

MAPS for Response to *After THE END*
Mode- Self-Reflective Response
Audience- Professor/ Other Participants
Purpose- To Explore/ To Reflect
Situation- Attitude

Response to Barry Lane's *After THE END*
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CRWP Summer 2009

Creative revision. I had no idea what this could possibly mean. I wasn't sure how revising a piece of writing could be creative in any sense of the word. Revision always seemed like one of those things that people have always looked at as more of a chore that has to be completed in order to improve a piece of writing while in the final stages.

Barry Lane's book *After THE END: Teaching and Learning Creative Revision* has opened my eyes to a new perspective on revision. For example, it has not been all that uncommon for me to ask students to revise a piece of writing after having 'completed' the first draft. Logically, it made sense to me that since they had something to work with they could next revise it. What I wasn't taking into consideration was my own writing process, as Lane points out all teachers *should* do. When I did start thinking about how I write, Lane's points were like light bulbs clicking on in my head. Since when have I ever sat down, done web chart, drafted a paper, made revisions, edited, and then published, all in that exact order? I always revise and edit my pieces as I write them; I let my brain leak the words onto the page. I could be halfway through a sentence when I decide that I want to take what I'm saying in a different direction, so I make the transition and keep going. Never have I said, "Oh, I need to wait until the revision step to make that change!" In

retrospect, it seems absolutely absurd that I would expect my students to find success in a writing process that even I don't use.

Logically, my thinking then drifted to how I could help my students to revise in the same way that I do. Lane offers up a plethora of activities in this book that are not only creative, but also highly engaging for students. One activity I found to be very appealing was that of webbing and charting AFTER having written a piece of writing. Like Lane, I was never one that found much of a use for pre-writing strategies like webbing and charting for my own writing. Yet, like clockwork, you could find me requesting that my students complete this 'step'. I never stopped to think that maybe using a web before one begins writing was not helpful for a good portion of my students and that maybe it shouldn't be required. I love Lane's concept of using the web as a way to step back from a piece of writing to examine where you are going and where you could go with the piece (82-85). It only makes sense that using a web in this way is likely to prompt someone to make revisions to their writing or even just help them to become 'unstuck'.

Another strategy for creative revision that Lane addresses and that has sparked ideas for an independent study project is the idea of the teacher conferencing with students about their writing while acting as an interested reader and NOT a teacher corrector. Too often I have probably overwhelmed my students with comment after comment on their papers, trying to get across what I feel they should correct. But what Lane suggests is that the teacher take a step back and act as someone who is simply interested in the story. (104-105). It excites me to think that a strategy like this could work with my students. No

longer do I have to bring on the curse of my mighty ink pen; now I can simply try to enjoy what they are sharing with me while asking questions to get them to reconsider where their writing is going. It's definitely a strategy that I expect to adopt in my classroom in the upcoming year.

Finally, I found it very fitting (and entertaining) that Lane chose to end this book with a chapter titled "The Writing Doctor." It is in this section of the book that Lane points out common problems in writing, giving them humorous names, and identifying possible 'fix-it' strategies. Someone who is looking for strategies in a specific area could almost read this chapter first. It offers advice and then redirects the reader to the proper chapter that would be of the most use for him or her. I enjoy that it's a great review of the things he's covered throughout the rest of the book.

Lane's strategies are not only engaging, but they distribute power in the revision process to the person who should always matter most: the writer.