A PROFESSIONAL SONGWRITER'S APPROACH TO WRITING

A Dissertation

by

REGINA CHANEL RODRIGUEZ

BA, University of Missouri-Kansas City, 2004
MA, University of Missouri-Kansas City, 2008

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi
Corpus Christi, Texas

May 2014

A PROFESSIONAL SONGWRITER'S APPROACH TO WRITING

A Dissertation

by

REGINA CHANEL RODRIGUEZ

This dissertation meets the standards for scope and quality of
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi and is hereby approved.

Bryant Griffith, PhD
Chair

Catherine Quick, PhD
Committee Member

Robert Bowden, PhD
Committee Member

Matthew McClung, DMA
Graduate Faculty Representative

JoAnn Canales, PhD
Dean, College of Graduate Studies

May 2014

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between songwriting, creative risk-taking, and critical thinking from the perspective of a single songwriter. This relationship has been examined throughout academic literature and the commonalities among the studies suggest songwriting contains elements applicable to learning how to write.

These elements include finding voice, taking creative risks, and thinking critically. Researchers in a variety of fields have individually analyzed these elements, but studies focusing on the entire process of writing a song were difficult to locate. Songwriting curriculum connected to English Language Arts standards is also currently available for schools to utilize, some of which has been analyzed by researchers in the education field. After reviewing the literature, a gap was found in terms of synthesizing the elements of songwriting (listed above) and understanding how those learning those elements could improve writing skills and transfer those skills to other genres of writing.

This qualitative study utilized arts-based educational research as a substantive framework and ethnodrama as a methodological framework and was guided by the following research questions: (1) How does the participant describe the process of songwriting? (2) In what ways does the participant use creative risk-taking in his songwriting? (3) In what ways does the participant's process of songwriting reflect critical thinking? Data was collected through interviews, observations, and documents and was then coded, categorized, and themed.

Four themes emerged from the analysis (a) I Do, I Do Understand You, (b) Take a Chance on Me 'Cause without that, Risk Ain't Nothing', (c) R-E-S-P-E-C-T My Comfort and

Privacy, and (d) Think, Think about the Critical in the Creativity. Splices of dialogue were combined with the song-title themes to create an ethnodrama to artistically demonstrate how the findings about process, creative risk-taking, and critical thinking interacted and how they applied to an education setting.

Implications include the need for educators to create a comfortable writing environment for their students, for educators to build trust in the classroom by sharing and facing their own insecurities about writing, to expand the concept of writer's workshop and the Flower and Hayes Cognitive Model.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my ever-loving, supportive husband, Saul Rodriguez, whose you-need-to-write-tonights helped push me through to the end, our ornery, bright toddler Thiago Aurelius Rodriguez, our newborn baby girl, Seraphina Adele Rodriguez, and my always encouraging, set-the-bar-high-from-day-one parents, Nanette and Timothy Burge. I also dedicate this dissertation to my students, past, present, and future, for teaching me there is always room to grow, and with a little nudging, you never know just how far you can go.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A special thanks to Lucinda Juarez and Lucinda Sohn, my "writing cohort" for all the mornings, afternoons, and evenings of "doc talk" that talked me out of the I-don't-know-what-I'm-doing zone. Without you, I never would have made it through this grueling process.

To Andy Gibson and family for opening up their home, the lives, and their talents to me. Your gift is truly inspiring.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Subjectivity

SONGWRITER: I'm gonna show you how I made those lines work, and then I'm gonna go into the chorus.

> *The clock strikes 12 and she's nowhere to be seen.*
> *There's a rough crowd and they're lookin' pretty mean*
> *Maybe I just imagined it,*
> *Maybe it was all a dream*
> *How could I ever think she could be a sure thing?*

> *Two beers later, I asked her to dance,*
> *Thinkin' how could a guy like me ever stand a chance*

SONGWRITER: You've got a beat problem.

TEACHER: Ha, It's too long, it's too long.

SONGWRITER: Hear that? Ok, so it needs to be cut down a little bit.

> *Two beers later I asked her to dance,*
> *Thinkin' how could I ever stand a chance?*
> *Her eyes glistened as she smiled*
> *"Yes," she whispered in my ear,*
> *And we two-stepped for a while.*
> *Yeah, she's a sure thing.*

SONGWRITER: See, I get it back in there. Now the chorus.

> *She's a bombshell, blue-eyed country queen*

SONGWRITER: I'll give it a little more space.

> *She's got that swag in her walk, if you know what I mean*
> *Yeah, She can have ev'ry man she wants, but she only wants me*
> *Just like the sun risin' every morning*

We're a sure thing

SONGWRITER: That's kind of what I have in mind. So, what your challenge would be in the next two verses to match that meter up again. Let's go to that second verse.

A cowboy in the crowd was getting' kind jealous
Itchin' for a fight, he gathered up his fellas

Already we're getting' a little out of meter. That's kind of the challenge as a writer is making that meter match verse for verse. I'm not gonna ask your students to count out the meter in each line. That gets kind of boring.   But I will tell you this…when I get a stack of lyrics that come in front of me, I'll pick out about six songs that I put a melody to. The ones that are in meter and falling into place, I jump on because my job's a lot easier.

***

TEACHER: I don't have the gift to just pick up a guitar and put music to the lyrics. I can play the guitar a little bit, but I can't just pick one up and come up with songs. Usually, I write narratives stories. It's cool to see that you can dabble in other genres and with a little bit of collaboration, you can really make something. You picked up on the way I wanted this song to sound without me even telling you anything.

SONGWRITER: You know, you taught me something there. It's true. The words can reach out across the miles and get your point across.

The above script is snippets of a conversation I had with a songwriter in the *Words & Music Program* in fall of 2012 during a teacher training to prepare me to teach a unit on songwriting (something I was *very* unfamiliar with). During this conversation, I realized what a valuable tool songwriting could be in terms of teaching writing because songwriting takes a

tremendous amount of confidence since is typically written for a listening audience. The ultimate goal of this genre of writing is to share with others what you have written. Because of this sharing aspect, songwriting strikingly different from the writing students have to do in class. Most writing assignments I have given stay inside the classroom between me and the writer, and maybe the writer's peers. Quality pieces are hung on a bulletin board to "show-off" a writer's skill, but students passing by seldom stop to read the entire piece. My students have put their writing in state-wide and nation-wide contests, but even those contests have an audience that is limited to just a few people, a set of judges the students will never meet or discuss their writing with. In songwriting, there is a great need for the writer to understand the audience's ideals and experiences so the song can be relatable to a wide scope of people.

A major aspect of songwriting is being able to connect to an audience. One of my students asked the songwriter her class met with if he listened to other people's music to help him come up with new ideas to write about. He responded that while he liked listening to other music, he didn't use that as a form of inspiration. Instead, he tried to think of songs that could be written from another person's perspective because he didn't just want to write about his life over and over.

The fact that the students' writing would be shared with someone outside the classroom seemed to affect another area of writing, reflection. Getting students to revise their work had been a very strenuous task in the past, but with the songwriting unit, the revision came much more naturally. Perhaps because they knew their writing would be shared with a professional? The refinement of ideas was apparent in all their works and during peer-editing, the student writers questioned their peer audience to make sure the message was clear. Below is an example

of a portion of one student's song that was submitted for a professional songwriter to put a melody to.

> *Confusion, illusion. October, you're full of tricks and treats*
> *Please let him stay, if he's really what I need*
> *Because like the fall breeze, you always let them roam away*
> *But I want him like no other. Please, make him stay*
> *October, October, you brought along this love again*
> *And I just don't want to be left luckless*
>
> *October, October, Why did you do this to me?*
> *You bring along love as if it's something I need*
> *Well, October, never seemed to be my month*
> *Full of many wishes, just never any luck*

Later, that student's song, along with five other student's songs, was submitted to the 2013 Scholastic Art and Writing Awards competition where all of the songs received either Honorable Mention or a Silver Key Award in the Southwest Region-at-Large that included: Texas, Arkansas, New Mexico, and Louisiana. Out of 210,000 pieces submitted to the contest nationwide, only 40% received recognition. The statistics sound impressive, but the even better was the fact that several of my students who won an award had never previously considered themselves "writers." Their songwriting experience opened up a whole new realm.

I share these experiences from my own classroom to show the attitude I have developed about songwriting as a result of collaborating with a songwriter. In my seven years of teaching, I have only done a songwriting unit once, and never have I seen such tremendous growth in writing in such a short time period. As with great writing, songwriting's essential purpose is to connect the writer with the audience, requiring and intense amount of revision and focus on the central message. Songwriting requires an intense amount of revision and focus on a central message, both assets of great writing.   My study is written through the lens of someone who is

impressed with songwriting and the skills a songwriter must have, skills I want my students to develop and transfer to other genres of writing. And I wonder what tools, what tools and transferrable writing skills a professional songwriter uses that would enhance writing curriculums.

Background and Context

In America, concern for the quality of student writing dates back to 1872 when President Charles N. Eliot suggested Harvard develop a first-year writing program (Schoenburger, 1997) after more than half of the applicants failed the writing portion of the admission exam (Nagin, 2006). Technology, such as the fountain pen (1850), the telegram (1864), and typewriter (1868) made writing more efficient and pushed it into new settings (Clark, 2012). The opinion that student writing needs improvement has only heightened over the years.

In 2001, University of California President, Richard C. Atkinson announced his recommendation that the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) be dropped because it "distorted education priorities and practices" (The Associated Press, 2001, p. 1), particularly because there was no writing section (Haas, 2006). In 2002, College Board, the organization that makes the SAT, responded by forming the National Commission on Writing in America's Schools and Colleges (National 2002). By April of 2003, the Commission had issued a report, *The Neglected "R": The Need for a Writing Revolution,* claiming writing was the most ignored of the educational subjects cliché "reading, writing, and arithmetic."

Among its many suggestions, *The Neglected "R": The Need for a Writing Revolution,* the national agenda proposed that states make sure their standards include a writing curriculum, teach writing across the curriculum, require that all pre-service teachers should be required to

learn how to teach writing, double the time spent on writing, and assess writing beyond multiple choice. The report also issued a challenge suggesting that teachers and professionals, not just English teachers, needed to come together to develop common expectations for writers. After all, the reason for forming this commission in the first place was not only that the SAT was going to add a writing assessment in 2005, but also that there was a "growing concern within the education, business, and policy-making communities that the level of writing in the United States is not what it should be" (National Commission, 2003, p. 7). The Commission went on to say there was a lot of excellent work being done in writing, but there was still an impressive amount of work to be done. Nine years after the release of the Commission's report, standardized writing assessment scores and the verbiage of the Common Core State Standard's indicate student-produced writing and writing curriculum are still a concern for educators.

In 2012, the percentage of students earning passing scores on state writing scores was less than half. After drastic scoring changes on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) that focused on near-perfect proper spelling, punctuation, and grammar in addition to development of supporting details, only 27% of Fourth Graders earned a passing score (Solochek, 2012). The Texas Education Agency implemented the new State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR) exams in spring of 2012, along with a requirement that, beginning with the Class of 2015, all high school students must pass two writing exams in order to earn a diploma. English students in the state of Texas must master the expository and persuasive genres, and analytical short answer and be able to demonstrate their mastery of those genres in 10-26 lines. The first set of scores released in June of 2012 revealed that 64% of English I students statewide failed the exam (Heinauer & Taboada, 2012). These

standardized writing assessments measuring a limited set of writing skills may indicate how well a student writes to specific requirements in a timed setting. Recent changes in standardized test respond to suggestions in *The Neglected "R": The Need for a Writing Revolution*; However while standardized assessments have moved beyond multiple choice, writing expectations of educators, policy-makers, and business communities still have not been met.

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) were formed to push curriculum to meet the needs of those communities. One of the chief concerns for those involved in the creation of the CCSS, the national curriculum adopted by forty-five states, four territories, the District of Columbia, and the Department of Defense Education Activity, was student literacy rates (Common Core Standard's Initiative, 2012d). Students entering college and the workforce are/have been coming in unprepared for the increasingly complex texts they must read and understand, as well as the increasing complexity of composition tasks they are being asked to write (Common Core Standard's Initiative, 2012a).

Of the three main sections in the CCSS curriculum, two focus on literacy: English Language Arts (ELA) and literacy in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects (2012b & 2012c). The ELA writing subsection is designed to develop student writing skills beginning in Kindergarten and cultivate them throughout the primary and secondary grades to prepare students for college coursework or the global workforce (Common Core State Standard's Initiative, 2012a). For writing, the general goal set forth by the Common Core Standards is to produce students who understand the structure of a variety of genres and write in those genres in a way that effectively conveys purpose to the intended audiences.

While writing curriculum has evolved since the Harvard's revelation 1872, the workforce and higher education communities still feel high school students are not prepared for the variety of complex writing tasks they will face after graduation. Educators, especially composition teachers, need to be aware, not only of what the CCSS entail, but also what kind of composition instruction student writers need to meet the demands of the CCSS and 21st century literacies.

Rationale

An analysis of the CCSS English Language Arts writing standards reveals they are described in broad terms and are representative of traditional values and conventions in composition. Berlin (1987) characterized current traditional rhetoric as

> The writing class is to focus on discourse that deals with the rational faculties: description and narration…exposition…and argument…Current traditional rhetoric thus teaches the modes of discourse with a special emphasis on exposition and its forms—analysis, classification, cause-effect and so forth….The writer must take pains that language not distort what is to be communicated. Language must be precise….Finally, since language is to demonstrate the individual's qualifications as a reputable observer worthy of attention, it must conform to certain standards of usage thereby demonstrating appropriate class affiliation. (p. 8).

In the CCSS, four sub-sections of writing are defined for each K-12 grade level: *Text Types and Purposes; Products and Distribution of Writing; Research to Build and Present Knowledge; and Range of Writing* (Common Core Standards Initiative, 2012b). All four of the subsections mimic the traditional values of academic writing. For example, in 8th Grade writing, under the subheading of *Text Types and Purposes*, students are expected to compose three different types

8

of texts: argument, informative/explanatory, and narrative. The non-fiction compositions focus on introductions, diction, formal style, support/evidence, using transitions, and writing a concluding statement. The narrative composition focuses on engaging the reader, using narrative techniques, using punctuation and format techniques to signal the reader, using descriptive details, and providing a conclusion that "reflects on narrated experiences or event" (Common Core Standards Initiative, 2012b). In the CCSS writing objectives, the academic-oriented compositions make up the majority of the standards.

Although the CCSS writing objectives outline writing "products" a student should be able to create at each grade level, they do not mention much in the way of how a student should go about producing that writing product. Processes to produce writing products are vaguely mentioned as "trying a new approach" in the standards for grades 9-10 and 11-12 and "Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting…focusing on purpose and audience" in all of the grade levels (Core Standards Initiative, 2012b). The CCSS curriculum simply states *what* the students should be able to write. It does not explicitly dictate *how* the students will get to there. This is left up to the individual teacher.

Teachers can pull from a mix of composition theories regarding experimental writing, expressivism, and transfer to create a solid framework that will aid in understanding how to teach a student to write effectively in both the traditional academic genre and the more creative genres. The academic genre requires the author of the text to write from an objective standpoint free of biases (American Psychological Association, 2009). In academic prose, a writer must move beyond an ego-centric perspective, where the writer is the focus, to write for the intended audience (Flower, 1979). For novice writers, this cognitive abstractedness is difficult to achieve

9

(Flowers, 1979) because writing is tied to self-awareness and can be an extension of one's self (Antoniou & Moriarty, 2008). Traditional academic writing is bound by a long list of rules (Berlin, 1987) that can impede the writer from achieving the final polished product as well as prevent the writer from demonstrating writing capabilities because the writer becomes overly concerned with following the rules (Rose, 1980). The limited word economy of academic prose prevents students from connecting writing with their personal lives an inhibits self-expression (Sullivan, 2012).

Advocates of expressivism, Peter Elbow, Donald Stewart, Walker Gibson, and Ken Macrorie, argued that because academic writing pedagogy had such an intense focus on grammar and mechanics, the writing produced was voiceless (Bowden, 2012). Expressivism is the concept of voice as "what most people have in their speech but lack in their writing—namely a sound or texture—the sound of 'them'" (Elbow as cited in Bowden, 2012). Voice is gained by as the writer learns to trust himself/herself (Bowden, 2012). For academic writing to become more than just a structural checklist, writing curriculum should teach expressive writing alongside the traditional (Sullivan, 2012).

There are several benefits of including expressivism pedagogies in the curriculum. Elbow (1987) argues that allowing students to write without an audience, without proper grammar and punctuation, and without a concern for academic language during the early phases of the writing process encourages students to find what message they want to convey by using their own voice. As the student moves through the process of composing an academic paper, the student will transfer to an objective perspective but will still maintain a unique voice (Elbow, 1987). Expressivists believe students should focus on process rather than product, and that

informal writings such as journals, e-mails, notes, and false starts contain valuable information that will help build up to the final product (Sirc, 2002). If students focus only on a fixed set of conventions for a single discourse community, they will not be able to transfer their writing skills (Boone, Biggs Chaney, Compton, Donahue & Gocsik, 2012).

A broad approach to academic writing must be adopted for students to transfer their writing to other contexts and courses (Antoniou & Moriarty, 2008). Researchers have evaluated the transfer of writing skills emphasized in freshmen composition and found that context, the ability to reflect, as well as to find abstract relations all play a key role in whether or not knowledge will transfer to new situations (Wardle, 2012).   Disposition and self-efficacy are also essential to transfer (Wardle, 2012 & Driscoll & Wells, 2012). According to Driscoll & Wells (2012), the more motivated a student is to complete a writing assignment and the more confidence the writer has in his/her ability, the more likely writing skills will transfer. A high sense of self-efficacy allowed students to dissect a writing prompt or assignment in order to devise a plan for completing the assignment. These students were able to think about how to apply the writing skills learned in other genres or classes to the task at hand.

Self-efficacy can be developed through creative writing approaches. Antoniou & Moriaty (2008), reflect on teaching creative writing to undergraduates and how their processes serve as a model for supporting writing in academia. Freewrites that do not restrict the student's voice and critiquing their peer's writing are dominating processes in the class. The key in critiquing is to give suggestions for growth during the next editing and revising stage. The approaches used to teach creative writing such as social support and critique, exploration of

values and beliefs, and establishing a "safe-place" for writers can be used to get students to write more effectively in the traditional academic form

A possible solution to broadening approaches to writing through songwriting. Past studies show songwriting as an intense form of creative writing that encompasses all of the elements needed to succeed in traditional academic writing. Songwriting allows students to express themselves and capture their unique voice all while gaining confidence in themselves and confidence as writers (Taylor, 2004). Songwriters must consider a large audience and how your voice and experiences relate to that audience (Country Music Hall of Fame, 2009a). When composing songs, a writer also has to go through a complex process of moving from a moment of inspiration to writing a complete song that involves cognition, revising, reflecting, and free-writing (Country Music Hall of Fame, 2009a & Stephenson, 2001). These components of songwriting are valuable for teaching academic writing. They are present in the literature, but each component has not been analyzed in-depth.

Isolated values of songwriting have been explored, and studies covering the value of songwriting in a therapeutic setting are rich (Jones, 2005). There is still much more material that can be uncovered about songwriting. Devoss and Webb (2008) argue that writing scholars can work with artists who use digital technologies, such as remixing and audio recording, to discover new methods to be incorporated into writing pedagogy. Sanchez (2010), a teacher in a Midwest urban district, found that African American students in her class were able to meet the basic requirements of academic writing by analyzing the rhetoric of hip hop lyrics. Stephenson (2010) found that students participating in songwriting curriculum gained self-confidence while

covering important components of the English Language Arts curriculum. These isolated values of songwriting have been explored, but not examined in-depth.

The researcher is aware that other studies regarding the analysis of professional songwriters may have been conducted, but they are not widely known to those outside the realm of those interested in songwriting. Songwriting has proven it can give students a voice, provide a space for creative risk-taking, and evoke critical thinking and understanding; all while teaching key components of curriculum. Studies have focused on pieces of songwriting, but there has not been a holistic view of the songwriting process in relation to composition and rhetoric. More information is needed to evaluate if this form of creative writing can be used to effectively teach other genres of writing, namely traditional academic text. Writing pedagogy will benefit from a larger pool of knowledge on the processes or methods involved in writing songs. Therefore, there is a need to uncover specific processes used by songwriters.

Research Purpose and Questions

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between songwriting, creative risk-taking, and critical thinking from the perspective of a professional songwriter residing in Nashville, TN.

1. How does the participant describe the process of songwriting?
2. In what ways does the participant use creative risk-taking in his songwriting?
3. In what ways does the participant's process of songwriting reflect critical thinking?

Operational Definitions

- Songwriting is defined as writing the words and music of songs (Songwriting, n.d).

- Creative Risk-Taking is defined as a willingness to step outside the comfort zone in order to develop something innovative (Tervooren, 2011).

- Professional songwriter is defined as one who writes and sells songs to earn the majority of his/her income.

- Critical thinking is defined as higher-order judgment derived from interpretation, analysis, evaluation, inference, and contextual consideration (Astleitner, 2002).

Methodological Framework

Arts-Based Educational Research

The central objective of education research is to elevate understanding (Eisner, 1998c). Barone and Eisner argue that arts-based educational research magnifies social experiences to improve "educational policy and practice" by appreciating a variety of perspectives. By pointing out what is commonly supposed, arts-based research offers a means to expand discussions about educational policy and practice (2006). In arts-based research design elements are used to create a form of art, whether it be short stories, theatre, poetry, or visual pieces (Barone & Eisner, 2006) to "concentrate[s] and enlarge[s] an immediate experience (Dewey, 1934, p. 285). The work of art becomes a materialization of thought (Dewey, 1934) that can aesthetically persuade the viewer to see educational experiences through a fresh lens. By providing a fresh outlook to conversations in education, arts-based research serves as a vehicle to discern what is meaningful in schools (Eisner, 2002).

Arts as a Way of Knowing. Eisner states, humans can often find themselves "at a loss for words," unable to express what they mean linguistically because cognition is not limited to only words (Eisner, 1998a). Representation of thought can take a variety of forms: poetry,

sculpture, song, etc. that help shape meaning. Even in statistics, a representation of the data can clarify a thought and make it much more understandable than a paragraph full of effect sizes, statistical significance, and means. For example, outliers are not necessarily clear when they are mixed into to a cluster of other numbers, but when they are plotted on a scatter plot, they become much more visible (Eisner, 1998b). Art as a way of knowing is essentially different from an academic way of knowing (Gardner, 2011), but allows people to use their imagination to fill in the gap between what is directly stated and meaning that lies beyond (Eisner, 2002). "We are able to convey through analogy, prosody, innuendo, and metaphor what escapes the precision of literal language (Langer 1957). Art as a way of knowing encourages people to internalize new knowledge, to explore how their own personal experiences connect to it, (Green 1995) which aids in a deeper understanding of material (Hunt, 2012). Allowing opportunity for imagination creates a playground for new ideas to be tested, to fail, to be re-thought (Eisner, 2002).

Representation and Editing in Art. A common theme in Eisner's discussion of making art is that there are multiple cognitive processes required to create: inscribing, communicating, and representing. When an idea is represented, whether through song, poetry, fiction, dance, etc., the idea becomes concrete and can open up a metaphorical dialogue between the creator and the created. In other words, the idea can be edited so the meaning and message become refined (2002, 1998a). This refined creation becomes a contribution to society, a shared experience (Eisner, 2002).

In this study, writing will be examined through the lens of arts-based education because the reality of songs is they are more than just words on a page. Songs are a form of

representation. Songwriting provides a way for writing to become a meaningful, shared experience of creation.

Methodology

Qualitative Inquiry

This study will use a qualitative research design to gain an understanding of how a professional songwriter writes music and lyrics to create a complete song as well as the role revision plays in his songwriting process. Qualitative research will aid in understanding because the participant's creation process is unknown. Although existing composition theories will be discussed in Chapter 2, the aim of this study is not to mold the participant's writing methods into existing theories, but rather to discover how the participant creates his own texts. Because the goal of qualitative research is to "achieve an understanding of how people make sense of their lives, to delineate the process of meaning making, and to describe how people interpret what they experience" (Merriam & Simpson, 2000, p. 98), this approach suits the task of comprehending the process of a professional songwriter. This inductive process will be followed to "build up" the participant's process rather than use a theory to break it apart (Creswell, 2007).

Arts-Based Research

There is a variety of forms used in ABER, the most common one being narrative construction or narrative analysis (Barone & Eisner, 2006). Narrative inquiry pulls data from interviews, observations, and descriptions of events; synthesizes evidence from those multiple sources of data; and creates a story (Barone & Eisner, 2006). To qualify as a "story" in literature, the events described in the text must contain a plot that is usually driven by some type of conflict. Researchers reconstruct the story of participants in a study and use plot elements to

"enhance meaning as portions of the world are construed, organized, and disclosed" (Barone & Eisner, 2006, p. 100). Even though narrative analysis is the oldest and most commonly used form of ABER, other literary forms are common in the field today, including, but not limited to: poetry, the novel, the short story, auto-biography, reader's theatre, and ethnodrama (Barone & Eisner, 2006).

During the creative process, the participant might not use words to describe what he is doing, particularly when it comes to writing music with the lyrics. A "bah, duh, duh, duh, duh" or tapping on the guitar means little when to the reader when simply written on a page, but when the words are performed, the audience is able to make meaning of the words and recognize them as a beat. These language-less actions, essential to the creative process, will be better understood through a dramatic performance, as will the songs he writes during the study. The salient ideas found in this study will best be represented through an ethnodrama, a term defined by Saldaña as "a word joining ethnography and drama, a written play script consisting of dramatized, significant selections of narrative collected from interview transcripts, participant observation field notes, [etc.]" (2011, p. 13). Data collected during this study for use in the ethnodramatic analysis included interviews transcripts, field notes during observation, photographs, videos, and lyrics.

Limits and Possibilities of Study

Assumptions and limitations are certain to influence the interpretation of data, therefore, they are important to state directly. I made the assumption that the one of the goals of this study was to tell the story of the participant in his voice; However, I could not separate myself from my subjectivities; Therefore they were woven into the participant's story as I retold it. The story

17

was the particpant's as told through my lens. Additionally, I assumed the songwriter had a process and patterns occurred in that process. I also assumed that a complete song(s) would written during the data collection period. Finally, I assumed that this songwriter's experience writing songs was unique because each songwriter has a different process.

The limitations of this study are: (a) because the results of this study will be published, the participant may not want to divulge certain information, (b) the participant will be videotaped and that may affect his natural behavior in songwriting, (c) because of time constraints while interviewing and observing, I may not be able to go deep enough into the songwriting to fully understand the songwriter's process. Both assumptions and limitations may prompt the participant and myself to interpret the meaning of the data differently. However, as qualitative inquiry allows, my meaning-making from the data does not have to be the same as the participant's. Member checks will allow me to see how our understandings align.

Writing requires a complex web of cognitive processes that is difficult to navigate for both students and teachers. Teachers who understand the theories behind composition realize they need to be equipped with a variety of tools to teach writing. The ability of the teacher to guide students through the writing process is key to the student being able to produce authentic, meaningful texts in a diverse set of genres. This qualitative arts-based educational research study examines the relationship between songwriting, creative risk-taking, and critical thinking from the perspective of a professional songwriter residing in Nashville, TN. The study will add to the knowledge base of writing practices and pedagogy with a rich, in-depth understanding of one songwriter's processes and how those processes may help teachers meet the needs of their developing writers.

