

Melodic Expressions: Empowering First-Year Writers through Songwriting

John Ryan Hrebik
(Re)Vision Writing Academy

Music is a more potent instrument than any other for education because rhythm and harmony find their way into the inward places of the soul.

Plato

Long before I studied creative writing and composition studies, I spent countless hours writing songs. I never considered myself to be a songwriter; however, I discovered that this genre of writing helped express many of the complex feelings that plagued me during my late teens and early twenties. And, like Plato suggests, “rhythm and harmony” did eventually found their way into my soul, helping me navigate the emotionally charged waters of early adulthood. Years later, I began incorporating music-based activities and songwriting into my first-year writing course in an effort to present my students with a similar opportunity for meaning-making and self-discovery, while equipping them with the tools necessary for college-level writing. And, while the use of songwriting seemed unique to my classroom at the time, I have since found other first-year writing instructors who see the value of using music in the teaching of writing. In the article, “Music in the First-Year Writing Course,” Scott Strovas, a musicologist, methodically outlines his music-centered approach for teaching first-year writing (25). In particular, he injects

the music motif into the personal essay, the research argument and, my personal favorite, the journalistic music review. With each prompt, Strovas places students within the familiar genre of music, affording them the opportunity to “develop and gain trust in their own writing abilities while exploring what their favorite music means to them” (33). And, in addition to bolstering their overall confidence, he encourages students to utilize primary sources when performing academic writing in an effort to “subvert students’ expectations about the writing process, lessen their dependence on writing formulas and bad research habits, and foster their confidence in their own ideas” (25). By situating his course within the realm of music and placing value on primary source material, Strovas creates a familiar atmosphere for his students to begin exploring the value of their own inimitable experiences and knowledge. Moreover, his approach offers students a practical experience to reflect upon when critically engaging secondary source materials while performing academic research.

With Strovas’ music-based course in mind, this article extends the conversation further into composition studies by examining how incorporating *songwriting* into the first-year writing course enables students to begin expressing their own ideas/perspectives, while also developing the ability to create the concise, detailed texts associated with academic writing. The forthcoming discussion offers a detailed account of some of the individual assignments and in-class activities that I implement over the course of the semester in order to accomplish the previous objectives. Although the following discussion is situated within the context of the first-year writing course, it can easily be modified to fulfill the objectives of the primary or secondary English classroom.

Setting the Scene

On the first day of class, I announce to my students that they will be writing original song lyrics throughout the semester. This, of course, sends a wave of panic over my students, followed by a cacophony of disbelief. "Original song lyrics? We are not songwriters!" I quickly reassure students that while they may never hear their song on the radio, they will be inspired to integrate their personal experiences into writing assignments, while developing the ability to write succinct, detailed pieces. After taking the time to introduce the course, I ask them to open their notebooks and begin the following writing prompt: Name one of your favorite songs and explain your distinct connection to it. This ten-minute freewriting exercise is followed by a large group discussion, which gives students the opportunity to get to know one another as they share their unique relationship with a particular song. This icebreaker sets the tone for the entire semester, since freewriting and in-class participation are the cornerstones of my writing course. More importantly, it offers me a glimpse into students' musical tastes, which helps me create the individual Pandora Radio stations that serve as background music during each class session. With regard to background music, I make it a point to choose a different station for each class, ensuring that each student has the opportunity to walk into class hearing the hum of his/her favorite song or band whistling through the speakers. In essence, these stations create a familiar, relaxing environment for my students to craft the following songwriting assignments.

Throughout the semester, we as a class engage in various in-class activities that, in many ways, serve as models for the lyric writing process. Additionally, we use Andrea Stolpe's *Popular Lyric Writing: 10 Steps to Effective Story Telling*, which offers a blueprint for crafting

detailed song lyrics. Stolpe—a performing artist, songwriter, and educator—states, “Whether we are writing for ourselves or for someone else, the objective is always the same—to cause a significant experience in the mind and heart of our listener” (vii). In the case of the first-year writing course, the “listener” or audience is the larger class community of readers and writers. Stolpe’s book, while written for emerging songwriters, encourages my students to begin viewing their unique experiences as valuable material for academic writing, since most of the activities presented in the book require students to dig into their lives for content. And, as the semester rolls along, my students begin to thoughtfully incorporate their ideas into the pieces they craft, while recognizing the importance of creating subject matter that engages their audience using universal themes and relatable topics. To be clear, I am not dismissing the importance of formal writing, since students will be required to perform research writing in many of their classes. Instead, I am advocating that the first-year writing class should encourage students to call upon their own experiences and utilize their critical thinking skills in order to build arguments or persuasive prose rather than simply using source material to speak for them. Moreover, my goal as an instructor is to constantly remind my students that their personal perspectives and unique experiences can and should be added to the larger academic conversation.

