

10-2017

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APA Citation

Shea, J. (2017). Teaching Chinese-language creative writing in Hong Kong: Three case studies. *TEXT* (Special Issue 47), 1-13. Retrieved from https://repository.hkbu.edu.hk/hkbu_staff_publication/6404

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Teaching Chinese-language creative writing in Hong Kong: three case studies

Abstract:

With attention to the growing prominence of ‘cultural and creative industries’ and the rise of liberal arts education in Hong Kong, this paper presents three case studies of instructors who teach undergraduate Chinese-language creative writing in Hong Kong’s tertiary institutions. The article begins with a brief overview of Chinese-language creative writing programmes and posits three conceptual models of the writing workshop: a site of apprenticeship to foster self-expression, a setting for skills training, and a space for social critique. Given the limited research on Chinese-language creative writing in Hong Kong, the paper documents the experiences of three prominent instructors, Hon Lai-chu, Mary Wong Shuk-han, and Wong Leung-wo. The findings indicate that despite the heterogeneous nature of course goals, class sizes, target students, and instructors’ training and background, all three instructors envision the workshop as a site for mentoring self-expression. While they do not emphasise skills-based teaching, the instructors share an implicit commitment to social criticism in their pedagogy. The paper concludes with reflections on the use of defamiliarisation as a pedagogical practice that underscores this social critique.

Biographical Note:

James Shea is the author of two books of poetry, *The Lost Novel* (2014) and *Star in the Eye* (2008), both from Fence Books. His poems have appeared in various literary journals and anthologies such as *The New Census: An Anthology of Contemporary American Poetry* and *Isn’t It Romantic: 100 Love Poems by Younger American Poets*. He received an MFA in poetry from the University of Iowa, and he has taught creative writing at Nebraska Wesleyan University, University of Chicago, Columbia College Chicago’s MFA Program in Poetry, DePaul University, and as a poet-in-residence in the Chicago public schools, where he received The Poetry Center of Chicago’s Gwendolyn Brooks Award for Excellence in Teaching. A former Fulbright Scholar in Hong Kong, he is currently an assistant professor in the Department of Humanities and Creative Writing at Hong Kong Baptist University.

Keywords:

Creative Writing – Chinese-language creative writing – Pedagogy – Hong Kong

Introduction: three conceptual models of the creative writing workshop

A great deal of scholarship on English-language creative writing pedagogy exists in Anglophone countries, where creative writing has been an established academic discipline for decades (Myers, 1996; Dawson 2005; Harper 2006; 2014; McGurl 2009; Bennett 2015). Chinese-language creative writing pedagogy, however, is relatively new and unsettled, and there is comparatively little research on this subject, either in English or Chinese. Taiwan has the longest history of offering Chinese creative writing courses, going back at least to the early 1960s (Neih 2011) [1]. Recently, leading universities in mainland China have begun to offer the equivalent of an MFA degree in Chinese creative writing, starting with Fudan University in 2009 (Zhao 2009). Other universities followed with their own graduate programs in creative writing, such as Shanghai University (Lili, 2011), Peking University ('Brief' 2014), and Tongji University ('Master's' 2016) [2]. In Hong Kong, Chinese creative writing courses at the university level date to the 1980s, when the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) offered a two-semester course in prose and poetry, and some final exam questions from the early 1970s at CUHK included creative writing prompts.

Individual creative writing courses in Chinese and English are now a fixture at numerous Hong Kong universities and among various departments [3]. The author's home institution Hong Kong Baptist University, for example, offers creative writing courses in Chinese in the Department of Humanities and Creative Writing, Department of Chinese Language and Literature, Language Centre, and the School of Continuing Education. Despite the proliferation of creative writing courses, there is little consensus about what constitutes a writing workshop. Whether in Chinese or English, academic research on creative writing pedagogy in Hong Kong remains limited, and this article is one of the first efforts in English to document Chinese-language creative writing pedagogy in Hong Kong's tertiary institutions [4].