John Dewey once said the purpose of education is to create individuals who are capable of examining the world at large and using their full potential to act as purposeful and intelligent human beings who are considerate of their rights and responsibilities as well as the rights of others (1943). The impact of songwriting processes may lend itself to collaborative and experiential meaning-making that gives individuals the self-efficacy to take creative risks in their writing. The songwriting process gives a space for students to put out themselves "out there" and explore how their experiences connect to a wider audience and the world at large. Through this kind of abstract thinking, students may develop critical connection skills that can be applied to other contexts if transfer techniques are explicitly taught. This will allow educators to engage in a conversation about how learning can be both critical and creative in tandem.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter I have provided the reader with background information sufficient to guide the reader through the course of my study. I have introduced the topic and its historical and research significance; and have grounded my study in qualitative research using the arts-based educational research as a framework. I have outlined my research purpose and questions and stated my subjectivity. The next chapter discusses composition theories of writing cognition and process, expressivism, transfer, and explores studies that have already uncovered information about songwriting. Chapter 3 details the methodology for this study, while Chapter 4 provides an analysis of the data collected. Finally, Chapter 5 discusses the findings and offers suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Academic research in the area of songwriting is vast, with the majority of the literature being in the field of psychology, particularly in the area of therapy such as Jones, (2005). Only a handful of studies, however, cover the implementation of songwriting in school curriculum or adolescents learning songwriting techniques. Even fewer studies exist that focus on songwriting outside of music therapy. Single interviews with songwriters such as Ludovic (2007) and Mazor, (2007), posthumous analysis of songwriting sessions such as Helgert (2008), and the breakdown of lyrical components such as Kaple (2008), were plentiful, but in-depth studies concentrating on the writing process of a professional songwriter employed in the entertainment industry were difficult to locate.

In this chapter I will discuss the historical background of major movements in the field of rhetoric and composition that share a connection with songwriting, including the writing process cognition model developed by Flower and Hayes in the early 1980's, critiques of that model, and the expressivism movement characterized by such theorists as Peter Elbow and social constructionist James Berlin.

In the following section, I will demonstrate how teaching songwriting or creative writing in an educational setting provides a means for teachers to cover key components of the Common Core State Standards curriculum (CCSS). This section will address findings from various empirical studies from a diverse group of fields including psychology, education, and music.

Several themes emerged from a synthesis of the available literature: songwriting is therapeutic, songwriting gives students a voice and enhances self-efficacy, songwriting promotes creativity, creative risk-taking and general writing skills, songwriting evokes critical thinking

and understanding, and current songwriting curriculum. Although the writing capabilities

stemming from songwriting are vast, skills learned in songwriting must be taught in a manner

that facilitates transfer if a student is going to learn to use them outside an isolated setting. The

issue of transfer will round out the chapter followed by a closing critique of the existing literature

and identification of the gap in the literature.

<div align="center">

Historical Background

</div>

Two co-existing theories defined rhetoric and composition movements of the 1970's and

1980's. Expressivism, emerged as an outcry to the shackling chains of academic writing

(Sullivan, 2012) and promoted the unique experiences and voice of the writer (Elbow, 1987).

The Cognitive Process Model of the Composing Process designed by Flower and Hayes (1981),

illustrates the flow mental processes during the composing process. Theory of Writing Post-

process came after the writing process became known as strict, specific steps that moved in a

linear line. The critiques in post-process theory re-emphasize the fact that these steps are not

individualized boxes, but instead are recursive actions that sometimes occur simultaneously

during the construction of text.   An understanding of the concepts outlined in these three

theories will provide a background for this study's research questions.

Flower and Hayes Cognition Model

Flower and Hayes laid the groundwork for the reciprocal concept of the writing process.

In their 1981 article titled *A Cognitive Process Theory of Writing*, the authors set out to define

the steps, both internal and external, a writer goes through when composing a work. Prior to

Flower and Hayes, the writing process was defined as the stage-process model, a step-by-step

approach to creating a whole piece of writing: Pre-Write, Write, and Re-Write. The steps were

believed to occur in this specific order with the writer moving from internal thoughts to words on the page that gradually created an end product.

Flower and Hayes (1981) argued that the lines between phases of the stage-process model are in fact blurred and are neither entirely internal thoughts nor external work, but a mixture of both. While there are separate processes in writing, they do not always occur independently of each other. The researchers used a protocol approach when observing a writer, a think-aloud where the writer had to verbally tell what he/she was thinking during composition. This allowed for them to analyze what internal thoughts the writer was having throughout the creation process, rather than having the writer recall what he/she did after the piece was composed. A hierarchical model was developed to illustrate how each component of the process fit inside and connected to another.
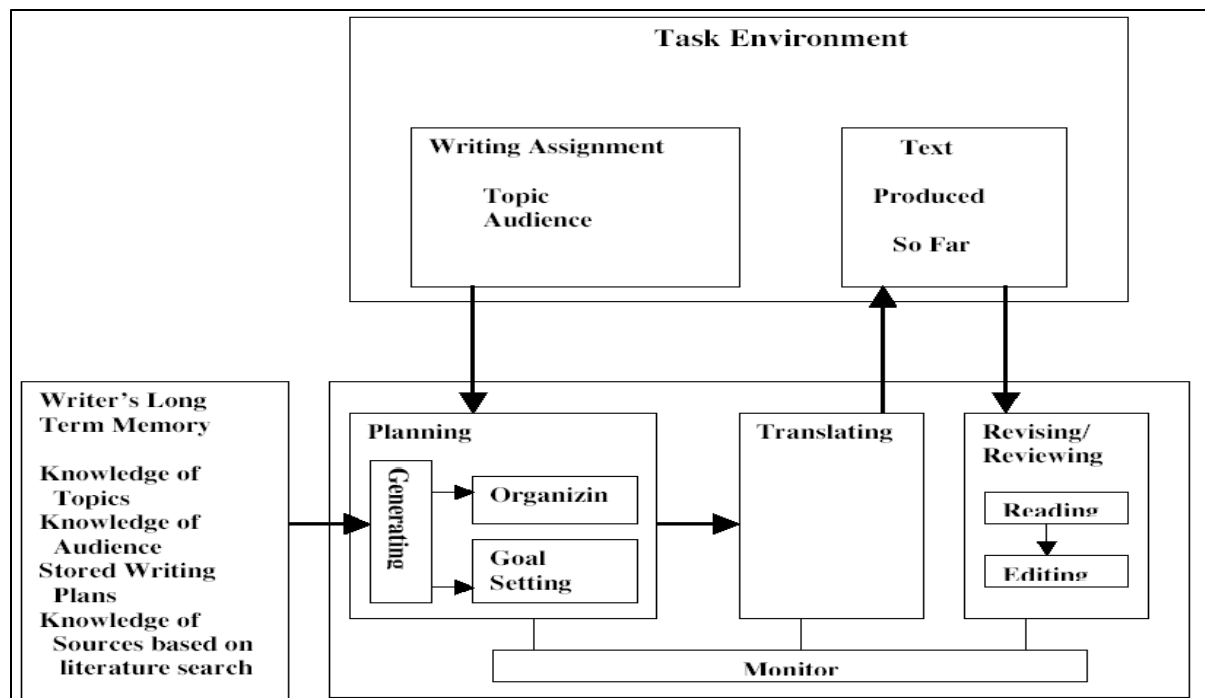
Figure 2.1. Structure of the writing model. This figure illustrates the cognitive processes of a writer as defined by Flower and Hayes (1981).

22

The following definitions created by Flower and Hayes (1981) explain the parts of the cognitive process in Figure 2.1.

- Task environment are the external factors of the process, the writing assignment and text produced so far. The writing assignment includes the writer's topic and audience.

- The writer's long-term memory includes the writer's knowledge of the genre, familiarity with the audience, and knowledge of/experience about the topic both inside the head an in outside resources.

- The writing processes include planning, translating, and revising/reviewing under the control of a monitor.

  - Planning "the act of building [an] internal representation" (p. 372) including generating ideas and uncovering relevant information, organizing those ideas, and setting goals.

  - Translating: to transfer sensory feelings and symbols into words.

  - Monitor: the writer assessing his/her current task and goals.

Post-Process Theory

As stated in Pritchard and Honeycutt (2006), the writing process has turned in circles since the coining of the term "writing process". In the 1940's process pedagogy was teaching the students how to move in a linear fashion through their writing, combining proofreading and editing into one category. After the work of Flower and Hayes (1980, 1981) and Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) was published, educators began to detect flaws in the straight-lined process and realize writing required an immense amount of cognitive brain-power. Through the years,

however, mandated curriculum has turned the writing process back into easy-to-follow, linear steps.

Pritchard and Honeycutt (2006) add, the effectiveness of the writing process has proven difficult to measure. What should be included or excluded from the writing process varies depending on the study. Some believe the process is natural and does not need to be explicitly taught, while others believe explicit instruction of the writing process is necessary. This has made studying the writing process a difficult task. However, some studies, with a sound methodological design, have showed the writing process has a positive effect on the measured variables (Harris, 1992), skills demonstrated in final products (De La Paz & Graham, 2002), organization (Bruno, 1983), and attitudes towards writing (Scannella, 1982). Because the writing process is so diverse and includes a complex web of craft elements, the majority of writing process studies have focused on only one component at a time (Pritchard and Honeycutt, 2006).

Voice in Personal and Academic Writing

Originally, the focus on academic writing was grammar and basic structure (Schoenburger, 1997). Throughout the past half-century, the definition of *academic discourse* has slowly been evolving (Hebb, 2002), leaving it a non-absolute term with specific characteristics: "lean…the language of truth and reason…stripped of false dressings of style and fashion, a tool for inquiry and critique" (Bartholomae, 1995, p.62). Writing in an academic setting has proven to be difficult for basic writers (Hebb, 2002) because academic writing generally takes place in a strictly defined environment rules by format, structure, and paraphrasing (Bartholomae, 1995). Advocates of making writing more personal to the student

have managed to wedge into the academic space, even though they have been (and still are) faced with much resistance, especially in terms of allowing the student to break the rigid mold of academic writing (Hebb, 2002). One such movement, Expressivism, has been infiltrating the academic environment since the 1980's.

There are several benefits of including Expressivism pedagogies in the curriculum. Elbow argues that allowing students to write without an audience, without proper grammar and punctuation, and without a concern for academic language during the early phases of the writing process encourages students to find what message they want to convey by using their own voice. As the student moves through the process of composing an academic paper, the student will transfer to an objective perspective but will still maintain his/her unique voice (Elbow, 1987). Expressivists believe students should focus on process rather than product, and that informal writings such as journals, e-mails, notes, and false starts contain valuable information that will help build up to the final product (Sirc, 2002). The writing process is not the be-all-end-all solution to improving student writing, especially, since in many cases, the process can be poorly taught (Cramer, 2001). This, however, does not mean the writing process is not valuable.

Skills Learned from Non-Academic Writing

Even though many studies have been carried out that show how songwriting is valuable to students, few studies that examine the connection between the songwriting process and improving general composition skills have been documented. Specific skills pertinent to academic writing have been shown to emerge from teaching students how to write creatively. Researchers have isolated particular composition craft elements to demonstrate the value creative writing has for developing general writing skills and the confidence of student writers, yet

25

studies that demonstrate the full plethora of skills that can stem from creative writing are also difficult to locate. This section will provide an overview of the benefits of learning a creative writing process, specifically songwriting, from literature available in the fields of psychology, education, and music.

Songwriting is Therapeutic

The value of songwriting in therapy has been extensively studied. Songwriting can be a form of release and can empower students to tell their own story (Stephenson, 2001; Jones 2005). A student participant in Stephenson's (2001) study expressed, "It felt good to let them go," speaking of her experience about a disappointing school dance, "It felt good to let my feelings go. I haven't let them go, and it seems like they stayed inside my body all my life. It made me feel better" (p. 123).

Songwriting Gives Students a Voice and Confidence

Giving a space for students to express their voice dots the landscape of songwriting studies (Eisla, 1995; Hollander, 2010; Sanchez, 2010; Soderman & Folkestead, 2004; Stephenson, 2001). Teenage students reported feelings of validation in Sanchez's (2010) study when their hip-hip music was brought into the classroom to dissect because their outside culture now meshed with the education culture, allowing students to gain new identities (Kirkland, 2008). Students in the *Words & Music* outreach program (discussed at length in a later section of this chapter) were treated as professional songwriters throughout the entire program and their efforts were validated when an adult, unconnected to anyone in the class, added music to their words (Stephenson, 2001).

These same students even challenged the experts when the professional altered the student's message (Stephenson, 2010). The Country Music Hall of Fame Museum education director explained, "Well, professional songwriters here in Nashville say stuff like that to each other all the time—that's what the co-writing peer relationships are like" (Stephenson, 2001, p. 199). At the third site in Stephenson's (2010) case study, students in the opera outreach program took on the roles of opera professionals to create an original opera, allowing them to make meaning from the experience.

In a 2004 study of a music camp for young girls, Taylor probed how rock music could be used as a teaching tool to help girls navigate what it means to be a girl. Her findings indicated that a challenge of rock camps was to negotiate how to make each girl's voice, soft or loud, heard. She also discovered participants in one particular rock camp gained confidence that could be applied to life after camp and that these rock camps provided a safe environment for the females to express themselves and transform into something new.

Songwriting has a novel quality that increases the appeal of writing and can serve as a space to release their creativity (Stephenson, 2010). More importantly, songwriting directly correlates with the goals of the Expressivist movement, to help students find their voice (Elbow, 1987), and by doing so, the students increase their self-efficacy and become proud of their work (Stephenson, 2010).

Creativity, Risk-Taking, and Skill

Collaboration, the social aspect of writing, is essential to the development of composition skills (Bruffee, 1973) and was identified as a finding in multiple studies investigating creative writing and songwriting (Holm, 2010; Soderman & Folkestead, 2004; Stephenson, 2001).

Through the process of songwriting, teachers and professionals demonstrated appreciation of every member's works and supported each member throughout songwriting development, which was echoed by the students during their group collaborations (Stephenson, 2001). One participant teacher mentioned how group work was less threatening (Stephenson, 2001). When collaborating, the students did have disagreements, but rarely did those problems heed progress (Stephenson, 2001). Stephenson (2001) followed another class through their participation in the New York Metropolitan Opera Guild's outreach program and noted the students were required to go through the process of creating and original work as part of the program, which expanded their mental aptitude. Students were engaged, rarely off-task, which opened the doors for them to write more (Stephenson, 2001).

Writing a song requires the composer to appeal to a large audience and catch that audience's attention by using phrases that are easily remembered (Stephenson, 2001). This kind of experimental writing opens the dialogue for students to participate in larger conversations, which they are enthusiastic to do (Holm, 2010). A third grade teacher in Stephenson's (2001) study noted that the students were "coming up with different ideas, trying to keep to the main idea, putting things together to make sense, to sequence things," which are all necessary components of synthesizing to write a traditional academic essay ("Components of a," 2014). (A high school teacher put Tupac's lyrics side-by-side with Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* and asked students to find intertextual connections (Kirkland, 2008) that occur throughout hip-hop lyrics (Soderman & Folkestead, 2004).

The education director at one of Stephenson's (2001) case study sites sums up how the songwriting process relates to English Language Arts skills,

We're trying to pick the part of the songwriting process that can be built on skills they are already learning in the curriculum; language skills and how to choose an adjective; skills of description; hot to tell a story with a beginning, middle and end; how to say something in an unusual way; how to edit and revise—all language skills, all being taught in the curriculum. Now you bring songwriting in—you're teaching those skills plus meter, phrasing, line length. The teachers see what we're doing as an amplification or an embellishment to what they set out to do with the curriculum in the first place. (p. 131).

Songwriting Evokes Critical Thinking and Understanding.

Songwriting ties into curriculum whether purposefully or incidentally (Stephenson, 2001). An obvious connection to the curriculum is through poetry units where students are required to study rhyme and prosody, but literary elements, such as plot structure, characters, and setting (Stephenson, 2001). The ability to develop also comes into play (Stephenson, 2001). Figurative language, structures like compare and contrast, and repetition for effect are also important components of songs that students can learn through studying songwriting (Stephenson, 2001). One teacher in the case study recommended to educators who want to teach songwriting in the classroom that listening to and analyzing children's song would facilitate the process. A second teacher-participant in Stephenson's (2001) case study indicated there was a smooth transition from the required poetry unit into lyric-writing.

Culture is captured in songs. They are artifacts of the songwriter's culture, of the student's culture and can be complex text with layers of meaning to be peeled back one fold at a time (Kirkland, 2008). In rich music mediums, such as hip-hop, the struggle between culture and capital is riddled throughout the text, and students mimicking the genre weave in and dissect

29

their own culture, moving them closer to the critical analysis skills needed in academic writing (Sanchez, 2010; Kirkland, 2008).   Analyzing these kinds of lyrics may lead to discussions that raise awareness of one's culture and a quest for explanations that explain society's hierarchies (Kirkland, 2008).

Ungerledier and Harrison (1987) conducted research on how music can be used to facilitate social change movements and found that students participating in a songwriting workshop scored higher in conscience awareness than students not receiving the treatment. Further support from this claim comes from Sanchez's (2010) study on using hip-hop in the classroom, where she found students critiquing their own lyrics to see how they fit in the genre of hip-hop.

Hollander & Curtis (2000) followed three students through their first year remedial composition course as they were asked to write personal essays, a concept from expressivism and process theory, as preparation for becoming social critics. The curriculum did not include explicit lessons on how to take personal essays and use them to write an academic social critic. Instead, the students were assigned to read published texts where the author blended personal essays with social critic. All three of the participants infused their writing with emotion and expression. One of the participants made the jump from the autoethnographic writing to critical analysis. Her writing at the end of the course shows the development of a critical lens.

> Eventually when I began to understand that language is a representation of one's culture; I began to feel apart from the individuals within my ethnic group. This feeling was especially evident when I struggled to speak with peers in Spanish. Struggling with the language created a sense of isolation between my ethnic group and myself. (p. 40).

This selection of Maria's writing demonstrates how she learned to observe from a distance, to be objective, which is an essential part of academic writing. By constructing a personal text she was able to recognize her own beliefs and then deconstruct them.

Songwriting has been connected to other subjects outside English Language Arts and has been used to tell the stories of events in history such as the plight of the Pilgrims in Jamestown and the struggle of women in Afghanistan (Stephenson, 2001). However, few studies on how songwriting is applicable outside music and English classes have been documented.

Current Songwriting Curriculum.

Several programs exist across the United States that connect professional songwriters or music organizations to K-12 classrooms. These programs are generally in large metropolitan areas, such as New York, Memphis, and Nashville, where there is a rich, thriving music culture that had gained notoriety decades, ago. In this section, two of the longest running programs will be highlighted, along with a newer program created by the alternative music icon, Natalie Merchant.

The Country Music Hall of Fame in Nashville designed a program that allows local school districts to implement songwriting into their core and music class curriculum. *Words & Music* is structured to match Tennessee's state standards, as well as a few national standards, for English Language Arts and music (Country Music Hall of Fame, 2012). Even though the curriculum has been designed for elementary students, several teachers have successfully used the program with high school students. According to David Bogart, the outreach coordinator for *Words & Music*, the program is provided free of charge and includes: a CD, school visits, a CD

recording session, professional development, a unit plan and more (personal communication, September 19, 2012).

During the unit, teachers cover 15 different lessons divided into three different parts: "What is Songwriting?, What's in a Song?, and A Song is Born" (pg. 1). Students collaborate to identify themes of the songs on the accompanying CD, elements of a song such as rhyme scheme and meter, and musical style. Teachers may then choose to follow the outlined process for having the students turn an authentic story into a song that is checked and revised before being submitted to a professional songwriter (Country Music Hall of Fame, 2009). However, during teacher training with the outreach coordinator and a *Words & Music* songwriter, teachers are encouraged to adapt the curriculum to their own classroom and student needs, as well as to include plenty of opportunity for free-writing (D. Bogart, *Words & Music* Outreach Coordinator, personal communication September 19, 2012), writing what is on the mind with little concern for standard conventions. The final components of the program include putting the students' lyrics to music, performing the song, and reflecting on the songwriting process (Country Music Hall of Fame, 2009).

The program's website *Words & Music* has been in existence for the past 34 years and has reached over 80,000 educators and students. Schools in Nashville and across the country have used the curriculum to merge their music and language arts classes for collaborative, cross-curricular learning. Teachers have even used the curriculum to help students learn about important people and historically significant events including Rosa Park, Martin Luther King Jr., and segregation of African-Americans during the Jim Crow era. For districts outside the Nashville area, *Words & Music* offers a distance-learning program over the Internet using

teleconferencing equipment or Facetime (D. Bogart, *Words & Music* Outreach Coordinator, personal communication, September 19, 2012).

Nola Jones, Coordinator of Music for Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools, states, "Anytime children are excited about learning something new, we're successful. And that's the important thing that Words and Music offers….You just can't put a price on when children are anxious to learn" (Country Music Hall of Fame, 2012b). This outreach program has shown sustainability and promise in motivating students to learn, yet only Stephenson's 2001 study (D. Bogart, *Words & Music* Outreach Coordinator, personal communication, September 19, 2012), mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, has investigated the songwriting process using this curriculum.

Another songwriting program included in Stephenson's study was The Metropolitan Opera Guild's *Students Compose Opera*. The Guild does not have a set curriculum for the program (J. Chou, School Programs Advisor, personal communication, September 25, 2012), rather it uses research-based practices to work with the schools and teachers to develop a customized curriculum that fits the age level and course of the participants. *Students Compose Opera* allows students to construct their own performance piece using a variety of visual arts such as: dance, theatre, music, and visual arts; and "provides a powerful strategy for integrated instruction" (pg. 5) across several core courses (Metropolitan Opera Guild, 2012). During a single school year, the Guild's *Creating and Opera* and other outreach programs worked with "more than 14,000 students and 550…across 7 states" (pg. 18). The costs associated with the various programs range from $250 for *Access Opera* to $2,900 for *Student Compose Opera* (Metropolitan Opera Guild, 2012).

Natalie Merchant, employed in the music industry for over 30 years, released her book *Leave Your Sleep* in November of 2012. Merchant searched for obscure poems and turned them into songs that are included on a CD that comes with the book. Last fall, she worked in New York City schools to share her love of poetry and songwriting with students and helped create a teacher's guide that is available from Macmillan's Children's Publishing Group. The guide ties Merchant's songs to Common Core Standards (Merchant, 2012). A more complete guide will be available online early next year (N. Merchant, personal communication, November 15, 2012).

By the sheer number of students participating in the two programs offered by professionals in the entertainment industry, the notion that songwriting is a successful mode of discourse for learning is clear. Songwriting, whether it be through lyrical story composition or composition of an opera, has a place in K-12 curriculum that goes beyond aesthetic value and meets both state and Common Core Standards.

Transferring Songwriting Skills

While studies on songwriting have demonstrated songwriting can have positive results on student writing, studies that prove learning songwriting skills can improve student writing in other contexts and genres are sparse. To make learning songwriting processes valuable, several key steps must be written into the curriculum. Students must hold positive beliefs about their writing (Driscoll & Wells, 2012), must be explicitly taught how to transfer songwriting skills (Boone et al., 2012; Driscoll & Wells, 2012; Rounsaville, 2012), must be responsible for their own learning (Boone et al., 2012), must value the assignment they are writing for (Driscoll & Wells, 2012), and acquire rhetorical flexibility (Boon et al, 2012). More research is vital if researchers are going to prove that writing creatively can help students develop valuable skills

that transfer to other genres and contexts. If this proof never manifests, the chasm between academic and creative writing will only widen (Sharmoon & Martin, 2007).

Critique of Empirical Studies

Single interviews with songwriters (Ludovic, 2007; Mazor, 2007), posthumous analysis of videotaped songwriting sessions such as Helgert (2008), and the breakdown of lyrical compenents such as Kaple (2008), were plentiful. Stephenson (2001) was one of the first to publish on the use of songwriting in education and is one of the few researchers who examines existing curriculum in-depth instead of taking an action-based research approach. Her portraiture qualitative study had the richest findings of all the songwriting studies I could locate and was one of the few who followed professional songwriters in the classroom.

Several researchers conducted action-research where they examined the effect of self-created songwriting curriculum on participants (Ungerleider, 1987; Elsila, 1995; Carpenter; 1999; Satterwhite, 1991). Both Ungerleider and Carpenter collected quantitative data, the first on change in consciousness, the second on a pre-test and post-test of social studies concepts. Elsila (1995) helped prisoners write songs and recorded their voices using a self-created process he coined "liberatory musicology" to help prisoners write songs and record their voices. The existing literature addresses how songwriting is taught, skills used to create a popular song, songwriting techniques created by graduate music students and teachers, and the effects on using songwriting to learn concepts. Satterwhite, an accomplished guitarist and songwriter, evaluated country music songs to create his own techniques of teaching songwriting and then taught those techniques to three of his different classes. The songs created in those classes were then analyzed for their creative content and skill level (1991). The topic in songwriting and education

35

needs more rich, in-depth qualitative studies that analyze the artists' processes and more quantitative and qualitative studies to measure the effectiveness of using songwriting as a teaching tool, specifically for writing skills that will transfer to other genres.

Gaps in the Literature

In general, there is not an extensive amount of research specifically covering how songwriting skills transfer to writing skills, but there are many avenues that provide relevant insight about the value of the songwriting process in the writing context. Areas left open for exploration include following experts or professional songwriters as they compose songs to understand how their techniques differ from novices (Rijlaarsdam & van den Berg, 2008). Qualitative studies in regards to what inspires songwriters and how they find a voice that reaches millions of people could also be conducted. The transferability of techniques a songwriter uses could be examined in K-12 schools to: motivate the uninspired writer, learn content in other areas besides music and language arts, and teach students a method for revising. The effectiveness of these techniques could be analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively. Lastly, a researcher could examine the application of songwriting techniques to other genres of writing such as fiction or academic.

Chapter Summary

This literature review has highlighted important composition theories from the 1970's and 1980's: expressivism, the cognitive process theory of composing, and post-process critiques. Recent writings in the field of songwriting and education reveal that songwriting is therapeutic, songwriting is expressive and builds self-efficacy, songwriting is an arena for risk-taking, and song-writing can help a student learn important composition skills. Based on this review, little is

known about the process a professional songwriting goes through when creating music and lyrics and how those findings could benefit ongoing writing curriculum.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

In the preceding chapters, arts-based education research; writing theories involving process, revision, expressivism, experimental writing and transfer; and previous studies involving songwriting and education were reviewed. This chapter begins by explaining an overview of the qualitative research paradigm and how the qualitative approach fits the purpose of this study. An explanation of arts-based research, and the methodological framework type, ethnodrama follows. Research Design, Data Collection Methods, Data Management, Data Analysis, Data Representation, and Trustworthiness and Rigor conclude this chapter.

Recall that the purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between songwriting, creative risk-taking, and critical thinking from the perspective of a professional songwriter residing in Nashville, TN.

1. How does the participant describe the process of songwriting?

2. In what ways does the participant use creative risk-taking in songwriting?

3. In what ways does the participant's process of songwriting relate to critical thinking?

4. In what ways does the participant's process of songwriting connect to teaching writing?

Qualitative Inquiry

The choice of approach in a study is driven by the research questions (Mason, 2006), the beliefs of the researcher, and the intended audience of the research (Creswell, 2003). Closed-ended questions with the relationship of variables as the focus that use predetermined methods to collect numerical data are best suited for a quantitative approach that covers a wide area, while

open-ended questions that use emerging methods to collect multiple text or image data are best suited for a qualitative approach (Creswell, 2003) that seeks a deep understanding (Greenhalgh & Taylor, 1997). The questions for this study, as stated above, are constructivist in nature, seeking to make meaning of an individual's writing methods "with the intent of developing a theory or pattern" when important variables to examine are unknown (Creswell, 2003, p. 18). Therefore, the questions of this study were best answered by a qualitative approach. Even though qualitative inquiry seeks to build data from the ground up (Urquhart, 2013).