In addition to encouraging my students to call upon their own personal experiences when writing, I attempt to create the mutuality-minded classroom that David L. Wallace and Helen Rothschild Ewald promote in *Mutuality in the Rhetoric and Composition Classroom*. Wallace and Ewald define mutuality as “teachers and students sharing the potential to adopt a range of subject positions and to establish reciprocal discourse relations as they negotiate meaning in the

classroom” (3). At its core, mutuality encourages students to be the subject-knowers Paulo Freire champions in his seminal text, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Like Freire, my goal is to create a liberatory environment where students begin to value and appreciate their own thoughts and perspectives rather than attempting to imitate mine. With that, the following three assignments are designed to rejuvenate student writers by making writing a process of personal discovery, as well as preparing them for later research writing assignments.

Songwriting Assignments

A Song About a “Place”

Throughout the semester, my students are asked to write original song lyrics, which they craft over the course of several weeks. The writing pieces are divided into three separate themes: place, person, and time. The first of these assignments, provided as [Appendix 1](#), asks students to write song lyrics that capture/reveal a specific place—literal or metaphorical—that holds particular meaning for them. However, before asking students to craft their original lyrics, I like to incorporate specific in-class activities that center on the idea of “place,” offering my students concrete examples to reflect upon as they begin writing their first set of song lyrics. The idea of “place” is explored over the course of several class sessions using freewriting prompts, music video analysis, and small group activities. The following is an example of one of the small group activities designed to help students begin writing their first song.

I recognize that many of my students have little or no experience writing song lyrics, so I implement the following in-class activity in order to illustrate how to use an existing song to

write an original set of lyrics. Before class, I take the lyrics from “Broadway” by Goo Goo Dolls, provided as [Appendix 2](#), and omit certain nouns and adjectives in order to strip the song of its identity. And, while there are countless songs that center on a particular place, I like using the aforementioned song for two specific reasons. First, it offers a detailed story surrounding an everyday place (Broadway Street in Buffalo, New York), which demonstrates for students how this particular songwriter, John Rzeznik, was able to craft a vivid story using his experience growing up near this street. The song “Broadway” demonstrates how students can call upon their own personal experience with a common place and make it both interesting and universal for their audience. In essence, my goal is to reinforce for my students that content can, indeed, come from their everyday experiences. The second reason is that the song’s overall structure, in particular the length of the verse and chorus sections, lends itself to the task of recreating the lyrical content. The verse sections, while detailed, are not too long, which affords students the time to focus on choosing the appropriate words that capture their song’s meaning without becoming overwhelmed by a large volume of text. Also, it illustrates how one word has the potential to alter the meaning of a line or phrase, reinforcing the importance of word choice when writing future poems, narratives, and research essays. Furthermore, the chorus is the same throughout the song, so students can utilize this repetition in order to highlight their song’s overall message for audience members.

To begin our activity, I place my students in groups of three to four, providing each group with a copy of the altered song lyrics. Next, I ask them to read over the lyrics and begin filling in the blank spaces in order to create their own song. The only caveat is that each group’s song has

to vividly describe a place (real or fictitious). This portion of the activity usually takes twenty to thirty minutes. Once students have a complete version of their song, I ask them to locate three pieces of supporting evidence and use them to formulate song's overall meaning. This task pushes them to offer a more text-driven analysis of their lyrics rather than simply offering sweeping statements to explain the song's meaning.

Next, I ask each group to share their lyrics and analysis with the class. This simple act of sharing presents students with the opportunity to witness how their peers negotiate meaning when presented with similar information (the scaffolding for "Broadway") and it demonstrates how individual perspectives have the ability to shape the overall interpretation of a text. Moreover, this exchange of ideas and varying perspectives illustrates for students that secondary sources (textbooks, scholarly articles, etc.) can, in fact, be interpreted differently as long as there is sound evidence and reasoning behind it. This opens many doors for students when writing future research papers. In particular, it gives them the confidence to begin interacting with their source material, encouraging them to have a dialogue with their sources rather than letting the sources do all of the talking in their piece. After sharing their songs, we watch/listen to "Broadway," which is accompanied by the original lyrics. Finally, we conclude our class session by discussing possible meanings for the song based on the differing perceptions and insights.