A review of literature on various frameworks for teaching creative writing suggests at least three conceptual models of the creative writing workshop. The first model posits workshops primarily as sites of 'mentoring or apprenticeship' to foster creativity and self-expression (Leahy 2012: 76). Marilynne Robinson, a professor at the Iowa Writers' Workshop, signaled this model when she noted, 'The workshop idea does, after all, depend on the willingness of a group of people to pay careful attention to a piece of written work, to criticize it thoughtfully and constructively, and to learn from criticism in their turn' (Robinson 2011). This 'Iowa-model' is the most common way of framing creative writing instruction today. The second model largely regards creative writing as a 'skill' that can lead to employment. Grigorenko and Tan articulated this view in their proposed framework for teaching creativity in Singaporean schools. Defining creativity as a 'demand-led competency', they emphasised the primacy of the job market:

Such a pragmatic approach to teaching creativity reflects the capability of diverse labor markets to merge and blend ... under the pressure of changing economies, educators can and should develop ways to teach creativity. (Grigorenko and Tan 2008: 24).

Grigorenko and Tan advocated the use of 'proficiency scales for assessing creativity' and suggest, 'each level can be decomposed into a set of teachable and exercisable skills that can be developed while acquiring specific content areas within particular academic domains' (Grigorenko and Tan 2008: 22-23). The third model, informed by critical theory, considers creative writing classrooms as spaces for social criticism that

can explore power structures in society. Rather than view creative writing workshops as a community to foster creativity or as a training ground for the workforce, these critics, such as Morton and Zavarzadeh, argue for a creative writing pedagogy that emphasises the instruction of ‘radical theory’. The premise of such critiques is that the workshop ‘is not a ‘neutral’ place where insights are developed, ideas/advice freely exchanged, and skills honed. It is a site of ideology: a place in which a particular view of reading/writing texts is put forth and through this view support is given to the dominant social order’ (Morton and Zavarzadeh 1988: 161). This model can be viewed as an extension of arguments expounded by Henry Giroux and others for a “critical pedagogy” in the classroom (Giroux 1983; 1988).

To what degree are Chinese-language creative writing courses in Hong Kong regarded as a means of self-expression, a vehicle for improving skills for the workplace, a tool for social criticism, an admixture of these models, or something altogether different? As the findings from these case studies suggest, instructors’ pedagogical values include the fostering of self-expression by way of mentorship. Their pedagogy also entails implicit social criticism based on the practice and concept of defamiliarisation.

Methodology

My data source included semi-structured, hour-long interviews with three instructors of undergraduate creative writing courses at three different universities in Hong Kong and course documents, such as syllabi and handouts. Due to the limited number of Chinese-language creative writing courses and the lack of uniform design and course goals across creative writing curricula in Hong Kong’s tertiary institutions, it is a challenge to conduct a valid comparative study of the course structures, in terms of finding equivalent class sizes, offering departments, and assignments, etc. Consequently, I employed a grounded analysis of the instructors’ interview responses by coding for key terms, practices, and attitudes in order to understand the instructors’ pedagogical values (Creswell, 2014). Interview questions (samples of which can be found in footnote 5) focused on the instructors’ formation as creative writing instructors, their philosophy of teaching creative writing, their practices in class, and how they regard creative writing within the university system [5]. Hon Lai-chu represented a full-time writer who is relatively new to teaching creative writing; Mary Wong Shuk-han is primarily a scholar who has been teaching creative writing over the past few years; Wong Leung-wo is a writer and teacher with the most years of experience in teaching creative writing [6]. The instructors in this study consented to the use of their real names.

1. Hon Lai-chu: ‘writing is the only exit’

Hon Lai-chu (韓麗珠) is a part-time lecturer in the Department of Chinese Language and Literature at The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK). One of Hong Kong’s most celebrated authors, she has written numerous books and is the recipient of multiple awards, including the Hong Kong Biennial Award for Chinese Literature for fiction, Taiwan’s Uitas New Writer’s Novella first prize, and the Hong Kong Book Prize. In 2010, she was a resident at the University of Iowa’s International Writing Program (Hon 2017). In an interview with the author, Hon reported that she never took a formal creative writing class. She majored in translation at City University of Hong Kong, and during her sophomore year, she published her first

book of fiction. She earned an MA in cultural studies at Lingnan University and worked for a local newspaper as a reporter and later as an editor. She resigned from her position at age twenty-five to become a full-time writer, but she still had to find work. After her first book appeared in 2004, she was invited by a student group at Lingnan University to lead an informal creative writing class. In 2014, Hon began to teach as a part-time instructor at CUHK, but in the past, she has taught for the YMCA, where she would often experiment with new teaching methods. She also teaches for The House of Hong Kong Literature, a nonprofit organisation that promotes literary appreciation and creation. CUHK is her first and only experience teaching a university-level class.