The researcher in a qualitative study is not void of assumptions (Creswell, 2003). By recognizing ontology, epistemology, axiology, rhetoric, and methodology, the researcher becomes aware of his or her understanding of reality (Creswell, 2003). The definition of "what is known" or what is "real" in a qualitative approach differs from the single "truth" and "reality" used in a quantitative approach, which is determined by pre-existing knowledge (Vasilachis de Gialdino, 2009).

In qualitative inquiry every phenomena is tied to multiple truths and multiple realities (Bhattcharya, 2007) that are dependent upon the context in which the experience takes place (Creswell, 2003). Ontology, the researcher's position on reality, differs with every researcher, as well as with every participant (Creswell, 2003). By recognizing ontology, qualitative researchers are able to determine what knowledge is relevant to the study and what knowledge will allow the researcher to answer the research questions (King & Horrocks, 2010). A *realist* ontological approach assumes there is one reality shared by the members of society, which exists independently of those members in the society, but a *relavist* ontology understands reality to be dependent upon experiences (King & Horrocks, 2010) and social contexts (Weissman, 2000).

Because context is so important to the understanding of reality, qualitative researchers seek a natural approach in which the participant is observed in a location where the phenomena is typically experienced (Denzin, 1994).

Multiple truths, how we know what we know, is defined as epistemology, which is also influenced by the context of the experience (King & Horrocks, 2010). Creswell states, acknowledging epistemology allows the researcher to make meaning of the relationship between himself or herself and what is being researched. Conducting the research in the natural setting of the phenomena, the field, provides a way for the researcher to gain firsthand access to the culture tied to the phenomena. The longer the researcher remains in the field and interacts with the participants, the better understanding the researcher will have of his or her epistemology (2003), decreasing the distance between himself or herself and the participants (Guba & Lincolon, 1988).

The third assumption involved in meaning making in qualitative research is axiology, a prime characteristic of qualitative research (Creswell, 2003). Considerations under the axiological assumption include: ethics, goodness, and researcher obligations (Given, 2008). By positioning himself or herself in the study, the qualitative researcher explicitly states his or her values in regards to the study and how those values influence the interpretation of data (Creswell, 2003). The researcher asserts that the evidence represented in the analysis and presentation of data are influenced by his or her own values and beliefs (Denzin, 1989).

The rhetorical assumption in qualitative research is that the diction used to write the study should be literary in form (Creswell, 2003). Qualitative research uses language that is personal, informal at times, and context-based (Lee, 1999) in order to capture the voices of the participants and to share their stories (Given, 2008). The participant's "stories can be collected, used, and

produced in in different ways to meet various underlying ontological and epistemological assumptions, but then the stories often have to be retold for academic audience(s)" (Belk, 2007, p. 168). In traditional academic discourse, diction is very specific and written from an objective point of view, which limits how an experience can be shared. This objective discourse detaches the researcher from those participating in the research, but the narrative nature of qualitative rhetoric allows "expressive, passionate opinion" to be included in the study (Bartel, 2010, p. 832). The "Definition of Terms" section in a qualitative study often evolves to fit the definition of the participant (Creswell, 2007) in order to capture the expressive opinion of the participant.

According to Creswell (2007), the process for collection data in a qualitative study, methodology, is distinguished by the ground-up approach, rather the deductive approach used in quantitative research. Inductive analysis begins with specific sources of data and finds commonalities between the individual pieces of data and then proceeds to identify patterns present (themes) throughout the data so "general statements about phenomena under investigation can be made" (Hatch, 2002, p. 161). The opposite of deductive analysis, inductive analysis uses the themes in the data as evidence to build up to a theory. Inductive analysis frees the researcher from the restraints of deductive methodologies and provides a space for new concepts to emerge instead of testing to see if concepts are aligned with current assumptions (Thomas, 2006). In an inductive analysis, the research questions may change in order to understand the research problem. The data collection and data analysis procedures may change to accommodate the new research questions (Creswell, 2007).

The assumptions in the areas of ontology, epistemology, axiology, rhetoric, and methodology define the approach to research. Qualitative research plays on the assumption that

there are multiple truths and multiple realties, as opposed to one central truth. The qualitative

researcher explicitly states his/her beliefs and values and recognizes that those beliefs may

influence the results of a study. Rhetoric in qualitative studies can be informal and narrative in

style in order to capture the voice of the participant(s) present in the data. Evidence is pulled

from the data through inductive analysis, and the methods for data collection an analysis can

change during the research process so meaning making can be achieved (2007).

This researcher seeks to make meaning of one professional songwriter's approach to

writing songs using open-ended research through a methodological framework congruent with

qualitative research. Qualitative researchers attempt to interpret or understand phenomena "in

terms of the meanings people bring to them" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p.3). Qualitative

methods will be used in this study to develop a deep understanding of the process(es) a

professional songwriter goes through the phenomena of creating and revising songs. This

method will allow the participant to collect data and give detailed accounts of his creation

process in locations where he naturally writes songs and will allow the researcher to record

details about those places (Creswell, 2003, 2007). Observing and talking directly to a participant

within his/her context is indicative of qualitative research (Creswell, 2007), as are multiple data

sources, data collection by the researcher, reflection by the researcher, and inductive analysis, all

major components of this study.

Instead of using one data source, qualitative research centers around collecting multiple

sources of data (Creswell, 2007). For this study, sources will include: interviews, artifacts,

video-recordings, photographs, and observations (Creswell, 2003) to help make meaning of the

participant's writing process. These multiple data sources will allow the researcher to explore

the diverse cognitive processes, as described by the Flower and Hayes model in Chapter 2, *Figure 1,* the participant may go through when writing songs. In addition to the sources, tone of voice, gestures, body language, pauses and sounds will be noted in the transcription of videos and in the field notes. These elements may prove to be essential to the participant's writing process, yet would not be relevant in a quantitative study.

The sources of data were collected by the researcher, another characteristic of qualitative research, (Merriam, 2002), instead of using questionnaires or inventories typical in quantitative research (Creswell, 2007). Because I was the one recording and analyzing the data, the results were filtered through my own lens (Creswell, 2003), my subjectivity, which may have affected how the results were interpreted (Merriam, 2009). My role as a researcher cannot be separated from my personal views (Creswell, 2003). I had to remain aware of my personal views throughout the study, which was achieved through reflexivity (Creswell, 2003). Journaling and memo-ing for the duration of the study allowed me to practice reflection, a component essential to the qualitative approach.

This study focused on a specific writer in a specific genre of writing in the hopes of uncovering methods that may transfer to other forms of writing. Although existing theories on writing are used to guide this research, the aim of this study was not to fit the participant's writing process inside these theories, but rather to uncover the unique approach he brings to his own writing. The intention of this study was to provide an in-depth analysis of the participant's process, which is understood to be exclusive to the participant. The patterns that were identified in this study are not intended to be generalized to a larger population. Instead, the over-arching

goal of this study is to find new methods that may benefit those learning to write, attempting to improve their writing, and teaching others how to write.

Methodological Framework

Arts-based educational research

An increasing number of inquiry approaches in qualitative research feature artistic elements, which have become known as arts-based educational research (ABER) (Barone & Eisner, 2006). Arts-based educational research emerged in the 1970's when educational researchers combined aspects of art criticism and artist methods (Sinner et. al. 2006). A combination of aesthetics and artistic activity are used to amplify attitudes of social life (Barone & Eisner, 2006) by collecting data, analyzing that data, and interpreting that data to create a form of art that is representative of that data (Cahnmann-Taylor & Siegesmund, 2008). The different forms of art created in ABER serve as an alternative way of meaning making for both the researcher and the participant(s) (McNiff, 1998) and is not meant to as a substitution or replacement for quantitative research or for other forms of qualitative research, but rather, as a new way of knowing (Barone, 2008).

The language of ABER varies from traditional academic rhetoric by including colloquial, expressive, or contextual language that is subjective to the participant, rather than written through an objective lens (Barone & Eisner, 2006). Cultures are defined and revised through language (Tedlock as quoted in Denzin & Lincoln, 2008), and the language used to define cultures can, at time, be riddled with multiple layers of meaning (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). By using expressive language associated with everyday life in, researchers are able to capture the non-literal meanings of participants' words (Barone & Eisner, 2006), which reinforce the

concept of *multiple truths* present throughout qualitative studies. Keeping colloquial language intact helps preserve the perspective of the participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). The use of evocative language in ABER lends itself to becoming literary, allowing for thick, rich descriptions of the participants' stories (Barone & Eisner, 2006).

Qualitative research is centered around making meaning of the world. ABER shifts the focus of research, placing meaning making at the forefront (Leavy, 2009). Art as a way of knowing is essentially different from an academic way of knowing (Gardner, 2011), but allows people to use their imagination to fill in the gap between what is directly stated and meaning that lies beyond (Eisner, 2002). Art as a way of knowing encourages people to internalize new knowledge, to explore how their own personal experiences connect to it, (Green 1995) which aids in a deeper understanding of the material (Hunt, 2012). By using art and the language of literature, ABER allows researchers to make meaning using alternative forms, opening up a new way of seeing (Leavy, 2009). When an idea is represented, whether through song, poetry, fiction, dance, etc., the idea becomes concrete and can open up a metaphorical dialogue between the creator and the created. In other words, the idea can be edited (Eisner, 2002, 1998a). This refined creation becomes a contribution to society, a shared experience (Eisner, 2002). Creating a piece of art from evidence in a study is a method of sharing meaning-making with an audience (Leavy, 2009) or society itself.

In a narrative analysis, or any other form of ABER, the researcher make take liberties when writing the participant's story, filling in missing dialogue here, adding a transition there, or even creating a fictional character that serves as a metaphor to the participant's life. Researchers unfamiliar with the process involved in an ABER study may criticize the legitimacy of the

45

results and representation. When judging art created in ABER studies, the question of focus

should not be *What pieces of the story were counterfeit?,* but rather *What insight was gained*

that would have been ignored in a non-ABER study? (Eisner & Barone, 2006).

According to Eisner & Barone (2006), the artistic representation created from an ABER

study meet certain criteria in order to be considered valuable. A valuable artistic representation

created from a study must reveal information that had not been previously noticed. The

representation must also promote questions and possibly generate ideas for new research. A

third factor in judging the value of a representation is the relativity to education. If the ABER

does not revolve around salient issues and questions in education, it is unlikely to be significant

in the field. The final, and possibly most important judgment factor is generalizability. The

results found in an ABER study should not be applied to a larger group of people. Instead, in the

case of ABER, generalizability refers to the new connections that can be made based on the

information in this study. Just how pieces of fine art are not all considered valuable, neither are

all ABER studies. To be considered a talented, useful work of art, the representation from an

ABER study must be either "illuminating, generative, incisive, and relevant to [the] educational

world (p. 102-103).

Recall that the purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between songwrting,

creative risk-taking, and critical thinking from the perspective of a professional songwriter.

In Chapter 2, I discussed the studies that had already been conducted on songwriting in education

and the value of experimental writing as a way to develop all forms of writing. The Arts-Based

Educational Research framework befits this study because the nature of the study was to

illuminate a professional songwriter's methods for writing, something previously has not been

done in-depth. Songwriting itself can be considered a work of art and the methods uncovered in this study may prove to be useful to those who teach writing.   Therefore, the ABER framework is a logical choice for this study.

Methodology

According to Saldaña (2003), ethnotheatre (the performance of an ethnodrama) is using the artistic fundamentals of theatre, lighting, staging, monologues, etc. to produce a live performance that retells the story of the participant's experiences to a live audience. In terms of academic research, ethnodramas are a relatively new form of data representation covering a diverse list of social issues and personal stories. Published ethnodramas include participants' experiences with illnesses such as health issues (Mienczakowski, J., Smith, L. & Morgan, S., 2002) and a physician and a cancer patient (Paget, 1995), as well as numerous topics covering a wide range of issues in education. Topics span from the writing processes of middle schoolers (Donmoyer & Yennie-Donmoyer, 1995) to lesbian physical education teachers (Chapman, Skyes, & Swedberg, 2002) to power struggles between school officers (Meyer, 1998) and so on. Two of the most well known ethnodramas are *The Vagina Monologues* and *The Laramie Project.* Certain qualitative studies cannot be told effectively using traditional academic reports. Saldaña (2003, p. 219) warns, "Ethnodramatic research representation should be chosen not for its novelty but for its appropriateness as a medium for telling a participant's story credibly, vividly, and persuasively."

The content of an ethnodrama is derived from the researcher's field notes, interviews, observations, and other sources of data (Saldaña, 2003) that are triangulated to gain a rich perspective of the participant's story (Saldaña, 2011). Handfuls of transcribed pages are perused

for valuable phrases and then reduced to the meaningful salient ideas and adapted to script form (Saldaña, 2011) using character-revealing monologues or soliloquies and interactive dialogue (Saldaña, 2003). The researcher has the choice to use the words from single data sources verbatim or to engage in artistry and weave dialogue from different sources and time periods together to reveal contrasting evidence, triangulated data, or just to speed the play along to keep the audience entertained, the ultimate goal of an ethnodrama (Saldaña, 2003 & 2011).

A vital consideration for the ethnodramatist is the structure of the script, the plot (Saldaña, 2003). An ethnodrama should have a plot, but there is no specified order for that plot. The ethnodrama must have the classic beginning, middle, end in the sequence but can use soliloquies to serve as reflections of the past that set up the context of the play. The story may take the audience full-circle, starting in the present, traveling back to the past, and ending in the present again. Whatever order the dramatist chooses for plot and story line, the outcome must result in a mixture of meaningful expressions and discoveries that re-story the participant's experiences and keep the audience entertained (Saldaña, 2003).

Characters and their roles are chosen by the ethnodramatists to highlight the experiences of the participant. Generally, the participant plays the role of the protagonist to keep the view of the participant at the forefront (Saldaña, 2003). The researcher's subjectivity can come to life through a character that straightforwardly states the researcher's values and assumptions as Harry did in Wolcott's *Finding My Place* (Barone, 2002), or the researcher can play the role of a confidant whom the participant shares his/her feelings with (Saldaña, 2003). Depending on the researcher's role during the study, his/her character may not even manifest on stage (Saldaña, 2011). Minor characters may weave in and out of the plot as needed or the sole character could

be the participant himself/herself. Abstract concepts could also form the role of a character, such as a deadline that constantly hovers over the participant's shoulder.   The cast of characters that comprise an ethnodrama should facilitate plot development and enhance meaning-making during the performance.

Arts-based researchers who are overzealous with their authority and inconsiderate of their audiences may wind up not making art at all (Barone & Eisner, 2012). Ethnodramas should not be mediocre and simply recite interviews or findings word for word (Saldaña 2005). Ethnotheatre must be both entertaining and informative at the same time, all while being "aesthetically sound, intellectually rich, and emotionally evocative (Saldaña 2005).

Ultimately, the choice of ethnodrama as the form of data representation is up to the researcher (Saldaña 2011). Art has the capability of expressing abstract ideas that cannot be conveyed to an audience through the use of words (Dewey, 1934), and an ethnodrama is an appropriate representation of data that cannot be captured by language. Just as the purpose of theatre is to entertain, so is the purpose of music. Music resonates with an audience when it is heard live and will be more powerful than photographs, reports, and visuals. Musical notes and prosody of words are difficult to describe with words stuck to a page and become much more clear when these elements of songwriting are heard, rather than read. Lines in songs could be dissected by meter and even further by syllables, then counted, but the richness of description and the holistic view of the participant's writing process would be lost.

Vignettes of musicians rocking the stage, struggling to hold bands together, and battling the weariness of months at a time on the road litter rock star documentaries, but rarely does the public get more than a few moments to glimpse the reality behind the birth of a song. An

ethnodrama provides an aesthetically pleasing "stage" for one man's songwriting techniques to be shared with researchers, academics, and lovers of both writing and music through a meaning-making experience.

Research Design

The previous sections in this chapter covered the substantive and methodological framework section used to guide this study. This section will discuss participant selection, the research site, gaining access to the participant, and my role as a researcher with reference to how all of these apply to a qualitative study in general and how they applied specifically to this study.

Participant selection

The sample size in this study was based on typical qualitative methods. Participants were selected through purposeful sampling where, "researchers intentionally select (or recruit) participants who have experienced the central phenomenon or the key concept being explored in the study" (Creswell, 2011, p. 173). A small number of participants are used in a qualitative study so the researcher can gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomena being researched (Creswell, 2011). In a narrative-style study, one to two participants will suffice (Creswell, 2011). Using the research questions as a guide, I was able to gain the most in-depth analysis using only one participant.

There were three potential participants whose work I was familiar with, who I had personally met, and who were professionally employed in the music industry. Two of the three potential participants expressed interest in participating in the study, and the final participant was identified from the larger pool of songwriters because he met the following criteria:

- is currently employed in music industry either through contract or freelance;

- has both a publishing contract and a recording contract within the music industry;

- has written a song that has received recognition by a company or organization in the
  music industry (i.e. Billboard, The Grammies, Country Music Television, American
  Music Awards, Academy of Country Music, etc.);

- is at least 20 years of age

- and is still actively writing songs.

Research site and gaining access

As mentioned in the qualitative inquiry section above, a major characteristic of
qualitative studies is observing the participant(s) in natural contexts. Typically, the qualitative
researcher conducts the research where the participant experiences the phenomena being
investigated, which enables the researcher to record rich details about the environment where the
phenomena occurs (Creswell, 2003). The research site for the interview was chosen because
both the interviewer and the participant felt comfortable maintaining a dialogue on the proposed
topic, was relatively free of distractions, was private, and was a place the participant had written
before. The was a room in the residence of the participant's parents (See *Figure 2)* and was only
open to those invited into the home. For the duration of the study, those in the home were only
immediate family members and myself.

Figure 3.1. Interview and Observation Setup. This figure illustrates the location of the participant, secondary participant, and researcher during the interviews and observations.

Having permission to conduct research in the locations listed above was not enough to gain an in-depth understanding of phenomena (Feldmen, Bell, & Berger, 2003) that occurred during songwriting. The researcher must establish a relationship with the participant that conveys the importance of the study (Gillen, 2010) and encourages the participant to share information that will advance meaning-making of the phenomena. With this established relationship, the researcher enhances the trustworthiness of the findings (Shenton & Hayter, 2004). A consent form (see Appendix A) that includes a listing of all possible locations, data protection, and data collection methods was given to the participant before any data was collected. The researcher provided the participant with his own copy and gave the participant a chance to read and discuss the document before signing. At the end of the study, the participant

was asked to sign a confidentiality consent form (see Appendix B) where the participant indicated his willingness to use his identity or not use his identity in the study.

In addition to the participant, there was a secondary participant involved in the observations that collaboratively wrote songs with the participant. The secondary participant was asked to sign a consent form (see Appendix C) where she indicated her information could appear in the transcripts and she could be video-recorded. This participant was an important contributor to the context of the study, but she was not the focus of the study.

Membership role

My role as a researcher in this study will move between two of the three types of membership roles Adler and Adler (1987) classify as: the peripheral researcher, the active observer, and the complete participant/observer. When I observed the participant collaboratively writing songs, I fully intended to be a peripheral researcher. However, in his interview, the participant stated anyone in the room during a co-write would receive credit for co-authoring the song. At the beginning of the first co-write, I attempted to act as a peripheral researcher but felt very awkward and intrusive, like I was watching something that was not supposed to be seen by outsiders and that my actions were inhibiting the participant. Within the first five minutes, I started contributing to the songwriting, offering my ideas about the storyline here and there. At first, I felt uncomfortable because I was unsure if I belonged in this setting, but after the participant and secondary participant began to use some of my words in their verbal thought process and then the song itself, I felt more at ease and shifted to the active observer. By the middle of the first observation, I had stopped functioning as an active observer.

At the end of the first observation/co-writing session, I noticed I had become a complete participant/observer. This was due to the fact that the creative process of songwriting took so much focus that all my mental capabilities were centered on helping create the song. By the second observation, later that evening, I was much more comfortable with acting as a complete participant/observer and continued through the second songwriting session in that role. Afterwards, I returned to the active participant/observer and began digesting what had taken place.

The researcher and I became connected seven years ago when he and I were introduced through family members. At this time, the participant was temporarily residing in the same geographic area as myself ,where we met, before he moved to Nashville, TN to pursue a music career as a country music artist. I was familiar with the participant's journey to success in the music industry and have followed his career through his Facebook and MySpace pages throughout the years. Although I had seen the participant perform his songs live on a few occasions, at the proposal stage of this study, I had not had the opportunity to observe him in a songwriting session or discuss songwriting with him. Because the connection between the researcher and I could be considered "Backyard" research (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992) the data could be compromised if I did not use multiple strategies of validity are (Creswell, 2003). These strategies are discussed in the *Data Analysis* section of this chapter.

A protocol form was submitted to the Research Compliance Officer to the university along with the consent form, the confidentiality agreement, the secondary participant form, and a list of possible interview questions. After receiving comments from two board members, revisions were made and resubmitted for final approval. Approval was granted by the Texas

A&M University-Corpus Christi Institutional Review Board on April 25, 2013 for a period of one year (see Appendix D for approval letter).

Data Collection Methods

Methods that were used for data collection and the timeline for data collection will be discussed in this section. Face-to-face interviews with the participant, field observations, photographs, and artifacts were the collected forms of data. A description of these forms and how they relate to both qualitative research and this study will be communicated throughout this section.

The data collection took place in Gallatin, Missouri over a period of four days. This collection period included a 87-minute formal interview with the participant on Tuesday where the participant answered nearly 40 interview questions; an observation of a co-writing session Friday afternoon; and a second observation of a co-writing session late Friday evening, followed by a brief question and answer session after each observation. Both of the songwriting sessions were between 150 to 180 minutes long. After both sessions, the secondary participant e-mailed an electronic copy of the "finalized" lyrics to myself, and the participant sent an MP3 file of him singing each song. Photos of the room where the co-writing took place were also obtained from the participant after the observations were conducted.

After the first interview, I transcribed my field notes and the first 30-minute segment of the interview. During this time, I begin an initial round of coding in the web-based qualitative analysis software, Dedoose. While I was transcribing and coding, I created memos that documented my thoughts on what I had observed, the connections I was seeing between the forms of data, as well as between songwriting and teaching writing, and ideas that were forming

for my ehtnodrama. Analysis continued through the transcription process and write up of

Chapters 4 and 5, which took six months to complete (See Appendix E for a detailed timeline).

The following inventory is an approximation of pages that will be generated as raw data.

This number will change during the actual collection of data.

Table 3.1

Types and Amount of Data Collected

Source of Data	Collected	Pages per Event	Pages
87 Minute Interview	1	32	32
Collaborative Observation Video "Come on and Love Me"	1	65	65
Collaborative Observation Video "Sing Your Song Tonight"	1	66	66
MP3 File from Participant	2		
Photographs	1	2	2
Lyrics from Secondary Participant	2	3	6
Peer Debriefing	4	1	4
Member Checks	1	1	1
Observation Notes	3	8	24
Total			200

Interviews

The research interview is an exchange between two people about a topic of mutual

interest in which meaning is derived from the dialogue (Kvale, 1996). Interview questions

should evoke storytelling rather than opinions from the participant (Given, 2008). To create a

more in-depth understanding of the participant's experiences in songwriting, I interviewed the

participant for an extended period of time and asked open-ended questions such as:

1. Could you give me an example of some lyrics you have written?"

2. Could describe the process you go through after a moment of inspiration strikes?

3. Could you describe any creative risk-taking you do in your songwriting?

4. Could you describe what you do to write a song for a particular audience?

5. Could you describe what kinds of instructions or requests your producer makes in regards to your songwriting?

that were designed to obtain information and personal anecdotes rich in detail. To make sure I had an understanding of the participant's experience, I repeated some of the questions using different wording and would make simple statements about my understanding throughout the interview, which the participant verbally verified. Questions for follow-up interviews were determined by the participant's answers, data collected, and patterns that emerge as the study progresses. Additional interviews were conducted via e-mail and text messaging after the initial data collection period.

Interview protocol included video-recording the interview itself, taking notes during the interview, and transcribing the interview dialogue and coding that dialogue. During the interview, I took observation notes that described immediate connections I was making, as well as additional questions I had for the participant that arose during the interview process. During the transcription, body language, such as tone of voice and gestures was recorded.   After the interview were transcribed and coded, the participant had the opportunity to review and discuss the transcripts and coding with the researcher during member checks.

Observations

There are several advantages to conducting observations during a qualitative study: the researcher has first-hand experience watching the phenomena occur, "the researcher can record information as it happens," (Creswell, 2003, p. 186) gestures, tone of voice and other sounds can

be noticed during observation, and the observation may prove to be useful in when the participant is asked about events that are difficult to discuss (Creswell, 2003). Observations in the field helped triangulate data that was discovered during interviews (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). A first step in field observations is to survey the scene and describe the general setting, then zoom in and focus on more selective details (Spradley, 1980). An observation in qualitative research entails more than just jotting down notes while watching a phenomena occur. Field notes must be read and re-read so the researcher can constantly be posing new questions and assessing how the interview questions relate to what is observed in the field (DeWalt, 2002). As Creswell (2007) states, the researcher must reveal his/her role to the participants being observed in order to address the issue of deception. The participant served as a gatekeeper (Creswell, 2007) to the secondary participant and introduced me to that participant so I could explain the purpose of this study.

Because I most likely did not know the secondary participant and did not have more than a few minutes to get to know her before the observation, certain limitations may have occurred.. The limitations of this type of data collection are I may have been seen as an intruder to their process, and private information was shared in the dialogue that I cannot report (Creswell, 2003). This participant was asked to sign a consent form (Appendix C) where she elected keep her information in the data. The secondary participant was not the focus of the study, but her dialogue was necessary to include to understand the context of the primary participant's words.

The site described in the section above was specifically chosen because it was one of the participant's natural songwriting settings and was suggested by the participant. Over a period of four, the participant allowed me to document his journey through scheduled collaborative

songwriting sessions while he was vacationing at his parents' lakeside home. The participant met with a fellow songwriter two different times during the data collection period. Each session lasted over two hours. The observation protocol included obtaining a picture of the location, as well as reflective notes and possible codes and categories that emerged while observing (Creswell, 2011). However, the primary purpose of the observation was to observe (Creswell, 2007). After the sessions were filmed, they were transcribed and observation details were added to the transcription.

Videotaping and photography

Two possibly unobtrusive methods of collecting data (Creswell, 2003) are videotaping and photography. Both types of images serve as a record of multiple-truths in a culture and provide a vehicle that aids in meaning-making (Razvi, 2006). Videotaping is unique because it allows the researcher to "rewind" and view the participant's reality (Creswell, 2003) multiple times (Erikson, 1985). Recording the phenomenon does not replace valuable observations and field notes, but rather enhances those other methods of data collection (Erikson, 1985) in a visually appealing way (Creswell, 2003). Photographs can serve as another visual report that captures a certain aspect of the phenomena being observed, and can serve as a mean-making vehicle for both the researcher and participant (Schwartz, 1989).   Their function is twofold, provide an artistic visual of the phenomena that occurs and capture a specific moment in time that serves as a historical record (Schwartz, 1989). Photographs can also provide visual documentation of the natural setting where the phenomenon occurs (Razvi, 2006).

The limitations of videotaping and photography were the camera felt slightly disruptive to the participant during the observations and may have influenced his responses (Creswell,

2003) and the researcher could not interact with the participant through the videotape, which means the researcher could not cross-check emerging theories with the participant (Erikson, 1985). A limitation of photography was that the image can be treated objectively, when actuality, the image is a tool of meaning-making for both the researcher and the participant (Schwartz, 1989). Ethically, participants must give consent to be photographed, videotaped, or both so they are aware they are being recorded (Razvi, 2006), which was given in the consent forms by both the participant and the secondary participant.

