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## From College to Kindergarten: Exploring Teaching on a Shifting Career Path

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From College to Kindergarten: Exploring Teaching on a Shifting Career Path

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A Final Portfolio

Submitted to the English Department of Bowling Green

State University in partial fulfillment of

the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts in the field of English with a specialization in English Teaching

April 22, 2021

Dr. Ethan Jordan: First Reader

Ms. Kimberly Spallinger: Second Reader

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Dr. Ethan Jordan

ENG 6910

8 April 2021

### From College to Kindergarten: Exploring Teaching on a Shifting Career Path

When I made the decision to move to South Korea in May 2018, my intention was to gain experience that would make me stand out on applications for competitive Ph.D. programs back in the United States. I decided to pursue my master's degree at Bowling Green State University while abroad with the intention of carving a path that would allow me to either enter a Ph.D. program or pursue a university teaching position in East Asia. I knew that the teaching specialization offered within the Master of Arts in English would give me both the knowledge and competitive edge needed to pursue either of these paths. But as I continued teaching young learners, my focus shifted, and I felt I had finally fallen into the right career path. This turn of heart led to me almost leaving Bowling Green in order to pursue an early childhood education degree, but in the end, I was determined to finish my degree, finding all the ways that the pedagogical knowledge I was gaining could be applied to my current and future teaching contexts as a primary educator.

While much of the focus in the English teaching specialization program was directed toward high school and first year composition instructors, I was able to gain valuable knowledge that can be transferred to the primary classroom. In fact, much of my research and application of the pedagogy learned throughout my time in this program centered on teaching multilingual students, since my current teaching context is working with native Korean speakers learning English as a foreign language. As I near the conclusion of my time at Bowling Green, I am

afforded the opportunity to look back on my work and reflect on how my knowledge of teaching has grown. In selecting the works for my portfolio, I took many variables into consideration, but there were a few major factors that resulted in my selection choice.

When determining which project best reflected my researching abilities, I immediately knew my choice would be the research proposal I wrote for Dr. Ethan Jordan's Graduate Writing course. My proposal, "Exploring the impacts of team teaching on literacy and language acquisition in public and private after-school English programs in South Korea" drew inspiration from my own interest in a topic highly personal to my life, but one I found to be underrepresented in my own research. My own interest in whether or not my current position at the time was effective led me to develop a research proposal that would hopefully begin the conversation about team teaching and after school education in South Korea. This proposal also represents the point in time when my career goals shifted. I was no longer interested in working with older student populations, and instead wanted to focus my educational research on young learners in a way that still fit within the scope of Bowling Green's program. In revising my work, I had to undertake research in a new area: the ethics of conducting research on, and interviewing minors. From this additional research, I learned just how important it is for all professions that work with children to be aware of how their role can impact the children they are working with. This new knowledge is reflected in my expanded methods section, where I include information on informed consent and training researchers on signs of child abuse and neglect.

My second selection, my FYC Syllabus and Developing Creativity Unit Plan were developed for Dr. Ethan Jordan's Composition Instructor's Workshop. I made this selection because I believe it demonstrates my ability to apply what I have learned throughout my coursework despite having no experience working with first year college students or even high

school students. Developing this syllabus was challenging for me, particularly because I had no knowledge of how a first year writing course worked. I had never taken one myself, having earned that college credit through an AP Exam. Therefore, in developing this project, I had to rely on my own creativity, as well as everything I had learned in my coursework to develop a syllabus and unit plan that could realistically be used in a college classroom. This required that I not only understood the pedagogy I was engaging with, but also that I put myself in the shoes of a university professor, despite not wanting to pursue that career path in the future. Therefore, I believe that my finished syllabus and unit plan not only represent my understanding of pedagogy, but that it also represents my ability to consider a project or task from perspectives of which I may not have first-hand knowledge. The revised version of this syllabus also includes the teaching philosophy I wrote for the final project in this course, which directly relates to the syllabus and the choices I made when writing it. The decisions I made with this syllabus, including the unit on fostering creativity, are highly inspired by my experience working with English language learners who often feel pressured to produce perfect writing in English as well as my experience teaching young children, which brings a creative playfulness to my approach as a teacher.

Moving forward to my third selection, I chose a piece that not only informed my teaching, but that my teaching experience helped to form. I wrote “Nurturing the Whole Learner: A Case for Teaching Grammar in the Context of Reading and Writing in the ESL Classroom” for Dr. Sue Carter Wood’s Teaching Grammar in the Construct of Writing class. This teacher-focused research project allowed me to explore one of my primary areas of interest: English language learners. This research-based project allowed me to explore methods of teaching writing and grammar while also drawing on my own knowledge from working with this

particular population of learners. This research project not only inspired my own teaching practices for the current academic year, but it also served as a starting point for further research as I conclude the master's program. This project, as well as pedagogical research on the topic of writing to learn has changed the way I view writing in the English as a foreign language classroom, and has improved my teaching methods exponentially. Not only that, but much of what I learned through researching this project and in this course in course in general I have been able to apply to my current teaching context by transferring the pedagogical ideas and applying them to age and developmentally appropriate activities for my current students. Since this piece was written toward the end of my time in the master's program, I believe it demonstrates not only my knowledge of the English as a foreign language teaching field, but also my growth as both an educator and a researcher. While I did not revise very much in this piece, I believe it represents some of my strongest work.

My final selection for my portfolio was written halfway through my academic career at Bowling Green State University, but serves to represent an earlier version of myself: the part of me that I nurtured all through my undergraduate career, the part of me that deeply loves literature. In many ways, "Death and Defiance: Gender Expectations and Punishment in Sophocles' *Antigone*" written for Dr. Piya Lapinski's Theory and Methods of Literary Criticism course is an extension of my body of work completed as an undergraduate who concentrated on feminist theory in British literature. I selected this piece because not only does it reflect my analytic and research abilities in relation to studying literature, but it represents that passion for literature I will always have despite moving away from my desire to teach in higher education. Furthermore, this piece demonstrates my analytic abilities in relation to writing and my ability to synthesize sources to support my own argument about a text while making a broader connection

to the state of the world today. Reading through this piece, I took the advice of my advisor and made stronger ties to my conclusion in the opening paragraph. While *Antigone* was written centuries ago, many of the major themes in the piece still permeate societies around the world, and I wished to make that clear connection in my piece. Therefore, I chose to introduce the overarching connection between the themes of *Antigone* to Korean society today in the introduction section of the paper.

My development as an educator, researcher, and writer would not be as fine-tuned today if it has not been for the exemplary education I received in the Master of Arts in English program at Bowling Green State University. Throughout my time at the university, I was privileged to work with remarkably passionate and knowledgeable educators who aided in my academic success. I would like to take a moment to all the professors in the Bowling Green English department, but especially Dr. Ethan Jordan for his kindness, patience, and guidance in the various courses I took with him, but especially in the construction of this final portfolio. As I move forward in my career, I will take with me the knowledge I gained at Bowling Green State University, knowing well that despite the many twists and turns I have taken in my own career path, everything I have learned has contributed to my competence and capabilities as an educator, whether that is in the high school classroom, or the primary school classroom where I find myself for the foreseeable future.



Exploring the Impacts of Team Teaching on Literacy and Language Acquisition in Public and  
Private After-School English Programs in South Korea

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### **Abstract**

For decades, English speakers have been migrating to Asia in order to teach English as a foreign language (EFL) to learners of all ages. Each country has its own scheme, but the sought qualifications are similar across countries. While various studies have been done investigating the benefits and drawbacks of native English speaking teachers in compulsory school, little to no research has been undertaken to examine the impact of after-school programs on literacy and language acquisition on young learners. This under-studied area is crucial in understanding EFL in Asia, as the EFL market is rapidly expanding into new regions and rural areas, primarily in the form of private and public after-school programs. This proposal will highlight key topics regarding EFL in Asian countries as well as demonstrate why further research is needed to understand the consequences of team teaching using native-English speakers as teachers of young learners in Asia.

*Keywords: Asia, English as a foreign language, EFL*

### **Introduction**

For a young native English speaker unsure of what path to follow and a taste for adventure, moving abroad to teach English seems the best route to take. Salaries are competitive, housing and airfare are often provided by employers, and in addition to a bachelor's degree, all that's needed is a Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) or Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) certificate, costing only a few hundred dollars if one opts for an online-only course. Not to mention, the market is booming. According to Maxwell, there were nearly half a million expatriates teaching in China alone as of August 2019 (2019). This statistic does not include the hundreds of thousands of native-English speaking teachers who choose to settle in South Korea, Japan, and countries across Southeast Asia where private language centers are opening at a rapid rate, all seeking foreign English teachers.

For an expatriate, the emphasis on learning English in Asian countries can be seen and felt in all aspects of life. Children begin learning English in their pre-schools, take English classes with local English teachers as well as foreign teachers multiple days a week, and are enrolled in after-school English programs upon entering primary school. Food labels, street signs, and various other items used in daily life contain some level of English, and parents often encourage their children to say hello when they see native English speakers in public. Beyond school-aged children, certain professions outside of English education require basic knowledge of the English language, including bankers and financiers, medical professionals, and those in the hospitality industry. With so much pressure to master a language vastly different from the languages spoken across the Asian continent, it becomes clear why there is a booming market that allows young native English speakers to pack their bags and migrate around the world.

I myself have been living abroad in South Korea since 2017 and have met many other expatriates who are teaching English throughout Asia. While we all share a deep sense of wanderlust, there is something else we all share, and that is a clear lack of teacher training and experience in working with young learners. When reviewing the qualifications to teach English in the majority of Asian countries, there are three main qualifications: one must be a native speaker of English (some Asian countries have a list of designated countries and will not hire from other countries despite one's first language), one must hold a bachelor's degree from an accredited university, and one must complete a certification course in teaching English as a foreign language (BridgeTEFL, 2019). Some countries will even hire candidates who have not completed a bachelor's degree.

While these requirements allowed me to move to Korea with ease, in time I began to question just how effective native-speakers are in *teaching* English without prior teaching experience and without knowledge of language acquisition theory and pedagogy. Much research has been done regarding English language teaching throughout Asia, especially at the secondary level and when done by local English teachers, but little research has been done in regard to after-school programs where students are team taught by native English speaking teachers and local English teachers. As the market for both private and public after-school education expands throughout Asia and becomes the norm for students at younger and younger ages, I am interested in discovering how these after-school programs, both public and private, impact literacy and language acquisition for young learners in Korea.

## Literature Review

While little research on the effectiveness of foreign-teacher schemes and team teaching in Korea is available in English, various studies on this topic have been conducted in Hong Kong. While there are many cultural differences between Hong Kong and other countries in Asia, general findings from studying Hong Kong's native English speaking teacher scheme can be applied to other schemes, such as the English Program in Korea (EPIK) and the Japan Exchange Program (JET). For that reason, the majority of the information provided in this section will be regarding native English speaking teachers in Hong Kong, with additional information about the JET program where relevant.

Before reviewing the salient literature, a definition of team teaching should be provided as well as information on the Hong Kong education system. According to Mei, team teaching "refers to the situation where all participants, teachers as well as students, are encouraged to learn from one another by exchanging ideas or cultural values through the target language" (2015, p. 195). Although the target language is English, utilizing a local English teacher can help bridge gaps in communication that often arise in the EFL classroom. For that reason, team teaching is an ideal method for English language teaching in Asia, because as Phillipson claims, "A monolingual approach appears to be a common-sense concentration on the target language only, but is invalid cognitively, linguistically, and pedagogically" (2016, p. 86). Reasons for the invalidity of monolingual models will be discussed further in the literature review when defining strengths and weaknesses of both native English speaking teachers and local English teachers. Analysis of team teaching in this literature review will refer to the collaborative process defined by Mei.

A brief history of Hong Kong's education system will provide knowledge of the transition from compulsory English education across the majority of subject areas to a return to Cantonese as the primary language used in schools. Prior to 1997, classes in 90% of Hong Kong's secondary schools were taught in English with the exception of Chinese language and history. This English framework was the result of 99 years of British occupation in the city. After the city was returned to China in 1997, coursework was once again taught in Cantonese to align with education policy in mainland China. Although education is once again provided in Cantonese, English remains a vital part of the Hong Kong education system, since effective usage of the English language is regarded as vital to Hong Kong's economic standing. Therefore, English is required for all students from kindergarten through secondary school (Hoi, 2012, p. 42-43).

