POETRY, MEDIA, AND SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

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By

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have examined the dissertation entitled

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A candidate for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy,

And hereby certify that, in their opinion, it is worthy of acceptance.

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Dr. Jill Ostrow

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Dr. Flore Zéphir

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my husband, Chun Ming Lee. I thank him for accompanying me to the US; I thank him for always cheering me up; I thank him for the myriad of other things he did for our living here in the US. I dedicate this work to my parents. I acknowledge their unconditional love for me. They show so much confidence and trust in me. I thank them for always supporting me to do what I love doing. I dedicate this work to my sister and brother. They offer me help whenever I need. I am thankful for having a wonderful family. Without their support, I could never have come to the US to fulfill this dream.

I dedicate this work to Dr. Roy Fox. His support made this research possible. I dedicate this work to Dr. Amy Lannin and Dr. Jill Ostrow. They helped me get the assistantship from the department, which enabled me to complete my study at MU.

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ii

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I am also thankful to the participants in this study. The time spent with them in the poetry class in fall 2010 semester has been memorable for me. I appreciate that they made time to meet me and provided all the sources I need for this study. I have been touched by those stories they shared. I am grateful that I had pleasure and opportunity to work with and learn from them. I cherish our friendship and I want to say I miss that poetry course very much.

Writing this dissertation has been a fantastic experience for me in the doctoral program. I cannot say enough about my love of this topic: Poetry, Media and SLA. Since I love it, the process is enjoyable; since I love it, the process is meaningful; since I love it, I could live in it forever. I cannot thank enough to the professors on my committee and the participants in this study. Without their help, I could not have had this wonderful experience.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

POETRY, MEDIA, AND SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISTION

Chih-Ning Chang (Lynn Chang)

Dr. Roy Fox, Dissertation Supervisor
Dr. Amy Lannin, Dissertation Co-Supervisor

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this qualitative study was to describe and analyze how the graduate course: "Writing, Reading and Teaching Poetry" influenced American and international students' writing, thinking, response to poetry, teaching beliefs and English learning through their participating in the class activities. In this study, I examine the following areas: (1) students' experience with and attitudes toward poetry reading and writing, (2) students' experience with and attitudes toward digital poetry, (3) and the influences of poetry and digital poetry on international students' English learning. Eight students and their instructor in a large Midwestern university participated in this study from August 2010 to December 2010. Four of the students are international students and four are American students. Multiple sources of data were analyzed. Five major findings are presented and examples are given to support these findings. The major findings of this study are: (1) Students' attitudes toward poetry and digital poetry changed from negative to positive; (2) Students wrote poetry to cope with life issues; (3) Students experienced self-exploration; (4) International students learned English through reading and writing poetry; and (5) International students were motivated and engaged in English learning while doing digital poetry. This study also makes some recommendations in terms of poetry and digital poetry teaching in the American classroom and the ESL/EFL classroom as well as suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Rationale

       Why Study Poetry Reading, Writing, and Teaching?

       Why Study Poetry Incorporating Media ?

       Why Study Poetry and Second Language Acquisition?

Definitions of Terms

Research Questions

Theoretical Framework

Methodology

Findings

Organization of the Study

Conclusion

"*Two or three things I know for sure*," by Dorothy Allison, is one of my favorite books. One paragraph from her book struck me: "Two or three things I know for sure, and one of them is that to go on living, I have to tell stories, that stories are one sure way I know to touch the heart and change the world"(p. 72). I relate to this quote, so perhaps this is why I enjoy doing research. I hope to tell stories through my research and raise people's awareness in the world to make education sound. The purpose of my dissertation, "Poetry, Media, and Second Language Acquisition" was to discover what happened to the learning, writing, reading, thinking and technology-use of graduate students when they participated in a poetry class. My story is based on my observations in class, interviews, and students' artifacts.

Why Study Poetry Reading, Writing, and Teaching?

I learned English poetry in college, and my experience was very negative. Analyzing poetry killed my interests, and I stayed away from it at all costs. I was surprised to see myself intrigued by it again, and I fell in love with it after I entered the doctoral program at MU. The wall against poetry was melted after I could feel safe and approach it in my own way. I realized that poetry is a beauty that everyone can enjoy, everyone can live in, everyone should explore. I have found my passion for poetry and I see it as my way to carry and express my emotions. We are human beings. We have feelings. Poetry is a way for me to connect with others. I am a very emotional person. I cry in poetry; I laugh in poetry; I vent my frustration when I write poetry. I feel the joy when I read poetry. Without poetry, I feel I miss something. Poetry is what made me whole. Some poems make me keep coming back to them. Some poems just emerge from my mind unconsciously as my mood changes. Wooldridge (2004) said, "Poetry hangs out where life is" (p. 4). Poetry is my lifelong companion now.

Yet, many people still believe it to be a difficult subject and avoid poetry. Some teachers do not enjoy poetry even though they are teaching poetry. They make poetry more intimidating for their students. I hope the stories I tell in my dissertation can change the status quo and have positive impacts on education.

Why Study Incorporating Media With Poetry?

I am obsessed with media and have incorporated images and sounds with my poetry. It is fascinating to study the interaction between visual and verbal, the impact of images on generating thoughts, and the influence of media on writing processes. I feel

strongly that bringing an awareness of this mode (digital writing) and expanding the communication in the classroom is crucial. The transition from thinking about writing poetry on paper with a pen to writing in digital ways will need to take center stage in teacher preparation and professional development. I hope that my exploration of how incorporating poetry with media will influence language learning and help engage teachers, students, and all learners in the 21st century.

Why Study Poetry and Second Language Acquisition?

I am an EFL learner (Learning English as a Foreign Language). Learning to read and write English poems has been a complex challenge. Yet, I have composed hundreds of English poems and cannot stop doing it. I enjoy immersing myself in the beauty of language and the process of playing with language. Poetry writing is a creative and free way for me to acquire another language. I also read poetry to fall asleep every night. Through extensive and intensive reading and writing English poems, my language proficiency has improved. I was interested in digging deeper into using poetry and digital poetry with language learners in my dissertation. I was intrigued to explore the language learning process for L2 (ESL/EFL) speakers. I would like to know if other scholars find the similar effects of poetry immersion.

Definition of Terms

The following are brief definitions of some of the terms used in this study

- Digital Poetry

When people see this term "digital poetry," they might wonder: What is digital? What is digital poetry? What is my interpretation of "digital poetry" in this study? Below are their short descriptions.

"The term digital," said Bachleitner (2005) "should be reserved for innovative works with specific qualities that cannot be displayed on paper." Most frequently, in digital poetry, "digital" mediums are merged with versification and concrete and shape poetry conventions to engineer a new means of poetic expression. As for the "digital poetry," according to online Wikipedia (2011), "Digital poetry is a form of electronic literature, displaying a wide range of approaches to poetry, with a prominent and crucial use of computers. Digital poetry can be available in form of CD ROM, DVD, as installations in an art gallery in certain cases also recorded as digital video or films, as digital holograms and on the Internet." The interpretation of "digital poetry" in this study means the combination of poetry text, sound, and images created by digital tools. Some common softwares used in this creation are "Window Movie Maker" "PhotoStory 3" "i-Movie" and "PowerPoint."

- Second Language Acquisition

The term of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) is the scholarly field of inquiry that investigates the human capacity to learn language other than the first language (Ortega, 2009). Ellis (1997) defined SLA as "the way in which people learn a language other than their mother tongue, inside or outside of a classroom"(p. 3).

4

- Writing as Healing: Poetry Therapy

Writing as healing means the therapeutic aspects of writing. Poetry therapy is based on this notion. People cope with their physical or mental problems, pain or dilemmas through reading and writing poetry to adjust themselves and maintain their well being.

Research Questions

The central question of my study: What happens when international and American graduate students participate in a poetry class, "Writing, Reading and Teaching Poetry"? The following sub questions (question clusters) provide possible avenues to study poetry, media and second language acquisition.

Poetry Reading and Writing

- What are international and American students' experiences with and attitudes toward poetry reading and writing when beginning and completing the course?

- What happens when international and American students work in peer response groups?

Poetry and Media

- What are international and American students' experiences with and attitudes toward digital poetry?

- What happens when international and American students compose digital poetry?

- What are the influences of poetry writing and reading on international students' learning of English?

- What are the influences of composing digital poetry on international students' English learning?

Theoretical Framework

Within this part, I outline several theories that inform my thinking and support my study rationale. A detailed literature review is shown in Chapter Two. The four areas associated with poetry learning, media, and second language acquisition that guided my thinking are: Reader Response Theory, Writing as Healing (focus on Poetry Therapy), Media Literacy and Second Language Acquisition.

Reader Response

My study is highly influenced by Louise Rosenblatt's transactional theory outlined in *Literature as Exploration* (1938) and *The Reader, The Text, The Poem* (1978). The transactional theory of reading (Rosenblatt, 1938) stresses the interconnectedness of reader and text in the process of meaning making. Readers continually shape their understanding of his world while encountering the text. By immersing in the text, the reader constructs his thoughts, his views, his emotions, and his personality to live in society. Each individual interprets the same text differently from others as he/she brings different prior knowledge and background into the text. With different interpretation, the text influences the reader in a certain way. Rosenblatt

(1938) also stresses the critical thinking within an emotional context, "The emotional character of the students' response to literature offers an opportunity to develop the ability to think rationally within an emotionally colored context"(p. 217).

Rosenblatt's aesthetic reading theory (1938, 1978) espouses the enjoyment and engagement in reading poetry occur when the reader responds to the text on a personal level. In addition, poetry is taken as a lived- through experience. It is a continuum process between the reader and the text.

Some other recent scholars' studies, such as Elbow's, Moffet's, and Murray's also altered my thinking about literacy development in this study. I could see that their ideas about the process of reading and writing as well as enjoyment from the freedom and choices are related to Rosenblatt's theory.

As for the literacy development in English language learners, many researchers have advocated the benefits of teaching poetry in EFL/ESL classrooms. Rosenblatt's (1978) aesthetics theory is one main focus. Language learning is more effective when learners are engaged in the text where they obtain the pleasure and fulfillment. Second, language acquisition involves cognition and emotional effects. Hess (2003) claims that poetry can be used as a vehicle for thought and an instrument for shaping language. Kellem (2009) also states, "Poetry is a source of content-rich reading material; a model of creative language in use; a way to introduce vocabulary in context; and a way to focus students' attention on English pronunciation, rhythm, and stress" (p. 12). Thus, we know that poetry helps students learn not only the mechanical aspects but also

emotional aspects of the target language. McConechie (1982) states that poetry improves the sense of another language for Second Language (L2) learners.

Writing as Healing: Poetry Therapy

Several theories support the notion that poetry can be therapeutic**.** Hayakawa (1990) in his book " *Language in Thought and Action*" talked about "Allness" and " Map & Territory" which mean that people tend to project their bias to the whole context. The belief each individual holds is distorted and incomplete because of their limited experiences. Writing helps people bring in bigger contexts into the issue and enables them see things more objectively. Desalvo (1999) states, "Writing cleans the minds, and enables the writer to achieve serenity, for it purges us of 'tangled emotions.' The writer, then, inevitably is changed by the act of writing" (p. 70). Writing enables people to achieve order in the chaotic world. Details of this theory and previous research are discussed in Chapter Two.

Media Literacy

Wagner (2008) discussed the impact of digital tools on poetry learning and affirmed the capability of digital tools of affecting both writing and the readers' experience.

> Experimentation is not new to poets: Even the constraints of the printed
> page permitted visual enhancements through the arrangement of words on
> a page and the additions of illustrations; adding music to words creates
> songs. The multimedia age permits and encourages new ways of
> approaching poetic communication, such as three-dimensional

installations in virtual reality, which invite direct participation of the

reader/viewer. (p. 16)

I also cite some foundational theories related to the notion of digital tool

integration, such as Gardner's "Multiple Intelligences" and Csikszentmihalyi's "Flow."

Digital tools offer the learners the opportunity to work with sound, images and texts.

Students are more engaged since digital tools draw in people with different intelligences.

Using digital tools meets the needs of all with different personalities and learning styles.

According to Csikszentmihalyi (1990), "Flow means the positive aspects of human

experience—joy, creativity, the process of total involvement with life"(p. xi). When

doing digital poetry assignments, students can become deeply absorbed and engaged, to

the point of becoming unaware of the passage of time and of their immediate

surroundings. During the composing process and the sharing moments, students

experience the most fulfilling and meaningful moments. Digital poetry experiences

become intrinsically rewarding for the students, and therefore they keep exploring it.

The power of images is another focus in digital poetry. Fox (1994) stated the relationship

between thinking, media, and language:

> The image is the DNA of language, of media, of media and of mind.
>
> Whether we receive them, send them or think in them, images are the most
>
> basic element of thinking and communicating. The message to the
>
> educators is that we can no longer separate visual literacy from verbal
>
> literacy, that we must treat word and image equally and simultaneously"
>
> (back cover).

Second Language Acquisition

This study was influenced by several SLA theories. Stephen Krashen's affective filter hypothesis is a major one. Krashen (1982) noted that there are a number of "affective variables" that play a facilitative, but non-causal, role in second language acquisition, including motivation, self-confidence and anxiety. Language acquisition is promoted when the learners' "affective filter" is low. (Filter means things can block language acquisition.) Krashen (1982) believes that learners with high motivation, self-confidence, good self-image and low anxiety are better equipped with language ability.

Poetry contributes to the emotional, imaginative and intellectual development of our learners, thus when I see the progress of ESL/EFL students in this study, I could relate the emotional factor to this theory. I could also see the connection between Krashen's theory and Rosenblatt's aesthetics reading theory. In addition, Maley & Duff (1989) stated: "One of the most important conditions for learning a foreign language ... is the opportunity to play with it, to pull it this way and that, to test its elasticity, to test and explore its limits. Poetry is an excellence medium in which this can be done" (p. 9). Poetry offers a playground for learners, and learners become advanced while engaging in the joyful experience. As Maley & Duff (1989) succinctly stated, "Poetry offers a rich resource for input to language learning" (p. 7).

One aspect my study explored was the integration of poetry and technology in language learning. Several scholars' findings guided my thinking. A Canadian researcher, Hughes (2007) pointed out, "It is important for students to be able to read and write or construct texts in multiple genres. Moving beyond pen and paper and using a

variety of representing strategies (including visual arts or drama, for example) provide students opportunities to express themselves and demonstrate their understanding in alternate ways" (p. 2). Hughes (2007) continued, "New media have an immersive and performative potential that encourages students to get inside a poem and play with it. Giving students opportunities to create poems or respond to and annotate existing poems using new media provides them with opportunities to use the technology in meaningful ways" (p. 3).

Methodology

This qualitative case study was conducted over a four months. According to Creswell (2007), case study research is a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (e.g., observation, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports), and reports a case description and case-based themes" (p.73). I was a "participant observer" in the research described by Glesne as action research in that, "practitioners who couple basic research theories and techniques with an action-oriented mode can develop collaborative, reflective data-collecting" (Glesne 1999). The data collection took place in the course "Writing, Reading and Teaching Poetry" during 2010-fall term over 16 weeks. Each class was observed, writing samples and students' artifacts were collected, and I interviewed the students.

The Participants

The participants were eight graduate students and their instructor. This study got the instructor's approval in early August 2010. The instructor, Dr. Roy Fox is also my advisor. He supported and supervised this study and eventually became one of the participants. I talked with him after each class to gain a deeper understanding about the teaching and learning process and his interpretation of each event and each individual's progress. He also made comments on my teaching. Eight of the students were enrolled in the poetry course at a large Midwestern university. One of them dropped the class in the first week but still continued reading and writing poetry with me. His writings, emails as well as the class meetings in the coffee shop were documented and analyzed. Those students are currently studying in the College of Education at this university. Four of them are international students and four are American students. All of them have teaching experience and three of them are teaching currently in public high schools. The international students' home countries include two from the Middle East, one from Southeast Asia and one from Northeast Asia. Those international graduate students have advanced English proficiency. They can communicate in English effectively. In order to protect the participants' privacy, the participants' names presented in this paper are pseudonyms.

- Hung, from Southeast Asia, is a doctoral student in English Education /TESOL. He came to the U.S. in August 2009. He learned poetry in high school and college in his native country. He has never taught poetry. He received his master's degree in Australia before coming to the US. His English proficiency is advanced.

- Fem, from the Middle East, is a doctoral student in English education/TESOL. She came to the U.S. in August 2008. She learned poetry in high school and college in her native country. She has never taught poetry. Her English proficiency is advanced. She has taught ESL courses in college in the US.

- David, from the Middle East, is a master's student in Literacy Education. He came to the US. in August 2007. He learned poetry in elementary school in his native language in his home country. He has never taught poetry. His English proficiency is advanced.

- Kim, from Northeast Asia, is a specialist student in English Education. She came to the U.S. in July 2006. She learned poetry in high school and college in her native country. She has never taught poetry. Her English proficiency is advanced.

- Tom, from a southern state in America, is a doctoral student in English Education. He used to work as a musician for living for more than 20 years and then he changed career to be an English teacher. He learned poetry in high school, college and graduate school. He has also taught poetry in his high school for 10 years.

- Willy, from Midwestern America, is a first-year Language Arts teacher in a public school. He learned poetry in high school and college. He had not tried to teach poetry in class before he enrolled in this class.

- Helen, from Midwestern America, is a first-year Language Arts teacher in a public school. She learned poetry in high school and college. She had not tried to teach poetry in class before enrolling in this class.

- Dona, from Midwestern America, is a first-year Language Arts teacher in a public school. She had not tried to teach poetry in class before enrolling in this class.

The informed consent forms were given out to the students who were enrolled in the first class meeting and all of them agreed to participate in this study and signed the form. My role in the class was a "participant observer." I often participated in the class discussions and completed the assignments. I was also in charge of technology incorporation in class and digital poetry instruction.

Procedures

The "Writing, Reading and Teaching Poetry" was a three-hour graduate level course taught over 16 weeks. The class met every Wednesday from 4 pm to 7 pm in one computer lab in the College of Education building. I observed the students' class participation. I also participated in classroom activities and discussion. During audio taped interviews, the participants were asked to talk about their attitudes and experience with poetry learning (past and current; in or out of the class), and writing and thinking processes of assignments. One interview was done in early September of 2010 and the second interview occurred in middle November 2010, and the follow-up interview took place in February 2011 in a mutually agreed upon, quiet campus corner for about 30-60 minutes. The goals of the interviews were to "uncover the meaning structures that participants use to organize their experiences and make sense of their world" (Hatch, 2002, p.91). In this study, "their worlds" would be their experience with poetry learning. Besides the formal interviews, I also conducted informal interviews in class and out of class by asking questions, chatting, sharing experience, etc. in a natural setting. Also,

research participants' free writings, drafts of writing, teaching projects, digital poetry assignments, final portfolios and any other writing pieces and artifacts done for this class were collected and analyzed. Participants were asked to hand in the hardcopy of their assignments and also submit them on Blackboard. I was able to get their writings and artifacts in both electronic file and hardcopy. Other ways to collect data included:

- Photographs of research participants were taken during class.

- Discussion for weekly assigned readings, class activities or writing group discussions were videotaped during class.

- Observation forms and notebooks were used for class observations.

Limitation of the Methodology

There are some limitations to this study. The major one was that I knew many of the students as we have been colleagues in this program and we have taken several classes together before. I had been a friend with some of them. I was concerned about studying the class with those students I was familiar with. Lincoln and Guba (1985) talked about the problems of using someone the researcher knows. I have been asking myself the same questions, " Is my interpretation objective?" "Will I have different thoughts about this event if we were not friends?" "Is this really what he/she wanted to say?" "If we were not friends, would he/she have different answer?" It is difficult to be both a "friend" and a "researcher." I somehow got into my own prejudgment before I looked at their writing and conducted the interview. I tried hard to be objective and understand my interpretation might be just a part of the truth. Hayakawa's "map and territory" theory described the flaw of my study. According to Hayakawa (1990),

15

language is limited and cannot present the whole truth. I think people are also limited as our thoughts and opinions are formed by our limited experience. It seemed impossible to consider every side of the story for me. I believed there were things happened in the class that I did not notice. I also believed other people might have different interpretations toward the same event from mine.

<div align="center">Findings: Central Themes</div>

The data analysis led to five central themes that related to previous research about poetry, media and second language acquisition. These five central themes will be explained in Chapter Four, "Findings," and some related theories will be shown in Chapter Two " Literature Review."

(1) Students' attitudes toward poetry and digital poetry changed from negative to positive.

(2) Students wrote poetry to cope with life issues.

(3) Students experienced self-exploration.

(4) International students learned English through reading and writing poetry.

(5) International students were motivated and engaged in English learning while doing digital poetry.

Organization of the Study

Chapter One outlines the rationale of the study, the theoretical framework, the overview of the methodology and data analysis and informs the organization of the study. Chapter Two reviews the previous research related to my study. Chapter Three describes the methodology of the study, the participants, the field and the procedures for my data collection. Chapter Four stressed the findings of my study based on the data analysis. Chapter Five outlines lessons learned from this study and the implications of the research.

Conclusion

When William Stafford was asked in an interview about when he realized that he wanted to be a poet, he said, "I've thought about that, and sort of reversed it. My question is 'When did other people give up the idea of being a poet? Why did other people stop?'" (Stafford and Lofsness, 1972, p. 92.) Indeed, we were born as poets and it is important for us to know it. I understand this idea after getting my professor's guidance here at MU. I felt sorry for the lost days before I discovered poetry. Instruction does matter and it is the teacher's responsibility to guide students to explore their poetic voice. Digital poetry has been an effective way for me to express myself and tell my stories. I knew this was the area I wanted to study and this is what my passion is. I enjoyed reading and sharing poems with the participants. I was impressed watching them create digital poetry and inspired by their stories.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

History of Poetry & the Development of Humanistic Values

Reader Response Theory

Writing as Healing: Poetry Therapy

Media Literacy Theory

Second Language Acquisition (SLA)

Conclusion

This chapter reviews the literature that informs my thinking about the relationship between poetry, media, and second language acquisition. My question throughout this study was "What happens when international and American graduate students participate in a poetry class?" I also posed the following sub-questions:

(1) Poetry Reading and Writing

- What are international and American students' experiences with and attitudes toward poetry reading and writing when beginning and completing the course?

- What happens when international and American students work with peer response?

(2) Poetry and Media

- What are international and American students' experiences with and attitudes toward digital poetry?

- What happens when international and American students compose digital poetry?

(3) Poetry and Second Language Acquisition (SLA)

- What are the influences of poetry writing and reading on international students' learning of English?

- What are the influences of digital poetry composing on international students' English learning?

This review of the literature explores the study of poetry, media and second language acquisition. First, I review the history of poetry in developing humanistic value. The review is followed by four related areas: reader response, writing as healing (focus on poetry therapy), media literacy, and second language acquisition.

History of Poetry and the Development of Humanistic Values

In order to understand the role of poetry in developing humanistic values, I traced back the history of poetry. I reviewed previous studies about how poetry has been used as a way to reveal, explore and develop humanistic values.

According to the online Wikipedia (2011), "poetry," from the Greek "poesis" means "making" or "creating." Poetry was used as a way to record cultural events or tell stories in prehistoric and ancient societies. Poetry is among the earliest records of most cultures, with poetic fragments found on monoliths, rune stones, and stelae. Fox (2001) states, "We live in a world erected by the stories we hear and see and tell. Unlocking incredible riches through imagery and words, conjuring up the unseen through art, creating towering works of imagination and fact through poetry, song, tales, reports, and

laws-that is the true magic of human life" (p. x). As we ponder about the value of human life and the meaning of being in the universe, poetry can reveal how and why we exist in this world. It is a way to tell our stories.

This quote reflects Hayakawa's (1990) comments about affective language in his book *Language in Thought and Action*. "The distillation of emotion and experience brought about through poetry permits readers to participate in sensations of ordinary life" (Cline & Luken, 1995, p. 169). Through poetry, we can live more lives. As I am reading, I can feel how the poet feels; as I am reading, I can visualize others' lives; as I am reading, I can share parts of the poet's soul. The intense emotion brought up is what makes us whole human beings. Bolton (1999) also claims that "poetry is the exploration of the deepest and most intimate experiences, thoughts, feelings, and ideas: distilled, pared to succinctness, and made music to the ear by lyricism" (p. 118). I wonder how many of us have paid attention to our deep thoughts and listened to the music of our words. Emotions carried and conveyed from poetry connect people together. According to Gerrish (2004), there is evidence that strong emotion is a factor that led many people to become poets.

Reader Response Theory

Reader Response Theory describes readers' processes of engagement and involvement for their construction of a text. Effective reading instruction considers students' backgrounds and personal meaning making. As students' feelings are aroused, they are motivated to immerse themselves in poetry creating and appreciation. In the next part, I review Rosenblatt's theory: its origin, advocates, main ideas and the

influences. Louis Rosenblatt (1938/1978/1995) is the most recognized name associated with this theory. Before her, New Critics believed reading comprehension should focus on the meaning of the text and the author's original intention. People were trained to locate the original meaning and background of the text and the author. The readers were treated as 'passive recipients' rather than active agents who can carry on their own special and peculiar activities when reading" (Rosenblatt, 1938, p. 4). Rosenblatt's *Literature as Exploration* first published in 1938 claims the meaning depends on the reader and text: "The reader interprets the book or poem in terms of his fund of past experiences" (Rosenblatt, 1938, p. 107). She challenged the age-old assumption of the importance of the text over the reader. Her transactional theory of reading stresses the interconnectedness of reader and text in the process of meaning making. Readers continually shape their understanding of their world while encountering the text. By immersing in the text, the reader constructs his thoughts, his views, his emotions, and his personality. Yet, individuals transact with the text differently since they bring different prior knowledge into that text. Rosenblatt (1995) states, "Language is socially evolved, but it is always constituted by individuals, with their particular histories" (p. 25). Without involving the readers, the text has no meaning. As readers produce their interpretations, the text influences them in different ways. Rosenblatt also (1995) states, "The same text will have a very different meaning and value to us at different times or under different circumstances" (p. 35).

In *The Reader, The Text, The Poem*, Rosenblatt (1978) also mentions her transactional theory and stresses that meaning happens in a space between the text, the author, and the reader. The space created by what the author brought to the text, the text

as object in a specific time and place, and the unique vision and experience of the reader come together in a new experience of the text:

> The reader draws on his own internalized culture in order to elicit from the text [this world], which may differ from his own in many aspects. Moreover, the text may yield glimpses of the personality and codes of the author. The literary transaction may thus embody, and probably to some degree always embodies, an interplay between at least two sets of codes, two sets of values. Even when author and reader share the same culture – that is, when they live in the same social group at the same time and the text directly reflects that culture, their uniqueness as individual human beings would insure this interplay. (p. 56)

Rosenblatt (1978) also explains the "continuum" of the reading process. She thought we are constantly reevaluating our thinking based upon the interplay of the past, present and future. We are making it up as we go, by ourselves and with others.

