

The Assessment of Creative Writing in Senior Secondary English: A Colloquy Concerning Criteria

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Abstract

The assessment of creative writing is mandatory in the Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE) Literature course; is part of the WACE English course and exam; and is a component of the Australian Curriculum English courses: therefore it is important to understand how to assess creative writing consistently. This article reviews studies into methods of assessing creative writing and the literature detailing creative writing assessment criteria. It argues that criteria should be derived from qualities observed in students' creative writing, criteria that describe a spectrum of performance. The use of analytical marking keys' criteria and categories ensures fair and consistent assessment.

Keywords

Creative writing, assessment criteria, Literature, English.

Introduction

The teaching of English in Australia is in transition from state-based syllabi to a federal Australian Curriculum (AC). As with all curriculum change, the future direction has been shaped by extensive and vigorous professional and academic debate. With implementation of the AC senior secondary curriculum not scheduled until 2014/6, deliberation continues, especially around the place of creative writing in a high-stakes examination environment. A central concern of the debate is the reliability and consistency of assessment methods for creative writing. This article reviews the position of creative writing in relation to other components of English curriculum such as literary theory, literary studies, analytical writing and literature, within the current Western

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Australian Certificate of Education (WACE) and the proposed AC. The article particularly focuses on practices of creative writing assessment and persistent concerns regarding the reliability and consistency of its assessment, which framed an empirical study of creative writing assessment undertaken by Morris (2012).

The current WA senior secondary English and Literature curriculum

The current WACE curriculum, developed from 2006–2009, condensed the previous 140 senior secondary subjects to 52 courses of study in Years 11 and 12 (Curriculum Council 2003). Two English courses, English and Literature, replaced the three previous subjects: Senior English, English and English Literature (Curriculum Council 2008a). Students currently complete four units of an English or Literature course across the senior years. A key component of both courses is the requirement for writing of a creative nature to be assessed.

In the English course, students are assessed on their achievement of four outcomes: Reading; Writing; Viewing; and Speaking and Listening. Within the Writing outcome, students are assessed on how well they write about texts and how well they produce texts from a wide range of genres. Opportunities for creative writing are included both within the course and in the external WACE English exam.

In the WACE Literature course, students primarily write about texts, typically focussing on analytical writing; they are encouraged, however, to extend their writing repertoire to discursive and reflective writing and, for the first time in the history of Literature courses in WA, students are required to write creatively. Creative writing is mandatory in the coursework (with a weighting of 10–20%) but not required or allowed in the WACE Literature exam (Curriculum Council,, 2008a).

The Literature course makes a distinction between ‘creative’ writing and ‘analytical’ writing. English educators generally accept that ‘analytical’ writing can be considered creative because the assembly of any words in a purposeful way is arguably an act of creativity. Conversely, there are degrees of analysis involved in creative writing, including analysis of one’s experiences; of the historical and cultural context in which one writes; and analysis of the reader or audience. Nonetheless, within the WACE Literature course, the term creative writing pertains to the writing of poetry, plays and narrative prose fiction whereas analytical writing pertains to writing about literary texts.

The future English curriculum: The Australian Curriculum

The most recent drafts of the Australian Curriculum Senior Secondary Course include four English subjects: English, Literature, Essential English and English as an Additional Language/Dialect. All make references to the production and assessment of creative writing. The draft overview of the English course states

that 'Students create...texts in all language modes' (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority [ACARA] 2011b:1) and the unit descriptions contain statements such as, 'apply knowledge of text construction and stylistic devices to create, recreate or adapt a text in oral or written form' (ACARA 2011b: 7), 'create their own literary texts' (ACARA 2011b: 2) and 'create...imaginative literary texts that reflect upon the structure and style of literary texts (studied)' (ACARA 2011b: 28). Furthermore, 'literacy' and 'critical and creative thinking' are listed as two 'general capabilities' (ACARA 2011a: np), which can be demonstrated by the creation of texts.

