

CASEY ANDREWS // CCT 602 // SPRING 2018

POETRY // THE CLASSROOM

PRESENTATION AGENDA

- ▶ FRAMING & INTRODUCTION
- ▶ POETRY
- ▶ THE CLASSROOM
- ▶ FRAMEWORKS
 - ▶ CREATIVITY AS A BEHAVIOR
 - ▶ FREEDOM V CONSTRAINT
- ▶ NEXT YEAR

FRAMING & INTRODUCTION

FRAMING:

THIRD ANNUAL “YOUTH/POETS” COLLABORATION
BETWEEN HAMPSHIRE COLLEGE STUDENTS AND THE
12TH GRADE STUDENTS I TEACH IN BOSTON

WRITING POEMS BACK AND FORTH [STUDENT-CENTERED]

POETRY READING & ANTHOLOGY

NEW THIS YEAR:

MY COURSE WAS AN ELECTIVE, “LITERATURE AS ART”

WE READ AND WROTE POEMS BEFORE THE
COLLABORATION STARTED

THIS PROJECT IS AN EFFORT TO EXAMINE THE CREATIVE
PROCESS THIS YEAR IN ORDER TO PLAN FOR NEXT
YEAR’S COURSE



**“I WON’T LIE...SOMETIMES
I’M NOT SURE WHAT MOST
POETRY MEANS”**

**WHAT WE DID THIS YEAR:
AN EXAMPLE**

FOR I WILL CONSIDER HOW TO BE 14.
FOR WILL YOU PLEASE NOT ACT LIKE YOU KNOW ME?
FOR QUIT TALKING TO ME LIKE I'M A KID.
FOR WHEN I WALK I KEEP MY SHOULDERS CROOKED BACK.
FOR I WALK IN THREES, LOOKING BRIGHT INTO THE DISTANCE AS IF I'M MORE
CONCERNED WITH SOMETHING ELSE. FOR IF I AM ONE, I AM NOT THE
PRETTIEST, JUST THE OEN WHO HOLDS MY SHOULDERS FARTHEST BACK,
HEMS MY UNIFORM SKIRT THE HIGHEST, SO THE SPACE BETWEEN MY
KNEESOCKS & SKIRT IS EXCEEDINGLY PURE, IS GOOD TO THINK ON, IF A
BOY WOULD EXPRESS HIMSELF NEATLY. FOR I KNOW JUST HOW TO SNEER
TO GET A BOY TO LIKE ME.

DAISY FRIED, "JUBILATE SOUTH PHILLY: CITY 14"

Jubilate South Philly: City 14

For I will consider how to be 14.

For will you please not act like you know me?

For quit talking to me like I'm a kid.

For when I walk I keep my shoulders crooked back.

For I walk in threes, looking bright into the distance as if I'm more concerned with something else. For if I am one, I am not the prettiest, just the one who holds my shoulders farthest back, hems my uniform skirt the highest, so the space between my kneesocks & skirt is exceeding pure, is good to think on, if a boy would express himself neatly. For I know just how to sneer to get a boy to like me.

For if I am two, my fat, which is beautiful, pushes out in the gap between my shirt & low-rise jeans. I snap my gum, blow bubbles the size of Spalding balls, wear dark eyeliner, line my lips' outer edges with a different dark than my lipstick's pink. For the tattoo I want at the base of my back that my mother won't let me get is a rising sun, the flames of it just licking up out of my jeans.

For if I am three, I am sort of shy & pretty, I sort of go along & wish my parents would let me stay out later & no one notices me, & my friends are so funny, the funniest, the coolest, I wish I could be so funny & cool.

For at the first glance of the glory of Frankie on Seventh St. who has his learner's permit, I worship in my way.

For I wreath my body seven times around with elegant quickness.
For I leap up to catch the musk of his aftershave [though he doesn't really need to shave], which is the blessing of Frankie upon my prayer.

For I roll upon prank to work it in, i.e., sometimes he touches my elbow & I think I'll never wash again.

For last year everyone had henna tattoos & little stretchy chain chokers & this year without saying anything, no one's wearing them anymore, why didn't I notice?

For I look up at my friends for instructions.

For we go in quest for food: jalapeño poppers, Diet Cokes, cheesesteak with.

For I can tread to all the measures upon the musick: Shakira, Eve, Christina Aguilera ...

For I have this certain gesture: I bend my arm up, crook my hand, fingers somewhere between loose & tense, palm down.

For accompanying the gesture, I let loose a little sharp breath.

For I go tsk!

For I have HAD IT, I'm UP TO HERE!

For OK, it's overdramatic, it's too much, but like what am I supposed to do, spraggle upon waggle at the word of command?