> During the reading the reader keeps alive what he has already elicited from the text. At any point, he brings a state of mind, a penumbra of "memories" of what has preceded, ready to be activated by what follows, and providing the context from which further meaning will be derived. (p. 57)

Rosenblatt did not neglect the text's original meaning. She notes, "The reader must remain faithful to the author's text and must be alert to the potential clues concerning character and motive. But he must do more than that: he must seek to organize or interpret such clues" (Rosenblatt, 1978, p. 11). Related to this notion, Rosenblatt (1978) points out two different reading stances: efferent reading and aesthetic

reading. In efferent reading, readers look for information such as details, the concept or the solutions to carry away from the text; in aesthetic reading, readers' primary concern is with what happens during the actual reading event. It is crucial for readers to take an aesthetic stance besides an efferent reading stance when approaching the text. Rosenblatt (1978) states, "In aesthetic reading, the reader's attention is centered directed on what he is living though during his relationship with that particular text" (p. 25). Rosenblatt's aesthetic reading theory supports the enjoyment and engagement in reading poetry that occur when the reader responds to the text on a personal level.

In terms of poetry reading, Rosenblatt (1978) explains, "In the reading relationship, the reader brings his sense of something called reality, to which words point; this may become transmuted into something 'rich and strange' under the magnetism of the patterned words and text. Thus, the reader also is a link in the 'universal intercourse' between the world of 'reality' and the world of 'poetry'" (p. 34). She also claims the poetry reading is an event, a lived- through experience. Rosenblatt (1978) explains poetry as human experience:

> The poem…must be thought of as an event in time. It is not an object or an ideal entity. It happens during a coming-together, a compenetration, of a reader and a text. The reader brings to the text his past experience and present personality. Under the magnetism of the ordered symbols of the text, he marshals his resources and crystallizes out from the stuff of memory, thought, and feeling a new order, a new experience, which he sees as the poem. This becomes part of the ongoing stream of his life experience, to be reflected on from any angle important to him as a human being. (p. 12)

23

Rosenblatt claims that the reading of a text is an event occurring at a particular time in a particular environment at a particular moment in the life history of the reader. The transaction will involve both the past experience and the present stage and present interests or preoccupations of the reader. This means it is possible that printed marks on a page may even become different linguistic symbols by virtue of transactions with different readers. Just like a knowing is the process linking a knower and a known, so a poem should not be thought of as an object, an entity, but as an active process lived through during the relationship between a reader and a text. (Rosenblatt, 1978, p. 20-21)

Research on Reader-Response

Rosenblatt's theory has influenced numerous scholars. Anderson & Rubano (1991) published *Enhancing Aesthetic Reading and Response* and claimed it is important for teachers to believe that besides reading with an efferent stance, we still need to evoke creative and aesthetic responses to fulfill the rest of the objectives of the literature curriculum. Anderson & Rubano (1991) state, "It became the English teachers' responsibility to create an environment in which aesthetic response can occur" (p. 8). Anderson & Rubano argue the pleasure and enjoyment from a reading activity is the main motivation, which makes our students keep learning outside of the school and become life-long learners.

Similar to Anderson and Rubano's idea, Elbow (2000) reminds us that what interests the teacher might not interest the students. Elbow (2000) asserts that we need to give the authority of writing back to the students. We will also need to give the authority of reading back to the students. We need to let students choose what they love to read

and write to evoke pleasure within each individual. Related studies about students'
choices and freedom are used as support. Atwell (1998) discusses the freedom of
choosing poetry's topics, "Poetry could be anything—any subject, any theme, in any
voice. You could write a poem about McDonald's, you could write one as if you were a
neurotic Peter Parker, aka Spiderman"(p. 417).

In "Does Feeling Come First? How Poetry can Help Readers Broaden Their
Understanding of Metacignition?" Eva-Wood (2008) explores the readers' metacognitive
experiences in an 11th grade English classroom. She analyzed the classroom discussions,
which indicated that her students used four strategies, appearing to be driven primarily by
sensory and emotional responses rather than cognitive processes alone. These strategies
included: (1) Responding to key words and phrases; (2) Visualizing and using the senses;
(3) Relating the text to personal experiences; and (4) Identifying with the poems'
speakers. According to the findings, Eva-Wood (2008) provides justification for a more
expansive definition of metacognition, which includes "thinking about feeling." Eva-
Wood asserts that thinking can never depart from emotional and sensory response and
she continues:

> Teachers' modeling and use of think-and-feel-aloud prompts might lead to greater
> understanding of poetry's emotional contours and set the stage for the valuable
> opportunity "to think rationally within an emotionally colored context"
> (Rosenblatt, 1995, p. 217). This dance between thought and feelings can enhance
> self-understanding and challenge us to live more fully as human beings. (p. 575)

However, some scholars believe that the transactional reader-response theory has its limitations in addressing the cultural issues presented in multicultural literature. Some classroom teachers have expressed their dismay with students' misunderstandings, stereotypical perceptions, biases and prejudices raised. They argue that Rosenblatt assumed the reader and her response to literature are ideologically innocent and the continuum of aesthetic and efferent stance does not encompass critical reading. They call for re-theorizing or moving beyond the transactional theory. For example, Cynthia Lewis (2000) claims it is hard to situate critical reading in Rosenblatt's continuum of aesthetic and efferent response. Lewis (2000) argues that the most common use of reader-response theory in the classroom is misguided in its emphasis on personal response and identification. She suggests that when a text is about characters whose lives and culture are very different from the reader's, it can heighten the reader's self consciousness and text consciousness. A middle school English teacher, Dressel (2003) reports that students fail to see other aspects of other cultures as portrayed in the text when adopting reader-response theory. Like many students from mainstream culture, they read "egocentrically," assuming people from different cultures are all like them and judge people of other cultures based on bias.

Recently, Mingshui Cai (2008) discusses the former criticisms of reader-response theory and claims that the critics misunderstood the nature of the theory and the two reading stances it poses. Cai (2008) asserts two points to justify transactional theory: (1) Rosenblatt's theory regards the aesthetic response as primary in the reader's personal transaction with a text, and at the same time urges readers to examine personal factors that enter into their response, potentially allowing them to change and grow into mature

26

readers. (2) Transactional theory can encompass any critical perspective and states that emphasizing the reader's response does not exclude the application of critical approaches to the interpretation and evaluation of a text.

Rosenblatt's Transactional Theory does acknowledge the influence of social, cultural and political factors on the individual reader. Aesthetic reading is connected to critical reading. Efferent reading is not just reading for information. The dichotomy some scholars use is not appropriate. When approaching literatures, we should take both "efferent reading stance" and "aesthetic reading stance."

<div align="center">Writing as Healing: Poetry Therapy</div>

Humans get stuck and feel hurt when tragedy happens. Poetry has been a way to walk people through and remain their senses of self-value. Just like Hanauer (2010) states, "Poetry would seem to be a form of therapeutic self-discovery that allows strong emotions to be explored, explicated and expressed" (p. 16). In *Poetry and the Meaning of Life*, Hanauer (2004) suggests that in the writing of poetry, the writer discovers aspects of meaning in the real world experience addressed by the poem that he had not been aware of prior to the writing itself. The poem is as a literary text that presents the experiences, thoughts and feelings of the writer through a self-referential use of language that creates for the reader and writer a new understanding of the experience, thought or feeling expressed in the text. According to Hanauers, we can see how poetry develops humanity through healing and self-reflections. His finding of poetry's power also helps us understand the whole concept regarding poetry as an experience and its power in our lives. The power of poetry is that it "situates the reader in the impossible situation of

experiencing another linguistically mediated experience" (Hanauer, 2004, p. 70). Poetry is taken as a linguistic media, which has the power to help people adjust themselves in a difficult situation.

<div align="center">

Research on Poetry Therapy

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Nicholas Mazza, the founder of the *Journal of Poetry Therapy* has been investigating the poetry therapy intervention in helping people cope with mental or physical pain. In *Poetry Therapy: Interface of the Arts and Psychology*, Mozza (1999) addresses the therapeutic aspects and clinical uses of metaphor, narrative, journal writing, storytelling, bibliotherapy, poetry, and the related arts. Mozza presents a unified poetry therapy practice model that combines the use of literature in therapy, creative expression, and symbols/rituals in this book. Mazza (1999) defines poetry therapy as "the use of the language arts in therapeutic capacities" (p. 29).

In 2001, Mazza investigated the relationship of poetry therapy to narrative therapy and family practice through a case study of a single family dealing with death and loss. Mazza found that through the combination of story telling and poetry composing, the clients (the 41-year-old mother and her 14-year-old son) were more able to externalize their problems. After they could finally tell a story of their experience of loss through receptive, expressive and symbolic means, they could regain the control over disturbing events. In "The Place of the Poetic in Dealing with Death and Loss," Mozza (2001) states that the ultimate treatment outcome proved to be empowerment and restoration of choices for the "authors." The poetic experience provided his clients a sense of meaning

and control over disturbing events, and they eventually were empowered to be the authors of their family history and were able to move on.

In *Poetry Therapy Theory and Practice*, Mazza (2003) discusses the power of the written word and quoted what Shelly wrote that, "Every author is necessary a poet because language itself is poetry" (Shelly, cited in Mazza, 2003, p. 3). Mazza also states the distinguishing element of poetry is its "power to reveal and illuminate" (p. 4). Mazza then describes the cathartic effect of poetry. He claims that by providing a release of strong feelings while under pressure, poetry could also serve to reduce internal conflict, anxiety and confusion.

Alschuler (2000), a social worker at a health care corporation, found through poetry (reading/writing poetry) his clients learned new coping skills, which can also be a new leisure or relaxation skill. By sharing their pasts, emotional conflicts and difficult current relationships, members improved their overall self-awareness and self-esteem.

Michael Smith (2000), a therapist who has also used poetry to help his clients, claims that poetry therapy is a creative method for assessing and addressing clients' issues. It can be a powerful therapeutic tool for clients who are not amenable to more traditional psychotherapies or could benefit from more expressive interventions. In one case study, Smith (2000) found poetry worked as a reliable true friend for his client. Poetry provided a vehicle to express deepest feelings without fear of rejection or judgment and a much-needed outlet when the client could not verbalize. Poetry saved the client's life.

Wilkins (2002) states the metaphorical use of poetry has the power to heal the heart. She points out the four characteristics of poetry's metaphorical use:

1. Metaphorical language allows us to engage invisible realities.

2. Invisible realities are made visible through metaphorical language.

3. Quaternary structure within the psyche provides access to invisible realities, thereby advancing shared knowledge between disciplines.

4. Internal and external images allow us to make something that is abstract into something concrete, and something that is concrete into something that is abstract. (p. 129-130)

Longo (1999) claims that in poetry, images rise from the unconsciousness, which often gives birth to memory and words come—at first spoken and then written. This process brings clarity and order to what is chaotic or not understandable. When we are able to connect with something deep within and express it, there is a sense of relief and satisfaction in communicating first with ourselves and then another person. She also points out the impact on self-esteem of poetry therapy:

One of the benefits of poetry reading and writing is that it doesn't not only help define "I," but strengthen it. This is necessary if we are to be a part of the world. The process attaches us to the greater part of ourselves, to all that is whole and good and beautiful. And when we feel ourselves as not alone in the world, but a part of and integrated with all that exists, self-esteem grows. (p. 12)

The above quote echoes with DeSalvo's (1999) comments that through writing, we develop self- mastery.

In 2009, poet Georgia Heard spent a week with middle school students in New Mexico, encouraging their search for "self-portrait poetry"--poetry in which they saw themselves. She witnessed courage, pain, tragedy, and hope in the choices and writing of those struggling students. From her observations and analysis of students' poems, Heard (2009) states, "Poetry could be taken as a life-changing outlet" (p. 14).

Research on Writing as Healing

The theory of poetry therapy cannot be separated from "Writing as Healing." In *Writing as a Way of Healing: How Telling Our Stories Transforms Our Lives*, DeSalvo (1999) explains by showing case studies based on her 20 years of research how people can use writing as a way to heal the emotional and physical wounds that are an inevitable part of life. She states that writing helps us achieve psychic growth though we are carrying pain and despair. People are able to imagine a hopeful future. Writing can also help organize our thoughts, vent our feelings, and express ourselves in a complex way. She gives examples from Virginia Woolf, Isabel Allende, and Alice Walker and argues strongly that "writing is a very sturdy ladder out of the Pit to reach freedom and safety"(p. 8). DeSalvo also claims writing enables us to link feelings with events in details and achieve clarity; writing helps us to discover the wholeness of things, the connectedness of human experience; writing also helps us to bring in a bigger context into our issues.

DeSalvo refers extensively to James W. Pennebaker's *Opening Up: The Healing*

Power of Expressing Emotion. According to Pennebaker (1997), writing provides "distance" and "perspective" (p. 42), which helps us cope more effectively with trauma and pain.

Regarding the notion that writing helps us see things more objectively, it is necessary to mention Hayakawa's theory. Hayakawa (1990) in *Language in Thought and Action* introduces the term "Allness" which means people tend to have their own biases since we project the partial elements such as negative emotions connected to the whole event. Writing is a way for us to sort things to avoid applying "Allness" to our world. Through writing and thinking through the cause and effect, we are able to walk out from the trap we create for ourselves.

Recently, several researchers have also found the therapeutic effects of writing. For example, a college professor, Molly Moran (2004) investigates the interdisciplinary field of Writing and Healing to see if it holds implications for the teaching of basic writing. In her basic writing class, she had her students do extensive private writing on personal and sometimes painful issues. This private writing forms the basis for all their essays beginning with personal narratives and moving toward more academic genres. Moran (2004) reports that her teaching experiment has the potential to improve students' attitudes toward and confidence in their writing and to help them develop a stronger prose style and a more authentic voice. Moran (2004) suggests that teachers should give students chances to write, to see how writing can help them make sense of their lives and heal their emotional wounds.

Kellman (2008) investigates the writing therapy in helping HIV/AIDS patients in a hospital. Kellman examines the relationships of place, community, narrative and art

making in the lives of those who are seriously ill. Kellman found patients were able to cope with their physical and mental pain through writing. Through getting relief through writing, the patients reflected on the self-perception and the relationship between themselves and the society. Kellman also explores the complex relationship between herself and the patients through reflective essays.

Fox (2011), a college professor, wrote an article "Using Adversity: Teaching Imagery and Language for Wellness" to report his findings from an experimental graduate course he offered in spring 2010. His article focuses on the fusion of three basic processes: 1) psychological wellness, 2) using oral and written language to explore traumatic personal issues, and 3) creating and manipulating internal and external imagery in tandem with using language. In his article, he highlighted two students' experiences with manipulating images and using writing for healing. One student dealt with family relationship issues and the other suffered from the pain of a beloved one's death. Fox (2011) reported that imagery and language constantly influence each other and the effect of physically manipulating images results in positive thoughts of issues. In the process of creating, thinking and writing, students were able to clarify confusions and obtain more objective perspectives. Students' mental health outlook improved when immersed in critical thinking and literacy skills. Fox's (2011) research explored the impact of not only language but images on healing.

Media Literacy

Below is the overview of some of the foundational theories and concepts for the use of media in my study. I explain more about (1) Multiple Intelligences, and (2)

Critical Thinking and the Power of Images. After the introduction of foundational theories, I review several scholars' research about poetry in digital age.

> Media Literacy in a 21st century approach to education provides a
> framework to access, analyze, evaluate and create messages in a variety
> of forms—from print to videos to the internet. Media literacy builds an
> understanding of the role of media in society as well as essential skills of
> inquiry and self-expression necessary for citizens of a democracy.
> (Thoman and Jolls, 2005, p. 190)

Media Education experts have encouraged the synthesis of the "reading" (analysis and deconstruction) as well as the "writing" (construction/production) of media texts into the media literacy pedagogy.

Maslow's theory—"Hierarchy of Human Needs" is also related to the notion of applying media literacy pedagogy. In *Motivation and Personality*, Maslow (1954) suggests that human needs could be grouped together into meaningful categories. He points out some basic needs: 1. Physiological Needs, 2. Safety Needs, 3. Love and Belonging, 4. Esteem Needs, and 5. Self-Actualization. Other needs are also mentioned in this book, such as aesthetic needs.

Self-actualization encourages people to join up or try out new things. It is about activating and realizing potential. In this digital age, taking advantage of any of the digital tools and media is a means to realize our own potentials. People grow, learn new things, increase skills and expand beliefs in what they can do.

Multiple Intelligences (MI)

In *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*, Howard Gardner (1993) questions the notion that human's intelligence is a single entity resulting from a single factor and is measured simply via IQ tests. He also challenges the cognitive development work of Piaget. He believes a child might be at very different stages of development at any one time:

> In the heyday of the psychometric and behaviorist eras, it was generally
> believed that intelligence was a single entity that was inherited; and that
> human beings – initially a blank slate – could be trained to learn
> anything, provided that it was presented in an appropriate way.
> Nowadays an increasing number of researchers believe precisely the
> opposite; that there exists a multitude of intelligences, quite independent
> of each other; that each intelligence has its own strengths and constraints;
> that the mind is far from unencumbered at birth. (Gardner 1993: xxiii)

Gardner (1993) claims that there are separate human capacities, ranging from musical intelligences to the intelligence involved in self-understanding.

 "Multiple intelligences (MI) is the capacity to solve problems or to fashion products that are valued in one or more cultural settings"(p. 9). MI can be developed in specific cultural settings. Gardner mentions seven capacities:

1. Spatial — Visual images and space

2. Linguistic — Words and language

3. Logical — Logic and number

4. Kinesthetic — Body movement control

5. Musical — Music, sound and rhyme

6. Interpersonal — other people's feelings

7. Intrapersonal — self-awareness

Gardner's theory raised educators' awareness of people's different aptitudes and different needs, and he said it is necessary for educators to provide a variety of learning materials and teaching approaches to students. Mindy L. Kornhaber (2001) identifies a number of reasons why teachers and policymakers have responded positively to Howard Gardner's multiple intelligences:

> The theory validates educators' everyday experience: students think and
> learn in many different ways. It also provides educators with a
> conceptual framework for organizing and reflecting on curriculum
> assessment and pedagogical practices. In turn, this reflection has led
> many educators to develop new approaches that might better meet the
> needs of the range of learners in their classrooms. (p. 276)

Incorporating the Multiple Intelligences theory is one of the features of understanding media literacy. Thoman & Jolls (2005) discuss the application of MI in Media Literacy. They claim the approach of synthesis reading and writing into media texts is helpful for applying the Multiple Intelligences theory in instructional techniques. Some of the many benefits of such an approach are seen in higher levels of engagement and motivation, increased self-esteem and self-expression among students, creative tools

36

that help bridge the divide between the classroom and the "real world" experiences, and more effective means of assessment of understanding content and concepts for instructors.

Critical Thinking and the Power of Image

We live in an age of rapidly developing electronic communications technology and increased dependence on visual media for both communication and entertainment (Postman, 1986). Postman alerts us that we have spent more time in watching TV and receiving other visual media, the stimulus images to entertain ourselves. It's our constant desire for amusement and pleasure. We have to recognize the ways in which the media shape our lives and the ways we can, in turn, shape them to serve our highest goals.

Postman's insights lead us to look at media through a critical lens. We have to be aware of how media has affected our lives and keep thinking reflectively about how to take an active role in the use of media. The emergence of new forms of expression in popular culture demands more of people's reflective thinking. According to Postman, we will feel lost and overwhelmed in the era of media, digital tools and a variety of technology entertainments. Just like the title of Postman's book: *Amusing Ourselves to Death*— What we love will destroy us.

The power of images is another focus in digital poetry. In *Visual Thinking*, Arnheim (1969) mentions visual perception as a cognitive activity, which is a reversal, one might say, of the historical development that led in the philosophy of the eighteenth century from aisthesis to aesthetics, from sensory experience in general to the arts in particular (p. v). Arnheim (1969) positions his thoughts within the structure of western philosophy, the dichotomy between rationalism (Plato) and empiricism (Aristotle). He

37

concludes strongly on the side of the empiricist by using Aristotle's quotes, "The soul never thinks without an image" (p. 12). The visual thinking mind is not simply mechanically recording images and regurgitating them repetitively. Arnheim insists that perception is intelligent. And perception and thinking cannot get along without each other. He appears to conclude that language is best suited for intellectual cognition while visual imagery is best suited for intuitive or productive cognition.

> What makes language so valuable for thinking, then, cannot be thinking
> in words. It must be the help that words lend to thinking while it operates
> in a more appropriate medium, such as visual imagery. (p. 231-232)

In *Images in Language, Media and Mind*, Fox (1994) explains how images and language are linked and influence each other. Fox also describes important ways that images function in our thinking and language. It is important to realize how images work on us and we are capable of figuring it out. For educators, it is important to treat visuals and words equally in our teaching because reading and writing cannot be separated from visual culture:

> The image is the DNA of language, of media, of media and of mind.
> Whether we receive them, send them or think in them, images are the
> most basic element of thinking and communicating. The message to the
> educators is that we can no longer separate visual literacy from verbal
> literacy, that we must treat word and image equally and simultaneously.
> (Back cover)

The notion of image and language has influenced many scholars and classroom teachers. As our time has rapidly changed to the digital age, it is important for teachers to use visuals to meet students' needs. Gorman and Eastman (2010) encourage English teachers to expand and develop the way their students think by using visuals to enhance students' reading and writing.

> Students consume information differently from students of even just ten
> years ago. The sheer volume of and popularity of iPods, podcasts, video
> games, and Internet videos speak to this different kind of student: a
> student who consumes visually as well as through the written word.
> Today's students organize information not merely by naming-the learning
> of the definitions—but by sight and context. Teachers of language arts
> need only tap into this innate sense of the visual, to use these visuals as a
> basis for lessons on active visual literacy, to expand the students'
> thinking. (p. 99)

Digital Literacy/ New Literacy

The previous section reviews theories and concepts related to media literacy, focusing on "Multiple Intelligences" and "Critical Thinking and the Power of Image." This section explores concepts of digital poetry and previous studies about using multimedia and digital tools in literacy, the so-called "new literacy," "multiliteracies" and "digital literacies." Digital narratives are reviewed first and then the focus shifts to the convergence of poetry and media.

Research in the areas of multiliteracies, new literacies studies, and digital literacies has shown that students bring the new skills out of school lives and regularly engaged with a number of new digital media (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000; Alvermann, 2002; Alvermann& Xu, 2003; Gee, 2003; Kress, 2003; Millard, 2003). It is the educators' responsibility to tap into the integrated curriculum to meet students' needs.

Research on Digital Literacy

Hughes and Robertson's (2010) case study of three beginning teachers who used digital media in their English language arts classrooms explores those beginning teachers' shifting perceptions of multiple literacies and how this shift in thinking helped shape their ideas about teaching and learning. The teachers and their use of digital media particularly focused on the students' creation of a digital literacy autobiography. Through the analysis of the three case studies, four persistent themes were identified related to students' use of digital media both in the program and in their teaching practice. The four specific themes were: collaborative, multimodal performative, critical aspects of creating digital stories, as well as teachers' revised perception of what it means to be literate in the digital age (Hughes & Robertson, 2010). One of the teachers, Hilary (pseudonym), used digital media to reflect the school's monthly Character Education foci in her class, for example, the trait of kindness. She thought the use of digital video helped promote critical literacy and that was an effective way to get her students thinking about responsibility, fairness, and caring, among other things. Hilary (pseudonym) also added:

Using digital media hones many literary skills, such as storytelling and

story writing, plot development, personal voice, opinion, persuasive

writing, the list goes on. Virtually any literacy skill you can think of is

exercised when using digital media. It also develops writing skills such

as researching, story boarding, revising, adding or deleting, rewriting,

condensing, drafting, grouping, and sequencing. Not to mention that

digital media is great for exploring new ways of learning when

attempting to reach each diverse learning style, as is present in most

multiple intelligence classrooms. (p. 35)

In "Personal Perspectives Multimedia Project," Carroll and Carney (2005)

engaged teacher candidates in examining and representing their cultural identity by

means of Apple's iMovie software. Carroll and Carney, two instructors in elementary

education and instructional technology at a state university, designed a multimedia

project to explore how the project connects in each course. Their findings support the use

of media in literacy teaching. Carrol & Carney (2005) state, "as this student observed,

the technology is a great tool enabling students to tell their stories with music, photos,

and video, but she realized that the assignment itself is the important part. All the pieces,

technological and pedagogical, had come together" (p. 477).

Digital Poetry

According to Wikipedia (2011), "Digital poetry is a form of electronic literature,

displaying a wide range of approaches to poetry, with a prominent and crucial use of

computers. Digital poetry can be available in the form of CD ROM, DVD, as

installations in art gallery in certain cases also recorded as digital video or films, as digital holograms and on the Internet." Usually in language art classrooms, digital poetry is known as the combination of poetry text, sound, and images created by digital tools. In the following section, I introduce a digital poet and I review some research on digital poetry.

A Digital Poet

This creation, digital poetry, has been a meaningful exploration for the poet, M.D. Friedman. In spring 2009, Robert King interviewed M.D. Friedman about his thoughts regarding digital poetry and published the interview content in the Colorado Poets' E-Words Issue # Six. M.D. Friedman, the creator of digital poetry is taken as a photographer, musician and digital artist as well as a poet. When asked about his thought regarding composing digital poetry, Friedman (2009) answered:

> The ability of a digital poem to create a transformational experience, to
> take the viewer to that place where poetry comes from, a place of intense
> understanding, is greatly enhanced by appealing to the mind in multiple
> ways rather than with just text. The sound art behind the audio spoken
> word helps to engage the logical side of the brain and allow the viewer's
> emotive mind to respond to the poetic experience in a different way….

When Robert King, the interviewer asked, "What are you after, an 'experience' that's substantially different than a poem with, let's say, added effect?" Friedman(2009) replied:

I often want to create sensations that the logical use of words is inadequate to describe. I have recently discovered that there is a very significant synergistic effect when I can blend all of my creative pursuits into a single work toward the purpose of drawing the reader/viewer/listener into feeling the feelings I am trying to express. I want to recreate certain feelings I am feeling inside in someone else, to awaken their subconscious to the image we all dream together. I am trying to communicate as directly as I would be if I were there physically touching them.