Hon teaches a 2-credit hour general writing course for first-year majors in CUHK's Department of Chinese Language and Literature called 'Writing' (寫作訓練) that she tailored as a creative writing class. Her class sessions consist of three parts: 1) discussion of model works; 2) in-class writing activities; and 3) discussion of student writing. She teaches mainly the works of Hong Kong writers like Liu Yichang, Xi Xi, Leung Ping-kwan (Ye Si), Dung Kai-cheung, Wu Xubin, Tse Hiu Hung, Chan Chitak, and some Taiwanese writers, such as Xia Yu. One reading she gives to students on the first day is Xi Xi's short story 'Drawer' because, as she put it, the story raises the question, 'What is the self?' Hon doesn't usually teach international writers, except for an occasional work by Italo Calvino. Students are allowed to pick their own genre for writing assignments, although Hon begins the term with short essays and poems, and later, introduces short stories. During class discussion, she encourages students to connect the assigned readings to their own lives [7].

During the term we spoke, Hon's two-hour class session had roughly 20 students, (although the quota can be up to 24 students) and was held once a week. The in-class writing activity, which takes about thirty minutes, might include asking students to pick an object in the room and imagine a special relationship between themselves and the object; how does it represent you? If you were this object, how would you feel? What would you do? Then she asks students to write a short essay from the point of view of the object. She usually plays meditative music in the background while they are writing, and she may ask them to do yoga for a few minutes, before they begin. Hon described her aim to make her creative writing classroom into a 'special' atmosphere, different from the typical university class. She asks students to sit in a circle, for example, or on occasion, she takes them to a grassy area on campus where she invites them to take off their shoes to feel the grass, take in the air and trees, and write.

When students share their work, they often read aloud their in-class writing and provide immediate feedback on each other's work, discussing which pieces they liked the most. Hon offers her remarks throughout the entire discussion. Most of the students' writing is done mainly in class, with students finishing or polishing their work at home. One of her five writing assignments asks students to select a family member and mimic his or her actions for an evening, and then write a story from that person's point of view. For homework, students must finish or revise their in-class writing and do a reading assignment. The final exam (required by the university) is in three sections: 1) response to a creative writing prompt; 2) response to an assigned reading; 3) response to a second creative writing prompt. For Hon, revision is optional and not assessed. When asked how she grades assignments, she responded that she asks herself 'if it can touch me'. If a student describes a tree, for example, the writing

should avoid clichés and move her. When she first started teaching, she had fewer in-class activities and more lectures on theory, including PowerPoint presentations, but she found eventually that they were not necessary.

Her teaching philosophy is based on her aim ‘to free [the students]’. She described the education system in Hong Kong as a ‘prison’ and that ‘writing is the only exit’. She wants to ‘try to persuade the students to believe in themselves’ and ‘to dig into themselves’. Later in our interview, she returned to her main point: ‘We don’t have freedom in our city’ and ‘freedom is decreasing.’ She observed that the Hong Kong government views creativity like an App that can be downloaded into people’s brains and activated when it’s needed. The central government posits creativity as concrete, practical, and related to the world of commerce and goods, rather than as a way of life. For Hon, creativity is more abstract in that it expresses the imagination, freedom, a sense of hope, and a ‘taste of living’ or aesthetic sense. She connects this tension to the Umbrella Movement, which she considered as expressing great creativity on the part of student activists, and yet the government opposed the movement. For Hon, it’s a central example of how the government compartmentalises creativity in society—it wants creativity to occur here and there (in creativity institutes and creativity centers), but it does not want imaginative thinking spreading too far into society. She continues to believe that engagement with creative writing can help students to ‘build up a better self’ and a ‘better life’ and in turn, a ‘better world’.