Despite the current emphasis on creative writing in the WACE and AC, acceptance of creative writing within the curriculum continues to be challenged by perceptions that it is difficult, if not impossible, to assess objectively, fairly and reliably. This article reviews the positions on creative writing within the curriculum and issues related to the assessment of creative writing in the senior curriculum, in order to reinforce the view that creative writing has an important place within all English curriculums and that further research is needed to develop processes and criteria to enhance the consistency of its assessment.

It is accepted, within the pragmatic context of the Senior Secondary curriculum, that performances and results are used for selection into post-school tertiary institutions. In order to achieve this with fine-grained precision, Andrigh (2005) argues that it is necessary to have criteria and categories that describe what students can do. The findings of Andrigh were used in WA to endorse the use of marks for the purpose of tertiary selection; hence ensuring that such marks can be determined with consistency which, in turn, has motivated this review of the literature.

Competing discourses within subject English

Competing discourses within the English curriculum have variously been described by O'Neill (1987), Ball et al. (1990), McIntyre (2000) and Marshall (2000). Ball et al. (1990) categorised four main discourses of subject English: English as skills; cultural heritage; progressive; and radical (also known as cultural critical). These discourses compete for space and status within English curriculums: how much time and space is given to functional literacy, enhancement of national solidarity through the study of the canon, the development of the individual through personal language use and the development of awareness of the ideological workings of texts (Christie and Misson 1998; Marshall 2000; Hastie and Sharplin 2012)? The view that the cultural heritage model has dominated English curriculums (Wilkinson et al. 1980) continues to resonate in Australia (Radio National EdPod 2009).

In the context of the dominance of cultural heritage, where does creative writing sit within the curriculum? One debate centres on the relative influence

of the writer and the reader in the production of meaning in literature and creative writing. Those advocating the inclusion of creative writing in the curriculum have to confront the Romantic myth that writers are inspired by the Muse. As Swander, Leahy and Cantrell (2007: 15) suggest:

the premises of this approach to creativity include that talent is inherent and essential, that creative writing is largely or even solely an individual pursuit and that inspiration, not education, drives creativity...if creative writing cannot be taught, then it might also follow that student work cannot be evaluated.

This position conflicts with advocates of Cultural Studies who favour the idea that all text, including creative writing, is a product of the cultural, leaving the writer disempowered. While notions of beauty (aesthetics) are still relevant, all be they changing with the eye of the beholder (note the emphases in literary theory on the reader, multiple readings and reading practices), the notion of originality, as Ramey (2007) explained, is tempered by an understanding of the importance of previous reading experience to the creative writer. The notion of the Muse, 'places artists in a paradoxical position: wanting to lay claim to possession of the fruits of their labour, yet avowing that the driving force is not theirs at all' (Earnshaw 2007: 67).

A mediated position is outlined by Earnshaw (2007: 67) who sees the modernist aesthetic as 'determined to make the work of art stand alone...a law unto itself, each piece unique and with its own set of rules, completely independent of the writer and its audience, self-directed, "autotelic"'. The modernist assumes that texts can be produced (and read) without reference to the cultural contexts in which they are produced and read. The writer might have a degree of independence in the sense that writers are often not keen to explain the meaning of their texts, that readings of the text will be created by the readers and that creative writing cannot be assumed to have an autobiographical/ autoideological basis, but it is hard to assume that the ideologies of the writer are never involved in the creation of the text.

Tension between creative/expressive and functional/transactional writing

The distinction made between creative and analytical writing in the current WACE literature course can be traced back to The Bullock Report into English in the UK (1975), and the seminal works of Britton (1970), Martin (1976) and Barnes (1976), which considered the different functions of language generally and writing more specifically. These functions were categorised as: Expressive, Transactional and Poetic (Monteith 1992). Britton (1970) explored the functions of children's language while Martin (1976) advocated an emphasis on breadth rather than correctness of writing. Wilkinson et al. (1980) suggested that poetic and expressive writing evident in primary school was overtly discouraged in secondary schools. Robinson and Ellis (1999: 70) comparing the expectations

