second, that creative writing is therapeutic, or a form of self-expression, and Rodriguez bluntly responds to this idea: “If even our textbooks perpetuate the idea of creative writing as an emotional and psychological release […] how can creative writing exist as a discipline?” (Rodriguez 169), proving that textbooks have a great influence on the pedagogy for a style of writing. Through the denial that creative writing be seen as a means of therapy for the student, Rodriguez infers that the subfield would have a more legitimate standing in the
greater field. And, the third preconception is that creative writing can be used to teach social awareness to students. Rodriguez finds that this thinking encourages students to write in the voice of an unrealistic authority on unfamiliar topics, which “may elicit egocentric pontification, not a good technique in either creative writing or composition” (Rodriguez 169). Interestingly, Rodriguez expresses concern over the origin of voice and how creative writing alters voice to the student writer’s detriment, due to the nature of unfamiliar and fictitious subject matter.

Rodriguez proposes using grading rubrics in workshops to evaluate creative writing assignments, similar to rubrics used in composition classes, because, in her words: “If creative writing is to finally take its rightful place in academia as a valid and necessary discipline, it must bear evaluation” (Rodriguez 171). Rodriguez acknowledges that the challenge in grading creative writing is its innate emotive quality, but she asserts that while emotions may be involved in the writing process, they should not be infused in the final product. An advantage to grading with rubrics is that students are less likely to challenge their grade as they can see its culmination. Rodriguez assigns her creative writing students texts that focus and provide model essays on narrative theory. These textbooks educate students on use of voice and audience using examples of well-known prose. She developed her grading rubrics from assignments and examples taught within these narrative theory textbooks.

Chris Dew and David Yost recall Mayers’ proposal to ally creative writing and composition in order to unite together against literary studies, to encourage text production over interpretation. In their essay “Composing Creativity: Further Crossing Composition/ Creative Writing Boundaries” (2009), Dew and Yost remember that Mayers unsuccessfully introduced the option of a poem to take the place of an assignment for an analytical essay-- he was disappointed in the resulting poems, admitting that students would need the experience and education involved
with expressing their work in poetry before they can be compared to the work of analytical essay which is taught in class (Dew 27). Dew and Yost use this failed assignment as a starting point to then discuss how creative writing can be used successfully to enhance the composition classroom.

In the opening paragraph of this article, Dew and Yost, who are compositionists with creative writing backgrounds, observe that most creative writers who teach composition courses unintentionally draw on their specialty by incorporating exercises into the composition work. They intend to explore just how these specific exercises can be used and become an important part of a composition classes going forward. The differences between creative writers and literature and composition professors are evident in how they traditionally structure their classes as Dew and Yost note: “Literature and composition classrooms rarely assign students to write their own stories, plays, or poems. Creative writing workshops, in turn, rarely assign literature or theory beyond a few stories or poems to be studied for their ‘craft’” (Dew 26). In other words, the subfields continue to separate themselves from each other while, like an increasing number of theorists and scholars, Dew and Yost feel that creative writing has much to offer the other subfields of English studies such as composition, and vice versa.

Their argument to connect creative writing and composition regards the level of investment the student has in his writing. The composition student is often taking a course he dreads and feels little attachment to his work. He looks for the teacher suggestions or criticism to make it better or revised. They note that this is partly because the student work is regarded as eternally “in process,” compared to published work that they may read in class that stands on its own authorship. When student work is critiqued among classmates, they focus on grammar and structural problems. When published texts are critiqued, students look for hidden meaning and
common themes. This is very different from student investment in the creative writing classes, in which students are often both offended and resistant to criticism by classmates and teachers in a creative writing workshop environment. Dew and Yost contend that creative writing techniques should be used to produce a similar investment in authorship in the composition classroom.

Neither extreme of student response to authorship—apathy in composition or defensiveness in creative writing—can possibly be productive. One method for overcoming this is by challenging students to creatively rewrite a sample of text as if it was their own work, kind of like a “mad-lib” assignment. Dew and Yost find that this invariably creates more respect for the author and his original work. They may still favor their own words or phrases more than the ones the author chose, and this “suggest[s] that this increased respect for the text does not come at the expense of their own sense of authorship” (Dew 31). And this respect for the written work helps the students see each other, and published authors, as fellow writers. It also teaches them to become close readers. This exercise can also stimulate class discussions on important writer issues such as word choice, verb choice, synonyms, and how all of that affects meanings.

Another exercise that can be used to improve a student’s voice or tone in his writing is by having the class engage in role-playing. They can be told to act as a book reviewer, an editor, an interviewer, or even the author herself, and they must comment on a text from that point of view. This exercise not only teaches the student to experiment with different voices, but it also makes him more aware of the issues of diction—how a text is received by the reader based on the author’s word choice and language. This can be a priceless exercise in understanding rhetoric for students who often write only for an audience of peers. For the composition student, this exercise will also make him more familiar with the academic discourse community he is expected to join. Or, students could be assigned a text from a composition theorist and be asked to write using the
same type of style or language the theorist used. This “modeling” is done often in creative writing classrooms in which a fictional text is examined in the same way.

At the end of their essay, Dew and Yost point out that an increasing number of MFA and PhD candidates in creative writing will be teaching the future composition classes, and these graduate assistants should be used as a unique resource to enrich the field of composition study. Their essay is unique from other scholars’ work as Dew and Yost focus more on specific examples and suggestions of creative writing exercises rather than on theories of why the culmination of techniques should work together.

In the same way that creative writers such as Rodriguez are burdened with preconceived notions of their outdated pedagogical practices, compositionists, as evidenced in the chronology, continually suffer from negative stereotypes, as noted by composition scholar Douglas Hesse. In his 2010 essay “The Place of Creative Writing in Composition Studies,” Hesse criticizes creative writing by pointing out that as a field, it does not perform a service role to the world of English studies, still lacks integration with other subjects in school (which is the main goal of writing across the curriculum programs), and it does not worry about assessment procedures. He notes its attitude towards the other subfields of English studies as he says that creative writing “sometimes condemns teaching composition as a regrettably necessary rite of passage toward a degree or ballast to more meaningful teaching, as many graduate students have made clear to me-- at least until they find religion on the job market” (Hesse 32). Hesse blames this negative connotation of composition instruction on the general disinterest in systematic research on writers and writing, choosing instead to focus on authors’ direct accounts with their experiences. Hesse explains that “most composition scholars are wary of author talk cast too far into unique and unassailable genius” (Hesse 33). This is the start of the familiar talent versus craft debate as Hesse describes
that still, in 2010, creative writers are content with their supposition of their own self-possessed talent, while compositionists generalize and hold contempt for them and their pedagogies that seem outdated and habitual rather than researched and cutting edge. Hesse also acknowledges that there is some envy as well for the student dynamic; as opposed to composition students, creative writing students are actually interested in their work.

Hesse gives a detailed history of creative writing and composition’s divorce from each other in the first part of this essay. He talks about how both fields claimed creative nonfiction as their own and how it eventually settled with creative writing. This essay was published in *College Composition and Communication* (CCC), which has not historically paid much attention to what creative writing considers its scholarship, mostly because it is overshadowed by the rise of research and study in the field of composition. Hesse recalls two incidents in the history of *CCC* in which creative writing was praised for its ability to develop basic human qualities in its writer. Creative writing can show students how valuable their own personal experience can be. Although *CCC* does acknowledge its benefits, it also sticks by its traditional belief that creative writing cannot be used to prepare students to be professional writers. In the 1990s, compositionists who wrote for *CCC* scorned expressivism, desiring to teach students to do more with the written word than to simply express themselves. However, Hesse references Marvin Bell when *CCC* published an entire issue in the 1960s themed “Composition as Art” in which Bell claimed that creative writing enforces important composition techniques (Hesse 39), implying that even though the traditional composition journal does not promote the use of creative writing in academic writing, it has acknowledged scholarship that claims otherwise.

While Dew and Yost suggest classroom practices and exercises to introduce creative writing in the composition classroom, Amanda K. Girard and Carey E. Smitherman discuss the
importance of relating creative writing technique to composition theory. In “Creating Connection: Composition Theory and Creative Writing Craft in the First-Year Writing Classroom” (2011), Girard and Smitherman argue that first year composition students must be exposed to composition theory so that they can eventually join the writing discourse community and ultimately see themselves as writers. They connect the similarities between traditional classroom instruction on composition theory to conversation on creative writing craft and conclude that students educated in theory will be able to apply the appropriate theories to various disciplines of study as intended in the Writing Across the Curriculum movement.

Girard and Smitherman reference David Bartholomae’s 1985 essay “Inventing the University” in which he explains that the reason for introducing theory to novice writers is to involve the student in the discourse community by enforcing the hierarchal structure in the classroom until the student can effectively join in the scholarly conversation. Girard and Smitherman warn, however, that composition theory textbooks that stress practice over theory do so at a point in undergraduate education in which students are unfamiliar with the theory’s language. Therefore, students must first learn the correct terminology of composition studies before they can understand the complex language and ideas of the field (Girard 52). They suggest exposing students to the reflective nature of creative writing in the composition class, not as assignments themselves but as an examination of process, using Mayers’ definition of craft criticism as an element useful to composition students. As both Mayers and Girard and Smitherman explain, craft criticism and composition theory are closely linked, and they believe that once students recognize this relationship composition theory would become more accessible. Girard and Smitherman relate craft criticism to composition theory by observing that when students become educated in the practice of craft criticism, they are exposed to the reflective
model they are encouraged to use in composition writing. This connection of practice to theory, according to Girard and Smitherman, enables student writers to understand why certain classroom practices are successful. For example, the use of peer review in the classroom would introduce the theory of collaborative pedagogy in composition studies by putting the theory to practice.

Like Girard and Smitherman, Zachary Snider also describes specific uses of creative writing methodology in the composition classroom. In his 2013 essay “Creative Social Commentary in the Composition Classroom,” Snider proves that it is beneficial for student learning to use creative writing to teach form, style, and first person point of view. He says that when he asks students what they like to read, he is surprised to find out that most composition students hate reading, and then, understandably, hate writing as well. In an attempt to turn the hatred of reading and writing into fondness or at least tolerance, Snider tells his students that they will work from “mimicry and creation rather than from misinformed, detached analysis and regurgitation” (Snider 89). Here, Snider points out that traditional writing instruction methods may have created the negative overtones his students have for writing. In his classroom, Snider instead uses familiar and interesting subject matter and writing methods to engage his reluctant students. This is a way to teach students to write objectively while using research but also in the first person voice, creating a combination of creative and scholarly essay. Students learn that essays can be anecdotal and humorous while still offering substantial research and also serving as an affective personal essay. Students also learn to write creative nonfiction and understand its place in the field of English studies, as a way to bridge composition and creative writing.

Although he offers the genre of creative nonfiction as an option when writing academic papers, Snider still enforces the same goals for all assignments: “to teach their reader something
about a certain subject matter; to inform their reader about and describe this place or experience in absolute detail [...] to offer an educated rhetorical commentary and a well-considered conclusion that is equally analytical” (Snider 90). In other words, Snider allows his students the freedom to write in different genres while still expecting the same standards of an academic paper. Snider provides models for this kind of writing, assigning his students works to read that combine scholarly research and personal narrative in engaging ways, which leads to discussion of honest writing: “We have a long lesson about how good writing is honest writing-- as preached by many writers, from Joan Didion to Stephen King to Joyce Carol Oates to George Orwell-- but that honest writing doesn’t even necessarily mean writing that is 100% truthful” (Snider 91). Teaching students to write honestly is an important quality of effective writing that may not be addressed without a creative slant on composition. And, this honest writing prompts the students to develop their own voice, which makes their discourse more rhetorical, rather than simply repeating a professor’s notes.

Snider chooses examples for students to read before they begin to write their own research profiles. He chooses entertaining research papers that may seem journalistic but are actually humorous, using themes from their favorite movies and books. Then, when students write of their own experiences, they are often surprised to find out that their friends or family are actually interesting to other people as well. The final research paper must be on a subject close to the student, with which they have personal experience or interest. Snider says that students value these final papers “perhaps because they’re written at the conclusion of a stressful semester, or perhaps because students are able psychologically to evaluate themselves and their own experiences with scholarly research” (Snider 96). To imagine that academic writing can abide by the expressionists’ theory and serve as an emotional outlet seems a far cry from traditional
compositional expectations, but Snider finds that his teaching methods allow for this to be true. And, since they are personal and relative, most students end up liking their work, and as a result, they learn to like writing. Snider finds that their finished work is honest, of a much higher quality, and their topics are more ethical.

Judging from my literature review, I conclude that there is a strong need to combine creative writing and composition studies for the benefit of our student writers. The separation of creative and academic writing has hindered the quality and education of our undergraduate students, and today’s graduate students are in position to evolve the field into a more cohesive unit. These sources show there has always been a division in the subfields and the conversation hasn’t really changed over 50 years. Mayers’ suggestion to unifying our already divided field is defined as “Writing Studies, a hybridized field of inquiry that bears traces of its origins but also exhibits significant differences from its predecessors” (Mayers 114). A revised composition class that combines elements from creative writing would rid the field of English of its historical and territorial placement of the two forms of writing instruction. And, by combining the two subfields, instructors can find ways to pedagogically approach difficult and ambiguous topics such as voice and talent, which have always been described as innate and visionary.

Scholars differ on their theories of how to combine pedagogies and practices and on what should be deemed as most important, however, they share the same sentiment that it is time for the barriers between composition and creative writing to finally come down. Mayers discusses the positive outcomes that would occur if the subfields were to converge. The required first-year composition course may include reflective questions on the creative element of the student’s writing process. Students may be instructed to use poetry in their assignments as long as it is introduced in a “meaningful way” (Mayers 136). The introductory creative writing course may
use methods other than the problematic writing workshop method to teach about student writing. Commentary could be more useful and direct rather than vague. Scholars would engage more thoroughly in craft criticism and study journals and magazines that produce poetry and fiction. And finally, by combining composition and creative writing, the entire English program would do more writing across the curriculum, a need that Bishop, Girard, and Smitherman also expressed. The new faculty hires for the writing studies program would be required to have a background in writing, possibly changing the dynamic of who traditionally teaches the first-year composition classes.

