New Self-publishing Technology Takes Students and Faculty Beyond the Classroom

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Frank X. Barron, one of the pioneers in the psychology of creativity, argued that “the personal sensitivity and understanding available in a supportive educational environment toward a person who is artistically inclined can have a significant effect on a person developing his or her artistic potential in life” (ctd in Benjamin “Art and Mental Disturbance” (65))
*Creativity theorist Elliot Benjamin has developed what he calls the Artistic Theory of Psychology. Benjamin challenges the traditional link between creativity and “mental disturbance” (i.e., the tortured artist as social outcast).
“I shall define the successful creative artist to be a person who has received the respect and acknowledgement for his or her work from a community of his or her peers or society at large and also who is considered both psychologically and ethically to be a “well-adjusted” member of his or her society and the greater world.” (Art and Mental Disturbance, 64)
* And, Benjamin believes this self-motivated artistic connection with the world is the foundation for the “successful creative artist” making a satisfactory adjustment to day-to-day life.

* Peer recognition/community is key to artistic success and well-being.
* Benjamin took his theory into the real world by exploring the effect of a creative artist support group on the mental well-being of the participants. He shared his finding in the *Journal of Public Mental Health.*

*"The creative artist support group: a case study"* (2014)
Benjamin found significant therapeutic benefits for members of a community-based creative artist support group, arguing that the social value of peer support allowed the participating artists to develop “natural” (i.e., self-motivated) creative expression in comparison to “normal” (i.e., “socially approved”) patterns of behavior.

*Self-motivated expression vs. socially-approved expectations*
*Can new technologies give writers the kind of benefits they find in support groups and college workshops?*

And can they do that on a global scale?
“The Internet long ago revamped publishing and bookselling. Now technology is transforming the writing of fiction, previously the most solitary and exacting of arts, into something nearly the opposite. It is social, informal and intimate, with the results not only consumed but often composed on the fly ... *Wattpad eliminates any remaining distance between creator and consumer.* The reader has been elevated to somewhere between the writer’s best friend and his ideal editor, one who offers only adoration.”

* “Web Fiction, Serialized and Social”  
David Streitfeld, New York Times  
March 23, 2014
* 75 million stories to read
* 35 million Wattpadders
* 9 billion minutes spent on Wattpad each month

*Wattpad: the world’s largest community of readers and writers*
“Wattpad is a place to discover and share stories: a social platform that connects people through words. It is a community that spans borders, interests, languages. With Wattpad, anyone can read or write on any device: phone, tablet, or computer.”

(from the Wattpad website)
* Thousands of stories are added each day
* Wattpad stories are free and always available on any of your devices
* Anyone can publish their work on Wattpad: students, new authors or established literary stars
* Readers and writers interact: readers can message the writer and interact with other readers who love the story. Writers can talk to their fans.
* Readers can be notified the moment their favorite writer shares a new chapter or poem.

*Wattpad is redrawning the lines between reader and writer*
*Could Wattpad be the largest creative writers support group in the world?*

(but without the coffee and donuts)
You can create and publish instantly just by typing into the screen.
4 books of poetry being published serially by students in my Introduction to Writing Poetry class.
LeeAnn gained 138 readers in 2 weeks, with 5 votes of popularity and 13 comments. She is working to build her “followers”: people who are alerted whenever she posts new work.
Works of Poetry

This is a collection of several poems based on different prompts and ideas.

START READING

RECENT COMMENTS

potent. You're never very sure if the sessions are working or not, and this captures it

Beautiful! I look forward to reading more. I am proud to have you as part of the Pace family.

This is beautiful, Leann! Am so glad you are following your passion of writing and combining it with your love of animals!

Range of comments from friendly well-wisher to unknown reader.
Because I Raise Goats

I almost speak a foreign language.
The words that dribble from my tongue
Bounce to the floor and back again.

Oberhasli becomes brown and black,
And I say Toggenburg but you hear Toggehasli,
Which is almost correct,

This single poem has had 89 readers and gotten 6 comments, to which LeeAnn has replied, far more readers than she could get in a college poetry workshop.
Aisha has 113 reads and 6 votes. I love her cover image!
Aisha’s poem got 35 reads. Gaining followers is the biggest task the self-publishing author has.
* The feeling of being in control
* A strong feeling of satisfaction with the product created.
* The creation of a support team.
* A feeling of being part of the Zeitgeist.
* A feeling of permanence and discoverability.

* “What satisfactions do self-publishing authors gain from the process?”
Alison Baverstock and Jackie Steinitz (2013)
FEeling of being in control
*Feeling of satisfaction with product*
Creation of a support team
Feeling part of the Zietgeist
Feeling of permanence and discoverability
*Feeling of global community!*
*Why would Margaret Atwood, an award-winning novelist, choose to publish on Wattpad?
"But Margaret," you can hear them whispering. "You're a literary icon at the height of your powers; it says so on your book covers. Why are you sneaking out with an online story-sharing site heavy on romance, vampires and werewolves? You should be endorsing Literature, capital L. Get back up on that pedestal! Strike a serious pose! Turn to stone!"

“Why Wattpad Works”
6 July 2012  The Guardian
Atwood’s Wattpad page: she has 80,000 followers!
“Maybe my dates with Wattpad are a bit undignified. But at my age you can afford to be undignified. You're free to explore, and to guinea-pig yourself, and to stretch the boundaries.”
* I've been a writer since 1956. I've seen writing and publishing change a lot over the years. I look forward to exploring the ways Wattpad connects people to reading and writing, and may help give them confidence through feedback from readers.
* “I got into trouble a while ago for saying that I thought the internet led to increased literacy - people scolded me about the shocking grammar to be found online - but I was talking about fundamentals: quite simply, you can't use the net unless you can read. Reading and writing, like everything else, improve with practice. And, of course, if there are no young readers and writers, there will shortly be no older ones. Literacy will be dead, and democracy - which many believe goes hand in hand with it - will be dead as well.”

* Internet reading = increased literacy = increased democracy
*Allen Lau, the co-founder of Wattpad, remembers getting a letter from an old man in a village in Africa. The village had no school, no library, no landline, and no books. But it had a mobile phone, and on that they could read and share the Wattpad stories. He was writing to say thank you.

*Wattpad offers a truly global audience for writers


www.wattpad.com

www.wattpad.com/user/MargaretAtwood

*Works Cited*
Thank you for your kind attention. We hope you enjoyed the presentation.