In this study, video recording was used during the interview with the participant and the observations of collaborative songwriting, so that I could rewind and replay the participant's words as I transcribed and also document his gestures in the transcription. A photograph was taken of the location where the songwriting occurred to serve as visual source for my observation notes.

Artifacts

Documents are one of the most pertinent type of data collection for this study. Documents created by the participant are written in the words of the participant and can conveniently be accessed at an unobtrusive time. Documents often represent data that has been planned out and revised and have the added benefit of saving the researcher the tedious task of transcribing (Creswell, 2003). The documents collected in this study were lyrics written by the participant and his collaborators during the songwriting sessions and electronic documents the participant uses to help advance his writing process.

Data Management

My data was organized using both electronic devices and paper printouts. The web-based software tool Dedoose was used to transcribe my videos, expanded field notes, and my researcher memos. A data-process log was kept where the data and actions of my Dedoose entries were recorded so I could remember what work had previously been completed and how much time had been invested. The collaborative songwriting session observations, photographs, documents, and interviews were sorted in Dedoose, so each method of data collection had a separate analytical space. As I wrote, I was able to view my previous assumptions and evolving positions in the memos I created and coded earlier in the inquiry and analysis process.

Dedoose allowed me to organize and access my data more quickly than storing all the information in large quantities of paper files. However, the Dedoose software was limited in terms of what it could do. Therefore, some of my writing and data analysis was conducted by hand which allowed me to draw thoughts on the data (such as highlighting, annotating, circling, etc.) as well as to physically manipulate the data to construct new meanings. Even though some analysis was done by hand, the documents were photographed or scanned and uploaded to Dedoose where they were connected to the other forms of data.

The Dedoose software allowed me to connect multiple pieces of data while I developed answers to my research questions and continuously ask, "What is going on?". Dedoose also allowed me to search for key terms and locate the context in which they appear, giving me a visual to determine if the key terms were created by myself in my memos and observations or if the key terms were coming from the participant's words in the interview and observations. This

type of search can be saved in Dedoose, which allowed me to document my searches, write around them, and provide a traceable path of my research footprints when needed.

A paper-based binder of all transcribed data, coded data, etc. was useful for the instances when the Dedoose program could not perform the kind of organization or connecting I needed it to (as mentioned previously). This binder was taken with me to various locations where I reflected on the data in new places and was able develop new ideas. The combination of the paper-based binder and the Dedoose software and documents allowed me to stay organized, while still providing me the freedom to physically manipulate the data to form new meanings and understandings.

To protect the participant's privacy, the data was stored on my personal laptop that requires a username and password to be used. The folder on the computer where the data files are stored is also password protected. The paper files and binders are kept in a locked file cabinet at my home when not in use. As stated in the IRB, all data will be kept for a minimum of three years and will be destroyed upon the completion of use of the data.

Data Analysis

To coincide with qualitative inquiry's inductive approach, raw data was used to create contextual units of meaning that were labeled as codes, grouped into broad categories, and themed when patterns across and within the categories are identified (Given, 2008). This study, as previously stated, used "open-ended" questions whose answers were unpredictable and could not be confined to pre-conceived codes. Saldaña defines a code as "a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and /or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data" (2009). All of the data collected in this study,

including interview transcripts, observation field notes, researcher journal entries, photographs, and artifacts were be coded in several cycles. The first cycle of coding began during field or interview observations using single words or parts of a text. The codes from the first cycle of coding were used as is and also generated new ideas for codes in the second and later cycles of coding. A code is meant to capture the primary essence of the data (Saldaña, 2009) that aids the researcher in answering the research questions.

Therefore, coding was done on a line-by-line basis so the code was constructed from the data rather than the data being constructed to fit a pre-existing code (Charmaz, 2006). For the purpose of this study, the code was taken directly from the participant's words, which is known as In Vivo Coding (Saldaña, 2009). The use of In Vivo Coding allowed me to capture the words the songwriter typically used when he is writing instead of using English teacher or rhetorician jargon to describe his process. Repetitive phrases, action verbs, words with strong connotation, and phrases unique to the participant drew my attention to be coded. There is no fixed rule for number of In Vivo codes per pages of data (Saldaña, 2009), therefore, the actual number of codes generated was not known until the analysis process is complete. After four cycles of coding, 78 codes were applied to 1245 excerpts.

As codes were generated in the first cycle, I documented my thoughts in researcher memos. These memos were useful during the second cycle of coding that was more direct and selective (Charmaz 2006). In order for me to widen my focus and not become overly dependent on In Vivo coding of the participant's words, which could have resulted in an inability to connect emerging ideas to the theoretical lens and limited insight (Saldaña, 2009), I also used In Vivo codes taken from my recorded thoughts in my memos. Quotation marks were used to

differentiate between participant-based codes and researcher-based codes (Saldaña, 2009), so I could keep track of what is significant to the participant and what is significant to myself. This allowed me to connect my ideas to arts-based educational research while still keeping the participant's words intact from the first cycle of coding.   Below is an excerpt from the transcripts with the line-by-line coding.

Table 3.2

Sample of Line-by-Line Coding

Interview Dialogue	Initial Coding
C: How do you know what those guidelines are? A: Just through experience, through listening to a song. You know, like listen to an Aerosmith record, and I would say that's a good example of rock music, like what they do and talk about…you know, it can be across the board. You listen to a hip hop record (leans back and sighs). You know the main thing that you get out of that probably is like the production, the rythms, the beats (slides fingers across tabletop as he describes) like, whatever is working at the time. And sometimes, you know styles like po…like right now hip hop and pop is kinda like the same thing 'cause you get like uh, Justin Beiber and like Ludacris and whoever else comes together and they're rapping over a pop track. So, sometimes they collide and you get like that cross-pollination of the two genres, the two audiences listening to the same music. For the most part, there are guidelines that kind of dictate what you can and can't do (nods head).	*"Experience," Critical Thinking Skills, Rock/Hip-Hop/Pop* *Risk Taking* *"Cross Pollination," Awareness of Audience*

This second cycle of codes created a more organized, concise list from the first cycle of codes. Some codes from the first cycle were merged together because they shared similar salient concepts (Saldaña, 2009). Others were dropped altogether because they were repetitive or did not help develop an answer to the research questions (Saldaña, 2009). As Saldaña states, the second cycle of coding generated categories that are built from the first cycle of codes. There is

no prescribed method for generating categories in cycle two, therefore each category contained a different number of codes and even approaches for generating categories (2009).

The process of applying themes took place after categories were generated. Themes are abstract identifiers that bring meaning to patterns that are continuously present throughout an experience (Saldaña, 2009). Five themes emerged from the categories: *R-E-S-P-E-C-T…My Comfort and Privacy, Think…Think about the Critical in the Creativity, Take a Chance on Me…'Cause Without the Risk Ain't Nothing, and I Do, I Do Understand You.* These themes are meant to capture what was essential to the phenomena (Saldaña, 2009) of songwriting, and begin with titles of popular songs to create a cohesive motif for the ethnodrama. The figure below is an illustrated example of how codes were merged into categories and then themes.
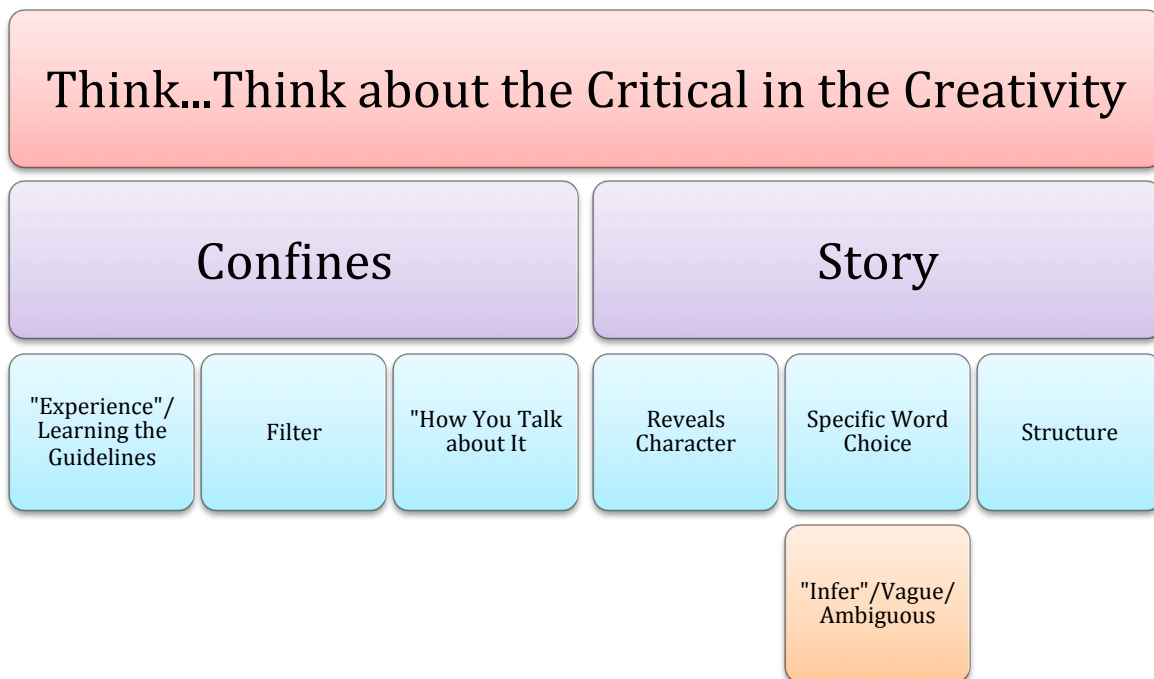
Figure 3.2. Example of codes, categories, and a theme. This figure illustrates how codes were merged into larger categories and an over-arching theme.

Charmaz's and Saldaña's approach to coding, categorizing, and theming data aligns with two of Eisner's guiding principals of arts-based education—arts as a way of knowing, and representation and editing. Generating themes from the data allowed me, as a researcher, to make meaning of the participant's experiences. Refining my first cycle of codes through lumping them into categories with similar concepts and then larger themes allowed me to edit and revise the meanings I gained from the participant's experiences. Furthermore, the resulting themes ultimately served as the framework for my ethnodramatic representation, a text designed for the general public in addition to other researchers.

Data Representation

To coincide with arts-based educational research as a framework for this study, the chosen method of artistic representation was an ethnodrama. Through the creation of an ethnodramatic script, I was able to internalize the knowledge gained from this study and connect my own personal experiences to it, and the script serves as a concrete representation of my meaning-making. This script opened up a figurative dialogue between the participant and I so the meaning and message could be further refined (Eisner, 2002).

Because the ethnodrama serves an artistic representation of the meaning-making from this study, it was built around the themes triangulated throughout the data. Writing an ethnodrama required me to sift through pages and pages of transcripts, field notes, and artifacts from the study to find salient ideas that triangulate throughout the data. These salient ideas drove the plot of the ethnodrama and brought the study to life creating a story that seemed more vivid (Saldaña, 2011). Smith (1993) stated that at times, language may fail the participant or the

participant's feeling(s) may not be as powerful when described with words (as cited in Saldaña, 2011).

I have taught drama and theatre at the high school level for four years and have been involved in writing, acting in, and directing theatre productions for nearly two decades. Therefore, I am very familiar with the elements of drama including, but not limited to staging, lighting, sound effects, monologues, and dramatic irony. I am also aware that conflict often drives the plot of a dramatic script and used using this element to make the script more interesting to the audience. The artistic task undertook involved identifying any conflicts the participant experienced or described during the interviews and observations and connecting those conflicts to the themes that emerge from multiple data sources. I urge the reader to bear in mind that I could not separate myself or my values from the artistic process used to create the ethnodrama, and therefore my findings may be suspect because my artistic process may alter the "original" moment of experiences. However, I am copying the original experience through re-imagining, re-thinking, and re-presenting to the best of my limited abilities.

To write the actual script, I went back to my interviews, observations, and photographs and pulled noteworthy dialogue (Saldaña, 2011) that helped me create the themes mentioned above. Saldaña provides an example of this in his article *Dramatizing Data: A Primer*. The verbatim transcript from an interview (see Figure 4) was reduced to words that illuminated the salient ideas for a dramatic effect (Saldaña, 2003) as seen in Figure 5. Transition words and phrases were added to help smooth out rough patches of dialogue or the move from one scene to another. Alfred Hitchcock once said, "Drama is life with the dull parts cut out of it." The script

67

created is meant to be a concentration of the participant's experiences during songwriting with all the tedious parts taken out (Saldaña, 2003).

> Barry: And I remember going to see the shows. I remember the interviews afterwards, sitting out on the grass, talking about what we thought about the shows, and what we thought about the longitudinal study. I remember always having interns sitting in the back of the class, watching us do drama.
> Johnny: What shows do you remember?
> Barry: I remember a lot of the Childsplay stuff. [Childsplay is a local professional touring theatre company for young audiences.]
> Johnny: Any particular titles or images come to mind?
> Barry: I remember *Clarissa's Closet*, which was interesting because I performed that last year. And I was thinking, "You know I've seen this, I've seen this, it was Childsplay came did it." And I also remember one about, I recall an Oriental setting, there were masks, uh, I don't know much about it, like journeying something.
> Johnny: Any other images?
> Barry: I remember them coming out and taking their bows and then talking to us after the show, and the energy they had, and just the raw energy and everything. They were answering questions and they seemed to be having so much fun just being there, and I think that's when I first decided I wanted to be an actor. So I saw that and it was an amazing feeling, there was just energy, you could see it, it was emanating from them, and just from having done this show. And it was just a show for a bunch of elementary kids, and yet it was still, it was a show, you know? And it was, that was when it first, I first started thinking, "Hm, this is something I want to look into."

Figure 3.3. Interview with Barry. This figure is an excerpt from Saldaña's interviews with a participant from a 1998 study.

> Barry: And I remember going to see the shows, a lot of Childsplay stuff. I remember them coming out and taking their bows and then talking to us after the show. And the energy they had! They were answering questions and they seemed to be having so much fun just being there. And I think that's when I first decided I wanted to be an actor. It was an amazing feeling! That was when I first started thinking, "Hm, this is something I want to look into." (Saldaña, 1998b, p. 92)[6]

Figure 3.4. Monologue from Saldaña's *Maybe Someday, if I'm Famous.* This figure is an example of a monologue created from a reduced interview.

I had several options when it came to choosing characters for my ethnodrama. Four characters were created to relay the salient ideas that emerged in the data. Gib was a representation of the participant, concocted from actual dialogue spoken in the observations and interview and filler-dialogue, words and phrases added to help fit the dialogue into the setting of a classroom. The second main character, Rebecca Ryan, was a conglomeration of my experiences teaching writing, as well as problems my co-workers have expressed when teaching writing. Although Rebecca Ryan is a fictitious character, the conflicts she experiences when teaching writing are adapted from real-life situations. Two side-characters were created to aid in the theatrical feel of the text. Bull Teddy, a radio DJ telling the story of *Confessions from the Writer's Block,* was named to represent the participant's dog who was ever-present in the all of the observations and interviews. He serves as a narrator in order to set up the background of the ethnodrama and to help smooth transitions between scenes. Barnes, an Advanced Placement History teacher, was based on a co-worker of mine who also struggles with teaching writing. The inclusion of this character is meant to demonstrate that the difficulty of teaching writing does not just apply to English teachers. The participant took the role of himself to keep the participant's view intact (Saldaña, 2003).

Trustworthiness and Rigor

The nature of qualitative research is "messy" (Parkhe, 1993) but still adheres to a framework to ensure credibility. Eisner (1998b) defined the credibility of qualitative research as a measurement of three components: structural corroboration, consensual validation, and referential adequacy. Structural corroboration, more commonly referred to as data triangulation (Hoepfl, 1997), refers to the use of multiple and different data sources to construct evidence

(Creswell, 2007). Collecting data through varying methods and identifying patterns that are consistent throughout the sources increases the credibility of the findings (Knafl and Breitmeyer, 1991 as cited in Houghton et al., 2013). Consensual Validation, also known as peer debriefing, refers to an external peer who questions the researcher's methods, meanings, and interpretations (Creswell, 2006). This peer review is not meant to "prove" the researcher's analysis is correct, rather it is meant as a means to verify the findings were formed through a logical analysis (Houghton et al., 2013). The third measure of credibility, referential adequacy, requires the researcher to question how the findings will relate to other contexts outside this study (Givens, 2008). With the use of thick, vivid descriptions, the "researcher enables readers to transfer information to other settings and to determine whether the findings can be transferred" (Creswell, 2007, p. 209) to contexts with common features.

The value of the data is increased by the decreased distance between the researcher and the participant through prolonged stays in the field (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Member checks allow the researcher to continuously share his/her findings with the participant to determine if the researcher has accurately represented the participant's viewpoint (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Member checks can be done through letting the participant watch the video recordings of observations and interviews, read transcripts, and discuss the themes that have emerged from triangulated data (Krefting, 1990). A researcher's journal also enhances the credibility of the findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This journal reflects the researcher's thoughts, emotions, questions, and connections generated through contact with the participant and examination of the data (Krefting, 1990). Combined, member checks, researcher journaling, peer review, and data triangulation help to ensure the trustworthiness of the data.

Through this study, the participant shared valuable information about his writing process with me. In return, he had a chance to reflect on his writing process and added to the writing pedagogy pool of knowledge. His exposure to a new fan base will increase through the publications and presentations that articulate from this study. The lines between being a friend, fan, sometimes a support system, and always a researcher were blurry and separating these roles into discrete activities was not possible. Ethically, I faced dilemma about how to represent the findings in a way that did not tarnish the relationship that developed as a result of my insider status and access. As sensitive information arose, I had to consider what role I wanted to play. I had to balance between gaining access to the sensitive information and playing the protector who warns the participant of the significance of what he is about to reveal. I also had to battle with the English teacher in me and tried to prevent myself from helping him write his songs. Fortunately, the participant and co-participant were both willing to let me in on their process, and I myself became a co-writer in the observations. By conferencing with him during his songwriting sessions, I could have altered the data so that the process documented does not represent his true process. However, as a participant observer, valuable insight was gained by participating in some of the writing sessions. I had to negotiate the roles of participant and observer so I did not overtly influence his process.

Having the participant sign a consent form at the beginning of the study does not dictate the way in which the participant interacts during the research. Rather, the consenting is conditional on negotiating the roles both the researcher and participant play throughout the study.

Posolutely, this study did not come with specific guidelines or ethical concerns laid out, but I attempted to identify the ethical negotiations I made through journaling so I could shed light on the ethical decisions I made throughout the study.

Chapter Summary

This chapter is grounded in various qualitative approaches informing research design, data collection, analysis, and re-presentation. By building from the ground up and collecting various forms of data that are analyzed then represented, this study will capture multiple ways of producing knowledge.

This collaborative, inductive research process, along with member checks, peer debriefing, and shuffling between inquiry and reflection will enhance rigor and trustworthiness of this research. Since this study began with the intent to make meaning of new knowledge, the approaches taken will be consistently informed by theoretical and methodological frameworks of such epistemologies, will allow for varied forms of data analysis and representation.

My subjectivity will be brought to the through writing, member checks, peer debriefing, constructing and ethnodrama. In the next two chapters, the participant's songwriting methods and processes for revision will be represented and discussed.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

This chapter will be split into two main sections, the description of themes and an ethnodramatic script based on those themes. The findings are organized by the three research questions:

1. How does the participant describe the process of songwriting?

2. In what ways does the participant use creative risk-taking in his songwriting?

3. In what ways does the participant's process of songwriting reflect critical thinking?

This ethnodramatic script was written as representation of the data. The scenes in the script correspond to a theme that emerged from the data. The script offers the reader the opportunity to hear and visualize the researcher's and songwriter's experiences and form meaning from the dramatic representation. All of the theme titles were formed from a combination of existing song titles and the main ideas from the interviews and transcripts in order to carry on the music motif. The four themes explained below are *I Do, I Do Understand You; Think, Think about the Critical in the Creativity; R-E-S-P-E-C-T My Comfort and Privacy;* and *Take a Chance on Me 'Cause without that, Risk Ain't Nothin'.*

Please note, due to protection of the songwriter's intellectual property rights outlined in the IRB for this study, complete transcripts of the interview and observations and lyrics will not be included in the appendices until the songs written during this study are recorded and released for public listening.

I Do, I Do Understand You!

The participant had an in-depth knowledge of his own writing process and the production process of songs that he delivered through casual, relatable diction. His words, different from

what one might hear in the typical English Language Arts classroom, were much less jargon-filled. He used words that carried positive connotations and made the process of writing and producing a song sound enjoyable; By-and through this study, I found that professional writers give us new ways to talk to students about writing. Hence, the title of this theme *I Do, I Do Understand You.* Using words and phrases similar to the songwriter's could possibly help students understand the writing process better and lessen the threats that come with writing when formal jargon is used. Using some of these phrases may also help writing teachers better define their ~~own~~ roles as well as students'.

One word the participant used repeatedly throughout the interview and observations was "co-write." Through the participant's words, the definition of a co-write could be inferred as the act of writing a song with another person(s). Even though this word is specific to the music industry, its definition is applicable to a number of other writing settings. For instance, academics often co-author journal articles or book articles and students write collaboratively for specific projects. "Co-write" could be used to describe any type of collaborative writing across a variety of writing environments. The word also has a more pleasant connotation than "peer-editing," which is a process where students read each other's work and either edit for Standard English conventions or comment on their peer's writing. By using the term "co-write," the connotation of "peer-edit" would shift slightly. Instead of only looking for mistakes in grammar or unclear sentences, students' collaborative writing would focus more on guiding each other to a finished product. If student "co-writes" followed the process of the participant's co-writes, this movement would occur mainly through conversation, listening repeatedly to what was already

written, and "filling in the holes," which was another phrase used frequently by both the participant and secondary participant during the observations.

During each of the two observations, the participant, secondary participant, and I were able to write two complete songs by "filling in the holes." Both times, the process began with a casual conversation between the three of us wherein we hoped to find a topic to write about. While we were conversing our way through possible topics, we were also searching for a hook. In music, the hook is the phrase or melody that makes the song appeal to the listener and is easy to remember. It also tends to be the title of the song and is often repeated numerous times. Once the participant chose a hook that fit his melody and the topic we three had agreed upon, we worked to build the rest of the song. Much of the transcriptions of the observations look something like this, "Mmmm, mmm, doo, doo, baby/I'll sing your song," where the "Mmmm-mmm's" and "doo-doo-doo's" serve as placeholders. The participant had already created the melody, but there were not yet words that would fit into that melody. Instead of outlining the entire song beforehand, the other co-writers and I built the song around the lyrics that came out first. We then listened to the lyrics we had just created and worked to "fill in the holes." By doing so, we did not get stuck on figuring out the next line. We simply let the conversation lead us to whatever line could be filled in next.

The holes that had to be filled in did not emerge in perfect form from complete thoughts. Instead, we worked to "mold" or "massage" the words from the conversation, a phrase the participant used to describe the process of shaping the beginning words into something that was usable in the song and that would fit with the overall feel of the song. This "molding" occurred continually throughout the process. Andy would replace the "mmm-mmm's" and "doo-doo-

doo's" with actual words, test those words to make sure they fit the rhythm; and if the words were still a bit off, we worked together to mold them until they fit with the melody. This molding and massaging also happened at the beginning of the song when we were trying to determine a topic. Conversation, testing, and tweaking, allowed us to mold our original thoughts into a workable topic.

Even though the observed co-writing sessions generated two complete songs, the participant did not consider these songs finished or polished. He described these un-produced songs as "raw" or in the "baby phase." He showed a strong discomfort for letting his radio audience hear songs in the baby phase.   According to Andy, only certain people are allowed to hear a song in its "baby phase," this select group being his fellow co-writers, producer, and close family members. (This topic of trust and privacy is elaborated on in the theme *R-E-S-P-E-C-T My Comfort and Privacy)*. Andy describes his audience listening to the "raw" or "baby phase" as, "your general listening audience is not going to understand that song when it's just in its raw state…they won't really be that into it because they're so used everything coming to them like, here it is...it's finished, it's hot out of the oven." Fine-tuning the song so that it is ready for the general listening audience's ears is the task of a producer, at least in the country music genre.

"An orchestrator" or "director" is how Andy views his producer's role. The producer listens to the song with the artist, charts it out, and brings the band in to record the song on a demo. After this "wrangling of musicians," the producer then takes the song to the sound engineers and tells them what elements to enhance on the song, all the while listening to and incorporating the artist's style and suggestions. Altogether, the artist, band, sound engineers, producers, and even record labels provided a system of "checks and balances" to make sure the

76

music produced is high quality. To sum it up, the role of Andy's producer is to find the most valuable parts of the song in its "baby phase;" take it through the production process by telling the artists, musicians, and sound engineers what to enhance; and turn the "raw" song into a finished product that is ready for a wide listening audience.

If educators used this participant's description of a producer to characterize their own role as writing teachers, their focus would be to identify the best qualities, or "gems" if you will, of each student's writing, then work collaboratively with other experienced experts and the student to guide a raw text through the production process and into a final, polished piece that is ready for a wide reading audience. Writing experts, such as Katherine Bomer—author of *Hidden Gems: Naming and Teaching from the Brilliance in Every Student's Writing*—have brought this concept of teachers being the guides or "producers" of the writing process to the education world, and this study validates that concept as a method professional writer's themselves use. A teacher's role should be similar to that of the producer's, find the gem and work with other experts to polish it.

This professional writer's use of casual diction to describe his own writing processes can prove to be beneficial to educators by helping define a writing teacher's role, the students' roles, and the approaches we take to viewing the writing process. While the phrases discussed in this theme, *I Do, I Do Understand You*, are unique to the participant, his descriptions of writing are applicable to the world of education. By studying more professional writers in varying genres, writing teachers and other educators will have new ways to discuss and approach writing.

Think…Think about the Critical in the Creativity

The songs written during the observations of this study had significant ties to the English classroom, including understanding the fiction genre, using the writing process, thinking objectively and subjectively about a text during the creation process, working in the confines of a genre, being aware of one's audience, and understanding the significance of word choice. The participant has a deep understanding of the structure of both country music and pop genres as demonstrated by his diverse references to classic rock lyricists and analysis of popular artists' songs. The participant repeatedly states that to qualify as country, a song must tell a story (A. Gibson, personal communication, July 2 & 5, 2013), something students are often required to do. Students in today's K-12 classrooms have a long list of objectives for each grade level. Whether the objectives come from the Common Core Initiative or from a single state's grade-level expectations, a substantial chunk of the objectives deal with reading and writing fiction.

Even though the pop-style, country songs written by the participant appear simple on the surface, they actually contain a variety of fictional elements, including, but not limited to: revealing character and character motivation, foreshadowing, plot, setting, and drawing inferences. Crafting a country music song requires the writer to have a deep understanding of those fictional elements and how to weave those elements together to tell a story that has more than just a beginning, middle, and end.

Below is a table of how the songs written in the observations connect to several of the objectives in the English Language Arts Common Core Standard W.6.3 for Grade 6.

Table 4.1 *Common Core Standards for ELA Grade 6 Connections to Observation Songs*

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.3 Write narrative to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

Core Objective	Come on and Love Me	Sing Your Song Tonight
W.6.3.a Engage and orient reader by establishing a context and introducing a narrator and or/characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.	Male walks into a female's workplace, notices how beautiful she is, flatters her, encourages her to go on a date, encourages her to love him.	Male is at the beach waiting for a party to start, sees his crush pull up, gets his guitar ready so he can sing to her, shows he is nervous, gets encouragement to sing from her smile, sings to her.
W.6.3b Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, and description, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.	The line "It's alright if you act flirty" implies the girl is interested in the male lead, but she is hesitant about taking that risky first step. The male lead delivers lines such as, "You can have my number, if you want to" to soften the clichéd one liner "Can I get your number." Subtle twists on the one-liners make the male lead appear genuine rather than cocky.	Song builds anticipation and develops character by relaying how the character has wanted to do this for a long time "It never seems to be a right time, but tonight I'm gonna give it a go." The song continues to build anticipation for the character's singing debut when his crush shows up, chooses a seat directly across from him, and the male lead expresses his nervousness.
W.6.3e Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events.	The song concluded with the male lead flipping the tables. Through the majority of the song, he invites the girl to love him. At the end, he expresses that he wants her.	The song concludes with the male lead summoning enough courage to sing to his long-time crush.