Composition theorists and scholars have laid the groundwork for the integration of creative writing elements in the composition class. In the next chapter, I discuss a current trend in which scholars are using creative writing elements to evolve academic writing, implying that composition should also be influenced by the same elements.
CHAPTER III. THE CURRENT TREND

As evidenced in the literature review, scholars and educators have long shared the desire to improve student writing through the use of creative writing techniques in the composition classroom. This concept is reflected in modern-day academic writing, as witnessed by the current movement to create a style of academic writing that could appeal to a wide audience. Scholar Douglass Hesse defines the purpose for the undergraduate composition class as “advancing the civic and social good” (Hesse 47) by developing and sharing important ideas, and there has never been a time when it was easier to share ideas. We live in an era in which information is easily accessible through Internet searches, and this accessibility diminishes our control over the size of our audience. Therefore, we must write and instruct our students to write for a general audience. For this reason, current scholars are calling on writers to create academic work with a similar awareness of a general audience as opposed to traditional academic writing, often directed towards an exclusive community of scholars with similar educational backgrounds and experiences. Writing scholars recognize that by writing to a selective audience the writer limits the extent to which his ideas and message will be heard. Not only is the message muted, the quality of writing declines when the academic writer tries to follow conventions particular to his discourse community while ignoring elements of writing, often celebrated in quality prose, that make the material interesting to the reader. In the July 2012 issue of *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, Rachel Toor explains that one reason academics may write this way is out of fear that the information will seem inadequate, and she reassures academic writers that “Attractive writing-- brave, personal, narrative, zingy, imaginative, funny- will not make you appear any less smart” (Toor para. 18), a predominant concern in a community in which rewards are handed out based on one’s perceptiveness and intelligence. Academics also cling to traditional styles of
writing directed to an exclusive audience because they assume it is safe to adhere to academic conventions for easy acceptance into their discipline’s discourse community, fearing the wrath of academia’s “gate-keepers” should they write outside of the box. Others write to the small audience simply because they are not taught how to be better writers who appeal to a larger readership. If academic writing were more readable by the general public, the writer’s ideas would prove more effective, or, as Toor says, “When academic authors set out to seduce the reader, their ideas and research have a chance to make changes in the world” (Toor para. 11), reminding academics that there must be more reasons to write than to simply impress an exclusive audience; if this new information is as important and worthy as the writer believes it to be, and it reaches enough readers, it can cause great change.

Helen Sword, Steven Pinker, and Kate Evans argue for a revised form of academic writing in which writers are more aware of style and use techniques from creative writing to make their works accessible to a wider audience. These scholars see traditional academic writing as problematic for both the writers and the readers. One such problem is that it does not conform to what writers deem to be “good writing,” which is not just correct writing, but writing that is convincing and interesting as well. Helen Sword received her PhD from Princeton University in Comparative Literature and is an award-winning professor and director of the Centre for Learning and Research in Higher Education at the University of Auckland. In her professor profile taken from the University of Auckland’s website, Sword acknowledges that good academic writing should follow the same standards as all good writing, linking the expression of one’s research to its success. Even though she obtained a literature PhD, Sword has developed her career by researching and teaching academic writing. In Stylish Academic Writing, Sword quotes Strunk and White’s classic style handbook The Elements of Style (1920) to define good
writing and then she compares their definition to peer-reviewed work in academic journals which are, according to Sword, full of “impersonal, stodgy, jargon-laden, abstract prose that ignores or defies most of the stylistic principles” described by Strunk and White. Sword states that “there is a massive gap between what most readers consider to be good writing and what academics typically produce and publish” (Sword 41), and so she conducted a research project to determine what writers can do to improve the quality of academic writing. The ideals that she identified through her research should be reflected in undergraduate composition instruction.

First, Sword asked over seventy academics from various disciplines to describe the characteristics of “stylish academic writing,” and she found that academics who wrote stylishly were able to “express complex ideas clearly and precisely; produce elegant, carefully crafted sentences; convey a sense of energy, intellectual commitment, and even passion; engage and hold their readers’ attention; tell a compelling story; and write with originality, imagination, and creative flair” (8). Keeping these characteristics and qualities in mind, Sword analyzed books and articles described as examples of stylish academic writing and noted the commonalities of writing techniques found within their works. Then, Sword read one thousand articles from a wide field of disciplines to analyze the respective acceptable discourses and provide a “compelling snapshot of contemporary scholarship at work” (9). Lastly, Sword analyzed recently published style guides to see how or if scholarly writing is reflected in its instruction, which is a similar project to this one in which I analyze popular composition textbooks for the same purpose.

Sword evaluated the wide-range of articles based on the use of the same criteria that the stylish writers employed, which are the use of personal pronouns, unique or hybrid structure, engaging title, engaging opening, greater than 6% common abstract nouns, and less than 4% use of the words it, this, that, and there, which are the characteristics identified by her surveyed
audience on the constitutes of stylish writing. She presented her work in charts and graphs, and concluded that academics learn to write within their discourse through imitation of previous scholarly works (Sword 24). Sword found that most instructional writing guides promote the same qualities identified by her surveyed readers, yet she was frustrated to find that “these principles are so often preached yet so seldom practiced” (Sword 27). Sword also found that more advanced creative writing techniques such as use of personal pronouns, personal voice, creative expression, nonstandard structure, and engaging titles were inconsistently represented in the guides, leading her to question their veracity in instructing students to write well and suggesting that the writing guides are partly to blame for poor academic writing.

Like Sword, Steven Pinker, a Johnstone Family Professor in the Department of Psychology at Harvard University, is also interested in the connection between language and the mind. Pinker received his doctorate at Harvard and post-doctoral fellowship at MIT, researching visual cognition and language development. In The Sense of Style, Pinker disputes Strunk and White’s instructions to produce simple and pointed writing by avoiding the excessive use of adjectives and adverbs as Pinker provides examples of prose enhanced through those very same extra words, and he searches for a better way to school writers other than attributing good writing to innate ability (Pinker 24). Pinker provides four examples of good modern writing and says that the four authors share the following qualities: “fresh wording and concrete imagery […]; an attention to the readers’ vantage point and the target of their gaze; the judicious placement of an uncommon word or idiom […]; the use of parallel syntax; the occasional planned surprise; the presentation of a telling detail […]; the use of meter and sound” (Pinker 26). What Pinker describes here are characteristics of creative writing, as, for example, he describes the wording and imagery as “fresh” and “concrete” and an emphasis on word choice
and sound, suggesting that good modern writing values not only the writer’s message, but how it is delivered. Pinker feels that should these qualities of good writing transcend into the academic realm, academic writing would improve in both readability and correctness. He refers to academic writing in his chapter titled “The Curse of Knowledge,” claiming that academics write in “incomprehensible prose” because of the challenge they face with explaining complicated material to people that do not know as much, or as Pinker explains, “The better you know something, the less you remember about how hard it was to learn” (Pinker 61). Like Sword, Pinker believes that the inability to relate to a less educated audience prevents academic writers from creating good writing that makes sense and follows grammatical guidelines, hence the “curse” beneath which academic writing suffers. Pinker personifies writing as he says: “Like a drunk who is too impaired to realize that he is too impaired to drive, we do not notice the curse because the curse prevents us from noticing it” (Pinker 63). In other words, since the world of academia exists within each discipline’s own discourse community, academics often do not realize where their weaknesses in audience awareness lay, becoming so immersed in the conventions that they fail to recognize them as arbitrary rules that could be changed.

Pinker advises academics to do more than just imagine their audience as they write. While he does think it is important to understand the reader’s level of comprehension, he warns against the excessive use of jargon, abbreviations, and technical vocabulary, explaining that the language so typically used within a discipline, while unbeknownst to the academic writer, may appear to be convoluted to a general audience. By defining common and standard terms, the writer invites a larger audience to his work: “It’s not just an act of magnanimity: a writer who explains technical terms can multiply her readership a thousandfold at the cost of a handful of characters, the literary equivalent of picking up hundred dollar bills on the sidewalk” (Pinker 65).
By comparing the ease of attracting readers through simple explanations to picking money off the sidewalk, Pinker himself uses the creative element imagery, a form of figurative language, to reinforce his message. In fact, all three scholars consistently use figurative language in their defense of its use in academic writing, proving their case by actually following their own advice.

Pinker implies that by increasing the audience, what may start as merely an abstract idea may evolve into a discussion and then ultimately, a resolution. Like Sword, Pinker finds academics fear that simplifying language in this way would make their writing lack sophistication, but he does not qualify this concern, as he says: “Every audience is spread out along a bell curve of sophistication, and inevitably we’ll bore a few at the top while baffling a few at the bottom; the only question is how many there will be of each […] one should not confuse clarity with condescension” (Pinker 69). Here, Pinker reinforces that the main goal in his movement towards using creative writing techniques to produce good academic writing is to improve the writing’s clarity. Pinker suggests practical methods to turn “bad” academic writing to good. He promotes sharing a draft of the work to people similar to the intended audience to see how it is received, an example of the collaborative pedagogy commonly used in the creative writing classroom. While this may seem like an obvious suggestion, Pinker feels it is an important step of the writing process, as he reminds us that it is easy for a writer to wrongly assume he understands his audience’s comprehension. Sharing drafts and revising based on comments and criticism will make the work more reader-based. In addition, Pinker advises a writer read his own draft after enough time has passed, so that he can read it with a sense of objectivity.

All three scholars agree that, similar to fictional prose, academic writers must also be able to tell and sustain a good story by emphasizing the use of the narrative in academic writing, for
academic writing can and should contain a plot. Humans love storytelling and are inclined to present knowledge in that fashion. However, academic writers often think that the use of narrative to move the plot is discouraged as they instead attempt to present research as fact with no regard for their own or their readers’ personal interests. Sword contends that all research is made up of stories, through its subjects and findings, and that the “question to ask is not ‘Do I have a story to tell?’ but “Which story or stories do I want to tell, and how can I tell them most effectively?’” (Sword 88) In other words, Sword advises writers to begin with a research question, follow with a summary of how that research will be conducted along with the findings from the research, and then bring forth a conclusion (similar to a plot structure). Like novelists, “stylish academic writers transform stories into plots through careful attention to elements such as character, setting, point of view, and narrative sequence” (Sword 91). The characters can be made up of abstract concepts, and the setting can be sketched with a mere few lines describing where the research took place. Academic writers often feel compelled to remain neutral in their point of view, but Sword argues that they should wholeheartedly adopt their role of theory-defender in their works. She asserts that unknowingly, academic writers already do address narrative structure as they put their work in order and can present the “story” in a non-chronological order, in hopes of igniting reader interest. “The art of academic storytelling is a complex business, yet it depends on a very simple principle: a good story makes people want to keep reading to find out what happens next” (Sword 96), which is a common goal for all of writing: to share an idea.

In *Pathways Through Writing Blocks in the Academic Environment*, Kate Evans also encourages writers to seek the academic story, or narrative, in their works in order to achieve better communication with the reader. She draws on her career as a writer and leader of
workshops in which she instructs health professionals on how to use creative writing in therapeutic contexts. She explains that throughout history, human beings have told stories and described events, and that the narrative is important because therein lies the writer’s construction of meaning and self. Evans “proposed that narrative is what binds people together, creates understandings within societies and cultures” (Evans 74). She goes on to explain the value of narrative use to an academic writer: “Stories help us to get in touch with our material, giving us access to it, so that we are then able to mold it given the proscriptions of the academic writing we are working within. And yet, even academic writing is a narrative, so thinking of it as a story with a plot and characters may still help” (Evans 77). Here, Evans sees the value of the narrative as a pre-writing method used to inspire the invention process of writing, recalling earlier advice from scholars Lea Masiello and Michael G. Southwell who both encouraged pre-writing exercises aimed at brainstorming new ideas. Sharing in the same sentiment and advice, Evans aims to help academic writers use creativity when they face writer’s block.

In his two articles “Research and Reflection in English Studies: The Special Case of Creative Writing” and “Should I Write this Essay or Finish a Poem? Teaching Writing Creatively,” Patrick Bizzaro examines the writing workshop as an example of collaborative pedagogy borrowed from creative writing and used in the composition classroom, as he sees the value in peer response over teacher response. Evans also sees the importance in sharing draft work with outside readers, though she recognizes that this can be an intimidating move for the writer, and she cautions that fear of criticism can be particularly blocking (Evans 88). Evans believes that this fear of peer feedback and desire to conform and be accepted by the academic discourse community may lead to unintentional plagiarism. Instead, Evans advocates the use of writing groups to provide vital and positive feedback. Evans says, “Academia can be a
competitive place. Participants in a writing group need to feel safe enough to be able to share” (Evans 92). Writing groups can provide the necessary feedback to ensure that the academic writing is reader-based without the debilitating sense of competition that is present in peer review.

In addition to advocating the use of the narrative in academic writing and the effectiveness of peer review, these three scholars connect to their academic predecessors as they address the writer’s use of the first person pronoun. In the essay “Voices from the Writing Center: It’s Okay to Be Creative- a Role for the Imagination in Basic-Writing Courses,” Lea Masiello encouraged her students to “discard previously over-learned and applied rules and discover new ones” (Masiello 210) to break away from what she described as static writing by, for example, allowing the use of the first person pronoun in their formal prose. Pinker points out that while there is no law in the world of academia against using first person pronouns, academic writers avoid them to their own detriment: “Often the pronouns I, me, and you are not just harmless but downright helpful. They simulate a conversation, as classic style recommends, and they are gifts to the memory-challenged reader” (Pinker 53), pointing out that the negative stigma surrounding those words is a misconception. According to Sword’s study of academic journals, the first person pronoun is allowed in most disciplines, and Sword says that writers develop agency and authoritativeness through the use of the active voice in the first person. Regardless, most academic writers still employ the third person voice or construct sentences using passive and agentless voice. Sword believes that writers find comfort in ascribing agency to the research rather than those who actually do the research. For this reason, academic writing is largely passive and agentless (Sword 37).
The writer may choose to avoid the first person pronoun in traditional academic writing to maintain a certain amount of distance from the argument to remain objective. Evans discusses the perception of distance and attachment in her explanation of the writer’s use of context and closeness to the subject, as she says: “When writing academically we aspire towards a scholarly perspective […] a scholarly perspective will want some use of detail (‘closeness’) and some review of context (‘distance’), as well as clarity around the ‘subjective’ and ‘objective’ stances” (Evans 67). Here, Evans suggests that the distance the writer puts between himself and his subject will dictate the readability of the writing. Evans feels that it is easy to become attached to one’s writing, binding the writer to his message; at the same time, academics are encouraged to adopt a narrator’s objective voice. However, when a researcher delves into the material to the point that he feels inclined to prove and defend his message, his voice is likely to take on a different, sometimes more subjective, tone, which is the scorn of the academic writer who wishes to be completely objective. So, the writer may choose to distance himself from the subject. This distancing, according to Evans, defines the writer’s connection to his subject: “As with relating to people, we can interact more effectively with a topic and our writing when we can gauge and regulate our distance from them” (Evans 57), and Evans warns that being over-distanced or under-distanced can lead to writer’s block. When we write from the “in-between” (attached and distanced writing) we can right with “open thinking, exploration, and reflection” (Evans 59). Therefore, regulation of distance is imperative. Evans says that shifting the writer’s point of view narrows the distance, suggesting that the writer be so connected with his subject that the reader sees him and his writing as one and the same, thus allowing the writer to invoke the same sentiment in his reader, convincing him that what he has written is true and important.
Sword concurs with Evans that a writer’s diminished connection to research leads to emotionless prose, creating an irony in the end-product of academic writing as she claims: “Most academics would describe themselves as passionate, committed researchers; they love what they do and undertake their work with a strong sense of personal engagement […] Yet these same researchers have typically been trained […] to strip all emotion from their academic writing” (Sword 161). Sword points out that when writers consciously or unconsciously omit emotions from their writing through the conscious restricted use of word choice, structure, and voice which they perceive as fulfilling their discourse expectations, their passion falls flat, and passionless writing is a chore to read.