The previous activity becomes a valuable model for students to reflect upon when writing their first song. First, it demystifies the songwriting process by encouraging them to use an existing song as the scaffolding for their own song, creating a familiar framework for them to work within. Secondly, it positions content at the forefront of the writing process, since they are

responsible for incorporating details that are specific to their subject (a place) rather than laboring over the song's structure and form. This attention to content gets them immersed in the writing process as opposed to staring at a blank computer screen wondering what to write about. Additionally, this in-class activity gives students the experience of creating a concise, detailed song that will serve as a model for subsequent assignments. Finally, students learn the importance of locating and utilizing supporting evidence when offering an interpretation of a text, which will, no doubt, be useful when writing research essays in the future.

A Song About a "Person"

The next assignment, provided as [Appendix 1](#), asks students to choose a "person" who has had a significant impact on their lives and write a song about him/her. I like to begin our discussion surrounding this theme by sharing the following quote: "Specific detail causes strong, specific emotion" (Stolpe 9). Throughout her text, Stolpe stresses the importance of incorporating specific details when writing lyrics in order to "cause a significant experience in the mind and heart of our listener" (vii). And, while some formal research writing may not need to capture a reader's heart to be effective, it should, however, offer supporting details that cogently connect readers to the text's main idea and overall message. That said, if the goal of this assignment is to describe a specific person, then it is important for writers to utilize specific details in order to paint a vivid picture of this real life individual. By this time in the semester, we have discussed the importance of using *internal* and *external* details when writing both song lyrics and expository essays. According to Stolpe, internal detail "describes the thoughts and

emotions within the main character of a song,” while external detail “describes the actions or objects surrounding the main character of the song” (21). Equipped with these details, students begin exploring how to balance the previous details within their own writing in order to create content that is both specific and unique to the message that they are attempting to convey to readers.

In order to help my students better conceptualize internal and external details, I implement yet another in-class activity to help facilitate this process. The following exercise uses the song “Black Balloon” by Goo Goo Dolls to offer an example of a song about a particular person. I use this song because of its rich detail and subject matter. It offers a haunting portrayal of an individual’s struggle with addiction and how her resulting death impacted those around her. To begin, I ask my students to take out their journals, open them to a blank page, and draw a line directly down the center of the page, creating two separate columns. The first column is labeled “Visual Details” and the second is labeled “Lyrical Content.” Along with their notebooks, I have also provided each of them a printout of the song lyrics. We begin by just watching the video, allowing students the opportunity to experience the visual content. Next, students are asked to take notes as they watch the video for a second time, placing any and all visual details from the video that they find compelling under the corresponding column. Lastly, we listen to the song while focusing solely on the lyrics. This portion of the activity gives students the chance to identify the specific lyrics—comprising of both internal and external details—that inform or support the visual details offered in the video.

After completing their columns, I then place students into groups of three to four, asking

them to interpret the song's meaning based on the gathered evidence. And, like the earlier activity involving “Broadway,” this act of sharing ideas and negotiating meaning gives students the opportunity to witness firsthand how their peers’ life experiences and unique backgrounds have the ability to shape their interpretation of a song/text. In particular, it reinforces the idea that the same source/s (in this case a video and song lyrics) can, in fact, be interpreted differently by readers/listeners as long as it is accompanied by sound evidence and logic. Simply put, I want to encourage my students to consider their perspectives and experiences as valuable tools for interpreting both literary and academic texts. This reader-response approach to video/song analysis, in my estimation, is a great way to get students to view reading as an active negotiation between their thoughts and the presented textual information rather than the insurmountable task of finding the author’s one and only meaning (a New Critical approach to reading/interpreting texts). This opens many doors for students when they begin research writing, since it urges them to consider their insights as readers and writers as valuable resources. In particular, it gives student writers the confidence to begin interacting with their sources, applying personal experience and perspective to the task of textual analysis. This act of meaning-making could, of course, take the form of asking questions regarding the source’s offered information, or it could use a past experience to further contextualize the source material within the student’s research.