It seems digital poetry has different meanings for Friedman and it can do so much beyond what traditional texts can do.

Wagner (2008) gives this opening statement as she starts her discussion about poetry in the digital age: "Poetry is arguably one of the most intimate and spiritually connecting forms of public communication that humanity has yet devised, an art that speaks from one heart to another." She states the impact of digital tools in the journal *Futurist* on poetry learning and affirmed the capability of digital tools of affecting both writing and the readers' experience:

> Experimentation is not new to poets: Even the constraints of the printed
> page permitted visual enhancements through the arrangement of words on
> a page and the additions of illustrations; adding music to words creates
> songs. The multimedia age permits and encourages new ways of
> approaching poetic communication, such as three-dimensional
> installations in virtual reality, which invite direct participation of the
> reader/viewer. (p. 16)

43

Digital tools offer learners the opportunity to work with sound, image and text. Students are more engaged since digital tools draw in people with different intelligences. Using digital tools meets the needs of all with different personalities and learning styles.

Campbell and Warburton (2001) describe poetic projects that involved technology in a teacher education program. They highlight the integration of technology and poetry that raised students' interests in learning poetry. Campbell and Warburton state that students display greater understanding and skill in the use of figurative language and poetic forms, and become more adept with the use of various computer graphics and word processing programs. Students are able to develop greater enthusiasm for poetry, recognition of its place both in traditional and popular culture, and an appreciation of the unique and enduring power of figurative language to engage the imagination and the emotions. Also, students become more "visually" literate and representationally competent by communicating their ideas graphically as well as verbally.

In "Cin(E)- Poetry: Engaging the Digital Generation in 21st-Century Response," Stuart (2010) discusses "Cin(E) Poetry Project" developed by her students, middle level teacher candidates, recalling their own previous experience about using digital tools to engage students to learn poetry. Her research is based on the rationale of *Reader Response* and she believes there is a need to integrate into classroom learning the out-of-school technologies that students interact with every day. Stuart (2010) states, "rather than the close and concise analysis of text itself being central to reading, reader-response

encourages students' engagement with text and as Rosenblatt describes in her seminal work, reading and responding to literature become an engaging "event" (p. 28).

Stuart explains Cin(E) poetry project as an engaging integration of poetry, reader response and technology. Stuart provides the steps to developing Cin(E) –poetry, a students' collaborative work. The steps for developing Cin (E) poetry are:

1. Talk about poetry, wonder about poetry

2. Read, read, read-poems, poems, poems

3. Learn about Cin(E)-Poetry

4. Collaborate to select a poem

5. Storyboard the poem

6. Collect digital images

7. Load images into creative software to sequence

8. Edit movie with selected effects

9. Add selected titles, words, sounds, music

10. Share and celebrate Cin(E)-Poetry at mini film festival

(Steps to develop Cin (e)-poetry, p. 30)

When recalling their teaching experiences, teacher candidates had a similar finding: during the process of doing digital poetry, students not only negotiated meanings of poems but had a change of attitude about learning poetry: students engaged in the process and loved immersing themselves in poetry. Stuart (2010) concludes with Kajder & Swenson's comments (2004):

The digital media offers teachers an opportunity to take advantage of the

unique capacity…by fusing image and word. The content created

communicates at multiple levels, engaging students on the same terms as

the media experience outside of the classroom. (p. 19)

A Canadian scholar, Janette Hughes (2007/2009/2010) discusses poetry's

important role in improving literacy skills and suggested a variety of ways to make poetry

teaching effective. These include using new media, the creative applications to extend

their learning from school to home through the immersion in digital technologies. In

What Work? Research into Practice Series, her research monograph, Poetry: A Powerful

Medium for Literacy and Technology Development, Hughes (2007) points out four

advantages of teaching poetry and digital poetry in language arts class:

- Poetry awakens our senses, helps us make connections to others,

    and leads us to think synthesizing ways as required by the use of

    metaphor.

- Paying attention to the language and rhythms of poetry helps

    build oral language skills.

- Children with well-developed oral language skills are more likely

    to have higher achievement in reading and writing.

- Creative applications of new media that build on the literacies

    students have already developed outside of school can help

    teachers tap into the literacy-enhancing power of poetry. (p. 1)

Hughes (2007) suggests, "It is important for students to be able to read and write or construct texts in multiple genres. Moving beyond pen and paper and using a variety of representing strategies (including visual arts or drama, for example) provide students opportunities to express themselves and demonstrate their understanding in alternate ways" (p. 2). She also states:

Not only was the project (digital poetry) fun but the students were able to "see poetry differently" when they created their poems on screen. The use of new media adds multiple layers of meaning and interpretation of a poem in ways that are not available with a conventional textual format. (p. 3)

Hughes (2007) points out students were able to think differently and produce different perspectives while doing the project. Hughes also claims:

New media have an immersive and performative potential that encourages students to get inside a poem and play with it. Giving students opportunities to create poems or respond to and annotate existing poems using new media provides them with opportunities to use the technology in meaningful ways. (p. 3)

Hughes asserts the benefits of the use of media in students' literacy development. Recently, Hughes conducted much research about digital poetry. She not only worked on her own but also cooperated with classroom teachers and other scholars to investigate the effect of digital poetry on students' learning. In 2009, Hughes did a case study of a digital poetry project undertaken by the teacher, Amy John's and her adolescent students. They intended to move students beyond observing and analyzing poetry,

toward encouraging a dialogue with a poem. They found digital poetry is a great way to

sustain attention to the object of the poem and that is what educators are after. By saying

attend, Hughes and John (2009) quote the words from Anne Sullivan (2000):

> …one way to achieve *attend* is to adopt an artist's aesthetic vision, which
>
> requires a fine attention to detail and form; the perceptions of relations
>
> (tensions and harmonies); the perception of nuance (colors of meaning);
>
> and the perception of change (shifts and subtle motions). (p. 17)

Hughes and John (2009) claim that their students were very involved in the digital

poetry project, the artistic creation of their words, commenting on how the words were

positioned on the page, the colors they selected, and the shapes they formed with the

words. They conclude that:

> The use of new digital media for reading, writing and representing poetry
>
> encourages an exploration of the relationship between text and image and
>
> how images and sound might be used to mediate meaning making. Our
>
> students are already immersed in new media and the question is no longer
>
> whether we should use digital technologies in the classroom, but rather
>
> how they are being integrated into the curricula. (p. 22)

In this statement above, Hughes and John (2009) present the benefits of digital

poetry instruction and advocate for other educators to use digital technology in the

classroom.

Second Language Acquisition (SLA)

This section is devoted to the overview of second language acquisition, the introduction of key terms, the relationship of poetry and second language acquisition, and the relationship of digital poetry and second language acquisition.

Definition of Second Language Acquisition (SLA)

The term of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) is the scholarly field of inquiry that investigates the human capacity to learn language other than the first language (Ortega, 2009). Ellis (1997) defines SLA as "the way in which people learn a language other than their mother tongue, inside or outside of a classroom"(p. 3). SLA includes a concern for both processes and products involved in how languages are learned, as the field is informed by a variety of disciplines such as linguistics, psychology, and education (Van Pattern and Benati (2010); Ortega (2007); Long (2007). As for the history of SLA, Ortega (2007) provides the following explanation:

> As a field, second language acquisition (SLA) is young but strong. It
> began in the late 1960s with a few key initial developments during the
> decade of the 1970s, followed by a prodigious expansion in research and
> theorizing during the 1980s and 1990s. The field of SLA is also
> decidedly interdisciplinary, both in its origins and its development. It
> interconnects with four related fields, some of them also relative
> newcomers in academia: language teaching, linguistics, child language
> acquisition, and psychology. (p. 225)

Overview of Key Terms and Theories

The focus in this study is the area of Teaching English as a Second Language (TESOL), which means the study of how English is learned. In this section, I introduce five key terms in this field, which will often be mentioned in my following chapters, including "ESL/EFL/ELL," "Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory," "Krashen's Theory," "Schmidt's the Noticing Hypothesis," and "Swain's Metatalk."

(1) ESL/EFL/ELL

This field is often referred to as "Learning English as a second language (ESL)," "Learning English as a foreign language (EFL)," or "English Language Learning (ELL)." As for the difference between EFL and ESL, according to Van Pattern and Alessandro (2010), EFL is used to refer to language learning in contexts in which the language is not normally spoken outside the classroom, such as learning English in Japan. ESL is used by some to refer to those contexts in which the language is used outside the classroom, as in the case of learning English in the US.

(2) Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory

According to Ortega, Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory posits that cognition can best be understood as a social faculty, which means human cognition is thought to arise from the material, social, cultural, and historical context in which human experience is embedded. Learning (including language learning) is explained via processes by which the mind appropriates knowledge from affordances in the environment. (Ortega, 2007)

Vygotsky (1978) states that a child follows an adult's or an advanced learner's example and gradually develops the ability to do certain tasks without help or assistance. This is so –called "ZPD" – "the zone of proximal development." According to Vygotsky, the zone of proximal development is:

> The distance between the actual developmental level as determined by
> independent problem solving and the level of potential development as
> determined through problem solving under adult guidance, or in
> collaboration with more capable peers. (p. 86)

The concept of "Scaffolding" is related to ZPD. The term was developed by other sociocultural theorists applying Vygotsky's concepts in educational contexts. According to Balaban (1995):

> Scaffolding is a process through which a teacher or more competent peer
> gives aid to the student in her/his ZPD as necessary, and tapers off this
> aid as it becomes unnecessary, much as a scaffold is removed from a
> building during construction. According to education expert Nancy
> Balaban, scaffolding refers to the way the adult guides the child's learning
> via focused questions and positive interactions. (p. 52)

(3) Krashen's Theory

This present study is also highly influenced by Stephen Krashen's (1987) theory of second language acquisition. Krahsen's (1987) theory consists of five main hypotheses, but I will just highlight two of them, which have had major influences on my research, including "The Input Hypothesis" and "The Affective Filter Hypothesis"

The Input Hypothesis: Krashen (1987) attempts to use this hypothesis to explain how language acquisition takes place. According to the input hypothesis, the learner improves and progresses along the "natural order" when he/she receives second language "input" that is one step beyond his/her current stage of linguistic competence. For example, if a learner is at a stage "i," then acquisition takes place when he/she is exposed to "Comprehensible Input" that belongs to level "i + 1." Since not all of the learners can be at the same level of linguistic competence at the same time, Krashen suggests that *natural communicative input* is the key to designing a syllabus, ensuring in this way that each learner will receive some "i + 1" input that is appropriate for his/her current stage of linguistic competence (Krashen, 1987).

As for the "Affective Filter Hypothesis," Stephen Krashen (1987) believes the "affective variables" play a facilitative and important role in second language acquisition. The variables are: motivation, self-confidence and anxiety. Krashen argues learners will learn better when they are equipped with high motivation, low anxiety and confidence with a good self-image. In other words, low motivation, low self-esteem and anxiety will inhibit learners' ability to learn a second language as those factors will "raise" the affective filter and form a "mental block" that prevents comprehensible input used in language acquisition. That is to say, when the filter is "up," the learner's acquisition will be impeded; when the filter is low, the positive affective factors arise, and then the effective acquisition will take place.

 (4) Schmidt's the Noticing Hypothesis

Schmidt (1990) states that features of language cannot be learned unless they have been noticed. Noticing means the learners are aware of the gap between their own

proficiency and the target language (TL). In other words, the learners notice the gap between what they can say and what they intend to say (Schimidt (1990); Swain (1995, 1998)). The learners will discover about their language and form a language in order to communicate. They will process to form a language and test and modify to reach the goal of communication. This awareness is essential for language improvement.

(5) Swain's Metalangauge (Metatalk)

Metatalk is also known as "Metalangaue." According to Swain (1998), "Metalanguage" means using language to reflect on language use. Metalanguage is encouraged in contexts where the learners are engaged in "making meaning." Swain (1998) states, "Metalanguage works to deepen the students' awareness of forms and rules and the relationships of the forms and rules to the meaning they are trying to express" (p.69). If metalanguage happens to the learner more often, it is beneficial for language improvement.

<div align="center">

Poetry & Second Language Acquisition (SLA)

</div>

In this section, I examine the relationship between poetry and second language acquisition and review some previous literature. Many researchers / teacher researchers have advocated the benefits of teaching poetry in EFL/ESL classrooms. Some have presented positive results of using poetry in ESL/EFL classrooms; others have provided reasons to support the use of poetry in the ESL/EFL classroom and claimed that poetry teaching enhances language learning. The articles are discussed in two categories: (1) Poetry in the ESL/EFL classroom and (2) Digital poetry in the ESL/EFL classroom.

In *Sound and Sense*, Perrine (1977) affirms the importance of using poetry in ESL/EFL classrooms and provides reasons why poetry is beneficial in helping students develop both their writing and speaking skills:

- Poetry is an expression of our personal feelings which are important in any language,

- The rhythms of a language are easier to assimilate through poetry,

- Ideas and personal ideas can be brought into play more so than in other types of writing,

- Poetry enables us to experience the information relayed to us.

In the *English Language Teaching Journal*, Hess (2003) states, "A poem can be used as a vehicle for thought, and as an instrument for shaping language" (p. 19). Hess also provides a manageable nine-step process that unlocks poetry. She believes that poetry should be learned for real and relevant life and shared her own teaching experience. Hess (2003) states:

The entry into a poem, under the guidance of appropriate teaching,

brings about the kind of participation that almost no other text can

produce. When we read, understand, and interpret a poem we learn

language through the expansion of our experience with a larger human

reality. Reading poetry gives us a concentrated version of a parallel life.

A poem can be used as a vehicle for thought, and as an instrument for

shaping language. (p. 19)

Harlan Kellem, an English instructor in a college in Japan, argues that poetry can

be a useful type of input for EFL learners who need to understand linguistic aspects to

reach meaning, and it also deepens their acquisition of English by giving them the

opportunity to describe and interpret their experiences and to express their opinions in an

interesting, meaningful context (Kellem, 2009, p. 16). Kellem (2009) examines poetry

teaching in an EFL class in Japan by adopting the "Formeaning Response Approach"

which combines reader response and the study of language elements. She describes the

equal importance of the text and the reader and provides her teaching strategies. Kellem

(2009) reports, "Poetry is a source of content-rich reading material; a model of creative

language in use; a way to introduce vocabulary in context; and a way to focus students'

attention on English pronunciation, rhythm, and stress" (p. 12). Thus, we know that

poetry helps students learn not only the mechanical aspects but also emotional aspects of

the target language.

McConechie (1982) argues that the relevance of poetry is a component of

language teaching and the study of poetry and other literature is necessary to an

understanding of the full nature of English. He believes poetry improves the sense of

another language for Second Language (L2) learners. Poetry as a part of literature is

valuable as a language learning experience because the language of literature is

interesting and memorable and serves as a link with the English speaking culture. In "All

This Fiddle: Enhancing Language Awareness Through Poetry," McConechie also

provides four principles to incorporate poem into English as second language (ESL) lessons:

> In sharing poetry with adolescent and adult ESL students, teachers should
> (1) select poems that promote deeper self-understanding among students,
> (2) explain the story in the poem, (3) explain the poet's underlying
> cultural assumptions, and (4) treat formal aspects of the poem as ways in
> which the poet plays with the linguistic resources of the language.
> (McConochie, 1982, p. 221-230)

Molotsi (2000), a Japanese teacher, used poetry to teach her students English writing in Japan and found by doing some exercises she designed, her students became more aware of the different ways in which they can communicate a range of feelings. Her students were not afraid to open up since there was no correct or incorrect answer. Her students' expressive writing skills were enhanced through the use of the poetry, if not orally, then through written language.

For teaching poetry writing, Molotsi had students keep a journal or a log book in which they recorded their experiences on a daily or weekly basis. Molotsi (2000) states,

> I have observed that not only do students enjoy working with poetry, but
> also, because they are being so expressive, their vocabulary base
> broadens immensely. Most important of all, their writing ceases to be
> dull and non-captivating and becomes rich and interesting. As Keith
> Waterhouse states, writing can either drone or it can sing: "Aim for the
> singing kind — writing that has life, rhythm, harmony, style — and you

will never lose your reader" (1994, p. 143). Through these exercises, I

believe that students are taking one step to achieving this goal. (p. 35)

Chao (2001), a Taiwanese English teacher in a high school, references DiYanni

(1998) and mentions the pleasure from learning poetry:

In most EFL classrooms, the materials are centered on some topics for

grammar or for communicative competence. Being exposed to the kind

of material for a long period of time, students will inevitably become

tired of them for lack of intellectual inspiration. But Poetry turns the

dullness into excitement, for it can offer "many pleasures-pleasures of

sound and meanings, of images and symbol, of speech and feeling and

thoughts. (p. 2)

Hannauer (2001) clarifies some people's confusions of the features of poetry and

claimed that poetry needs to be taught in EFL/ESL classrooms:

"The shortness of poem and easiness of the vocabularies does not inhibit the presence of

poetic features, personally significant topics or the presence of expressed emotion" (p.

52). Hannauer describes poetry as "a close reading, meaning construction task that

involves high levels of close consideration, analysis and elaboration of textual

meanings"(p. 52). Hannauer develops a coding system to analyze students' responses of

poetry. The coding system reveals some themes about how non-native readers of poetry

notice form and consider the gap between input and output, thus extending their

understanding of the potential uses of meanings of an existing linguistic structure. Also,

those themes indicated how ESL readers view the distance between the poem's content and their own knowledge of the target culture and thus find their cultural awareness enhanced. The research methodology chosen was qualitative and consisted of an in-depth analysis of the protocols of ten dyads of advanced English language learners reading a poem from a popular song. The most useful contribution of this study is the development of a coding system that describes the types of responses elicited during poetry reading.

Culture is an important part of the language. Besides the acquiring of vocabulary, improving the sense of L2, poetry is a great material for second language learners to learn the culture of the target language. Peyton & Rigg (2001) examine the use of poetry with adult English Language Learners. They state, "Poetic themes are often universal, at the same time giving insights into individual's cultures, beliefs, and practices" (p. 27). Rosaen (2003) offers another example of using poetry as the sight for cultural identity development. In that middle ground, experimenting with expressive activities like narrative or poetry and encouraging playfulness with media tools to generate electronic texts representing candidates' cultural roots show promise for negotiating the tensions. Culture provides an important part of language learning. Without getting acquainted with the culture of the target language, we cannot say we truly understand a language.

In "Between the Lines: When Culture, Language and Poetry Meet in the Classroom," Melin (2010) discusses the theoretical and practical questions in teaching poetry in second language classrooms and how to best treat literature when target language and culture are negotiated. She surveys the knowledge base that shapes literature pedagogy, examines the conceptual implications of two common approaches:

"New Criticism" which means close reading and focuses on the text and "Reader Response" which means the reader brings his own experience into the text. Melin (2010) claims, "Poems participate in everyday discourse, stand as canonical works in national literatures, and display the ideological underpinnings of our society" (p. 335). Learning poems is a way to acquire the culture of the target language.

Penha (1996) presents his classroom practices that view the personal experiences of diverse student populations as valuable resources for instruction. He offers his teaching pedagogies in teaching poetry to a group of Asian high school students in a Hong Kong international school. He offers various responses to the challenges posed by students' cultural, linguistic, and social group affiliations. Penha (1996) believes EFL students have advantages in learning the literature of the target language. He explains, "Students' native knowledge of languages other than English provides a special opportunity in the study of literature as well as writing" (p. 103).

Although I have mentioned Hughes in literacy in the digital age, her research is highly related to poetry and SLA. Hughes (2007) proves the benefits of learning poetry in developing students' speaking skills. Hughes states, "Paying attention to vocabulary and rhyme develops oral language skill" (p. 1).

Peyton & Rigg (2001) examine the use of poetry with adult English Language Learners. They claim that poetry provides adults with learning opportunities in language, content, and community building and can be used in adult ESL classes with all learners, even those with limited literacy and proficiency in English" (p. 27). Peyton and Rigg (2001) also mention the benefit of learning culture through poetry:

59

Poetic themes are often universal, at the same time giving insights into

individuals' cultures, beliefs, and practices. When teachers and learners

read and write poetry together, they connect with texts and with one

another in powerful ways. (p. 27)

Schroeder (2010) explores an "Independent Personal Project" for his Master of

Arts in teaching degree. In his report, he considers the use of poetry with regard to

reading, writing, listening, and speaking in the English as a Second Language (ESL)

classroom and advocates the benefits of teaching poetry in the ESL classroom. In his

project report: "For Better or Verse – Poetry in the ESL Classroom," Schroeder (2010)

states reasons why poetry should be taught in the ESL classroom. Schroeder claims:

There are many reasons to use poetry in a classroom. Students can

improve vocabulary through use of metaphors and similes. They can

practice listening skills while doing dictation exercises or listening to

actors or the actual poet read poetry. They can better writing skills by

writing poems and by editing their work. In addition to the fun and pride

students feel when reading their or other poets' efforts, they will be

practicing pronunciation. When we expose our students to poetry, we

don't just help them with their English lessons, we open up new cultures

and new ways of thinking or looking at the world. (p. 100)

There are few investigations using digital literature and poetry in ESL classrooms. This lack of research shows the value of my study since my research taps into this area and contributes to education. In this section, I list a few related research studies.

A Canadian researcher, Cummins (2001) declares a term "identify text" to describe the text which the English language learners use to show their identities. Cummins et al., (2007) found when students are given opportunities to share their *identity text* with peers, family, teachers and the general public through digital media, they are likely to make gains in self-confidence, self-esteem, and a sense of community belonging through positive feedback. When identity text is built, the English Language Learners engage in language learning more effectively. *Identity text* is one of the components that is outlined in the "must exist" for English Language Learners. The other two components are *literacy engagement* and *cognitive engagement*. In *Negotiating identities: Education for empowerment in a diverse society*, Cummins (2001) includes a figure to explain his notion about the three components in English language learning and the relationships among them. Figure 2.1 shows Cummins' framework for academic language learning. Maximum identity and maximum cognitive engagement influence each other and they two are the results of "Interaction within the leaning community." In digital media environment, students shape identity, which helps shape cognitive engagement and facilitate the learning community.

Figure 2.1 A *Framework for Academic Language Learning*
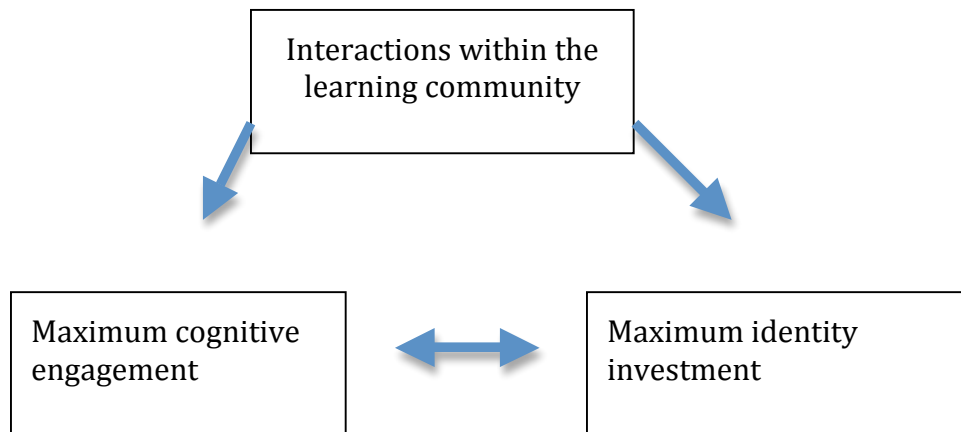
(*A Framework for Academic Language Learning* p. 125)

In the previous section, I reviewed Hughes and Robertson's (2010) study about using digital video to engage students. They investigated three beginning teachers and their use of digital media in English Language Arts classes in Canada. I talked about the general findings. Here, I will focus on one of the teachers, Emily (pseudonym), a teacher in a grade eight Toronto classroom since she taught digital poetry in her ESL classrooms.

Around 86% of the school's students are English language learners, and the majority of students are East Asians. Emily decided to teach digital literacy and focus on poetry because she thought poetry is an immensely powerful genre for English language learners. It does not require a lot of the second language, English to produce a piece, but it can be more powerful than a longer writing piece. Also, Emily believed her students could move from their first language to English easily with support from teachers and peers. She taught a poem "Where I'm from" by George Ella Lyon in class first and told

students to create their own poems based on this topic. To her surprise, one of her

students, Brian (Pseudonym) turned in his digital poem almost finished on the next day.

Brian was the only Chinese student in the class and was new to school; he seemed rarely

engaged in class. He was shy, reluctant to participate but this project amazed all of the

classmates and the teacher.

Hughes and Robertson (2010) explain Brian's improvement as his way to show

what Cumming et al. called *identity text.* Brian was using the images, the sound, and the

text in her digital poetry to present his identity, which seemed to be silent in ordinary

classes. Brian created a powerful and personal performance of self in a mode that begs to

be shared with others.

Hughes and Robertson (2010) argue that the reluctant student disinclined to share

his work enjoyed the attention his poem garnered and was pleased to show it to his class.

That is an example of connecting schoolwork to outside of the school. Brian spent his

weekend at home to do this project, as he felt eager to show his identity to the class.

Digital poetry makes schoolwork relevant to ESL students and engaged students in

learning.

In *Because Digital Writing Matters,* DeVoss et al. (2010) describe a story of

Rivera-Amezola's ESL class. Rivera Amezola is a fourth grade English teacher in

Philadelphia. He invited his English language learners to use digital tools to compose

their writing. In one assignment, students created slideshow presentations and Rivera-

Amezola had them narrate their slideshow using Apple's GarageBand software. Students

wrote across different modalities, and Rivera-Amerzola had them participate in the

writing process of brainstorming. The process appealed to all of his students. His students loved being engaged in this process. Rivera-Amezola claims this project was effective in helping students learn English.

In *Making New Media*, Burn (2009) presents a case study conducted in his ESL classroom in Cambridge. He explores four arguments for a greater emphasis on the moving image in English by using his class as an example. The four arguments were: (1) The moving image as a form of communication (2) The media education (3) Information and communication technologies and (4) Rhetorics of creativity. From his findings, Burn (2009) draws two especially true and explicit themes of his ESL students' pieces: *Identity* and *Bilingualism*.