David Carless and Elizabeth Walker have conducted research regarding the effectiveness of team teaching in Hong Kong schools. Carless and Walker interviewed both native and local teachers about the benefits and drawbacks of team teaching. What they discovered is that areas where one teacher is weak, the other exhibits strength, leading to an effective learning environment so long as teachers are working together cooperatively. According to Carless and Walker, "policy-makers may regard team teaching between NETs [Native English Teachers] and LETs [Local English Teachers] as a useful strategy to harness respective strengths and weaknesses" (2006, p. 464). Carless and Walker expand on the strengths each teacher brings to the classroom, explaining, "NETs possess a breadth of active vocabulary, can use appropriate idiom, harness intuition about usage and provide insiders' cultural knowledge," while "LETs can be positive role models for students; are generally better placed to anticipate language difficulties; and make profitable use of the mother tongue, with consequent richer resources for

explaining grammar points” (p. 463-464). These observations from Carless and Walker demonstrate how effective team teaching can be impactful in the classroom. These reasons also can be used to debunk any claims that a monolingual approach to foreign language education is effective.

While Carless and Walker observed effective team teaching in the secondary classroom, Lee Ng Mei interviewed and observed multiple native English-speaking teachers in private kindergartens in Hong Kong and found instances of ineffective team teaching. The primary teacher of the study, Ms. N, teaches three different kindergarten classes each week with three different local English teachers. Unlike the observations from Carless and Walker, Ms. N was found to be teaching most of her classes alone with little to no help from local teachers, who are referred to as K1, K2, and K3 in the study. Mei witnessed that, “the K1 teacher saw her role as a carer who needed to help bridge any gaps in communication, whereas the K2 and K3 teachers assumed children were old enough to make sense of Ms. N’s teaching, hence their decision not to participate which reflected their view that Ms. N should do the teaching and make herself understood” (2015, p. 193). This attitude made it harder for Ms. N to be an effective educator for young learners and also demonstrates how lack of communication between teachers can lead to an ineffective classroom management strategy. The claims of both K2 and K3 demonstrate a belief in a monolingual teaching method, yet the findings of this case study clearly showcase that this method does more harm than good, since both the children and the native English speaking teacher appeared bored and frustrated, respectively.

Tensions between native English speaking teachers and local English teachers are quite common in Hong Kong and beyond. Yuen Chan Hoi’s study found various points of contention between local English teachers and native English speaking teachers in Hong Kong’s secondary

schools. Reasons were both financial and based on school policy. Many local English teachers' view the hiring of native English-speaking teachers as an insult to their own knowledge of English. Along with this perceived slight, native English speaking teachers also earn over twice as much as local English teachers despite having fewer teaching qualifications and less experience. Despite making half as much as native English speaking teachers, local English teachers have a significantly heavier workload than native English speaking teachers. Local English teachers teach more classes each week, and these courses are often literature and composition courses, which leads to more grading than that of oral classes taught by native English speaking teachers (Hoi, 2012, p. 45-46). The disparity in workload then contributes to the tension often found between LETs and NETs in team teaching situation, particularly when local teachers are performing more labor for a significantly lower salary.

Workload of local English teachers impacts the quality of relationships between local English teachers and native English speaking teachers in Japan as well. In a study conducted about the JET program, Ohtani interviewed current and past teachers in the JET program. One teacher commented that education systems and expectations were often not explained to new JET teachers, but that "Japanese teachers are not to blame for this problem [because] 'We are placed in schools among teachers who work far too hard while we're given little direction of responsibility. The result is a lot of resentment from Japanese teachers who now, on top of all of their other responsibility [*sic*], have to figure out what to do with an entire extra person'" (2010, p. 45). High social pressure and an intense work culture is shared by Hong Kong, Japan, and Korea, which impacts the relationships between local English teachers and native English speaking teachers because native English speaking teachers do not have the same responsibilities



as local English teachers, and the cultural pressures to go above and beyond in the workplace do not extend to the native English speaking teachers.

While most studies focus on the relationship between teachers, Carless and Walker also interviewed students in order to understand how students viewed these collaborative classes. The feedback provided by students indicated that team taught classes were more effective than classes taught by a solo local English teacher or classes taught by a solo native English speaking teacher. The students interviewed stated team taught classes were “more motivating than in a LET or NET solo class...[because] there was more varied input in that there were two voices, two accents, two speeds of speech delivery [and] there was relatively higher situational authenticity” (Carless & Walker, 2006, p. 469). When executed effectively, team taught classes can greatly impact students’ attitudes in regard to learning English. Collaboration and willingness to participate from both teachers can also lead to a more authentic experience in learning, because students hear English spoken in their own accent, at their own pace, and may even witness off-the-cuff conversations that are far less contrived than dialogs provided in EFL textbooks.

### **The Proposal**

The majority of research conducted about team taught English classes focus on primary and secondary education. With the boom in after-school education programs, a study needs to be done to understand whether these team taught English classes are effective in aiding students’ language acquisition and literacy, especially in early childhood. This specific study will focus on the effectiveness of after-school programs for young learners who have little to no experience learning English. Both private and public language centers will be represented in this study.

## Methods

The purpose of this study is to determine if enrolling young learners in after-school programs that are team taught have a positive impact on young learners' literacy and language acquisition in Korea. In order to determine if these programs have a positive impact on language acquisition and literacy, various methods should be used to measure how much students have learned. The students for this study will be those who have just entered the first grade, making them between six and seven years old. The students in this study will be randomly selected from various primary schools in various cities throughout Korea. Large cities, such as Seoul and Busan, and smaller, country-side cities, like Jinju and Andong, should be included in the study, since students in larger cities have more exposure to English from an early age.

Before the study begins, all students and parents will be informed of their rights and the process of the study. After all information is given to parents and students, the parents and child will review the consent form and if they wish to participate in the study, they will sign the consent form. Informed consent is ongoing, and if a student or parent wishes to withdraw at any time, they may withdraw from the study without consequence. Researchers will regularly communicate with families to ensure they are still happy to participate (NSPCC, 2020). All students selected for the study will be assigned a number in order to keep their identities confidential. Before beginning their research with the children, all interviewers and researchers will undergo training to learn about warning signs of neglect and abuse. If a child discloses information relating to abuse or abuse is suspected, researchers will follow the proper procedure and contact the correct local authorities. At the onset of the research, interviewers and

researchers will be given contact information for all local authorities pertaining to child protection (NSPCC, 2020).

In the selection process of randomly selected students, at least half should attend an after-school English class at either a private or public education center in their city. The after-school classes selected for this study will be those that utilize team teaching between local English teachers and native English speaking teachers.

At the onset of the study, students will take an initial test to determine how much English students already know at the time of intake. I predict that students will start with similar scores, although there may be some outliers since some students attend English kindergartens. The exam will include a combination of matching words to pictures, spelling words, and listening questions where students circle the correct picture. The questions on the intake test will be determined using curriculum commonly used in English phonics classes in Korea. The initial scores will be recorded as the baseline for this study.

As students progress through the academic year, additional exams will be given to mark progress in students' literacy and language acquisition using the same curriculum as the intake test. Exams will be standardized and issued every six months. Ideally, these exams will show strong language acquisition and literacy development in students taking additional English courses after school. I make this prediction because English courses are not required in the Korean school curriculum until the third grade, which means those not taking additional English classes will not have the same level of exposure to English as those taking additional courses after school. This study will also aid in determining if there is a difference in the quality of education provided by private educators versus public institutions.

Along with the intermittent examinations, classroom observations and interviews should be held to determine if the team teaching happening in the classroom aligns with Mei's definition of team teaching. Interviews will be conducted with the native English speaking teachers in English, and interviews with local English teachers and students will be conducted in their mother-tongue, Korean. Interviews can be used as supplemental information for insight into collaboration between teachers and perceptions of student progress from the perspective of teachers and students. These interviews will also shed light on areas of contention in the classroom, areas where teachers find cultural differences inhibit learning, and where there is strain in collaboration. Like students, teachers will also receive aliases to keep their identities confidential. For students and teachers who cannot be interviewed based on time and budget constraints, surveys will be sent to be completed and sent back.

### **Limitations**

There are many limitations to this study, including time constraints based on costs, turnover of native English speaking teachers in Korea, and region-specific factors that may not be able to be transposed to other countries in Asia. I will briefly discuss each of these limitations and why these limitations should not limit case studies in this area of English language teaching.

Ideally, this study will take course over multiple years in order to determine just how impactful after-school programs are in literacy and language acquisition for young learners. For many young learners in Korea, and Asia at large, the first step in learning English is learning the Roman alphabet. Learning a new alphabet can be a time consuming process, so initial studies may find that students' literacy and vocabulary acquisition have not greatly improved. If resources are not available to create a longitudinal study for greater than one year, then the

findings gathered at the end of the academic year can be used to come to conclusions that will serve as a foundation for further research in this field.

Another factor that may impact student outcomes is the high turnover rate of native English speaking teachers in Korea. Teaching contracts are for 12 months, but may be renewed if both the teacher and educational institution wish to enter a new contract. Native English speaking teachers hired to work in Asian countries often do not have teaching experience or degrees in education, which may negatively impact how much students are learning, especially if they are interacting with a new, inexperienced teacher every year.

Finally, while many native English speaking teacher schemes throughout Asia have the same hiring requirements, cultural standards and expectations vary not only between countries, but between regions within countries. For that reason, one cannot make blanket statements and apply them to all regions within Asia. More case studies would need to be completed in order to fully understand the impact of native English speaking teacher schemes in after-school programs throughout Asia.

## **Discussion and Conclusions**

The need for native English-speaking teachers in Asia is not going to come to a halt, so it is imperative that research is done to determine the impact that hiring native English speaking teachers has on language acquisition and literacy in young children. Research is especially needed in regard to after-school programs, not just in Korea, but throughout Asia. But this study is only just the beginning. Case studies need to be conducted across Asia, not just to determine the effectiveness of these native English speaking teacher schemes, but to improve the quality of education these children are receiving.

As the world becomes ever more connected and there is more pressure to learn English to compete in a global economy, the quality of education needs to align with the high expectations set by education departments in Korea and Asia at large. Not only will students benefit from these studies, but parents will also benefit, since these additional English courses often come at a high cost. While case study results showing improvement in literacy and language acquisition would justify the high costs paid by parents to educate their children, results demonstrating the contrary would be justification to withdraw students from these courses and incentivise improvements in public and private after-school education at the governmental level.

While it will take years to understand the benefits and drawbacks of team teaching in an after-school educational environment, it is vital that we begin studying this facet of education that is not slowing down, but expanding its reach further throughout the Asian continent each day.

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### Developing Deep and Creative Thinkers: My Philosophy for FYC

My first year composition (FYC) classroom is a space for university students to develop their understanding of human interaction, epistemology, textuality, and process. It is also a space to explore creativity, critical thinking, and identity as a writer and member of a discourse community. While students will not leave my class professional writers since all writers have more to learn, my goal is to prepare students to be valuable members of our campus community and budding professionals (Rose 59). I believe in developing deep thinkers who have a complex understanding of what writing is, how writing shapes our communities and connects us to others, and who push the boundaries of creativity.

#### *Developing Creativity*

I believe all writers are creative writers. To form the swirling mass of ideas in one's mind into a comprehensible work involves creativity in both planning and execution. To teach any form of writing without conveying its creative core is to promote the "damaging stereotypes about writing and creativity that continue to reinforce troubling dichotomies about the nature of creativity" (Alexis 189). In order for my students to reach their full creative potential, we will break away from the standard five-paragraph essay early on, learning more complex features of academic writing. Through development of creativity, my students will challenge their notions of the writing process, developing new processes for themselves that better suit their academic and



professional needs. Some of these processes may develop from skills they have already learned, while many others will present new challenges that require students to think creatively and go against prior knowledge.