of published literature and student writing noted that while the former elicits, 'responses which are to do with the power of the message and the enjoyment of the reader', in students' writing, 'the features of language which attract attention in school are more frequently form and structure –spelling, grammar, handwriting, organisational conventions'. Grainger et al. (2005) have argued for a renewed emphasis on meaning making in students' writing rather than stolid attention to transactional writing with emphasis on word and sentence level grammar. Earl et al. (2003, as cited by Grainger et al. 2005: 7) suggest that, 'Evidence from national evaluations of the NLS [National Literacy Strategy] indicates that teachers may have become more competent in teaching sentence and word level work, but still find supporting children's compositional development more challenging'. Studies over the last forty years point to continuing tensions between the functional/critical and the creative components of English.

However, recent discussions have placed creative and analytical writing as complementary rather than oppositional. Misson (2004: 33) argues that while we usually associate 'critical capacity...with reception' and 'imagination...with production' we should, 'acknowledge that imagination is involved in reception and a critical capacity in production'. In other words, creative writing and analysing literature are intimately related. Further, Misson and Morgan (2006) argue that some of the criteria by which analytical writing is judged (for example, coherence, expression and structure) might apply also to the assessment of creative writing. Consequently, Wilkins (2009) argued that the criteria for the assessment of creative writing can be similar to the criteria for the assessment of scholarly or analytical writing. She reminds students that 'before a literary text became an artefact for study it was first a piece of writing that was drafted, revised, redrafted and so on' (Wilkins, 2009: 7).

Creative writing and literature

Tensions within the English school curriculum have also been evident in tertiary education. The relative merits of creative versus analytical writing, at times seen as polar opposites, were debated with the introduction of creative writing in tertiary institutions. Brayfield (2009: 183) discusses the hostility towards creative writing that 'still lingers in some universities in England'. Attempts to introduce creative writing as a separate course in the United States in the 1970s were strongly opposed because it was perceived as a soft option in comparison with the study of literature. Singleton (1992: 68) argued for the inclusion of creative writing in a tertiary English course, on the grounds that other Arts courses, like music and drama, had 'a long tradition of critical activity and original composition working side by side'. Similarly, Austen (2005: 138) advocated creative writing in English Literature courses arguing that, 'creative writing (1) dispels the awe of literature and creates active learners; (2) develops critical readers; [and] (3) furthers student understanding of literary criticism'.

More recently, Dawson (2001) described how the nexus between creative writing and literary studies varied across universities. Dibble and van Loon (2002) challenged the relative emphases afforded writing theory/literary theory and creative writing/literature in their tertiary institution, while Wolf and Gearhart (1997) argue that what they called 'Writing What You Read' is more effective in producing good creative writing than 'Writing What You Know'; that is, students should be encouraged to learn from their reading of literary texts rather than writing solely from personal experience.

From such evolving debates, the WACE Literature syllabus (Curriculum Council, 2008a) conveys the view that literature is creative writing (although not all creative writing would qualify as 'good literature') and that it is educational for students to write about literature and to attempt to create literature by writing short stories, poems, plays and variations on those genre. Some of the learning about literature could be experiential, based on experimentation with the form, rather than just admiration and analysis of the polished efforts of well-known writers.

The challenge of assessing creative writing

A rudimentary requirement of any assessment process is that assessments are based on common understanding of standards in order to have 'valid, fair, educative, explicit' assessment (Curriculum Council 2008b: 18), comparable across a system. Yet, there is a common perception among English teachers that such methods do not exist for the assessment of creative writing and therefore teachers lack confidence in their judgements (Brophy 1998; Green 2009). According to Singleton (1992: 68) creative writing is 'too subjective, too personal to be measured. How could it submit to the exactitude of grading, to percentaging and classification?' Robinson and Ellis (1999: 78) cite the Department of Education and Science (1989: 31) who echo this concern:

*The best writing is vigorous, committed, honest and interesting.
We have not included these qualities in our statements of
attainment because they cannot be mapped on to levels.*

Everett (2005: 239) counters by arguing that:

*Coherence of organisation, use of observed detail and
control – of language, voice and idiom – are just a few of the
criteria [which] make judging creative quality as unproblematic
as judging critical quality.*

Everett concluded that while objective assessment of creative writing might not be possible, assessment can be consistent. Further, given the views of Misson and Morgan (2006) it is possible to think of works of creative writing and works of literature as being on the same developmental continuum, and that scholarly writing and creative writing might share common characteristics.

