

## The “Goldilocks” Conundrum: Moderating *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* Inclusion Toward a Generative Composition Praxis

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In the episode “Gone,” Spike refers to *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* as “Goldilocks.” Buffy’s discomfort with the extent of Spike’s adoration and phrasing is palpable; she abruptly cuts her hair. Cleo, her hairdresser, makes modifications, responding successfully to Buffy’s request to “make her different.”

A parallel can be drawn between Spike’s adoration and the immensity of affection felt by many composition instructors toward the show, the result of which is often a visceral, negative reaction on the part of students who might otherwise benefit from its content. Composition instructors must aim not only to temper their original enthusiasms by striving for a “just right” degree of *Buffy* in their lesson plans, but to harness student reactions (whether positive or negative) into conversations which generate “different” writing; in other words, *Buffy*-employing composition classrooms must enable student responses which facilitate complex, original writing.

The presenter aims to discuss his past experiences with uses of the show in freshman composition classes, relying on past scholarly reflections on *Buffy* and pedagogy (the essay collection *Buffy in the Classroom* contains both extensive justification for the text’s inclusion and thoughts on “inclusion levels”), along with reflective writings and interviews with former students. These retrospectives are to be paired with recommendations which address the relatively specific context of *Buffy* in “the composition classroom” (an unexplored facet of “Whedon Studies”) but indicate an awareness of the need for flexibility in classrooms which aspire to generative composition. The end result, it is hoped, will be a means for instructors to enable student agency through responses to this salient work of popular culture.