In order for students to reach their full creative potential, an entire unit within the semester is dedicated to writing projects that follow a pass-fail grading criterion. Students are given a grade based on whether or not they complete the work assigned. These pieces are workshopped by both me and their peers, and the topics of these short pieces will span the curriculum. The goal of this unit is to develop student understanding of writing as a creative task in academic and expository writing.

### *Developing Critical Thinking*

As students progress through my FYC course, they will learn that good writing is more than proper grammar and sophisticated syntax. Rather, good writing demonstrates a level of deeper thinking. I will foster an environment of critical thinking to develop new knowledge of one's audience and the way in which texts gain their meaning from other texts, reaching beyond their own work to see how their work fits into a larger body of knowledge. Dryer states, "these experiences are reminders that the relations that imbue a sentence with particular meanings come not just from nearby words but also from the social contexts in which the sentence is used" (24). Critical thinking will be developed through meta-cognitive activities, such as frequent reflections written about their own writing process, exploring why they made the choices they did and how those choices impacted their final written work. Reflective work is done because it "helps writers begin assessing themselves as writers, recognizing and building on their prior knowledge about writing" (Taczak 78).

Students will also participate in writing workshops, critiquing their peers' work, allowing students to gain a deeper understanding of human interaction in writing. The works developed through these workshops are published in our own undergraduate journal toward the end of the semester. The journal is available to all members of the campus community.

*Developing Identity*

When students enter my classroom, they are given an opportunity to explore their identity. Kevin Roozen discusses the importance of writing in developing identity, stating, “through writing, writers come to develop and perform identities in relation to the interests, beliefs, and values of the communities they engage with, understanding the possibilities for selfhood available in those communities” (50-51). I encourage my students to explore their budding identities, incorporating various sociological topics into my curriculum. Students are encouraged to explore their own identity within our campus community, as well as within a larger context of their city, and global communities. I also encourage them to explore topics that are of interest to them for both major and minor writing assignments. Not only are students encouraged to write about issues within their professional field, but also about issues that they are passionate about outside of their chosen profession. By developing their identities within their discourse community, students expand their knowledge of their professional community while actively contributing to the body of knowledge present in the community.

## Works Cited

- Adler-Kassner, Linda, and Wardle, Elizabeth, editors. *Naming What We Know: Threshold Concepts of Writing Studies*. University Press of Colorado, 2015.
- Alexis, Cydney. "Creative Writing is a Unique Catagory." *Bad Ideas About Writing*, edited by Cheryl E. Ball and Drew M. Loewe, West Virginia University Libraries, 2017, 187-193.
- Dryer, Dylan B. "Words Get Their Meaning From Other Words." Adler-Kassner, Linda and Wardle, Elizabeth, pp. 23-25.
- Roozen, Kevin. "Writing is Linked to Identity." Adler-Kassner, Linda and Wardle, pp. 50-52.
- Rose, Shirley. "All Writers Have More to Learn." Adler-Kassner, Linda and Wardle, Elizabeth, pp. 59-61.
- Taczak, Kara. "Reflection is Critical for Writers' Development." Adler-Kassner, Linda and Wardle, pp. 78-79.

English 101

# First Year Composition

Fall 2020

Meets: MWF 9:00-9:50

Location: Insalaco 006

**Prof. Christine Zopf**

Office: 102 Walsh Hall

Office Hours: Tuesday 10:30 a.m.- 12:00 p.m., Thursday 10:30 a.m.- 12:00 p.m., 2:00 p.m.- 4:00 p.m.

Contact Information: +82 010-4090-9520 or [czopf@bgsu.edu](mailto:czopf@bgsu.edu)  
(preferred)

# About First Year Composition

This English 101 course is an intensive writing course dedicated to developing your skills as a writer at this university as well as beyond the classroom. In this course, you will engage in all areas of the writing process, including planning, research and analysis, drafting, editing, writing, and reflection. Through in-class workshops, discussions, and one-on-one conferences, we will develop your writing in three main areas: *creativity*, *critical thinking*, and *identity*. Writing is not just about stringing together grammatically correct sentences, but about creativity, critical analysis, and developing your own identity as a writer! I cannot wait to see how much we learn together this semester!

## Catalog Description

This course introduces and develops skills and abilities fundamental to proficient academic writing. This course emphasizes the critical reading and the summary, synthesis, and analysis of primary materials in specific social and historical contexts. Successful completion of this course is required prior to beginning in the writing intensive courses.

## Learning Goals

- Engage in the electronic research and composing processes, including locating, evaluating, disseminating, using and acknowledging research, both textual and visual, from popular and scholarly electronic databases.
- Demonstrate the importance of values systems in academic writing, including the abilities to write effectively to audiences with opposing viewpoints, to participate in an active learning community that values academic honesty, and to recognize the place of writing within learning processes.
- Practice the processes entailed in academic writing, including recursive processes for drafting texts, collaborative activities, the development of personalized strategies, and strategies for identifying and locating source materials.
- Demonstrate rhetorical knowledge through writing in a variety of academic genres and to a variety of academic audiences.

- Demonstrate knowledge of the conventions of academic writing, including format and documentation systems, coherence devices, conventional syntax, and control over surface features such as grammar, punctuation, mechanics, and spelling.
- Demonstrate critical thinking, reading, and writing skills through approaching academic writing assignments as a series of cognitive tasks, including engaging in multiple modes of inquiry, synthesizing multiple points of view, critiquing student and professional writing, and assessing source materials.

## Course Materials

### Textbooks

Reading materials for this course will be provided through our online learning portal. While you are not required to purchase any books for this course, you may consider purchasing:

- The MLA Handbook, 8th Edition
- The APA Style Guide, 7th Edition

Some of our projects will be done in MLA and some will be APA. If you are unfamiliar with one, having the manual may be helpful!

### Other Materials

- Access to a computer or tablet
- Internet connection
- Access to our online learning portal
- A word processor
- Access to a printer.

**Important!** If you do not have your own computer or tablet, you can utilize any of the on-campus computer labs. Please schedule your time accordingly if you need to access these facilities and check the lab schedules ahead of time to be sure they are not being used by another class.

# Major Assignments and Grading Policy

## Attendance- 5%

Three late arrivals equate to one absence. Three unexcused absences will result in the lowering of your final grade by one letter grade.

## Class Participation- 10%

Classroom participation is crucial to developing our skills as writers. To achieve full marks in participation, please come to class having read the material and ready to share your thoughts and ideas.

## Workshop and Conference Participation- 10%

Classroom workshops and one-on-one conferences are both required to be successful in this course. When preparing for an in-class workshop, please bring all draft materials and be prepared to engage with your peers' writing. For one-on-one conferences, you will sign up for a conference time the previous week. Please email me your draft **at least 24 hours in advance**.

## Unit 1- Developing Creativity- 25%

### Writer's Snapshot (3+ pages)

Who are you as a writer? In this initial project, I want you to explore your experiences with writing. This project is fairly open-ended. You may wish to explore your strengths in writing, your weaknesses, who influences you as a writer, the types of writing you enjoy, etc. Further questions to consider will be available once class begins.

### Profile (5+ pages)

For this project, you will interview someone you **do not know** and write an expository piece based on your time spent with the person. You will want to think about your perspective, purpose, and audience when crafting your piece. Engage your creativity and see how you can use your experience talking with another to form a compelling story! See the project description for more details along with the project waiver.

### **Student Blog (ongoing)**

The first unit of the semester is dedicated to developing creativity. Our major project during this unit is developing your own blog. If you already have a blog, you can also continue to develop your voice on your own blog.

Beginning in week two, you must develop and publish two blog posts per week related to your interests. You should also read and comment on your peers' blogs. This blog project is pass/fail. Failure to complete three or more blog posts will result in a fail grade for this unit project.

## **Unit 2- Developing Critical Thinking and Knowledge Making- 25%**

### **Research Paper (8+ pages)**

During this unit, each student will develop a research paper to be published in our Undergraduate Research Journal. Students may choose a topic of interest in their field, or a topic about which they are passionate. Past research papers have included cultural studies, literature synthesis, discussion of medical practices, and business strategy analyses, among others. The Undergraduate Research Journal is located in the library as well as in my office. You may look at the journal for inspiration, or discuss your ideas with me during my office hours.

## **Unit 3- Developing Identity- 25%**

### **Newsletter (5+ pages and PowerPoint Presentation)**

You will develop your own newsletter relevant to your own interests in a specific field. Your newsletter should consist of smaller pieces crafted together to form a cohesive document. This project will allow you to explore various genres, as you may include more in-depth research pieces as well as creative and opinion pieces. Be as creative as you wish!

Along with your written newsletter, you will also develop a PowerPoint presentation. Presentation days are marked in the course calendar at the end of the syllabus. Your presentation should be 5-7 minutes and must include your references. Your PowerPoint presentation must be uploaded along with your final newsletter.



## How do I get graded in this course?

The goal of this course is to help you develop as a writer, not to teach you a formula for getting an A on an assignment. Along with attending class and conferences, you will be graded on the development of your work throughout the semester. For our first unit, you will be graded on whether you complete the work or not. This method is known as pass/fail. If you complete the work, you will receive an A. If you don't, you will not. In units two and three, you will be graded on your overall process, not the final product. Therefore it is important that you attend all in-class workshops and conferences, since your grade will be determined by how well you are able to develop, edit, and expand your ideas through peer review, conferencing, and experimenting with new techniques.

## Classroom Policies

In order to create a learning environment that fosters growth on our academic journeys, I ask that you respect the policies outlined in this section.

### Classroom Etiquette and Expectations

- Please arrive on time and ready to learn. Arriving five minutes after the start of class will be marked as late on attendance. Repeat lateness and absences may impact your final grade since much of our growth will be fostered through in-class assignments. **If you know you will arrive late or must miss a class, please email me in advance.**
- Cell phones should be switched to silent and put away when class begins. That said, I understand that sometimes things are going on in our lives outside the classroom that require our immediate attention. If you are expecting an urgent phone call, please tell me at the beginning of class and quietly step outside when you receive the call.
- Laptops and tablets are welcome for note-taking and editing, but I hold the right to change this rule at any time if technology becomes disruptive.
- While drinks are welcome in my class, please eat breakfast before the start of class.
- My classroom is a space where dialog and discussion of various viewpoints is encouraged. Please be respectful of me and your fellow classmates. Do not interrupt others when they are speaking, and be respectful when discussing differing viewpoints.

- I expect all students to engage in classroom discussions and workshops. Comments and observations about course material are encouraged. When working with other students in workshops, constructive critiques are needed to develop strong writers. **Active participation in discussions positively benefits your participation grade.**
- **Late work is unacceptable.** For each day your work is late, I will deduct one letter grade. If an assignment is three days late, you will automatically receive a zero. If there are circumstances beyond your control preventing you from turning in your work, **please contact me before the due date and we can make alternate arrangements.**

# University Statements and Policies

## Title IX

I am a mandatory reporter at BGSU, which means I am not a confidential resource. Therefore, I am required to report any information that I am aware that may violate the Sexual Misconduct and Relationship Violence Policy. If you would like to speak with someone confidentially, please contact the Counseling, Psychological Services, or Falcon Health. Other resources include The Cocoon, the Violence Prevention Center, and Unison. Otherwise, if you would like to report an incident involving a possible violation of BGSU's Sexual Misconduct and Relationship Violence Policy, please contact our Title IX Coordinator at 419-372-8476.

## Academic Honesty

Please familiarize yourself with the Code of Conduct (Academic Honesty Policy) in BGSU's Student Handbook: <https://www.bgsu.edu/student-handbook/code-of-conduct.html>. This requires that students do NOT cheat, forge, bribe, threaten, fabricate, plagiarize, or facilitate academic dishonesty. These violations are taken seriously. You will, at a minimum, receive partial or zero credit on the assignment and may fail the course, at my discretion.

## Disability Services

Any student who requires accommodation based on a disability should contact the instructor privately to discuss specific needs. In accordance with the University policy, if the student has a documented disability and requires accommodations to obtain equal access in this course, he or she should contact the instructor at the beginning of the semester and make this need known. Students with disabilities must verify their eligibility through Accessibility Services (<https://www.bgsu.edu/accessibility-services.html>), 38 College Park, 419-372-8495.