Sword, Pinker, and Evans agree that correct use of the first person pronoun is just one characteristic of good writing; sentence structure is another. The sentence structure of academic writing is riddled with problems and often results in convoluted, lengthy sentences that neither excite nor interest the general public, thereby limiting the audience to its own narrow discourse community. Evans believes that through the process of imitation and pressure to impress colleagues, academic writers have lost the urge to create strong and vibrant sentences.

Academia and research evolve through fresh thinking, innovative perspectives, challenge and the exploration of what was previously the unthinkable. This pioneering potential is often squashed out of work when the writing of it becomes a sort of purgatory. Enjoying the writing process, delighting in the textures and tastes of words and how we can slot them together to form the patterns we call sentences and paragraphs, releases the potential for invention. (Evans 102) Here, Evans uses an element of creative writing in the form of figurative language by comparing dull writing to a “sort of purgatory”, and assigning “textures and tastes” to words, forming
“patterns” in designed sentence structure. Again, this demonstrates to the reader how figurative language can enhance academic writing to reinforce the main point. Evans sees the process of research and the process of writing as two parts of one whole, driven by the passion of the writer. Scholar James L. Kinneavy also valued the research phase of the writing process as an integral stage, observing that “Professional writers don’t just sit down and begin an exercise in freewriting” (Kinneavy 2), implying that the research phase occurs early in the pre-writing process. However, Evans warns that when the writing is so structured and regulated that creativity is stifled, so is the invention of new ideas.

Sword believes that sentence structure is imperative for setting the tone for the reader to feel the passion and emotion of the writer, as she says:

A carefully crafted sentence welcomes its reader like a comfortable rocking chair, bears its reader across chasms like a suspension bridge, and helps its reader navigate tricky terrain like a well-hewn walking stick. A poorly crafted or uncrafted sentence, on the other hand, functions more like a shapeless log tossed into a river: it might or might not help you get to the other side, depending on how strong the current and how hard you are willing to kick. (Sword 48)

Once again, Sword uses figurative language in the form of simile as she describes the effect of a well-structured sentence, comparing its effect to that of a “comfortable rocking chair” and as helpful as a “well-hewn walking stick” to guide the reader to the text’s meaning. She compares a poorly structured sentence to be as useless as a “shapeless log” and its helpfulness is completely dependent on the reader’s efforts. Here, she shows the importance of using creative elements as she compares sentence structure to a walking stick or a log, and uses the metaphor of kicking
through the current throughout her book, constantly putting the responsibility for the reader’s comprehension on the writer’s ability to write well.

Ironically, Sword points out that academic writing, created by scholars who are leaders in their fields, often consists of poorly crafted sentences that exemplify bad grammar in its most conventional sense. She identifies three areas of grammatical concern commonly recognized in academic writing: the lack of concrete nouns, excess space between noun and verb, and misuse of words that weigh down sentences and phrases and appear as clutter. These tendencies overload sentences and make them needlessly complex to the reader outside of academia, as well as challenging those who exist within the same discourse community. Sword asserts that academic writing often relies heavily on prepositions that do not supply energy and instead are used to string together abstract nouns, and this contributes to the feeling of cluttered sentences. Other attributes to the clutter include the use of “it, this, that, and there,” which, when used excessively, create reader confusion. According to Sword, stylish academic writers vary their vocabulary and syntax to keep their sentence structure enticing. Scholars Chris Dew and David Yost explored the focus on word choice and sentence structure in their own classroom exercises designed to develop the writer’s true voice, acknowledging that “while such exercises might seem removed from the normal work of composition, using them as brief warm-ups can help increase student sensitivity to issues of diction […] while also engaging student creativity” (Dew 34), and they found that student writing improved when they were allowed to use creativity and quit trying to impress the academic audience.

Like Sword, Pinker also identifies poor sentence structure as a characteristic of academic writing. He asks and then answers himself: “How does a writer manage to turn out such tortuous syntax? It happens when he shovels phrase after phrase onto the page in the order in which each
one occurs to him. The problem is that the order in which thoughts occur to the writer is different from the order in which they are easily recovered by a reader” (Pinker 115). Here, Pinker personifies the process of writing with the verb choice “shovels” to describe the monotonous and emotionless method of academic writing’s use of sentence structure. He reminds us of his earlier assertion that academic writers choose to exist too much within their own minds and communities and wrongly assume their readers will share in the same reading experience. To avoid convoluted and presumptuous sentences, Pinker suggests writers share drafts to identify poor structure and disorganization, once again, recalling the benefit of the use for collaborative pedagogy in writing instruction. While his focus on the correctness of writing alludes to current-traditionalist theory, Pinker’s intention is to produce clarity in the finished written product, suggesting an emphasis on audience.

Pinker identifies convoluted terminology as another weakness of academic writing. He cites examples in which writers confuse members within their own discourse community of their discipline by stringing together terms that stall, rather than advance, its reading. Pinker explains the reason for this by defining the term “functional fixity”: “as we become familiar with something, we think about it more in terms of the use we put it to and less in terms of what it looks like and what it is made of” (Pinker 71). Here, Pinker points out that academic writers lose the context of their subject and instead focus on its role in their argument. Thinking this way promotes obscure writing that is not easily understood by a general audience.

Sword labels the use of convoluted terminology with the term “jargonitis.” She recognizes the struggle to communicate using the common language of the discourse community without alienating the community from the rest of the reader-based world, and she cautions that language that engages and challenges is not necessarily to be avoided; rather, it is important to
understand when and how to use it as a means to enhance the text without losing the reader’s attention. In short, Sword believes that academics should be committed to using language effectively and ethically, and not as a means to impress and exclude, and concludes that jargon can be useful as long as it is judiciously included.

As early scholar Marvin Bell believed, careful use of language is important to all writing, whether creative or academic in nature. In “Poetry and Freshman Composition,” Bell connected poetry to academic writing as he states that by studying poetry, the student “becomes more aware of exactly how language can shape thought. He becomes even more aware of what is necessary to intentional communication” (Bell 2), supporting the concept that correct use of language and word choice is integral to the successful communication of the writer’s message. Evans suggests that using “poetics,” or figurative language, gives gravity to subject matter that may otherwise be dull and lifeless (Evans 96). She explains that blending certain creative techniques can create a more authentic voice and would in turn benefit academic writing. Evans says that the use of metaphor helps the reader to understand more about the concept by invoking a separate image whose connotations are understood (Evans 111). Bell and Santos would agree with Evans here, as they both recognized good writing as possessing this lyrical and artistic quality.

Pinker also recognizes the effectiveness of using figurative language to reinforce meaning, as he says that “good writers reach for fresh similes and metaphors that keep the reader’s sensory cortexes lit up” (Pinker 48). Here, Pinker accentuates the meaning of “fresh,” as he warns against using clichés and common idioms. However, Pinker does acknowledge that it is impossible to completely avoid their use as they are almost as commonly accepted in the English language as individual vocabulary words are. He differentiates between figurative language and abstract nouns based on which advances the meaning of the text with less verbiage.
Sword addresses the use of figurative language as a means for “illuminating abstract ideas by grounding theory in practice and by anchoring abstract concepts in the real world” (Sword 99), relating the reader to the concepts through understood associations. Sword broadens the concept of figurative language to include the use of case studies, which is one way to use anecdotal techniques in academic writing. Case studies display theoretical concepts in real world application. If a writer chooses to construct a fictional “case study” he can use a scenario to show a theory at work. By creating a scenario to defend a theory, figurative language can be used in academic writing, as simile, metaphor, and personification are meant to “show and tell” and the construed images can be used to explain concepts. Sword, however, points out the bias against the use of this type of figurative language: “Some academics, particularly scientists and social scientists, regard figurative language with suspicion, associating metaphor and its cousins with the flowery, emotive outpourings of the novelist or poet” (Sword 104), indicating that creative writing is disparaged for being “less” academic, a concept explored by previously discussed scholars. However, she points out that language is already used to symbolize greater concepts, through the use of metaphor. An extended metaphor or an analogy strings several related comparisons together, and allusion links concepts to stories and images that are more familiar to the reader. These literary devices accomplish the common goal for all writing- academic and creative included, which is to encourage the reader to understand and relate to the concepts.

The movement to create a reader-based style of academic writing is designed to bring writing back to its original purpose-- to deliver new and important ideas, a purpose shared by undergraduate composition instruction. Consequently, composition pedagogy must adapt to the changing style of academic writing and reflect the evolving set of rules in its instruction. After considering her research, Sword concludes that academic writers must concern themselves with
“making intelligent choices, not of following rigid rules. Yes, scholars in some fields have more freedom than others to make stylistic decisions that go against the disciplinary grain. Yes, convention remains a powerful force” (Sword 30), acknowledging the pressures for unproven writers and undergrads to abide by the traditional writing conventions of the discourse community. However, Sword encourages writers to insist on using their freedom to incorporate creative writing elements in their academic writing as she suggests that: “Scientists can choose to use active verbs. Social scientists can choose to introduce a personal voice. Humanities scholars can choose to eschew disciplinary jargon” (Sword 30). Here, Sword puts the responsibility for interpreting the disciplines’ conventions on the writer, and suggests ways in which the writer can revolt against such restrictions of the discourse community. While her recommendations may seem reckless, it is important to note that Sword is a tenured professor, a position that possibly provides her with a feeling of security and allows her to abide by her interpretation of academic writing conventions. Finally, Sword states that: “Informed choice is the stylish writer’s best weapon against the numbing forces of conformity and inertia” (Sword 30), indicating that it is the job of the educators to enlighten writers to the creative elements that, while they may be unacknowledged, are at their disposal. While Sword acknowledges the pressure for academic writers to conform to traditional expectations, she asserts that the choice to write to a limited audience or a wide audience is a decision that the writer must consciously make.

This conscious perception of audience should be informed through writing instruction, and in particular, the composition class. Composition instructors must educate students of the elements that constitute good writing, for the goal of the undergraduate composition class remains to create good written communicators who are able to write well for their fields. The goal of good writing is to share ideas in the most effective way, which opens the possibility of
using creative writing elements such as narrative, first-person, and figurative language in the finished written product. By focusing on good writing rather than trying to follow academic conventions, students will have to veer away from context-driven writing, or, writing directed to a limited discourse community and instead aim to write for a general audience, in an effort to answer Hesse’s call for social responsibility. This shift in composition theory builds on the methods suggested by previous scholars who discussed the advantages of incorporating creative writing methods in the pre-writing stages of the writing process, but not necessarily in the final draft. Sword, Pinker, Evans take the work of the previous scholars a step further, as they address the role of creative writing elements in the finished written product. In the next two chapters, I explore the ideology of the undergraduate composition class through an examination of five popular composition textbooks and determine if students are actually being taught to be good writers, as is defined by Pinker, Sword, and Evans and our previously discussed composition scholars, or if there still exists the subfield divide evident in the literature review.
CHAPTER IV. METHODOLOGY

Following the lead set forth by Sword, Pinker, and Evans, I aimed to determine how academic writing is introduced to writers at its most basic level -- the undergraduate composition class. I examined the treatment of creative writing elements in the instruction of academic writing by selecting five recognizable and, based on their ranking on Amazon’s sales website, widely-used composition textbooks as a sampling for modern-day composition instruction. Although composition instruction is the primary purpose of these textbooks, they can also be used to introduce creative writing as well, so before I examined them I made the assumption that the use of creative writing elements would be reflected within the wide scope of information covered in their pages. It is important to mention that many composition instructors choose to not use a textbook and instead select craft essays and sample works to teach academic writing; however, the backbone for their text selection and lessons lies in similar structure to these commonly used textbooks, as each textbook provides samples of writing intended to be dissected and discussed, along with guided instruction.

I examined the textbooks, treating each textbook as an artifact for study. I sought to understand the ideology of composition theory each of the textbooks employs and then examined the ways in which the particular ideology influences the use of narrative, first person voice and figurative language in academic writing -- elements that Sword, Pinker, and Evans consider to be the most significant elements of creative writing that should be more fully included in academic instruction. After selecting the textbooks based on their high on-line sales as displayed on Amazon’s sales ranking, I classified each textbook based on its predominant ideology of the composition theories. To determine its ideology, I noted recurring and commonly used words from the subject titles and chapter descriptions and then created assumptions for what they
suggest about the textbook’s underlying message and emphasis. These prominent words and suggested ideas functioned as indicators for the artifacts. I examined the relationship between what the textbook labeled as subjects and the content within each subject to determine its likely ideology, and then noted how the textbooks’ strategies adhere to its ideological framework.

Next, I examined within each textbook how the authors introduced and included the concepts of narrative use, figurative language, and first person voice. These are three of the imperative creative writing elements promoted by Sword, Pinker, and Evans in their movement to reform academic writing. I examined my findings to determine first, how the ideology present in each of the composition textbooks is expressed, and second, how the individual textbooks respond to the current movement to use creative writing elements in academic writing, and in the event that the above creative writing elements were not addressed in a particular textbook, I concluded that the artifact did not conform to the current movement.

