



# ASSESSING CREATIVITY

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# Today's session

- My module – Creativity: myth, madness and play
- Talk briefly about my experience at Art School and doing a Creative Writing MA
- Discuss some of the problems associated with creativity and assessment - fairness
- How to overcome them
- Read 2 short pieces of students' work
- A chance for you to explore assessment skills and discuss
- Assess them in groups
- Assess against specific criteria

# Assessing creativity

- Of all the aspects of creativity the one that poses the greatest challenge to teachers is how to assess/evaluate it
- Many teachers within the creative arts and media frequently are or have been practitioners (Gordon 2004 p.62)
- Does this experience mean tutors can assess fairly, plainly and without bias or subjectivity?
- Not you who is being marked, found worthy or unworthy but the work as it stands
- Find ways to get over this by making the process transparent

# My experience

- Been through 5 years of Art School and 1 year of Creative Writing MA
- Misinterpretation of feedback (Weaver 2006)
- ‘Not entirely in control of your work’
- The problem lies in not being clear – what does ‘not in control’ mean
- Imperfect grammar, swapping tenses
- Jolted out of the story by word repetition or a clumsy piece of dialogue
- In control means – you have the reader’s confidence, their trust

# Fairness

- Fairness is the burning issue
- Old school – ‘I’ll know it when I see it’ approach (Gordon 2004)
- Some validity – experience
- Transparency is essential (Brown 2015)
- Language is a good place to start
- Making sure the language of art and creative writing assessment is understood

# Student examples

- Clarity of language and ideas – do you know what is going on within the first few lines
- Originality/freshness of descriptions
- Dialogue – succinct, entertaining, moves the story forward? Or are there some redundant bits of dialogue?
- Characterisation – how successful?
- Were you able to stay in the story and not be jolted out by mistakes?
- Risk taking

# Clarity

- Language – how do students put these specific terms associated with assessment into practice?
- Hear work read out every session – begin to make judgements, approach the authors
- Beginning to discriminate, realise what works
- Also critique student work
- Vast array of stories, discuss various merits – Angela Carter to James Kelman
- Try to get beyond liking and disliking and identify quality

# Reflective pieces accompany the creative work

- Reflection – ‘understanding a students’ creativity depends to some extent on their ability to understand and explain it (Jackson 2005)
- Reflective pieces
- Creative Writing – how did you come up with the ideas, authors who have influenced you
- On receiving feedback how did you change the piece and why?
- Made piece – which artists have you looked at? How many approaches have you experimented with? Why those materials?



# Other sources – who else can guide us?

- What do professional writer's say about quality?
- Richard Ford
- Kurt Vonnegut
- Other writers on the short story often use the same metaphors to describe excellence and impact within the short story
- Depth charge
- Explosion
- Little earthquake

# Your turn

- 'Teachers would develop a better collective understanding if they talked about creativity using examples of students' work or behaviours they had encountered'
- 2 pieces of writing

# Summary

- Discussed potential problems of creativity and assessment
- Had a chance to read and consider student work

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