

# Building a Framework for Creative Peer Critique

Lania Knight, PhD  
Senior Lecturer, Creative Writing  
School of Education and Humanities



## Vision

**How do we create a framework so students engage with peer critique in meaningful, constructive ways?**

Let's begin  
with the  
Creative  
Writing  
Workshop







**Students learn to practice peer critique in a Creative Writing Workshop through enquiry-based learning.**

I give a range of questions to my students when preparing for workshop.







Asking  
Questions

I ask my students: What are your **initial observations**?

What is this story **about**? What questions does the **opening** bring to mind? Do you want to **read on**? How does the **formatting** look? Does it **follow guidelines**?



## Asking Questions

I ask: Can you describe **how the story is told?**

How would you describe the use of language? Does the story **flow naturally?**



## Asking Questions

I ask: Can you describe **your response** to the story?

Did you get so **caught up in the story** that you **lost sight** of the fact that you were reading? Can you go back and **pinpoint where** in the story that happened for you?



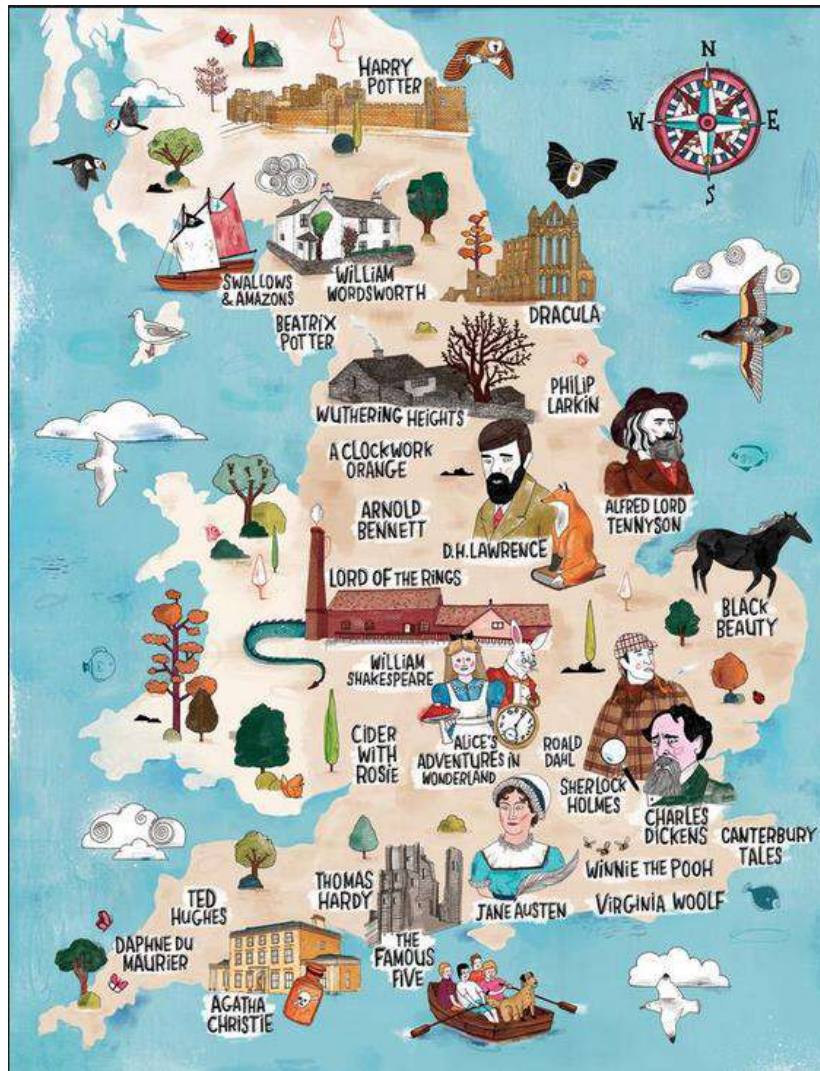


Asking  
Questions

## I ask: Can you describe the use of **tools of the craft?**

Does the story make use of **sensory details**? Is there any use of **interiority**, or **interior monologue**? How would you describe the ratio of **showing to telling**? What is your sense of **characterization**? Briefly describe the **character arc**, the **narrative arc**.

## Asking Questions



## I ask: Can you make connections?

Does the story remind you of **anything else you've read**? Do you have any suggestions for **books or short stories** the student might want to read?



Asking  
Questions

## I ask: Can you take meaning from the story?

If this story is **arguing** something about **the way the world works**, what is that argument? If this story is arguing for some kind of **change in the world**, what is that change?



How can **your students** apply questions from Creative Writing Workshop for peer critique?

---





**initial observations**  
**how the story is told**  
**their response**  
**tools of the craft**  
**connections**  
**meaning**



Applying the  
questions



What are their  
**initial**  
**observations?**



Applying the  
questions



**Initial Observations**  
acknowledge that the  
student-critic has  
**engaged** with the  
work to be critiqued.





Can the student-critic describe  
**‘how the story is told’?**



Applying the  
questions

**Describing  
'how the story is  
told' or  
the media it relies  
on defines the  
mode and the  
parameters of the  
project.**







**Their response:**  
**what did the**  
**student-critic**  
**feel?**



Applying the  
questions

**Conveying how  
the work  
made the student-  
critic feel  
helps the student-  
artist understand  
how well they've  
carried out their  
intentions.**





What **tools of the craft** were used?



Applying the  
questions



Pointing out **tools of the craft** helps the student-critic and student-artist become familiar with terminology from the discipline and how to use it appropriately.





What **connections** are there between **this and other work** already produced?



Applying the questions



Seeing **connections** between the **student-artist's work and other creative work** in the same discipline helps the student-critic and the artist see how the work is **part of a larger conversation.**







What **meaning** or **message** can be taken from the student-artist's work?



Applying the questions

Identification of the **meaning** or **themes** within a work-in-progress by the student-critic can help the student-artist see what they might be **arguing for or against** in their creative work.





Given tools for peer critique, students will begin to see creative work with new eyes.



# Additional Resources

- Gray, C. (2013) 'Informal peer critique and the negotiation of habitus in a design studio'. *Art, Design & Communication in Higher Education*. 195-209.
- Hastings, D. (2017) ' "With grace under pressure": How critique as signature pedagogy fosters effective music performance'. *Arts & Humanities in Higher Education*. 252-265.
- Heinert, J. (2017) 'Peer critique as a signature pedagogy in writing studies'. *Arts & Humanities in Higher Education*. 293-304.
- Schrand, C. and Eliason J. (2012) 'Feedback practices and signature pedagogies: what can the liberal arts learn from the design critique?' *Teaching in Higher Education*. Routledge: London: 51-62.
- Stukenberg, J. (2017) 'Deep habits: Workshop as critique in creative writing'. *Arts & Humanities in Higher Education*. 277-292.



Contact me for further ideas and conversation about peer critique and enquiry-based teaching.

Dr Lania Knight  
[lknight2@glos.ac.uk](mailto:lknight2@glos.ac.uk)