He assigned a project for making digital poetry and gave an example of "Search for My Tongue" by Sujata Bhatt. He asked his 11- year- old ESL students to write, perform and film poems modeled on "Search for My Tongue." Students considered in his article are Ayi, who speaks Mandarin and English; Fatima and Nayana, who speak Bengali and English and Sophie, who speaks French and English. Burn (2009) analyzes his students' works and states:

> Students' works show culture roles, in which these young people take on
> the function of cultural makers, as poets, film-makers, game-players.
> They also show how the roles made available by media genres and
> technologies allow dramatic reworkings of aspects of the world closely
> related to identity-cultural passions, fashions, play, and narratives of
> self, family and friends. (p. 88)

64

Burn (2009) points out the importance of helping students by reflecting on poems metalinguistically through media. Moving images are so important in the contemporary culture, and a full engagement with the moving image demands production as well as analysis. He gave more specific reasons as follows:

> Nayana, Ayi, Fatima and Sophie don't just use digital video-they learn how to set up and film shots, and how to edit their film in ways closely analogous to the processes through which they edited their poems. In doing so, they built a performance of self and language which points in one direction towards some exam question about the poetic word, but in another direction toward a world where such performances really have the cultural value that, too often, school can only thinly simulate. (p. 89)

Conclusion

Some Theories are Interdisciplinary

As I have learned, some foundational theories can be applied across fields. For example, Rosenblatt's reader response, Gardner's Multiple Intelligences, Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, and Krashen's "Affective Filter Hypothesis." Rosenblatt's Reader Response has influenced numerous scholars and studies no matter what language is used and what modes we are composing. In terms of learning, no matter what kind of learning, the affective variables and social interaction are essential. With high motivation, learners are eager to learn. Multiple Intelligences (MI) has explained different students' aptitudes and learning styles in our classroom and the responsibility for teachers to offer a variety of means and materials to meet their needs.

65

Themes

The theories and previous research are connected and similar. A few themes run through the material outlined in this chapter associated with "Poetry, Media and SLA." First, poetry can be therapeutic and poetry therapy has been used to help people cope with physical and mental pain; Second, poetry learning enhances language learning in the ESL/EFL classroom; Third, digital poetry enhances language learning in the ESL/EFL classroom; Fourth, digital poetry engages students and presents the individual's culture and identities.

Significance of This Study

There is a need for more investigations of the impact of digital literacy in the ESL/EFL classroom. Classroom teachers and researchers alike need to see language learning that is stimulated by the use of poetry to build a sense of self, understand culture and to situate the learner in the appeal of digital literacy. This investigation is a way forward to understand how the "new literacy" can use visuals and words to stimulate second language acquisition. In the next chapter, I will describe how I designed my study and the process of conducting my research and the approach of analyzing my data.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Research Questions

Research Design

Research Context

The Curriculum

Data Collection Sources and Data Collecting Procedure

Trustworthiness

My study is a qualitative study. According to Creswell (2007),

> Qualitative research begins with assumptions, a worldview, the possible
>
> use of theoretical lens, and the study of research problems inquiring into
>
> the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem.
>
> To study this problem, qualitative researchers use an emerging
>
> qualitative approach to inquiry, the collection of data in a natural setting
>
> sensitive to the people and places under study, and data analysis that is
>
> inductive and establishes patterns or themes. The final written report or
>
> presentation includes the voices of participants, the reflexivity of the
>
> researcher, a complexity, description, and interpretation of the problem,
>
> and it extends the literature or signals a call for action. (p. 37)

Creswell's statement describes the basic procedure and organization of my study.

As qualitative research focuses on "process, meaning, and understanding," the product of

my research, accordingly, is "richly descriptive" (Merriam, 1998, p. 8). I give

description in details of my understanding of the phenomenon and the case (Creswell, 2003/2007; Guba, 1990; Mertens, 1998). To support my findings, I also include the participants' own words and direct citations from documents, such as their written poems, digital poetry, projects, email exchanges, freewritings, and interview transcripts.

The purpose of this qualitative study was to describe and analyze how the graduate course: Writing, Reading and Teaching Poetry influenced students' writing, thinking, response to poetry, teaching beliefs and language learning through their participating in the class activities.

In this chapter, I will describe the research methodology of my study as I observed the classroom, participated in the activities and discussions, analyzed the data and interviewed students and the instructor. In the following sections, I explain the questions I posed through the dissertation study, the rationale for choosing the research paradigm and data collection procedures.

Research Questions

My main question for this study: What happens when international and American graduate students participate in the course, "Writing, Reading and Teaching poetry"? The following sub-questions guided this study of poetry, media and second language learning:

(1) Poetry Reading and Writing

- What are international and American students' experiences with and attitudes toward poetry reading and writing when beginning and completing the course?

- What happens when international and American students work with peer response?

(2) Poetry and Media

- What are international and American students' experiences with and attitudes toward digital poetry?

- What happens when international and American students compose digital poetry?

(3) Poetry and Second Language Acquisition (SLA)

- What are the influences of poetry writing and reading on international students' learning of English?

- What are the influences of composing digital poetry on international students' English learning?

Research Design

Paradigm

According to Creswell (2007), "Researchers bring their own worldviews, paradigms or sets of beliefs to the research project, and these inform the conduct and writing of the qualitative study" (p. 15). A paradigm or worldview is "a basic set of beliefs that guide action"(Guba, 1990, p. 17). There are other terms referring to the same concept. According to Creswell (2007), "These beliefs have been called 'paradigms' (Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Mertens, 1998); philosophical assumptions, epistemologies, ontologies and alternative knowledge claims" (Creswell, 2003, p. 19).

I held the worldview of social constructivism in doing this study, which means that I as the researcher sought understanding of the world (research field) in which I lived and worked. Creswell (2007) stated that in social constructivism:

Individuals develop subjective meanings of their experiences —meanings

directed toward certain objects or things. These meanings are varied and multiple, leading the researcher to look for the complexity of views rather than narrow the meanings into a few categories or ideas. The goal of the research is to rely as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation. (p. 20)

My study aimed to investigate the impact of poetry and digital poetry on the participants. In order to understand how the participants experienced and processed these inputs, I needed to dive deeper in understanding each of them and also to hold a holistic view to look at the social interactions among individuals.

Approach

I could see myself as the constructivist, and my worldview manifests in a combination of two approaches: phenomenological study and case study. I originally thought I would just use case study approach, yet as I collected more data and more time I was involved in the study, I sensed my scope had broadened and I was actually doing things with mixed approaches. In the following section, I explained the rationale of adopting mixed approaches.

According to Creswell (2007), case study research is a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (e.g., observation, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports), and reports a case description and case-based themes" (p. 73). Creswell further stated (2007), "Case study research involves the study of an issue explored through one

70

or more cases within a bounded system (i.e., a setting, a context)" (p. 73). In my study, the class of " Writing, Reading, and Teaching Poetry" is the case, the bounded system. My goal was to explore what happened in this bounded system. Merriam (1998) explained, "Case studies are particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic" (p. 29). In my study, the poetry class is a particular situation and the students and instructor explored poetry. Case studies focus on detailed descriptions and aim to illuminate the readers' understandings of the case. In my study, I gave thick description of the participants, the events and the stories that happened in the poetry class. According to Yin (2009), a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a phenomenon within its real-life context. In my study, I inquired about and described the impact of poetry learning (the phenomenon) within a real-life context (the poetry class).

The reason I adopted a phenomenological approach was that I tried to understand how each participant describes his/her experiences (Moustakas, 1994). For the definition of "phenomenological approach," Moustakas (1994) explained that it is the lived experiences of persons and the development of descriptions of the essences of these experiences. In my study, I interviewed each student about the experiences he/she had in the poetry class and looked into the developmental experiences of the whole class while observing in the class.

My use of the combination of the case study and phenomenological approach can sum up my study as: a study which explored what happened in the poetry class, and explained the lived experiences and the development of these essences of the experiences. I told the story in this case in my eyes as the researcher using observations, interviews, photos, videos, exchanging emails and students' artifacts.

Researcher Role

My role in this study was a "participant observer" (Merriam, 1998, p.101). Merriam (1998) defined a "participant observer" as a researcher whose activities are known to the group, but are subordinate to the researcher's role as a participant (p. 101). The instructor of this course was Dr. Roy Fox, who taught a graduate poetry course in 2003 in the same department. He modified the syllabus he used before and included my input of digital poetry in the new syllabus. I was in charge with the digital poetry instruction, and I organized the Blackboard platform for announcements, assignment submissions and discussions. I led the session on digital poetry and solved students' problems with technology inside and outside of the class. I did the class assignments with the students and participated in the class activities. I was always an insider of the group. The students were comfortable with my presence and took me as a part of the class. I usually talked about my observations with the instructor after class, reflecting on myself as both a teacher and a student. During the process of data analysis, I co-constructed meaning with the instructor and students through informal and formal interviews as well as informal member checks (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Research Context

Qualitative researchers recognize how the context—the site, the setting, the students, the instructor, the class and the research impact the conclusions of the study. In the following section, I describe these important elements involved in this dissertation study.

This study was conducted in a bounded system composed of one class of students and the instructor. I should mention that one student dropped from the class after the first class meeting but still worked with me individually. I took him as a part of the case study since I did the same activities with him and it was just in different time. Within the bounded system, eight of the students all signed the consent form and agreed to participate in this study. They agreed to participate in the interviews, have their artifacts collected, have their photos taken and behaviors videotaped. They also agreed to have their email communication collected and analyzed. I did three interviews with six of them and two interviews with two of them. This case was a layered system with deep context to analyze the poetry and digital poetry experiences in a reading, writing, and teaching poetry classroom.

Setting

The research took place in a Midwestern university, with a diverse enrollment of 30, 200 students, including graduate students and undergraduate students. The students of the poetry class are currently studying in the department of Learning, Teaching and Curriculum (LTC) in College of Education. The poetry class was originally assigned to use a classroom located on the second floor of another department's building. When the class first met, the instructor and I were so frustrated with the insufficient technology facilities. The classroom did not have the Smartboard, video player, CD player and any tools we needed for the classroom activities. It only had a traditional blackboard and chalk. (The Smartboard is a big interactive computing device with a large touch screen. It is usually placed in front of the classroom. Teachers and students can use it for giving lectures and presentations, browsing websites, and playing videos or music.) The desks

and chairs in the classroom were set in rows and it was not easy for us to create a community in class. The atmosphere was strict and cold. The instructor soon decided to move the class back to LTC department's building in the College of Education after the first class meeting. Yet there was not any classroom available for us at that time. After checking and communicating with the staff member in charge, we finally found a computer lab to use in our department's building.

We were satisfied with the new classroom though it was a lab and it was small. The size of the room was about 800 square feet. It had most of the technology facilities we needed. It had the Smart Board and a big white board in front of the lab. The room 's floor was carpeted. It had about twenty computers in the lab. When the students were not working on the computer for the freewriting, we pulled chairs to the front of the room to form a small circle. The students and the instructor were able to face each other during the discussion and sharing time. Two American students often sat on or lay down on the floor as the setting was friendly and comfortable. Students always greeted each other and chatted when they entered the lab. Before the class started, they usually shared stories of their lives. Very often, class began with a focused freewriting response to the assigned reading for 15 minutes. Students worked on the desktop computers in the lab or on their own lap tops.

The Class

The course was offered in the semester of fall, 2010 in the department of Learning, Teaching and Curriculum. It was a three-credit class and the class met on Wednesdays from four pm to seven pm in the evening. It was a graduate level class categorized under English Education 8640. It was an elective course so interested

students signed up for the class as their choice. According to the syllabus (Appendix A), this course focused upon poetry in the middle school, secondary school, and college classroom—the writing, reading, teaching and learning poetry. It was intended for advanced English/Language Arts teachers and others who wanted to explore selected processes and strategies for writing, reading and teaching poetry. It was also for those who wanted to better understand and apply literary theories in the classroom: "New Criticism," "Reader Response," "Marxist Criticism," and "Feminist Criticism" were discussed from class assigned readings. This course also viewed "writing" as consisting of word, image, music, sound, voice, etc. Students were encouraged to explore multimodal poetry writing, such as digital poetry.

The class used the school Blackboard system to do the communications, further discussions and assignment collection. When the class first met, students decided to take turns to bring food for the class. This course had participants from five countries, including the US, two countries in Asia and two in Middle East with different native language backgrounds.

In order to obtain more information about the students' background with poetry and digital poetry, I created a survey (Appendix B) and gave it out in the first class. One hundred percent of the international students felt anxious about English poetry learning and had unpleasant learning experiences in their native countries. Seventy-five percent of American students learned poetry and did not enjoy it before entering college. Seventy- five percent of students had never experienced digital poetry and multimodal writing before.

The Participants

In order to protect the participants' privacy, the participants' names presented in this paper are pseudonyms. Following is the introduction of each participant. I have known some people longer since we have taken many courses together. I was able to give thick description about them. For some students, I had never met them before this class, so I could only mention something I have learned from the interviews, surveys, class observations and their writing.

Hung

Hung, from Southeast Asia, is a second year doctoral student in English Education /TESOL. He is 31 years old and single. He came to the U.S. in August 2009 after receiving his Master of Arts degree in linguistics in Australia. He used to teach English in a college in his country before he pursued his master's degree in Australia.

 I have known Hung for almost two years since we took some classes together. In a writing workshop, he introduced himself to the class by using the analogy of a "monkey." He told us, "I was born in the year of monkey. And just like a monkey, I am active, agile, and talkative. I love talking talking and talking." His self-introduction was just right in describing himself. Indeed, he is very talkative and active. When I see a monkey on TV or books, I often think of Hung.

Hung learned poetry in high school and college in his native country. In the survey, he described poetry as a very difficult subject to learn and he said only a few talented people could understand it. He did not know how to read and write poetry and he did not learn much about poetry in his native country. He has never taught poetry,

76

either. Before taking this course, Hung had never done or viewed digital poetry but was interested in trying composing some on his own.

Fem

Fem, from the Middle East, is a second year doctoral student in English education/TESOL. She taught English in the EFL classroom for one year in her country, and she came to the U.S in 2003. She is 32 years old and married. She has a five-year-old son who was born in the U.S. Her husband, also from her home country, is a math professor teaching in another college away from her son and her. Fem took care of her son alone during the weekdays and drove for two hours to meet her husband every weekend when she was taking this course. She has a part time job teaching in the TESOL program in another college and she is a Teaching Assistant in the TESOL program in which she studies. She got her master's degree in TESOL in a big university in the U.S. in 2005. She learned poetry in high school and college in her native country. Like Kim, Fem's poetry learning experience was very traditional. They were asked to analyze poems and memorize poems, and they studied poems for the purpose of taking tests. She has never taught poetry.

I have known Fem for almost two years and we have had chances to work on some projects together. In my eyes, Fem is a confident, friendly and a sociable kind of person. She is talkative and talks very fast. She is also a proud mother. She loves talking about her son and sharing some conversations that they had with us in the class.

When asking about digital poetry experience in the survey, Fem did not know what that was but could relate it to some kind of poetry writing with technology tools.

She has enjoyed technology so she showed her interest in trying this new mode of poetry writing.

Kim

Kim from Northeast Asia is a graduate student in English Education. She is around 35-40 years old, single and she lives on her own. She came to the U.S. in July 2006, and she is currently teaching her native language to American college students in the German and Russian studies department. She used to teach in a private English institute in her country. She learned poetry in high school and college in her native country and found the experience to be negative. Teachers' approaches were very traditional and focused on analyzing the text. She had never taught poetry, but she said she loves poetry since she has taken some great teachers' class in graduate school, and they have had a positive impact on her. In the survey, she said she has difficulty with technology and media, but she would like to try.

In my eyes, Kim is an open, outgoing and funny person. She loves dancing and telling jokes. She is obsessed with wearing high heels. The first time I met her was two and an half years ago and I was impressed with her high heels. I guessed those high heels were about five inches. I was also surprised to hear her say she does not belong to the social community of her country in town, and she just likes to hang out with Americans, and she is interested in "men." I thought people from her country like to stick together, but apparently, she is an exception; I thought people from her country are conservative, but apparently, she is an exception. She tries hard to fit in the American society. She prefers that people call her by her American name that she made for herself. She likes fashion, but she does not appreciate her own Asian beauty. She once told the class she

wishes she could have bigger eyes and could grow taller… like American girls. I have taken many classes with her, and I have enjoyed having her in class since the class would be often surrounded with laughter.

Tom

Tom, a Caucasian male, is from a southern state in the U. S. He is a third-year doctoral student in English Education. He did his undergraduate and Masters in Music composition and he also holds a master's degree in English Education. He is 58 years old and married. Tom has a wife of twenty-eight years and two children: a son who is twenty years old and a junior at college and a daughter who is twenty-three years old and a graduate student. Until he was 45, he made his living as a full time musician. He was a drummer with a famous band and then he worked in a professional music show place. He changed his career at the age of 45 at which time he became a high school English teacher. Tom told me he was thrilled to be a high school teacher, but after ten years of dealing with the battles with the administration, he decided to quit and brought him to the doctoral program.

Tom learned poetry in high school, college and graduate school. He also taught poetry in the high school. In the survey, Tom showed his passion for teaching and learning poetry. But when talking about digital poetry, he showed his disagreement with this new mode of writing. He said, " Combining images and music with poetry will limit poetry." He said, music and poetry are both sacred for him and they should stand-alone. He used an example to show his contempt, "When I saw Disney took Beethoven's sixth symphony to go with their cartoon images, I was furious. That is so insulting for such a great musician."

In my eyes, Tom has the knowledge and is eager to share what he knows. He also likes to share things about his family and experiences in the music business and teaching. Tom likes telling jokes and shows his sense of humor to the class.

Willy

Willy, a Caucasian male, is from an urban city in a Midwestern state in the U. S. He is a first year English language Arts teacher in a public high school. He is also pursuing his master's degree in secondary education as a part of the university's Teaching Fellows Program. According to the introduction from the program website (2011), "Teaching Fellowship" is a rigorous induction program offered by the College of Education and the university's Partnership for Educational Renewal. Teaching Fellows are first-year teachers who work with a full-time, on-site mentor and complete courses delivered by faculty from the college's Department of Learning, Teaching, and Curriculum to earn a master's degree during that first year." Willy works for a school district teaching full-time with reduced pay, taking classes for reduced fees and having support from a mentor on-site. He can get a Master's in Education in Curriculum and Instruction at the end of the 15 month program.

Willy is 23 years old and single. Willy has a younger sister and a brother. His family lives in an urban city two hours away from where he teaches now. Willy has learned poetry since he was in the elementary school. He enjoyed poetry analysis. Willy told me " I started loving poetry in college. I enjoyed studying poetry craft, analyzing the poetry text and how poems are built." He had not tried to teach poetry in class before he enrolled in this class. When mentioning digital poetry, he did not show much interest.

Willy said, "I will do it if it is required." Willy doesn't show much of his emotions. In my eyes, he is a calm, rational and focused person.

Dona

Dona, a Caucasian female, is from a rural town in a Midwestern state. She is a first year English language Arts teacher in a public junior high school. Like Willy, she is also pursuing her master's degree in secondary and middle school English education in the College of Education. Dona is 23 years old and single. She has an elder sister and her parents and her sister live in a town forty minutes away from where she is living now. In my eyes, Dona is an outgoing, talkative, and independent person. Dona has learned poetry since she was in elementary school but she doesn't remember much of what they learned. She started reading more poetry in college, and her favorite poet is Emily Dickson. She had not tried to teach poetry in class before she enrolled in this class, and she expected to learn more strategies that she can use in her classroom. Dona had not heard of digital poetry before enrolling in this course and was interested in exploring this new mode of poetry writing.

Helen

Helen, a black female, is from an urban city in a Midwestern state in the U. S. She is a first year English Language Arts teacher in a public junior high school. Dona, Helen and Willy have been taking many courses together and have been great friends.

Helen finished the undergraduate course and received the Bachelor of Arts degree from the university. She majored in dual secondary and middle school English education, and minor in architecture and theatre. Helen is 23 years old and single. She has a boyfriend studying in the graduate school of the engineering department. She has

one brother and two sisters studying and working in different places in the U.S. Helen

learned poetry in high school and college. She said her English teachers taught poetry in

a traditional way, which focused on the text analysis and she was taught to follow the

forms and pattern to compose poems. She had not tried to teach poetry in class before

she enrolled in this class. When mentioning digital poetry, Helen was keen to try this

new mode of writing.

David

David, from the Middle East, is a graduate student in Learning, Teaching and

Curriculum department at a mid-western university. David is currently working on his

masters degree in Literacy Education. He received his undergraduate degree in

Elementary Education in a well-known university in his country. After graduating from

college, he taught full time in a public school as a fourth and fifth grade teacher for two

years. In 2008, David was awarded a scholarship from the Ministry of National

Education of his courntry to pursue master's and doctoral degrees in the U.S. He plans

to return to his country and teach in college after obtaining his doctoral degree. David is

27 years old and has a girl friend in California. In my eyes, David is humble, polite and

an intelligent person.

David was the student who dropped after our first class meeting, but he was still a

participant of this study. I first worked with David when he enrolled in a writing

workshop for international students in 2010 spring. I worked as a Teaching Assistant and

cooperated with Dr. Jill Ostrow in class preparation, course design and teaching. David

discovered his poetic voice and produced several poems in both Turkish and English. He

learned to transfer his essays and stories into poems. He told us he had loved poetry and

82

enjoyed sharing his poems with others. Dr. Ostrow and I witnessed his progress and improvement.

During fall semester 2010, I was fortunate to have a chance to work with the instructor, Dr. Roy Fox in a poetry class. I thought David would love it so I recommended him to sign up for this class. The instructor and I planned some technology integration in curriculum and added digital poetry as one of the course requirements. I knew David is interested in doing digital writings so I emailed the syllabus to him before the course started. I expected that he would feel excited and have a great time in this course.

To my surprise, he emailed me that he wanted to drop this class after our first class meeting on Aug 25th, 2010. Actually, I did sense his anxiety in class and felt worried. I planned to talk to him but I did not expect he would like to drop. I just had not had a chance to talk with him and he emailed me about his decision.

> I am so sorry for this, but I am going to drop the poetry class. It seems it would be so hard for me to do in class activities. There are so many unknown words in a single poem for me, and it is impossible for me to talk about a poem, which is unfamiliar to me. (Email from David, August 26th, 2010)

The instructor and I tried to relieve his worries and told him we would offer help outside the class, but David still insisted on quitting. After exchanging several emails, he dropped this class. I didn't really understand why David felt anxious and made this decision. In the first class, we did an activity and many students told me it was fun and

they enjoyed it. David also composed a good work. I had been pondering these questions about his decision: "Why did he feel stressed in this class? How can I help him overcome the obstacles? " I believed he is an effective writer and poet and he should keep exploring poetry. I decided to work with him individually. David was delighted and agreed when I proposed this idea to him. I included him as one of my participants, and everything I did with him and all of his artifacts, our conversations, and interviews were documented.

The Instructor: Dr. Roy Fox

Dr. Roy Fox was the instructor of this course*:* "English Education 8640, Writing, Reading and Teaching Poetry" offered in Fall 2010. He is also my advisor in the doctoral program. This study got the instructor's approval in early August 2010. Dr. Fox supported and supervised this study. Dr. Fox is a professor in English Education at the university where I conducted the research. He is around 62 years old. He has a wife and two children, one is a 27-year-old daughter and the other is a 23-year-old son. Dr. Fox has devoted himself to education for almost four decades. Dr. Fox is knowledgeable in the reading, writing and teaching poetry. He is also a great poet. He started publishing poetry when he was a teen.

I learned about his poetry learning philosophy through several planning meetings with him. Dr. Fox believed most English teachers themselves are afraid of poetry and teaching poetry. It is probably because they were not taught well in school. Many teachers just want to get a " teaching recipe," an easy way created by others, to use in their classroom. It is sad that teaching recipes often are just some teaching templates that restrain students' creativity. Dr. Fox believes the best poetry teachers are those who

really learn how to do poetry, learn how play with language and live as poets themselves; the difficulty of poetry can be demystified and the strategies, such as " Think Aloud" need to be taught; poetry does not need to follow forms, and poets create forms to meet their needs. I appreciate Dr. Fox's openness in encouraging risk taking. While designing the class activities with him, I learned Dr. Fox had not tried some of the poetry experiments before and he wanted to try out to see what would happen. The courage to try new things in teaching also encouraged students to take risks to do different things, and it often leads to surprising results.

As I have mentioned, my role in this study was a " participant observer" (Merriam, 1998, p.101). I worked with the instructor and was in charge with digital poetry instruction. The instructor usually gave great feedback on my teaching and on my research after class. I took our conversations as informal interviews. His insights about the observation were also included as one source of my data. His comments and feedback for students' performance helped me construct meanings of the case. In other words, I co-constructed the meanings with the instructor through informal and formal interviews as well as informal member checks (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Campus IRB Approval

The University of Missouri-Columbia's Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviews research projects with human subjects. I submitted an Exempt application on August 13th, 2010 to Campus IRB. I received approval on August 16th, 2010. The class started on the August 25th, 2010.

Informed Consent Process

The students who participated in this study were asked to give written informed consent before I began my research. In the first class meeting on Aug 25th, 2010, the instructor gave me about 10-15 minutes to explain my research background, the purpose, the procedures, confidentiality, benefit/significance, and risk of this study. Then I distributed the informed consent form and asked them to read the form carefully and consider if they would like to participate (See Appendix C for the consent form). They all agreed to participate in this study and signed the form. Then I collected all the signed forms and stored them in a locked cabinet in my study.

Ethical Considerations

As a researcher, I understood the importance of research ethics and I strived for protecting the participants' confidentiality during the process of conduct and writing up the research. The participants' privacy was maintained by adopting the pseudonyms, safely storing digital data in a hard drive protected by passwords and hard copies of data in a locked cabinet with limited access to other people. I gave all of my participants pseudonyms, and made sure not to reveal both their first names or last names. I used the data only for the research and not for any other purposes. I decided to use the instructor's real name as he supervised this study and cannot be just taken as a "participant." My study did not involve any risks greater than those encountered in everyday life.

The Curriculum

In this part, I described this course's assumptions, class routine, the content and the course's requirement.

Course Assumptions

According to the syllabus (Appendix A), the course assumed:

- Poetry = Playplayplay.

- English/Language Arts teachers must also be writers themselves— especially of poetry.

- Poetry writing should often be linked to actitivity or "doing."

- Writing, reading, and teaching poetry must run hot, as well as cold.

- Poetry is not reserved exclusively for the glittering literati or belletristic among us.

- Poetry does not depend upon visits from a muse or any other mystical entity.

- Poetry carries no restrictions—no rules in genre, conventions, themes, language, etc.

- Writers construct and discover meaning through many recurring experiences in writing and reading poems—and reflecting on their processes and products.

