

日本の大学での英語授業としてクリエイティブ・ライティングを教える方法と効果的な資料の作り方についての概要

Dierk Guenther

(徳島大学全学共通教育センター准教授)

1. Abstract

In many English speaking countries creative writing is part of the regular syllabus in High Schools and universities. Furthermore, creative writing is also being taught at universities in many non-English speaking countries as part of their English language education programs.

Unfortunately the proven potential creative writing courses have to offer to English language education is still not being fully in Japan: A look at the conference book of this year's '39th Annual JALT International Conference on Language Teaching and Learning & Educational Materials Exhibition' organized by the Japanese Association for Language Teaching (JALT) clearly illustrates this point: Out of several hundred presentations on language teaching held during this three days conference only two (!) presentations were about creative writing.

This is truly regrettable, because creative writing is actually an exciting, refreshing tool for learners of English as well as the teachers: In creative writing courses students from advanced beginner level on can efficiently improve their English skills in a stimulating, creative classroom atmosphere. creative writing uses students' creativity while encouraging and motivating them to apply their English skills to improving their writing skills. This is being achieved by giving students the opportunity to produce individually written pieces, ranging from short stories of all genres to poetry.

Although creative writing does not focus on teaching grammar and correct spelling, through practical application, students of creative writing classes arguably can improve their language

competence in these areas as well. Even more impressive, these improvements are achieved by students working autonomously outside of the regular classroom lessons by re-writing and editing their own work. Teaching students the value of returning to a previously written piece, rewriting it and thereby improving its quality is an important element of any quality creative writing course's syllabus.

In spite of its name, creative writing is not exclusively about writing: It also helps students to improve their oral communication skills and raises their awareness of literature by guiding them to contemplate and appraise literature.

Giving and receiving feedback on personally authored work should be a fixed part of any creative writing course. With this, two further important issues are being addressed: (1) Students with English skills on a lower level will acquire the necessary means to express themselves correctly and learn how to give critical feedback in a mature and appropriate manner. (2) All students are encouraged to express their honest opinion, thereby learning the importance of confident self expression. In this respect creative writing does not only help Japanese students to improve their language skills but also helps them to develop as a person through improved self confidence. In the end of course evaluations, especially this aspect of our creative writing course usually receives highest praise by Japanese students.

Creative writing also leads students to appreciate literature: When teaching aspects of writing, examples from famous literary works are usually being used to illustrate the points. Students are also

encouraged to do their own research in finding further examples of topics and writing skills learnt in class and to emulate famous examples. Therefore students can not only learn just 'writing' but are also being led to understanding, evaluating and appreciating literature.

2. Content of Presentation

The intention of this presentation is to interest, motivate and help teachers to also try out teaching creative writing – or aspects of creative writing – in their own classes.

The presentation will consist of three parts: First it will inform about the prerequisites for conducting a creative writing course on university level for sophomore students from an advanced beginner level on. This part will focus on perfect class size, give ideas how to produce a stimulating, flexible syllabus that catches students' interests and how to establish a creative classroom atmosphere. The presentation will also describe ways and criteria to grade participating students and their written pieces in an appropriate manner.

Further attention will also be given on how to solve problems like students showing lack of creativity or helping students giving their classmates helpful and positive feedback.

Secondly the presentation will be about the course material used in a creative writing class. As there are no textbooks available for teaching creative writing at Japanese universities, teachers who consider to try out teaching creative writing will have to produce their own course materials. This second part of the presentation will extensively address this problem by giving information about where to find sources for course material as well as how to self produce interesting and level appropriate course materials.

The presentation will also describe several classroom activities ranging from stimulating writing assignments to writing games.

Finally the presentation will show the results of a

creative writing course held at Tokushima university in the academic year 2012/2013 in form of an 'English Journal' featuring stories and poems written by students of this course.