A Song About “Time”

The next assignment, provided as [Appendix 1](#), is the shortest and, for some, the most challenging of the semester. Students are asked to write a 6-line verse/stanza capturing a

significant “time” in their life. In addition to the truncated nature of this assignment, students are also asked to implement a specific rhyme scheme. At this point in the semester, we have started examining three specific rhyme types: perfect, family, and assonance. Stolpe outlines two additional types, additive/subtractive and consonance, but I only highlight the previous three due to time constraints. My students are all familiar with perfect rhyme (vowel sounds and consonant endings are exactly the same); however, many of them have little or no experience with creating family (vowel sounds match perfectly and the consonant endings are similar but not exactly the same) or assonance (the vowel sounds match perfectly but the ending consonants are completely different) rhyme pairs (Stolpe 34-35). So, in order to place these foreign rhyme pairs within a familiar realm for my students, we begin this unit by watching the 2010, *60 Minutes* interview with Eminem. In this interview, Eminem shares his writing process and unique approach to creating rhyme phrases with Anderson Cooper. This brief interview also includes clips of popular Eminem songs, which I pause and use to begin highlighting the three rhyme types for my students. I want my students to be able to hear the rhyme pairs in action, so this examination of the song lyrics helps to contextualize these advanced rhyme schemes into a familiar atmosphere for them.

The next several classes are spent exploring popular songs—chosen by students—and analyzing the different rhyme types. Additionally, I create freewriting prompts that allow students to explore the motif of time in order to begin developing content for their latest masterpiece. For instance, one prompt asks students to choose a photo in their phone (at least one person has to be present in the photo) and write a one-page description of that particular moment

in time. The description must include the following: (1) a minimum of three external details; and (2) a minimum of three internal details to capture the thoughts and feelings of those individuals captured in the photo. Students are given twenty to thirty minutes to work on their description. During this time, I move from student to student offering assistance when needed. Once completed, students share their memory with the larger class, affording their peers the opportunity to experience this moment in time for themselves. And, of course, the goal is for students to practice using internal and external details to help create an experience for their audience. In addition to helping students further refine their ability to create specific details, the previous freewriting prompt can serve as a springboard for their six-line stanza.

By the end of this unit, my students present their 6-line stanzas to the larger class, accompanied by a detailed synopsis of the story behind it. For me, the overall goal of this activity is rather simple: show students that their original texts can tell a story while being both concise *and* detailed. Furthermore, it affords them the opportunity to practice incorporating internal and external details within a concise framework, challenging them to carefully choose words and phrases that truly capture this moment in time.

Implications for Research Writing

Preliminary Research Writing with Sweeney Todd

Over the course of the semester, I encourage my students to explore their lives and interests, while developing the ability to create succinct, detailed song lyrics that capture their inimitable experiences for readers. In addition, I actively strive to instill a sense of confidence

and curiosity in my students that they can call upon when tackling future research writing assignments. This final assignment, provided as [Appendix 3](#), presents students with the opportunity to apply their newly acquired songwriting skills to a formal piece of writing, while learning a valuable notetaking technique in the process.

I begin this particular assignment by teaching my students the “double-entry journal” technique taken from *The Curious Researcher: A Guide to Writing Research Papers* by Bruce Ballenger. The double-entry approach asks the student/reader to create a dialogue with their source/s as they take notes. When initially engaging source material, Ballenger instructs students to take their notebook and draw a line down the center of a page, creating two columns. The left side is reserved for any quotes, words, phrases, and/or evocative material taken directly from the source. The right column is meant for the reader/researcher’s comments or questions on the corresponding source material. This particular approach encourages students to take an active role when reading sources, while reminding them that their views and perspectives are valuable when interpreting texts. Furthermore, it reinforces each student’s *interpretive agency*, a central element of mutuality. According to Wallace and Ewald, interpretive agency is “bringing one’s prior experience to bear in the construction of knowledge” (16). With that, the double-entry approach encourages students to use the lens of their own lives and experiences to read/interpret source material.