In short, the course, " Writing, Reading and Teaching Poetry" was designed to have students experience the play with language and inspire them and their own teaching through a variety of writing activities. They would construct the meaning through the experience in reading and writing poetry. They would be given much freedom, no

restrictions in creating poems. It was meant to demystify the difficulty of poetry and express the ideas of our living in poetry and find poetry in our daily lives.

Glimpse of the Class Routine

Below is the basic structure of this course. I also gave description for each element. Basically, students wrote about the assigned reading for ten to fifteen minutes in the beginning. And the whole class discussed the reading and shared thoughts about the book or articles they read. After the discussion, an assigned person did a poetry demonstration and others offered feedback and suggestions. New ideas of poetry learning and teaching were also introduced in every class (poetry experiments). At last, the class ended with writing group where they shared their writing and supported each other.

1. Freewriting response to the assigned reading

2. Discussion about the assigned readings

3. Poetry demonstration

4. Poetry experiments introduction

5. Writing group

Freewriting

The class usually started with ten to fifteen minutes of freewriting. Students could work on their laptops or choose any computer in the lab to write. Students were given some writing prompts about the assigned reading and options of reflecting on any points of the assigned reading. In the first two weeks, they wrote on paper and handed

their writing to the instructor. Because some people's handwritings were hard to decipher, the instructor decided to have them type on the computer. I have most of the electronic files of freewritings collected. After fifteen minutes, they saved their freewritings and send them via email to the instructor and me. The instructor read and commented on everyone's freewriting and handed them back to the students in the next class meeting.

Reading Discussion

After freewriting, the students pulled their chairs to form a circle in the front of the class for discussion. It was a free discussion. Anyone could jump in to express his or her opinions toward the ideas of the readings, raise questions or share experiences. The instructor effectively guided the discussion. He usually asked some questions to guide students to think more deeply and critically. Everyone had equal opportunities to talk in class and share ideas.

Poetry Demonstration

The poetry demonstration was usually followed by the class discussion. Doing the poetry demonstration was one of the required projects for each student. In a poetry demo, students took turns in presenting the composing process of a written poem or digital poem. Students needed to collect several different drafts of a poem they created to show the class and explain their decision making of the revision. Students were encouraged to use power point to present their poetry demonstration. Each draft was shown in a different slide. The instructor himself modeled how to do the demo and what elements should be included first. He used his poem "Having your cat" to present the process and product. (See the instructor's sample of poetry demonstration in Appendix D.)

Several main questions led students to understand his decision-making and composing process. Those questions were: 1. What is the immediate context of your central idea? 2. What is the history or larger context of your central idea? 3. Tell about the title. 4. What do you drop, and then return to – and why? 5. What do you drop and why? 6. What do you cherish, but then give up and why? 7. What remained throughout and why?

Course Requirements

The syllabus listed the course requirements: (a) Doing poetry experiments: Students did weekly poem experiments; wrote reflection about the process. There were ten a total of experiments (b) Three of the weekly poems needed to be digital poems. (c) Poetry demonstration: students took turns to present to the class about their poem writing process. (d) Teaching Project: students found their interests in teaching, writing and reading poetry and conducted an inquiry. They applied some of the teaching strategies in their own class or selected students and submitted a research-based paper in the end of the semester (See Appendix E for the guideline.)

Below, I list the ten poetry experiments and give brief descriptions (See appendix F for the detailed instruction given to the class):

1. Magazine Poem:

   In class, students selected words cut from the magazine and arranged them into a found poem. Students pasted words on the poster and took turns to read aloud their magazine poem. After class, I took all the poems and posted them on VoiceThread which is an interactive online program.

http://voicethread.com/share/1283967/ Students were required to respond to 2-3 poems on VoiceThread.

2. Writing poems from boring information:

    Students visited three websites below and consulted some of the factual information. Students went to what interested them in some way as a springboard, as a theme, as specific words or phrases borrowed, as numbers. Then they wrote a poem.

    http://www.statehealthfacts.org/

    http://www.statehealthfacts.org/comparemaptable.jsp?ind=267&cat=5

    http://www.statehealthfacts.org/comparecat.jsp?cat=2&rgn=27&rgn=1

3. Silent walk poem:

    Students carried notebooks and took a fifteen-minute silent walk. They jotted downed fifteen words that came to them as they walked. A class wiki was created on the Blackboard. Students typed their words in wiki to create a word pool. Students chose any words from the group word pool to create their own poems.

4. List poem:

    Students used the examples from class (See Fox list poems online at *Journal of Creative Work* site or Appendix M) and the article on the history of the List poem to write a list poem.

5. Digital poem: (theme: memory and dream):

    Use multimedia such as photostory 3, movie maker, power point or iMovie. Students collected their personal photos, created images, and selected music and /

or record voices to make them into an artifact. Students could write about their memory or dream.

6   Read ten poems by Theodore Roethke selected by the instructor: 1) "Cuttings," 2) "Cuttings (later)," 3) "My Papa's Waltz," 4) "Dolor," 5) "The Waking," 6) "I Knew a Woman," 7) "The Young Girl," 8) "Wish for a Young Wife," 9) "The Chums," and 10) "In a Dark Time."

Write a poem in some way launched by Roethke's poems.

7.   Side effects may include… poem:

Students watched a few minutes of a video clip, "On Topic: Colbert Case Files--Side Effects May Include," and selected any malady, be it personal, social, environmental, cultural, physical. Somehow, readers should know the malady in question, stated or implied. Students wrote poems, which included this phrase: " side effects may include." Students were encouraged to communicate their solutions to the malady or problems and play with language by inventing some side effects.

8.   Free topic (students could write about anything):

Students wrote a poem about anything they felt like writing.

9.   Dialogue poem (students proposed this idea):

Students used dialogues to create a poem or created a poem for two voices. Some poems from "Joyful Noise" were posted on the Blackboard as examples.

10. Make most mundane poem or make the ugly beautiful poem:

Students focused on a topic (person, animal, place, object, etc.) that is *commonly agreed upon* as being ugly or so mundane nobody thinks twice about it. Then, in

their poems, they suggested or elicited *very different or unusual qualities—the ugly becomes beautiful, or noble or pathetic or whatever values or emotions they and their topics believe in.*

Course Reading

The required course texts included *The Elements (and Pleasures) of Difficulty* by Salvatori and Donohue published in 2006 and many selected journal articles about writing, reading and teaching poetry. Some are recent with new ideas; some are classic and foundational. The reading list is included in the syllabus. (Appendix A)

Data Collection Sources and Data Collecting Procedure

I collected data from late August 2010 through February 2011. Data came from many sources: (1) the writing survey, (2) the interviews with students and the instructor, (3) informal communications with students and the instructor, (4) the collection of participants' artifacts, projects, writing samples and emails exchange, (5) audio and video recording the class, (6) photo taking, and (7) my teaching journal. Figure 3.1 illustrates the data source and chronology of data collection.

Figure 3.1 *Chronology of Data Collection*

Data	*Time*
Survey Recruitment of participants	August 25th, 2010
Formal interview 1	September, 2010

Formal interview 2	Middle November 2010
Informal communications with students (in person and via email)	Many times during class and out of the classroom (August, 2010- February 2011)
Artifacts, projects, freewritings	August, 2010- December 2011
Class recording/photos	August, 2010-December 2010
Teaching journal	August, 2010-December 2010
The instructor's feedback on my teaching (informal talk after class)	August, 2010-December 2010
Follow up interviews	Late February 2011

Data Sources

(1) Survey

In order to understand the students' personal experience and views of writing, reading and teaching poetry as well as the frequency of poetry experience in life, I gave out the survey in the first class meeting after gathering their consent form on August 25th, 2010. In the survey, I asked open-ended questions about their past experience of poetry learning, digital poetry, attitudes about poetry, how often they read and write poetry and the attitudes of trying out digital poetry. The purpose was to get to know each individual's different background, previous knowledge and attitudes. There were six questions in the survey. Besides three open-ended questions, I included "Likert Scales"

with four levels for the rest of the questions. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2001), a

rating scale is more useful when a behavior needs to be evaluated on a continuum. They

are also known as Likert scales. My consideration for adopting the combination of open-

ended questions and Likert scales was to force response for the behavior pattern while

giving freedom in expressing more details. I could not only compare each one's level

from Likert scales but also get each individual's narratives from the open-ended response.

The following figure illustrates the example.

Figure 3.2 *Selected Survey Question*

1. How do you define "poetry"

2. How were you taught poetry in and/or outside of school?

3. How have YOU taught poetry? If you have never taught it, please explain.

4. How often, overall, do you read poetry?

1	2	3	4
Never	Once in a while	Fairly often	Frequently

Comments:

5. How often, overall, do you write poetry?

1	2	3	4
Never	Once in a while	Fairly often	Frequently

Comments:

6. How confident or comfortable are you, right now, with creating multimedia or "digital" poems?

1	2	3	4

Never   Once in   Fairly   Frequently
     a while   often

Comments:

(2) Interviews

        I arranged three times of formal one-on-one interviews (digitally recorded and

transcribed later) with each of the student participants. I asked the participants'

permission every time before I recorded the interview content. Each interview was about

30-60 minutes held in a mutually agreed upon, quiet campus corner. The first interview

took place in early September 2010. I looked over their survey responses and asked

questions in order to gain in-depth understanding of and comments about their past

experience of poetry writing, reading and teaching. I was also probing their reasons for

taking this course and what they expected to learn from this course. The second

interview took place in middle November 2010. Based on my observations in class and

some of the tentative findings from their writings and artifacts, I asked questions to get a

deeper understanding of their attitudes toward poetry writing, reading and teaching and

the impact of this course had had on them so far. The follow up interview took place in

February 2011, two months after the course finished. It was meant to investigate the

continuum of impact of this course on their lives. I was curious to know if they still write and read poetry and digital poetry and how had this course influenced their poetry teaching and beliefs. The interview questions are attached (Appendix F) .

During each audio taped interview, the research participants were asked to talk about their attitudes, feelings and experience with poetry learning (past and current; in or out of the class). The goals of the three interviews were to "uncover the meaning structures that participants use to organize their experiences and make sense of their worlds (Hatch, 2002, p.91). In this study, "their worlds" were their experiences with poetry learning.

(3) Informal, Ongoing Communications

Besides the formal interviews, I also kept records of our informal communications (informal interviews) in class and out of class while asking questions, chatting, sharing experience, etc in a natural setting. I had many times of informal, ongoing communications with students and the instructor, either verbally or electronically: I saved or took notes of the constant contact I had with them and the conversation in person or via email. The communications with the participants provided me different perspectives of the stories and events that happened in class and helped me gain a more thorough understanding of the case.

(4) Artifacts, Projects, and Freewritings

In addition, students' free writings, drafts of writing, teaching projects, digital poetry assignments, final synthesis portfolios and any other writing pieces and artifacts done for this class were collected and analyzed. Students were asked to hand in the hardcopy of their assignments and also submit them on the Blackboard. I was able to get

their writings and artifacts in both electronic file and hardcopy. Figure 3.3 illustrates the

numbers of each item of artifacts collected.

Figure 3.3 *Breakdown of Participants' Artifacts Collected*

Item	Number
Freewritings response to assigned readings	64
Written poems	70
Digital poems	21
Difficulty paper project	14
Teaching poetry project	6
Poetry demonstration	7
Final synthesis portfolio	6

(5) Class Recording and Photo Taking

As a participant observer, I participated in the class discussion and activities.

While engaging in the activities, I was not always able to take field notes. In order to

record each class moment, I set up a digital camera on a mini-tripod on the top of a

desktop computer to video the class. I also set up "Tegrity" in Blackboard to do the

screencast. Tegrity is a kind of software that records everything the computer user does

on the computer, including presentations, internet browsing and typing, playing music,

images, etc. I checked out the snowball (sensitive microphone), the digital camera, and

the mini-tripod from the Reflector (school technology department) every Wednesday and

set up Tegrity and the camera equipment before the class started. I downloaded the video after class and saved and dated each class recording. I watched the video and took notes at home. In the "writing group" time, the class was split into two groups and each group worked in a different corner of the lab. While I was working in one group, I was not able to observe the other group. It was not easy to capture the class moment in details, either. I then placed the camera in one group, which I was not with and placed an audio recorder in the group I was working with. This strategy worked very well. I was able to see what was going on in the other group by watching recorded video. Besides video recording, I also had my camera with me and took photos while students working in groups, discussion, doing poetry demonstration and sharing digital poetry. Taking photos functioned different from the video recording. It could highlight memorable moments. I always got permission from the participants before I recorded the class. They seemed very comfortable. My multiple methods in recording the class were intended to keep the authentic and memorable moments of the case when telling the stories.

(6) Teaching Journal

Field note observations of teachers, students, teacher-student interaction, student-student interactions were taken. I had my notebook with me and I jotted down my observations quickly in class. I often talked about my observation with the instructor, Dr. Fox, after class to get his opinions and perspectives about some events and the students' performance. I organized my notes, reflected on my observations and communication with the instructor and wrote the narrative and reflection in my journal every time I got home. There were fourteen journal entries collected in total. Figure 3.4 below illustrates the data collection specified for each preliminary question.

Figure 3.4 *Data Sources Used to Answer Each Research Question*

Research Question	Data Sources

<u>Main Question</u>
What happens when international and American students participate in poetry class?
	• 64 Freewriting response
	• 70 Written poems and reflections
	• 21 digital poems
	• Observations
	   14 observations in class
	   12 times of photo and video taken
	• 22 formal Interview
	• Informal interview and communication
	   50 email exchanges
	   20 notes on conversations outside of the class
	• Writing survey: 8 surveys
	• Poetry demonstration Power Point files: 7 files
	• 7 teaching projects
	• 6 final synthesis portfolios
	• 14 Teaching journal entries

Sub- Questions:
(1) Poetry Reading and Writing
   • What are international and American students' experiences with and attitudes toward poetry reading and writing when beginning and completing the course?
 	
   • What happens when international and American students work with peer response?
	• Freewriting response
	• Written poems and reflections
	• Observation notes
	• Teaching journal entries
	• Recorded class discussion and activities
	• Informal interview and communications
	• Interviews
	• Writing survey
	• Teaching project
	• Final synthesis portfolios

(2) Poetry and Media • What are international and American students' experiences and attitudes toward	• Freewriting response • Digital poems and reflections • Observation notes

digital poetry? • What happens when international and American students compose digital poetry?	• Teaching journal entries • Recorded class discussion and activities • Informal interviews and communications • Interviews • Writing survey • Teaching project • Final synthesis portfolios
(3) Poetry and Second Language Acquisition (SLA) • What are the influences of poetry writing and reading on international students' learning of English? • What are the influences of digital poetry composing on international students' English learning?	• Freewriting response • Digital poems and reflections • Observation notes • Teaching journal entries • Recorded class discussion and activities • Informal interviews and communications • Interviews • Teaching project • Final synthesis portfolios

Data Analysis

The analysis was followed step by step according to the approaches to inquiry in Creswell's (2007) "*Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*":

1. Description of the case and its setting: If there is a chronology of events, the evidence will be detected. I was also determined to see how the case or incident fits into the larger situation.

2. As for the approaches to analysis and interpretation, I used (a) categorical aggregation: the researcher collects instances from the data to look for issue-relevant meanings and (b) direct interpretation: the researcher looks at a single instance and draws meaning from it (Creswell, 2007, p. 163).

I started my initial analysis as soon as I began collecting data. The information I gathered, the insight I gained throughout the time confirmed my or disconfirmed my assumptions about this case and some hypotheses I had made. Some initial preparations of the data analysis included consulting with my advisor, reading research books and reading related research. I read through the data many times, got ideas on coding and found the patterns of the information. I was able to categorize data into different themes.

The in-depth data analysis began while writing this research. The transcripts of the interviews, freewritings, poems, digital poems, observation of the class and emails were selected, read and coded. I followed the coding steps and suggestions from Creswell (2007) in analyzing transcripts. I first looked at a single instance and drew meaning from it as direct interpretation. I also investigated if there was a chronology of events for each step of my research. I determined if the incident that happened to individuals or the class fit into the larger situation. I also collected instances from the data to look for issue relevant meanings. Figure 3. 5 illustrates the coding of the data.

Figure 3.5 *Coding of the Data*

Code	Explanation	Examples
EP/P	Experience of poetry	• Past experience in reading and writing • Reading and writing experience in this course
EP/DP	Experience of digital poetry	• Past experience is composing digital poetry • Experience of composing digital poetry in this course
ATT/P	Attitude of poetry	• Attitude toward poetry reading and writing before this class

		• Attitude toward poetry during and after this course
ATT/DP	Attitude of digital poetry	• Attitude toward digital poetry before this class • Attitude toward digital poetry during and after this course
PR	Peer Response	• Feelings of being in writing group • Feelings of suggestions the group made • Thoughts about the peer's interaction
Diff/P	Difficulties in poetry reading and writing	• Difficulties in demystify poems • Difficulty in expressing ideas
Diff/DP	Difficulties in composing digital poetry	• Difficulties in combining images/visual elements • Difficulties in combining music/audio element
SLA	Second language acquisition	• Grammar improvement • Word choice • Generating ideas • Poetry device • Writing rhetoric • Analytical/academic writing
T/C	The instructor's comments	• The instructor's comments on written poems • The instructor's comments on digital poetry
W/H	Writing as Healing	• Using poetry to cope with painful history or events • Using poetry to release stress
RR	Reader Response	• Connecting the poetry to their own lives • Finding personal meaning

As for the methods of doing analysis and interpretation, I also followed Creswell's (2007) approaches, naturalistic generalizations: I noted what could be learned from individuals or a larger population from the case. For example, what could I learn from Hung as an individual and as one of the international students? The goal of this analysis was to find the essence of the poetry learning experience based on the interviews and students' works. Hopefully, I could unveil the thinking, learning, writing process of students' poetry composing and infer better poetry teaching and learning practice in class. The analysis had been aimed to reach the purpose of the study: to discover the impact of poetry learning on the participants, to record the participants' learning and thinking process, to infer the ideal poetry learning philosophy and to offer further suggestions for language arts educators.

Another Approach of Data Analysis for Teaching Practice

While collecting data, I worked as Dr. Jill Ostrow's research assistant and helped her teach in a classroom research for TESOL masters students. Besides adopting Creswell's data analysis approaches, I also watched a professor, Dr. Jill Ostrow's (2010) teaching video for the classroom research class and used the guidelines to plan my data analysis. This was for better class planning and teaching practice. Here are the three things I did to analyze my data: Each of them was explained in details as follows: (1) Do: what did I do with the data I collected and where did it lead me? (2) Interpretation: How did I interpret the data, what did it mean, what pattern have I noticed and how might I organize my thinking as I did my research? (3) Change: What have I learned from the

data analysis and have I made changes in my teaching, and how might I document those changes in my teaching? (Ostrow, 2010)

Step One: "Do"

I recalled my data collection procedure and the reason of adapting these approaches. I read and reread my collected data. I coded places where ideas impressed me and decided insights within them were worthy of becoming the themes. I pondered where the theme would lead me and generate my interpretation. As I have mentioned, I did the data analysis once the data collection started. What I did with the instructor about teaching influenced the outcome of the class. I interpreted the data gathered from each class for a better planning in the next class.

Step Two: "Interpretation"

Here, I list several examples what I did in data collection and how that led to my interpretations. According the writing surveys I collected on August 25th, I learned some of the students' backgrounds of learning poetry: their attitudes toward learning poetry, their poetry learning experience, thoughts about digital poetry, and their expectations about this class. All of the international students did not enjoy poetry when they were in their native countries, while two of the American students told me they enjoyed poetry in school. Some people tended to draw personal connections while reading poems while some people believed that understanding poems, and analyzing poems are important in teaching and learning poetry. Doing this writing survey led me to pay more attention to each individual's difference and to ask for clarification for our first interview that happened in September. I also wonder if they do not think ideas through before they talk or if they are not aware of what they really like and do not reflect deeply enough on their

own. For instance, In the interview with Tom on September 1, 2010, he said he expected

to learn how to hook students to learn poetry, but later he told me his teaching was

successful and he believed what he did was great.

Ning: What did you expect to learn from this class?

Tom: I have no expectations... (Silence)…ok, I want to know how to hook

students to learn poetry.

Ning: How did you teach poetry? What was your poetry class like?

Tom: My class started with introducing the poem's background and

history. Poetry craft is very important. I taught them meter, rhyme and the

structure…I gave tests and I made them memorize. I am big on

memorization. Straightforward…they took tests. It is very important to

teach students the craft, "the context" I want to emphasize again….And

my students loved it...

Ning: They loved it?

Tom: I knew they loved it.

(First Interview with Tom, September 1, 2010)

I questioned about what Tom said and I wondered if his students really enjoyed

this kind of teaching. I wish I could have had chances to interview his students. From

my first round of interviews with each of the participants, I noticed individual differences

and contradictions with what they did and what they said. I decided to look into their

writings for deeper understanding of their stories.

As I looked at their written poems, digital poems and reflections, I focused on

what creating the poem meant to them, what happened in the writing process, the impact

on their language learning and the psychological aspect. I paid attention to how they share and interact with the instructor and other students. I analyzed the meaning in the written text by coding and took the class observations as a reference in order to get the whole context. Fem shared her son's baby photos, Tom and Hung talked about their family issues after class, Dona shared her love stories … this class became a community where they developed trust and friendships.

Step Three: "Change"

Based on my interpretation of interview transcripts, I made some changes in class instruction after discussing with the main instructor, Dr. Fox. Here, I list an example of my interpretation and how that led to my teaching adjustment.

By October 2010, I noticed no participants tried to make digital poems. From the writing samples I collected and the class observation, I made some interpretation: Students did not have examples to follow; students felt unsafe about trying digital poems. I worried if they were not confident with trying this new genre.

After talking with the instructor, we decided to change the syllabus and arrange a class time (three hours) for them to try a digital poem. We set the topic of poem five as the memory poem and had them collect photos and music for their memory poem. On September 29, 2010, I modeled how to use the software, Photostory 3, step by step and had them work on their own in class. I walked around to offer help for their problems. This change worked very well. We had students share their poem 5 in the next class, and many of their works were so impressive.

I recorded each of the changes the instructor and I made in the class plans, I recorded how they worked, and I wrote my reflections about what I learned and what to do next in my field journals. In my teaching journal of September 29, 2010, I wrote:

> Today's class was so quiet because they were immersed in doing digital poems. I am glad we made this change. I learned that teacher modeling helps students to walk though the difficulties. If they are not willing to try new things, we as teachers should offer clear instructions in class and model how to do it step by step. Students will feel safe to try. (Teaching Journal, September 29, 2010)

Trustworthiness

My study strived for understanding the deep structure of knowledge that comes from the case study of the course in 2010, "Writing, Reading and Teaching Poetry." I personally engaged in the course, participated activities and spent extensive time in the field. It was meant to obtain detailed meanings. In other words, trustworthiness was achieved through prolonged engagement in the field and persistent observation, triangulation and thick description (Creswell, 2007).

Prolonged Engagement in the Field and Persistent Observations

This was one of the validation strategies mentioned by Ely et al., 1991; Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993; Glesne& Peshkin, 1992; Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1988.

Since my role in this research was a "participant observer" —I taught, I participated and I observed. I was able to meet with participants every Wednesday and build long-term relationships with them. I was familiar with the classroom culture, and I had been a friend with many of the students before the class began. Since I had a prolonged engagement in the field, I had chanced to build trust, learn the culture and check for misinformation with each participant.

Truth Value through Triangulation

According to Creswell (2007), "In triangulation, researchers make use of multiple and different sources, methods, investigators, and theories to provide corroborating evidence" (p. 208). In my study, multiple ways of collecting data strengthened the validation in order to obtain the truth-value through triangulation. : (a) I did three formal interviews and many informal interviews with each of the participants. I used the recorder to record each formal interview. I kept notes of each informal communication. Each interview and communication was saved and stored under a specific folder for each participant. Each folder was categorized and coded. (b) I also collected the participants' artifacts, writings and other assignments. I asked each participant to hand in the hardcopy of their assignments and also submit them to the Blackboard. I created one folder for collecting each assignment. I checked to see if they uploaded their works by the due date through the Blackboard evaluation system. If I did not see their assignment, I sent out a reminder. (c) I did the observations in class and kept them in my teaching journal. (d) I also collected the emails between the participants and me. (e) I took photos during the class and videotaped the class. Each file was

downloaded after class and stored in a specific coded folder. The number of interviews

and the multiple ways of collecting data provided multiple copies of one type of source.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) stress the need for credibility through triangulation:

Findings will be…more credible if the inquirer is able to demonstrate a

prolonged period of engagement to learn the context, to minimize

distortions, and to build trust, to provide evidence of persistent observation

for the sake of identifying and assessing salient factors and crucial atypical

happenings, and to triangulate, but using different sources. (p. 307)

With my prolonged period of engagement in the course and the multiple sources of data,

my study was able to maintain its trustworthiness.

Rich and Thick Description

Trustworthiness was also achieved through thick description. I tried my best to

describe each participant, event and setting in details that my readers might easily transfer

the information to other settings and to determine whether the information can be

transferred. Gaining the rich, thick description allows readers to make decisions

regarding transferability (Erlandson et al., 1993; Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Merriam,

1988).   Merriam (1988) described "thick" description as below:

Descriptive means that the end product of a case study is a rich, "thick"

description of the phenomenon under study. *Thick description* is a term from

anthropology and means the complete, literal description of the incident or entity

being investigated. Case studies include as many variables as possible and

portray their interaction, often over a period of time. ... the description is usually

110

qualitative—that is, instead of reporting findings in numerical data, case studies

use prose and literary techniques to describe, elicit images, and analyze situations.

(Merriam, 1988, p. 30-31)

Chapter Four is devoted to the detailed description of each participant's learning

experience, stories that happened within individuals and among the group. I emphasize

heavily the in-depth description and meaning of each event as well as the whole context.

I attempt to identify patterns and draw conclusions based on my data analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview of Methodology and Data Analysis Procedures

This study, Poetry, Media and Second Language Acquisition, is a qualitative study (Creswell 2007; Denzin and Lincoln 2000), and I used the combination of two approaches: the case study approach and phenomenology, which means describing the case (the class) and exploring the experiences of the participants. I collected data in a graduate level class, "Writing, Reading and Teaching Poetry" offered by the College of Education in a Midwestern university. I collected data from late August 2010 through February 2011. Eight students and their instructor participated in this study. Four

students are international students and the other four are American students. My role in this study was a "participant observer." I observed the classroom, participated in the classroom activities and discussions and interviewed students. I also did the assignments.