Educator candidates are expected to respect all individuals, regardless of characteristics or background, and endeavor to accommodate communications and actions to learning differences arising from cultural, linguistic, and disability origins.

## Religious Holidays

It is the policy of the University to make every reasonable effort to allow students to observe their religious holidays without academic penalty. In such cases, it is the obligation of the student to provide the instructor with reasonable notice of the dates of religious holidays on which he or she will be absent. Absence from classes or examinations for religious reasons does not relieve the student of responsibility for completing required work missed. Following the necessary notification, the student should consult with the instructor to determine what appropriate alternative opportunity will be provided, allowing the student to fully complete his or her academic responsibilities. (As stated in The Academic Charter, B-II.G-4.b at: <http://www.bgsu.edu/downloads/file919.pdf>.)

# About Me



Hello! Welcome to First Year Composition. This is my first time teaching first year composition, and prior to this course, I taught English as a Foreign Language in South Korea for three years and a half years.

I completed my Bachelor of Arts in English Literature at Misericordia University and will complete my Master of Arts in English from Bowling Green State University in May 2021.

I enjoy writing travel stories, memoir pieces, and research papers in my academic areas of interest. I am looking forward to growing together this semester!

# Course Calendar

## Week One- *Developing Creativity*

<p>August 31 Introduce the class Get to know each other Introduction to our online learning materials, library resources, etc.</p> <p>For next time: Read the syllabus <i>thoroughly</i></p>	<p>September 2 Discuss classroom policies What is rhetoric? Who is your audience? What does the writing process look like?</p> <p>Introduce Writer's Snapshot assignment</p> <p>For next time: <i>The Rhetorical Situation</i></p>	<p>September 4 Discuss Reading Answer questions about writer's snapshot Introduce Blogging Project</p> <p>For Next Time: <i>Creative Writing is a Unique Category</i></p>
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## Week Two- *Developing Creativity*

<p>September 7 <b>Labor Day- No Class</b></p>	<p>September 9 Discuss reading Class prompt: What is creative writing to you? What creative writing do you partake in regularly? <b>Writer's Snapshot Due 11:59 p.m.</b></p> <p>For next time: All Writers Have More to Learn</p>	<p>September 11 Discuss reading. What are you hoping to learn in this course?</p>
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## Week Three- *Developing Creativity*

<p>September 14 Introduce Profile Assignment For next time: <a href="#">Profile</a></p>	<p>September 16 Discuss reading. What makes this profile a good piece of writing? For next time: Bring a profile piece you find compelling to share with the class</p>	<p>September 18 Share profiles</p> <p>For next time: <a href="#">Workshop article 1</a> and <a href="#">workshop article 2</a></p>
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Week Four- *Developing Creativity*

<p>September 21 Introduce Writing Workshops Practice workshoping example pieces</p> <p>For next time: Bring Profile to class</p>	<p>September 23 Profile workshop</p>	<p>September 25 Reflection on Workshoping</p> <p>For next time: Keep working on your profile and email it to me by Sunday night at 10:00 p.m.</p>
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Week Five- *Developing Creativity*

<p>September 28 <b>No class- paper conferences</b></p> <p>For next time: Read article about pre-writing strategies</p>	<p>September 30 In class activity on pre-writing strategies</p> <p>For next time: "Revision is Central to Developing Writing" and "Learning to Write Involves Different Kinds of Practice, Time, and Effort"</p>	<p>October 2 Discuss the readings.</p> <p>For next time: <b>Profile Due Sunday October 4 by 11:59 p.m.</b></p>
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Week Six- *Developing Critical Thinking*

<p>October 5 In-class reflection Introduce unit 2 research project</p> <p>For next time: Reflection is Critical for Writers' Development</p>	<p>October 7 Discuss reading Why do we reflect?</p>	<p>October 9 Introduction to research: What is a scholarly source?</p>
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Week Seven- *Developing Critical Thinking*

<p>October 12 <b>Research topics due</b> <b>Research and introduction to library services- class held in computer lab</b></p> <p>For next time: bring one or more sources to practice citations</p>	<p>October 14 The research process: Introduction to annotated bibliographies and citation practice</p>	<p>October 16 Research integration- how to quote and paraphrase</p>
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Week Eight- *Developing Critical Thinking*

<p>October 19 Research- Works Cited and Reference Pages For next time: Bring research papers</p>	<p>October 21 <b>Research Paper Workshop</b> For next time:</p>	<p>October 23 Address concerns in the research process.</p>
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Week Nine- *Developing Critical Thinking*

<p>October 26 <b>Paper conferences</b> For next time: complete online journaling prompts</p>	<p>October 28 <b>Paper conferences</b></p>	<p>October 30 <b>Paper conferences</b></p>
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Week Ten- *Developing Critical Thinking*

<p>November 2 In-class activity on media literacy</p>	<p>November 4 For next time: Finish your research paper</p>	<p>November 6  For next time: <b>Research paper due Sunday, November 7 by 11:59 p.m.</b></p>
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Week Eleven- *Developing Identity*

November 9 In-class reflection  <b>Introduce Newsletter Project</b> For next time: Writing is Linked to Identity.	November 11 <b><i>Veteran's Day- No Class</i></b>	November 13 <b>Newsletter Theme Due</b> Discuss readings
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Week Twelve- *Developing Identity*

November 16 Activity on audience and tone  For next time: Bring a short article about your newsletter topic to share with the class	November 18 Share articles and discuss	November 20 Bring Newsletter Outline to class. Workshop and discuss outlines and ideas with multiple partners For next time: Bring one article from your newsletter
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Week Thirteen- *Developing Identity*

November 23 Share your article in small groups, discuss  For next time: Continue to work on your newsletter	November 25 <b><i>Thanksgiving Break- No class</i></b>	November 27 <b><i>Thanksgiving Break- No class</i></b>
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Week Fourteen- *Developing Identity*

November 30 <b>Newsletter Workshop</b>	December 2 <b>Newsletter Paper Conferences</b>	December 4  For next time: <b>Newsletter due Sunday, December 6 by 11:59 p.m.</b>
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December 7 Newsletter Presentations	December 9 Newsletter Presentations	December 11 Final reflection Closing thoughts and discussions You did it! Great Work!  <b><i>Last Day of Classes</i></b>
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## Developing Creativity Unit Plan: Profile Project

Fall 2021

September 14	Introduce Profile Project. Read select profiles in class. Students read <a href="#">this profile</a> from <i>The New Yorker</i> for the next class.
September 16	Warm up: Personal profile—write about an event from your childhood that shaped who you are now. (15 minutes) Discuss the profile in class. Then discuss the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What makes this profile a compelling piece of writing?</li> <li>• What background information does the author pull in to move the story along?</li> <li>• How is this snapshot representative or divergent from the culture at the time it was written?</li> </ul>
September 18	Read select profiles in class and discuss the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why did you choose this piece of writing?</li> <li>• What background information does the author pull in to move the story along?</li> <li>• How is this snapshot representative or divergent from the culture at the time it was written?</li> </ul>
September 21	Discuss “Diagnosing and Responding to Student Writing” and “Collaborative Learning/Learning with Peers” Practice workshopping sample papers from previous classes.
September 23	In-class workshop. Today we will take what we learned on Monday and apply it to our peer’s papers.
September 25	In-class reflection on workshops. The following questions will be used for an in-class writing reflection: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How did this workshop help me better understand my own writing?</li> <li>• How can I improve my own critiques to help others develop as writers?</li> </ul>
September 28	No class, we will hold individual conferences Read the article on pre-writing activities for Wednesday’s class and answer the questions on our class discussion board before coming to Wednesday’s class.
September 30	Discuss pre-writing strategies In-class activity: 15 minute reflective writing answering the following:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What pre-writing activities do you engage in? Why?</li><li>• How do these activities help you in developing your final piece. If you don't use any pre-writing activities, why not?</li></ul> <p>Share and discuss pre-writing strategies and how to use them effectively. For our next projects, students will engage in one of two possible pre-writing activities. This will be included in their final grade.</p>
October 2	<p>Answer any last minute questions about the Profile.</p> <p>Discuss “Revision is Central to Developing Writing” and “Learning to Write Involves Different Kinds of Practice, Time, and Effort”</p>

## Profile Assignment

What is a profile?

A profile is a piece of writing about a person. Profiles are shorter than a biography, and may focus on one specific aspect of a person's life. Profiles are just that: a snapshot of a person's life. Some writers choose to use these details against the backdrop of a larger issue, such as worker's right, violence against women, or other local and national problems.

When constructing your profile, please do not set out to write a biographical piece. You should be looking at no more than a week of a person's life. You may tie in details that are relevant to your story, but do not set out to tell a life story!

Over the next few weeks, we will read profiles as well as find profiles that we think are good pieces of writing.

Now that you have reflected on who you are as a writer, it is time to turn our attention outward. Your goal over the next three weeks is to gather information and compose a profile of your own. There are few rules when it comes to how you approach this piece.

- You may profile anyone you wish, with the only stipulation being that you cannot know the person before you begin your profiling journey.
- You will want to find someone who intrigues you, and then sit with them to find out more about them.
- You should not knowingly put yourself in harm's way, and if a situation feels dangerous, please leave immediately.

While this might seem overwhelming, I believe that you are capable of creating a well-crafted profile!

So who can you profile? Anyone, so long as you do not know them! Before beginning your investigative work, please have your person of interest review and sign the waiver provided. Additionally, please keep those in your life informed of where you are, what you are doing, and when you intend to be finished with your interviews. I encourage

your creativity, but please do not put yourself in danger to get a good story. If your subject does not want to talk to you or does not want you writing about them, do not keep pursuing the story! If this creates a problem with you turning in work on time, please let me know as soon as possible and we can make other arrangements.

In the past students have profiled janitors who work the night shift and are unseen by those at an institution, local people from their hometown against the backdrop of politics, your everyday college student, and sex workers. Again, you may profile anyone you do not know as long as you are safe and they sign the consent waiver.

This assignment only requires your creativity. You do not need to include any outside sources. If you would like to include outside information because it aids your story, please cite using MLA format. If you have questions about information that should be cited or you have concerns about who to profile, please come talk to me after class or during office hours. Good luck!

**Important Due Dates:**

**September 23- In-class Workshop**

**September 28- One-on-one conferences**

**October 4- Completed and revised Profile is due by 11:59 p.m.**

## Profile Assignment Waiver

I, \_\_\_\_\_ agree to be interviewed by and written about by \_\_\_\_\_, a student at Bowling Green State University for their English 101 course. I acknowledge that the information I share will be used to write a story that will be shared with the professor, students, and faculty of BGSU. I consent to sharing this information to a larger audience should the student wish to seek publication of this project or present this project at any academic functions.

Sign \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Rubric

	<b>Exceeds Expectations (25 points)</b>	<b>Meets Expectations (20 points)</b>	<b>Below Expectations (15 points)</b>
<b>Development of Story</b>	The profile presents a clear representation of the subject. The story flows and keeps the reader engaged.	The profile is interesting but information is missing. The subject seems incomplete, but the reader is still engaged.	The profile seems incomplete, causing the reader to lose attention or become confused by the subject.
<b>Presentation</b>	Writing is highly polished and the audience does not struggle in accessing this piece.	Writing lacks polish in some areas, which may hinder audience reaction, but overall writing is clear and accessible.	Writing is inaccessible, making it difficult for the audience to engage in this piece.
<b>Style</b>	The writer uses a mixture of simple and complex sentences, imagery, and a wide variety of vocabulary. The writing flows and keeps the reader wanting more.	The writer uses some complex sentences. Imagery is present and vocabulary is slightly varied. Writing flows with a few areas where meaning is unclear.	The writer does not vary sentences and vocabulary. Imagery is not present throughout, or only sparingly. Overall purpose is unclear.
<b>Revisions</b>	The writer made significant improvements from the first draft to final submission.	The writer made some improvement from the first draft to final submission.	The writer made little improvement from the first draft to final submission.

\*Activities completed in class and homework assignments for this unit are pass fail. The profile project will be graded on how well you complete the assignment.