While Austen (2005: 148) noted that ‘there is little research in how to evaluate creative writing effectively’, there is a wealth of literature from experienced educators, critics and theorists about the process of assessing creative writing and suggestions of criteria which might be effective.

Criteria for the assessment of creative writing

The identification of central features of effective creative writing can be traced to the ancients. Ramey (2007: 47) quoted Longinus (1st century AD) whose text *On the Sublime* described the five sources of sublimity:

The power to conceive great thoughts.

Strong and inspired emotion.

Figures of thought and figures of speech.

Noble diction which includes choice of words and the use of metaphorical language.

Dignified and elevated word arrangement.

While Longinus’ thoughts indicate that the search for the qualities of powerful writing has a long tradition, what would today’s students understand by ‘great’, ‘noble’, ‘dignified’ and ‘elevated’? Indeed what teachers value in students’ creative writing appears to change over time. Protherough (1983:191) discussed how a study of students’ writing by Boyd in 1924 privileged, ‘the detached, elevated, fluent and rhetorically varied’ over qualities that found favour in the 1980s, for example, ‘what is personal, imaginative, emotionally-felt, lively, vividly realized’. This example suggests that any statement of criteria for the assessment of creative writing will be historically and culturally bound.

Early suggestions for criteria lack definitional clarity. Coles and Volpat (1985, cited by Slomp 2007: 107) listed ‘honesty, voice, risk-taking, exploration, attention to audience, effective use of details, organic structure, and control of diction and conventions’. Similarly, Miles (1992: 37) identified three important elements: ‘an appreciation of the history of the craft; a mastery of its techniques; and an inquiry into the contemporary, into what is vital, or viable, and what is not, into what constitutes ‘saying something, now’, and what is simply derivative.’

Peters (1990: np) wrote idealistically, that creative writing:

should move the audience in some deeply personal way, contain some element of surprise, and fulfill the spirit...of the assignment... students who choose to write creative papers generally work harder and longer than others because of a commit-

ment of self, the heart's passion or pain, the mind's light or dark humour...If that magic does not happen, it can generally be explained to the student, in ways that will not crush or blight the imagination.

Students require a clear understanding of what constitutes good creative writing and of the criteria by which their writing will be assessed; however, it might be difficult to define, 'move the audience' or 'magic'.

In a more empirical approach, Hake (1986) used raters to assess students' writing based on the number and type of flaws in the writing. He discovered that, 'personal experience expositions that incorporate narrations will be more objectively graded than pure narrations that describe personal experience' (1986:160). Hake concluded that, 'the holistic rating system for grading essays can be inadequate; namely, even similarly trained graders see different elements in the same essays, particularly in pure narratives' (p. 161).

Goldberg et al. (1998) proposed creative writing criteria from their study of 300 randomly selected student creative writing texts. They noticed the emphases the students gave to form, technique and meaning and observed how the readers' assessment of the creative writing differed from positive to negative depending on the choice of topic, implying that the students' ideologies might have complemented or conflicted with the teachers' ideologies. The creation of rubrics assisted readers to attend to technique and meaning, especially in the assessment of poetry. They noted that although readers were trained to honour students' topic choice, some topics 'touched teachers' nerves 'favourably' or 'unfavourably' (Goldberg et al. 1998: 55). Some readers were concerned about length and others about the role of poetic devices.

Similarly, Johnston (1999: 42–43) referred to 'the centre of gravity of the piece...a pattern in the writing...Have I been led to appreciate the centre and how the elements of the story relate to it?' May (2007: 72) listed criteria including: 'work of a distinguished quality...logical organisation...originality and insight'. The qualities mentioned by these writers might be worth rewarding in students' writing but are hard to describe or measure. It might be difficult to assess 'honesty' in a piece of creative writing; and what teacher has not wondered how much to reward a student for being 'committed'?