There are a variety of data sources, including: (1) the writing survey, (2) the interviews with students and the instructor, (3) informal communications with students and the instructor (4) the collection of participants' artifacts, projects, writing samples and emails exchange, (5) audio and video recording the class, (6) photo taking, and (7) my teaching journal. I began analyzing data by immersing myself in reading the data over and over. I gained impressions from what I read, and I coded places where interpretations are supported. I followed Creswell's (2007) and Ostrow's (2010) data analysis procedures. I examined my codes and the corresponding contents and drew major themes from them. In the following section, I discuss the findings of this research. I first review the main question and the three categories of sub-questions followed by detailed findings and analysis.

Overview of Findings

The main question throughout this study was "What happens when international and American graduate students participate in a poetry class?" The first category of sub-questions is associated with poetry reading and writing. In this category, this study asks:

- What are international and American students' experiences with and attitudes toward poetry reading and writing when beginning and completing the course?

- What happens when international students and American students work in peer response group?

In general, the majority of students experienced attitude changes, especially for international students. At the beginning of this course, they were filled with anxiety toward poetry. The reason was the unpleasant past experiences and unfamiliarly with this genre. Interestingly, most students experienced attitude changes toward poetry upon completing this course, and this poetry course also influenced their teaching beliefs. Overall, students enjoyed working in small groups. "Writing Group" was regarded as one of their favorite classroom activities. Also, students claimed they benefited from the comments and suggestions made by peers. Most students felt the atmosphere in the peer response group was warm and comfortable.

The second category of sub-questions is associated with poetry and media (technology and multimodality). In this category, this study asks:

- What are international and American students' experiences with and attitudes toward digital poetry?

- What happens when international and American students are composing digital poetry?

Most participants told me that they enjoyed doing digital poetry and they would like to teach their students digital poetry some day. Surprisingly, an American student, Tom, who was originally cynical about the "new literacy" of incorporating images and music with poetry had a great attitude change. He admitted he was intrigued by this new mode while taking this course. He believed images and music would limit poetry before he took this course, however; after trying to do some digital poems on his own, he changed his thoughts. He even claimed that he was "hooked" by digital poetry. He then

114

composed several digital poems and has shared with many people. Digital poetry charmed him and influenced his teaching beliefs. He also plans to include digital poetry in his own class in the future. In this section, I illustrate the participants' digital poetry journey. I analyze some students' works and add their voices in the narrative.

The third category of sub-questions is associated with poetry and second language acquisition (SLA). In this category, this study asks:

- What are the influences of poetry reading and writing on international students' learning of English?

- What are the influences of digital poetry composing on international students' English learning?

In the interview conversations, most of the international students told me that they learned English through reading and writing poetry. They have learned better word choices, new vocabulary, correct grammar, accurate pronunciation, poetry devices and some writing skills. Some claimed that the integration of images and music is so fascinating that they wanted to keep exploring. I found they were much motivated and engaged in English learning while doing digital poetry. I noticed some of their language improvement after carefully analyzing their written text and digital works.

For all of my research questions, I focus mainly on three international students, including Hung, Fem, and David. I also embed the voices of other students who support the assertions found in this section. I illustrate the findings by describing each focused participant in the study separately. I analyze each student's selected artifacts, interview transcripts, my observations, teaching journal and the instructor's comments to present

their personal narratives. Eventually, I weave the whole story together by pulling different personal narratives together.

To help the reader keep track of the participants in this study, the following description includes each one's background. I gave the participants pseudonyms to protect their privacy. I only used the instructor's and my real name in this study.

- Hung: A 31-year-old male participant from Southeast Asia. He is a second year PhD student in English Education. He taught English in college in his home country and he got his master's degree in Australia. He is single.

- Fem: A 32-year-old female participant from the Middle East. She is a second year PhD student in English Education. She teaches in the TESOL program of a Midwestern college. She is married and has a five-year-old son.

- Kim: A female participant around 40 years old from Northeast Asia. She is a graduate student in English education. She teaches her native language to undergraduates in a Midwestern college. She is single.

- David: A 27-year-old male participant from the Middle East. He is a master's student at a big university. He dropped the class after the first class meeting. I then worked with him individually.

- Tom: A 58-year-old male participant from a southern state in America. He used to be a musician and changed his career to become a high school English teacher. He taught high school English for ten years before

entering the doctoral program. He is married and has one son and one daughter.

- Willy: A 23-year-old male American. He is from a big city in a Midwestern state. He is a first year English teacher in a public high school. He is single.

- Helen: A 23-year-old female American. She is from a big city in a Midwestern state. She is a first year English teacher in a public middle school. She is single.

- Dona: A 23-year-old female American. She is from a small town in a Midwestern state. She is a first year English teacher in a public middle school. She is single.

- Dr. Fox: The instructor of this course.

- Ning: The author of the dissertation.

Below I list tables of the time and date I recorded each of the poetry experiments and the class routine.

Figure 4.1. *Poetry Experiment and Date*

Poem 1	August 25th, 2010 Magazine Poem
Poem 2	September 1st, 2010 Poems about boring information
Poem 3	September 8th, 2010 Silent Walk Poem

Poem 4	September 15th, 2010 List Poem
Poem 5	September 22nd, 29th 2010 Memory Poem (Digital Poetry)
Poem 6	October 6th, 2010 Poem inspired by Theodore Roethke
Poem 7	October 20th, 2010 Side Effects May Include…
Poem 8	October 27th, 2010 Poem 8: Free Topic
Poem 9	November 3rd, 2010 Poem 9: Dialogue Poem
Poem 10	December 1st, 2010 Make Mundane Poem/Make the ugly beautiful

Figure 4.2 *Class Routines*

1	Freewrite to respond to the assigned reading
2	Reading discussion
3	Poetry demonstration
4	Poetry experiment introduction
5	Writing Group

Cases Highlighted

In this section, I tell the story of the following participants: Hung, Fem and David as they showed more significant changes (attitude change toward poetry, digital poetry and language learning) in this study. Each case opens with a poem I wrote according to

118

the impressions they left on me and my interpretations of their stories. Some further context regarding the participants and their background are also discussed which will help readers frame these findings.

Case one: Hung

Hung

Pencils write on the page

Leaves write on the wind

He writes on his memory

A Red River dream

Poetry

Empowers his imagination

Turns sorrows to memories

Reminds him where he belongs

Hung, from Southeast Asia, is a doctoral student in English Education. He took this course because he majors in English Education and he is in the program that requires English Ed. Courses. "Writing, Reading and Teaching Poetry" is what he needed to take to fulfill the requirement. The instructor is his advisor, and he also hoped to take more of his advisor's classes. Besides, Hung thought he needed to challenge himself to learn a difficult genre. He admitted in the first interview that he did not like poetry and did not know much about it. He viewed poetry as a difficult subject and he thought only few people could understand poetry. Before taking this class, he did not read poetry and write poetry and he believed poetry belongs to a group of *elite* in a different world where common people can hardly get into.

Poetry is not something people can understand. <u>Poets live in a different world</u>. <u>They are a group of elite with special talents.</u> English poetry is different from poetry in my native language. It is much more difficult. But I think every genre has its own beauty. I assume poetry has its own attraction. I want to learn how to understand poetry and something behind it. I want to see what is that world about. (First interview with Hung, September 2, 2010)

Hung's past experience with poetry was *awkward*. He learned poems in his native language when he was in middle school and high school. He was asked to follow teachers' *prescribing ways* to approach poetry. Teachers assigned poems for them to read followed by analysis, memorization and then a test. Hung thought the reason of this approach was because the teacher did not know how to teach poetry either. Teachers followed some teaching patterns designed by others. Apparently, Hung did not enjoy poetry at that time. Poetry was taught for testing.

Ning: Did you learn poetry before?

Hung: A lot in my native language. A few in English when I was in college.

Ning: Could you talk about your poetry learning experience?

Hung: My past poetry learning experience was very *awkward*. Teachers had *prescribing ways* to teach poetry.

Ning: What are *prescribing ways*?

Hung: I mean every teacher taught in the same way. They asked us to
read, analyze, underline some words, memorize – they said that was
"learn by heart," and then they gave tests to see if we understood. We
were supposed to understand the author's intentions of writing poems;
understand why they used those words; understand some words' hidden
meanings. Teachers provided answer keys. It was very _weird._ But I
knew it is really hard to understand the <u>right meaning</u> the author implies
in the poem. Teachers or others designed some patterns for us to analyze
the poems. Or I can say it is easy for teachers to teach since maybe they
themselves didn't understand those poems either. They asked us to
memorize the answers for tests. Teachers taught for tests and we studied
for tests. If we had some different ideas about that poem, we were not
allowed to say. Our ideas wouldn't be <u>right.</u> In order to get a good score,
we followed the <u>right answers</u>. (First interview with Hung, September 2,
2010)

It was funny to hear Hung say that memorization was called "learn by heart" in
his school. I wonder how poems can touch our hearts if we only read them for taking
tests. He mentioned "right answer" and "right meaning," and pursuing the right answers
was the goal of learning poetry in school. He was not allowed to read poems of his
choice. His teachers assigned poems for them to read. The restriction killed his interests
in learning poetry. Hung said, "Most poems I read slip away after taking exams. I hardly
can remember them now." When Hung went to college, he had chances to read English
poems but the experience was not pleasant, either.

Hung: I first learned English poetry when I was in college. We even had a dictation competition.   Teachers read a poem to us, and we had to write down what we heard. We memorized poems. I can still memorize "The World is a Stage" by Shakespeare.

Ning: Were you able to choose what poems you wanted to read?

Hung: No.. No..No.. It's impossible. We didn't have choices to read what we want to read. The school curriculum was already set. Teachers followed the school curriculum and we followed teachers' plan. I knew they didn't have choices to teach what they wanted to teach. (First Interview with Hung, September 2, 2010)

Hung said his difficulties in reading poetry are "vocabulary" and "unfamiliarity with western cultures." These seem to be the common difficulties for international students. Not growing up in the western culture, it is not easy to understand the context of the poem. When asking Hung about his difficulties in writing poetry, he talked about the use of right words and some poetry devices. In the first interview with him, he showed his concerns about his unfamiliarity of "beautiful words with special meaning." He said, "When writing poetry, we need to use beautiful, special and meaningful words. I know the words in poems are different from the words we use in conversations. Anyway, I know it is very difficult for normal people." (First Interview with Hung, September 2, 2010)

Hung's past learning experience influenced his attitudes toward poetry. He distinguished poets from normal people. He said, "Words in poems are different from

those in conversation." He adopted "two-valued orientation" when looking at the language and differentiated words as "conversation words (normal)" and "poetry words (beautiful)." According to Hayakawa (1990), people tend to think in opposites and ignore the area in-between. Hung thought that it is essential for poetry to rhyme since that was what he was taught in his native country. However, it is not easy to find the right words to rhyme, which can express his true feelings. He took the use of rhyme as one of the hurdles of writing poetry.

> Ning: What difficulties do you have when writing poetry?

> Hung: Still vocabulary. It is hard to express what I wanted to say with the right words. I need to think of some beautiful, special and meaningful words in poems. I know the words in poems are different from the words we use in conversations. And also … like sometimes I have ideas about what I want to write in the poem but I got stuck in the rhyme. It takes time to make the poem rhyme well.

> Ning: So, you think poems need to rhyme?

> Hung: Yeah.. Yeah…Sure. Good poetry needs to rhyme. But freewriting doesn't need to rhyme. Poetry is not like freewriting. Of course, good poetry needs to rhyme. It is necessary….

> Ning: What makes you think poems need to rhyme? Did you learn that in school?

Hung: Maybe I was influenced by my past teachers. Um… I am not sure!
Most of the poems we read in school were in rhyme. And we studied how
they rhyme. Like AABBC or 6868. Something like that…So I guess that
makes me think good poetry must have some structures and rhyme in the
right way. So when I compose poetry, I need to look for my already
limited vocabulary bank in my head and find one word to rhyme. Most of
the time, I need to spend time looking up at the dictionary, search some
good words. … Writing a poem takes a lot of time. (First interview with
Hung, September 2, 2010)

Hung tended to over generalize poems and poets. He said, "Good poetry needs to
rhyme." and refrained from other possibilities. In fact, many effective poems do not
rhyme and do not follow the rules. Hung seemed to extend one principle, one thought or
feeling to all areas, which means he tended to apply the "allness orientation" (Hayakawa,
1990) when talking about poetry.

In Sum, Hung's past experience influenced his attitude toward poetry. Before
taking this class, he tended to apply the "allness orientation" and the " two-valued
orientation" to interpret poetry. He thought that *good* poetry needs to rhyme, poetry
needs to follow certain formats and structures, poetry is hard to approach, and poetry is
for few artistic people. The difficulties he had about reading and writing poetry leaning
were "vocabulary," and "cultures context" within the poems. He enrolled this class
because it could fulfill the requirements in his academic program. He thought poetry was
a very difficult genre, but he needed to challenge himself to learn it.

Hung's Selected Poems and Analysis

In this section, I describe Hung's poetry learning in this course by highlighting some of his poems. I analyze some of his poems, and I embed the conversations between him and me in interviews and the recorded class conversation where the readers will see his learning experience in this course.

(1) Poem One: Magazine Poem

The first experiment was the Magazine Poem. The instructor and I cut words from magazines, brochures and fliers and spread those words all around the table. Students could pick up any words they liked and arrange them into a found poem. Each student got a poster. And we provided some glues and tapes for them to attach the words. There were no certain rules and no restrictions for this activity. I noticed some students chatted about school while composing their poems (Dona, Helen and Willy) and some students chatted about their summer vacation (Fem, Kim and Tom). Dr. Fox also participated in this activity: he joined some others' conversations while creating his poem. The atmosphere was relaxing and friendly. After 30 minutes, we took turns to read aloud our poems and some thoughts about this activity. (I also participated in this project. I made my magazine poem and shared it in the group.) Figure 4.3 shows Hung's Magazine Poem.

Figure 4.3 *Hung's Magazine Poem*

Typed Version:

You question what are dreams?

Something dazzling you believe?

The most expensive tales

Which make me strong and positive

Music, water and light

They color my life

They open my eyes

It's the luxury I can afford

In the sharing time, Hung told the class, "It was really fun. I didn't know composing poems could be this fun. Just put some words together? Unbelievable. And there were no rules to follow? I enjoyed it a lot." For the homework of that week, students were required to respond to two to three colleagues' poems on Voicethread. I took photos of

each poem and upload them on the Voicethread (An online program where people can record, type and write to respond to others) Here is the link:

http://voicethread.com/?#u1043822.b1283967.i6886786

In the response to Dona's magazine poem, Hung stated that he found a way to claim his identify.

> This poem makes me think of my root where I was born and brought up during the very first day of my toddler's life. It reminds me of horrible pain my dad once suffered after having been diagnosed with a chronic illness. It makes me think of days that I've been through and that I am living. I emerged from a stormy childhood; and in this poem – I found a right way to claim my identify. I think of potential power I might keep inside, waiting time to be unleashed and enshrined. This poem really pushes me to find images of meaningful things in life; and if I fail to find some, I should create it. I am painting a picture of me. (Response on Voicethread, September 2, 2010)

Below is Dona's poem (Typed from the magazine poem)

A Civil Tongue

Why be afraid in life?

What other days should you keep

Once you cope

You're plainly feel pain

127

Built every possible root

Collect any image

There is a power in you

Our story deserves a crowd

Do it sooner

Do it today

The Magazine Poem was the first poem he composed in this class. Hung was able to create his own meaning when encountering Dona's words. He brought in his background and personal thoughts. Reader- response is the first step to lead the students to the literature. According to Rosenblatt (1938), "The reader interprets the book or poem in terms of his fund of past experiences" (p. 107). Hung transacted with Dona's poem in terms of his past experience and constructed his own meaning.

I also participated in responding others' poems on Voicethread. I wrote a poem to respond to the instructor's poem and made a poem for two voices. Hung imitated this approach and jumped in to make it a poem for three voices. Hung has the ability to imitate and learn things fast. I was glad to see this outcome. Hung said it was his first time to see this format (poems in different voices). I typed the poem for three voices below in Figure 4.4. A poem for three voices is a poem performed by three people. People reading the poem read the text in their column. People take turns reading. The poem is read from left to right and top to down. When they see their words in the same line, they read the word together. The poem often sounds like a dialogue between three people.

In this poem, the first column (The instructor's poem) stands on its own and makes sense as an individual poem when it was first created (see the Figure 4.5 below) When my poem (the second column) was added, it formed a dialogue between him and me. Hung then added his column and formed a poem for three voices. This poem for three voices should be read together top to down and left to right by three people line by line starting from the instructor's part and followed by my part and then Hung's. For example, the instructor starts by saying, "Wrap school in a box," then I say " Free minds outside" and Hung continues reading "Idea unleashed" and the poem goes on to the bottom line with three people saying their words together. The instructor's magazine poem could be interpreted as various ways. It might be just the instructor's ideas about school and teaching. When my column and Hung's were added, it formed a conversation about ideal schooling, teaching beliefs with different people's opinions.

Figure 4.4 *Poem for Three Voices*

The instructor's typed poem	My response	Hung's response
Wrap school in a box		
	Free minds outside	
		Idea unleashed
Get out		
	Dive in	
		Upbeat mood
Uncork fitness		
	Loose bottom lines	
		Shoot a heavy ball
Save style		

	Let things drift	
		Police called
Promise ribbon		
	I wonder if there is one	
		No one witnessed
Beyond light	what to expect?	Crippled

Figure 4.5 *The Instructor's Magazine Poem*

Image of the Instructor's Magazine Poem	Typed Poem
	Wrap School in a box Get Out Uncork Fitness Save Style Promise Ribbon Beyond Light

Hung is a smart and quick learner. From poem one, I could feel his boldness to play with language and try different forms of poems. It meant not only this poem's content was enriched, but also Hung's poetry learning was enriched. Hung learned a new form of poetry.

(2) Poem Three: Silent Walk Poem

In poem three, students were required to take a 15 minute silent walk and write down words which came to their minds. After the walk, they needed to contribute 15 words to the wiki word pool I created on the Blackboard and to choose words from that word pool to compose a poem. Figure 4.6 shows Hung's different drafts of poem three. Hung shared his first draft in the next class meeting, and he did some revision after getting peer's feedback and comments. Hung talked about what he learned from doing poem three in the interview:

> Hung: I loved poem three, and I think I will use it in my class. I learned that we
> need to pay attention to things around us in our daily life. <u>Poetry is everywhere. I</u>
> <u>learn to see things differently.</u> I learned what words can do: for example, I
> changed "unhappy leaf" to "solitary leaf" and " bubbles cry" to "bubbles sigh".
> A different word changes the whole meaning.
>
> Ning: Why did you make those changes?
>
> Hung: My group members gave me some suggestions and Dr. Fox also made
> some comments on my poem. (Second Interview with Hung, November 2, 2010)

Figure 4.6 *Hung's Drafts of Poem 3*

First Draft	Final Draft
Torn leaf	Torn leaf
Lies alone on cement sidewalk	Lies alone on cement sidewalk
Giggles in breeze	Giggles in breeze
Trembles when bicycles pass	Trembles when bicycles pass
Lights come and vanish	Lights come and vanish
No one cares the unhappy leaf	**No one cares for solitary leaf**
Crippled guy	Crippled guy
Strolls heavily on concrete path	**Trudges heavily on the concrete path**
Cotton flakes plummet	**Cotton flakes are plummeting**
Stabbing blows whistle	**Stabbing blows are whistling**
Hunger creeps	**Hunger creeps as the man is staggering**
Steps sluggish	**Shadow falls in distance lights**
Shadow falls in distance lights	**While traffic is rushing into blizzard Christmas night**
Traffic rush to frozen Christmas night	Ominous quietness
Ominous quietness	Lights dance and wind annoys
Lights dance and wind annoys	**Bubbles sigh**
Bubbles cry	**Their lonesome burst**
The lonesome bursts	

Hung also altered some grammatical structures in the final draft. For example, he changed "care" to "care for," and "the lonesome bursts" to "their lonesome burst." In the poem three experiment, Hung showed some language improvement and experienced finding poetry in daily life. In his talking, I noticed the assigned reading and classroom discussion influenced his thoughts. He said, "I can find poetry everywhere." This is actually the title of Atwell's (1998) article "Finding Poetry Everywhere" from *In the Middle.* In his poem three, he described what he saw, what he heard and what he felt during the 15 minute walk, he used objects such as "leaf," "sidewalk," "traffic," "bicycles," "path," "guy," "lights," etc in his poem. This experience let him realize that poetry is not a different world; poetry is around people and he can find it everywhere even when we are walking. In the first interview with him, he said, "We need to use beautiful, special and meaningful words in poems which are very different from the words we use in conversations." However, he experienced using simple words from magazines, during his walk to create a poem, which was much different from his understanding. Hung also claimed that he started to see things differently. He became more observant. Before, he did not pay much attention to mundane things in his life; after a few poetry experiments, he was inspired to observe objectives around him more carefully. When the semester started, he thought "Poetry is very difficult" but after magazine poem experiment, he told the class "It is so fun, I never know writing poetry can be this fun." This was a turn-around attitude toward poetry.

(3) Poem Ten: Make Ugly Beautiful

In poem ten, students were encouraged to compose a poem to turn something ugly to beautiful. Hung composed a poem about his best friend's death titled "If." The

highlighted text presents "parallelism" and "repetition." Each stanza has four lines in the same pattern. In the first three stanzas, each line starts with the same word(s): "If only," "Enough to," "And to," and "To." The underlined text presented "imagery," for example, "hold his tiny hands," "join his games with his Teddy Bear," "teach him guitar basic," "pull him closer," and "dissolve into darkness."

If

If only I could stay for one more year
Enough to hold his tiny hands
And to look into his (big fledging eyes)
To feel his joys of becoming a first grader

If only my heart could squeeze a bit harder
Enough to wake up my brain
And to give me enough courage and strength
To join his games with his Teddy Bear

If only I could have bullet-proof skin
Enough to resist chemotherapy
And to teach him guitar basics
To pull him closer before I go

If my only wish were granted by God
Of not dissolving into darkness
To have my soul be felt and my voice be heard
And not to be forgotten about who I am

In addition, Hung physically played with the look of the poem: the first stanza and third stanza align to the left and the second stanza and fourth stanza align to the right. He created an interesting format different from the poems we usually see. The visual text looked like a back-and-forth conversation and read like an internal dialogue with self. Doing this is good for a language learner since that showed his boldness and creativity—manipulating the text and creating a new form. In this poem, Hung also showed his language improvement. He altered the syntax and mechanics after getting the writing group's suggestions. He changed "stayed one more year" to "stay for one more year;" "teddy bear" to "his Teddy Bear." Readers can also see some words, which do not make sense, such as "fledgling eyes." In the writing group conversation below, readers can see Dona and Tom tried to help Hung find a better word to express himself. I still did not understand what Hung tried to say about the son's eyes. " Fledgling" is not an appropriate word to describe eyes. Maybe there were some misunderstandings among them. It showed that confusions could slip no matter how hard we try.

Dona: What is " fledging eyes"? What are you trying to say?

Hung: um…. I mean his eyes are big, vivid and bright.

Tom: Do you mean, "fledgling"?

Hung: um…. How do you spell " fledgling"?

Tom: F-L-E-D-G-L-I-N-G

Tom: And you need to put a "for" after stay. Stay for one more year.

Hung: Yes, that's right.

Tom: You may want to capitalize T and B in teddy bear.

Dona: Or just say "his Teddy Bear"

Tom: Right. Right. Thank you. (Writing Group Conversation, December 10, 2010)

Figure 4.7 Language *Improvements in " If "*

Excerpt from Draft 1	Excerpt from Final Draft
If only I could ***stay one more year***	If only I could ***stay for one more year***
Enough to hold his tiny hands	Enough to hold his tiny hands
And to look into his big fleging eyes	And to look into his big fledgling eyes
To feel his joys of becoming a first grader	To feel his joys of becoming a first grader
If only my heart could squeeze a bit harder	If only my heart could squeeze a bit harder
Enough to wake up my brain	Enough to wake up my brain
And to give me enough courage and strength	And to give me enough courage and strength
To join his games with ***teddy bear***	To join his games with ***his Teddy Bear***

This poem was written in his best friend's perspective. Hung established connection with the dead friend and discovered another side of the story between his friend and the son. Through writing, Hung walked into the tragedy and empowered the dead friend and gave him a voice. Hung said what his friend would do; Hung did what his friend would say in poetry. Although the writing process is painful, writing itself

resulted in the recovery of what had been lost. It created the "wholeness." Hung was

also able to find another meaning of this tragedy and changed his relationships with the

trauma. Death used to be ugly and terrifying for Hung, but he thought his death

differently in writing this poem. He said his best friend left him some beautiful memories

and hopes. In the writing group, Hung told us:

> My best friend is gone. I wrote this poem to tell him we miss him and we
>
> will never forget him. I can feel his spirit is always with us. When I see
>
> his son's face, I think of him. I wrote a poem for him last semester for the
>
> Writing as Healing class. I wrote in my perspective. This time, I wrote in
>
> a different perspective— in his voice. I imagine we have a dialogue,
>
> which might bring him to life. Yes, writing helps me heal the pain of
>
> losing someone I love. I choose to write this for this assignment " make
>
> ugly beautiful" since I don't see his death as an ugly thing with only pain.
>
> He has become our beautiful memory. His son is a new him. He is still
>
> with me. (Writing Group Discussion, December 1, 2010)

Hung took a course "Writing as Healing" in the spring 2010 semester (I also took

that class), and I was in the same writing group with Hung and he composed some work

about his friend (who was suffering from cancer and died during the semester). Hung's

thinking was influenced by the previous learning experience. He continued to use writing

to cope with his pain. In the "Writing as Healing" course we had similar class routines

like this poetry course. The assigned readings and reading discussion had an impact on

students' thinking and writing. Hung composed this poem to memorialize his best friend.

As he said his best friend's son is the hope he remained in the world, Hung refused to

extend the negative feelings to all of his life (allness orientation). He has shifted his perspectives of death: He sees the little boy the best gift his friend left in the world. His friend's death is not the end and his son is the hope.

The experience of writing this poem "If" involved Hung's imagination and flexible thinking. He was able to change points of view, create scenes, and analyze cause and effect, which are what an effective writer and language learner needs to do.

(4) Poetry Demonstration:

As one of the class requirements, each student needed to sign up a date for a poetry demonstration. Each of them needed to prepare a Power Point presentation to show the class how one of their poems had grown and changed through several revisions. They also needed to offer reflections on the process. For this assignment, Hung composed a poem titled "Where I belong." In his presentation, Hung reported that this poem represented his self-identity. He started this poem from a poem template, "Where I'm From" by George Ella Lyon, a recipe which many teachers have used and which we avoided in this poetry class. His first draft was composed in summer 2010 when he participated in a writing project institute. In the figure below, the reader can see the recipe Hung used and his first draft. Each stanza starts with "I am from" and followed by another sentence starting with "from." This recipe is very structured with directions for writers to follow. It is forced and restricted. Adopting this recipe may constrain students' writing, thinking and learning.