Christine Zopf

Dr. Carter-Wood

ENG 6220

9 December 2020

Nurturing the Whole Learner: A Case for Teaching Grammar in the Context of Reading and  
Writing in the ESL Classroom

**Introduction**

The English classroom and the activities that happen there can be daunting even for students who grew up in English-speaking households and neighborhoods. As students get older and progress through the school system, the writing formats and techniques they learn become more complex and demanding. After all, it is the duty of the English teacher to prepare students for writing beyond the high school classroom and make sure that they are equipped with the skills they need to excel in higher education and the workforce.

When teaching native English speaking students who grew up in English speaking households and neighborhoods, the teacher does not need to take into consideration the various factors that might impact a student's ability to read, write, and speak in the English classroom. It is expected that the student will have progressed through the school system meeting the level of proficiency required to move to the next grade level in their course subjects, including English Language Arts. But when teaching English Language Learners (ELLs) who come from various language backgrounds and have differing levels of English language proficiency, teaching writing becomes much more complicated. The traditional approach to teaching English to ELLs has been through vocabulary acquisition and grammar drilling. While these methods have long been mainstream, grammar taught in the context of writing would be much more beneficial to the



ESL classroom than traditional methods because not only would it allow students opportunities to engage with authentic English texts, it also promotes vocabulary acquisition and a practical application of target grammar structures.

### **Focusing on the Whole Person**

When working with English Language Learners, it is important for the teacher to remember that their English language ability is not a reflection of their intelligence and that ELLs are likely capable of more than teachers give them credit for. Rather than focus on the strengths of the students, ELLs are often perceived only through their weaknesses in their command of the English language, as Weaver explains, “the conversation rarely looks at the strengths of these students but focuses instead on what they lack and what teachers and schools need to ‘fix.’ This deficit perspective presupposes that language minorities are at a cognitive disadvantage because they are not native speakers of English” (262). This view of ELLs fails to recognize the knowledge that ELLs already possess in their first language (L1) and the transferring of that knowledge when ELLs complete assignments in their second language (L2). This failure then leads to teachers setting low expectations for their students and causing teachers to “organize instruction for poor and minority students at the ‘lower’ end of their abilities rather than at a level that maximizes their potential” (Weaver 262). Over time, this diminished education becomes discouraging to the learners, who will begin to see themselves as capable of less than their native-speaking peers (262).

In fact, it might be beneficial to the teacher to spend more time with their ELL students learning about their abilities in their L1. If students have a strong L1 writing education, and the student demonstrates a command of their L1, it is likely that once a student becomes more

confident and proficient with the L2, their abilities will shine through in their work. In her study “The Integration of Lexical, Syntactic, and Discourse Features in Bilingual Adolescents’ Writing: An Exploratory Approach,” Danzak supports this claim by stating, “Children with good L1 skills relied on these competencies in their early acquisition of L2 writing,” meaning that as ELLs build their vocabulary and knowledge of grammar structures in their L2, they make connections to the knowledge they already possess in their L1 (492). Schoonen et al. have a similar finding in their study of secondary students learning English as a foreign language in Denmark, “In foreign language/second language (FL/L2) writing context, writers also bring their first language (L1) writing proficiency and L1 writing experience to the learning task, which usually makes the situation even more complex” (33). When planning writing activities and assignments, it is important that teachers of ELLs remember these complex processes and consider how they may impact a student’s ability to engage in all stages of the writing process, and where necessary, allow more time for students to plan, write, and revise their work. Most importantly, it is important for educators of ELLs to remember that students needing more time and support throughout the writing process is not a deficit.

Rather than view ELLs as learners with a deficit, one way to approach the ELL writing classroom is to create a transformative classroom. The transformative classroom is one that actively engages students in their education and, on a larger scale, their communities, where their own experiences and knowledge are brought to the classroom. Teachers do not simply pass on facts and formulas for writing in the transformative classroom; rather, student knowledge and opinions are valued as part of the learning process (Weaver 261-262). This approach allows educators to create assignments and tasks that are meaningful to the student’s life. When working with ELLs, this open classroom atmosphere can be vital in making connections with

students and building community. Depending on the type of ESL classroom, students may come from wildly different cultures and backgrounds. Each student, no matter their age and life experience, brings with them funds of knowledge, which are “the bodies of knowledge developed socially and historically by households; they are valuable cultural and social resources that learners possess” (Larrotta 40). These funds of knowledge impact how students interact with others in the classroom, the assignments they are asked to complete, and how they view the material being studied in class. Most importantly, by engaging with students’ funds of knowledge and allowing them to bring their experience and opinions into the classroom, the teacher creates an engaging environment where all students begin to see themselves as active participants in their education. Weaver explains, “It was the result of transformative classrooms in which the teachers believe that all students can read, write, view, and think. In the right environment, all students can be part of what Frank Smith calls the literacy club” (282). It is vital for ESL teachers to create this type of environment where students can thrive in their education and feel that sense of purpose and belonging.

### **Creating an Engaging and Nurturing Environment**

Working in the context of an ELL environment means that educators may need to be more flexible in their syllabus and daily lesson plans in order to meet the needs of their students throughout the writing process. This flexibility is required because students may need more time and support throughout the writing process in order to create a final product that meets the expectations of the course and students’ own expectations of themselves. Schoonen et al. explain, “Formulating the planned content in FL/L2 takes substantial time, often at the expense of planning content and text revision, and poor FL writers tend to be inflexible in allocating their

time to subprocesses during writing” (37). Since students are taking more time writing their papers, unless the assignment timeline integrates pre-writing planning and revision, it is likely that students will cut time from these stages of the writing process in order to have more time writing up their actual assignment.

In the pre-writing stage, teachers might consider integrating models of target grammar structures into mini-lessons. These models could include short paragraphs about the topic or models from literature. The pre-writing process should also include multiple opportunities for students to practice the target structures in a low-stakes environment after studying models.

After students have had time to write their composition, it is time to revise. When working with ELLs, as with all students, it is important to remember the humanity of the writer. Feedback that is not constructive or sees only the deficits in a student’s work will lead to a disengaged and discouraged writer, as Weaver notes “how important it is to attend to the humanity of the writer—to respond to the writer first, then to the content of the writing, and only later to what might need to be revised or edited” (263). By first responding to the writer, the teacher is acknowledging the hard work the student put into their work. Next, discussing content allows the student a chance to clarify anything that may have been unclear in the composition while the teacher also takes the time to praise the writer’s strengths. Finally, the last stage is to call attention to areas that need revision, whether they be grammatical errors or content errors. This approach to revision not only demonstrates that the teacher cares about the students as individuals, but it creates a safe environment where mistakes can be discussed without fear of judgment or reprimand, and strengths can be celebrated.

## **Ideas for Writing Assignments in the ESL Classroom**

There is no doubt that working with the ELL community can present unique and challenging opportunities for teaching grammar in the context of writing. Not only will the following ideas for the ESL classroom help build grammatical knowledge and awareness, but they will also help to build literacy skills as well as build on student vocabulary in a meaningful way. It is difficult to acquire a second language by simply drilling from a textbook. Schwarzer explains in his article “Best Practices for Teaching the ‘Whole’ Adult ESL Learner:”

Importantly, vocabulary in the second language (L2) seems to increase over time when learners engage with text in meaningful ways and are encouraged to actively negotiate its meaning with others. This means that a part of the teacher’s job is finding reading materials of high interest and relevance to the language learners’ lives and making them part of the group’s conversation and vocabulary work. (26)

This statement is not true only for adults. Young learners and teen learners acquire language best when they are engaged in their education. While the traditional ESL classroom may introduce students to vocabulary and grammar in rigid structures that sound unnatural in most writing and speaking contexts, the following activities introduce students to writing in a more natural and practical context, including various writing-based and reading-to-write based activities.

### **Dialogue Journals**

Dialogue journals are a long-term, personal writing project that would benefit ELLs of all ages and proficiency levels. Dialogue journals are written exchanges between a student and their teacher in the target language, in this case, English. The duration of written exchanges can vary depending on the teaching context, but ideally these journals are used over the course of an

academic semester or school year. These journals serve as a low-stakes tool to help improve students' writing proficiency as well as a way to build community between students and their teacher (Larrotta 35).

Integrating a dialogue journal into the ESL classroom could happen at any point in the academic year, but would best be started at the very beginning of the course. If the class is a class of older learners, the best way to introduce the journal is by explaining the way the journal will work and by establishing rules for the journal together. Clarena Larrotta writes extensively about integrating a dialogue journal in her article "Journaling in an Adult ESL Literacy Program" and explains the importance of developing expectations alongside the students rather than dictating them to students: "Establishing these rules together was important for all of us, both to gain commitment to them and for learners to realize that as adults they also participate in the curriculum decision-making process" (Larrotta 37). While Larrotta used the dialogue journal in a class of adult ESL learners in Texas, this concept would work well in the high school classroom or even in classrooms abroad where students are enrolled in immersion schools. Involving teenagers in the decision-making process for journal guidelines would also be beneficial because it would allow students to see themselves as mature individuals and active participants in their education. It would also help to establish boundaries of what is and is not appropriate to write about in their journal conversations with their teacher.

Dialogue journals are practical tools for the ESL classroom because they model grammar in the context of writing, help develop vocabulary, and they provide a low-stakes way for students to experiment with writing extensively in English over time. The teacher writes the first entry in the journal and concludes the entry with two questions. These questions serve as a springboard for the student response. The teacher's entry should present proper grammar

structures, spelling, and vocabulary that is at the student's proficiency level. This initial entry from the teacher, along with all subsequent entries from the teacher, serve as the model for students from which they can model their own answers. Each entry from both student and teacher should end with questions in order to sustain the long-term conversation (Larrotta 37).

For teachers who might be considering integrating a dialogue journal into their ESL classroom, it is important to remember that this is a low-stakes activity and that the teacher plays a vital role in the learning process. This journal should not be kept for a grade based on writing ability, but rather a place where students can experiment with writing and integrate new structures and vocabulary that they learned into writing. It is also important for teachers to remember that students will make mistakes in their writing, but that "errors are a natural part of language learning" (Weaver 264). Larrotta explains that in her use of the dialogue journal, she did not correct any errors in student writing, but found other ways to aid student learning: "Examining the mistakes that they made in their journal entries allowed me to design mini-lessons to target what my teaching experience told me were their particular learning needs instead of just following the order of topics established in the course syllabus" (43). So although students should not see their journal entries marked with red pen, the mistakes that occur frequently should be noted by the instructor and then addressed outside the context of the journal.

Finally, Larrotta provides a glimpse into student feedback on the use of dialogue journals in the ESL classroom:

The comments made by learners [about the DJ] provide a glimpse into the role of the teacher in the DJ activity. She acts as a more experienced partner to the learner, one who will provide correct language structures and more complex language in order to challenge

the learners to extend themselves in this nonthreatening environment. She needs to be flexible and tolerant of learners' mistakes. She has to give up power and her desire to correct every mistake the learner makes. The DJ enables the learner and the teacher to build a relationship of friendship and trust. (40)

While the idea of friendship between students and teachers might sound odd, it is important to remember that Larrotta taught in an adult context where acting as a friend to students is more appropriate. For those working with younger students, such as those in high school, viewing oneself as a mentor who is trying to guide students, rather than an all-knowing adult who is simply trying to pass on knowledge to students, might be the ideal mindset for a dialogue journal. Rather than simply giving students vocabulary lists and grammar drills, the teacher is pushing students to experiment with their knowledge and to speak openly and honestly about their hobbies, personal lives, and their culture. Ideally, the use of a dialogue journal in an ESL classroom will not only improve student writing, but create a strong sense of community and trust as well.

### **Newspaper Articles**

Another activity one can use in the ESL classroom to engage the entire ESL learner is the use of newspaper articles. This is another tool that can be used at various age and proficiency levels. For high school and adult learners, teachers can encourage the use of English newspapers from various countries. For younger learners, there are publications, such as *Time for Kids*, that lend themselves to the ESL classroom. For those working overseas, many countries have English-language newspapers to serve expatriate and immigrant communities where the teacher and students can locate articles that are both in the target language and relevant to their lives.