In addition to the above-mentioned reasons, the double-entry method coincides with the art of songwriting. In 2014, the Foo Fighters released the album *Sonic Highways*, which was recorded in eight different cities across the United States. In particular, Dave Grohl, guitarist and

lead singer of the band, wrote the lyrics for each song using a technique similar to Ballenger's double-entry journal. Grohl and the band spent a week in each city recording and interviewing the local musicians. Towards the end of each week, Grohl would comb through the collection of interview transcripts and begin choosing interesting words or phrases to write down in his notebook. From there, he would begin forming song lyrics using snippets from the interviews and his own ideas and responses to the words/phrases. I like sharing Dave Grohl's songwriting approach with my students because it captures the essence of Ballenger's double-entry method by illustrating the importance of "active reading" and "making the information your own" (Ballenger 151).

After exploring and practicing the double-entry technique, we begin watching Tim Burton's film adaptation of Stephen Sondheim and Hugh Wheeler's musical, *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*, which occurs over the course of several class sessions. To further contextualize the importance of notetaking, students are asked to employ the double-entry method while watching *Sweeney Todd*. In particular, students record details from the musical in the left column of their notebooks, paying close attention to the scenery, overall mood, and context of each scene. At the end of each class session, students are assigned the task of filling in the right column of their notebooks for homework, responding with comments, questions, personal feelings, etc. This process continues until we finish the movie/musical and students have a wealth of material to consider when beginning the assignment.

The writing assignment asks students to replace the music of one particular scene from the film, choosing a song that captures the overall mood and context of the scene. In many ways,

this essay is the culmination of our entire semester. First, it requires students to critically read/analyze their appointed selection, considering how the existing song lyrics inform/shape the visual details of the scene. Also, students are encouraged to consider their own unique perspective regarding the scene in order to unearth the overall context. This process should be familiar to students, since they have been honing these skills all semester through the many in-class activities where they analyzed music videos and song lyrics. Second, students are expected to incorporate direct quotes from their sources, such as dialogue from the movie/musical and lyrics from their chosen song. I also encourage students to include at least one blocked quotation as well. And, while students are required to include quotations from sources, this assignment challenges them to “make the information their own,” using the source material to support and further their unique perspective. In addition to critical reading/thinking skills and properly incorporating source material, students have the added task of crafting an essay that is both detailed and concise.

After several weeks of drafting and individual feedback from me, students are ready to present their essays to the class. In addition to reading their essay, students share their selected scene from *Sweeney Todd* with their chosen song playing in the background. Here, students have the ability to witness firsthand how their peer’s song works with the scene. For me, it is particularly interesting when students choose the same scene, but use drastically different songs to capture the overall mood and context. Moreover, students may offer conflicting perspectives on a scene by choosing a song that reflects a peripheral character’s thoughts or feelings rather than showcasing the main character. This occurrence further illustrates for students that sources

can, in fact, be interpreted in multiple ways—in this case a scene from a musical—when accompanied by supporting details.

Outro

Songwriting, like poetry, demonstrates that it is, indeed, possible to craft a rich storyline using a small amount of text. And, it is this ability to create language that is both condensed and particular that makes songwriters such compelling models for my emerging student writers. For me, it is important for my students to recognize how their own experiences and ideas can shape/inform their writing. Sadly, for many students academic writing has become the formulaic task of regurgitating other people's ideas into the best version of what they consider to be college-level writing. This apparent misconception reinforces for students that their ideas and perspectives are not worth including in an academic conversation, such as a research or argumentative essay. In my experience, I have found that imbedding my students within the fabric of songwriting encourages them to rely more on their own experiences for content, while challenging them to create succinct, comprehensive pieces of writing. Additionally, it inspires students to begin developing their own writing style rather than echoing back the same essay template semester after semester. Most importantly, songwriting empowers students to begin viewing their life experiences as valuable resources, while developing confidence as writers.

Appendix 1

Songwriting Assignments

Song #1: This assignment asks you to construct a song describing a particular “place,” which could be either metaphorical or literal in nature. To begin, you may select one of your favorite songs to serve as the scaffolding for your original lyrics. For example, if you choose Zac Brown Band’s “Colder Weather,” simply use the verse and the chorus sections as models/guides. That said, you can create your own original song without the aid of an existing song if you prefer. Either way, the goal is to make your lyrics unique to this “place.” Use both internal and external details to transport your readers to this location. In addition to your song lyrics, please provide a copy of the original lyrics if you decide to use an existing song. Remember, show us this place; do not simply tell us about it.

Song #2: This assignment asks you to construct a song describing a particular “person” who made a significant impact on you at some point. Using your newly developed “destination writing” skills, paint a clear/detailed picture of the person you are describing by using **internal and external details**. Try to make your details as unique as possible. Remember: Specific detail causes strong, specific emotion!