2. Mary Wong Shuk-han: ‘defamiliarise’ the classroom

Mary Wong Shuk-han (黃淑嫻) is an Associate Professor in the Department of Chinese at Lingnan University, where she teaches ‘Creative Writing in Chinese’ (中文文學創作), an elective course for third and fourth-year Chinese majors. Although Mary has published short stories and nonfiction, she self-identifies primarily as a scholar of comparative literature and film. Her course is Lingnan’s main creative writing class in Chinese, whereas other writing courses cover journalism, travel writing, children’s literature, etc. She co-taught the course with the Hong Kong poet and scholar Leung Ping-kwan (Yesi) until he died in 2013. Leung had moved to Lingnan University from the University of Hong Kong in 1997, and began a writer-in-residence program in 2003 (Leung 2008).

Mary reported that her teaching goal is ‘not producing great writers, but trying to help students to present their ideas through fictional ways’. She teaches mainly short stories, and when there is a writer-in-residence, the visiting writer gives lectures, and she teaches some of the tutorials. During the semester we spoke, her class had about forty-five students who met for thirteen weekly lectures (1.5 hours), and they broke into three tutorials (1.5 hours) of fifteen students each. These separate tutorials are workshops in which students sit in a circle and discuss their stories. Rather than use writing exercises, Mary provides ‘thinking exercises’ in which students are asked, for example, to describe verbally how a character might behave based on a given backstory. Students share their stories by e-mail at least one day before their assigned workshop, and their classmates refer to the stories on their phones during discussion.

Mary stressed that students are not required to follow her verbal comments on their revisions for the final portfolios, which includes three writing assignments. She wants them to reflect for themselves on how best to revise their work. Her reasoning is

based on the stressful atmosphere found in secondary schools, where students must revise their writing based directly on their teachers' corrections. She faults secondary school education for the lack of risk-taking in her students. Unlike in her other courses, such as 'Literature and Cinema,' 'Introduction to Literature,' and 'Popular Culture: 1950s to 1960s,' Mary avoids PowerPoint, because, in her words, she wants to 'defamiliarise' the classroom experience, so that her students feel the writing class is different from a typical university class and they will pay deeper attention to their work. 'Defamiliarization' refers to Victor Shklovsky's theory that art should make us see the world anew by waking us from the 'automatism of perception,' and in the case of her pedagogy, Mary encourages students to experience writing and literature afresh by differentiating the learning experience from her students' normal Chinese literature courses, in which lectures generally take precedence over discussion, and from their previous writing courses in secondary school (Shklovsky 1965: 13).

Mary provides verbal feedback on her students' writing, because of her large class size. She focuses less on grammar and more on creative uses of language, structure, character, and plausibility, within the world set by each story. She wants her students to focus on emotion, asking students, for instance, 'What made you feel happy or angry this week?' She also emphasises close observation and attention. She takes into consideration the revisions made between students' first drafts and their final portfolios, when she's grading. She changes her readings every semester, but for the term during which we spoke, her reading list included Hong Kong writers, mainland Chinese writers, such as Su Tong (蘇童), Wang An Yi (王安憶), Yan Lianke (閻連科), and international writers, such as Mario Benedetti. Asked to reflect on how her students have changed in recent years, she gave three specific examples:

1. Over 90% of her students now write about social problems, such as suicides among young people or government policies, whereas in the past, students wrote more about personal relationships;
2. Students tend to write more speculative fiction, such as setting their stories in an alternative or fantastical world;
3. Students are using more Cantonese in their writing, especially for dialogues, whereas the narration generally remains written in literary Chinese.

3. Wong Leung-wo: 'fermentation of feelings'

Wong Leung-wo (王良和) is an associate professor in the Department of Literature and Cultural Studies at the Education University of Hong Kong (EdUHK). A prolific writer, Wong has received numerous literary awards, including the Hong Kong Arts Development Council's first award for literary arts. He has published over a dozen books of poetry, essays, and fiction, and he has co-edited a series of books on teaching literature in primary and secondary schools. During the late 1980s, Wong began teaching creative writing in secondary schools, and in 1996, he joined The Education University of Hong Kong (formally known as the Hong Kong Institute of Education), where he has taught creative writing for over two decades. In 1999, he formed the 'Passing the Torch Literary Society' (薪傳文社), a student literary organisation that he describes as having 'nurtured generations' of new writers in Hong Kong ('Dr Wong' 2016).