In a Master of Arts level university course, Newman (2007) set out the criteria for assessing creative writing. For example, the criteria for a Distinction (70 +) included the ability to 'delight and excite...to engage the reader at a sophisticated level...an overall coherence of tone...an inventive use of language...a "distinctive" voice... original observation...and spelling, grammar, punctuation, syntax and editing are impeccable' (Newman 2007: 29). Conversely, for a fail

(less than 40 per cent) work is 'poorly conceived and clumsily written... rambling, difficult to follow or just plain boring' (Newman 2007: 30). Creative writing has to be assessed for the qualities it exhibits.

Rodriguez (2008), in relation to the assessment of short stories, recommended a focus on narrative elements such as character, plot and setting with each criterion elaborated by a series of questions and attracting between 0 and 5 points. For example, for the plot criterion: 'Is the plot clear? ... Is the plot open or closed? ... Is the plot interesting or is it cliché?' (Rodriguez 2008: 174). Despite the detailed attempts to identify criteria regarding the use of plot, Rodriguez (2008) admitted that two professors marking the same work 'must make unscientific judgements' (p. 175) and that it was entirely possible for two professors to award different marks. Rodriguez tried to define what some claim is indefinable because assessment is perceived to be entirely subjective and impressionistic. Clearly, it is challenging work to explain to students the qualities that are expected in their creative writing and the criteria by which they are being assessed.

VanDeWeghe (2007) and Ramey (2007) both saw some degree of originality as an important criterion. VanDeWeghe (2007: 93) argued for a 'classroom climate (that) encourages novel expression and rewards intellectual and stylistic risk-taking'. Ramey (2007: 49) endorsed the advice of Young in 'Conjectures on Original Composition' (1759) who, 'encourages his readers to establish meaningful relationships with the past, and learn from their precursors whilst making their own unique and contemporary mark'. It is unlikely that deference to literary works is the most important factor in what makes creative writing creative.

Weldon (2009) argued that 'someone has to make a judgement ... Did it move me? Did it make me laugh? Did that impress me much?' (p. 169). She explains how her colleagues agreed on 'five markable elements: originality and imagination ... use of language ... structure ... expression of theme ... maturity of style' (p. 172) and argued for another criterion 'awareness of the reader' (Weldon 2009: 172). Weldon also referred to the usefulness of criteria so that, 'students can be clear as to which aspects of their writing are working, and what aren't' (p. 171). Like many other creative writing educators, Weldon endorsed the use of students' critical reflections on their own work, which indicate the criteria the students were trying to meet.

Green (2009: 191) endorsed Larkin's (1983) view that the writing of a poem consists of three stages: 'inspiration, creation and recreation' whereby in the last stage the readers are 're-creating in themselves what the poet felt when he wrote it' (Larkin 1983: 80). In such a scenario, the only criterion for the success of the poem would be whether the reader felt what the poet felt! Modern literary theory, with its emphasis on the multiple readings of texts and notions of intentional fallacy, surely discounts such a criterion.

The National Association for Writing Education (2011) listed many criteria for its tertiary graduates including:

develop strategies to draw upon and record their personal experience and research, and to synthesize these in an imaginative form;

write creatively with confidence and technical ability, and with an awareness of tone, structure, genre, audience;

effectively communicate concrete ideas, abstract concepts, and information using the written word,

understand the contexts within which creative writing is (and, where appropriate, has been) produced and consumed.

A student who exhibited all of these qualities would probably produce very good creative writing, but such a list is not a method of differentiating between standards and could only be used holistically for very good creative writers. It does not weight the criteria nor describe the qualities of inferior creative writing. The focus is on an ideal rather than on a spectrum of performance.