During the observations of the participant's songwriting process, the concept of revision was ever-present. Instead of taking place after a draft of the song was written, revision began

during the brainstorming process, as illustrated by the following excerpts from the "Come on and Love Me" co-writing session.

The session begins with Allison reading some lines from her journal, "...don't tell me. Show me. Don't tell me, love me. Get to know me…words are cheap…." and evolves as she throws out lines while Andy continuously strums his guitar and suggests the song have "some element of hope."

After approximately three or four minutes of verbally "massaging" her original idea, Allison delivers a cluster of sentences that ends with "Just get over here and love me." I scribble down Allison's line and continue jotting the visual I am seeing while she continues working with the "get over here and love me" line. Several more minutes elapse as Allison contributes more possible lines and Andy comments on them, steering them back to something more up-beat. I scratch the words "Come on and love me" in my notebook and decide to share the line. Andy tests out the line with the melody he already has going and it happens to fit, becoming the hook of the song. After a solid eleven minutes of attempting to come up with something usable, we finally have one line. One that was dramatically different from the mood of Allison's first thoughts. All three of us worked together to shape Allison's original diary notes into a useable line. The revision continued throughout the entire process with each one of us verbalizing a thought, a possible line, and the others working to "massage" or "mold" that line into something useable.

There was never a physical stopping point where we decided to revise, it just came about in the flow of things. A large chunk of the revision was done through conversation and through sharing opinions of a specific line. Andy mentioned after the observation that there were quite a

few phrases that went through his head during the process that he chose not to share because he felt like they would not get us anywhere. I had many lines scribbled in my notebook that I didn't bother sharing, such as, "Off for the night/This feeling's kinda right," namely because I didn't feel like they fit with the direction the song was moving.

At other times, when I or another co-writer shared, the original line was molded until it fit with the melody Andy had been strumming. For instance, during observation two, Andy sings, "Everybody's sittin' round starin' at me/Doo, doo, bah, bah/Hope I got the right key/I hope so." He tweaks it a bit more and comes up with, "Tune my guitar /Hope I got the right key/I hope so" to fill the hole in the melody. He then merges the two versions and comes up with "Everybody's sittin' round starin' at me/Tune my guitar/Hope I got the right key/I hope so/Prayin' I got the right key." Another tweak changes "prayin'" to "pray" so the line flows a little better, and finally Andy comes up with "Everybody's sittin' round starin' at me/Tune my guitar/Pray I got the right key/I hope so."

This kind of process happened repeatedly throughout the entire session. One or more co-writer would throw out a line, Andy would "test" the line to see how it fit into the melody, and either Andy or the other co-writers would tweak the line until it fit into the song and flowed with the other lines and story we were trying to tell. This kind of revising required an intense amount of listening, returning to the top of the song, and listening again. We were constantly moving from a subjective viewpoint, being inside the song, focusing on a single line, to an objective viewpoint where we acted as listeners hearing the song for the first time. We questioned what made sense, what kind of visual we had created, what both male and female listeners would want, as well as the multiple meanings our phrases could take on.

81

This awareness of audience played a key role in the choice of specific words. While we wanted to provide the listeners with a visual, we also wanted to leave some of the words a bit vague so they would be more generic. By choosing "little work dress" over "you're pretty for a waitress" we kept the tone more romantic and made the dress relatable to a larger audience. Allison summed it up as, "I just think, yeah, if we just say work dress, it could be like anybody. You know? It could be a girl behind a counter somewhere. It could be this cute dress that she wears to work." Keeping the songs relatable was extremely important because we wanted our future listening audience to have an immediate tie with the song to keep them tuned in to it.

Even though the participant's output from writing was confined by the genre of country music, the method of getting to that output was not. The confines of country music, "spell it out," "tell a story" (personal communication with A. Gibson, July 2, 2013) where ever-present in the process, but they did not hinder the writer's ability to reach the desired output, a complete country-music song. Instead, the confines acted more as a starting point. What did we have to do? We had to tell a story. How we went about doing it was entirely up to us.

Even though songwriting would be classified as creative writing, there was a great deal of critical thinking involved in this process. The participant had to understand the elements of fiction, use those elements to artfully tell a story, maneuver inside the text to create something meaningful to him, move outside of the text to analyze how his audience would relate to his words…all while navigating inside the confines of a specific genre. Each of these parts was interwoven in the creative process. Each one of these parts, and the process as well, are requirements of the English Language Arts classroom as defined by the Common Core Standards.

R-E-S-P-E-C-T…My Comfort and Privacy

Three distinct categories that, upon first glance, appeared to have nothing to do with each other, wove themselves together throughout the interviews and observations. Trust, the feeling of security in regards to sharing thoughts and information, "the baby phase," the participant's phrase for his songs in the raw form, and comfort became the basis for the theme *R-E-S-P-E-C-T...My Comfort and Privacy*. The purpose of this theme is to illustrate how important respecting the participant's entire writing process and privacy was to him, and how that respect, centered in comfort, afforded me access to an aspect of the music industry most outsiders are not invited to experience in such a raw form.

The participant very much needed to trust whom he was working with and that the information he shared not be used in a way that would be harmful to his career. Although he was very casual about broaching the issue of trust, he did mention it each time we met in one way or another. For instance, during the interview, Andy stated,

> …people are going to have different opinions…they're going to have different directions that they're going to go as a songwriter, melodically or lyrically, and you kind of have to look at that and look at their history as a songwriter, and be like, ok, do I want to trust this person, do I like what they've done before?

The trust is applied, not to the co-writer themselves, but to the co-writer's creative process. If a co-writer isn't able to produce something worth listening to, something radio-worthy, the participant does not have faith in his co-writer's ability to lead the co-write in a

83

worthwhile direction. This stems from the need to compromise in a co-write. When asked about co-writes that did not quite work out, Andy responded, "It usually boils down to the other person, either you or them are not willing to compromise, and it doesn't go anywhere. That's kind of what makes a co-write work….you may not know if it's going to work…you just have to have faith that what they're doing is something you're going to like." An element of trust stems from faith in the co-writer's abilities to produce quality music.

This trust was also directly connected to the participant's privacy during the creative process. He described the production of a song in several distinct phases. First, the so-called draft of the song is written during what the participant coined as "the baby stage." Through flowing conversation and trial and error that takes place in a comfortable environment, a song is developed and recorded. In the participant's sessions, he had Allison, the secondary participant, write the final version of the lyrics on her laptop while he recorded himself playing the guitar and singing the lyrics using his iPhone's VoiceMemo utility. At the end of the session, the participant was left with a raw, un-produced version of the song. His voice sounds a little distant and isn't clean and clear through the entire song, the guitar is not amplified, there are no accompanying instruments, and the ending isn't quite determined, but the Mp3 is suitable enough for a listener to get the feel of the song. Andy, however, limits who is able to hear his songs in this baby stage. His family is often the first because he trusts them to give their honest opinions about the song without being too critical of the production elements. His family, though, is not ignorant of the production process and some have personal experience in the music industry. For instance, his father, who was a member of a surf-band called *The Sandals* wrote

and recorded the majority of the scores on the *Endless Summer* soundtrack, and sometimes travels with Andy as his bass player.

Andy also stated that his producer is one of the few people who is allowed to listen to a song that is still in the "baby phase" of development. When asked who he shares his "baby phase" work with, Andy responded,

I like to have something as far along as a I possibly can. When you're going into record a record…a lot of it depends on who you're playing it for. I could play a song that's in an earlier stage for my producer because…he's got a talented ear for hearing things in the beginning phase…you'd think a professional wants to hear it done…all the way because they're not going to be impressed unless it's done completely, but it's really kind of opposite because they can hear it in the baby stage and be like, "I know what I want to do with that."

Later, Andy went on to discuss the producer's role further and elaborate on why the producer can listen to a song that is still in the "baby phase." He describes his own producer as, "Directing them, leading them, taking them in the right direction to get what he hears out of the section." Andy appears to trust in the producer's ability to make the song better, all while keeping Andy's personality and personal taste still intact.

Outside of those whose musical ability he trusts, Andy also stated sharing a song that was still in the "baby phase" was down-right embarrassing. Taylor Swift's Diet Coke commercial came up in the interview, the one in which she is penning the lyrics to her song *22*. The commercial starts with Taylor writing the first line of the lyrics and saying it aloud. The next line is sung by a man in the car listening to the radio, and the commercial proceeds to go back

and forth between Taylor adding more lyrics and a fan singing the next line. Andy remarked he was embarrassed for Taylor because her audience is "hearing it [the song] before it's ready." Even though Andy knew the commercial was a recreation, he still felt embarrassed for her. He elaborated on his discomfort by adding,

…when you write, when you even record work tape…you're playing it, you're ready to write, to present the song to some extent. But when you're just writing it out, you're talking about it, that's…more of a private situation. So it was kind of uncomfortable for me. I was taken aback by it a little bit. Oh, that's weird.

At this point, he recognized the irony of saying it was uncomfortable to watch Taylor being recorded knowing that his songwriting process was going to be video-recorded later that week. We discussed "natural process," alternatives to video and audio recording, and "whatever feels comfortable for you" took place, and Andy verified that he was still willing to have his writing process recorded by me. Omnipresent in all the interviews and observations was the comfort that arises out of trusting a co-worker's creative abilities and commitment to keeping the "baby phase" private.

Similarly, physical comfort was also an extremely important component of the songwriter's process. In this study, comfort came from five different areas: physical space, physical activity, food and drink, clothes, and the relationship of the songwriter to those who were welcome to listen his music in the raw form.

The location the participant chose for the observations and interviews was his parents' residence which sits in a cove of a privately-owned, man-made lake in Northwest Missouri which is reached by driving down a narrow, windy, tree-covered road. The large, two-story

home sits at the bottom of the sloped driveway, approximately 50 yards from the road. Inside, to the right of the main door is the dining room where all the observations and interviews were held.

Three creamy, yellow walls enveloped the dining room table, with the fourth wall absent, creating an open-layout concept. A large window to the right of the dining room table looked out onto the front porch where white rocking chairs sat behind white, rectangular planters filled with fuchsia-pink impatiens. An over-sized mirror hung above the built-in buffet, 'causing the summer sunlight's rays to fill the room with natural light. To the left of the dining room table were floor-to-ceiling windows that provided an expansive view of the cove. These windows provided even more natural light, which left no need for artificial light. The participant repeatedly mentioned the need for sunshine and a comfortable environment while writing. When asked to describe the environment where he typically conducted co-writes, the participant responded,

> …everyone kind of has the same set up. It's usually like comfortable chairs. There's no desks or tables. Maybe like a coffee table…But I like a lot of light. I like the room to be naturally lit. I don't like four closed-in walls with no windows. You know, I definitely feel more creative in an environment that has a lot of natural light…I like it when it's sunny outside. For some reason, you know, if you wanna write a happy song. It's gotta be sunny. Or you have to be thinking about how sunny it should be.

The idea of comfort extended to the clothes he chose to wear to the interview and observations. For the songwriting sessions, the participant wore knee-length, khaki cargo shorts with a green, zip-up hoodie, the sleeves pushed half-way up his arm. He wore his shoulder-

length hair ~~was worn~~ down for the first session and pulled back into a mid-ponytail for the second. He wore, no rings or other accessories and was barefoot the entire time. The co-participant dressed in a similar fashion. She wore a white t-shirt, black, relaxed-fit sweat capris and flip-flops. Her hair was not styled, but she periodically pulled it up into a clip during the session. Both the participant and secondary participant appeared relaxed.

A critical component of the participant's writing process was "flow," where thoughts are focused on the task at hand and the majority of energy and emotions is concentrated on moving that task towards completion. In order to maintain "flow," the participant immersed himself in both physical (food, clothing, natural location, arrangement of room) and mental (trust in creative ability and privacy) comfort, all while doing a monotonous physical activity such as drumming his fingers or strumming the guitar.   All three of these comforts were an essential part of the creative process that enabled the participant to compose both music and lyrics. Respecting these comforts was of utmost important to the participant.

Take a Chance on Me…'Cause without that, Risk Ain't Nothin'

Creativity is entwined with taking risks because without risks, thoughts would be stagnant, stuck inside the head and would never make it to the page, or in the case of this study, into the song. By taking risks in a variety of ways, both low and high stakes, Andy increased his self-efficacy and made a name for himself in the music industry. Risk-taking begins in the co-writing sessions and carries all the way through a DJ choosing to play a song on the radio. Each step of the way, someone took a risk, whether minor or major, on a line in the song, recording the song, playing the song, etc. Risk-taking is key in Andy's songwriting process writing

because it builds self-efficacy and an audience, which are both necessary to succeed in the music industry.

The smallest, less frightening form of risk taking begins during a co-writing session. Each co-writer who participates in a sessions takes a small risk just by being there, after all, a co-write may prove to be unfruitful. As Andy stated in his interview about co-writing sessions that don't work, "you're so differently musically, and the way you work on things that you don't meld. You don't jive, so you have nothing, not really feeling the need or desire to get back and finish the song.,,You're just not interested in writing." Most of the time, Andy's co-writing sessions are fruitful, however, and the risk-taking picks up when the conversation starts to move towards developing the song.

Seasoned songwriters may not think anything of "throwing a title (or line) out there," in essence putting his/her words into the brainstorming pot, but for a novice such as myself, saying the thoughts that were swirling inside my head was a bit daunting. I was fearful my ideas for lyrics wouldn't be accepted by the other two co-writers and that I would put myself in an awkward position by trying to "pretend" that I was capable of producing a hit song like they had. At the beginning the first session, I hesitated to read any of the lines on my page. I felt my lines were good. I just didn't know if they were good enough for a song that might make it all the way to radio. I was too timid to share them until I noticed the co-writing conversation sort of circling.

Allison had repeatedly mentioned the line "Just get over here and love me," but Andy couldn't make it work with the melody his fingers were playing and wanted a line that was less dramatic and that fit the character of a romantic. In my observation notebook, I had scribbled the words "Come on and love me," but held onto them for several minutes because I thought Andy

would reject them. I finally made the decision to share the line because I knew that line would literally remain on the page if I didn't, and eventually, someone else's line would be chosen. I took a chance by throwing the line out there, and fortunately for me, Andy picked it up and turned it into the hook of the song. This acceptance of a single line, that and listening to quite a few of Andy and Allison's lines not get used, built up my self-confidence just enough to give me the courage to try more lines. I quickly figured out that if none of us were willing to share our thoughts, no matter how ridiculous we thought they were, the song was not going to move forward. Low-stakes risk taking, just adding a line to the conversation, kept the flow. The more my lines were accepted and used, the more my self-efficacy grew.

Acceptance of one's music, though, is not what happens the majority of the time in the music industry. Andy is at the beginning of a successful music career and has already had a song he co-wrote hit number one. However, not all of Andy's songs have turned into hit or even been recorded for that matter. When asked to describe a time when a song that was meaningful to him got rejected, Andy responded,

> …I'm pretty used to it by now. You get used to people saying no. In this business, you hear a no like, probably 20 times to a yes. That's just common. Because there are so many opinions in on a decision. Then, you know, you're not all going to arrive in on the same decision… they were definitely songs that I thought would be like mega-smash hits that they passed on…and I understand why they passed on them. You…have to look at things with different angles.

By making inferences from his description above, clearly, Andy has built up his self-efficacy as a writer. He is no longer afraid to have his music criticized or not be accepted by

other people in the industry. After asking Andy how rejection affected his confidence as a writer, he responded,

I just go back to the drawing board. You know, you get used to it. I'm sure the first time. I don't even remember how I felt the first time someone rejected something, but I'm good with constructive criticism. If you tell me why you don't like something, or even if you just tell me you don't like it. You can just be like, alright, let's go on to something new.

Go on to the next thing because you will eventually land on something if you keep going. Being asked to work with well-established songwriters increased his self-efficacy even more and encouraged him to keep writing songs.

During the process of writing the second song, we, as co-writers, took another kind of creative risk, sampling a hit 90's pop ballad into a song that was being written for country music radio. Allison had been tossing around the idea for some time, but she and Andy could never seem to make it work. During the evening of the second observation, Allison brought it up again while we were discussing possible topics for the second song, but her idea quickly died out of the conversation. The idea re-surfaced later in the conversation and Andy immediately thought of the song from Mr. Big, "Be With You," the most popular lines from the song being "I'm the one who wants to be with you/ Deep inside I hope you feel it too/ Waited on a line of greens and blues/ Just to be the next to be with you." All three of us were quite familiar with the song and began working it into the story of a young man preparing to sing to his crush on a moonlit summer night. With quite a bit of "molding and massaging" we were able to merge those lines into the story we were telling. By taking the risk of fusing a number one hit from the early 90's with a country music story, we were hoping to widen the song's listening audience since we used

a familiar lyric that people outside the country music world would relate to. The payoff from the risk, however, will not be known until/if the song makes it to radio, which could take several years.

Perhaps, those who invest money, time, and energy into his talents take the biggest risk associated with Andy's songwriting. Andy's producer, record label, and publishing company depend upon the quality of his product to make their investment payoff. All three of them take a chance on Andy's writing ability in hopes that it will pay off. So far, it has. Though Andy would not have a producer, publishing company, or record label if it weren't for one man taking a huge risk on an unknown artist. Andy tells the story of ~~him~~ being discovered as follows:

> I was discovered in Nashville. I moved there from LA where I had been working with
>
> people, different producers and engineers in the Latin music field…I moved to Nashville,
>
> and because I speak Spanish, I saw an opportunity for me to play live music in a different
>
> place that a lot of the other country guys couldn't tap into because they didn't speak
>
> Spanish. So I found all these Mexican restaurants down in Nolensville. It's a road in
>
> Nashville where… It's more of like a multicultural type of part of town. There's a lot of
>
> Hispanics, and Arab, and Asian and just different. It's more the ethnic part of town. So, I
>
> set up. There's three restaurants I was able to find, where I would sing a couple times a
>
> week or whatever, depending on that week and my schedule and their schedule. And at
>
> the same time I was working my Myspace account, like pretty hardcore. It was back
>
> when people were into Myspace. There wasn't any other outlet and it was actually a
>
> really good thing. And one day, I got a message from this guy John Rich on there. And I
>
> was like, no way is this John Rich. So I called the number and it was John Rich. And he

uh, at the time had a song out called "Lost in the Moment" with his band Big-N-Rich and it was a big song. It was number one. And I would take songs, like country songs and translate them into Spanish for the restaurant. Just so I could kind of fill out the catalogue of songs I could sing and for fun, you know, give me something to mess around with. And so John's song's out on the radio. And uh, even before I heard from him, I though it'd be a great idea to translate the song for the restaurant. So, he, we talked, he really liked my music. He wanted to come out to the restaurant to hear me play. So after I got off the phone with him, I'm like alright, I'm translating this song. So, I translated this song. He came into the restaurant. I see him come in. Next song I go into is "Lost in the Moment in Spanish," and he freaked out. He jumps up on stage, takes my buddy's guitar. We do "Lost in the Moment" as a duet. And it was really weird. These two guys, singing this love song to each other. It was awesome though.

Creative risk-taking is essential to Andy's entire writing process. From being willing to work with writers he's never worked with before, to contributing lines to the conversation of a co-write, to attempting to cross-pollinate music genres, to believing in and investing in someone's talent, creative risk-taking is necessary to the songwriting process. Without it, Andy's self-efficacy might not have been strong enough to propel him through his career and he'd just be a guy saving words to his phone.

Ethnodrama: Confessions from the Writer's Block

Characters

GIB: A professional singer and songwriter who has been working in the music industry for the past decade.

BULL TEDDY: A radio DJ who works for WTRC Radio *(audio-recorded voice)*

BARNES: An Advanced Placement History teacher whose future job status depends on his students' Advanced Placement scores. *(video-recorded actor)*

REBECCA RYAN: An elementary teacher working in a district that is obsessed with test scores. Her administration believes standardized test measure a student's knowledge and the only way to pass the state's standardized exams is to practice, practice, and practice the exams all year long. *(Rebeccaa's character is live and interacts with the characters on screen)*.

This ethnodrama will be performed using mixed media. Some of the characters will be pre-recorded, while others will be interacting with them on a live stage. The venue for this performance can be as small as a classroom, as long as a projector is available.

Act 1: Scene 1

R-E-S-P-E-C-T My Comfort and Privacy
The stage is black. Bull Teddy's voice is heard over the speakers.

TEDDY: This is Chapter a Day, Bull Teddy here. I'm reading from *Confessions from the Writer's Block*, a tale of a teacher charged with the task of teaching one of the dreaded three "R's"…wrrriiiittttiiinnngggg. The story takes us back to a place in time when writing was a chore, not just for the students, but for the luckless faculty who were stuck teaching it to reluctant students.

(Sound Effect: School bell)

(BULL's voice continues to be heard as the projector screen lowers and a video begins to play)
It was a humid Wednesday afternoon, sometime near the middle of the school year. Half-empty binders are jammed into backpacks, headphones slipped into ears *(An image of STUDENTS walking flashes on the screen)*. A teacher nervously taps his foot. Students stroll past him, out the door, unaware of the pressure he is under. A voice is heard from down the hall. "Barnes! I'm ready for you, Barnes." The teacher walks down the hallway, anxiously awaiting his fate.

(The lights dim on Bull Teddy and fully rise on Teacher 1) (Sound Effect: slamming door…BARNES appears on screen, shaken)

BARNES: *(rubbing his hands over his eyes and down his face and speaks to the camera MTV-Real-World style)* I'm screwed. I'm totally screwed. These kids. I just don't know what to do with 'em. Six years of college, two degrees, thousands of dollars, and my job comes down to a couple of kids being able to hammer out an essay in 40 minutes flat. Man, I'm totally screwed. There's no hope. I'm gonna lose my job next year if *some*body doesn't pass this AP exam…but these kids can't write. *(Sighs)* I'm so screwed.

RYAN: *(head appears on right side of screen)* Barnes? What are you doing in here? You've got a class waiting in the hall.

BARNES *(sliding off stool)* Ugh, ninth grade. I was hoping maybe they would all be mysteriously absent today.

RYAN: *(coming into full view)* Sorry, Barnes, even aliens don't want those kids.

BARNES: No one does. *(reluctantly leaves the video diary room)*

RYAN: *(patiently waits for BARNES to exit the room while she takes the stool. As soon as he is gone. She jumps off the stool and gets in the camera's lens)* Aaaaaarrrrrggghhhhhh. Are you kidding me? Really? They're in 4th Grade. Fourth Grade and you expect them to have some amazing insight into their lives, like they're capable of reflecting on how a single event has changed them? For Christ's sake, they're only nine years old. I'm lucky if they remember to bring a pencil to class. How am I going to do this? *(she places her head in her hands and begins to sob)*

BULL TEDDY: *(heard overhead)* Faced with a seemingly impossible task, Rebecca cries tears of defeat. Unaware help is hovering nearby.

(An angel's harp sounds and a man who resembles Jesus, tan skin, long hair, nonchalantly strolls into the camera booth).

GIB: (*Brushing his shoulder-length hair out of his face and extending his hand)* Hey girl.

RYAN: (*puzzled as to why this stranger is in the confessional booth)* Uhm, hello, Mr….

GIB: Gibson, Andy Gibson, but please, call me Gib. Mr. Gibson sounds far too stuffy.

RYAN: Mr…I mean Gib, can I help you with something?

GIB: No, no, I'm here to help you.

RYAN: With???

GIB: With writing.

RYAN: With writing? But you don't look like a writing teacher. You don't look like a teacher at all.

GIB: Well, *(chuckles)* that's because I'm not. Never really was a fan of school.

RYAN: So, how are *you* going to help *me* with teaching fourth graders how to write?

GIB: Well, first of all, we're going to have to start by making this place a lot more comfortable. Let's start with the lighting.   I like a lot of light. I like the room to be naturally lit. No closed-in walls. You know, I definitely feel more creative in an environment that has a lot of natural light. And, I like it when it's sunny outside.

RYAN: And why do I need to worry about being creative? I'm teaching personal essays to fourth graders. There's no creativity involved in that.

GIB: Let's worry about the lighting first. *(Snaps fingers and background changes from black to white)*.

RYAN: Mmmm, k. I still don't see how this is going to help with teaching writing.

GIB: I'm not done just yet. This place still has a very stiff feel to it. If you want to get the vibe flowing, you need a place where people actually feel comfortable…some food, a couch, maybe like a coffee table, some comfortable chairs. Definitely no desks.

RYAN: You act like I have a bunch of movers on hand and like the administration won't have a cow if I just throw all the desks in storage.

GIB: Girl, you've gotta learn to relax. Maybe get some white noise going or something because people are nothing but a distracting element. You kind of have to have a focused environment. Like the door is closed when you're writing. I don't like to have the door open, people walking by, or hearing what you're working on. I like an isolated environment, but have the windows open or the shades so that you get natural light. You know? Shut the administration out. These are your students, your world. You've got to create a safe place for them to write.

RYAN: Uh, Gib, you act like school isn't a safe place to be. We have all kinds of security measures to protect students.

GIB: Yes, yes, you do. Schools are notorious for safety protocol, but what they seem to forget is privacy. Have you ever seen that Taylor Swift Diet Coke commercial? The one where she is pretending to write out lyrics to the song "22"?

RYAN: Yes.

GIB: It's weird because she's writing the lyric down and she's talking the lyric out for this new song that she has out right now, and it's uncomfortable because that's private because, you know, it's like you're like writing a song, and it's being broadcast for the whole world to see on a commercial. I watched it, and oh, that's so uncomfortable because the audience hearing the song before it's ready. She wasn't playing it or singing. She was just talking the lyric out, and it sounds so dumb when you're just writing it out.

RYAN: Gib, I totally don't get you. What on earth does Taylor Swift have to do with students writing in a classroom?

GIB: Well, think about it. How many times have you asked your students to sit down and write a story, an essay, whatever? And the next day a complete draft of the story is due. The student has to share a raw piece of writing with you. And what do you do? You grade it. You give the student some meaningless number value on something that isn't even ready for an audience to read.

RYAN: Ok, I get your drift, but I do conference with my students before they turn in a final draft. I tell them what they're missing, help with grammatical errors, etc., etc.

GIB: You do that with a red pen?

RYAN: Sometimes. Other times I use purple, maybe blue.

GIB: So you correct their work that is still in the baby phase?

RYAN: Baby phase?

GIB: Before I share my work with my listening audience, I like to have something as far along as I possibly can. When you're going into record a record, a lot of it depends on who you're playing it for. I could play a song that's in an earlier stage for my producer because he's got a talented ear for hearing things in the beginning phase. You'd think a professional wants to hear it done all the way because he's not going to be impressed unless the song's done completely, but it's really kind of opposite. He can hear it in the baby stage and be like, "I know what I want to do with that."

RYAN: So, when I conference with my students, I need to focus on the potential the piece has, rather than what it's missing?

GIB: Uh-huh, yeah, you've got to know how to take the piece and fashion it into something worth reading. Whereas, your general reading audience is not going to understand the text when it's just in its raw state. They won't really be that into it because they're so used everything

coming to them like, here it is...it's finished, it's hot out of the oven. You know. You, as a teacher, have got to function like a producer. Look for what can come out of the text, not for what is missing in the text. Don't act like an audience before the piece is even ready for an audience to read.