Reading newspaper articles and then engaging in writing tasks based on the article help to develop all the crucial areas in language learning. In the article “Utilization of News Articles in English Grammar Teaching,” Özkan states that one benefit is the use of “those [teaching resources] which were not created or edited for use in the language classroom, but as those which are kept intact with no interference as they are presented to native speakers with no modification whatsoever to suit the needs of language learners” (50). Since the newspaper articles students are engaging with are kept intact, they demonstrate authentic language use, which is crucial to creating natural speaking and writing patterns in ELLs. Students develop their reading skills while engaging with authentic texts, develop their writing skills by writing summaries or short opinion paragraphs about the article, their speaking skills by discussing their articles with other students in class, and the vocabulary by making note of unfamiliar words and seeking their meaning.

In regard to grammar in context, using newspaper articles in the classroom means that students are engaging with longer written works that provide a model for various grammar points in a realistic context. Schwarzer explains:

Taking a holistic perspective means looking at language as a whole rather than approaching it in pieces... It helps the learners develop an understanding of the whole and then allows them to examine the pieces after that. Think about the context within which the piece was written or produced. Who was the audience? Why did the author write it or the producers produce it? What does it say about life, society, or politics in the author’s or producer’s society or culture? (28-29)

By using authentic English source materials, students are learning far more than they would from textbook grammar drills. Not only are they exposed to grammar structures that can be broken

down and then imitated as a part of the lesson, but students also learn about tone, audience, and the importance of context in writing. By allowing students to learn about these features in writing alongside grammar, not only are they improving their abilities in the ESL classroom, but these skills can be transferred across the curriculum.

### **Summary Writing**

Summary writing, while less intensive than writing a long composition or a semester-long journal project, is just as important to the ELL as these other forms of academic and communicative writing. Jiuliang Li wrote the article “Modeling the process of summary writing of Chinese learners of English as a foreign language,” which, while it is a study of Chinese students learning English in the context of their home country, still provides crucial insight into the importance of summarizing as a skill for ELLs. Li explains that the ability to summarize is vital to students seeking higher education, especially those who wish to attend an English-speaking university in the United States or another English-speaking country. For many students who are not native English speakers, there are additional examinations required to enter an English-speaking university and being able to summarize a passage is crucial to one’s success (Li 74). Additionally, “meaning is constructed from texts through reading and for texts through writing,” so by engaging students in reading tasks that are tied to a writing task, students can wrestle with the meaning of the text and the transfer that meaning into their own words (Li 74).

Summarizing activities are beneficial to the ESL classroom regardless of age or English proficiency. Writing summaries is a task that can be altered to best fit the needs of the students, whether it be providing age and level appropriate reading material or modeling basic and complex sentence structures in a summary. Furthermore, summary tasks could serve as an

opportunity for listening activities as well. Teachers could show students YouTube videos, episodes of TV shows, or even entire films for students to complete writing tasks about. In selecting materials, it is important for teachers to remember that “certain topics might have been more effective in eliciting more productive or more sophisticated writing across measures” (Danzak 502). To that extent, it is vital that teachers consider the demographic they are teaching and try to find material that engages the students.

Not only does writing summaries allow students to learn grammar structures in the context of writing, but it also introduces students to new reading material and vocabulary, while also serving as a gauge of student understanding. For a class of students at varying abilities, these reading and writing tasks might present a challenge. One possible solution is to use summary writing tasks as a homework assignment or independent work with graded readers. By using graded readers, the teacher would be accommodating to students whose language abilities far exceed or are not quite as developed as their peers. Regardless, before any students engage in the writing tasks, it is vital that the teacher provide students with models and complete practice tasks together to ensure that students understand the grammatical structures one might use most frequently in a summary.

### **Assessing ELL Writing**

When it comes to assessing ELL writing, there are many aspects of language learning that the educator must take into consideration before uncapping their pen. First and foremost, it is vital to remember that “we need to...narrow our focus to only a few basic grammatical concepts and terms,” when assessing student work (Weaver 275). It is also important to remember that “Proficiency in writing requires knowledge of the language sufficient enough to

formulate the propositional context of the intended message in appropriate linguistic form and to perform the correct ‘writing act,’” which not all students may possess at the beginning of their English education (Schoonen et al. 32). In certain cases, it may be the duty of the teacher to build the language foundation a student needs in order to excel as a writer, which in turn requires that the teacher not over-assess student work so as not discourage the student.

When working with ELLs, it is important to know some features of the student’s L1, and how the grammar structures in the L1 might impact their writing in their L2. There are also some features that are common among language learners, and an awareness of those features will help teachers prepare mini-lessons to improve these features in student writing. Weaver states that “some of the most persistent interlanguage features are the omissions of the third person singular and the regular past. According to Krashen’s natural order hypothesis, these grammatical morphemes are typically the last to be acquired by second language learners” (265). Being aware of this trend will help teachers to make note of mistakes students make in their papers without overmarking. Instead, the teacher can keep a list of the most common errors found in ELL student writing and track the data in order to plan mini-lessons for students and develop revision tools that will allow students to be more involved in the learning process (Weaver 250).

Once teachers begin to notice patterns of error in student writing, there are revision tools that teachers can implement to help students search for these errors on their own, therefore developing editing and revision skills, as well as grammatical knowledge. A tool that can easily be integrated into the ESL classroom is the code-switching shopping list. The code switching shopping list is a revision tool that demonstrates the common error alongside the proper grammar for the writing context. These checklists can be personalized to each student’s needs and the students use this tool before handing in their final product. Figure 1.1 shows an example of a

code switching shopping list that I developed for one of my own students in my teaching context based on the model provided by Weaver in *Grammar to Enrich & Enhance Writing* (254).

Code-Switching Revision Checklist		
When reading your essay, note the patterns in your writing. If you use any of the informal patterns, put a check in the final box. If you used formal English, put a smiley face in the final box		
Language Pattern	Example	Assignment 1
Simple past	<i>I <b>play</b> with my friends yesterday. v. I <b>played</b> with my friends yesterday.</i>	
Plural nouns	<i>There are many <b>dog</b>. v. There are many <b>dogs</b>.</i>	
Third person singular	<i>He <b>go</b> to school. v. He <b>goes</b> to school.</i>	

Figure 1.1

## Mini-lessons

Once an educator notices patterns of use that are common among the majority of students in the class, then it is time for a mini-lesson on the topic. Weaver explains that “the goal of the informal writing conversations and the minilessons is to introduce students to more standard forms of academic English,” therefore aiding their development of their L2 (280). These mini-lessons for the ELL classroom should be designed to acquaint students with new sentence structures, as well as expand their vocabulary since “the linguistic resources needed [to successfully complete an assignment] depend on the requirements of the writing assignment, but a large vocabulary and a rich and flexible repertoire of sentence frames will always help the

writer to be clear and concise” (Schoonen et al. 33). In that regard, it is vital that the ESL teacher prepare mini-lessons that not only help to build strength in the use of grammatical frames and sentence structures, but that they also introduce students to new vocabulary that will help enrich their writing.

When developing mini-lessons for the ESL classroom, it is important to prepare these lessons not only to improve student writing in areas where the educator has noticed consistent patterns of error, but also to frame the lessons in a way that is authentic and engaging. Authenticity in student writing activities is important because, “students should be able to learn explicit grammar rules as well as have a chance to practice them in authentic or simulation tasks” (Özkan 51). Weaver recommends using student work in these mini-lessons, giving students the chance to find the target structure in their own writing and revise them as needed. This work can be done individually or with a partner (280). Schwarzer recommends using pair work in the ESL classroom because working with a partner often elicits greater language use from students: “Research has shown that students produce more and longer sentences when they work in groups and pairs, and we know that language is best learned when social interaction is occurring and learners use the new language for social communication” (28). Partner work can be used in the ESL classroom during mini-lessons to promote not only improvement in writing skills, but in speaking skills as well since learning tasks should be completed using the target language.

## **Conclusion**

When students of various language backgrounds step into our classroom, it is our duty as educators to grow and nurture the whole student by engaging them in authentic tasks that develop their English language ability across all areas of language proficiency. ELLs are a

particularly unique group of individuals because their language backgrounds may vary, and their English language abilities may be at varying levels from their peers. When we enter the ESL classroom, we not are not only tasked with improving their knowledge of the English language and their abilities to read, write, and speak in a way that is understood, but we must also honor their first language, their culture, and take the time to learn about their motivations, fears, and expectations in learning English. Taking a holistic position is crucial because “when we approach learners in our classes as whole persons, we view them as [people] with accomplishments, responsibilities, relationships, personal histories, and hopes” (Schwarzer 28). Building these relationships in the ESL classroom aids in building a community of trust where students feel welcomed, comfortable, and vulnerable enough to make mistakes and take risks as they grow as a learner and English speaker.

For any foreign language learner, the ability to be understood by native speakers of the language should always be a priority to the educator. Grammar is a critical part of the English language that will make a person understood by others. Whether the student demographic is students in East Asia learning English for a college entrance exam with dreams of one day living overseas or immigrant children in the United States who left behind their home country and everything that was familiar to them, it is up to the teacher to see the humanity in these students. It is up to the teacher to develop engaging lessons each and every day using authentic and engaging materials in order to make students more knowledgeable of English grammar structures, and by design, better readers, writers, and speakers of English.

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## Death and Defiance: Gender Expectations and Punishment in Sophocles' *Antigone*

### Introduction

For centuries, Sophocles' final Theban play, *Antigone*, has been read and analyzed by philosophers and scholars alike. Offering insight into life in the Ancient Greek *polis* or public life, gender roles, and concepts of natural versus human laws, it is not surprising that *Antigone* has been greatly influential. Hegel, the eighteenth century German philosopher, used *Antigone* to highlight the opposition between the public (*polis*) and private (*oikos*) spheres, the former of which is occupied by the state and the latter which compromises the family (Story). Perhaps the most widely known reference to the Theban plays is that of Sigmund Freud's Oedipal Complex, which grew out of the events that take place in *Oedipus the King*. Beyond the well-known great thinkers, Sophocles' Theban tragedies continue to be influential and widely studied in both high school and college classrooms in America, but the significance of these plays goes beyond the classroom and even beyond the social understanding of Western culture. Many of the major themes of *Antigone* are enduring, and a close reading of the play can even help us to understand societal expectations today in places as far from Ancient Greece as South Korea, where women are still fighting against a patriarchal and misogynistic society. In order to better understand the global significance of *Antigone* today, let us first explore the history of the Theban tragedies.

In particular, *Antigone* is believed to have been written before or during the year 442 BCE and is the first of three Theban plays written by Sophocles in the fifth century BCE

(Blondell 3). The ancient Greek poet and playwright is one of three Ancient Greek men recognized for their contributions to tragic theater, but today only seven of his works survive (1). *Antigone* is the final Theban play when read in chronological order, but was the first of the plays written and presented to the public. Greatly influenced by the Athenian community where Sophocles spent most of his life, “the plays of Sophocles... show an unmistakable familiarity with rhetorical techniques popularized by contemporary thinkers known as ‘sophists’” since “public oratory can clearly be seen, especially in the long and formal speeches with which his characters debate each other” (3-4). *Antigone* is no exception, as Creon and Antigone engage in these rhetorically extensive speeches, locked in debate regarding the laws of man determined by Creon and the laws of the gods established through belief in a higher power.

*Antigone* is an incredibly powerful and political play that highlights the nature of the Greek polis. In Ancient Greece, women were not welcome in the public arena, yet Antigone chooses to defy the State in order to defend her private duties related to burial and mourning of the dead. When analyzing the central conflict of the play, religious laws in opposition to state law, it is easy to overlook gender dynamics and how Greek expectations for men and women influenced the outcome of the tragic story. Sophocles was not a progressive poet who sought to free women from the constraints of domestic life, nor was he seeking to free men from the strict expectations associated with masculinity like strength and rationality, even in the face of tragedy. This conclusion, made on the basis of who remains alive at the end of *Antigone* along with scholarly research, is that death is used as punishment for those who step outside of their assigned positions in Greek society. More specifically, adherence to gender roles and societal expectations is why Creon and Ismene live while Antigone and Haemon had to die in order to protect the status quo in Ancient Greece.

