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Abstract

Much qualitative research on student learning in higher education has focused on a key distinction between surface reproduction of 'knowledge' and a deeper understanding of it. This distinction has also been found in research on student practice and understanding of essay and discursive writing. This paper reports on results from a study of 40 interviews conducted with students taking creative writing courses at three different higher education institutions in the United Kingdom. Interviews were conducted with students of various levels of experience and expertise in creative writing and included students taking a single undergraduate module in creative writing and students enrolled in a highly selective Masters program in Creative Writing. The interviews focused on the students' conceptions and practice of creative writing while taking their respective courses. The analysis of the interview transcripts revealed an underlying subjectivist epistemology in the students' general assumptions and perception of the nature of Creative Writing vis-à-vis other forms of academic writing. Linked to this epistemology, the analysis disclosed a typology of four differing conceptions of student understanding and practice of creative writing within two overall transcribing and

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composing categories of conception. These categories closely resemble student's conceptions of writing practices in other disciplines. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)