Song #3: This assignment asks you to construct a **6-line stanza** describing a particular “time” or moment in your life that has left a lasting impression upon you. In addition to your stanza, you will craft a **one-page summary** offering a detailed account of the event or time period you are describing in your stanza. Remember, specific detail causes strong, specific emotion! I want you to *show* me this particular memory rather than simply telling me about it. That said, do your best

to use as much sensory detail as possible. Please use the following rhyme structure: AABCCB. The first two lines (AA) must end with an **Assonance** Rhyme, the third and the sixth lines (BB) must end with a **Family** rhyme, and lines four and five must end with a **Perfect** rhyme. Please single space your 6-line stanza and one-page summary.

Appendix 2

“ _____ ”

Chorus

_____ is _____ tonight
a little bit _____ than it used to be
_____ is _____ tonight
See the _____ man sitting in the _____ man's _____
_____ for his turn to _____

Verse

The _____ kills the _____
And _____ nights gone too _____
The _____ light hides the _____
On all the _____ girls
Forgotten but not _____
You _____ it off your _____
You _____ about the _____ like it's someplace that you've _____

You see, you'd _____ to go _____,
but you _____ you ain't got _____
Cuz you're _____ in a world that you've best _____, around _____

Chorus

_____ is _____ tonight
a little bit _____ than it used to be
_____ is _____ tonight
See the _____ man sitting in the _____ man's _____
_____ for his turn to _____

Verse

You _____ down all you _____
_____ your only son
You _____ to statues when you _____ up for fun
Your _____ don't _____ me
The world _____ in your face
It always _____ like hell on the loser's day to _____

Chorus

_____ is _____ tonight
a little bit _____ than it used to be
_____ is _____ tonight
See the _____ man sitting in the _____ man's _____
_____ for his turn to _____

Appendix 3

Reimagining the Music for *Sweeney Todd*

This assignment asks you to replace the music for one particular scene from the musical, *Sweeney Todd* by selecting a song of your choice. In paragraph form, please address the following:

- 1) What particular scene did you choose and what is the context of this scene? Describe the scene in **detail** using internal and external details. For example, what elements make up the scenery/environment and how does this create the “mood” for the scene? Paint a clear picture of the scene.
- 2) Describe each character in detail, as well as his/her frame of mind in the scene. Is he or she distressed? Joyful? Somber? Tell us what he or she is thinking and feeling during this scene. Please include direct quotes from the character/s, as well as visual details (facial expressions, gesticulation, etc.) to support your perspective.
- 3) What is the name of the song/band that you selected to replace the existing score? *Why* did you choose this song for this particular scene? What is the overall tone (tone is defined as the “attitude of the speaker”) of your selected song? How/why does this tone fit the overall mood of the scene? How does it reinforce the mood depicted in this scene? Explain *how* and *why* the song’s lyrical content (internal and external details) resonates with this scene. Please cite song lyrics to support your analysis.

Please make sure your essay has an introduction, paragraphs of 4-5 sentences, and a conclusion. Follow MLA guidelines for your heading and header/page #. Your analysis should be 5-7, double-spaced pages. Please use 12pt font, Times New Roman, and 1-inch margins.

Works Cited

- Ballenger, Bruce. *The Curious Researcher: A Guide to Writing Research Papers*. 6th Edition. Pearson Education, Inc, 2009.
- Eminem. Interview by Anderson Cooper. *60 Minutes*, 7 Oct 2010.
- Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Trans. Myra Bergman Ramos. New York: Continuum, 1990.
- Goo Goo Dolls. "Black Balloon." *Dizzy Up the Girl*. Warner Bros., 1998.
- Goo Goo Dolls. "Broadway." *Dizzy Up the Girl*. Warner Bros., 1998.
- Stolpe, Andrea. *Popular Lyric Writing: 10 Steps to Effective Storytelling*. Berklee Press, 2007.
- Strovas, Scott. "Music in the First-Year Writing Classroom." *CEA Forum*, Summer/Fall 2011, [WWW.CEA-WEB.ORG](http://www.cea-web.org), accessed 16 Feb. 2018.
- Wallace, David L., and Helen Rothschild Ewald. *Mutuality and the Rhetoric and Composition Classroom*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 2000.