The present article argues that if creative writing is valuable enough to include in English and Literature courses, then valid, fair and consistent (but not necessarily objective) methods of assessing it are needed and that explicit, criterion-referenced methods are preferred over others (Curriculum Council 2011b). Therefore, further research is needed to identify qualities that can be observed in students' creative writing and to reiterate that those qualities should serve as the basis for the writing of the criteria because observable, behavioural characteristics are preferable to idealistic wish-lists.

Analytical marking keys

The approach to assessment that is currently advocated in Western Australia is the use of analytical marking keys (Andrich 2005; Tognolini, 2006). A good marking key uses criteria relevant to the task (Andrich 2005), emanating from responses to the task; from qualities, in the case of creative writing, exhibited in students' creative writing performances.

An analytical marking key consists of a number of criteria, each of which consists of a number of categories describing what qualities are exhibited in the writing. Each category attains a score point. To move up a category, the script must exhibit a quality that was not exhibited by scripts in the category below. The number of score points a student gains reflects how well the student has performed with regard to that criterion. Criteria are weighted by virtue of the number of score points that criterion attracts compared to other criteria. Conversely, an holistic marking key typically consists of a plethora of

criteria with no indication to markers of which ones to attend to or how to weight those criteria and with none of the criteria having categories suggesting a developmental continuum or having associated score points. The use of analytical marking keys addresses, to some extent, two issues: different markers valuing different criteria (the criteria are listed in the marking key); and different markers valuing the same criterion differently (the analytical marking key determines what weighting should be given to each criterion). In the case of holistic marking keys, criteria are mentioned but no categories are used to represent different degrees of achievement within a criterion, therefore it is indeterminate as to how the response is scored and it is unclear as to how the criteria are being weighted in comparison to each other.

To construct an analytical marking key one needs to observe what is happening in students' writing performances, to describe what students do and the qualities of those performances, to order those performances, and to develop criteria by which to assess those performances from those observations. In short, it is important 'to make the criteria relevant to the task and to the performances of the students engaged in the tasks' (Andrich 2005: 26). While few have questioned educators' methods of assessing analytical tasks, various critics (Singleton 1992; Kroll 1997; Newman 2007) have questioned educators' methods of assessing creative writing. Both Andrich (2005) and Tognolini (2006) recommend the need to develop assessment instruments for the fine-grained assessment of writing, an analytical, criterion-referenced marking key that might serve as a model for how to assess creative writing fairly, consistently and reliably. The use of marking keys is now a requirement stipulated by the WACE Manual which further states that 'the Council recommends the use of analytical marking for all assessment tasks' (Curriculum Council 2011a: 17). As Marsh (1992: 54) argues, 'Making criteria absolutely explicit...is a way of enfranchising those who have always found the aims and methods of judgement in the education system mysterious'.

The literature reviewed here preceded and shaped an empirical study investigating the development of a creative writing analytical marking key and the trialling of its use with teachers. The findings of this study will be reported in a subsequent paper. Table 1 provides an example of an analytical marking key for the assessment of creative writing developed from the work of Morris (2012), which references a bank of 30 exemplars of creative writing. The features of the marking key are: that its criteria are based on the observed qualities of students' creative writing; that each criterion consists of a number of categories that describe different levels of performance on a continuum; and that these categories can be used to produce a numerical value, such as a percentage. The research points to the usefulness of criteria, categories and therefore marks which describe differences in qualities or standards of creative writing and accommodate the pragmatic need for the ranking of student performance with regards to tertiary entrance.