As for his own formation as a writer, Wong cited a secondary school teacher who encouraged him to submit his writing to a newspaper. As an undergraduate student, Wong took a creative writing course at CUHK in 1985. The course was taught by Yu Guangzhong (余光中), a Taiwanese poet, and Wong Wai-leung (黃維樑), a Hong Kong writer and scholar. Wong described his experience in the course this way:

Both professors would tell us to submit our works, and then we'd all discuss the works. They didn't look at the work of any famous writers. We were told to just write. There wasn't any topic or limit. It was the same every session. They didn't really have any teaching pedagogies. No theory. Just writing.

Wong's class 'Creative Writing' (文學創作) is a required course for students majoring in Education in Chinese, and it is an elective for another majors at EdUHK. Most of his students will become primary and secondary school teachers in Hong Kong, and the course is intended to make them more comfortable teaching language arts. The class seats up to forty-five students, meets for thirteen weeks (in one three-hour session per week), and is divided equally into three genres: poetry, prose (essay) and fiction. The final assignment is a poem, an essay and a short story. He does not use class time to workshop student writing. Rather, each week he conducts an in-class activity that illustrates a point about the writing process and he leads the class in a discussion of the assigned readings.

One activity is an observation exercise Wong does on the first day of class. He empties two large bags of different objects on a table, such as flowers in a vase, cans, small bronze statues, and other curiosities, and small groups of students take turns coming forward to observe the objects and describe them in writing. He doesn't explain what their observations should entail and he doesn't answer their questions directly [8]. At the end of the activity, Wong explains that good observation entails "sensual perception," so they should use all of their senses to experience an object and it's best if they pick an object in which they have a strong interest, as their close affinity with the object will help them to write a better passage. He describes this process as the 'fermentation of feelings,' in that one's feelings should brew or strengthen before writing. Wong's activity emphasises an emotion-centered approach to writing, one that privileges affect. Rather than framing observation as an objective or emotionally-neutral exercise, he encourages students to consider how an object can be charged with feeling, and how that can enhance one's own writing. Although Wong is not explicit about defamiliarisation, his teaching practices center on weekly activities that are dissimilar from the typical teaching methods of most university courses.

Instead of workshopping in class, he requires students to find peer reviewers to receive feedback on their writing outside of class time. They may have up to five peer reviewers and if they find the maximum, then their grade on an assignment can improve. He also advises them to keep their poems to fourteen lines or less, because he said they can't handle longer poems. He teaches mainly Hong Kong authors, although he includes poems by Rainer Maria Rilke and Jacques Prévert, and short stories by Ryūnosuke Akutagawa. When asked if his students write more speculative fiction these days, he responded by saying that they don't do so, because they know that their teacher prefers realism. Like Mary, he agrees that students are using more Cantonese in their writing, and he attributes the rise of Cantonese partly to 'localism'. Localism refers to 'a political movement centred on the defence of Hong Kong's identity and autonomy' in opposition to mainland China's rising influence (Kwong

2016: 68). Localism may account for the increase in Cantonese as way to signal Hong Kong identity, especially given that the number of Hong Kong people who identify as ‘Hong Kongers’ has ‘doubled since July 2012’ (Lao 2016).

Conclusion: self-expression as social critique

The three case studies above differ widely in terms of the instructors’ training, background, and experience, as well as in terms of the target students and course goals. Wong’s course, for instance, is intended to educate students who will teach language arts in Hong Kong secondary schools, whereas Mary’s course is for upper-level Chinese majors, and Hon’s course is for first-year Chinese majors. Yet based on a grounded analysis of their interview responses, their self-reported pedagogies demonstrate striking similarities in relation to the three conceptual models of creative writing workshops. The instructors follow mainly the model of apprenticeship to cultivate self-expression, and although they do not prioritise skills-based teaching, they include, to varying degrees, critiques of Hong Kong society in the form of their teaching practices. This social criticism is often not explicit, but is, rather, embedded in the perception of these courses as a reprieve from students’ traditional learning experiences, given the context of Hong Kong’s education system.