## Gender Roles in Ancient Greece

In order to understand the magnitude of Antigone's discretions and Haemon's weaknesses, one must first understand the strict social structures present in Ancient Greece. Much like nineteenth century England was divided into the domestic and public spheres with the former occupied by women and the latter men, so was Greece at the time of Sophocles' writing. Perhaps some of the greatest insight into women's place in the Greek polis comes from the acclaimed works of Plato and Aristotle.

While always claiming women to be inferior, Plato's view of women is contradictory, as different works present opposing views on whether or not women are fit for public life based on the idea of virtue. In the *Republic*, Plato claims that while women are inferior to men, the human soul, when separate from the body, is not impacted by one's bodily gender. Therefore, "the best *people*, from whose ranks philosopher-monarchs were to be drawn, could and should include both sexes," indicating that Plato believed both men and women were fit for public life so long as they met the standard of virtue set forth by society (Raphals 418). These virtues, Plato later states in *Laws*, were attributed to nurture and education, and that a nurturing upbringing and quality education could lead to similar achievements among men and women (419).

While these claims in the *Republic* and *Laws* may present Plato as a progressive thinker among ancient Greeks, later texts contradict these views, as he makes the declaration that women's inferiority stems not from their reproductive biology, but from lack of control over their emotions, desires, and beliefs, as Plato "claims that women are at the mercy of their emotions (and thus given to loud mourning)... and criticizes women's capacity for rational judgment by depicting them as fatalists who believe no one can escape destiny" (Raphals 419).

This shift in attitude depicts women as unstable and ill-suited for public life, as they lack the virtues necessary to make sound decisions that will impact the entire community.

Not only does Plato decry women, depicting them as emotional wailers who seek death, but he goes on to diminish men who may not live up to the idealized standards of masculinity. In fact, Plato goes as far as to claim that men who exhibit too many emotions that were considered feminine in their life, such as cowardice, would be reincarnated as women in their next life as punishment for their shortcomings (419). These denunciations of women's emotional fortitude and men's shortcomings for showing emotion are a far cry from his original claims that both men and women can become steady leaders in the polis through nurture and education.

While Plato's views on women's role in Greek society are contradictory and shifted over the course of his writings, Aristotle holds firm in the claim that women are always inferior to men by nature. He makes this claim on the basis of virtue and biology: men are both virtuously and biologically superior to women from the time of fetal development (Raphals 420). Furthermore, Aristotle put women and slaves on the same rung of the social hierarchy. This coupling allowed the philosopher to define a dichotomy in both the public and private spheres of Greek society. In the public sphere, the hierarchy between a man and his slaves existed; in private, the man was head of household and therefore superior to both his children and more importantly, his wife. Aristotle believed "this hierarchical relation between male and female is permanent" and therefore women could not rise in society through education or nurture, as they lack the capacity for rational thinking and deliberation (Raphals 421, 422).

The belief that women sat lower on the social hierarchy in Ancient Greece was put into practice through the structuring of the polis into two spheres: the public and the private. Men occupied the public sphere, where they were educated, conducted business, and participated in

governance. Women, on the other hand, were bound to the home. Within the home, women were expected to complete their duties while drawing as little attention to their existence as possible. Amy E. Story quotes Josine H. Blok, who states, “The principle rules concerning the relations between men and women, both in ancient and in rural modern Greece, may be summarized in a brief formula: women should not be seen, nor should they speak or be spoken of,” indicating how women were erased from public life in Ancient Greece. If women did not extract themselves enough from the public eye, they were met with scrutiny; it was unacceptable for a woman to make herself heard in a public forum. Furthermore, it was not enough to avoid negative gossip. Women of ancient Greece sought not to be spoken of, regardless of whether the words were scrutiny or praise: “Thucydides gives of Pericles’s Funeral Oration for the Athenian war dead in 421 BCE, where he notes that if anything must be said ‘on the subject of female excellence’ it is that the greatest [glory] will be hers who is least talked of among men whether for good or for bad” (Story). This expectation for women essentially removed them from life in Ancient Greece to the point that they had little to no power in the community, and were simply regarded as people who exist within the community, but do little by way of public life (Story).

Despite this seclusion to the private sphere, there were two instances in Ancient Greece where women were permitted to be seen and heard in public. Both occasions were closely tied to private and family life. The first event in which a woman was visible in the community was her wedding day, where members of the city celebrated her union with a man in the community. The second is more closely tied to *Antigone*: burial procedures and rites. According to Story, “It was women’s duty to sing laments, to shriek and wail over the family dead;” lamentation and burial were not only a woman’s duty, but her right (Story). While Plato’s theories on gender suggest that women are better suited to grief due to their emotional nature, this duty within the polis is

both religious and political, as outlined in *Antigone*. The tension between religious and political duty in *Antigone* highlights the tension that also exists between the public and private, male and female. This antagonism ultimately leads to tragedy, as it is the only way to restore the natural order between these opposing features of Ancient Greek society.

### **Death in *Antigone***

Who lives and who dies in *Antigone* is largely determined by how well someone adheres to the prescribed gender expectations within the polis, demonstrated by the survival of Creon and Ismene and the deaths of Antigone and Haemon. The only exception to this theory is Eurydice, who commits suicide after learning that both Antigone and Haemon took their own lives, which serves to restore the balance as women are considered fatalists, susceptible to their emotions (Raphals 419). But unlike Eurydice, Antigone and Haemon die as a form of punishment because they fail to adhere to the expectations held by those ruling in Thebes and Greek society at large. Meanwhile, Creon and Ismene are still alive at the conclusion of the play since they adhere to the gender expectations of Ancient Greece.

*Antigone* begins just as a civil war ravaging Thebes ends. The war fought between Antigone's brothers leaves one an upstanding—though deceased—citizen and the other ostracized from Theban society—a traitor to the city who is denied burial rights by the newly instated ruler of the city. Following the deaths of their brothers and their parents, Antigone and her sister Ismene are the only remaining members of their nuclear family. Just as the brothers came to represent two different sides of the Theban civil war, Antigone and Ismene come to represent opposing sides in the symbolic battle of women's liberation against the patriarchy, a battle that leaves one sister alive and the other dead.

The most important death in the play is that of Antigone, who dies a tragic hero on her own terms. In many ways, Antigone's death was cemented from the beginning of the play when she chose to defy the edict set forth by Creon forbidding the burial of her brother, Polyneices. Knowing well that burial of the dead is a woman's right in Greek culture, Antigone proclaims "He has no business keeping me from what is mine," speaking out not only against a man, but the leading figure in Thebes' government (Sophocles 48). When Creon learns that Polyneices was buried, he questions "what man dared do this deed?" assuming that the burial was carried out by a male member of the polis (248). Creon's assumption that a man proceeded with the burial is largely influenced by the Ancient Greek belief that "a woman should not be portrayed as courageous or clever," and to believe such would greatly have defied the gender norms prevalent at the time (Raphals 421). But Antigone continues to act with courage, and when confronted by Creon for her crimes, she responds not with remorse, but with clever reasoning and defiance:

It was not Zeus who made this proclamation;  
 Nor was it Justice dwelling with the gods below  
 Who set in place such laws as these for humankind;  
 Nor did I think your proclamations had such strength  
 That, mortal as you are, you could outrun those laws  
 That are the gods', unwritten and unshakable. (Sophocles 450-455)

In this passage, Antigone accuses Creon of weakness—the weakness of being only human, but believing that his orders could outweigh the laws set forth by the gods. Even though Antigone is defending her right to bury and mourn the dead as outlined by the natural laws of Ancient Greece, her verbal attack against Creon moves her from the private sphere of the home to the public sphere, specifically in the realm of governance. Not only does Antigone make herself

seen, but she makes herself heard, defying the beliefs that women should not be seen or heard in the public sphere (Story).

In speaking publicly and defying Creon, Antigone is fully aware of the weight of her actions. As the antagonism between the two continues to escalate, Antigone and Creon exchange this dialog:

Take me away and kill me. Do you want more than this?

No more. If I have that, then I have everything.

Then what's delaying you? For there is nothing

In your words that's pleasing to me — may there never be!

And naturally you disapprove of mine as well. (Sophocles 497-501)

Antigone commands Creon to sentence her to death, knowing that the weight of her actions, both her defiance of his edict and her public denouncement of him, are great crimes against the community. She acknowledges that she should not be speaking out against him in this public forum when she states that he disapproves of her words. Not only is she acknowledging that he disapproves of *what* she is saying, but that he disapproves of the fact that she is saying anything at all, since it is not a woman's place in Ancient Greece to speak out against men, especially those in a position of power. Staring in the face of death, Antigone continues to boldly denounce Creon, exhibiting the courage and strength that were unacceptable for women of the polis.

Not only does Antigone defy Creon's orders and make herself visible in the public eye, but in her final speech, Antigone adopts a more masculine mindset regarding marriage, further transgressing on both Creon's rule and the social order of Thebes. When offering her final lament for her brother, she claims she never would have risked the same fate for a husband or



even one of her own children, explaining that they are replaceable, but a brother, once both parents have passed, is not:

In satisfaction of what law do I say this?

My husband dead, I could have had another, and

a child from someone else, if I had lost the first;

but with my mother and my father both concealed

in Hades, no more brother ever could be born. (Sophocles 908-912)

To the modern reader, Antigone's speech serves to draw attention to the double standard persistent in Ancient Greece. Antigone's words draw offense, yet earlier in the play, Creon tells Haemon "do not ever lose your senses, child, just out of pleasure in a woman" and "spit that girl away just like an enemy," because Haemon can find a new bride who adheres to gender expectations (648-649, 653-654). In "Antigone's Two Laws: Greek Tragedy and the Politics of Humanism" Honig explains, "In her offensive speech, Antigone takes up that male position for herself. If she ranks a brother above a husband, that is, she all but says, because there are other furrows for *her* to plow as well, or... other plows for her furrow... Here the scandal of her speech is that she claims for herself a prerogative Creon would reserve for his son and perhaps for all sons" (13). Before her suicide, her final act of independence, Antigone placed the familial bond between brother and sister above that of the bond between a husband and wife or mother and child. While this statement would be acceptable for a man—after all, Creon suggests the same thing of Haemon—for Antigone to make this claim goes against the social constructs that identify women as property of their husbands and whose sole responsibility is producing sons for the polis (13).

Unlike Antigone, Ismene wishes to remain docile and compliant with the laws of Thebes, begging Antigone to abandon her right to burial lamentations in order to comply with the laws set forth by Creon. Of the two sisters in the text, “Ismene represents a stereotypical female: she is disturbed by her sister’s proposal to disobey the state, suggests that any action against the state should be done deceptively, and is concerned with her family, despite Antigone’s dismissal” (Miller 166). After learning that they cannot bury Polyneices, Antigone engages with Ismene, asking her to defy Creon’s law in order to fulfill their duties to the dead, but Ismene refuses to break the law, claiming it is not her place:

We must remember, first, that we two are by nature  
 women and not fit to fight with men; second,  
 that we are ruled by others stronger than ourselves,  
 and so must bow to this and even greater griefs.  
 So I for one shall beg those underneath the earth  
 to pardon me, since I am overpowered by force;  
 I shall obey those who are in authority,  
 for deeds that are excessive make no sense at all. (Sophocles 61-68)

Ismene claims that by nature, women are timid and meant to be ruled over by men. She is willing to give up her rights to burial and lamentation in order to appease the men who rule over her, as she sees them as stronger than herself, and therefore more fit to make decisions. She begs Antigone to adhere to these new rules as well, citing that the men who make the laws hold the authority and that their rule must be obeyed. This willingness to comply with Creon’s edict, even when it imposes on her personal and religious rights is what saves Ismene in the play, even if it results in her being utterly alone. In fact, Ismene only comes to Antigone’s side when she

realizes that the death of her sister will leave her completely alone, making her “desire for death a surrender to the powers that be, a giving up, a symbol of powerlessness and self-abandonment,” which ultimately saves her, as women in Ancient Greece were meant to be subservient and powerless (Story). Therefore, while Antigone gave her life for women’s rights—even though those rights were incredibly limited—Ismene desires only to die once she faces great loss herself. It was not dying in order to defy oppression that drove Ismene to beg for death, but the fear of living without Antigone, the last living member of her nuclear family, a fear that comes to fruition as she is spared a tragic fate as a reward for being a compliant to the social expectations of the polis (Story).