For I shall yell at my sister.

For I am tenacious of my point.

For ohmigod Reenie just went & got her bellybutton pierced & her mother's gonna kill her. No she ain't says Reenie, & everybody giggles so hard they're leaning sideways.

For they are falling down almost.

For at 14 I am not too young to be sexy & not too old to fight with the nine-year-olds on the block.

For *naaaooooooooowwwooooo!* I cry, & *fu-uuuck yeeaaooowww* I say.

For the doubling of diphthongs is the improvement of the arguer's talent.

For we stand in the light on the corner again tonight, the boys come around like most times, & this old man, like 35 at least, says you girls get home what are you doing out so late & Reenie sasses him & he walks away & ohmigod it's so funny.

For shall I not be good & sweet?

For shall I not be important?

For I am mean to the dog.

For I swear at it. Then I am nice to the dog, see how nice, see how animal-loving, I hug this furry thing, & bury my face, my only friend. Ew, you smell, get away from me.

For I brush my hair hard; it snaps & floats heavenward.
For in brushing of it I perceive light about it both wax & fire.
For then I apply Frizz-Ease & I bless the name of John Frieda that
my hair is all better.
For shall I buy green or orange sneakers?
For maybe if I am fourteen I am six months pregnant & everybody
looks sad when they see me & I don't know which is the father.
Don't care, & none of them hang with me anymore anyway.
For I don't care because they always stole all my cigarettes anyway.
For I'm quitting, I really am.
For I hope it was Frank. For he called me once since.
For my face is so puffy, but I don't even care. For I don't even
know why.
For nothing's on TV & Ma won't pay for DSL.
For I would never get an abortion, Ma won't let me.
For Ma will take care of it & it will be fun to dress up.
For on the Broad St. Line the other day I heard what they were
saying.
For anyway Shell rode me on the back of her bike & we screamed
cause my belly was pressing into Shelly's back & we were
laughing so hard it was so funny?

For dumb old Shelly said I told you you better stop riding with those boys, it won't lead nowhere but the bedroom, now see? At least I had fun while she stayed home.

For I always put dried roses in my bedroom.

For I tell everyone I always put dried roses in my bedroom.

For the goddamn air conditioner is broken.

For even so I can swim for life. For I can creep.

For it is hot out & where do I go, pregnant, on a summer day?

WHAT WE DID:

- ▶ **READ THE POEM OUT LOUD SEVERAL TIMES**
- ▶ **TALKED ABOUT THE FORM & THE CONTENT**
 - ▶ "THE LINES ARE LONG" // "EACH LINE STARTS WITH THE SAME WORD" // "THE P-O-V SHIFTS"
 - ▶ "THERE ARE LOTS OF QUESTIONS" // "IT'S ABOUT A GIRL WHO IS PREGNANT"
- ▶ **PICKED ONE FORM ASPECT & ONE CONTENT ASPECT TO DRAFT AN ORIGINAL POEM**

**“I WAS ONCE YOUNG AND MAD . . .
THEY KNEW ME AS THE QUIET,
SMALL GIRL”**

J.W., “I, ME, YOU, THEY”

**“YOU SEE MY HANDS
YOU SEE MY EYES FILLED
WITH TEARS”**

J.H., “YOU SEE”

**“I REPEAT IT LIKE A SCRIPT AS I STARE
MYSELF DOWN AND REALLY START TO
NOTICE WHAT I’M TURNING INTO”**

E.D.D., “okay”

**“WHEN I WASN'T MYSELF
THERE WERE ALWAYS TWO OF
ME, THE SHADOW WATCHING”**

C.A.

**WHAT WE THOUGHT ABOUT
THIS YEAR:
QUOTES FROM STUDENTS**

STUDENTS REFLECTING ON THE PROJECT

- ▶ CP: "Poetry has change [sic] my life b/c I can really express myself"
- ▶ FB: "This [project] has motivated me to write more poems"
- ▶ TN: "Poetry is a way for me to escape"

STUDENTS REFLECTING ON THE PROJECT

▶ JH:

- ▶ "I can write a poem and it doesn't need to rhyme. It could just be something simple that means something to me."

▶ ED:

- ▶ "The biggest challenge I faced was definitely beginning my poem because it was difficult to think of what to write or how to word my thoughts."