Despite their differences, the three instructors overlap in their pedagogies in various ways. For example, they:

- Assign at least three take-home writing assignments (Hon: 5; Mary: 3; Wong: 3)
- Generally do not provide written comments on students’ drafts;
- Generally do not prioritise revision;
- Have writing classes that are not genre specific (Hon allows students to pick their own genre; Mary teaches mainly fiction, although the master syllabus allows for other genres, such as essays, poetry, book reviews, film reviews, and cultural criticism; and Wong covers three genres equally: essay, poetry and fiction);
- Assemble their own reading materials, rather than use textbooks or anthologies;
- Teach works by primarily Chinese authors, including Hong Kong writers;
- Use experiential learning methods, such as mimicking a family member (Hon), thinking exercises (Mary) or an observation activity (Wong);
- Present their courses as different from typical Hong Kong courses, and they take care to create, as Hon puts it, a ‘special’ atmosphere in the classroom;
- Emphasise affect in their pedagogy: If you were an object, how would you feel? (Hon), How did you feel this week? (Mary), the fermentation of feelings (Wong).

The instructors regard self-expression as the primary goal of their writing workshops, as evidenced by their multiple creative writing assignments and the valuing of personal feelings in the writing process. The minor emphasis on revision suggests that the model of writing workshops as opportunities to teach creative writing as a skill for the workforce is not a priority among these instructors. It is also likely that the large class sizes for Mary and Wong make individual written comments onerous. Their practices do not frame creative writing as practical training for employment, in terms of the assignments or the instructors’ rhetoric. Even in the case of Wong’s class, which is intended for students who will become school teachers, his teaching strategy is to encourage students to think of themselves as potential authors by engaging in writing.

Although the instructors do not emphasise critical theory, social criticism is present in their pedagogy, albeit indirectly. First, the teaching of Hong Kong literature privileges Hong Kong writers in a way that is uncommon in primary and secondary schools, because their curriculum involves teaching mainly classical and modern Chinese writers and contemporary mainland Chinese and Taiwanese writers. The subject of Hong Kong Literature is offered only as an optional course within the elective called Chinese Literature, a noncompulsory concentration for secondary school students (Curriculum 2010: 4). In other words, the study of Hong Kong literature and even literature itself is optional in Hong Kong's secondary schools, and so, the instructors' use of local writers as literary models invites a reflection on Hong Kong identity and the role of power to define it. Second, the very encouragement of self-expression and the discourse of affect are an implicit social critique of the dominant practices in Hong Kong's secondary schools which prioritise the memorisation of model answers (McNaught 2011)^[9]. Third, the differentiation of creative writing courses from typical university courses and language arts education in secondary school implies a critique of the status quo in Hong Kong's education system, implicitly questioning its values. Defamiliarising strategies—such as playing meditative music, sitting in a circle, not using PowerPoint, leading large-scale in-class activities, and welcoming Cantonese in student writing—creates a space for alternative educational practices and a reprieve from conventional assessment measures (Zuba, 2016; Thomas, 2005)

Hong Kong's 'cultural and creative industries' continue to expand as an important source of employment, and it is likely that creative writing courses will remain popular with students ('Hong Kong' 2016)^[10]. These courses also reflect Hong Kong's recent turn toward the liberal arts. In 2012, Hong Kong's University Grants Committee (UGC), the governmental body that oversees Hong Kong's tertiary institutions, changed undergraduate education from a three-year to a four-year program with an emphasis on the liberal arts and general education courses. Undergraduate education in the United States was the 'explicit model for Hong Kong's liberal-education campaign' with the goal of promoting 'creative thinking' for the workforce (Wildavsky, 2015). Whereas the UGC may envision creative writing as a means for skills-based instruction for cultural and creative industries, the instructors in these case studies clearly value self-expression and, implicitly, social critique as pedagogical objectives. Framing creative writing as a skill with instrumentalist purposes may have profound consequences. B.B. Tye described what is lost due to the commodification of education:

First of all, it deprives young people of the feeling that what they are doing *now* is important. All the rewards seem to be somewhere in the future. Secondly, it deprives society of the understanding that learning has value in itself and not just as a saleable commodity (in Elliott and Phuong-Mai 2008: 42).