RYAN: Ok, I get you. It makes sense that a student would be fearful to share her writing with me for fear I would just tear it apart. I get that. That's happened to me a million times in my educational career.

GIB: Exactly. And by taking that criticism off the table in the beginning, you're opening the door for a conversation to happen. The student's going to trust you more and respect the fact that you are there to help her, rather than criticize her.

RYAN: She's got to believe in me as much as I believe in her?

GIB: Yup. A little R-E-S-P-E-C-T goes a long ways.

RYAN: R-E-S-P-E-C-T…my comfort and privacy. (*both laugh*)

GIB: Yeah, you got it. (*sings and music plays for a moment*) R-E-S-P-E-C-T find out what it means to me.

BOTH: (*singing*) Sock it to me, sock it to me, sock it to me, sock it to me. (*both laugh*)

RYAN: All right, Gib. You may be on to something here. I'm starting to trust that you know what you're talking about. What else do ya got?

GIB: Sorry, chica. I've got to be on my way. Got a gig in just a few.

RYAN: Oh, ok. Well, thanks for the advice! Break a leg!

GIB: Will do. Later!

RYAN: Later! (*GIB walks off camera, Ryan goes the other way, video lights go dark*)

BULL TEDDY: Feeling a little more hopeful, Rebecca returns to her classroom, eager to re-arrange the room and test out Gib's suggestions. A few weeks pass, and Rebecca has been seeing improvement in the content of her student's writing, but she is worried about putting them under timed pressure for the upcoming standardized exam. She returns to the Writer's Block to share her fears.

Act I: Scene 2

Think, Think about the Critical in the Creativity
I Do, I Do Understand You

The lights on the video come up again. Ryan enters room and sits on the stool appearing a bit frustrated. Video screen is blank.

RYAN: *(Running her hand down her face)* Ooooohhhhh, man. State writing exam in three weeks. We're making progress, but my students are freakin' out about writing under that time constraint. I know they're great writers. They've got great ideas, but getting through the entire writing process in just a few hours ain't gonna happen. And they keep getting confused about what goes into a personal narrative and expository. I don't know what to do!

Aretha Franklin's song, "Think" begins playing in the background. Ryan looks around, wondering where the music is coming from. She looks to her left and sees GIB enter. GIB is grooving a bit and singing the words the song.
GIB: *(singing)* You better think, think about what you're trying to do to me. Let your mind go, let yourself be free. *(RYAN just follows him with her head, looking at him like he's crazy)* *(Jokingly throws hands in the air and looks at Ryan, urging her to do the same)* Freedom! Freedom! *(Ryan questioningly throws her hands in the air)* Freedom!

RYAN: Hey Gib. Have you come to bestow some of your magical writing wisdom upon me, just in time for state testing?

GIB: Hey girl, you know I don't know much of anything about state writing exams.

RYAN: Dammit, I thought you were my knight in shining armor.

GIB: Sorry, chica. Why don't you tell me a little bit about these exams and I'll try to whip up some advice for you.

RYAN: Okie dokie. Well, they suck.

GIB: Maybe a little more information, please?

RYAN: Alright, alright. My fourth graders have two write two essays, one expository, one personal narrative under a time constraint. These essays have to meet stringent genre requirements, must be cohesive, and must not be in draft forms. In other words, they have to be pretty polished. I know these kids can write. I know they can. I just don't know if they can do it without my help. They tend to easily get off-track when I'm not there to guide them.

GIB: Ok. That's a bit of a dilemma, but I might be of some help. I know all about working with confines.

RYAN: You do? But I thought you were a songwriter. You know, that you function more on the creative side of writing, no rules, no limiting structures?

GIB: Well, yes and no. Of course songwriting falls under the creative category, but there are plenty of rules I have to follow. You know I mostly write country music, right?

RYAN: Yeah.

GIB: Ok, well, country music has its own set of rules. A country audience is gonna wanna have a complete thought, to where it's all spelled out. It's either a story or the concept is completely developed. Whereas in rock or pop, you can have something that just sounds cool and let the listener interpret it. 'Cause in rock, they're more concerned with the beat or the rhythm. Whereas in country, the box you have to stay within is a bit smaller. You can get outside of the box a little bit, but country music doesn't allow for as much, uhm, I guess, creative liberty in the production phase. So, you work more on what the song says and it has to be something concrete that they can get ahold of.

RYAN: Whoa, ok. I didn't realize songwriting could be so rigid.
GIB: I wouldn't really call it rigid. Everything can be flexible if you push it the right way. Just think of the confines as starting points.

RYAN: Ugh, I think of confines as confines. Could you show me what you mean?

GIB: Just a second. I might have a recording from a co-writing session I did last summer on my phone. If I can find it *(scrolls through phone),* I'll show you what I mean. *(Scrolls a little bit more).* Ah, here. Let me hook it up so you can watch. Now, keep in mind, this is really raw. This is for me to remember what we came up with in the flow of things, and I usually don't show the baby phase of my writing to people.

RYAN: You like your privacy. I remember. I promise I won't judge you *too* harshly. *(Both grin).*

Video appears on screen.

GIB: At this point, we've established a hook, Sing your song tonight, but we don't have much else. We've talked about the story we wanted to tell and kind of know the general story line, but we're at the part where we need some words to come to us.

Video plays where the line "Sittin' on the hood of my old car" line is established and plays through the part where Andy ends the chorus with "sing your song tonight," approximately 90 seconds of video.

RYAN: *(Looks at Gib with raised eyebrows)*.

GIB: I know, I know. It doesn't sound like much. I told you. This is really raw. You're seeing the process when you're used to getting the final product.

RYAN: Yup. But I see something else too.

GIB: Yeah?

RYAN: Yeah. I get what you were saying. A country song has to have a hook, so you started with that. You didn't worry about what came next. You just kind of let things fall into place and see where they landed.

GIB: Yeah. Exactly. In a typical co-write, you pass ideas back and forth, like someone will say, "Well, how 'bout this hook," for a song. And you're like, "Yeah, I like that, and you start singing a melody for it, you start playing a rhythm, and it's like well, I think the music feels more like this now, and you kind of change it, and you pass it back and forth and you mold it into what it's going to be.

RYAN: Molding. Hmm, I like that concept. You wouldn't happen to have a finished version of the song, would you?

GIB: Actually, I think I do. Well, not a produced version, but I do have the song in its entirety. *(Plays "Sing Your Song Tonight" for Ryan)*

RYAN: Whoa! You went from a lot of "mmmm, mmm's" and "doo, doo, doo, doo, doo's" to that? And listen to all the elements of fiction you have in there: a setting, character motivation, foreshadowing, plot development. They lyrics are so simple, but there's such a story there. And, like, I automatically relate to the song because you've got the lines from that Mr. Big song in there. Super smart.

GIB: Glad you caught that. My audience expects me as an artist to portray myself as they want to see me, like girls wanna hear the romantic stuff, guys wanna hear something they can relate to, personality-wise. People in country music want things that are very structured, very laid out, and very understandable. No abstract, open-to-interpretation, type of lyrics.

RYAN: The audience has to be able to see themselves as a character in the song's story.

GIB: Yeah. The success of a song definitely depends on relate-ability.

RYAN: You've got this amazing ability to move in and out of the text. To live in the moment of songwriting, but to think far beyond the creation process all the way to what the song sounds like through a listener's ears. My students totally need to learn that skill. *(Singing)* You better

think, think about the critical in the creativity. *(Both laugh)* How long did it take you to write that?

GIB: Usually, my co-writers and I can turn out a song in under three hours.

RYAN: That's it? I always thought songwriters needed a moment of inspiration for a song to come out.

GIB: Yeah, you do, but inspiration can be pulled from what you talk about in your normal, every-day kind of conversation. Sometimes, something will jump out and catch your attention, and you just kind of go for it.

RYAN: That's so cool. It just makes so much more sense for writers to talk it out instead of listing a whole bunch of meaningless topics to write about. And don't get me started on peer-editing. That's nothing but a waste of time, but if teachers approached this differently, if we didn't start with the outline. If we encouraged conversation and worked to fill in the holes rather than write the next line of the stories, I bet students would have a way easier time with writing.

GIB: And they wouldn't get stuck. Go where you feel comfortable, and where you know you really don't have to battle through something to get a good result. I mean, I don't even know that it's a laziness. It's just, it's a creative thing.

RYAN: Aka, writing doesn't have to be difficult. Just go with what you know first.

GIB: Yup.

RYAN: That's definitely applicable to my students. I really think that will help them guide them on their timed essays. Go with what you know and fill in the holes. Don't know your thesis statement? That's alright. Think of the evidence first and build the essay around it. If we use that approach, maybe, just maybe they can work through the process on their own. Granted, they are still really going to have to know their structures, but filling in the holes is so much easier than spending thirty minutes trying to come up with a thesis statement. The way you talk about, the way you approach writing. It just makes sense. It's so much less complicated.

GIB: Thanks girl. I never knew I was such a wordsmith. *(laughs)*

RYAN: Your language is so approachable. So much more in-tune with how kids think and understand. Take the word peer-edit, for example.

GIB: Anything with the word "peer" in it just sounds brutal.

RYAN: Exactly. But shifting the word to something like what you do, *"co-writing"* sounds much more positive, something people would actually enjoy doing. And the connotation implies that you both make the writing happen. Gib, you're a frickin' genius.

GIB: Well, thank you, but I wouldn't go that far.

RYAN: No, really, you are. You've given me a whole new way to talk about writing. I can see my students saying, "I Do, I Do Understand You." It's like you've bridged the gap!

GIB: *(in an Elvis-like voice)* Well, thank you. Thank ya very much.

Both laugh. Background goes dark and RYAN exits.

BULL TEDDY: (*heard on the video*) And so, once again, Ryan's worries are soothed by Gib's writing know-how. Another crisis on the writing front averted.

Act 1: Scene 3

Take a Chance on Me…'Cause without that, Risk ain't Nothin'

BULL TEDDY: *(screen is dark…heard on video)* One week, later, RYAN returns to the Writer's Block. After re-arranging the room and focusing on talking their way through writing, Ryan has seen improvement in her students' writing that is done in the classroom, but when faced with a test-like situation, her students freeze in the face of fear.

RYAN: *(screen turns white)* Gib! Gib! Heeelllloooo! Are you there? It's kind of getting down to the wire here, and I need some of your writing guru magic! *(Harp music plays)*

GIB: *(appears on screen)* You rang?

RYAN: *(whirls head in his direction)* Oh, thank goodness you're here! I'm about to have a meltdown. Your suggestions have been awesome. My kids are writing better than before, but…

GIB: But what?

RYAN: But they freeze when I have them write in a test-like atmosphere.

GIB: Sorry, girl. I don't think I can help you with this one. I know nothing about writing for a test.

RYAN: Yeah, but you do know something about writing under pressure. You're under pressure all the time, aren't you?

GIB: Well, yeah, all songwriters are. We've gotta produce good music or we don't get paid.

RYAN: Exactly! Those are pretty high stakes. So how did you gain the confidence to become a great songwriter who's capable of producing a number one hit?

GIB: Uhm, that confidence didn't come around in two weeks.

RYAN: Not helping!

GIB: I had to learn that rejection was just part of the process. And I'm pretty used to it by now. You get used to people saying no. In this business, you hear a no like, probably 20 times to a yes. That's just common. You've got to learn to take chances if you wanna build up your confidence.

RYAN: These essays aren't rocket science. No one is going to tell my students "no" and slam a door in their face.

GIB: Probably not, but they might get a bad score, right?

RYAN: *(Sighs)* Right. Which would mean they may not get to advance to the next grade level.

GIB: Pretty big deal when you're a kid.

RYAN: Huge deal. Now I can see why they freeze up. They keep thinking their words have to be perfect on that test.

GIB: You've got to give them the confidence to be great writers on that exam.

RYAN: But how? I only have two weeks.

GIB: Start small. When I'm in a co-write, people throw around different titles that they have, and you pick one that you like and just start working. Not everyone's title or line gets picked, but somebody's does. But sometimes, you say anything that makes it, but the thing you said that doesn't make it, might inspire me. And even just the look on your face might inspire me. You just never know where an influence comes from. Start giving your students credit for questions that inspire writing for others, for understanding something you taught them about writing, for just putting words on the paper. Encourage them to take a risk…just put something on the page, and congratulate them when they do.   Let them know that rejection is part of the process, but that rejection can lead to a better idea.

RYAN: You're right, as usual. You think those little praises here and there is enough to build up their self-efficacy as writers?

GIB: It's definitely a start, but what's really going to help is if *you* invest in their talent.

RYAN: Like give them money for good writing?

GIB: *(laughs)* Not exactly. Show them you believe in them. Encourage them to take chances.

RYAN: Is that what did it for you? Did someone take a chance on you?

GIB: Yeah, yeah, I guess someone did.

RYAN: That's all you're gonna give me? No story of discovery? Come on. Tell about when you got discovered!

GIB: Well, I guess you would say, really I was discovered in Nashville. I moved there from LA where I had been working with people, different producers and engineers in the Latin music field. And I met someone who, gave me the opportunity to come to Nashville and check it out. I've always wanted to come to Nashville because country music was my focus. And there wasn't anything for me to do in LA other than what I had kind of fallen into. So I moved to Nashville. I loved it. Just great environment. I hated livin' in LA. It was just too much of a city for me. And uh, I just don't like traffic. Just too many people. Too much traffic. Just not my bag. So I moved to Nashville, and because I speak Spanish, I saw an opportunity for me to play live music in a different place that a lot of the other country guys couldn't tap into because they didn't speak Spanish. So I found all these Mexican restaurants down in Nolensville. It's a road in Nashville where. It's more of like a multicultural type of part of town. There's a lot of Hispanics, and Arab, and Asian and just different. It's more the ethnic part of town. So, I set up. There's three restaurants I was able to find, where I would sing a couple times a week or whatever, depending on that week and my schedule and their schedule. And at the same time I was working my Myspace account, like pretty hardcore. It was back when people were into Myspace. There wasn't any other outlet and it was actually a really good thing. And one day, I got a message from this guy John Rich on there. And I was like, no way is this John Rich. So I called the number and it was John Rich. And he uh, at the time had a song out called "Lost in the Moment" with his band Big-N-Rich and it was a big song. It was number one. And I would take songs, like country songs and translate them into Spanish for the restaurant. Just so I could kind of fill out the catalogue of songs I could sing and for fun, you know, give me something to mess around with. And so John's song's out on the radio. And uh, even before I heard from him, I thought it'd be a great idea to translate the song for the restaurant. So, he, we talked, he really liked my music. He wanted to come out to the restaurant to hear me play. So after I got off the phone with him, I'm like alright, I'm translating this song. So, I translated this song. He came into the restaurant. I see him come in. Next song I go into is "Lost in the Moment in Spanish," and he freaked out. He jumps up on stage, takes my buddy's guitar. We do "Lost in the Moment" as a duet. And it was really weird. These two guys, singing this love song to each other. It was awesome though.

RYAN: Sweet! You took a chance and moved to Nashville. You took a chance singing country music in Spanish. John Rich takes a chance on you, and here you are today…takin' a chance on me. *(Hops off stool and begins to leave).*

GIB: Where ya goin'?

RYAN: I'm gonna take a chance on my kids, Gib. They deserve it. *("Take a Chance on Me"*
begins playing)

Screen fades to black

BULL TEDDY: And so, there you have it folks, the ending to tonight's tale. Rebecca gleefully
returned to her classroom where she focused on teaching her students to grow from rejection and
building their confidence by praising their risk-taking. Years later, with dozens of student
writing awards under her belt, and publications of her own, Rebecca's confidence as a writing
teacher became solidified, and she returned to the Writer's Block as a writing guru. Stay tuned
for the next installment of *The Writer's Block*, this Wednesday at 7:00 P.M.

Chapter Summary

Four distinct themes emerged from following a single participant through his songwriting process. These themes were: R-E-S-P-E-C-T…My Comfort and Privacy; Think, Think about the Critical and the Creativity; I Do, I Do Understand You; and Take a Chance on Me…'Cause without that, Risk ain't Nothin'. Each of the themes was represented in a single enthnodrama that combined snippets of interviews and observations of the participant with a semi-fictitious writing situation to demonstrate how the information learned in this study could be applied to a K-12 education setting. The next chapter will provide a discussion of the themes and the ethnodrama as they relate to education and will provide suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATION OF FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between songwriting, creative risk-taking, and critical thinking from the perspective of a professional songwriter residing in Nashville, TN. The inquiry delved into a songwriter's writing process that included finding inspiration for a song topic, molding the hook of a song, telling a story, finding words to fit a specific melody, and following the path of a song once it had been written. In viewing a professional songwriter's process as a "best-practice" for teaching writing, I sought to learn how one professional songwriter went through his writing process and how to apply elements of his process to a K-12 education setting.

This was not an examination of what makes a songwriter successful, nor an attempt to label his process as effective or ineffective. Instead, I explored the songwriter's thoughts as he worked through the creation of a song from the development of the hook that matched his pre-created melody to the complete telling of a story with the lyrics. Although I did attempt to capture the participant's voice, I do not pretend to speak for the participant. The ethnodrama and themes created from this study are simply my perspective on what was observed during the interview and observations with the participant. My guiding research questions were (a) How does the participant describe the process of songwriting? (b) In what ways does the participant use creative risk-taking in his songwriting? (c) In what ways does the participant's process of songwriting reflect critical thinking?

To answer these questions, I formed four assertions drawn from analysis of the collected data. First, the participant considered comfort, both physical and mental, an important part of his

writing process. Second, the participant's process of writing a song for a country music audience required him to think critically, both subjectively and objectively. Third, the participant's diction used to describe his own writing process provided an alternative way to talk about writing. Finally, the participant's writing process requires a certain amount of creative risk-taking, by the participant himself and by those investing in his talent.

In the next sections, I frame the discussion through the lens of arts-based research, seeking to provide a new way of knowing (Eisner, 1998b) the writing process itself. Then, I searched for possibilities of how this information could be applied to education paradigms. This chapter is concluded by identifying limitations within the study and discussing implications.

Findings Related to the Literature

This section is divided into three main parts that mimic the three research questions guiding this study. Each part discusses aspects of this study that replicated some of the findings from the existing literature and theories, and presents new information that emerged from the data analysis.

Describing the Process of Songwriting

Decades ago, the act of writing was found to be a non-linear cognitive process (Flower & Hayes, 1981), which was echoed in this study.   The Cognitive Process Model developed by Flower and Hayes (1981) includes three main areas (a) task environment, (b) writer's long term memory, and (c) the writing process. The rhetorical problem and goals set by the writer guide the process in this well-known model and the movement of the process was visualized with 10 arrows (Flower & Hayes, 1981). "Flow" was the term the songwriter used to describe his non-linear process and was essential if the product, a song, was going to come to fruition. Although

the participant never actually specifically defined the word "flow," his descriptions throughout the process would suggest that "flow" was the tangled movement of words from thought to melody to conversation to molding to solidified song lyric. There was no specific phase of his process that could be explicitly separated from the other phases during the construction of the song itself. Instead, each phase created a link to propel the development of the song forward. Lyrics began as a thought, sometimes immediately shared with the co-writers, and sometimes not shared at all, which generated a sort-of internal conversation. The songwriter described this part of the process at the end of the second observation, "all the stuff that's coming out, there's still a lot of stuff that's like bloooroooooggghhh *(spins finger by head)*. Going over and over in your brain…that's not even good enough to say. All the garbage you're sifting through in your head." These chunks of the revision were internal, happening simultaneously with the brainstorming occurring through conversation with the co-writers. The entanglement of phases kept thoughts moving fluidly throughout the entire process, allowing the writer to avoid mental blocks.

The songwriter's "flow" directly ties to Expressivist literature that states unstructured writing, also known as freewriting, helps a writer find his/her voice, which in turn, helps relay the message to the intended audience (Elbow, 1987). Although this songwriter's process did not necessarily begin with an intended message, he did start with the goal of telling a story to his audience. The lack of a rigid structure, or "flow" described above, gave the songwriter the freedom to discover what his intended message was by working his way through the process. Because there was no clear set of directions or requirements, the songwriter and co-writers were able to move through thoughts and conversations to song lyrics that fit the melody they were working with. For instance, during the second observation, the session began with a beat the

110

songwriter had made using an application on his iPad. From that beat, the co-writers were able

to pull a feeling of beach environment, which inspired conversations about what guys and girls

do at the beach. Eventually, this lead to a song telling the story of a young man who is trying to

catch the attention of his crush by singing her a song he wrote for her. The lack of rigid

guidelines in his writing process allowed the songwriter to twist and turn his thoughts until the

message, or story in this case, became clear, which was defined as a category of writing by

Expressivist James Britton (1970).

Enhancing the Flower and Hayes Model with R-E-S-P-E-C-T…My Comfort and Privacy.

There are new findings from the study. They involve the need for the Flower and Hayes

(1981) cognitive model, seen in Figure 1 in Chapter 2, to be expanded to include, (a) the physical

environment and physical comfort, (b) trust, and (c) privacy. The cognitive process model

developed by Flower and Hayes connected the act of writing to psychological theories and

divided the writing process into three main parts: the task environment; the writer's long-term

memory; and the writing processes (1981). Compared to the other two components, Flower and

Hayes gave very little description to task environment, simply stating, "The task environment

includes all of those things outside the writer's skin, starting with the rhetorical problem or

assignment and eventually including the growing text itself" (p. 369). The vague definition of

task environment leaves out the major elements of physical comfort and mental comfort

discovered in this study and supported by the literature.

During the interview and observation periods of this study, the songwriter repeatedly

mentioned how trust and privacy must be present in order for him to find his "flow" and write

comfortably. *R-E-S-P-E-C-T…My Comfort and Privacy* is described at length in Chapter 4 and

is reiterated in the enthodramatic representation of the data and can be summarized in the following manner. Before the act of writing even begins, the participant sought comfort in his physical environment by considering whether or not there was natural light and whether or not he could be comfortable sitting for several hours at a time. His choice of clothing also reflected his need for physical comfort. This physical need dictated where he would begin the act of writing and whether or not he would be able move through his process without experiencing major blocks, which was similar to literature on writing rituals or habits that promote physical comfort. For instance, Shaughnessy, McDonald, Maher, and Dobie (2002) highlighted three areas of rituals: (a) environment; (b) time; and (c) behavior that various writers use to get their process started and found that writers' who had specific habits or rituals positively experienced enhanced fluency, self-efficacy, and reduced anxiety. The songwriters need for physical comfort reflected the needs of writers who had been studied before him. However, this need still does not show up in the writing process model created by Flower and Hayes (1981), arguably the most well-known cognitive model.

More importantly, the songwriter's need for mental comfort with others, another area left off the cognitive model, had to be met. For the purpose of this study, mental comfort is defined as a trusting relationship with fellow writers and an acceptance that co-writers' critiques and criticisms will be used to drive the process towards a high-caliber final product. More often than not, the songwriter writes with other songwriters in the Nashville area. There are times when his publishing company pairs him with writers he has never worked with previously. Through conversation and humor, the co-writers build a bond with each other before they begin to throw out the first lyric. This bond is significant because, according to the songwriter, each co-writer is

112

going to throw seemingly random lyrics out to help get the process moving forward, a form of creative risk-taking and critical thinking (discussed later in this section). If any one of the co-writers is too critical of another's lyrics, the flow could be impeded, completely halting the production of the product, a song, all together. At times songwriters are also required to share personal stories or emotional connections to create an appealing song. If they do not trust each other or protect each other's privacy, they would not be willing to share those inner emotions or "raw," unrefined thoughts with each other.   Therefore, the term *task environment* coined in Flower and Hayes' (1981) early studies in the cognitive process model should be expanded to include both physical and mental comfort (see Appendix F for visual rendering).

Expanding Our Knowledge of Process. Previous literature identifies skills that can be acquired through creative and/or expressive writing (Elbow, 1987; Sullivan, 2012), and the same skills were characterized in this study. By writing through freewrites, a form of unstructured writing where the writer simply writes whatever thoughts emerge (Elbow, 1987), writers are encouraged to figure out what message they want to send to their audience and how they can maintain their distinct voice (Elbow, 1987). When teaching students to write, informal writing, such as notes, journals, and e-mails provides the students with methods to capture their thinking, which can later be used to guide what will be said in the final product (Sirc, 2002). While the songwriter in this study did not use traditional journals or e-mails during the observations, he did use his iPhone or describe using his iPhone to record possible ideas for songs in the Notes application. He also used his Voice Memo application during the sessions to record what had been written both lyrically and melodically. This Voice Memo application became extremely important for recalling something that was just developed. Without the recording application,

much of what was written could have possibly been lost. The applications were also used as a marker to determine where the storyline of the song was and start the conversation for where the cowriters wanted the songwriter to go. By playing back these informal recordings, the songwriter and co-writers were able to stay connected to the tone of the song and to the storyline, helping shape the message and keep the songwriter's voice intact. These forms of technological quickwrites and notes were vital to maintaining what had already been written and drive the process forward.

The literature does not, however, provide detailed observations on ways in which a writer uses these informal, expressive writings to move through the process towards the final product. In this study, the most valuable form of expressive writing the songwriter used was conversation with his co-writers.   Two extensive observations with the songwriter revealed that conversation propelled the songwriter's process. In the beginning of Chapter 4, the concept of using the conversation of a quickwrite is used to mold "raw" pieces of writing into something that is useful to the song as a whole and is applicable to the intended audience. The songwriter's voice, as well as the voice of the co-writers, naturally came out through conversation. Reading the transcript of the interviews, we can see how exactly how each line of the song emerged. Detailed observations of the way professional writers move through their process using expressive forms of writing are not readily available and could be a valuable tool to those in education who teach writing, as could descriptions of the un-rigid structure found in professional creative writing environments.

Using Creative Risk-Taking in Songwriting

Songwriting is a method for helping students find their voice and build their confidence (Eisla, 1995; Hollander, 2010; Sanchez, 2010; Soderman & Folkestead, 2004; Stephenson, 2001) and is typically done through collaboration with others (Bruffee, 1973; Holm, 2010; Soderman & Folkestead, 2004; Stephenson, 2001). Simple collaboration requires a certain amount of risk-taking. In the literature bloggers, economists, and educators discuss the value of risk-taking and deem it necessary, if writers are going to push the boundaries of creativity to become innovative (Dutton, 2008; Ellsburg, 2014; Tervooren, 2011). For the purpose of this study, the definition of the term "creative risk-taking" was defined as a willingness to step outside the comfort zone in order to develop something innovative (Tervooren, 2011). Stepping outside the comfort zone implies a large degree of danger and fear, but in this study the danger was not financial or physical harm. Instead, the danger was rejection.

Creative individuals are less likely to be afraid of making mistakes than the typical person and train themselves to learn from those mistakes (Dellas & Gaier, 1973). In this study I had the opportunity to work with a creative individual who was used to taking creative risks. However, I was not. Because my positionality was not situated inside a creative field, I was able to view the risk-taking through two lenses, that of an experienced creative writer (the songwriter) and that of an inexperienced one (myself). Since this was the case, I was able to observe different degrees of creative risk-taking in the observations and interviews.

As stated in Chapter 3, I felt awkward just sitting and listening to the songwriter and his co-writer work through a session, mainly because he had mentioned multiple times in his interview that he considered his process private. Sitting at the table with them felt intrusive and unnatural. I was actively listening and observing, but I also had the desire to be involved.

However, I was extremely hesitant to share any of my thoughts because I did not want to appear to force myself into the act of songwriting; furthermore, I was extremely unsure if my ideas or lyrics would be of any use. This fear of my own writing not being useful temporarily held me back from participating. Eventually, the desire to be a part of the session overrode my fear, and I took the seemingly small risk and shared my thoughts and lyrics. In Chapter 4 under the theme *Take a Chance on Me 'Cause without that, Risk Ain't Nothin'* I elaborated on the first instance where I shared a line. Overall, my participation in the observation taught me that creative risk-taking begins with overcoming small obstacles.