CONNECTING TO FRAMEWORKS:

- CREATIVITY AS A BEHAVIOR**
- ENVIRONMENT & INDIVIDUAL**
- FREEDOM VERSUS CONSTRAINT**

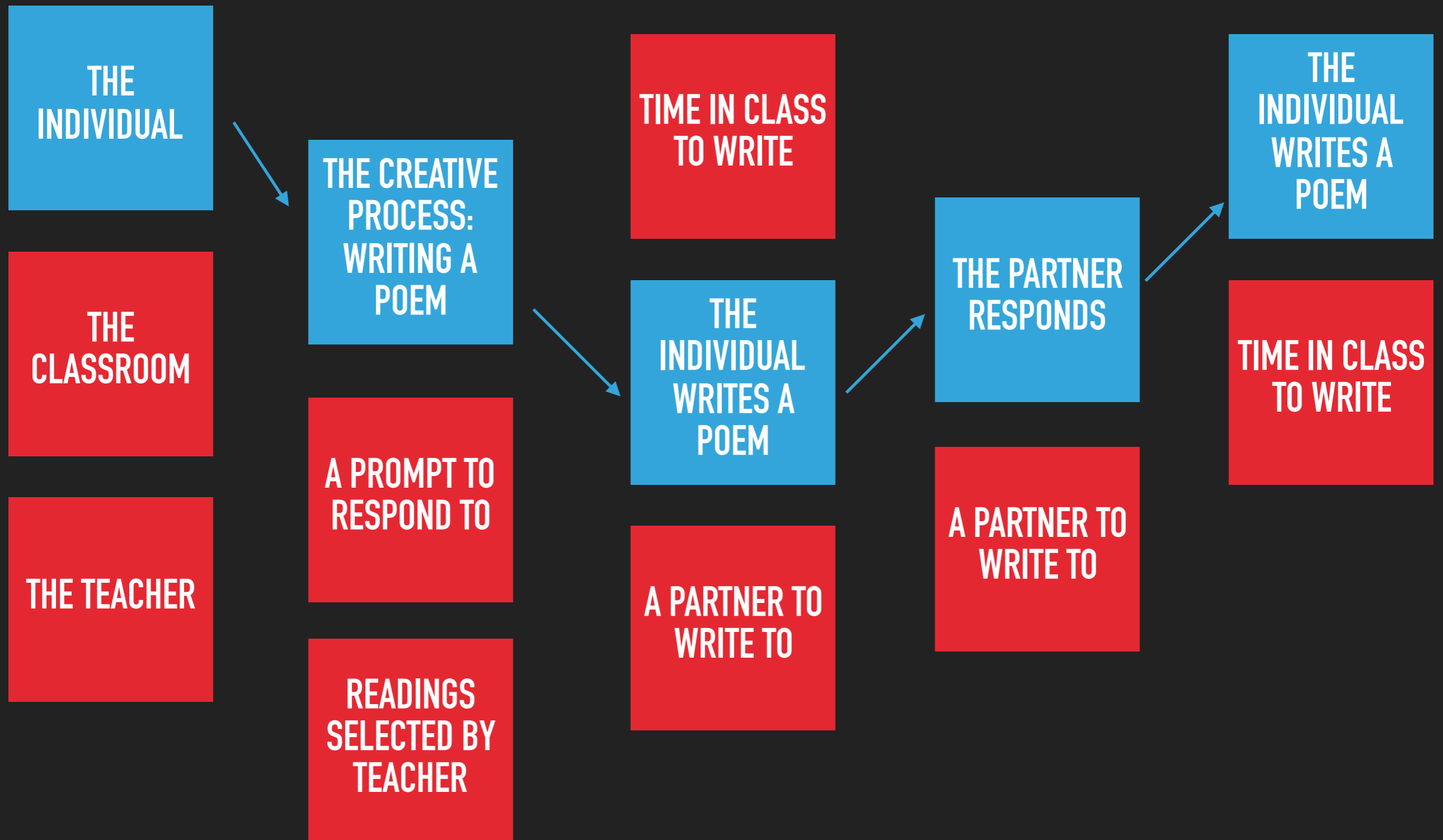
INDIVIDUALITY AS FOSTERED BY THE PROCESS

- ▶ Students used “I” and “my” frequently to in their reflections
- ▶ Emphasis on the **individual** fostered *ownership* of the creative process and *confidence* in **creativity as a behavior**
 - ▶ “I have gained confidence”
 - ▶ “I look at the world differently”
 - ▶ “I gained a chance to grow in writing poetry”
 - ▶ “I chose [my poem] because I wanted my partner to know me”