By determining its ideological framework, I was able to make assumptions on how the current trend is or is not being reflected in current composition instruction and theory. While these textbooks generally follow the composition theories of the social-epistemics and the Neo-Aristotelians, each textbook employs different pedagogies such as collaborative pedagogy and multi-modal pedagogy, in which the focus is on process over product. Since these are the current and widely used textbooks that follow both context-driven, audience-emphasized ideology, they should adhere to the advice of Sword, Pinker, and Evans for their use of the creative techniques, yet this thesis will show that their treatment of the creative writing elements is inconsistent, proving that current composition instruction must evolve to meet the demands of modern-day academic writing.
I found that these five textbooks all represent the theory of the New Rhetoric movement. James Berlin defined the New Rhetoric in his essay “Rhetoric and Poetics in the English Department: Our Nineteenth-Century Inheritance” (1985), in which he examines modern-day composition study’s emphasis on the considerations of audience awareness and context to create reader-based prose. Focusing on audience awareness through the reader’s context and shared experience follows the composition theory of the social-epistemics. Phyllis Mentzell Ryder, in her essay “I’m Ok, You’re (Not) Ok: Teaching in a World of Relativism” (1995), defines social epistemology as a lens “which sees knowledge as multifaceted and situated” (Ryder 513), based on the writer and his audience’s life, and so the focus is on the writer’s process and how experiences and context reflect on that process, and not on the end written product. In “Writing and Knowing: Toward Redefining the Writing Process” (1985), James A. Reither addresses this switch in composition studies from product to process as he notes that “the goal has been to replace a prescriptive pedagogy (select a subject, formulate a thesis, outline, write, proofread) with a descriptive discipline whose members study and teach ‘process not product’” (Reither 620) and as a result of this switch, both cognitive and non-cognitive factors should be considered in the act of writing. This would emphasize context and past experiences of the writer, along with deliberate thought and research. Reither notes the social-epistemic influence on teaching process as he explains “writing and what writers do during writing cannot be artificially separated from the social-rhetorical situations in which writing gets done, from the conditions that enable writers to do what they do and for the motives writers have for doing what they do” (Reither 621). In other words, the context and experiences that the writers possess, whether consciously or unconsciously, directly affect their process. The textbooks examined here use this notion by following this social-epistemic approach as their predominant ideology.
In addition to the social-epistemic theory, some of these textbooks also follow the theory of the Neo-Aristotelians. In his 1984 essay “A Comment on Pedagogical Theories in Contemporary Composition,” Richard Fulkerson labels Chaim Perelman as “the theorist now most associated with the phrase” New Rhetoric (Fulkerson 82), claiming that he is not a social-epistemic such as Berlin but is instead aligned with the Neo-Aristotelians, with his emphasis on using truth and not context to persuade the audience. In the 1983 article “The Role of Audience in Chaim Perelman’s New Rhetoric,” Richard Long explains Perelman’s Neo-Aristotelian process of using commonly understood truth, not “situational” truth, to convince the audience, as he says: “A rhetor, who attempts to gain the adherence of an audience’s mind […] must first reduce the minds into a singular mind. To do so, the rhetor can refer to self-evident truths held by a universal audience” (Long 109). Here, Long uses Perelman’s notion of audience awareness to explain how the Neo-Aristotelian focus on truth greatly influences their methods of discourse, or, as is the main concern of the undergraduate composition class, student writing.

Additionally, all five of the textbooks examined for this project address the learning outcomes set forth by the Council for Writing Program Administration. The WPA addresses this social-epistemic lens of composition as it lists in a section for rhetorical knowledge on its website wpacouncil.org that first-year composition should prepare students to:

- Learn and use key rhetorical concepts through analyzing and composing a variety of texts
- Gain experience reading and composing in several genres to understand how genre conventions shape and are shaped by readers’ and writers’ practices and purposes
• Develop facility in responding to a variety of situations and contexts, calling for purposeful shifts in voice, tone, level of formality, design, medium, and/or structure

• Understand and use a variety of technologies to address a range of audiences

• Match the capacities of different environments (e.g., print, and electronic) to varying rhetorical situations (“WPA Outcomes Statement”)

The first and second learning outcomes reflect the modeling approach to writing instruction referenced by several composition scholars such as Bell, Masiello, Bishop, and Bizzaro, who presume that the student will learn correct writing technique through the study of literary examples. In his article “Research and Reflection in English Studies: The Special Case of Creative Writing,” Patrick Bizzaro advocates teaching students to read to “gather information about technique” (301), explaining that modeling skills, recognized here by the WPA, help to produce good student writing. In the third, fourth, and fifth outcomes, the WPA grants writing instructors the latitude to create contextual situations in which the student will learn to write appropriately, and promotes the use of modern-day technologies in the composing process. These outcomes align with the social-epistemic theory as they emphasize both audience awareness and the skill for writing within specific contexts. Each textbook recites the above learning outcomes and provides the correlating chapters in which each point is addressed. I assume that the openly-displayed adherence to the WPA outcomes is intended to increase textbook sales, directed at a market for undergraduate instructors eager to affix their classrooms to an approved style of composition instruction.
One such textbook that follows the structure outlined by the WPA is *The Brief McGraw-Hill Guide: Writing for College, Writing for Life* by Duane Roen, Gregory R. Glau, and Barry M. Maid (2009). I selected this textbook due to its popularity, as Amazon ranks it number 2621 in rhetoric textbook sales, and because, as it states in the authors’ prefacing letter, they have “drawn on the learning outcomes established by the National Council of Writing Program Administrators” (Roen, Glau, and Maid xxvii) and so we can conclude that its effort to meet and draw upon the outcomes resulted in a comprehensive study of current composition instruction.

Amazon lists this textbook along with an overview description from its publisher:

*The Brief McGraw-Hill Guide* is designed to help students learn to write more effectively not only in their college courses but also in their professional, civic, and personal lives. Combining a flexible reader, rhetoric, and research guide, *The Brief McGraw-Hill Guide* shows students how to set goals for their writing, to use effective composing strategies to reach those goals, and to assess their progress towards achieving them. Based on the idea that effective writers are strong communicators in any context, *The Brief McGraw-Hill Guide* emphasizes the skills established by the Writing Program Administrator’s Outcomes Statement that form the foundation of assessment practices at writing programs throughout the country—rhetorical knowledge, critical thinking, writing processes, and conventions. These skills form the basis of the instruction in each assignment chapter and throughout the text. (“The Brief McGraw-Hill Guide Overview”)

Considering its familiarity with standard learning outcomes, it is not surprising that *The Brief McGraw-Hill Guide* is widely used in undergraduate composition classes.
Amazon ranks *The Allyn and Bacon Guide to Writing, 6th* Edition, by John D. Ramage, John C. Bean, and June Johnson (2012), at #503 of all rhetoric textbook sales. This textbook is reviewed on its publisher’s website:

Widely praised for its groundbreaking integration of composition research and a rhetorical perspective, *The Allyn & Bacon Guide to Writing* has set the standard for first-year composition courses in writing, reading, critical thinking, and inquiry. Teachers and students value its clear and coherent explanations, engaging classroom activities, and flexible sequence of aims-based writing assignments that help writers produce effective, idea-rich essays in academic and civic genres. Numerous examples of student and professional writing accompany this thorough guide to the concepts and skills needed for writing, researching, and editing in college and beyond. (“The Allyn and Bacon Guide to Writing, Overview”)

Similar in structure to *The Brief McGraw-Hill Guide*, this textbook addresses the learning outcomes of the Writing Program Administrators on its inside cover, even going so far as to label each outcome with the correlating page number on which it will be discussed, suggesting a strict adherence to that which is established as standard for student writing.


Whether you have years of experience as a teacher or are new to the classroom, you and your students can count on *The St. Martin’s Guide to Writing* to provide the support you need in first-year composition, with a rhetoric, an array of engaging readings, a research
manual, and a handbook, all in a single book — and available online. Thousands of instructors and their students rely on the Guide’s proven approach because it works: the Guide’s acclaimed step-by-step writing guides to 9 different genres offer sure-fire invention strategies to get students started, sentence strategies to get students writing, and thoughtful revision strategies to help students make their writing their own, no matter what their major. With its hands-on activities for reading like a writer and working with sources, there is no better text to help students bridge reading analytically to successful writing in first-year composition and beyond. ("The St. Martin’s Guide to Writing, Overview")

This textbook’s digital components and emphasis on composing multi-modally makes The St. Martin’s Guide to Writing a likely textbook to prepare students for an increasingly digitized job market where knowledge of multi-modal communication will be necessary in order to reach a general audience.

An Insider’s Guide to Academic Writing, by Susan Miller-Cochran, Roy Stamper, and Stacey Cochran (2016) also utilizes digital modes to educate students in a wide variety of disciplines, as it states in its preface: “As a unique enhancement to its rhetoric-based pedagogy, An Insider’s Guide to Academic Writing integrates, through video and print interviews, the writing advice of scholars and undergraduates from many disciplines; they speak from and about their own experiences as academic writers” (Miller-Cochran, Cochran, and Stamper v). By directly consulting scholars who define most of the writing expectations of their fields, this textbook adds a sense of legitimacy to its composition instruction. It is ranked by Amazon #276 for textbooks on writing skills and #475 for rhetoric textbooks. Its description on its publisher’s website emphasizes its interdisciplinary approach to writing:
Based on the best practices of one of the most innovative and productive first-year composition programs in the U.S., *An Insider’s Guide to Academic Writing: A Brief Rhetoric* is the ideal way to prepare students no matter which discipline they are entering. Through a series of flexible, transferable frameworks and concrete connections to the disciplines—including unique Insider’s video interviews with scholars and peers—it helps students use a rhetorical lens to adapt to the academic writing tasks of different disciplinary discourse communities. (“An Insider’s Guide to Academic Writing, Overview”)

Since this textbook addresses the different writing expectations of discourse communities it is an ideal guide for undergraduate competency requirements.

David Rosenwasser and Jill Stephen’s *Writing Analytically*, 6th edition, 2012, is a popular textbook, ranked by Amazon at #376 in sales of rhetoric textbooks and #193 in all language textbooks. This textbook’s emphasis is very different than *The Brief McGraw-Hill Guide* as it focuses on research and analytical writing, defined by the authors as a “patient and methodical inquiry into the meaning of information” (Rosenwasser and Stephen xxiii), instructing students to be able to write within this style for any college discipline. As they describe in their preface, the authors aimed to develop a book that would open the conversation to allow faculty to talk about writing across the disciplines, “learning about what college students need in order to succeed at academic writing both in first-year composition courses and in the various discourse communities they migrate among during their undergraduate careers” (Rosenwasser xxiii). The ability to transcend the different discourse communities is an enormous undertaking for the composition curriculum, yet is necessary to produce well-rounded academic writers.

Rosenwasser and Stephen point out that the ability to write analytically is the most sought after
skill for all disciplines and their textbook will not only guide students through the writing expectations of their undergraduate years but will also prepare them to succeed as writers in their future career discourse communities, as they state:

This edition of *Writing Analytically* remains committed to the goal of giving students the tools they need in order to engage in the analytical habits of mind that will be expected of them in their courses and in the world they encounter after graduation. Students who learn to analyze information and who know how to use writing in order to discover and develop ideas will continue to be in demand in the workplace, regardless of the form that writing takes or the medium in which it appears. (Rosenwasser and Stephen xxiii)

Rosenwasser and Stephen leave the task for composition instruction open-ended, implying that the field continues to evolve to embrace different modes and appearances, which is consistent with their goal to transcend different disciplines for academic writing, even while their definition of academic writing actually seems pretty narrow.

As noted, I did an examination on these five textbooks to determine how the predominant ideologies of current composition instruction influence the treatment of creative writing elements, whose uses are encouraged by modern-day writing scholars. My findings indicate that while modern-day composition instruction addresses the use of creative writing, the textbooks are inconsistent with their treatment of the creative writing elements. In the next chapter, I discuss each textbook’s ideological tendencies and examine their treatment of the following creative writing elements: use of narrative, first person pronoun, and figurative language.
CHAPTER V. FINDINGS

The undergraduate composition class is often students’ first exposure to academic writing, and so we can assume that its pedagogy will follow the conventions and current trends of the collegiate discourse community. And, since undergraduate education should mirror a muted form of real-world standards, these conventions should reflect professional writing expectations of the students after graduation. In her essay “Crossing the Lines: On Creative Composition and Composing Creative Writing,” Wendy Bishop notes the similarities between undergraduate composition class writing and academic writing as she claims that “academic writing is, to a degree, as compulsory within institutional life as is first-year writing for a first-year student” (Bishop 185), bolstering the connection between the two types of writing. My examination of the five textbooks introduced in chapter 4 produced a conflicting array of findings as to their treatment of the current trend set forth by Sword, Pinker and Evans to incorporate creative writing elements in the finished written product, suggesting that composition instruction must evolve to reflect the reformed expectations of academic writing.

After using ideological criticism to conduct an examination on each of the five composition textbooks, I find that The Brief McGraw-Hill Guide: Writing for College, Writing for Life closely follows the ideology of the New Rhetoric movement, and in particular, the social-epistemics. It provides extensive guidance for writing within the context of the assignment, suggesting an emphasis on awareness of a “real-world” audience. The textbook is divided into six parts to address different writing goals along with sample essays to demonstrate good writing.

In part one, “Getting Started,” this textbook establishes goals for writing and how they change for different writer roles such as college student, professional, citizen, and family
member or friend, suggesting that the student must adjust the language dependent on his experience and context. Part one also instructs students on how to read critically for research, analysis, and synthesis, and discusses how to use writing as a means to discover through the use of pre-writing techniques such as free writing, brainstorming, and listing. In her ground breaking article “The Uses of the Unconscious in Composing,” scholar Janet Emig explored the pre-writing stage of the process as a means for writing to discover, and she welcomed this necessary stage of unconscious writing as a “sloppy and inefficient procedure” (Emig 7) that ultimately resulted in stimulating ideas and worthy topics. This textbook continues to encourage the critical pre-writing phase of the writing process.

In part two, “Using What You Have Learned to Share Information” and part three, “Using What You Have Learned to Write Arguments” the authors step away from differentiating between the roles of the writer to discuss reasons for writing. Part two addresses the following reasons for writing: writing to share experiences, to explore, to inform, and to analyze, and part three lists the following reasons: writing to convince, to evaluate, to explain cause and effects, to solve problems, and to write about a creative work. Each reason, or goal, for writing is presented in its own chapter, indicating that the textbook’s authors view writing as contingent upon the purpose of the assignment. This textbook’s focus on goal-driven writing to produce good writing contradicts the definition of “good writing” that the current scholars explained in chapter three. Sword, Pinker, and Evans define good writing as a style of writing in which the same expectations, standards, and conventions are observed and recognized by both the writer and reader, across genres and disciplines. This textbook’s focus on goal-driven writing suggests that writing is evaluated based on its assignment or situation, implying that universally good writing does not exist in the composition classroom.
Within each chapter of parts two and three, this textbook suggests assignment options in which scenarios are presented for use in classroom writing and provides model examples of both good published writing and student writing. Also included in each chapter is a section in which students learn how to write with knowledge of the conventions, instructing students that “When effective writers edit their work, they attend to the conventions that will help readers move through their writing effortlessly […] By paying attention to these conventions in your writing, you make reading a more pleasant experience for readers” (Roen, Glau, and Maid 175), thereby suggesting that contextual writing is intended to make the writing ultimately more reader-based. The authors’ language here is noteworthy as they begin the section with an objective statement that qualifies what effective writers do, and then shift to the second person voice and address the student directly, creating a slightly patronizing yet instructional tone. This switch in tone implies that the student writer is not yet an effective writer, which, according to Wendy Bishop, discourages students from learning the skills to write better, as she says, “Our students aren’t writers the day they are hired as writers or […] publish in ‘professional’ forums. They are writers whenever they write” (Bishop 193), indicating the need to respect their efforts at all stages of the writing process. Bishop would disagree with this textbook’s assumption that student writers are not effective writers until they join the larger academic discourse community, instead nurturing their growing confidence as writers with each assignment.