Figure 4. 8 *The template and Hung's first draft of " Where I belong"*

The WHERE I'M FROM Template	Hung's Draft one (Wrote in 2010 summer)
I am from _____ (specific ordinary item), from _____ (product name) and _____.	I am from the wavy windy lake From plain black pencil, and crunchy nut cake.
I am from the _____ (home description... adjective, adjective, sensory detail).	I am from green, gold and winding rice terrace. From pinky roaring river And gray dandelion
I am from the _____ (plant, flower, natural item), the _____ (plant, flower, natural detail)	I am from tiring Oak book case Overflown with comics and classics From Greek epics, And fables magically demystified by grandma From melodious lullaby in stuffy summer nap
I am from _____ (family tradition) and _____ (family trait), from _____ (name of family member) and _____ (another family name) and _____ (family name).	I am from nightlong tales Told by mom
I am from the _____ (description of family tendency) and _____ (another one).	I am from green hill Running leisurely down To touch the Red river's lips And show his boiling pristine love
From _____ (something you were told as a child) and _____ (another).	
I'm from _____ (place of birth and family ancestry), _____ (two food items representing your family).	I am from group of gangsters Fight in Mid-autumn festival From giant flowing lantern Shining in the night sky

139

For the poetry demonstration, he changed the last stanza in the final draft, creating

something different from the template. The figure below showed the difference he made.

Figure 4.9 *Different drafts of Hung's Poem "Where I Belong "*

Last stanza of first draft	Last stanza of Final Draft
I am from group of gangsters Fight in Mid-autumn festival From giant flowing lantern Shining in the night sky	I am from echoes of my childhood **Sweet and loud that wake me up** **And lead me to where I belong**

Hung also turned this written poem into a digital poem with unique music and images.

He used some photos of his home country from the Internet, such as "Red River," rice

terrace, green hill, and some nature scenes. He also added a Vietnamese song (Que

Huong -Hometown by Tran Manh Tuan, 2003) in this video. The exotic music and

images effectively transformed his poem. Figure 4.10 shows some photos he used in the

video.

Figure 4.10 *Selected images in Huang's video "Where I Belong"*

Hung's written text looked very much like others' "I am from" poems." I have read many people's "I am from" poem and feel they are almost the same. My first reaction of a "I am From" poem is "Everybody is from George Ella Lyon." Under this format, it cannot arouse special emotions in readers. Yet, the music and images Hung used made this poem somewhat different and unique. Hung used the images to enhance the poem's meaning as he said his poem became "more special." Huang's images, texts and music gave the reader a different sensational experience. His poem was luckily not taken as another boring poem. In my second interview with Hung, he talked about the meaning of creating this digital work. Hung thinks this work represents who he is. He was proud to share things from his country with others. He thought the images showed more than what he could say and the use of image and music enhanced his writing. In other words, his language was somewhat limited, and he could not convey what he really wanted to say and the images could fill the gap.

> Hung: Images showed more than what I can say in the written texts. Those
> images enhanced the meaning of my words. I like images and I think
> readers like to see how those things I mentioned in my poem, such as,
> moon cake, and red river…I felt great to show people something from my
> home country. They will know more about me.

Ning: Could you talk about the composing process, did the poem come first or images come first?

Hung: <u>I wrote the poem first and I found the meaning is not strong enough. I mean maybe my language is not that vivid so I thought I could add some images to show what I meant.</u>

Ning: What does this poem mean to you?

Hung: It represents who I am, I am proud of where I am from. It is more special than the written poem. (Second interview with Hung, November 4, 2010)

Hung's Attitude Change

Hung used to think poetry was difficult; poems needed to rhyme and poetry belonged to only a few people. After several months, he had a significant attitude change. Hung was not afraid of poetry any more. He ordered a poetry anthology on Amazon since he was interested in reading more poems. In the second interview with Hung, he said:

Poetry …Poetry… I don't feel so afraid of poetry. Poetry is more approachable for me now. I am more confident with poetry. I no longer think poetry is just for those supermen or superwomen. I can write English poems even I am an international student. I bought a poetry book on Amazon called….500 something great poems…I can't remember. I

haven't got it. Anyway, I am interested in reading more poems. (Second

interview with Hung, November 4, 2010)

Hung told me poetry changed his way of living. He learned to pay attention to some

details around him and observe the word in a different way. He has become a careful life

observer. In his portfolio, Hung described he enjoyed the freedom of reading and writing

poems. He also composed a poem to go with this reflection:

I love the <u>freedom</u> in writing and interpreting poems. What I mean by

<u>freedom</u> is that there are possibly no compulsory rules or mechanics in

composing poetry. The only prerequisite requirement, perhaps, is powers

of imagination and observation. To use the ideas of somebody I forget, the

difference between a writer and non-writers is that the writer knows how

to capture even the smallest moment before it slips away.

<div align="center">

Stroke a few sketches,

Enrich with flesh

Feed them with colors,

<u>Play</u> with words

Make

a

crazy

poetry

formula

</div>

(Hung's Reflection in Portfolio collected in December 10, 2010)

Hung did not only use the word "play" in his poem (see underlined word), he also

physically played with the word arrangement. The last six lines dropped to the end,

which is quite interesting. Hung also became more confident, he told me, "I can write

<div align="center">143</div>

down what I think on my mind and transform my thoughts into a poem. He mentioned that the "freedom" of writing and reading poems makes him love poetry.

Hung's Reaction to Peer Response

Hung told me "Writing Group" was one of his favorite parts of the class. His writing group helped him with his English learning and he saw the friendship as a treasure (Hung was in the same group with Tom, Dona and me). In the follow up interview with Hung on February 18, 2011, he said the members in his writing group were like his family and he still missed them after the course finished.

> Hung: You know Tom is like a father. You and Dona are like my sisters. We are a family.

> Ning: Laugh …ha ha Tom is the father. Is it because of his age?

> Hung: Probably… because he is the eldest and he always gave us encouragement and good advice about what words to use and how to make sentences better. You and Dona also helped me. … I like sharing my poems. I felt good to read my poems aloud and share my digital poems. And…I mean you are so funny, I felt relaxed. I enjoyed being with you. I felt I can trust the family. (Third interview with Hung, February 18, 2011)

Hung's English Learning

Hung learned English through reading and writing poetry and his language improved over time. It can be shown from written poems, digital poems, interview conversations, self-reflection and drafts comparison. The reasons could be attributed to

144

the released anxiety, immersing in poetry learning, the influence of writing group, and the influence of the use of images and music in digital poems. In the first interview with Hung, he expressed his language anxiety. He took this class to be a tough challenge. As the time passed by, Hung became able to appreciate the language. He seemed to be more comfortable with the group. He was motivated to read and write more poems. He volunteered to do the "Think-Aloud" in class on the third week to read a poem titled "Transistor Radio." In the poetry class' "Think Aloud" time, the instructor had one student sit in front of the class. The instructor showed a poem on the screen of Smartboard (the interactive computer) line by line. The student "on the spot" had to read along and articulate everything he uses to get the meaning of the poem. The instructor had other students sit around the "on the spot" student and take notes about their observations. After "Think Aloud," the class discussed some reading strategies the "on the spot" used such as make connection, ask questions, make hypothesis, visualize, etc. I was surprised when I heard Hung say he want to be the "on the spot" person. What he did was very brave for an international student. At that time, I assumed that was because of his personality. However, he told me he volunteered because the class atmosphere was relaxing and he did not need to worry if he made mistakes. The affective filter (Krashen, 1982) became lower. I noticed he joked and laughed in the writing group time. He learned to loose the grip of his past leaning experience, which had restricted him for years and he had become bold to play with language and have fun with it.

Hung's language improvement also presented in the reflection of his English use. His approaches were "Noticing" and "Modifying" mentioned by Swain (1998). According to Swain, effective language learners notice the gap between their own

competence and the level where they wanted to achieve. They try to use language to convey meaning and they continue modifying their language to communicate with others. In the second interview, he said:

> I love sharing my poems in the writing group. I _noticed_ I sometimes
> couldn't accurately express what I want to say. I _noticed_ my language is
> different from native speakers. Some sentences I used seemed confusing
> and awkward for them and they didn't understand what I meant. I
> explained and they suggested me some better words. I made changes
> _[modify]_ as they told me. It is really beneficial for me to work in a group
> with two Americans, especially they are English teachers. (Second
> interview with Hung, November 4, 2010) (Emphasis mine)

According to Vygotsky (1978), the cognition can best be understood as a social faculty. The individual learns better through interaction with a social group. Language learning is a process by which the mind appropriate knowledge from the environment. The writing group offered a great environment for Hung. He was able to get the advanced learner's help to reach a higher level (ZPD, the zone of proximal development). Vygotsky (1978) claims that a language learner follows an advanced learner's example and gradually develops the ability to do certain tasks without help or assistance.

Doing digital poetry also contributed to Hung's English improvement. Cummins (2001) stated that when language learners' self identities are built, it is easier for them to engage in language learning. As the excerpt of the interview showed, Hung was proud to show his childhood to the class. Hung claimed that "Where I belong" is a poem to

146

present his self-identity. Hung seemed to enjoy the attention his poem gathered and was

excited to tell the class about his childhood. Hung told us what he read, what they did in

special occasion, how his parents took care of him. His images reinforced the message

he wanted to convey.

Hung did not just use digital poetry to show his identity; he learned how to edit

his video, add transitions, modify the tones, checking the spellings and others ways

closely analogous the writing process. Doing digital poetry involved much thinking,

planning and reformulating. When digital poets are working, they are not just

manipulating the computing programs; they are using those tools to advance their

language— to convey what they want to say.

Case Two: Fem

Fem

Her boy, her world

Little hands and little feet

He is her love

He is her happiness

He is her everything

Poetry

Means relaxing

Means revealing her feelings

Means to be "herself"

Fem, from the Middle East, is a doctoral student in English Education. She took this course because she majors in English Education and she is in the program that requires English Ed. Courses. "Writing, Reading and Teaching Poetry" is what she needed to take to fulfill the requirement. Another reason of her enrollment was that the instructor is her advisor and she hoped to have more time to work with her advisor. Yet, she admitted that she did not like poetry, and she was not interested in learning poems. She claimed herself not to be an artistic person. In the first interview with Fem, she said, "My husband loves poems and reads many poems. But we are different types of people. I am not an artistic person." Fem first leaned poetry in her native language when she was in middle school. She studied English poetry when she entered college. In the writing survey I collected on August 25, 2010, she said, "The way we were taught poetry in my country was very intimidating. I always hesitated to write poems and didn't do so. I just didn't want to." In the first interview with her, I asked her for more details about how she was taught poetry. Fem said:

> We were asked to memorize poems…many many poems. I could recite
> Shakespeare's sonnets even I didn't like them. The teacher led the class to
> read the poem aloud first and then analyze word-by-word, then sentence-
> by-sentence. We were asked to highlight some important words and
> sentences, memorize the meanings, and then memorize the whole poem. I
> had to memorize the rules of poems; I had to understand the hidden
> meanings; I had to read between the lines but I was not really good at it…I
> learned the knowledge but poetry… I think I tended to miss a lot of parts

148

of it. <u>Poetry was a myth to me. It was not easy to understand. I didn't</u>

<u>have the talents.</u> I didn't read any poems for myself after graduating from

university. (First interview with Fem, September 7, 2010)

Fem thought poetry was difficult for her and she could not get the meaning. She was

forced to memorize poems although she did not like them. The teaching pattern and

sequence was like "read, explain, analyze, and memorize." Fem did not enjoy poetry and

of course she quit reading poems after graduating from college. Apparently, the way her

teacher taught poetry was not effective, and her teacher ignored students' interests. The

poetry teaching was only focused on reading. Fem said she never learned to write any

poems and did not think she could do it. Fem had negative feelings toward poetry and

toward herself. She claimed she did not have the talent for poetry. Poetry was a myth for

her. Frustrations led to lack of self-confidence in learning poetry.

However, it was interesting to hear Fem mention her husband in the interview.

Fem said her husband was a math major and did not learn poetry in school. However, her

husband loves reading poems and has continued reading poems on his own. When

asking about the reason, Fem said, "He reads what he likes and finds personal meanings

from poems. He never needs to memorize poems that he doesn't like." Fem seemed to

have learned the better approach to read and teach poetry from her husband. But her past

learning experience had inhibited her to try again.

In the first interview, I asked Fem about her difficulties in poetry learning. Again,

she mentioned "understanding the meaning." Fem also pointed out the following issues:

149

lack of cultural background, unfamiliarity with the history, and too many unknown

words. She told me how she studied Shakespeare's sonnets in college:

> There are old English words in his sonnets you know. It was so difficult
>
> for me to understand. So, I bought translation. I studied the translation
>
> many times first before reading the English version. I had the translation
>
> next to me, and I compared two versions to get the meaning. Although I
>
> understand my native language in the translation, I still feel I missed most
>
> of the meaning in Shakespeare. The culture and history is different. (First
>
> interview with Fem, September 7, 2010)

As Fem tried to compose some poems in this poetry course, her other obstacles in

poetry learning were detected: Fem's use of language in poems was "general" and she

had difficulties in presenting "Show not Tell" in poetry. She tended to use "general"

terms instead of offering "specific" details. Figure 4.11 below is her list poem titled

"Friends" and the instructor's comments.

Figure 4. 11 *Fem's Poem "Friends" and the Instructor's Comments*

Excerpt of "Friends"	The instructor's comments
We are happy together, We are sad together, Together we fought and Together we won. Some are in Asia, Some are in different lands, They always come and see me, With their letters and hold my hands They have children now, They have houses, jobs, and cars I remember dreaming about them together Crying, holding hands. Friends are not any other	 Typed the Instructor's Comments: The underlined words and phrases are at the "category" level-can you make them all specific?

Like the instructor said in his comments, the underlined words and phrases are very general terms. Fem used words such as "we, they, friends, children, and different lands," and readers might not know whom she is talking about. And the readers might not able come up with images from her lines and make connections. Fem should use more specific words to make her lines speak. For example, she can describe one of her friends: what is her name, what does she do with her friend, a story happened between them, etc.

But two lines the instructor marked on the page, "they always come and see me with their letters and hold my hands" are specific and effective. They created some images. Besides being "too general," most of Fem's poems are short in length and lack of complexity. Fem might need to work on "description," "elaboration" and "writing fluency." In other words, she might need to write longer, describe details, seek relationships, consider different perspectives and generate more ideas. In her piece, "Friends," she could write about the relationship between her and her friends, the meaning of the friendship, and the friends' influence on her life.

I read through her poems and found she tended to use third person instead of the first person. I wondered what the reasons were. She also liked to use "we" instead of "I." I wondered whom she indicated. I found my answer in the next interview with Fem.

> Ning: Fem, why did you use "we" and "they" so many times in your
>
> poems? Who are "we" and who are "they" you are indicating in your
>
> poems?

> Fem: In my country, we are taught to use" we "instead of "I" in writing.
>
> We are not allowed to use "I." It is very impolite and rude to keep saying
>
> "I, I, I." We need to be humble and always use the third person's voice.
>
> It's our culture.

> Ning: Oh, I see... It's the culture factor. (Second Interview with Fem,
>
> November 4, 2010)

I learned a lesson from this conversation. Culture influences students' writing manners. Writing manners (tone, voice, usage, etc) differ from culture to culture. Fem

avoided using "I" because using "I" is rude in her culture. But she has learned the difference and has adjusted herself in the later pieces after reading and writing more English poems. Fem gradually showed more of her self. She told me in the third interview that she felt she could be herself in poetry:

> Fem: Yes, I learned the difference in English writing. I tried to be more direct. I do feel great when I am using "I" instead of "we" I feel like I was allowed to tell what "I " really feel and think. <u>I can be myself in poetry</u>. (Third interview with Fem, February 18, 2011)

Here is a selected stanza from Fem's poem titled "Hidden Place." Although many terms are still general, Fem used the forbidden word "I" in her writing.

<p align="center">My hidden place is <u>my</u> little park</p>
<p align="center">When <u>I</u> am annoyed</p>
<p align="center"><u>I</u> go there</p>
<p align="center">When I am happy</p>
<p align="center"><u>I</u> go there</p>
<p align="center"><u>I</u> go there with <u>my</u> friend, family or</p>
<p align="center">Just with <u>my</u> coffee</p>
<p align="center"><u>I</u> love to feel the wind</p>
<p align="center">To watch people walking on the pavement</p>

In sum, Fem's past experience influenced her attitude toward poetry. She thought poetry was a myth and she did not have the talent to understand poems. Before enrolling in this class, she never wrote any poems and she thought she could not do it. The

difficulties she had about reading poems were the lack of culture context and limited vocabulary. The difficulties she had in writing poems were to present specific images (Show not Tell). She should also try to write longer pieces with elaborative ideas and details. Her use of general pronouns such as "we" instead of "I" was due to her cultural background. While taking this course, Fem freed herself and learned to write more directly. It was her biggest attitude change.

Fem's Selected Poems and Analysis

In this section, I describe more of Fem's poetry experience in this course by highlighting some of her other poems (including a digital poem about memory, side-effect poem and dialogue poem). I also embed the conversations between her and me in interviews, her written reflections, her freewritings samples and the instructor's written comments to let the readers understand her attitude changes and language improvement in poetry.

(1) Memory Poem: Little Hands and Little Feet

This is Fem's first digital poem in which she described the memory of giving a birth to her son. She wrote about how much her son's birth means to her and her family.

Little Hands and Little Feet (edited by the researcher)

The miracle of having a new life
Little hands, little feet
And his little nose.
The love,

The love is not similar with any other,

I've never had this feeling before,

The happiness,

The happiness in life

It is so strong that

Make me forget anything unpleasant

The anxiety,

It is no longer about myself

But for the little feet and the little hands

He brought us home

I experience all feelings at the same time

At the same moment

together

While looking at the little hands and little feet…

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AH8eA7z3ZgY

The video started with an opening slide showing the text, "Little Hands and Little Feet."

After the first slide faded away, she showed a close-up shot of a newborn baby's head

with her two hands holding his little hands. The readers first caught the theme of this

video: it is about her baby. The close-up shot was followed by several different angles of

baby photos taken when the baby was just born, such as Fem holding him in her arms,

her husband holding the baby by her bed, the first family photo in the hospital with three

people (her, her husband and the baby) and a close up shot of his little face while he was

sleeping. Then she showed a photo of her rented apartment in the US with a text

followed "He brought us home." It could mean the baby completed the sense of "home"

or the baby driving a car with his parents as passengers literally. After the word of

"together," she added a photo of her holding the baby in bed. The messages she wanted to convey were: love, connection, and happiness. The scenes of holding hands appeared twice. Fem learned to use repetitions to strengthen the meaning. The last scene is an image of her boy's smiling face zooming in. He has become a five-year old little boy. Photos with Fem and her husband's smiling faces were repeated several times. The mood was loving and sweet. I especially loved the music she embedded (Sila by Goksel Baktagir, 2005). In fact, after watching her video, the music still lingered in my mind for a few days. That was an impressive work. In the interview, Fem talked about her thoughts of this work. She said the memory poem is her favorite poetry project:

Ning: What do you think about doing memory poem?

Fem: I loved doing it. It means so much for me to do this digital poem. I have taken many pictures of my son but I haven't had a chance to put them together. When I was writing the poem, I actually didn't feel I was writing a poem. I felt I was just expressing my feelings in words. It came naturally. I shared it with my husband. We plan to show it to our son when he grows up. He has brought us so much happiness since he was born. I love him so much. You know he is my world. Everything is about my son. I want him to know that and I hope he will enjoy the pleasure when he has his own family.

Ning: I love the music you used.

Fem: This is our story with our music. This poem represented who we are. (Third Interview with Fem, February 18, 2011)

Fem chose the music she loved, and she chose the photos she loved. This work

represents who she is and means much for her and her family. I do not have children, but

I learned how much a woman could be bound with her children and the joy of having a

baby.

This video went through several revisions. In the first draft of the video, most

photos have texts on them. Some texts seemed distracting. She put many lines of text on

each single slide, which made the screen very busy. Also, the transition between each

slide was fast. The viewers could not finish reading the text on each slide. But after

watching more of other students' works and getting feedback from the class, Fem revised

it as a better work. Fem talked about her four revisions of this video in the last class:

> Fem: We watched Ning's "Forever Aroma" in class and I used hers as a
>
> model. I learned to use black background to make the words stand out. I
>
> put fewer lines in each slide. I also checked if the transition is in right
>
> speed. As I watch it at home several times, I corrected some of my
>
> misspellings. Sorry I just found I still have some misspellings. Laugh…
>
> Ning: Dr. Fox mentioned "simplicity" in the poem and you did well in the
>
> final draft. The video flows well and the speed was just right. The theme
>
> is clear and the images enhance the meaning effectively. (Class discussion
>
> in December 10, 2010)

Figure 4.12 below presents selected slides from Fem's first draft. It will help readers see

Fem's improvement in her digital poem. In a7 and a9, there are many words in each slide

and the screen seems busy. In a9, the text covers the son's face. The viewers can hardly

157

read the text and see the photo. (a.8) also has too many words on it. The slide (a.8) fades

away very soon. The transition between each slide is around three seconds, which is too

fast. In this project, Fem had some progress in poetry. She showed "specifics" visually.

In a.1 and a.4, the close-ups presented specific images of "feet and hands" Fem told me

those images were found on the internet, she intended to use the image of "hands and

feet" to *show* her topic. Fem repeated certain images (a.2 and a.7) but the texts on the

images were different. Additional meanings were accumulated and carried through the

video. The images also showed the progress of the son's growth. Slides (a.1-a.7) were

photos of little baby and the last slide (a. 9) showed a bigger boy's photo.

Figure 4. 12 *Fem's digital poem draft one (selected slides)*

a.1	a.2	a.3
The miracle of having a new life Little hands, little feet	And a little nose. Our baby... He brought our home,	Love no similar to any other, Never felt like that before,
a.4	a.5	a.6
Made the togetherness stronger	Gave us the happiness of the all times.	The love is so stong that You to forget about anything else.

a.7	a.8	a.9
The anxiety, Not about yourself, But for the little feets and the little hands…	You experience all of them, At the same minute, At the same time, Altogether… While looking at the little hands And the little feet	Welcome our life little baby… And thank you for… All you bring with your Little hands and little feet.
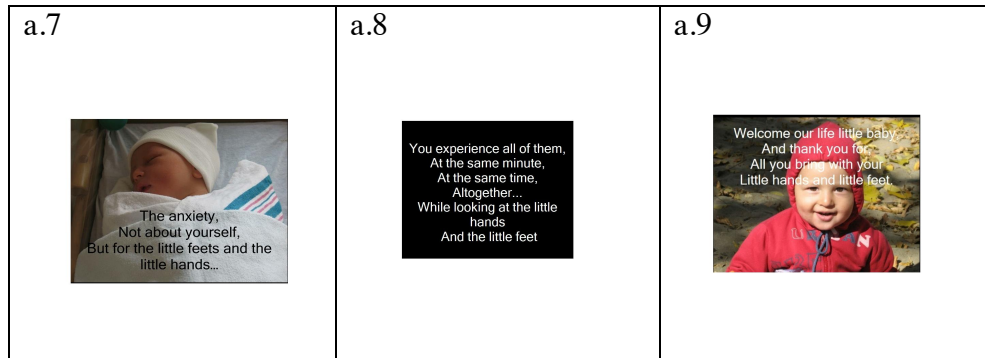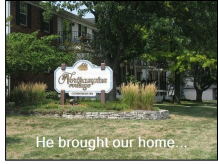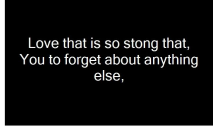
Figure 4.13 below presents the selected slides from the final draft. In Fem's final draft, she put fewer words in each slide. She was more aware of the text's place. She removed some text from the photos and put the text in different slide with black background. In b 9, the text was moved to the bottom and the viewers can see the son's face. She slowed down the speed. The transition between each slide is around four- five seconds. The viewers have enough time to enjoy her photos and read the texts. Fem had much improvement in this version.

Figure 4. 13 *Fem's digital poem final draft (selected slides)*

b.1	b.2	b.3
LITTLE HANDS AND LITTLE FEET		Love no similar to any other, Never felt like that before,

159

b.4	b.5	b.6
	 He brought our home…	
b.7	b.8	b.9
	 Love that is so stong that, You to forget about anything else,	 The miracle of having a new life Little hands, little feet
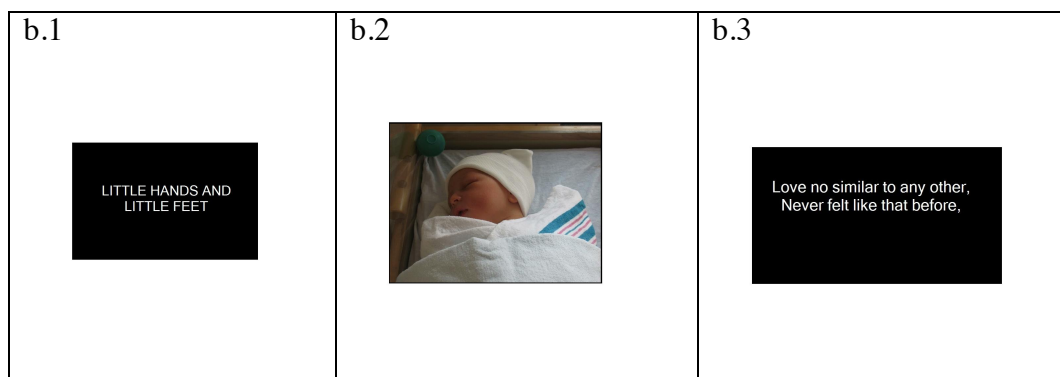
(2) Dialogue Poem: Reading Books and Watching TV

In this poem, Fem showed her language improvement. As I said earlier, Fem had a difficulty in presenting "Show not Tell" in poetry. The instructor sensed her needs and then arranged several individual conferences with her. The instructor gave examples and made comments of some possible phrases she could use. Fem showed improvement in her Dialogue poem:

Excerpt from Fem's dialogue poem (draft one)

Why would a person read a book

For days, for hours

Sit in front of TV,

It will give you the whole book

In minutes

<div align="right">How can you not see <u>**Scout sitting**</u> ?</div>

<div align="right">On <u>**Atticus' lap**</u>?</div>

<div align="right">Don't you hear <u>**Tess**</u> crying?</div>

<div align="right">For losing <u>**Angel**</u>?</div>

<div align="right">Don't you feel the accent of</div>

<div align="right"><u>**Pip talking to Estella**</u>?</div>

Fem presented specific terms and images in this poem, such as "Scout's sitting on Atticus' lap," "Tess crying," "Angel," and "Pip talking to Estella." She successfully presented sensory and imagery in her lines. (Scout and Atticus are the characters in *To Kill a Mockingbird*; Tess and Angel are the characters in *Tess of The d' Urbervilles*; Pip and Estella are the characters in *Great Expectations*.) Fem said in her reflection:

> I was writing about an argument I had with my friend the other day. She
>
> believed that TV would bombard us with too much information than a
>
> book can do. While I was writing this poem, I wrote down the scene, the
>
> conversation we had. I added the name, the action to do "show not tell."
>
> (Fem's written reflection, November 10, 2010)

In the following figure (Figure 4.14), the readers can see the instructor's comments. He was pleased about Fem's improvement, and he encouraged Fem to revise it to make it

better. He asked if Fem would like to talk again. The instructor's constant

encouragement and feedback improved Fem's language.