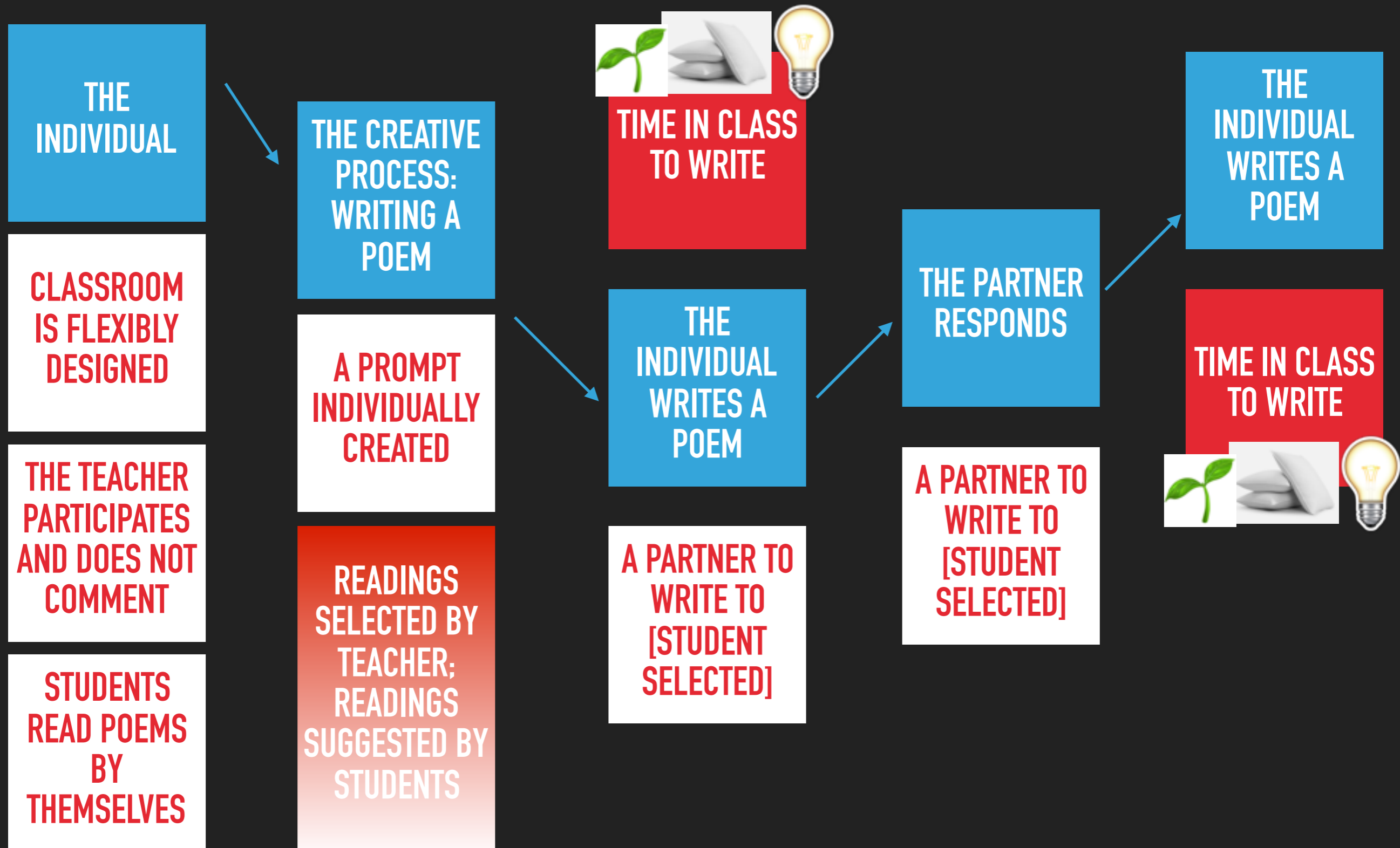
INDIVIDUALITY: OWNERSHIP OVER CREATIVE WORKS

- ▶ Students, later in the year, presented works they had created for a final piece
- ▶ They expressed similar ownership over their work:
 - ▶ “After finishing the piece it occurred to me...” - C.C.
 - ▶ “The work would be for nothing if I didn’t learn anything from it” - S.C.
 - ▶ “I [tried] a different approach with poems that will expand my thinking” - J.H.
 - ▶ “A few of my challenges were just trying to find out what words to remove to have a stronger impact” - A.R. R.

FREEDOM VERSUS CONSTRAINT



VIEWING CONSTRAINTS AS OPPORTUNITIES FOR FREEDOM



NEXT YEAR: QUESTIONS

- ▶ Is it possible for students to choose the poems?
- ▶ How can class time become “freeing”?
- ▶ How do partners get made? is there an increasingly flexible way to do this?
- ▶ Are there additional ways to foster ownership over the creative process of writing poetry?
- ▶ How can this be integrated into an overall vision of a classroom space? Can this process yield results with a form other than poetry?