Table 1: *Creative Writing marking key*

Criterion	Creative Writing Marking Key Performance categories (or distinguishable qualities of performance observed on each criterion)	Marks
1. The use of language and language devices	Demonstrates dynamic control and adaptation of language and language devices appropriate to the task, the audience and the purpose.	4
	Demonstrates effective control of language and language devices appropriate to the task, the audience and the purpose.	3
	Demonstrates adequate control of language and language devices appropriate to the task, the audience and the purpose.	2
	Demonstrates limited control of language and language devices appropriate to the task, the audience and the purpose.	1
	Demonstrates inadequate control of language and language devices appropriate to the task, the audience and the purpose.	0
2. The use of genre and generic conventions	Demonstrates playfulness and inventiveness in the adoption and adaptation of generic conventions appropriate to the task, the audience and the purpose.	4
	Demonstrates effective control of generic conventions appropriate to the task, the audience and the purpose.	3
	Demonstrates adequate control of generic conventions appropriate to the task, the audience and the purpose.	2
	Demonstrates limited control of generic conventions appropriate to the task, the audience and the purpose.	1
	Demonstrates inadequate control of generic conventions appropriate to the task, the audience and the purpose.	0
3. Contextual understandings: cultural, historical and social contexts	The writer shows strong understanding of the cultural, historical and/or social contexts in which s (he) is producing this piece of creative writing.	4
	The writer shows sound understanding of the cultural, historical and/or social contexts in which s (he) is producing this piece of creative writing.	3
	The writer shows some understanding of the cultural, historical and/or social contexts in which s (he) is producing this piece of creative writing.	2
	The writer shows limited understanding of the cultural, historical and/or social contexts in which s(he) is producing this piece of creative writing.	1
	The writer shows inadequate understanding of the cultural, historical and/or social contexts in which s(he) is producing this piece of creative writing.	0

Table 1: *Continued*

Criterion	Creative Writing Marking Key Performance categories (or distinguishable qualities of performance observed on each criterion)	Marks
	The writer neglects to consider the cultural, historical and/or social contexts in which s(he) is producing this piece of creative writing.	0
4. The awareness of audience and the reader's context	Demonstrates very good awareness of the audience and the reader's context	4
	Demonstrates good awareness of the audience and the reader's context	3
	Demonstrates some awareness of the audience and the reader's context	2
	Demonstrates limited awareness of the audience and the reader's context.	1
5. Ideas explored, issues raised, themes developed, meanings that can be made (quality of ideas)	Demonstrates a lack of awareness of the potential audience and the reader's context	0
	Deals with complex cultural and social issues and philosophical notions in meaningful ways	6
	Challenging the reader to make value judgements and create readings of the text.	
	Deals with complex issues in meaningful ways allowing the reader to make value judgements and create readings of the text. Deals with a range of major issues and makes frequent reference to minor issues in subtle and incidental ways	5
	Deals carefully with issues that are relevant to a wide audience	4
	Deals with issues in a simplistic way even though the issue might have potential for complex treatment	3
6. On balance judgement	Deals with simple issues	2
	Tells a story but neglects to raise any issues or explore any ideas	1
	Writes very creatively	0
	Writes creatively	3
	Needs major improvements	2
Total		1
Comments (Morris 2012)		25

Conclusion

The WACE Literature course (Curriculum Council 2008) makes creative writing mandatory in the range of 10–20% of coursework assessment. The rationale of the WACE Literature course argues that creative writing and literature are two sides of the same coin, with students' understanding of literature assisting their production of creative writing and their experience with creative writing assisting their understanding of literature: 'The course explores the power of language to provoke and shape response, with particular reference to both literary texts and the student's own writing' (Curriculum Council 2008a: 3). The current position has evolved from tensions between discourse within subject English and disputes over the role of and relationship between analytical and creative writing.

It is imperative to be able to place creative writing performances on a developmental continuum; to be able to explain why one student's creative writing is better than another's; to observe the qualities exhibited; and to identify the criteria by which teachers make their judgements. The current array of criteria proposed by academics, theorists and practitioners leaves creative writing susceptible to the criticism that its assessment is unreliable and inconsistent and therefore unworthy of inclusion in high stakes examination environments. Contemporary academics in the field of assessment and measurement propose the use of analytical marking keys to make creative writing criteria explicit, describing categories within each criterion and defining the relative weighting of each criterion to develop a common understanding of standards and to ensure that the assessment of creative writing is fair and consistent.

With creative writing now included in the current WACE and future AC Senior Secondary English curriculum, there is a pressing need to address the assessment concerns of teachers. Further empirical research is needed to explore the processes and criteria required for the consistent and effective assessment of creative writing.

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