The songwriter, however, had been participating in co-writes for well over five years and was very comfortable offering his input on possible lyrics during co-writing sessions, as long as he had formed a relationship with his co-writer. His level of creative risk-taking had evolved throughout the years and included writing with seasoned professionals while he was still new in his career, translating a popular country hit into Spanish, and performing at Spanish restaurants outside the well-known music district of Nashville. These diverse forms of creative-risk taking were all tied to overcoming the reluctance to share and eventually having his work accepted by those in the music industry. Although there were many "no's" that followed many of the creative risks the participant took, each "yes" strengthened his confidence in his ability.

Critical Thinking in Songwriting

Existing outreach programs, such as The Country Music Hall of Fame's *Words & Music,* and Natalie Merchant's *Leave Your Sleep* curriculum, have connected songwriting to national English Language Arts standards (Country Musical Hall of Fame, 2012; Merchant, 2012) mainly through the genre of poetry (Stephenson, 2001) and story-telling (Williams*,* 2012). The songs

116

written during the observation period of this study repeated the connection between songwriting and basic English standards as discussed in the theme *Think, Think about the Critical in the Creativity* in Chapter 4. To reiterate, the songs *Sing Your Song Tonight* and *Come on and Love Me* used poetic devices, such as figurative language, rhyme, rhythm, repetition, and meter, which echoed previous findings (Williams, 2012). These songs also demonstrated a mastery of story-telling skills listed in the Common Core English Language Arts Standards (see Table 2 in Chapter 4 for specific examples), such as establishing context, organizing event sequence, using narrative techniques, and providing a conclusion (Common Core 2012b). Pollock and Bono (2013) argue the need to include storytelling elements, such as the ones previous listed, in academic writing to enable the writer to connect to the reader. The diverse array of skills required to write a song directly align to an array of objectives outlined in the Common Core Standards and play into quality academic writing.

In addition to the specific standards discussed in the previous paragraph, the songwriter's process observed in this study also demonstrated a variety of critical analysis skills (Sanchez, 2010) that are necessary for writing in a wide range of genres. The first of which was awareness of audience. Unlike traditional print where the writer's audience is most likely intangible (Ong, 1975), songwriting has the quality of a live audience interacting with the participant through song purchases, meet and greets, and concert experiences. Because of this, the songwriter had to have an in-depth understanding of his listeners. He described his listeners as wanting a story, wanting the farm roads, wanting to "woo" the girl, wanting the story told in concrete form with little, if no abstract language (A. Gibson, personal communication, July 2, 2013).

The second critical analysis skill the songwriter demonstrated was the ability to move between the subjective and the objective. Throughout both of the co-writes, the songwriter shifted back and forth between the thoughts of the characters in the songs to the thoughts of those who would potentially listen to the songs. In other words, he was consistently moving in and out of his writing (Holms, 2010; Stephenson, 2001). For instance, in the first observation, the line "look so good in your little work dress" emerged and there was a discussion on whether or not to change "work dress" to something more specific. After the co-writers imagined who would be listening, they decided to keep the ambiguous term in order to appeal to the female audience, to make the women feel as if the main character in the song could show up at their place of work. The songwriter demonstrated a desire to appeal to the wants of his country music community. The interactions with his audience shifted the songwriters away from the "traditional cognitive process viewpoint" towards "the sociocultural tradition" where "a writer "seeks to become a member of or maintain membership in a certain community" (Magnifico, 2010, p. 168). Since he was so focused on connecting to his regular audience, the songwriter was also able to capture elements of the modern country music culture (Kirkland, 2008). The songwriter was able to capture his own voice, or distinct style of music, and at the same time make judgments about what his audience would want, a critical thinking skill.

The ability to shift in and out of his writing, as well as the understanding of his audience were both key components of the songwriter's editing and revision processes (Stephenson, 2001), two essential elements for writing in any genre. As mentioned previously in the subsection *Describing the Process of Songwriting*, the songwriter in this study revised the lyrics both inside his head and through conversation with the co-writers. Researchers and writing

gurus have shown that receiving specific feedback from peers and mentors or educators with expertise in the genre a writer is composing in is extremely valuable to improving the quality of writing (Bomer, 2010; Jasmine, 2007; Mulholland, 2011; Pollock & Bono, 2013) and the confidence of the writer (Bomer, 2010; Jasmine 2007). By providing a writer with specific feedback, the writer may develop a better understanding of the genre he or she is writing in and may learn how to more effectively use rhetorical and literary devices to get his or her message across. Understanding how to use these devices for an intended effect could be considered critical thinking. Reflecting on revising and editing his own dissertation, Mulholland (2011) noted how important it is for the writer to trust revisers and editors for the entire writing process to move forward. Realizing how a single element of a text connects to the larger text requires critical thinking. If the writer trusts that those revising his or her work provide critiques that will help tie all the parts together to deliver the overall message, the writer's process will not be impeded. The songwriter in this study received immediate, specific feedback from his peers, as described in the theme *Take a Chance on Me 'Cause without that, Risk Ain't Nothin'* in Chapter 4, which gave him the tools to revise his lyrics on the spot and not interrupt the flow of his process.

This concept connects all three of the research questions from this study (a) How does the participant describe the process of songwriting? (b) In what ways does the participant use creative risk-taking in his songwriting? (c) In what ways does the participant's process of songwriting reflect critical thinking? While these questions may seem like separate entities, the answers themselves were intertwined. There was no distinct division between the answers. This study re-emphasized many concepts already present in a wide variety of literature, but perhaps

119

most significantly revealed how creative risk-taking, critical thinking, and the process of songwriting all require the writer's privacy and trust to be safeguarded.

Conclusions

Limitations

This study had several limitations. One major limitation was that I was an integral part of the study, though that is typical of a researcher in any qualitative study. For the duration of this study I was a high school English teacher who faced the task of teaching students to write proficiently in a variety of genres. I was also involved with my local writing project as a Teacher Consultant, seeking new ways to view and teach writing. Positioning myself as a writing teacher directly influenced my investigation into the participant's writing process. Throughout the study, I often made connections between the participant's process and my experiences with teaching writing in the classroom. I related conflicts in his process to the difficulties my students and I faced completing a writing assignment, and sympathized with the participant's challenge to write something a wide audience would appreciate. Therefore, I tended to focus on actions and positions that could be applied directly to the classroom, actions that were either already present but needed improvement, or actions that rarely existed in the classroom itself. Because of my experience as a teacher, my epistemology was directly influenced by the social confines of the K-12 educational institution. However, I had very limited experience working with professional writers, and had no experience examining a professional writer's composition process. Therefore, I did have certain expectations about the writing

process, but knew the songwriter could teach me something about writing processes that I did not already know.

A second limitation of this study was that my presence during the co-writing observations may have affected the songwriter's natural writing processes. Because I did not have the opportunity to videotape or audio-record a co-writing session where I was not present, I do not know if the songwriter's typical composition process was altered by my presence. During the first half hour of the first observation, I was uncomfortable just sitting and watching the songwriter and his co-writer work. Because I was sitting at the same table and because the songwriter had discussed how he did not like to share his "raw" writing with just anyone, I felt intrusive. During the observations I could not separate my position of a writing teacher from my position as a researcher, and the two roles merged into one. I timidly began participating in the co-writing session and once a few of my lines were used in the song, I began to feel far more comfortable. Since I was actively participating during all but 20 minutes of both songwriting sessions, I cannot determine if my presence would have dramatically altered the outcome. However, during the observations and while reading over the transcript of the first observation, both the songwriter and the co-writer assured me that what I was observing was "…all normal…all abnormal and normal at the same time," and that the process was "…how it usually goes."

The use of a video camera and my participant's past experiences also shaped the participant's responses to interview questions. Because my participant had been on radio tours to promote his last three singles, he was comfortable being recorded while being interviewed and while performing songs he had rehearsed. However, he showed apprehension when we

discussed videotaping his songwriting process because he felt that was a private experience. After I provided him with several alternatives, he overrode his own concern and agreed to be filmed. Several times during the filming of the observations, he made a verbal note of being videotaped, yet he did not seem to be inhibited by the camera. This need for privacy in order to be comfortable became a salient idea throughout the data collection process and emerged as a theme in the analysis.

An additional limitation was that there was only one professional songwriter in this study, and only one genre of songwriting was observed, limiting the range of experiences examined. Because of the prevalence of male songwriters in the music industry, the participant selected happened to be male. As a female researcher, I do not attempt to take on the male voice of the participant, but rather seek to share my perspective on the topic studied in my own voice.

The final limitation was the participant's availability and the distance between the participant and the researcher. During the data collection period, the participant was traveling the country on a radio tour to promote his latest single. His schedule was often erratic and he was rarely at his residence in Nashville, Tennessee, which was an 18-hour drive from my home in Corpus Christi, TX. Once the proposal for this study was accepted and the IRB was approved, the songwriter informed me that we would schedule interviews and observations when he had a short break in the tour schedule. This required me to be flexible in my travel plans and my data collection process. When the participant's schedule opened during a holiday weekend, we made tentative plans for interviews and observations. One of his co-writers happened to be available that same week, so I was fortunate enough to have another experienced songwriter to participate.

Implications for Action

This study has a number of implications involving the way teachers approach composition in the classroom setting. In order to facilitate the writing process and move towards a finished product, the educator must make the writing environment comfortable and must build a trustworthy relationship with the students. This will require composition teachers, as well as other educators who assign writing, to step away from the red pen and focus on growing the writer, rather than criticizing the writer (Bomer, 2010). Educators can do this by integrating Expressivists' ideas into their classroom through unstructured freewrites, writing whatever comes to mind, or structured freewrites, writing whatever comes to mind after a specific focus is given (Elbow, 1987). Implementing freewrites and other forms of low-stakes writing allows students to become involved in course material and allows teachers to promote learning (Elbow, 1994). Educators could allow students to use technological tools, such as iPhone apps the songwriter used in this study, to compose their freewrites in a method the students are already comfortable with.

Building trust in the writing classroom will help build the students' confidence by giving them a safe place to write. The songwriter in this study felt as if those he was co-writing with protected his privacy by not sharing his songs before they were more polished. He was also physically comfortable and felt those in the room would not be overly critical of his raw writing. Teachers can replicate this kind of comfort in their own classroom by not restricting where students are allowed to write. For example, writing does not have to be done in a chair at a desk. Instead, students could lie on the floor and write, sit in a bean bag, or stand up and write. Teachers can also build mental comfort in the classroom by writing when their students write, by sharing their own raw writing with students, and by asking for students to critique that raw

123

writing. This safe place can also be developed by focusing less on criticism and more on useful

critiques that highlight the quality pieces of the text and give constructive feedback that helps

clarify the message the writer is attempting to convey (Bomer, 2010; Mulholland, 2011). There

is a distinct difference between novice songwriters and experienced songwriters, as well as

between novice writing teachers and experienced writing teachers. One of the major differences

is comfort with the writing process and writing with and in front of others. The notion that a

writer must be comfortable both mentally and physically could be applied to a wide variety of

education settings, but how comfort is defined and developed at different levels and by novice

and experienced educators would have to be further investigated. Researchers would have to

discover how educators build trust and respect privacy with students of various age levels and

intellectual abilities.

The data from this study indicated "what" is important to a single professional

songwriter, trust and privacy. "How" that plays out at both the K-12 setting and university levels

observed in education settings and then developed into composition curriculums needs to be

examined. Educators at all levels should provide low-stake writing assignments that are used to

drive the writing process but are not scored for a grade. While educators will still function as the

expert in the classroom, they do not need to function as the be-all-end-all to the writing process.

If educators write with their students and share their own raw writing, students may realize even

the experts may struggle with their own writing at times, which in turn, could build the

confidence of the students. By allowing students the chance to comment and critique on the

educator's own writing, the students may learn that it is rare for writing to come out perfect on

the first attempt and that trusting in the process will be more fruitful than focusing only on the

product. If the teacher works beside the students, similar to the description the songwriter gave

of his producer, the distance between the novice writer and the expert lessens, which could

possibly build trust and encourage creative risk-taking.

The conversational co-writing process observed in this study could also be used to

expand the concept of the writer's workshop since this type of collaborative writing is less

threatening than working alone and teaches students to be supportive of each other's

contributions (Stephenson, 2001). The elements of the co-writes observed do not have to be

bound to songwriting itself. By testing methods professional writers use in a variety of genres,

educators can provide student writers with a multitude of tools that help the novices find their

voice and strengthen their message (Vanderslice, 2004). This can be done through informal

conversations among a group of students or between the student and the teacher. The curriculum

guide from the *Words & Music* Program echoes the process used by the songwriter in this study.

In the unit, students are encouraged to generate a wide list of topics to write about and to find a

partner with similar topic interests. The students then pair up and together work their way

through writing a song using conversation as their guide. This type of activity could also be

applicable to other genres of writing and students would not necessarily have to stay with their

original writing partner. Students could rotate through the groups, asking questions and

recording conversations. The teacher could then meet with the students and help them determine

what salient ideas keep emerging in the conversations and how those salient ideas could be

turned into well-developed paragraphs.

Perhaps teachers need to consider how their own knowledge of and own comfort with the

writing process inform their positions as composition instructors (Trent, 1996), especially since

writing territories are moving from print to digital (Hudley & Holbrook, 2013; Mauriello & Pagnucci, 1997). The importance of privacy and trust expressed by the songwriter in this study applies to teachers as well as students. Write with your students is preached by writing experts affiliated with the National Writing Project (Gillespie, 1985), but research has shown many pre-service teachers and even veteran teachers are not comfortable writing in front of their own students (Hudley & Holbrook, 2013; Mauriello & Pagnucci, 1997; Trent, 1996). Learning how seasoned writing teachers who trust the process of writing become comfortable writing in front of their students and who trust in the process of writing would be beneficial to university teacher education programs, pre-service teachers, and non-English Language Arts educators who are expected to have their students write.

As more and more writing demands are created for our students, it is important to understand how teachers' responses to writing and the external environment affect the student writer's mental comfort. Doing so could shift the educator's role from that of a corrector to that of a producer to build the novice writers' self-efficacy along the way. High self-efficacy of a writer is vital if an educator wants the skills learned in a single classroom setting transferred to other settings and genres (Boone et al., 2012; Driscoll & Wells, 2012; Rounsaville, 2012). If writers do not have confidence in their writing abilities and if writers are not explicitly taught how to use certain processes in other areas, the writing skills they learned will stay in the classroom where they learned those skills (Boone et al., 2012; Driscoll & Wells, 2012; Rounsaville, 2012). Awareness of the long-term effects of criticizing a student's writing can help teachers can deliberately alter their approaches to teaching writing so their students are better equipped to meet writing expectations throughout their education and careers. If teachers

126

write with their students, their writing could be integrated into the revision process. Students could blindly critique each other's writing, including that of the teacher's, and be asked to improve the writing they are critiquing.   By giving descriptions of the changes they made and why those changes were made, students may begin to more objectively view writing. By incorporating the teacher's writing into these type of revision sessions, the teacher models taking creative risks, and at the same time encourages his or her students to do so, all while allowing the process to guide the writing.

Recommendations for Further Research

During the duration of this study, several suggestions for future research arose. This study explored the writing process of one professional songwriter and how creative risk-taking and critical thinking interact throughout his process. An area that needs further study is understanding professional writers' processes. There are numerous how-to books on writing in genres ranging from poetry to songwriting to screenwriting written by the experts (Leddy, 2012), but few of these are actual observations of what a professional writer does or an analysis of the professional writer's process. This study only focused on one person who writes within a very specific genre.   More songwriters who write in the country genre, as well as a variety of other genres should be explored. Analyzing professional writing should not be limited to songwriting, but instead could expand into fiction writing, journalism, screenwriting, poetic or other types of professional writing, especially those types of writers who have the intent of performing for an audience. By looking from the professional standpoint backwards, researchers of the composition process could gain an understanding of the differences in processes between novice or amateur writers and professional writers. Researchers could also discover a variety of tools,

approaches, and writer attitudes that could help novice writers improve their writing skills. Researchers could ask professional songwriters this question: What advice would you give teachers to help them teach kids to write better?

How composition teachers utilize professional writers' tools, approaches, and attitudes could then be applied and studied in the K-12 and higher education settings. For instance, one of the themes related to this study centered on trust, privacy, and comfort. Researchers could investigate the difference in the quality of student writing between students who are taught in a classroom where the teacher focuses on building trust between the teacher and student, keeps the students' "raw" writing private, and provides a comfortable environment to write in as opposed to a classroom in which the privacy and comfort of a student are not considered.

Additional studies could unfold from the theme *I Do, I Do Understand You* where researchers examine how changing the way teachers talk about writing affects students' attitudes toward writing and the quality of student writing. From the theme *Take a Chance on Me 'Cause without that, Risk Ain't Nothin'*, researchers could investigate the levels of writing self-efficacy between students who had instructors invest in their writing (i.e. by entering them in contests, publishing their work for a wider audience, or presenting their work) and how that self-efficacy related to transferring writing skills. Furthermore, future studies might investigate how traditional methods used in writing, such as the peer-review (where students revise and edit each others' work once a first draft is complete) compares to methods used by professional writers such as a co-writing session (where writers toss ideas into the conversation to keep the writing moving forward) and how students respond to the professional versus traditional method.

In terms of how trust plays out, research could be conducted on three different writing groups of the same age level. The control group would have all of their writing scored and counted toward their overall grade. The second group would have only a portion of their writing scored, and a third group would not have any of their writing scored for a grade. Then, the quality of work could be scored using a standardized rubric to compare specific elements in a post-test-like writing assignment.

Other studies could investigate if listening to specific types and amounts of music correlates with writing ability and creativity. Students could be divided into groups based on which genre of music they listen to the most, then could further be divided into levels based on the amount of time they are allowed to listen to that genre while writing. Both the mood and the quality of writing could be measured.

Concluding Remarks

This qualitative single-participant ethnodrama explored a professional songwriter's writing process and the relationship between songwriting, creative risk-taking, and critical thinking. The theoretical framework of Arts-Based Educational Research (ABER) proposed that art provides the researcher with a new lens to look through (Eisner, 2002) and produces an artistic representation of thoughts (Dewey, 1934) that can spark new discussions about what is already known (Barone and Esiner, 2006). The literature implied that writing is a non-linear process (Flower and Hayes 1981), that using your own voice to find your message is more important that product (Elbow, 1987), that songwriting can build confidence (Eisla, 1995; Hollander, 2010; Sanchez, 2010; Soderman & Folkestead, 2004; Stephenson, 2001), and that songwriting requires risk-taking and collaboration to build skill (Holm, 2010; Soderman &

Folkestead, 2004; Stephenson, 2001), all of which were supported by the findings in this study. While there was a wide-range of interconnected themes that arose, the underlying conclusion of the data in this research study is that following a professional songwriter through his writing process gives us a deeper understanding of what a writer must go through as he works towards a finished product and how the writer is affected by the process, as well as how the writer himself affects the process. Exploring and understanding the process of professional writers is needed to gain a deeper understanding of the writing process and to design tools that will aid novice writers on their paths to becoming proficient writers.

Chapter 5 concludes this research study. The findings produced four themes that connected songwriting, creative risk-taking, and critical thinking: (a) R-E-S-P-E-C-T…My Comfort and Privacy, (b) Think, Think about the Critical in the Creativity, (c) I Do, I Do Understand You, and (d) Take a Chance on Me, 'Cause without That, Risk Ain't Nothin'. Recommendations invite educators to collaborate with a variety of professional writers and to explore how aspects of professional writers' processes can be used to move novice writers towards proficiency.

References

Adler, P. A. & Adler, P. (1987). *Membership roles in field research.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

American Psychological Association. (2009). *The publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, D.C.: Author.

Andrews, R. & Smith, A. (2011). *Developing writers: Teaching and learning in the digital age.* Retrieved from books.google.com/books?isbn=0335241794

Antoniou, M., & Moriarty, J. (2008). What can academic writers learn from creative writers? Developing guidance and support for lecturers in higher education. *Teaching in Higher Education, 13*(2), 157-167.

Asleitner, H. (2002). Teaching critical thinking online. *Journal of Instructional Psychology*, *29*(2), 53-63.

Bamburg, B. (2012). Revision. In J. R. Edlund (Ed.), *Concepts in composition: Theory and practice in the teaching of writing* (2nd ed., pp. 1-29). New York, NY: Routledge.

Barone, T. (2002). From genre blurring to audience blending: Reflection on the field emanating from an ethnodrama. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly, 33*(2), 255-267.

Bartel, J. (2010). Rhetoric in research reporting. In A. Mills, G. Durepos, & E. Wiebe (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of case study research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Bartholomae, D. (1995). Writing with teachers: A conversation with peter elbow. *College Composition and Communication*, *46*(1), 62-71.

Barone, T. (2008). How arts-based research can change minds. In M. Cahnmann-Taylor & R. Siegesmund (Eds.), *Arts-based research in education: Foundations for practice* (pp. 28-49). New York, NY: Routledge.

Belk, R.W. (2007). *Handbook of qualitative research methods in marketing*. Northampton, MA: Edgar Elgar Publishing.

Berlin, J. (1987). *Rhetoric and reality: Writing instruction in American colleges, 1900-1985*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.

Bomer, K. (2010). *Hidden gems: Naming and teaching from the brilliance in every student's writing*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Boone, S., Biggs Chaney, S., Compton, J., Donahue, C., & Gocsik, K. (2012). Imagining a writing and rhetoric program based on principles of knowledge "transfer": Dartmouth's institute for writing and rhetoric. *Composition Forum*, *26*, Retrieved from http://compositionforum.com/issue/26/dartmouth.php

Bowden, D. (2012). Voice and style. In I. Clark (Ed.),*Concepts in composition: Theory and practice in teaching of writing* (2nd ed., pp. 228-253). New York, NY: Routledge.

Britton, J. (1970). *Language and learning*. New York: Penguin.

Bruffee, K. (1973). Collaborative learning: Some practical models. *College English. 34*(5), 634-643.

Bula, J. A. (2011). *Technology-based music courses and non-traditional music students in secondary schools* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Database. (998182818)

Cahnmann-Taylor, M., & Siegesmund, R. (2008). *Arts-based research in education: Foundations for practice*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Carpenter, D. (1999). *The impact of songwriting, dramatization, and performance on third grader's ability to learn and retain social studies concepts* (Unpublished master's thesis).

Chapman, J., Skyes, H., & Swedberg, A. (2003). Wearing the secret out: Performing stories of sexual identities. *Youth Theatre Journal 17*, 27-37.

Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative Analysis*. London, UK: Sage.

Clark, I. L. (2012). Processes. In J. R. Edlund (Ed.), *Concepts in composition: Theory and practice in the teaching of writing* (2nd ed., pp. 1-29). New York, NY: Routledge.

Common Core State Standards Initiative. (2012a). *Common Core State Standards for English language arts & literacy in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects, Appendix A: Research supporting key elements of the standards, glossary of key terms*. Retrieved from http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix_A.pdf

Common Core State Standards Initiative. (2012b). *English language arts standards*. Retrieved from http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy

Common Core State Standards Initiative. (2012c).*Frequently asked questions*. Retrieved from http://www.corestandards.org/resources/frequently-asked-questions

Common Core State Standards Initiative. (2012d). *In the states*. Retrieved from http://www.corestandards.org/in-the-states

Yale College Writing Center. (2014). *Components of a successful essay*. Retrieved from

http://writing.yalecollege.yale.edu/components-successful-essay

Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum. (2009). *Words & music teacher's guide*. Nashville, TN: The Country Music Association Endowment for Words & Music.

Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum. (2012a). *Words and music outreach program*. Retrieved from http://countrymusichalloffame.org/wordsandmusic/

Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum (Producer). (2012b). *Words and music* [Video file]. Retrieved from

https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=zNmiclcGU8A

Cremata, R. (2010). *The use of music technology across the curriculum in music education settings: Case studies of two universities* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Database. (765231890)

Cremin, T. (2006) Creativity, uncertainty and discomfort: Teachers as writers. *Cambridge Journal of Education, 36*(3), 415-433.

Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Culham, R. (2003). *6+1 traits of writing: The complete guide for grades 3 and up.* New York, NY: Scholastic.

Dellas, M, & Gaier, E.L., (1973). Identification of creativity: The individual, *Psychological Bulletin, 73*(1), 55-73.

Denzin, N. K. (1989). *Interpretive biography*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln, Y.S. (1994). *Handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2005). *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed.).

    Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln, Y.S. (2008). *Collecting and interpreting qualitative materials.*

    Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Devoss, D. N., & Webb, S. (2008). Grand theft audio. *Computers and Composition*

    Online. 25(79-103) *Retrieved*

    from http://www.bgsu.edu/cconline/CConline_GTA/index.html

Dewalt, K. M (2002). *Participant observation: A guide for fieldworkers.* New York, NY:

    Altmira Press.

Dewey, J. (1934). *Art as experience.* New York, NY: The Berkley Publishing Group.

Donmoyer, R., & Yennie-Donmoyer, J. (1995). Data as drama: Reflections on the use of reader's

    theatre as a mode of qualitative data display. *Qualitative Inquiry, 1*(10), 110-142.

Dutton, J. A. (2008). *Creative beginnings and calculated risk*. Retrieved from https://www.e-

    education.psu.edu/writingpersonalstatementsonline/p3_p3.html

Editorial: UC president: Time to drop SAT I requirement. [Editorial]. (2001). *The*

    Berkley Daily Planet. Retrieved from http://www.berkeleydailyplanet.com

Eisner, E. W. (1998a). The meaning of alternative paradigms for practice. In *The kind of schools*

    we need: Personal essays (pp. 103-115). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Eisner, E. W. (1998b). Forms of understanding and the future of educational research. In *The*

    kind of schools we need: Personal essays (pp. 116-131). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Eisner, E. W. (1998c). What artistically crafted research can help us understand about schools.

    In *The kind of schools we need: Personal essays* (pp. 149-156). Portsmouth, NH:

Heinemann.

Eisner, E. W. (2002). *The arts and the creation of mind*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Elbow, P. (1987). Closing my eyes as I speak: An argument for ignoring audience. *College English*, *49*(1), 50-69.

Elbow, P. (1994). *Writing for learning--not just for demonstrating learning*. University of Massachusetts, Amherst, 1-4. National Teaching and Learning Forum. Retreived from http://www.ntlf.com/html/lib/bib/writing.htm

Ellsburg, M. (2014, February 11). *The necessity of creative risk taking*. Retrieved from http://bigthink.com/in-their-own-words/the-necessity-of-creative-risk-taking

Elsila, M. (1998). Music behind bars: Learning to teach radically in prison. *Radical Teacher*, *52*, 4-8.

Ely, M., Anzul, M., Friedman, T., Garner, D., & Steinmetz, A. C. (1991). *Doing qualitative research: Circles within circles*. New York, NY: Falmer Press.

Erickson, F. (1985). *Qualitative methods in research on teaching* (pp. 119-62). East Lansing, MI, Institute for Research on Teaching.

Feldman, M. S., Bell, J., & Berger, M. T. (2003). *Gaining access: A practical and theoretical guide for qualitative researchers*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira.

Flower, L. (1979). Writer-based prose: A cognitive basis for problems in writing. *College English, 41,* 19-38.

Flower, L., & Hayes, J. (1981). A cognitive process theory of writing. *College Composition and Communication*, *32*(4), 365-387.

Gardner, J. (1983). *The art of fiction: Notes on craft for young writers*. New York, NY:

    Vintage Books.

Gardner, H. (2011). *Truth, beauty and goodness reframed: Education for the virtues in the*

    twenty first century. New York, NY: Basic Books.

