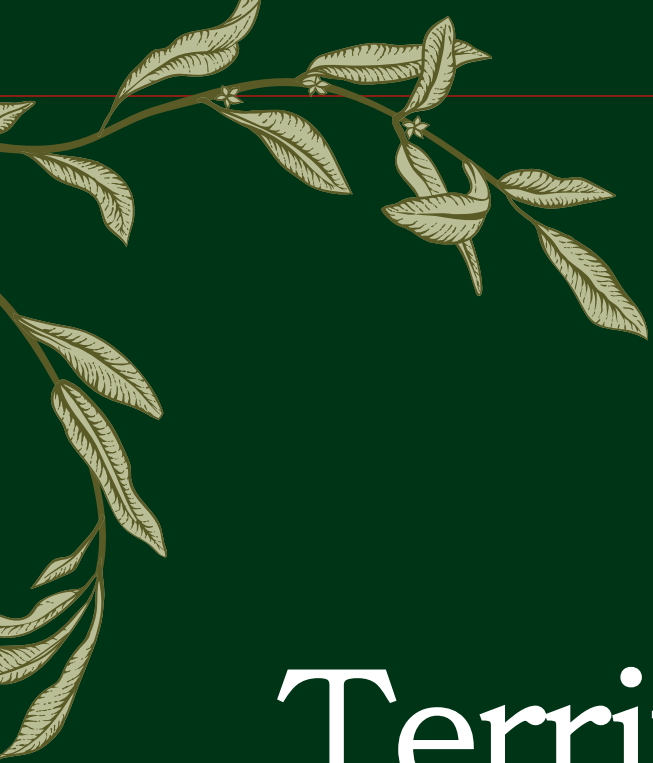


Creative Nonfiction as Joy & Resistance

with Kessey Jemmott & Kyle McKillop





Territory acknowledgement



Files & Slides

<https://tinyurl.com/BCTELACNF>



Shape of the day

- Connecting
- Definitions
- Stations
- Debrief & reflection



Connecting

1. Use your handout to hold thinking
2. Introduce yourself to someone

The background is a dark green color. In the top left corner, there is a branch with several leaves. In the top right corner, there is a small red asterisk-like symbol. On the right side, there are two large, detailed flowers: one is a large, multi-petaled pink flower, and the other is a smaller, more delicate pink flower above it. Below these, there is a stem with small white flowers and a large, heart-shaped leaf. In the bottom right corner, there is a large, detailed leaf.

Creative Nonfiction

What do you already know? What is it? How does it work?

Think/pair/share on the whiteboard.

Definitions

"True stories well told."
—*Creative Nonfiction* magazine

Creative Nonfiction Collective:

“Characteristic of creative nonfiction is a personal, identifiable voice. The writer is usually quite present in the text. Works of creative nonfiction include – but are not limited to – memoirs, biography, historical investigation, literary journalism, political commentary, social or cultural criticism, and essays that are personal or lyric or narrative.”

Creative Nonfiction on the boundaries of the form:

“The words “creative” and “nonfiction” describe the form. The word “creative” refers to the use of literary craft, the techniques writers use to tell stories about real people and events—that’s the “nonfiction” part—in a compelling, vivid, dramatic manner.”

The Traits of CNF



#1 CNF is transgressive



- Can decolonize scholarship by humanizing the writing and research
- Opens up what can be said about a subject, valuing lived experience & new perspectives

#2 CNF is joyful



- Brings the reader inside the experience
- Lets the reader follow their own line of emotional and intellectual inquiry

#3 CNF uses poetic devices & drama



- Intensifies language
- Projects images into the reader's mind
- Storytells & entertains

#4 CNF tells the truth(ish)



- Tells as close to the truth as it can
- Where it can't be sure of the exact details, CNF recreates them as best it can

#5 CNF is inquiry



- Lets lived experience become the research
- Can also incorporate conventional research

#6 CNF is elastic



- CNF forms stretch
- A CNF piece is not necessarily one thing but can stretch toward another
- The words find the form—the intent may differ from result

#7 CNF is persuasive



- Understanding comes through pathos
- Centres other ways of knowing

How does this look
in class?



How do we teach this?

Share different forms & see what happens!

Sequencing

Start with topic

Choose topic, research, introduce forms, generate, pluck out narrative strands, write, revise, publish

Start with genre

Introduce forms, choose topic, research, generate, write, revise, publish

Modes of Research

Journalling

Freewrites

Prompts

Interviews

Reading

Viewing

Listening

Scholarly
reading

Etc.

Merging the personal & research

- Start with the personal and find the larger theme, or
 - Start with the larger theme and find the personal within
-
- Graphic organizers can help kids plan these
 - Choose the right access point for your students



CNF Forms



Personal essay

Robert Lee Brewer:

“a piece of nonfiction writing that shares an interesting, thought-provoking, entertaining, and/or humorous story for readers that is drawn from the writer’s personal experiences (even if it’s second-hand information)”

Examples:

- Kyle's "[Wasp](#)“
- Tim Bascom’s [Picturing the Personal Essay](#)

Lyric essay

Dave Hood:

“The lyrical essay is a type of personal essay that combines both prose and poetry. It is often crafted like a prose poem. The writer uses a series of images or ideas, not narrative or argument, to craft the essay. The image can be of a person, place, thing, or object. The idea can be anything. The writer attempts to recreate the experience and evoke emotion in the reader by using sensory details, description that expresses what the writer sees, hears, smells, tastes, touches, and feels.”

Examples:

- See following slides

Collage Essay

A set of images and narrative fragments spliced into a larger combined form, the new work emerging from many little pieces. These pieces are not directly linked, with connections instead implied thematically. The title is often a key that unlocks the rest of the essay.

Examples:

- Kessey's "A Crack at Light"
- Christina Tang-Bernas' "in-
glish"
- Brenda Miller's "Typos"

Braided Essay

Braided essays are strands of thought woven together to make something grand and unified. The separate sections show up more than once, the way a strand of hair dives into the stream of the braid and then resurfaces.

Examples:

- Kessey's "The Wake"
- Alicia Elliott's "[A Mind Spread Out on the Ground](#)"
- Donovan Vincent's "[16-hour video game binges almost ruined Calgary teen's life](#)"
- John-Michael Schneider's "[When I Was 11, My Dad Killed My Mom](#)"

Hermit Crab Essay

Brenda Miller:

"Hermit crab essays adopt already existing forms as the container for the writing at hand, such as the essay in the form of a “to-do” list, or a field guide, or a recipe.

Hermit crabs are creatures born without their own shells to protect them; they need to find empty shells to inhabit"

Examples:

- Kessey's "Google Directions for the Times Colonist Book Sale"
- Brenda Miller's "[The Shared Space Between Reader and Writer](#)"
- Gwendolyn Wallace's "[Math 1619](#)"
- Dinty Moore's "[Mr. Plimpton's Revenge](#)"

And more!

personal
narrative

visual
essay

prose
poem

metissage

Stations

- Choose 2 of 4 stations
- 10 minutes per station
- Skim & consider the guiding questions
- Talk with group as needed
- Debrief to follow





Debrief & Reflect

Thank you!

Reflection time:

- What went well in this process for you?
- What do you want to spend more time learning before you try it in class?
- Who will help you on this journey?

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