At the end of each chapter, there is a self-assessment in which the student reflects on his learning goals, defined at the beginning of each chapter, through answering a series of questions that invoke thought on the process leading up to the final draft. There is also a sample reflective essay from a student writer who uses narrative as he considers the same learning goals and the question prompts, suggesting that narrative’s use is helpful in the reflective stage of the writing
process. In his book (Re)Writing Craft, Tim Mayers saw the value in using self-reflection in the composition class to encourage study of the writing process, saying that as the students answer the instructor-prompted questions they may “understand writing processes for the unwieldy, context-specific, variable, and mutable things they are” (Mayers 135). Mayers implies that through analyzing their own processes, the students are likely to develop efficient writing practices and use this knowledge for future writing assignments.

Roen, Glau, and Maid discuss the use of the narrative in part two, as a lesson for the student writer to reflect on academic experiences, but Sword, Pinker, and Evans suggest that narrative has a broader purpose. Although this textbook predominantly follows a social-epistemic ideology, it takes a Neo-Aristotelian approach in its treatment of the narrative, as it warns the student not to enhance the subject by elaborating but to instead use the narrative to accurately report the facts: “Effective narrative leads to something: a point the writer wants to make, an idea the writer wants to explain, a concept the writer wants the reader to understand” (Roen, Glau, and Maid 79). This means that Roen, Glau, and Maid see the function of the narrative as a means to defend the truth of the analysis, which is reminiscent of Neo-Aristotelian theory in which writing evolves from that which is already known. Using the narrative as a device to lead to the truth is a function of the narrative that, as noted in chapter three, Sword, Pinker, and Evans would likely agree to be integral to academic writing. These scholars assume that narrative’s place in academic writing is to provide support for the message, meant to give the reader a sense of relation to the writer. However, Roen, Glau, and Maid promote strict adherence to using the narrative as fact in opposition to Sword’s discussion of the usefulness of the fictional narrative to reinforce one’s points. The authors stress the importance of honesty in the narrative as they tell the reader that
When writing about your experiences, you may be tempted to make them more interesting than they actually were. When you are striving for accuracy, however, you need to resist that temptation. Usually you are not trying to convince readers to change their ways with this kind of writing, but to honestly relate your experiences so readers can understand their significance. (Roen, Glau, and Maid 79)

Here, Roen, Glau, and Maid indicate a parallel between honest writing and good writing, indicating that the narrative’s sole function is factual representation. This comment reveals the authors’ belief that the purpose of the narrative is to share the information in the most accurate manner possible with little regard to audience reaction or emotion, shifting the emphasis from reader to writer. By insisting that the narrative stay honest, Roen, Glau, and Maid imply that its fictional connotation in the form of creative nonfiction is not a trustworthy source for the academic, reminding us of the early research that placed creative writing as less important than composition in the hierarchy of English studies.

In keeping with the context-driven social-epistemics, Roen, Glau and Maid address voice and point of view as situational to the assignment. They do not suggest the use of any particular person, nor do they address when first person voice is and is not advisable. The same can be said for their treatment of figurative language, as the authors don’t acknowledge the use of figurative language in student writing, and only note its presence in a potential student assignment to critique a creative work, implying that students need not worry themselves with the reasons for which they might choose to employ figurative language in their own writing. Instead, the text defines metaphor, simile, and imagery so that the student can identify their presence when doing a creative writing critique, and this information is not addressed until late in the book, in the part three chapter 12 section in which the student learns how to read and write critically, but does not
invite the student to use the techniques in his own writing. The fact that the information is offered so late in the textbook implies that the authors do not think the material is important enough for the instructor to cover early in the course.

Each chapter in part four “Strategies for Effective Communication” defines a different writing strategy intended to help the student guide readers, argue points, collaborate with peers, and make effective oral presentations. Roen, Glau, and Maid again address the use of the narrative in part four as they provide two examples for narrative usage— to relate an event and to relate a process, once again using the honest nature of the narrative to connect the reader to the writer. Then, in part five “Technologies for Effective Communication,” the authors instruct students to choose a medium and genre for their writing, explaining that genre choice is usually dictated to by the purpose of the writing and the audience. Also presented in part five are the options of using technology and its various forms of media, design, and visuals as modes to compose. This part is focused on how the audience will perceive the student’s writing, shifting the focus from writer to reader, and this heightened sense of audience awareness reflects the intent of Sword, Pinker, and Evans to create reader-based prose in academic writing. In part six “Using Research for Informed Communication,” this textbook discusses the use of sources for research, from finding and evaluating information to synthesizing and documenting sources. This section is pretty straightforward, guiding the student through the considerations necessary for conducting quality and useful research, and then providing the guidelines for MLA and APA documentation styles.

*The Allyn and Bacon Guide to Writing* follows several different ideologies in its broad depiction of composition instruction. The authors state that “One of the premises of this book is that good writing is rooted in the writer’s perception of a problem” (Ramage, Bean, and Johnson
Initially, this textbook approaches academic writing with a social-epistemic lens, as it examines writing as a rhetorical act with an emphasis on audience-awareness and its relation to composition research. In the preface, the authors write that the method used in this book teaches students “to read rhetorically so that they can summarize complex readings and speak back to them armed with their own powers of analysis and critical thinking” (Ramage, Bean, and Johnson xxxvii), which is especially relevant when we consider the trend promoted by Sword, Pinker, and Evans; if the students are potentially an audience for academic writing, this is all the more reason for the writing to be clear. This textbook also suggests a collaborative pedagogy as several assignments suggest group work and peer review for student writing. Evans and Pinker allude to the effectiveness of collaborative pedagogy as they encouraged peer review to ensure that academic writing maintains a realistic readable voice. Lea Masiello also supported the use of peer review in her writing center work, in which students received feedback from peer tutors. Like all of the other textbooks analyzed for this project, this textbook meets the outcome goals set forth by the WPA, listing the outcome statements on both the opening and endpapers. Continuing with the list structure in a current-traditionalist manner, this textbook lists rules and conventions for sentence structure, grammatical functions, and use of mechanics, devoting an entire part of the textbook to correct use of language. Sword, Pinker, and Evans also emphasize the correct use of language; however, their intent for emphasizing correct language usage is not to follow traditional grammatical rules, but to instead use language to produce clear and convincing arguments, allowing the use of creative writing elements for their rhetorical effect.

This textbook is separated into six parts. In part one, “A Rhetoric for Writers,” the authors define “good writing” as the ability to think critically to pose questions and problems,
using writing as a means to discover and express new ideas. Throughout this textbook’s first part, Ramage, Bean, and Johnson conceptualize the common traits and habits of good writers, listing as “Concept 1: Good writing can vary from closed to open forms” (6), “Concept 2: Good writers address problems rather than topics” (11), and “Concept 3: Good writers think rhetorically about purpose, audience, and genre” (15), recalling the discussion of effective writing in *The Brief McGraw-Hill Guide*, as both textbooks’ authors indicate that “good writers” serve as role models for student writers yet neither textbook dissects good writing as a finished written product, focusing on the process of writing instead of the final draft. Not only does Wendy Bishop admonish this model of superiority, Lea Masiello also sees the harm in labeling students as “student writers” rather than “good writers,” as she says “our students are writers—though not necessarily fluent in any preferred literary or academic genre—and we can recognize whatever identities they have as writers” (Masiello 212), encouraging their individual identity to promote the self confidence needed to excel as a developing writer. Ramage, Bean, and Johnson assure the student that “the skills you learn in a writing course are transferable to all majors and to your professional careers” (Ramage, Bean, and Johnson 5), acknowledging the importance of the undergraduate writing class for all disciplines, a concept with which Sword, Pinker, and Evans would agree. Part one also instructs students to think rhetorically about subject matter, persuasion, and style, continuing to list the good writer habits within each concept.

It is important to note that early in part one, on page 23, Ramage, Bean, and Johnson discuss the use for closed-form prose and open-form prose, establishing right from the beginning that certain qualities are acceptable for both types of prose. Closed-form prose is the form expected for the standard thesis paper, containing a thesis statement, topic sentences, and predictable transitions. Open-form prose, on the other hand, “uses narrative techniques such as
storytelling, evocative language, surprising juxtapositions, and other features that violate the conventions of closed-form prose” (Ramage, Bean, and Johnson 23) yet appeal to the pedagogy for creative writing. This separation of the two types of writing indicates that the authors believe that writing is either open or closed, and do not promote intermingling between the two. The rhetorical slant of the assignment dictates which approach is appropriate for the writer to use.

According to the authors, academic writing focuses on closed-form prose, and so does this textbook. However, the authors do address the use of the narrative, specifically the autobiographical narrative and the literacy narrative, as a means to learn how to “relate ordinary experiences in a vivid manner” (Ramage, Bean, and Johnson 132). Since the authors include the use of the narrative as a method for enhancement, they allude to the importance of writing with style, yet they constrict the student to use this technique only in limited open-form prose assignments. There is no bridge between the use of narrative and the closed-form prose assignments, which represent the bulk of academic writing. In fact, Ramage, Bean, and Johnson warn against the use of chronological structure, a characteristic of narrative, in closed-form prose, labeling it as “the default mode we fall into when we aren’t sure how to organize material” (Ramage, Bean, and Johnson 456), suggesting that chronological structure, in the hands of the student writer, can produce shallow writing. While acceptable in the story-telling nature of open-form prose, the authors are quick to deem chronological structure unacceptable for use in closed-form prose due to its quality of predictability. Sword differentiates between story and plot based on the timeline as well, acknowledging that “A story tells you what happened; a plot tells you why,” explaining that the challenge for the academic writer is to “transform stories into plots through careful attention to elements such as character, setting, point of view, and narrative sequence” (Sword 91), invoking the use of these elements in academic writing.
Ramage, Bean, and Johnson again describe the difference between closed- and open-form prose styles of writing as they say: “The essence of storytelling is the depiction of events through time. Whereas thesis-based writing descends from problem to thesis to supporting reasons and evidence, stories unfold linearly, temporally, from event to event” (Ramage, Bean, and Johnson 498). So, while Sword sees a seamless move from a creative writing storyline to an academic plot, Ramage, Bean, and Johnson present the image of a stark contrast between the two styles of writing, suggesting there is no room to borrow techniques from one style to the other. This boldly contradicts the current trend that allows for creative writing elements and techniques in academic writing, making this textbook appear contradictory and outdated.

Part two “Writing Projects” instructs the student to read rhetorically, providing reading strategies and suggesting summary writing as a tool for reading comprehension. The authors address different functions of writing and explain each function’s likely forms, instructing the student that the purpose for the writing will dictate its acceptable form. The textbook discusses the function of writing to explore the subject matter, through autobiographical narrative, exploratory essay, and annotated bibliography; writing to inform on research through informative essay and report; writing to analyze/synthesize information using field research, images, fiction, and ideas; and writing to persuade the audience through the classical argument, evaluation, and proposal. This section differentiates between the different styles and types of writing based on its context, connecting the textbook’s instructional voice to that of the social-epistemics as it makes writing a situational experience for the student.

Part three “A Guide to Composing and Revising” explains the importance of revision, in particular, how the “expert writers” use the process of revision to refine their work. This section supports peer review to “help you think like an expert” (Ramage, Bean, and Johnson 445),
emulating experts while simultaneously reminding students of their novice status, and suggests
criteria to guide workshop discussions. The text refers back to the early discussion on closed-
form versus open-form prose, labeling each with separate revision techniques and guidelines to
abide by the conventions for each style of writing. The authors limit the use of figurative
language to open-form prose, as they briefly address its use in part three chapter 18,
exemplifying its role in creative writing to “enable the writer to describe an unfamiliar thing in
terms of different, more familiar things” (Ramage, Bean, and Johnson 507). Not only is this
basic definition of figurative language obvious, it is also constrictive as the authors do not
elaborate on importance of figurative language to readability and its contribution to style. There
is little to no discussion on use of the first person voice, other than a chart explaining active
versus passive voice, along with its acceptances. This is also indicative of its social-epistemic
ideological tendency as its attention to voice is based on its readers’ perceptions and not on its
contribution to the message. Should writers instead adopt the teachings of Sword, Pinker, and
Evans, they may find that the use of first person voice in prose that is typically written in the
third person may not only be more suitable to the writer; its use may also create more reader-
interest in the material.

Part four “A Rhetorical Guide to Research” instructs the student to ask research questions
and find sources based upon the thesis question, and evaluate and incorporate sources into his
own writing. This section also explains documentation and citation rules per MLA and APA
style. Part five “Writing for Assessment” focuses on the finished written product as this section
prepares students for essay examinations, portfolio review, and reflective work. The authors
suggest that sound writing strategies will result in the type of writing worthy of good grades. Part
five chapter 23 contains a section that is titled “Producing an ‘A’ Response” (Ramage, Bean, and
Johnson 620), implying that guidelines to good writing can be prescriptive, adding a tendency for current-traditionalist theory to this text. Part six “A Guide to Editing” continues to develop the current-traditionalist theory as this section shows the student how to improve editing skills in regards to sentence structure, punctuation, Standard English usage, style, and mechanics, presented in a list of clear-cut rules. Although this textbook instructs the students on the correct language usage, it does not explain how use of language can affect the rhetorical nature of the writing, as Sword, Pinker, and Evans advocate in their call to use language to enhance the writer’s message.

_The St. Martin’s Guide to Writing_ 11th Edition, by Rise B. Axelrod and Charles R. Cooper, 2016, is a guide to writing strategies for students to succeed at both academic and real-world writing. The chapters are purpose-driven with a common-sense approach to integrate modeled text with student writing, separated by strategic methods for writing. The strategies presented in this textbook are designed to satisfy the context-driven assignments, following the social-epistemic ideology. This textbook consists of five parts with an editing handbook included at the end.

Like _The Allyn and Bacon_, in part one “Writing Activities,” Axelrod and Cooper suggest assignments to stimulate the student to write for different reasons, such as writing about remembering an event and writing about a profile, which would seem to include the creative writing elements of narrative, first person, and figurative language. This textbook lists other reasons for writing, such as: writing to explain a concept, writing to analyze and synthesize opposing arguments, writing to argue a position, writing to propose a solution, writing to justify an evaluation, writing for cause and effect, and writing to analyze stories. Each chapter within part one focuses on one of the above writing activities, providing examples of reading for each
activity along with suggested assignments, drafting guidelines, peer review guidelines, editing guidelines, and finally, questions designed to reflect on individual process. A close look at each chapter’s guidelines reveals a combination of two popular composition theories; collaborative pedagogy reflected in the peer review, and process pedagogy, as seen in the emphasis on drafting and revision. This textbook’s focus on the different strategies for each writing activity shows the student that different writing assignments allow for different conventions, making writing a situational activity, which is an indicator of its social-epistemic ideology. Once again, this contradicts Sword, Pinker, and Evan’s definition of good writing; that good writing should transcend the disciplines (in this case, assignments) and utilize a variety of writing techniques.