It remains to be seen whether creative writing pedagogy in Hong Kong will embrace an instrumentalist vision of 'creative thinking,' or if these courses may engender a new way of approaching university education in Hong Kong.

Endnotes

¹ Neih Hualing recalls being the first fiction writing teacher in Taiwan: 'In 1962, Mr Tai [Ching-lung] invited me in person to teach fiction writing at the Department of Chinese, National Taiwan University, where he was the Chair. It was the first program of its kind in Taiwan' (Neih, 2011: 237).

² For more background on English and Chinese creative writing programs in mainland China, see Dai, F 2015 'Teaching Creative Writing in English in the Chinese Context', *World Englishes*, 34: 247–259; Dai, F 2011 'Writing, Sharing and Growing: Creative Writing in English at a Mainland Chinese University', *TEXT Special issue: Creative writing in the Asia-Pacific Region* (April); and Jose, N 1 February 2015, 'Creative Writing in China', *The China Story*, Australian Centre on China in the World, The Australian National University, Canberra.

³ For more on the history and development of English-language creative writing pedagogy in Hong Kong, see Lim, SG 2001 'English-Language Creative Writing in Hong Kong: Colonial Stereotype and Process', *Pedagogy: Critical Approaches to Teaching Literature, Language, Composition, and Culture*, Vol. 1. No. 1: 178-184; Tay, E & E Leung 2011 'On Learning, Teaching and the Pursuit of Creative Writing in Singapore and Hong Kong', *New Writing: The International Journal for the Practice and Theory of Creative Writing*, Vol. 8, No. 2: 103-113; and Tay, E 2014 'Curriculum as Cultural Critique: Creative Writing Pedagogy in Hong Kong', D Disney (ed) *Exploring Second Language Creative Writing: Beyond Babel*, John Benjamins Publishing Company, Philadelphia, USA: 103-118.

⁴ Chinese-language publications on creative writing pedagogy in Hong Kong include Kwok's two books listed in the Endnotes.

⁵ Sample interview questions included: Did you ever take a creative writing class as a student? Who were your mentors as a young writer? Which writers and texts do you teach the most, and why? Do your students sit in a circle and critique each other's writing? How often does your class discuss (workshop) writing by the students? How has the creative writing by your students evolved, such as the content or style? What is the most important advice you give to creative writing students? What would you like to see changed in terms of creative writing pedagogy in Hong Kong? Note: The interviews with Hon Lai-chu (27 May 2015) and Mary Wong Shuk-han (12 May 2016) were conducted in English, and the interview with Wong Leung-wo (19 December 2016) was conducted in Cantonese. My Research Assistant, Nicolette Wong, interpreted our exchange and translated the transcript into English. All translations of Chinese-language materials in this publication were by my Research Assistant and validated by colleagues at Hong Kong Baptist University.

⁶ This article renders Chinese names with the family name first. To differentiate Mary Wong Shuk-han from Wong Leung-wo, however, I refer to Mary Wong Shuk-han by her English name, 'Mary.'

⁷ Hon's discussion questions for an assigned reading include the following: 'What do you think about this reading? What's your understanding of this reading? What do you think about the relationship between this reading and your own life?'

⁸ If a student asks, for example, if he or she may touch an object, Wong responds by saying, 'If you think observation includes touching, then it's up to you.'

⁹ Some university teachers in Hong Kong report that their students are not accustomed to expressing their own opinions: 'Students who grow up in Hong Kong, however, are generally frightened as they are so used to having model answers given to them in their secondary school training' (Lo, quoted in McNaught 2012: 2).

¹⁰ Although 'cultural and creative industries' (CCI) do not constitute a large share of Hong Kong's Gross Domestic Product, they are an expanding part of Hong Kong's future: 'During 2005 to 2014, the value added of CCI in nominal terms increased at an average annual rate of 8.6%, significantly faster than the average annual growth rate of the nominal GDP of Hong Kong, at 5.4%' ('Census' 2016).

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