Gillespie, T. (1985). Becoming your own expert—Teachers as writers. *The Quarterly, 8*(1), 1-2

Givens, L.M. (2008). *Qualitative research methods* (Vol. 2). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Givens, L. M. (2008). *The sage encyclopedia of research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Glesne, C. & Peshkin, A. (1992). *Becoming qualitative researchers: An introduction.* White

    Plains, NY: Longman.

Grainger, T. (2005). Teachers as writers: learning together. *English in Education, 39*(1), 75–87.

Greene, M. (1995). *Releasing the imagination: Essays on education, the arts, and social*

    change. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Greenhalgh, G., & Taylor, R. (1997). How to read a paper: Papers that go beyond numbers

    (qualitative research). *British Medical Journal*, *315*, 740-745. Retrieved from

    http://ed.isu.edu/sspe/documents/graduate/research_resources/reading_qualitative_researc

    h.pdf

Grier, M. (2012). Kant's critique of metaphysics. In E. N. Zalta (Ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia*

    of Philosophy (Summer Ed.). Retrieved from

    http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2012/entries/kant-metaphysics/

Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1988). Do inquiry paradigms imply inquiry methodologies? In

    D. M. Fetterman (Ed.), *Qualitative approaches to evaluation in education* (pp. 89-115).

    New York, NY: Praeger.

Hass, N. (2006, November 5). The writing section? Relax. *The New York Times*. Retrieved

     from http://www.nytimes.com

Hatch, J. A. (2002). *Doing qualitative research in education settings*.

     Retrieved from http://books.google.com

Hebb, J. (2002). Mixed forms of academic discourse: A continuum of language posibility.

     Journal of Basic Writing, *21*(2), 21-26.

Heinauer, L., & Taboada, M. (2012, June 14). Writing tests trips up many freshmen on new staar

     end of course exams. *Statesman*. Retrieved from http://www.statesman.com

Helgert, L. E. (2008). *Jazz elements in selected concert works of Leonard Bernstein: Sources,*

     reception, and analysis (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and

     Theses Database. (304668856)

Hoepfl, M. C. (1997). Choosing qualitative research: A primer for technology education

     researchers. *Technology Education, 9*(10). Retrieved from

     http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/JTE/v9n1/hoepfl.html

Hollander, P. (2010). Finding sponsorship in the academy. *Journal of College Reading and*

     Learning, 41(1), 29-48.

Horning, A. (2002) *Revision revisited*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, Inc.

Houghton, C., Casey, D., Shaw, D., & Murphy, K. (2013). Rigour in qualitative case-study

     research. *Nurse Researcher, 20*(4), 12-17.

Hudley, M. & Holbrook, T. (2013). Set in stone or set in motion? Writing with preservice

     English teachers. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy, 56*(6), 500-509.

Hunt, I. (2012). *Visual arts and adult learners in retirement* (Doctoral dissertation).

Gillen, N. K. (2010). *A case study in ethnodrama: An arts-based research inquiry into the educational experiences of a south texas chicana during the 1950's and 1960's* (Doctoral dissertation).

Joanna, E. M., Sale, L. H., & Lohfeld, K. B. (2002). *Revisiting the quantitative-qualitative debate: Implications for mixed method research*. *36*(1), 43-53. Retrieved from http://link.springer.com/article/10.1023/A:1014301607592

Jasmine, J. (2007). The effect of writing workshops on first grade students to become confident and independent writers. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, *35*(2), 131-139).

Jones, J. D. (2005). A comparison of songwriting and lyric analysis techniques to evoke emotional change in a single session with people who are chemically dependent. *Journal of Music Therapy, 42*(2), 94-110.

Kaple, T. L. (2011). *The Michigan stud goes to Nashville: Music, masculinity, and learning Southernness* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Database. (913101655)

King, N., & Horrocks, C. (2010). *Interviews in qualitative research*. Retrieved from http://books.google.com/books

Kirkland, D. E. (2008). "You must learn": Promoting hip-hop education. *Youth Media Reporter, 3*, 42-46.

Krefting, L. (1991). Rigor in qualitative research: The assessment of trustworthiness. *The American Journal of Occupational Therapy, 45*(30), 214-232.

Kvale, S. (1996). *Interviews: An introduction to qualitative research interviewing.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Kvale, S., & Brinkmann, S. (2009). *Interviews: Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Leavy, P. (2009). *Method meets art: Arts-based research practice.* New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Langer, S. (1957). *Problems of art.* New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons.

Leddy, C. (2012). 20 must-have books by writing genre: Find our top picks for fiction, nonfiction, poetry, screenwriting, and more. *Writer, 124*(4), 19-21.

Lee, T. W. (1999). *Using qualitative methods in organizational research.* Thousand Oaks, CA. Sage.

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. A. (1985). Nature, rational and importance of qualitative research methods in nursing. In M. M. Leininger (Ed.), *Qualitative research methods in nursing* (pp. 1-28). New York, NY: Gune & Stratton.

Ludovic, H. (2007, May 12). Telling it like it is. Interview. *Financial Times*.

Magnifico, A.M. (2010). Writing for whom? Cognition, motivation, and a writer's audience. *Educational Psychologist, 45*(3), 167-184.

Mason, J. (2006). Mixing methods in a qualitatively driven way. *Qualitative Research*, *6*(1), 9-25. doi: 10.1177/1468794106058866

Mazor, B. (2007, March 27). A cultural conversation with Lucinda Williams: This singer-songwriter puts it all together. *Wall Street Journal*.

McNiff, S. (1998). *Art-based research*. Philadelphia, PA: Jessica Kingsly Publishers Ltd.

McRorie, R. M. (1996). *The process and production of the composition of a musical-drama by students from an elementary school* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Database. (304326001)

Meyer, M. J. (1998). *Transitional wars: A study of power, control and conflict in executive succession—theatre as representation.* Retrieved from http://books.google.com/

Merchant, N. (2012, November 15). *Preconference general session*. Speech presented at the National Council of English Teachers National Convention, Las Vegas, Nevada.

Merriam, S. B., & Simpson, E. L. (2000). *A guide to research for educators and trainers of adults.* Malabar, FL: Krieger.

Merriam, S. B. (2002). *Qualitative research in practice: Examples for discussion and analysis* (1st ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Merriam, S. B. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Metropolitan Opera Guild. (2012). School partnerships [Brochure]. Retrieved October 1, 2012 from http://issuu.com/metguildschoolprog/docs/spbrochure

Mienczakowski, J., Smith, L., & Morgan, S. (2002). Seeing words—hearing feelings: Ethnodrama and the performance of data. In C. Bagley, & M. B. Cancienne (Eds.), *Dancing the data* (pp. 34-52). New York, NY: Peter Lang.

Mullholand, J. (2011). What I've learned about revising a dissertation. *Journal of Scholarly Publishing, 43*(1), 39-51.

Mauriello, N. & Pagnucci, G. (1997). Behind the black veil: Fear, the internet, and teaching composition.

Murray, D. M. (1978). Revision strategies of basic and competent writers as they write for

different audiences. *Research in the Teaching of English, 18*(3), 288-304.

Nagin, C. (2006). Introduction. In *Because writing matters* (pp. 1-8) San

Franciso, CA: Jossey-Bass.

National Commission on Writing. (2003). *The neglected "r."*

Retrieved from http://www.writing commission.org/report.html.

Ong, W. (1975). The writer's audience is always fiction. *Publications of the Modern Language*

Association of America, 90(1), 9-21.

Parkhe, A. (1993). 'Messy' research, methodological predispositions, and theory. *Academy of*

Management Review, *18*(2), 227-268.

Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand

Oaks, CA: Sage.

Pollock, T.G. & Bono, J.E. (2013). Being scheherzade: The importance of storytelling in

academic writing. *Academy of Management Journal, 56*(3), 629-634.

Razvi, M. (2006, October). *Image-based research: Ethics of photographic evidence in*

qualitative research. Paper presented at the Midwest Research-to-Practice Conference in

Adult, Continuing, and Community Education, University of Missouri-St. Louis, St.

Louis, Missouri.

Rijlaarsdam, F., & van den Bergh, H. (2006). Writing process theory: A functional dynamic

approach. In C. MacArthur, S. Graham & J. Fitzgerald (Eds.), *Handbook of writing*

research.(pp. 41-53) New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Robinson, K. (2006, June 27). Sir Ken Robinson: Do schools kill creativity? [Video

file]. Retrieved from http://blog.ted.com/2006/06/27/sir_ken_robinson/

Rose, M. (1980). Rigid rules, inflexible plans, and the stifling of language: A cognitive analysis
of writer's block. *College Composition and Communication, 31*(4), 389-401.

Saldaña, J. (2005). *Ethnodrama: An anthology of Reality Theatre* (Vol. 5). Walnut Creek, CA:
AltaMira.

Saldaña, J. (2009). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Saldaña, J. (2011). *Ethnotheatre: Research from page to stage*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast
Press.

Sanchez, D. M. (2010). Hip hop and hybrid text in a postsecondary English class. *Journal
of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, *56*(3), 478-487.

Satterwhite, J. H. (1991). *Developing creativity through songwriting in secondary education
composition classes* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and
Theses Database. (303948866)

Schoenburg, C. R. (1997, June 5). Expository writing: An introduction, not a cure. *Harvard
Crimson*. Retrieved from http://www.thecrimson.com/

Schwartz, D. (1989). Visual ethnography: Using photography in qualitative research. *Qualitative
Sociology*, *12*(2), 119-154.

Shamoon, L., & Martin, C. (2007). Which part of the elephant is this? Questioning creative non-
fiction in the writing major. *Composition Studies*, *35*(1), 53-54.

Shaughnessy, K., McDonald, C., Maher, H., & Dobie, A. (2002). Who, what, when, and where
of writing rituals. *The Quarterly, 24*(4), 18-36.

Shinton, A. K., & Hayter, S. (2004). Strategies for gaining access to organisations and informants in qualitative studies. *Education for Information, 22,* 223-231. Retrieved from http://ptarpp2.uitm.edu.my/silibus/strategiesforgaining.pdf

Sinner, A., Leggo, C., Irwin, R. L., Gouzouasis, P., & Grauer, K. (2006). Arts-based educational research dissertations: Reviewing the practices of new scholars. *Canadian Journal of Education*, *29*(4), 1223-1270.

Sirc, G. (2002). *English composition as happening.* Logan, UT: Utah State University Press.

Soderman, J., & Folkestead, G. (2004). How hip-hop musicians learn: Strategies in informal creative music making. *Music Education Research*, *6*(3), 313-326.

Solochek, J. (2012, May 15). Fcat writing scores plummet, prompting school grade concerns. *Tampa Bay Times*. Retrieved from http://www.tampabay.com/

Songwriting. (n.d.). In *Dictionary*.com. Retrieved from http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/songwriting

Spradley, J. P. (1980). *Participant observation*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Stephenson, S. D. (2001). *Portraits of the songwriting process in elementary classrooms* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from hdl.handle.net/10450/1967

Sullivan, P. S. (2012). *Experimental writing in composition.* Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press.

Taylor, J. A. (2011). *Rock'n'roll camp for girls: Expanding girlhood and redressing history* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Database. (884346201)

Tervooren, T. (2011). *Creative risk-taking: Can I actually do that?* Retrieved from

http://www.accidentalcreative.com/inspiration/creative-risk-taking/

Thomas, D. R. (2006). A general inductive approach for analyzing qualitative evaluation

data. *American Journal of Evaluation*, *27*(2), Retrieved from

http://legacy.oise.utoronto.ca/research/field-centres/ross/ctl1014/Thomas2006.pdf

Trent, M. (1996). Beyond the comfort zone: Collaborative learning and the national writing

project of Louisiana.

Ungerleider, J. H. (1987). *Raising consciousness about the nuclear threat through music*

(Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from Dissertation Abstracts International Database.

Urquhart, C. (2013). *Grounded theory for qualitative research: A practical guide*.

Retrieved from http://books.google.com/

Vanderslice, S. (2004). The power to choose: The case for the concept-based multigenre creative

writing course. *International Journal for the Practice and Theory of Creative Writing,*

0(1), 15-21.

Vasilachis de Gialdino, I. (2009). Ontological and epistemological foundations of qualitative

Research. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research,10*(2). Retrieved from

http://www.qualitative-research.net/

Wardle, E. (2012). Creative repurposing for expansive learning: Considering "problem-

exploring" and "answer-getting" dispositions in individuals and fields. *Composition*

Forum, 26. Retrieved from http://compositionforum.com/issue/26/creative-

repurposing.php

Weissman, D. (2000). *A social ontology*. Retrieved from http://books.google.com/

Williams, W. (2012). Untold stories to tell: Making space for the voices of youth songwriters.

Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy, 58(5), 369-379.

Zinsser, W. (1974). *On writing well: An informal guide to writing nonfiction.* London: Harper & Row.

CONSENT FORM PRIOR TO STUDY
Music & Lyrics: A Professional Songwriter's Approach to Writing

Introduction
The purpose of this form is to provide you information that may affect your decision to participate in this research study. If you decide to participate in this study, this form will also be used to record your consent.

You have been asked to participate in a research project studying the writing process of a professional songwriter. The purpose of this study is to understand the process a songwriter goes through when creating a song from inspiration/brainstorming to recording/performing and what role revision plays in the songwriting process. You were selected to be a possible participant because your are employed in the music industry either through contract or freelance work; sell your work to other recording artists, record your songs for your own album, or both; have written a song that has received recognition by a company or organization in the music industry; and still actively write songs.

What will I be asked to do?
If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to answer questions during three interviews that last approximately one hour each, allow yourself to be filmed while composing/performing songs on at least two separate occasions, provide the researcher with artifacts such as lyric notes and examples of revised lyrics, and check the researcher's transcriptions and results for accuracy. The collection of data is estimated to be completed within one week. However, follow-up interviews and transcription reviews may take place up to one year after the initial data collection.

Your participation will be audio/video recorded.

What are the risks involved in this study?
The risks associated with this study are minimal. Everything will be voluntary. Data will be stored in a locked file cabinet at 1552 Lazy Lane or on the principal researcher's password-protected desktop and laptop. Data will be kept for a minimum of three years and will be destroyed upon the completion of the use of this information. Materials and information from the participant will not be financially profited from without mutual consent. Transcription reviews will be performed routinely throughout the data analysis. At the end of the study, you will have the option to sign a confidentiality agreement and choose if the study will be anonymous or not.

What are the possible benefits of this study?
 The possible benefits of participation are the information obtained in this study can benefit continued work in strategies for classroom writing instruction and you may receive

an opportunity for reflection on your writing process. Improvement of this process can be implemented in his career. You may also broaden your listening audience and organizations that acknowledge your work.

Do I have to participate?
No. Your participation is voluntary. You may decide not to participate or to withdraw at any time without your current or future relations with Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi being affected.

Is my intellectual property protected?
Portions of lyrics and scores from this study may be published in the future. The researcher will seek your permission in writing to reprint portions of lyrics and/or scores to protect your intellectual property.

Who will know about my participation in this research study?
There will be a follow up consent form at the end of the study, and at that time, you will choose if you would like to keep the study confidential or not.

Data and results will be kept in a locked file cabinet and a password protected computer. Research records will be stored securely and only Regina Chanel Rodriguez, Principal Investigaor; Bryant Griffith, Faculty Advisor; Kakali Bhattacharya, Faculty Advisor; and Catherine Quick, Faculty Advisor will have access to the records.

If you choose to participate in this study, you will be audio/video recorded. Any audio/video recordings will be stored securely and only Regina Chanel Rodriguez, Principal Investigator; Bryant Griffith, Faculty Advisor; Kakali Bhattacharya, Faculty Advisor; and Catherine Quick-Faculty Advisor will have access to the recordings. Any recordings will be kept for forty years and then erased.

Whom do I contact with questions about the research?
If you have questions regarding this study, you may contact Regina Chanel Rodriguez, 619-277-5509, reginachanel@gmail.com or Dr. Bryant Griffith, 361-825-2446, Bryant.griffith@tamucc.edu.

Whom do I contact about my rights as a research participant?
This research study has been reviewed by the Research Compliance Office and/or the Institutional Review Board at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi. For research-related problems or questions regarding your rights as a research participant, you can contact Erin Sherman, Research Compliance Officer, at (361) 825-2497 or erin.sherman@tamucc.edu

Signature
Please be sure you have read the above information, asked questions and received answers to your satisfaction. You will be given a copy of the consent form for your records. By

signing this document, you consent to participate in this study. You also certify that you are 18 years of age or older by signing this form.

＿＿＿＿＿＿ I agree to be audio [/video] recorded.

＿＿＿＿＿＿ I do not want to be audio [/video] recorded.

Signature of Participant:＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿ **Date:** ＿＿＿＿＿

Printed Name:＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent:＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿ **Date:**＿＿＿＿＿

Printed Name:＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿

APPENDIX B

CONFIDENTIALITY CONSENT FORM
Music & Lyrics: An Arts-Based Inquiry into the Writing Process of a Professional Songwriter

Introduction
The purpose of this form is to provide you information that may affect your decision in keeping your name confidential or anonymous.   If you decide for your information to remain confidential in this study, this form will also be used to record your consent.

You participated in a research project studying the writing process of a professional songwriter. The purpose of this study was to understand the process a songwriter goes through when creating a song from inspiration/brainstorming to recording/performing and what role revision plays in the songwriting process. You were selected to be a participant because your were employed in the music industry either through contract or freelance work; sold your work to other recording artists, recorded your songs for your own album, or both; had written a song that received recognition by a company or organization in the music industry; and still actively write songs.

What will I be asked to do?
You were asked to answer questions during three interviews that lasted approximately one hour each, allowed yourself to be filmed while composing/performing songs on at least two separate occasions, provide the researcher with artifacts such as lyric notes and examples of revised lyrics, and check the researcher's transcriptions and results for accuracy.   The collection of data was completed within one week and follow-up interviews were completed within three months of the initial data collection.

Your participation was audio/video recorded.

What are the risks involved in this study?
The risks associated with this study were minimal. Everything was voluntary. Data was/will be stored in a locked file cabinet at 1552 Lazy Lane or on the principal researcher's password-protected desktop and laptop. Data will be kept for a minimum of three years and will be destroyed upon the completion of the use of this information. Materials and information from the participant will not be financially profited from without mutual consent. Transcription reviews will be performed routinely throughout the data analysis. At the end of the study, you will have the option to sign a confidentiality agreement and choose if the study will be anonymous or not.

What are the possible benefits of this study?
 The possible benefits of participation are the information obtained in this study can benefit continued work in strategies for classroom writing instruction and you may receive an opportunity for reflection on your writing process. Improvement of this process can be

implemented in his career. You may also broaden your listening audience and organizations that acknowledge your work.

Do I have to participate?
No. Your participation was voluntary. You had the option to not participate or to withdraw at any time without your current or future relations with Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi being affected.

Who will know about my participation in this research study?
Data and results will be kept in a locked file cabinet and a password protected computer. Research records will be stored securely and only Regina Chanel Rodriguez, Bryant Griffith, Kakali Bhattacharya, and Catherine Quick have access to the records.

Because you participated in this study, you were audio/video recorded. Any audio/video recordings are stored securely and only Regina Chanel Rodriguez, Bryant Griffith, Kakali Bhattacharya, and Catherine Quick have access to the recordings. Any recordings will be kept for forty years and then erased.

Whom do I contact with questions about the research?
If you have questions regarding this study, you may contact Regina Chanel Rodriguez, 619-277-5509, reginachanel@gmail.com or Dr. Bryant Griffith, 361-825-2446, Bryant.griffith@tamucc.edu.

Whom do I contact about my rights as a research participant?
This research study has been reviewed by the Research Compliance Office and/or the Institutional Review Board at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi. For research-related problems or questions regarding your rights as a research participant, you can contact Erin Sherman, Research Compliance Officer, at (361) 825-2497 or erin.sherman@tamucc.edu

Signature
Please be sure you have read the above information, asked questions and received answers to your satisfaction. You will be given a copy of the consent form for your records. By signing this document, you consent to allow the researcher to identify you. You also certify that you are 18 years of age or older by signing this form.

_____ I consent to my identity being used,

_____ I do not consent to my identity being used.

Signature of Participant:_____ **Date:**_____

Printed Name:_____

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent: **Date:**

Printed Name:

Secondary Participant
Words & Music: A Professional Songwriter's Approach to Writing

Introduction
The purpose of this form is to provide you information that may affect your decision as to whether or not to allow photos or videotape material obtained during the research on Words & Music: An Arts-Based Inquiry into a Professional Songwriter's Songwriting Process

You have been asked to participate in a research project studying the writing process of a professional songwriter. The purpose of this study is to understand the process a songwriter goes through when creating a song and to understand what role revision plays in the songwriting process.

You were selected to be a possible participant because you collaboratively write songs with the primary participant in this study.

What will I be asked to do?
If you agree to participate in this study, you will be videotaped and/or photographed during your collaborative songwriting sessions with the primary participant. This study will take place over one week. Two separate collaborative songwriting sessions lasting one hour each will be videotaped. [allow photos or videotape material obtained during the research on Words & Music: An Arts-Based Inquiry into a Professional Songwriter's Songwriting Process to be used for research purposes.

Your participation will/may be audio/video recorded.

What are the risks involved in this study?
The risks associated with this study are minimal and are not greater than risks ordinarily encountered in daily life.

What are the possible benefits of this study?
You will receive no direct benefit from participating in this study. The possible benefit to society is the information obtained in this study can benefit continued work in strategies for classroom writing instruction

Do I have to participate?
No. Your participation was voluntary. You had the option to not participate or to withdraw at any time without your current or future relations with Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi being affected.

Is my intellectual property protected?

Portions of lyrics and scores from this study may be published in the future. The researcher will seek your permission in writing to reprint portions of lyrics and/or scores to protect your intellectual property.

Who will know about my participation in this research study?
Data and results will be kept in a locked file cabinet and a password protected computer. Research records will be stored securely and only Regina Chanel Rodriguez, Principal Investigator; Bryant Griffith, Faculty Advisor; Kakali Bhattacharya, Faculty Advisor; and Catherine Quick, Faculty Advisor have access to the records.

Any audio/video recordings will be stored securely and only Regina Chanel Rodriguez, Principal Investigator; Bryant Griffith, Faculty Advisor; Kakali Bhattacharya, Faculty Advisor; and Catherine Quick, Faculty Advisor have access to the recordings. Any recordings will be kept for forty years and then erased.

Whom do I contact with questions about the research?
If you have questions regarding this study, you may contact Regina Chanel Rodriguez, 619-277-5509, reginachanel@gmail.com or Dr. Bryant Griffith, 361-825-2446, Bryant.griffith@tamucc.edu.

Whom do I contact about my rights as a research participant?
This research study has been reviewed by the Research Compliance Office and/or the Institutional Review Board at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi. For research-related problems or questions regarding your rights as a research participant, you can contact Erin Sherman, Research Compliance Officer, at (361) 825-2497 or erin.sherman@tamucc.edu

Signature
Please be sure you have read the above information, asked questions and received answers to your satisfaction.   You will be given a copy of the consent form for your records. By signing this document, you consent to allow the researcher to identify you. You also certify that you are 18 years of age or older by signing this form.
_____   I agree to be audio/video recorded.

_____   I do not want to be audio/video recorded.

_____ I agree to my name appearing in the transcripts.

_____ I do not want my name used in the transcripts and request a pseudonym.

Signature: _____ Date: _____
Printed Name: _____

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent:_____ **Date: _____**

Printed Name: _____

154

APPENDIX D: IRB APPROVAL LETTER

The approval for IRB protocol "Music & Lyrics: An Examination of a Professional Songwriter's Songwriting Process" (IRB# 20-13) is attached. You may proceed with the study as outlined in the protocol application.

IRB approval is granted for one year from the date approval is originally granted. You must submit an IRB Continuing Review Application for IRB committee review and approval should the project continue beyond the April 25, 2014. Please submit the IRB Continuing Review Application one to two months prior to the approval expiration date to allow time for IRB review.

Please submit an IRB Amendment Application for ANY modifications to the approved study protocol. Changes to the study may not be initiated before the amendment is approved. Please submit an IRB Completion Report to the Compliance Office upon the conclusion of the project. Both report formats can be downloaded from IRB website.

All study records must be maintained by the researcher for three years after the completion of the study. Please let me know if you have any questions or if I can be of further assistance.

Regards,
Erin

_____
Erin L. Sherman, MAcc, CRA, CIP, CPIA
Research Compliance Officer
Division of Research, Commercialization and Outreach

Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi
6300 Ocean Drive, Unit 5844
Corpus Christi, TX 78412-5844| USA
Tel. +1 361.825.2497 | Fax. +1 361.825.3920
Email: erin.sherman@tamucc.edu

APPENDIX E: TIMELINE

Timeline

Time (in days, weeks, months)	Duration of Activity	Description of Activity	Participant's Role
April 26, 2013	1 hr	Pre-proposal meeting with entire committee	
May 14, 2013	1 hr	Proposal with entire committee	
Tuesday, July 2, 2013 Gallatin, MO	5 hrs	Initial meeting and interview (87 minutes), had participant sign consent form, transcribed observation notes and journaled while doing so.	Participate in the interview
Wednesday, July 3, 2013 Gallatin, MO	3 hrs	Uploaded interview video and transcribed researcher notes to Dedoose. Began transcribing interview video.	
Thursday, July 4, 2013 Gallatin, MO	1 hour	Continued transcribing and initial round of coding and memo-ing. Set up observation with participant.	
Friday, July 5, 2013	6 hours	1. Collaborative songwriting observations (one in morning, one in evening) & field notes (approx. 3 hours) *Obtained consent for secondary participants	Participate in observations
Week 2 & 3 July 7-20, 2013	30 hours	1. Continued transcribing and initial coding in Dedoose 2. Journal in Memos 3. Document emerging categories 4. Uploaded all videos to Dedoose software 5. Updated chapter 3 to reflect actual events during data collection	
Week 4 July 20-31	15 hours	1. Finish transcribing and initial coding.	

		2. Categorize and theme.
Week 5 & 6 August 19, 2013	10 hours	1. Update Chapter 3 to reflect coding and theming process. Work on writing out themes.
September & October	3 hours/week	1. Work on composing Chapter 4 and themes 2. Peer Review via e-mail
November	1-2 hours per week	1. Develop ethnodrama based on themes 2. Send Chapter 4 to Committee for review 3. Send participant ethnodrama and themes via e-mail
December & January		1. Work on composing Chapter 5 2. Work on editing and revising Chapters 1-4
January		1. Work on completing Chapter 5
February		1. Send out Chapter 5 to committee 2. Hire editor to review APA citations 3. Fill in any holes from proposal
March	3-10 hours per week	1. Schedule Defense by March 21st 2. Send off completed draft for editing 3. Send draft to chair, then to committee members 4. Prepare defense presentation
April 1, 2014		1. Defense

Enhanced Cognitive Model of the Composing Process

Writer's Long Term Memory
- Knowledge of Topic(s)
- Knowledge of Audience
- Knowledge of Genre
- Stored Writing Plans
- Knowledge of Sources based on Literature Search
- Personal Experiences

Mental Comfort
- Trustworthy relationship with fellow writers
- Raw writing will be kept private
- acceptance of co-writers' criticisms
- belief that co-writers' comments will drive process forward

Internal Thoughts

Creative Risk-Taking

Self-Feedback

External Thoughts

Self-Efficacy of Writer

External Input
- Conversation
- Peer Editing
- Expert Comments
- Audience Interaction

Writing Assignment
- Topic
- Audience

Flow of Process

Text Produced So Far

Physical Comfort
- Lighting
- Rituals
- Clothing
- Sounds
- Location
- Arrangement of Room

Moments of Editing and Revising