Part two “Critical Thinking Strategies” provides the student with more specific prewriting ideas such as free writing, looping, mapping, and outlining. It also devotes an entire chapter to reading strategies as it discusses annotating, outlining, paraphrasing, summarizing, synthesizing, contextualizing, and evaluating another writer’s credibility. This section defines elements of figurative language such as metaphor, simile, and symbolism (Axelrod 515). Similar to The Allyn and Bacon’s use of figurative language, this textbook teaches students to identify the elements of figurative language in assigned reading. However, unlike the previous two textbooks, in part three “Writing Strategies,” The St. Martin’s Guide goes into great detail about how students can use creative writing elements such as analogy, figurative language and comparing/ contrasting to strengthen their own writing. On page 552, the textbook uses a sample of writing from Annie Dillard to model the effect of descriptive language on the text’s meaning, and leads the student through an intense analysis of Dillard’s word choice. On the next page, the authors suggest a writing exercise in which the student describes a scene, focusing on his own choice of detail, and then asks the student to analyze how the detail contributed to the original
description. This type of writing exercise allow this textbook to address the writing requirements for many genres in addition to academic writing, and its inclusion of the creative writing elements make this text a likely choice for a wide-scope writing class.

In part three, the authors also introduce specific techniques for the student to use in formal writing such as transitions, headings, paraphrasing, narrating, describing, defining, classifying, comparing/contrasting, and arguing. Each chapter provides the student with a specifically defined writing technique and recommends a strategy for structuring sentences to fit the technique, teaching the students how to implement different techniques in their own writing. For example, in chapter 14 “Narrating,” Axelrod and Cooper explain the purpose and effect of narrating and then provide sentence prompts which the student can use to articulate his thoughts to ensure the writing reflects his true message. Axelrod and Cooper discuss process narrative in this section, advising that it is a useful technique for informal writing or when used to explain a concept to the reader, but they do not mention narrative’s role in academic writing. The authors discuss the elements of the narrative in terms of its conventions, such as active verb tense and its use of timeline, yet by not addressing the role of the narrative in academic writing, Axelrod and Cooper imply that it is not a functional element of formal writing or modern day composition, contradicting Sword’s belief that narrative strengthens the academic writing.

Part four “Research Strategies” is very similar to the research sections in the previous textbooks as it provides straightforward instruction on conducting field research, beginning with planning a research project, finding, evaluating, and using sources, and finally defining the MLA and APA style conventions for citing and documenting sources.

In part five “Composing Strategies,” Axelrod and Cooper discuss how to take essay examinations, prepare portfolios, and analyze visuals. The authors also address genre writing
such as writing for business, science, collaboratively, and multi-modally. This particular edition of *The St. Martin’s Guide* follows a multimodal pedagogy, which advocates the use of alternative modes in addition to textual literacy to convey a message, as it offers many concessions for the composition classroom’s students and instructors alike, such as “Launchpad”, an engaging resource for students and instructors to enhance the textbook’s material. It provides “new ways to get the most out of your book” and encourages readers to “Get an interactive e-book combined with useful, highly relevant materials in a fully customizable course space,” which comes complete with lesson plans and prebuilt units (Axelrod and Cooper xv). While all of the textbooks discussed here have digital components to aid instruction, this textbook, in its entirety, is offered in e-book format along with hyperlinked reading examples and website help/support systems, and while other textbooks can be purchased as e-books, this particular textbook advertises that medium as a better alternative than the traditional textual form. By enhancing the text through multimodal options, this textbook abides by the advice of Sword, Pinker and Evans to appeal to a general audience, as its multimodal capabilities invite an Internet community to hyperlink to its material, widening its audience. This textbook can also be purchased and packaged with optional video tutorials and videogame-like quizzing on the chapters. The actual written text utilizes lists and drafts to illustrate its lessons on process, highlighting areas for discussion, review, and new concepts.

By providing students with multimodal “practical strategies” and “time-tested tools” (Axelrod and Cooper v), this textbook encourages multimodal thought and practice in its readers. Axelrod and Cooper believe that modeling texts is an effective way to instruct as they explain in their letter on the inside cover, “The best way to become a good writer is to study examples of good writing and apply what you learn from those examples to your own work,” inferring that
the multimodal presentation of the information is meant to inspire students to look at composition through a multimodal lens and to compose in that fashion for their own student writing. In part five, Axelrod and Cooper directly address this ideology to the reader as they provide strategies for “analyzing visuals” (704), “designing for page and screen” (738), and “composing multimodal presentations” (751), delivering to the student step-by-step strategies to create multimodal work out of their textual composition. This multimodal pedagogy encourages the student to raise his level of audience-awareness because multimodality increases the size of the audience. In his article “The Place of Creative Writing in Composition Studies,” Douglas Hesse recognizes multimodality’s place in the composition class, describing it as the “new composition,” complete with its own standards and challenges. Hesse says, “Unlike the old composition, the new composition includes textmaking for situations in which readerships are neither compelled nor circumscribed. One of its main challenges is how writers make readers pay attention” (Hesse 45). Here, Hesse emphasizes that multimodalities must be carefully constructed to attract and hook a general audience because not only is its audience greater, it is also less controlled. Sword, Pinker, and Evans allude to this same idea in their emphasis on writing to a general audience. So, while audience-awareness has always been a concern for student writing, its importance has increased with the use of multimodal composition, a concept that the textbook addresses in detail in part five.

In *An Insider’s Guide to Academic Writing*, Susan Miller-Cochran, Roy Stamper, and Stacey Cochran also engage in digital learning to embrace writing across the different academic disciplines. Like *The St. Martin’s Guide*, this textbook utilizes Launchpad to provide supplementary content in the form of instructional videos, interactive exercises and tutorials, and game-like writing skills practice. However, it doesn’t assume a multimodal ideology inasmuch as
it uses multiple modes to enhance its social-epistemic ideology, as it addresses different writing conventions within each presented discourse community. Like the previously discussed textbooks, this one displays how it supports the WPA learning outcomes, connecting each outcome with its correlating chapter and page number. However, the WPA learning outcomes statement is the only similarity between this textbook and the other three. We can see from both this textbook’s section titles and its layout that there is much emphasis placed on writing within the context of the discipline and for the assignment, which indicates its link to the social-epistemic ideology. Part one is titled “A Guide to Academic Writing,” part two is “Getting Inside Academic Writing,” and part three is “Entering Academic Conversations: Readings and Case Studies.” By following this “guide” (part one) to get “inside” (part two) and then finally “enter” (part three) academic writing, the authors imply that academic writing is like a gaited community. The student must learn the conventions, rules, and expectations before he is allowed to share in its discourse, contrasting the tone of the other three textbooks that welcomed the student to the writing community, and diverging from the advice of Sword, Pinker, and Evans who believe it is important for the writer to level with a general audience.

In part one, the authors provide the fundamental rules and guidelines for academic writing, using a third of this textbook to present the same material that comprised the majority of the total content in the previously discussed textbooks. The authors focus on the transition from high school expectations to college expectations, leading to a discussion on academic writing and its conventions and establishing that this textbook focuses solely on academic writing for a variety of disciplines, separating it from the previously discussed textbooks that could be useful to a wide-scope of writing styles. Early in this section, this textbook addresses the importance of audience-awareness for academic writers, as it emphasizes that the purpose of academic writing
is “communicating the results of [a scholar’s] research, and it might be published or shared with academic audiences or more general audiences. In fact, a scholar might conduct a research project and then find that he or she needs to communicate the results of that project to a variety of audiences” (Miller-Cochran, Stamper and Cochran 10), implying that, like Sword, Pinker, and Evans suggest, academic writing often needs to be read and understood by more than its own discourse community. Here is the tension in academic writing-- while the academic discipline possesses a gate-keeper mentality, it is necessary to follow the discipline’s conventions while also appealing to a wide audience. Sword describes the stylish academic writer as possessing “a deeply held belief that academic writing, like academic thought, should not be constrained by the boundaries of convention” (Sword 11), indicating that while it is important for the writer to understand disciplinary expectations and conventions, it is equally important to interject style to increase its readability by a general audience. Part one also explains how the rhetorical context will change by genre, noting how writing situations may address both a primary and secondary audience; briefly discusses the writing process; and instructs the student on how to both read and write rhetorically. The authors introduce the concept of developing arguments, composing a rhetorical analysis, and performing academic research.

In part two “Inside Academic Writing,” the authors explain how to read and write within the different academic disciplines, analyzing the genres and conventions for each discipline. On page 102, the section “Translating Scholarly Writing for Different Rhetorical Contexts” shows that the writer must remember that, while it is important to write within the discipline’s structure, language, and reference conventions, at times the writing must be “repurposed for presentation in another, more general context” (Miller-Cochran, Stamper, and Cochran 102), to achieve clear communication. To translate a scholarly work, the authors identify a four-step process: identify
the new audience, analyze target audience and genre expectations, construct the genre, and write the analysis (Miller-Cochran, Stamper, and Cochran 106), understanding the rhetorical concept of the scholarly work and accentuating the perceived audience in the process. Pinker supports the need to, at times, translate academic writing to a wider audience, comparing different disciplines to separate universes, as he says, “When we make first contact with the aliens in the other universes and jabber at them in our local code, they cannot understand us without a sci-fi Universal Translator” (Pinker 69). Here, Pinker follows his own advice and uses imagery of the unfamiliarity of technology from outer space to imply that academic research can appear inconsequential when it is not presented in terms that are commonly recognizable, proving his case for why academic writing should appeal to a more general audience than a limited discourse community. This textbook’s section on scholarly article translation reminds students that it is the writer’s responsibility to “communicate the importance of a piece of scholarly writing to another audience” (Miller-Cochran, Stamper, and Cochran 102), reinforcing the need to write with a high level of audience-awareness.

The rest of part two is devoted to defining the different writing conventions attached to the academic disciplines. First, the authors examine the popular writing conventions for each of traditional disciplines: humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences, and also for the applied fields. In part two chapter six, the authors address the use of figurative language in the context of academic writing for the humanities. This textbook explains the importance of the rhetorical aspect of writing, saying that writers in the humanities “often pay similarly close attention to the text they’re creating, and they take great care to choose precise, and sometimes artistic, language […] the language not only conveys information; it also engages in rhetorical activity of its own” (Miller-Cochran, Stamper, and Cochran 136). Here, the authors demonstrate that not all language
used in academic writing need to be strictly informative, but that figurative language is important for use in the humanities because of its rhetorical effect, which aligns with the social-epistemic ideology of context’s relationship to audience-awareness. While Sword, Pinker, and Evans agree that figurative language is useful in the humanities, they also encourage its use in the other fields as well, considering Pinker’s work in the social sciences and Evans’ work in the health professions. Sword acknowledges that the academic writing of the humanities seeks this rhetorical effect as she says, “Openly impassioned writing is most frequently found in disciplines that favor a personal voice and a partisan viewpoint” (Sword 162), but then goes on to beg for passionate writing in other disciplines as she says that

   Passionate prose is, however, by no means exclusively the purview of politically engaged humanists and social sciences who write in the first person. Academics in any field can express passion for their subject matter, drawing on a range of rhetorical techniques that need not necessarily include a personal voice. (Sword 162)

When we consider Sword’s call for academic writing and then read An Insider’s Guide, we see that there is a bias in the text, relaxing the restrictions and allowing freedom within the writing conventions of the humanities, while the writing conventions presented for the social sciences disciplines is remarkably limited. For acceptable social science language, they promote the use of the passive voice and hedging. Contrastingly, Sword suggests that in the social sciences, “researchers can draw readers into their argument by giving a voice and presence to human subjects” (Sword 151) which opens the academic writer to a wide range of language use, including figurative language (personification) and voice (first person). The writing conventions discussed in this textbook for the natural sciences are: the writing’s objectivity, the replication of research, the immediacy of research, and the cooperation and collaboration amongst peer
researchers, emphasizing the objective nature of the sciences with no attention to the audience’s perception of the information.

In part three “Entering Academic Conversations: Readings and Case Studies,” the authors provide models of scholarly writing using examples of complete articles and essays that explore cultural and academic topics to show the conventions and genres of writing within each academic discipline. Following each reading is a series of questions intended to stimulate additional conversation and thought. By devoting a third of this textbook to modeling examples, the authors abide by the same theory that Zachary Snider discussed in his article “Changing English: Studies in Culture and Education” in which he says that his composition students learn from “mimicry and creation rather than from misinformed, detached analysis and regurgitation,” using examples of academic writing that are also “somewhat creative” (Snider 89). Snider implies that composition students learn more from analyzing examples of good writing than by muddling through their own research and invention process, and this textbook follows the same idea by providing and analyzing many examples of academic writing. Sword, Pinker, and Evans agree also provide examples of good academic writing, explaining the properties and characteristics that make each selection successful.

In *Writing Analytically*, Rosenwasser and Stephen instruct students to use analytical thinking by identifying parts of research and understanding how they connect to the whole subject. Connecting the research to the experiences and contexts in which the student writes is a social-epistemic idea, but this textbook also follows Neo-Aristotelian ideology as evidenced by the authors’ emphasis on the use of truth, logic and sense to lead students through the process of analysis and to defend their findings. Rosenwasser and Stephen promote the idea that good writing leads to good thinking, approaching writing as a cognitive act. Within this textbook there
also exists a thread of current-traditionalist ideology as they present rules governing that which is acceptable in academic writing and that which is not. However, the chapter on grammar addresses not just the rules of grammar but also the reasons for the stylistic choices and how to analyze a writer’s syntactic decisions, explaining that style functions to reinforce the writing’s meaning. Therefore, the writer must pay close attention to word choice, for words are “things with particular qualities, complex histories, and varied shades of meaning” (Rosenwasser and Stephen 375), and can alter the writing’s message in both helpful and harmful ways. The grammar chapter is closely tied to stylistic choices, as it “seeks to persuade you that all writing is contextual, its appropriateness dependent on the rhetorical situation” (Rosenwasser and Stephen 376). So, although this textbook may have a surface current-traditionalist read, its analytical and contextual emphases reinforce the social-epistemic and Neo-Aristotelian ideologies.