But while Ismene is spared, a reward for remaining within the confines of her social position, Haemon, Creon’s son, loses his life as punishment for weaknesses shown in his father’s court. When Haemon first enters the play, the Chorus describes him as grieving and distraught because he knows that Antigone is going to die (Sophocles 626-630). He has come to reason with his father to spare Antigone’s life, telling him how the people of the community think it is an injustice to kill her for performing the burial rites. Yet Creon does not trust that Haemon is solely trying to spare his reputation, but believes he is trying to save his future wife: “Don’t try to coax me with such words, you woman’s slave” (756). Women and slaves are among the lowest members of society in Ancient Greece, and Creon’s insult demonstrates just how emasculating Creon considers Haemon’s grieving of Antigone’s impending death.

After Haemon leaves, Creon wonders whether he will return to the court more level-headed and ready to assume his duties in finding a new wife while staying loyal to the government and his family, or if he will continue blindly trying to save Antigone. The first option would demonstrate strength, thus redeeming Haemon, while the second option would only

continue to emasculate him further since: “Passion and madness, while the provenance of young people of both sexes as the Chorus observes, are often particular to women, both in their inability to maintain an equilibrium of emotion and in their ritual activities” (Miller 165). Haemon’s emotional pleas to his father, his attempts to reason with him, are considered irrational by the heavy-handed ruler, demonstrating that like women, Haemon cannot control the shifts in his emotion, making him more feminine than masculine.

While Antigone has to die for taking on too many masculine qualities, Haemon’s death is a necessary punishment for upsetting the balance of gender expectations in Thebes, both through his emotions and his actions. When Haemon seeks to save Antigone out of love rather than blindly honor the decrees of his father, Haemon is not only taking on feminine qualities of emotional instability, but he is also attempting to override his father’s decision, which disrupts the hierarchy of Ancient Greece where fathers are stationed above their children. According to Miller, “Haemon’s actions in the play destabilize, at least, the binary and categorical construction of gender and sexuality and the hierarchical and repressive understanding of subjectivity,” but the disruption is only temporary (163). Subjectively, Creon believes he is making the best decisions for the city of Thebes by denying Polyneices burial and sentencing Antigone to death. Haemon’s suggestion that the people of Thebes disagree with this order challenges both the hierarchy of father and child, but also challenges Creon’s own subjective views that he alone can make sound decisions. These challenges, coupled with Haemon’s emasculation, are the basis for his death, because without his life coming to an end, the natural balance created by adhering to gender roles and remaining within one’s station in the hierarchy would not have stabilized.

The final death in the play is the death of Eurydice. While Antigone and Haemon had to die to restore equilibrium, Eurydice died while fulfilling gender expectations. As Raphals

explains in “Gender and Virtue in China and Greece,” women were considered to be victims of their emotions as well as fatalists (419). Both of these stereotypes hold true at the conclusion of the play. Eurydice is distraught by the death of her son, outraged at her husband’s hand in the death, and was powerless in preventing all the meaningless death that took place in her husband’s court. Even though right before she died “she sang out evil curses on [Creon’s] head,” she did so in the privacy of her home, where she is hidden out of the public eye until Creon goes to find her (Sophocles 1304-1305). Even in death, Eurydice fulfilled the belief that women are victims of their emotions, thus her death, being the final death of the tragedy, served in restoring balance to society.

With balance restored, only Creon and Ismene remain, both the embodiment of their gender constructs. Creon’s unwavering rule, which resulted in so many senseless suicides, is ultimately what spared him. It is only when he learns of his wife’s suicide that he begins to question his own decisions regarding burial rites in the city of Thebes. In a moment of weakness, Creon begs for death (Sophocles 1332-1333). But Creon is quickly reminded by the chorus, “That’s in the future. Now we must perform what lies at hand”: he cannot will his own death, but must live with the consequences of his actions (1334-1335). In the meantime, he must continue to rule over Thebes, perhaps with better judgment that he exhibited in the wake of Antigone’s disobedience. In the final scene, Creon is led back into the palace by his attendants, where he will continue with his duties, subjected to a life of mournful ruling for exhibiting the strong and unwavering characteristics so desired by the Ancient Greek society. While the lives of Creon and Ismene were spared, a reward for their remaining true to the structures of society, they will both live without family and in mourning.

## Antigone as a Symbol for Women's Rights

While Sophocles' *Antigone* comes to a tragic conclusion steeped in death, the social order of Thebes is restored. Who lives and who dies sends a message to the audience that there is a natural order to the universe, and to disturb it would wreak havoc on the society. Even the misery of Creon and Ismene are consequences caused by the actions of others, and their suffering is necessary in order to restore balance in Thebes. Rather than disrupt the balance and unleash chaos, one must continue to adhere to their social roles, whether that role is in the public or the private sphere, and not make any attempts to defy what is natural.

Yet since its inception, the title character of *Antigone* has become a symbol for women's liberation. Rather than seeing her as a tragic character punished for breaking the laws of Thebes and the laws of nature, Antigone is lauded as a hero who died for her cause. In "Antigone's Two Laws: Greek Tragedy and the Politics of Humanism" Bonnie Honig states, "[Antigone] is a lamenting sister and she *does* die for her cause, but she is, more fundamentally a political actor embroiled in fifth-century burial, kinship, and polis politics" (2). Honig's statement emphasizes that while Antigone is seen as a model for female rebellion, it is important to remember the context of her rebellion. Amy Story also makes this claim, stating that "the text nevertheless begs us to see Antigone as embedded in the social expectations of the time and place that both drive her passion and severely limit her options as to the expression of that passion" (Story). Antigone was defending her rights within the oikos, the right to burial and mourning of her brother. Her passion to carry out her duties led her to fight back against Creon, but she had few options to do so, none of which could have spared her life. Furthermore, her rebellion only began once Creon began using his power to infringe on her rights within the home. Honig's argument suggests that

Antigone was not a contemporary feminist, but rather a woman who had to defy the ban of women in the public sphere in order to defend her rights within the private sphere.

On the other hand, Amy Story insists that Antigone's actions were an attempt to unite the opposing structures in Greek society. She states, "Antigone suggests a model of social rebellion that insists upon the uniting of the moral and political, the private and the public" because without morality in politics, rulers can create laws that infringe on people's rituals and religious practices, while combining the public and private life would extend rights for women and ensure greater balance in society (Story). The central conflict of *Antigone* arises because Creon's laws are in direct opposition with religious law, and those laws, which primarily govern the public sphere, infringe upon the rights given to women within the private sphere, specifically, the rights to burial and mourning. The acceptable constructs within Ancient Greek society, which are considered stable and balanced, actually disproportionately favored men and the public sphere. As the conflict in *Antigone* unfolds, it "exposes the limits and limitations of the masculine universal" as three of the main characters have to die to restore the balance, and the only remaining characters must carry on with the rest of their lives living in guilt and mourning (Honig 5).

Despite how the context of the Ancient Greece polis shapes Antigone's actions and the readings of the play itself, Antigone herself still lives on as a feminist icon. The context of the rebellion is not so important as the act of rebellion itself, because "such rebellion, even in the harshest and riskiest of circumstances, will still sometimes arise, and though it may not benefit the rebel herself, her actions can potentially act as a beacon of hope and possibility in dark times" (Story). In reading the conclusion of the play through this lens, one can understand how Antigone became a feminist symbol of hope. Even though she herself died, her actions echo into

the future, offering courage to generations of women who will fight back against the constraints of the patriarchy in the hope that this time the end result will be different. This idea of dying for a cause to inspire those in the future works, because as Honig explains:

Human willingness to sacrifice on behalf of a principle, commitment, or desire, or knowingly to accept one's implication in unchosen acts or defiantly to march to one's death with head held high or to refuse vengeance or even justice on behalf of love for another or perhaps even an ideal of self. Tragic characters die but their principles live on. They suffer, but something beautiful is made of their suffering. (2-3)

So while Antigone died, she remained brave in death, choosing suicide before Creon or natural causes had the chance to kill her. Her willingness to sacrifice herself for something she believed in, rather than begging forgiveness for stepping out of line or seeking Creon's death as revenge for the way he disgraced her brother is the story that lives on and inspires others, whether the story is fact or fiction. So while Antigone was simply acting within and against the constraints of her time, it is the principle that led her actions—the belief that her rights should not be infringed upon—that makes her an enduring figure in feminist ideals.

### **Final Thoughts: *Antigone* and Modern Politics in South Korea**

Since the play was written in the fifth century BCE, *Antigone*, along with the other Theban plays, have continued to offer insight into life in Ancient Greece in regard to politics, gender relations, and the role of religion in governance. Along with offering insight into life in Sophocles' time, the plays went on to inspire many European philosophers, shaping our modern day understanding of virtue, politics, and humanism. *Antigone* in particular was an early work in shaping feminist ideals and today continues to serve as a symbol for women's rights.



While we are far removed from Ancient Greece in regard to technology and innovation, there are still structures in place today that place the value men above that of women in countless societies. The importance of *Antigone* prevails, as women across the globe continue to fight against the political powers that constrain them, downplaying their worth and attempting to limit their role in the public sphere. While countries like the United States and South Korea allow women to participate in politics and be seen in the public sphere, there are still those who wish to keep women lower on the social hierarchy than men in both countries. But while there is a greater representation of women in American politics at all levels, women comprise 17% of South Korea's National Assembly, a statistic that falls well below the 25% global average (Babe 2020). However, the political landscape is changing, and today the feminist backlash is not embodied by just one person, but by groups of women demanding to be respected and treated as equal.

Perhaps the most pervasive modern example of women fighting back against political and social structures that keep them oppressed is the #MeToo movement. What began as an American movement back in 2006 quickly exploded years later when women in positions of power began to speak out against the men who had sexually assaulted them ("About"). The movement spread around the globe, inspiring women in the socially conservative and highly patriarchal country of South Korea to fight back against the men who used politics as a way to keep them oppressed. Today, #MeToo has grown so profoundly in South Korea that 2020 saw the creation of The Women's Party in the weeks leading up to the April 15<sup>th</sup> election (Babe). Like *Antigone*, these women are entering a political realm that has always been dominated by men, and speaking out against the oppression they face in "one of the most gender-unequal industrialized countries in the world" (Babe). Furthermore, these women no longer believe that

men should be determining what happens in the private sphere, demanding a voice of their own, much like Antigone demands when she enters Creon's court after illegally burying her brother.

Much like Antigone's rebellion began outside Creon's court, the rebellion against the patriarchy in South Korea began outside the national assembly. The most notable movements in recent years are "Escape the Corset, whereby young women are bucking gender norms by cutting their hair short and throwing away makeup; and No Marriage, whereby they're rejecting society's patriarchal standards that expect them to get married and have children" (Babe). Perhaps the most striking connection one can make between South Korea and Ancient Greece is the importance of marriage and reproduction. As mentioned, women's primary function in Ancient Greece was to give birth to sons, thus populating the polis. In South Korea, women face similar expectations, as the pressure to get married and have multiple children is so strong that in 2016 the federal government created a registry of all women ages 15-49 who were not pregnant and plotted their location on a public map. The action was met with backlash from many young Korean women who felt the stunt "blatantly showed how the government saw women's bodies as the country's reproductive tools, not that belonging to the woman" (Associated Press). Despite the progress made in thought, gender equality, and technology since the age of Sophocles, it seems that South Korean women still face many of the same oppressive standards that permeated Ancient Greece.

So while Antigone may have faced death for opposing the strict government measures put forth by a domineering patriarch, the sentiment of her actions lives on today in the women who rally together to enter the political realm in order to balance the scales that have long tilted in the favor of men. While this disruption will unsettle the status quo, as was the threat in *Antigone*, the long-term implications are that of a fairer, and more just society. Because although

Sophocles was able to write the deaths of gender defectors, the cause that Antigone took up still lives on, and will for as long as women face opposition and oppression at the hands of their government.

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