This textbook is separated into three units. In unit one “The Analytical Frame of Mind,” the authors define analysis and discuss the writing process, emphasizing that the student should not feel compelled to write an argument or take a stance before completing a thorough analysis, implying that, like scholar James Kinneavy believed, research is an integral part of the pre-writing stage. Rosenwasser and Stephen instruct students to disregard some of the lessons they may have learned in high school education, especially conformities such as the five-paragraph essay, which they describe as “the rigid, one-size-fits-all organizational scheme that is still taught in many high schools” (Rosenwasser and Stephen 7). The authors condemn the use of formulaic writing because they say it “runs counter to virtually all of the values and attitudes that they need in order to grow as writers and thinkers” (Rosenwasser and Stephen 8) thereby limiting students of their full writing capabilities. Instead, this textbook aims to focus “primarily on ways of using writing in order to improve your ability to observe” (Rosenwasser and Stephen 9), which
provides the basis for the beginning of analysis. The authors also discuss methods of pre-writing including the use of free writing and importance of drafting. In a section on style, Rosenwasser and Stephen caution students against relying on style guides to improve their writing’s readability, saying that “The problem with subscribing to one set of style ‘rules’ is that this practice ignores rhetoric and context” (Rosenwasser and Stephen 17), once again linking this textbook to the social-epistemic emphasis on context and relation to audience awareness. Rosenwasser and Stephen point to the audience’s expectations as the reason there exists such a difference between academic and non-academic writing, as they say, “General audiences often expect bigger and more definitive claims than carefully qualified academic writing is willing to make. The desire for overly authoritative claims and immediate answers […] produces an appropriate wariness among scientists and other academics” (Rosenwasser and Stephen 19). Here, the authors reason that academic writers often adhere to their research as they summarize their findings with little regard for pleasing the audience, indicating one reason why academic writing often does not appeal to a non-academic audience.

Early in unit one, Rosenwasser and Stephen emphasize the importance of observation and detailed writing as they provide strategies to teach the student to notice details, suggesting in a “Try This” exercise that the student answer the question “what do I notice?” rather than “what do I think?” (Rosenwasser and Stephen 26). This exercise is intended to invoke greater observational habits in the student writer and to teach important brainstorming techniques, and for this particular exercise, the student is permitted to use the first person. Later in the unit, the authors explain that descriptive writing is “just as important to analytical writing- in fact to all kinds of writing- as it is to the writing of poems or fiction” (Rosenwasser and Stephen 56), liberating students to use detail to improve the quality and effectiveness of their argument. They
provide three examples of academic writing from different disciplines that depend on detailed description to lead the audience through their research, and include a “Try This” exercise in which Rosenwasser and Stephen suggest the student use description as a form of analysis (Rosenwasser and Stephen 56). Sword, Pinker, and Evans agree with the use of detailed description, emphasizing the importance of word choice and use of figurative language to compare and contrast ideas that will ultimately strengthen the quality of the finished written product.

In unit two “Writing Analytical Papers: How to Use Evidence, Evolve Claims, and Converse with Sources,” Rosenwasser and Stephen instruct the students in the form of analytical research, explaining the relation of evidence to claims, the integration of evidence into a paper, and the rules for argumentation. They discuss the move from idea to thesis, suggesting “Try This” exercises that demonstrate how rhetorical decisions on structure and syntax influence the thesis’s strength and address the correct way to analyze, cite, and integrate sources.

In addition, in unit two Rosenwasser and Stephen discuss the academic writer’s use of figurative language. They modify the term figurative language with the Neo-Aristotelian term “figurative logic,” which they define as reasoning based on the use of metaphors. They justify its place in analytical writing, arguing that “What is important for present purposes is to consider challenges that can reasonably be made to the assumption that one of our most common ways of thinking, is not, in fact, a way of reasoning about evidence” (Rosenwasser and Stephen198). Here, they imply that the use of figurative language is an essential component to providing evidence in an analysis. By labeling figurative language as a common tool to reason, Rosenwasser and Stephen say that the use of it, and in particular, the metaphor, is a natural part
of the academic language. They go into more depth on the importance and use of metaphor, defending its role in academic writing, in the following chart:

The Logic of Metaphor

- Metaphors pervade our ways of thinking
- Metaphor is a way of thinking by analogy
- The logic of metaphors is implicit
- The implicit logic of metaphors can be made explicit by scrutinizing the language
- We can recast figurative language to see and evaluate its arguments just as we recast language to examine its logic in syllogistic form (Rosenwasser and Stephen 199)

Rosenwasser and Stephen go on to discuss a specific procedure for analyzing metaphor: separating the metaphor from the rest of the prose, writing its characteristics, choosing the characteristics that apply best to its context, and interpreting what the metaphor means based on its characteristics reasoned in context. They note that “People who pride themselves on being logical thinkers and place great value on rationality are inclined to think of metaphorical language as imprecise and too little available to any systematic way of arriving at meaning that all who encounter the metaphor might share” (Rosenwasser and Stephen 200). Here, Rosenwasser and Stephen point out the reason why academics who write with the influence of Neo-Aristotelian ideology may balk at the use of figurative language, concerned that it may muddy up the truth, but the authors answer those fears by reassuring the academic writer that “the fact that metaphors require interpretation- as does most language- does not take away from the fact that metaphors are a way of thinking” (Rosenwasser and Stephen 200). And so, for authors who believe that good writing is good thinking, metaphors fall nicely in line with their
Neo-Aristotelian theory. When we consider their completely analytical approach to writing, it is surprising that Rosenwasser and Stephen seem to be directly in line with Sword, Pinker, and Evans in regards to figurative language in academic writing.

In unit three “Matters of Form: The Shapes that Thought Takes,” the authors discuss different forms and formats required by different academic disciplines, including organizational strategies, transitions, the use of inductive and deductive reasoning, and the different expectations for introduction and conclusions. As referenced earlier, unit three contains the grammatical chapter in which Rosenwasser and Stephen encourage the relationship between style and meaning and advise that the revision process be based on stylistic choices.

The authors introduce the use of narrative in academic writing in unit two and then describe its uses more fully in unit three as they note the effectiveness of including anecdotes to reinforce the main idea. Although they warn not to let an anecdote speak for an entire issue, they do assert that narrative can be useful for research, for it is raw evidence not already interpreted by a researcher, implying that the very fact that it is honest and real can convince the reader of the point’s validity. This contradicts Roen, Glau, and Maid, who fear that the use of narrative in academic writing can potentially lead the writer away from its factual representation. Rosenwasser and Stephen note that “A surprising amount of writing in the disciplines is narrative; that is, writers often find themselves needing to explain sequences of action (as in the methods and results sections of a scientific paper or lab report) or events or behaviors or ideas” (Rosenwasser and Stephen 335). This means that they see narrative as a form of evidence for the writer to use in order to support his claim, similar to The Brief McGraw-Hill Guide’s view of the narrative. Due to describing this effect as “surprising,” Rosenwasser and Stephen indicate that narrative, while it is acceptable in academic writing, is also rarely used. However, Rosenwasser
and Stephen do agree with Sword, Pinker, and Evans that there is a place of narrative in academic writing as they say: “A good piece of writing […] tells a story. It explains how and why the writer came to focus on an issue or question or problem. It also narrates for readers how the writer came to understand the meaning and significance of his or her evidence” (Rosenwasser and Stephen 336). The story-telling quality is the basis of the narrative, implying that all writing, with its story-telling nature, is rooted in narrative. They provide examples of narrative (anecdotes) and structure an exercise in which the student must find a piece of writing that uses anecdotal evidence to support its claim. Unlike Roen, Glau, and Maid, Rosenwasser and Stephen actually give students a chance to practice this strategy by identifying anecdotal evidence in other people’s writing, allowing them to see first-hand its importance and effect on analysis.

Rosenwasser and Stephen address the use of the first person voice in strict terms, instructing the student that “you should discuss your subject matter in the third person and avoid the first and second person […] most academic analysis focuses on the subject matter rather than on you as you respond to it. If you use the third person, you keep the attention where it belongs” (Rosenwasser and Stephen 385). This struggle for attention is connected to Evans’ discussion of distancing between the writer and his subject. Contrary to Rosenwasser and Stephen’s view, Evans sees the value in the attachment of the writer to his subject as leading to his response. This is imperative to whether the work will ultimately be successful, as she warns, “With the emphasis in academic writing being on the intellectual, this may lead us to ignore what is going on at the feeling or the physical levels which can block us” (Evans 58), leading to inability to write. Instead, Evans promotes writing from the “in-between, where our self and what is beyond our skin make contact,” warning that when we don’t write from that place we risk “becom[ing] too concerned with the external environment and lose our individual perspective” (Evans 59).
Whereas Evans, along with Pinker and Sword, value individual perspective, Rosenwasser and Stephen favor an anonymous perspective when writing analytically, relinquishing the responsibility of personal attachment. They also suggest omitting the phrase “in my opinion”, as they find it to be distracting to the reader. The textbook suggests using the first person in the drafting phase in order to write freely and to aid in the invention stage of the writing process; however, it advises that analytical prose is more direct and straightforward when its final revision is drafted in the third person- which is ironic since the third-person often leads to convoluted sentence structure- claiming that “what you lose in personal conviction you gain in concision and directness by keeping the focus on the main idea in a main clause” (Rosenwasser and Stephen 386). So, we can deduce that the authors regard the first person voice to be ineffective and out of place in academic writing. The authors do acknowledge that there are moments when the first person pronoun is useful, such as in clarifying awkward phrasing like “the writer (or ‘one’) thinks” (Rosenwasser and Stephen 386) or reducing wordiness by using first person plural “we.” However, Rosenwasser and Stephen believe that the use of all first person pronouns must be avoided in science and social science writing.

These five textbooks, though widely used as first-year composition textbooks that comply with standards set forth by the WPA, are inconsistent with their treatment of the creative writing elements advocated by Sword, Pinker, and Evans for use in academic writing. Although they are similar in that they reflect the social-epistemic leanings of today’s undergraduate composition class, focusing on audience awareness and context-driven assignments, there is a clear divide between the first three textbooks and the last two textbooks examined here. The first three textbooks- The Brief McGraw-Hill Guide: Writing for College, Writing for Life; The Allyn and Bacon Guide to Writing; and The St. Martin’s Guide to Writing- present a generalized form of
writing, useful for a first-level or an introductory composition class, but fail to explore the in-depth writing ability required for academic writing. Therefore, their broad depiction of the use of narrative, figurative language, and the first person pronoun in student writing does not provide the student with adequate instruction on how to enhance their writing stylistically using creative writing elements. Ironically, the two analysis-heavy textbooks *The Insider’s Guide to Academic Writing* and *Writing Analytically* both value the use of creative writing elements to enhance analytical research, as they focus on teaching students the standards for academic writing.

These textbooks themselves are not examples of academic writing; rather, they serve as instructional guides to teach students the process of writing. Therefore, they often do not abide by the same writing conventions that they define for their readers. All five textbooks address the reader directly, alternating between the first and second person, even though they do not recommend the students write in that same manner. The discerning reader notices that the textbooks suggest one thing (to write mostly in the third person) and demonstrate another (as they themselves are written in the first and second person), implying that their restrictive rules can be interpreted by the writer who must address his audience in the most effective way.

In the next chapter, I discuss these findings in more detail and determine what we can deduce from the popular composition textbook’s treatment of creative writing elements in academic writing. I also suggest possible areas in which a natural merging of the two writing styles can and should occur, in accordance with the current state of academic writing. It is time for composition theory to move away from the context-driven social-epistemic ideology and instead teach students to produce universally good writing that emphasizes an awareness of a general audience.
CHAPTER VI. CONCLUSION

Scholars have evolved the field of composition studies to adapt to the changing needs of undergraduate education and the wide-scope of expectations from the academic disciplines. Compositionists responded to theorist James Berlin’s call for composition and rhetoric to appease the scientific fields rather than appeal to the lyrical language of the “poetics” by centering traditional composition theory around the social-epistemics and their context-driven, situational approach to writing. At the time of its advent, the New Rhetoric was liberating and reader-based, weighing heavily on its audience’s experiences and expectations to produce prose that broke free from the stifling and restrictive current-traditionalist composition theory. However, with today’s widespread Internet access, it is easier than ever before to share information and, as a result, writers have lost control over the size and type of audience who may read their written work. It is time to make a switch to a broader composition theory to direct the approach and delivery of research towards a general instead of a restricted audience.

Throughout the history of composition studies, scholars explained why creative writing elements should be used to strengthen student writing. Their research provided the groundwork to allow Sword, Pinker, and Evans to explain exactly how these creative writing elements could be used to enhance academic writing to appeal to not only to its academic discourse community, to a general audience as well. These three current scholars promote a standard definition of good writing that transcends the various disciplines, reminding writers that the main purpose of good writing remains the same: to effectively and accurately deliver a new message or idea to a wide audience.
This integrated approach will also strongly abide with the WPA’s list of learning outcomes. As previously stated in chapter four, three of the listed outcomes from the WPA’s rhetorical knowledge section are:

- Learn and use key rhetorical concepts through analyzing and composing a variety of texts
- Gain experience reading and composing in several genres to understand how genre conventions shape and are shaped by readers’ and writers’ practices and purposes
- Develop facility in responding to a variety of situations and contexts, calling for purposeful shifts in voice, tone, level of formality, design, medium, and/or structure (“WPA Outcomes Statement”)

Through a close reading of these outcomes, we see that the WPA values a comprehensive approach to student writing, as they require that the composition student learn to “compose a variety of texts,” write in “several genres,” and be able to “respond to a variety of situations and contexts” reinforcing the importance of teaching the student how to use a range of appropriate techniques to develop good writing skills. The WPA warns that the writer’s choice to shift technique must be deliberate, indicating that the formal composition class must instruct students not only of the different creative writing elements but also how their use reinforces student writing, making it appealing to a wide audience.

In any academic field, the standards from its top level should trickle down and influence the lower levels of learning to prepare students for success in their careers. According to the academy’s view, published academic writers enjoy the prestige of being at the top level of their disciplines, contributing research and shaping the conversations for their field. The standards and
expectations necessary to produce good academic writing are reflected, although in a watered-down fashion, in the undergraduate composition class, likely the student’s first exposure to academic writing. Therefore, any changes that must be made to the process of academic writing must be introduced in the undergraduate composition class, linking academic writing to composition instruction and holding each accountable for the other’s success.

Both professional writers and student writers aspire to produce good writing, and while composition instructors who abide by the traditional social-epistemic lens believe that good writing is situational, scholars like Pinker believe that truly good writing is universal. At the end of his book *The Sense of Style*, Pinker explains his interpretation of the goals for good writing, which are “to enhance the spread of ideas, to exemplify attention to detail, and to add to the beauty of the world” (Pinker 304). Here, Pinker simplifies academic writing to possessing the same qualities attributed to creative writing, leveling the field of writing studies by uniting them in their common purpose. He alludes to writing instruction as problematic and challenging as he says that the “aspiring writer could be forgiven for thinking that learning to write is like negotiating an obstacle course in boot camp, with a sergeant barking at you for every errant footfall” (Pinker 12), using the imagery of boot camp and its connotation of drudgery and tediousness to explain writing instruction’s current state. Pinker asks “Why not think of it instead as a form of pleasurable mastery, like cooking or photography?” (Pinker 12) He relates writing to enjoyable pastimes to demonstrate that lessons will be more readily received if the student feels passionate about learning. In the preface to *Stylish Academic Writing*, Sword also notes the importance of passionate academic writing. She says, “intellectual creativity thrives best in an atmosphere of experimentation rather than conformity” (Sword vii), agreeing with Pinker in his assumption that conforming to certain academic expectations harms the written end-product. We
can use their emphasis on passionate learning to evaluate the success of the modern-day composition class, through the examination and analysis of popular composition textbooks, by determining if their instruction reflects the call from Sword, Pinker, and Evans to redefine good writing.

_The Brief McGraw-Hill Guide: Writing for College, Writing for Life; The Allyn and Bacon Guide to Writing; and The St. Martin’s Guide to Writing_ provide instruction for many forms of writing. They present the student with introductions to different genres and briefly outline their conventions, listing in clear terms the commonly understood rules for fulfilling writing assignments using a context-driven social-epistemic lens. However, by defining writing as mostly situational, these textbooks direct student writing towards a limited audience made up of a sole discourse community, ignoring the need to produce writing that appeals to a more general audience. In addition, these three textbooks only briefly discuss the transference of creative writing techniques and concepts outside of the field of creative writing, and in the rare case in which they do address sharing techniques, it is more often to recognize the creative writing element being used in analytical reading rather than promoting its use in the student’s own composition class writing. Therefore, their broad depiction of the use of narrative, figurative language, and the first person pronoun in student writing does not provide the student with adequate instruction of how to enhance their writing stylistically using these creative writing elements.

The broad depiction of style noted within the pages of _The Brief McGraw-Hill Guide: Writing for College, Writing for Life; The Allyn and Bacon Guide to Writing; and The St. Martin’s Guide to Writing_, along with their genre-specific rules and conventions, make these three textbooks sensible choices for a first-level or introductory composition course, intended to
situate and interest novice student writers before they enroll in a competency-required undergraduate composition class. These textbooks are concerned with presenting the material in a non-threatening manner, creating a comfortable environment for the student to experiment with different writing genres. As a result, they acknowledge the use of narrative, first person pronouns, and figurative language as tools to build confidence and interest in the students, baiting them to write without inhibition, all the while assuming that the revision stages and upper level composition instruction will gradually conform the writer to comply to the regulations of academic writing. These textbooks only provide a surface description and explanation of the expectations for the different academic disciplines, and since they do not go into depth on technique and writing strategy to prepare students for academic writing, these textbooks cannot reflect the current movement to reform academic writing to appeal to a general audience. Discussions on the style of academic writing level is above the instructional level for the introductory writing course. Instead, these textbooks target the beginning writer, using the creative writing elements to entice the student to explore his writing potential, associating creative writing with the lowest levels of academic writing ability.

*The Insiders Guide to Academic Writing* and *Writing Analytically* read in stark contrast to the first three textbooks. These textbooks provide the student with concise rules and parameters in which to write, defining academic writing and each discipline’s conventions with clarity and objectivism. While these two textbooks both abide by the social-epistemic view of context-driven writing, they leave open the opportunity for student interpretation of the audience to which the writing is directed, while recognizing that certain universal contexts are understood by a general audience. In addition, while these two textbooks do not instruct the student to direct academic writing to a general audience, it is easy to assume that a student could read through
these two textbooks as a guide to academic writing and still support the ideas of Sword, Pinker, and Evans, for they describe the use of creative writing elements in academic writing as stylistic choices. In *Writing Analytically*, Rosenwasser and Stephen define style in chapter 17 as they explain that “style refers to all of a writer’s decisions in selecting, arranging, and expressing what he or she has to say […] In this sense, style is personal” (Rosenwasser and Stephen 376). By labeling the use of style as a personal decision, Rosenwasser and Stephen remove the power of the message from the context of the situation or assignment and put it in the hands of the writer, giving the writer the authority to create a greater effect on the audience through his writing. And, by promoting the use of stylistic choices in academic writing, these two textbooks are open to the ideas promoted by Sword, Pinker, and Evans to use creative writing elements in academic writing. It is very possible to use *The Insider’s Guide to Academic Writing* and *Writing Analytically* in undergraduate composition class instruction. Should the composition instructor use either of these two textbooks, I suggest developing additional creative writing classroom activities and assignments in accordance with the chapters that discuss the importance of style so students become comfortable with incorporating creative writing elements in their own academic writing, because while these textbooks are not opposed to its use in the final draft, they also do not encourage it. So, the composition instructor needs to provide the students with examples and opportunities to write creatively in an academic assignment.

As instructors, we should encourage students to integrate style and research to create academic writing that appeals to a general audience, as this is the type of writing students will be expected to produce after graduation. Undergraduate education should prepare students to be productive in their careers and knowledgeable of the standards and expectations associated in their industries, and, therefore, we must constantly evolve our undergraduate curriculum to meet
these needs. The use of creative writing elements in composition writing should not be limited to the beginning writing class, for this implies that the creative writing techniques once used to encourage students to find their passion for writing are too elementary for use in formal writing. Instead, instructors should suggest a natural convergence into composition, as the careful and discerning use of creative writing elements does not solely help the writer recognize his potential; it benefits the audience’s perception as well.

While beginning writers are encouraged to use narrative to ignite their own interest in their writing subject, this practice often ends when the students graduate to the formal composition class, implying that narrative use, while enticing, is an elementary practice that is out-of-place in a formal setting. Sword disagrees, describing the narrative as a device to “show and tell” (Sword 99) complex ideas in a real-world setting. She notes that the purpose of the narrative, in the form of an anecdote, is to “revive a reader’s flagging attention and even inject some welcome humor into an otherwise sober academic discussion” (Sword 100), welcoming its use to improve the quality of the academic writing. If Sword is suggesting this practice for professional writers, there is no reason why narrative should not be taught to be carefully included in composition class assignments, both in the beginner introductory class and the advanced, formal composition class. The same is true for the use of the first person pronoun. Beginning writers are encouraged to write in their natural first person voice, to create uninhibited writing and to build confidence in their expression of ideas, another practice that is discouraged in the formal composition class. However, if students felt the freedom to use their own first person voice in composition class writing assignments, their writing may, as Pinker suggests, “stimulate a conversation” (Pinker 53), enabling the students to join the discourse community as active contributors. The use of figurative language is a bit more difficult to apply. While
beginning writers are taught to identify cases of figurative writing in their assigned reading, they are not often taught how to use figurative writing themselves, as evidenced in the beginner writing textbooks analyzed for this project, so they are unpracticed in its implementation.

Composition instructors must educate students on the careful implementation of figurative language to avoid mixing metaphors and the overuse of clichés. Pinker warns that “When a reader is forced to work through one stale idiom after another, she stops converting the language into mental images and slips back into just mouthing the words” (Pinker 46). Pinker demonstrates, in his condemnation of the misuse of figurative language, its implementation in the form of description (stale), and personification (mouthing the words). However, figurative language when used well, like other creative writing elements, will reinforce the quality and effectiveness of the writing.

It is easy to imagine that someone might wonder why it is important to direct academic writing towards a generalized audience if the research’s importance is intended to advance the academic field. The answer is simple. Important research is relevant to the world outside of its academic discourse community, and the Internet has allowed information to be unlimitedly distributed. And, since we cannot control who will read our research and ideas, we must be clear in our delivery. So, if our composition classes reflect the current movement to integrate creative writing elements in academic writing, we will create better student writers who will have the skills for good written communication in their professions. College education is intended to prepare students for what will be expected of them in their real-world careers. When academia separates itself from the rest of the world by devising its own conventions, standards, and expectations for student work, we, as educators, hinder our students, when they eventually leave the microcosm that is their college life. Reforming the composition class is one way we can
change the undergraduate curriculum to better prepare students for real-world expectations. Current scholars are evolving the expectations of professional writing, and therefore, we, as composition instructors, must reflect that same evolution in the composition classroom, to do our best job at preparing students for meaningful lives and productive careers. Introducing techniques and elements from creative writing into the composition class will likely draw the same effect as introducing them in academic writing; the writer will write interesting prose to a general audience. And, as the competency requirement at most universities, the composition class is the place to start to reform writing.

The next step to evolve composition studies is to educate students to integrate creative writing elements to produce good writing that transcends all disciplines. Composition scholars have already proven the benefits of using creative writing elements in the early stages of the writing process; academic writing scholars Sword, Pinker, and Evans have proven their usefulness in the finished written product. Now the responsibility rests upon composition instructors to integrate and accept the use of creative writing elements in the undergraduate composition classroom.
CODA

Early in this project, while I battled my way through the brainstorming stage, I met with the university’s director of writing to discuss creative writing’s use in the undergraduate composition class. She explained that there is a divide between creative writing and composition writing, indicating that the former is most useful to engage beginner writers, but out-of-place in formal composition. I asked why, if creative writing techniques are so successful at improving the writing of the majority of our incoming freshmen, couldn’t we continue implementing the same techniques in the advanced composition class? As a student adviser, I see equestrian students struggle to pass the required advanced composition class, and I register the same students, semester after semester, into class sections already swollen to capacity. Something must be done to engage these students. I know that creative opportunities always provide me with inspiration. So, I asked, shouldn’t we encourage creative thought in our students? The director of writing just looked at me and said, “We already do encourage creativity. All writing is creative.”

Creativity grants us the permission to paint the world how we see it. It allows us to leave our impression on everything that we do, and it gives our work meaning. Horse trainers wouldn’t want to train horses if they couldn’t create new training techniques and riding styles for each individual horse. Teachers wouldn’t want to teach without the ability to interpret new knowledge and invent classroom lessons. And writers wouldn’t want to write, no matter the genre or form, if they couldn’t create in words what they hear in their minds. So, the director of writing is correct; all writing is creative, because everything we do that has purpose and passion is creative. Perhaps if we point this out in more detail to our students, they can become students who are passionate about producing good writing.
As a collegiate riding instructor, I consider myself very fortunate to have the opportunity to interact with incredibly eager students, completely engulfed with their love for horses and hunger for learning riding skills. As life-long learners of equestrian pursuits, instructors and students share this same passion. There is no sole way to train a horse, and no theory or method will work for all horses. Therefore, we are instructors of a continuously adaptive program, reflective of the constantly evolving horse industry. In the horse-training world, while there exists a professional hierarchy based on riding accomplishments and years in the industry, there is no room for inflated ego or confidence; regardless of our own vision of self-worth, horses have an uncanny way of humbling the most successful trainers, whether in the privacy of a daily ride or on the great and public stage of a prestigious riding competition. So, for trainers and aspiring trainers alike, we train horses not for recognition within a narrow community or for fleeting accolades that only exist in the short-term memory banks, but for love of the process.

The process to learn how to train horses is long and complicated, both physical and cerebral, and wrought with pitfalls, self-doubt, and peril. My students must logically understand the behavior of the horse and at the same time be physically strong, coordinated and balanced in the saddle. Timing is everything; my students don’t have the luxury of taking a moment to analyze, reflect, and then respond to the horse’s reactions. Should they wait to respond to a horse’s reaction, they will be too late. A horse makes a new decision with every stride, and the only chance a rider has to respond in time, with balance and finesse, is if she possesses the elusive element of “feel.”

Teaching students about “feel” is my biggest instructional challenge. I start by defining “feel” as an intricate and highly developed form of communication between horse and rider, so
tuned that the rider understands and predicts the horse’s next move before it happens. Feel is located somewhere in between physical and cerebral action. It is more of an abstract idea than it is a tangible lesson. I see it as an upper-level concept that students must juggle within their bodies, between their hands and their legs, before they can fully understand within their minds.

As instructors, we often discuss the concept of feel amongst ourselves. Many instructors dismiss the challenge of teaching feel, for they believe that feel is a concept that cannot be taught, believing that some riders are simply lucky enough to possess feel naturally and some have no hope of ever attaining it.

I whole-heartedly disagree with that sentiment. While it is most definitely a difficult concept to teach, it is not an impossible one. I have witnessed students with little to no riding experience come to our program, bounce their way through their freshmen year, and commit every mistake possible as they work with completely untrained horses sophomore year. However, something happens between those years, a type of transformation begins to take place, a connection that develops somewhere beneath the saddle pad or at the ends of the reins, and gradually the rider starts to understand her horse. She replaces the childish adoration of the horse with a new respect for what it can do. This moment of understanding occurs at different times for the students. For some, it happens during summer breaks; for others, it occurs when they realize they actually taught the horse how to do something new. Most often, this moment of realization develops after the student works her way through riding many different horses, as she begins to relate things she learns from one to the other, refining her techniques, and developing her balance. The rider who possesses the most amount of feel does the least amount of work. Her riding does not impede the horse’s natural carriage and movement. This concept seems absurd! How can a rider accomplish more by doing less? The clichéd advice that “less is more” does not
satisfy the worker who tries to bully her way through the concepts. However, when the rider realizes that she can accomplish what she set out to do without trying to do things that feel unnatural to horse and rider, she truly understands how to ride. This process cannot be rushed and will develop in its own time.

Every year I watch as beginner students make the same riding mistakes as the students before them, and I must remind myself to be patient, for the learning curve of a physical and cerebral task is gradual and slow. Mistakes committed in seconds of frustration can, at best, affect the relationship of horse and rider for years, or, at worst, put the rider in a life-threatening situation. The horse always maintains the option to revert back to his instinctual and natural response--to flee. Humans consciously don’t understand this flee instinct. Maturity and life experiences teach us to deal with our problems, knowing that we cannot always avoid that which scares us or hurts us. Human growth, in itself, is a learning curve. As a rider develops feel for the horse, she can recognize through the horse’s body language when anxiety increases, anger brews, fear mounts, and danger is imminent. Balance is important, but timing is everything. The rider must react, willfully and deliberately, to change the horse’s mind. Our job, as riding instructors, is to prepare students for these moments, and to recognize the signs from the ground, from a distance, to feel remotely what is soon to happen and coach the rider through. If the rider’s timing is off a few seconds, things happen very fast and the actions are haphazard and random. The pressure to understand and respond is monumental. Timing is everything.

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Understanding the timeliness of learning is the true challenge for all types of instruction. Riding instructors and writing instructors must nurture beginner students, provide them with the confidence to express their individual thoughts and ideas, and encourage them to dare to push
their boundaries. Students progress through hours of practice and devotion to study. They fail, and then they learn the value of trying once again.

As instructors, we try to protect them from their failures, even while we know that we can’t. We must recognize when to expect them to do more and to produce higher quality work. Students often think we expect too much until they realize how much more they can do, and they learn to use their frustrations to propel them forward. As instructors, we must challenge students to leave their comfort zone, show them new strategies, help them see that they can achieve more than they imagined possible, and teach them to give meaning to their work, and ultimately, their lives.
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