Figure 4.14 *The Instructor's Comments on Fem's Dialogue Poem*

You cannot hear their voice,

You cannt hear the accent,

You cannot see pain

Those I definiotely can! I do not accept.

How can you not see Scout sitting

On Atticus' lap ?

Don't you hear Tess crying

For losing Angel.

Don't you feel the accent of

Pip talking to Estella.

Yes – here
you
get specific

Reflection:

I believe it was hard to find a subject for the dialogue poem. When I was trying to find a subject, I
remembered one of the debates we did on "reading books" and "watching TV", which would give
people a better understanding of the world. I believe that debate still continues but I decided to write a
dialogue poem on this subject.

It was easier to write the poem after deciding the subject. I thought I was discussing the subject with
someone else. I tried to remember the arguments of the friends who believed that TV would bombard
us with much more information than a book can do.

*This dialogue is a neat idea! On the
first page, I underlined many general + hence
abstract words. Can you revise p. 1 into specifics –
images? You do that very well in final st!
Can we speak briefly about this?*

162

Typed the Instructor's Comments: This dialogue is a neat idea! On the first page, I underlined many general and abstract words. Can you revise p1 into specific image? You did that very well in final! Can we speak briefly about this? (The instructor's comments on Fem's poem, November 11, 2010)

After their individual meeting, Fem changed "a book" to "Shakespeare." Shakespeare is more specific than "a book." But the others remained the same. Fem showed a little improvement here.

Figure 4.15 Different Drafts *of Fem's Dialogue Poem*

Excerpt from dialogue poem (draft 1)	Excerpt from dialogue poem (draft 2)
Why would a person read <u>a book</u> For days, for hours Sit in front of TV It will give you the whole book In minutes	Why would a person read <u>Shakespeare</u> For days, for hours Sit in front of TV It will give you the whole book In minutes

Fem showed "specifics" in this poem verbally after she made a progress in her digital poem where she presented visually specific. It seems that the imagery has influenced Fem's thinking, and her thinking in imagery specific transferred to her verbal language. The synaesthesic power also enhanced her language learning. As I previously mentioned, the instructor's comments and the one-on-one conference had a positive impact on Fem's

163

learning. All of these reasons, including instructor's comments, individual conference,

writing group and the image power, figured into Fem's success.

(2) Poem Seven: I Need to Raise Money

Poem Seven is a side effect poem. The instructor played a TV commercial clip in

class and asked them to take that video as an inspiration to create their own poems. They

can write about any issues or problems in the society or any physical illness. Fem

composed a poem titled "I Need to Raise Money." In the later draft of this poem (figure

4.16), she showed some language improvement but not much.

Figure 4.16 *Drafts of Fem's Poem "I Need to Raise Money"*

I need to raise money (draft one)	I need to raise money (final draft)
I need to raise money, To <u>help to buy</u> a new car, To build a third movie theater, <u>To travel around the world</u>. Oh the others, <u>They</u> can survive, <u>People</u> survived the earthquakes, Tornados, Hungers Homelessness But we cannot survive without watching <u>a movie.</u>	I need to raise money, To <u>buy</u> a new car, To build a third movie theater, <u>To travel the world</u>. On others, <u>The poor</u> can survive, <u>The homeless</u> survived the earthquakes, Tornados, Drought, But we cannot survive without watching <u>Friends.</u>

I need <u>the money</u> Not to help people in <mark>**slamdogs**</mark>, But to watch people in there.	I need <u>money</u> Not to help people in <mark>**slamdogs,**</mark> But to watch people in there

Fem alerted some syntax and mechanics: she changed "help to buy a car" to " buy a car" and "I need the money" to "I need money." She changed "a movie" to "Friends (a TV series)," "they" to "the poor," and "people" to "the homeless" to make them more specific. She changed "to travel around the world" to "to travel the world." The shaded words are misspellings that Fem did not correct. She meant to say "Slumdogs" but still did not correct it after the writing group's sharing and getting the instructor's comments. Other terms still remained very general, for example, "others," "hunger," "we" and "people."

Fems' Attitude Change

The most significant attitude change of Fems' is that she was more willing to present her true feelings and personal life in poems. She has learned to be more direct, she learned to use first person's voice in her poems, and she wrote about her son in three poems. Fem told me in the interview:

> I am not hiding my emotion anymore. In my country, everything we write
>
> is academic. In my education, I always read about the poem, analyze them
>
> but I did not write any poems until I took this class. I think writing poems
>
> helps me to understand poetry more than just reading them. If we didn't

struggle in creating poems, we would not really pay attention to the

language tools of these poems. Writing poetry provides me with more

information about the poetry. (Third interview with Fem, February 18,

2011)

Another exciting change about Fem is that she has developed a habit of reading poems. In

the third interview, Fem told me she still reads poems on her own. Poetry has become a

part of her life. She has read poems to help her release pressure in her busy life.

> Ning: Our poetry course is finished, do you still read poems?
>
> Fem: Yes, Yes. I love reading poems. I still read poems. Poetry reading is
>
> the time for me to relax. You know I have a son; I am teaching in another
>
> university and I am taking three classes. I feel I am always running,
>
> running and running. I found reading poetry is a time for myself. I have
>
> time to think about things for myself. (Third interview with Fem, February
>
> 18, 2011)

However, She once showed her frustration when she was struggling with learning how to

present "Show not Tell."

> I first thought I could do good poems, but I found … I couldn't. I didn't
>
> know how to present "Show not Tell." I know everyone can write poems,
>
> but not everyone can be a good poet. I am not a good poet. (Second
>
> Interview with Fem, November 4, 2010)

It is normal to feel frustrated when learning a new thing. Fem's frustration can be taken

as part of the process. That does not mean she does not have the talent. Everyone has a

166

different pace and process to learn a new thing. Poetry writing is new for Fem. She had to change her thinking and beliefs; especially this learning is so different from her own culture.

Fem's Reaction to Peer Response

Fem said she enjoyed her time in her "Writing Group." Fem was in a group with Willy, Helen and Kim. Fem said Writing group helped her release the anxiety of learning English poetry:

> You know I have a friend who dropped the class (she is talking about
>
> David). Poetry is so difficult for us. I thought I couldn't do it but I needed
>
> to stay. <u>I actually felt anxious in class but the writing group helped me</u>
>
> <u>release the anxiety.</u> We told jokes. Those people are really funny. They
>
> didn't just tell joke, they also gave me advice in improving my poems. I
>
> learned better words to use, the use of punctuation, how to clarify my
>
> meaning and I love reading their poems. They are so good. I felt I
>
> improved with their help. You know Willy is not kind of person who
>
> always says good things. If he says your lines are good, he really means
>
> it. I like to hear their feedbacks. (Third interview with Fem, February 18,
>
> 2011)

The group members' personalities influenced the group. Fem valued the peer's feedback and comments. Fem developed friendships in the group, gained confidence and learned language skills from group members. Interestingly, Fem said she would not share some of her poems with her husband, as she thought her husband would laugh at her. She felt

167

more comfortable with sharing works in her writing group since they all knew it was a place to learn how to write well, not to judge. She thought the writing group was a pleasant experience, which helped her learn poetry.

> Fem: I won't share my poems with my husband.
>
> Ning: Why not?
>
> Fem: He will laugh at me. My poems are like children's poems.
>
> Ning: But you shared poems in your writing group…
>
> Fem: I knew that was a place for all of us to learn how to write well. Not to judge. (Third interview with Fem, February 18, 2011)

Fem's Language Learning

Fem showed language improvement over the semester. She learned to use better words (more specific), she became comfortable to show her feelings and she corrected some of her grammar errors. Besides the instructor and the peer's help, another reason is teaching practice. Fem found the most beneficial learning to her language improvement in this class is the teaching project. (In this course, students were required to conduct a teaching project. They need to work with 1-2 students and adopt some teaching strategies with them. They had to turn in a paper in the end of the semester.) In the third interview with Fem, I asked about her teaching experience. She said:

> I learned the most while teaching it. I wrote several poems this semester
> and got comments and feedback. I tried to correct my mistakes but I felt
> like at some points I kept repeating my mistakes. However, while I was
> giving feedbacks to the students I was teaching, I was more aware of my

168

use of language and avoid making errors and mistakes. We learn better

while we are teaching. (Third interview with Fem, February 18, 2011)

Fem worked with two international graduate students for her teaching project; one of

them majors in Statistics and the other majors in Science. Both poetry-averse students

were effectively transformed into pretty good poets because of Fem's teaching strategies.

I was impressed by the way Fem taught students how to present "Show not Tell." Fem

herself took that writing skill: "Show not Tell" as her weakness but she effectively taught

it to her students. When working on a student's piece: "Poverty," Fem guided the student

to generate writing idea, using metaphor and present visual images in the poem. In the

report, she said:

> I asked her if we could show how poverty affects everyone instead of just
>
> saying it. She thought about it and then said, "I cannot think of any way,
>
> can you? I mean it is like a monster, eating up everyone." I screamed
>
> with joy and said that this is a great way of putting it and then we added
>
> the line "It consumes everybody with its huge mouth." (Fem's teaching
>
> project report, December 10, 2010)

Fem and her student worked together to revise the poem. We can see some improvement

from the two revisions. Revision (B) is somewhat better as it used metaphorical language

although (B) still has some general terms.

> (A) Poverty puts people on the streets,
>
> Keep them hungry
>
> Causes them to be on the streets

169

(B) Poverty turns benches into beds

Takes meals away

Changes asking for money into an occupation.

Fem claimed she learned the most through teaching. Her statement reminds me of a Chinese idiom, "Teaching students, teaching yourself." Not only her students but she improved during this project. Teaching itself is actually an effective way to learn a language. The teacher needs to think through the strategies while preparing and modeling, and the ideas and concepts become clearer for themselves. Also, the teachers needs to be reflective in their strategies to make students' learning happen. Fem internalized and constructed the knowledge and showed improvement in herself. Fem said in the third interview:

> If you compare my first poem with the later ones, you will see a difference. I learned to use better words and correct grammar—those were the things I taught my students to do. (Third interview with Fem, February 18, 2011)

In addition, digital poetry enhanced Fem's language learning. Fem claimed digital poetry was her favorite part of the course. She takes herself as a "visual learner." She could relate herself to a digital poem more than a written poem. She also has used digital poems to effectively express her feelings. Fem was motivated and earned the sense of accomplishment from doing digital poetry. Fem said, "I know my learning style,

I feel great about completing a digital poem. <u>I do not need to worry too much about my words, the images and music help me convey the meaning. They will do the work.</u>"
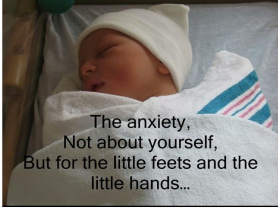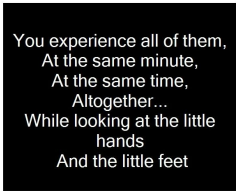
The underlined sentences raised the attention about the "distraction" by images and music. Although images and music can help language learners to fill the gap of communication, teachers should be aware of negative effects. Fem was somewhat distracted by the image and music. Her digital poem "Little Feet and Little Hands" is impressive, but if we only look at the text (the first draft), there are some language problems that needed to be fixed.

Figure 4.17 *Corrections on Fem's Poem " Little Hands and Little Feet"*

Excerpt from Fem's poem	Correction
<u>Little hands and little feets</u>	Little hands and little feet
The love,	
<u>The love not similar to any other,</u>	The love is not similar with others
<u>Never felt like that before,</u>	I never had that feeling before
The happiness,	
<u>The happiness of the lifetime,</u>	The happiness in my life
<u>It is so strong that</u>	It is so strong that makes me forget all the worries
<u>Cause you to forget anything happened it</u>	
….	…
You experience all of the at the same time	
At the <u>same minutes</u>	At the same moment

I also noticed that when Fem removed her text and placed them on another slide in the black background, she was getting less distracted by imagery and music. She was able to pay attention on her language use and did self-correction. Although there were still errors, she had corrected "feets" to "feet." For example, in slide A, she wrote "feets" but in slide B she corrected it to "feet" when placed text in a black slide. Figure 4.18 shows the comparison of different slides.

Figure 4. 18 *Comparison of different slides*

Slide A	Slide B
The anxiety, Not about yourself, But for the little feets and the little hands…	You experience all of them, At the same minute, At the same time, Altogether... While looking at the little hands And the little feet

Fem was also pursuing her own writing style throughout the semester, she told me, "I learned it is important to have our own writing style. Yes, I am still adding more about me in poems. Digital poems show more about me." Fem's digital poems had more of her unique voice. We can easily tell whose works they are by the way they present the photos and the music they adopt. Abandoning some ingrained rules from her past experience, Fem was able to put personal thoughts and voice in her writing.

It is true that Fem's digital poem "Little hands and Little feet" is emotional, however; it seemed excessively sentimental. Her language was in indulgence in "gushy" feelings. In other words, she was viewing the world through "rose colored glasses"

which is overly optimistic. She oversimplified the full complexity of human experience. Having a baby cannot be just full of joy and happiness. There are some other emotions and feelings that she did not reveal in her poem. The poetry is to express deep feeling, but Fem did not communicate the experience fully and truly.

According to Serafin and Bendixen (2005), "sentimentality" is an appeal to shallow, uncomplicated emotions at the expense of reason. Sentimental literature intends to stir to tears in viewers. Mark Twain also satirized it in Huck Finn with Emmeline Grangerford's poems. Cupchik and Laszlo (1992) states that, "Sentimentality often involves situations which evoke very intense feelings: love affairs, childbirth, death, but where the feelings are expressed with reduced intensity and duration of emotional experience...diluted to a safe strength by idealization and simplification" (p.120). Fem's digital poem is lovely and sweet but lacks of tensions and complexity. Being overly-sentimental could result in her language of generalities and simplification.

In sum, Fem experienced an attitude change regarding poetry. She was more comfortable with this genre. She presented her true feelings and personal life in poems. She had some language improvement through the instructor's comments, individual instruction, doing teaching project, and the peer's support. Digital poetry engaged and motivated her to learn English; she learned to be imagery specific and then verbally specific. She somewhat was distracted by the media, but when she placed text in another black slide, she got less distracted by the imagery and music.

Case Three: David

David

His love to Turkey

Brought him to this land

Supported him to grow

Strengthened his faith

Poetry

Reminds him of his history

Walks him through

The bitterness

The loneliness

The silence

David, from the Middle East is a master's student in Literacy Education. David dropped the poetry course after the first class meeting. The reasons were his "fear" of poetry and "lack of confidence." I still worked with him individually and adopted activities from the poetry course with him. I include his story in my study to help readers get a broader vision of the whole story about the poetry course.

Below is the excerpt from David's poem, "Silence." He composed this poem in a writing workshop in spring, 2010. In this poem, David describes how lonely he was studying in the U.S. This poem evoked many international students' emotions when he shared it in a writing workshop. Since many international students had experienced the

same feelings, this poem led to a great discussion and built a connection among them.

Silence

It never goes away from my room

Where is my old life?

Noisy but not boring

Exhausting but Energetic

Silence

Shadow in my small room

It follows me and sticks around me

Especially at nights, like a nightmare!

I first worked with David when he enrolled in a writing workshop for international students that I co-taught with another professor. David discovered his poetic voice and produced several poems in both his first language and English. He even learned to "transfer" his essays and stories into poems. I witnessed his progress and improvement. I had come to regard David as an effective writer and poet.

When I worked with the instructor (Dr. Roy Fox) in teaching the poetry class, I believed that David would love it so I recommended to him to sign up for this class. I planned some technology integration into the course and added digital poetry as one of the course requirements. David enrolled. I knew David was interested in doing digital writings, so I emailed the syllabus to him before the course started. I expected that he would feel excited and have a great time in this course.

To my surprise, he emailed me that he wanted to drop this class after our first class

meeting. Actually, I sensed his anxiety in class and felt worried. I planned to talk to him but did not expect he would want to drop. I did not have a chance to talk with him when he emailed me about his decision:

> I am so sorry for this, but I am going to drop the poetry class. It seems it would be so hard for me to do in class activities. There are so many unknown words in a single poem for me, and it is impossible for me to talk about a poem which is unfamiliar to me. (Email from David, August 25, 2010)

The instructor and I tried to relieve his worries and told him we would offer help outside the class, but David still insisted on quitting. After exchanging several emails, he dropped the class. In another message, he revealed that "I am not good enough" feeling which had evidently tortured him. He explained that he used to be one of the best students in his country, but he felt behind when confronting other outstanding students in the US:

> I graduated from all the schools I attended with an honor's degree. I was always one of the most successful students in my classes in my country. But here, I feel like I am the worst student of the class. (Email from David, August 28, 2010)

As I had worked with him in the writing workshop, I knew David composed good poems. He should have been more confident. In order to help David regain his confidence and continue his poetry journey, I asked him if he would like to keep reading and writing poetry with me individually. He was delighted and agreed right away.

176

I met with David every other Friday at a coffee shop located in the Student Union on campus. Each meeting was about one hour for a total of eight sessions. David's poetry journey with me started from early September and ended in early December 2011, the same length of time like the poetry course. It was usually quiet on Friday morning, so we were able to talk without interruptions. Each meeting was recorded and field notes and a reflective teaching journal were maintained. I often jotted down words and phrases about my observations during the meetings and expanded them in short narratives when reflecting later.

Materials and Teaching Activities

I adopted three activities from the course "Writing, Reading and Teaching Poetry" when working with David, including "Think Aloud," "A list poem," and "Composing digital poems." And I also encouraged him to share his favorite poems.

As I mentioned earlier**, "**Think Aloud" is a teaching strategy that reader articulates the thinking process while making meaning of a piece of reading. I thought that was a great strategy to help David demystify poems. I thought he would not be scared of poetry after he learned this skill. I modeled how to do "Think Aloud" using the poem "Those Winter Sundays" by Robert Hayden (See Appendix G), and then I had David read "Transistor Radio" by Andrew Hudgins (See Appendix H). He got stuck when he saw some vocabulary, such as "Transistor," "huddle," "march," "conscripts," and "inevitably." Asking for help was his strategy. Below is an excerpt of his think aloud process:

David: I don't understand the title. What is "Transistor Radio"?
Ning: I didn't know either when I first read it. It is hard to understand since
we don't have the culture background. "Transistor Radio" is like this small

177

and people could press against their ear while listening to it. It is something

for the people of my older friend's age. He told us he had one when he was

little in this week's class. Why don't you keep reading and see if you can get

something else?

David: I pressed against my father's radio? It was forbidden. So he was not

allowed to listen to that music. Why?

 Ning: Keep Reading…

David reading directly from the poem: "listening to songs of cheating lovers,

lost unrecovered love, drink, song itself, and making believe." … Those were

what the songs are about?

Ning: Right.

David reading from the poem: "I yearned and feared, to suffer that suffering,

so hurt would justify my pure unhappiness." …He was not happy at that

time…

Ning: I laughed with my head nodding….

David reading from the poem: "And now we march….paused …con—con

scripts of sorrow who first were volunteers. But what did I know then, a boy

in love with music first and only later the mournful…paused…forbidden

words" Maybe he is talking about something he didn't like. (Reading

Discussion with David, September 17, 2010)

Then, David and I talked about those words related to war, such as "march" and

"conscripts." I was surprised that David did not know the word "march" which could add

178

another difficulty for him to understand this poem. I explained and he also looked it up in the dictionary. After our discussions, David realized what this poem was about. He seemed interested in knowing more about this poet. He later wrote:

It is so interesting to know about American culture. I didn't know fifty years ago, America was so conservative that children were not allowed to listen to some love songs. (Email from David, September 17, 2010)

From the transcript, we could see how David used "Think Aloud" to approach the poem: He asked questions, made hypothesises and found answers in later stanzas on his own. David also tried to feel the poet's emotion between the lines. He assumed the poet was not happy. When encountering unknown words, David did not try to figure things out right away. He just paused a while and kept reading. That means David was trying to get the meaning from the context.

I bought a poetry book, *Good Poem* edited by Garrison Keillor for David. Actually I received a copy of this book from another professor, Dr. Jill Ostrow when I completed a poetry independent study with her. I was able to immerse myself into a variety of poems and got motivated to read more poems. I decided to buy David the same book. I hoped that he would be influenced by me just like I was influenced by that professor.

In our fourth meeting, I handed this book to him and I told him how to use it. There is a brief biography of each poet on the last part of the book, so David would learn more about famous American poets. I asked David to explore this book and mark poems he loved or had feelings for. I told him to share his reading experience in our next

meetings. This activity worked very well. David read his favorite poem aloud and talked about the reasons he loved that poem. He mentioned how poems reminded him of his love of music.

David: I love this poem… (David showed me a poem titled "The Instrument of Choice" by Robert Phillips (see Appendix I.) Like this girl, my family also let me choose to learn one instrument when I was little. (David reading from the poem) "So she chose the instrument…no one else wanted: the tuba. Big as herself, heavy as her heart."

Ning: What instrument did you choose?

David: It was a Turkish traditional instrument. Like hers, mine is very unique. No one would choose. I started loving music since then. I also love singing. You know… years ago, I sang a song in front of our primary minster.

Ning: Wow, that was such an honor….

David: I also like the way he described how she played it. (David reading the poem) "Into its mouthpiece she blew …life, its deep-throated…oompahs, oompahs sounding…almost, like mating cries."

Ning: What did you learn from this part?

David: The way to describe the sound, simile, metaphor and good words to use…

Ning: Good. Also, "Its golden tubes and coils encircled her like a lover's embrace. Its body pressed on her" is a good use of "imagery."

David: Yeah. I love that line. I could see the image. (Class Discussion

180

with David, November 12, 2010)

Certain lines in David's favorite poem reminded him of his childhood memory. David brought in his own experience and background while approaching these poems and continuously transacted with the text. Reading these two poems became meaningful for him because of his active action. David highlighted some words to share with me, such as "oompahs, oompahs" "and "mating cries." David learned writing skills, such as "onomatopoeia," "simile," "metaphor," and "imagery" which help him in English learning.

Two of David's challenges of learning poetry were identified: (1) language problems and (2) unfamiliarity with American culture. Limited vocabulary is the main issue for David. According to McKinley (2010), vocabulary is the main challenge for second language learners. This is not surprising, considering the extensive English lexicon. Introducing vocabulary is critical for preparing students for reading a poem. Teachers should encourage students to use context clues to derive meanings. I observed that David first resisted this and looked up in the online dictionary for each single unknown word. The reading flow was interrupted, and he was frustrated. But when David was taught to do the "Think Aloud" with the poem, "Transistor Radio," unknown words did not stop him from reading. He tried to figure out the meaning from the context. Also, students need time to practice the pronunciation and usage. Grammatical rules did not affect David's reading comprehension. Stern (1991) stated, grammatical complexity does not seem as great a problem as vocabulary for ESL/EFL students.

Besides limited vocabulary, the lack of the background knowledge of American culture was another factor, which often inhibited David's comprehension. On reading

181

"Transistor Radio," it was hard for David to imagine the child's feelings when listening to the radio secretly. A great inquiry question then emerged. It would be great to discuss with David about why a kid had to listen to music in secret.

David's Selected Poems and Analysis

(1) A List poem: I Saw Something Here

A list poem consists of a list of items. The spectrum of items can be as broad as experience. List poems can be long or short; rhymed or unrhymed. I showed David the list poem in the poetry course, "Doctoral Students are…" (See Appendix J) as an example, and asked him to do one on his own. My poems led to a discussion of the hardship of doctoral students' lives in the U.S. David talked about his dreams and future plans. That was the first time he mentioned his girlfriend in California: "It really bothers me to have the long distance relationship. I hope we can stay together." In his writing time, he composed a list poem titled, "I Saw Something Here" in which he described his experience of visiting the museum.

I Saw Something Here

The gun, the hat, and the stick…
They said they are American history,
But, I saw my grandpa here…

The guest towel, the baby clothes, and other home stuff…
They believe all those are from American history,
But, I saw my grandma here…

Gold, diamond, and those beautiful statues…

Old shoes, kitchen stuff, and different kind of calendar

They are from history…

It doesn't matter from what country,

America, Turkey, Greece, or Italy…

I saw my ancestors here…

This poem consists of four stanzas and each stanza has three lines. David said he meant

to make a structure like that. He put "I saw… here" in the last line of stanza one, two and

four to strengthen the meaning of his connection with his homeland. I did not ask David

to obey the rhyming scheme, but David was aware of the effect of the ending sound.

David also acknowledged that the repetition would impress the readers. I observed that

David read silently many times before he showed his poem to me. David was checking

his use of language. He used proper linking words and correct forms of nouns while

listing the items he saw. He was careful about the sounds, speech, subject-verb

agreement and structure. This is the sign of effective language learning.

Composing this poem demanded David's personal response and drew his own

experience. David said seeing those displayed items made him feel like being at home.

David said when writing this poem, he had images drifting in his mind. He wrote down

what he saw and what they reminded him of. This poem is a combination of two sets of

cultures and memories. David had emotional involvement during the composing

process, which facilitated his English learning.

David did not spend much time in writing this poem and he told me that it was quite "easy" to put down lists of items he saw and what he felt. He was surprised to know writing a poem could be this easy. "List poem" is a great activity to get language learners to start writing poetry.

David said his visit to the museum reminded him of his grandparents and his culture. He told me he could always find the connection among different cultures. He talked about the way their people entertain guests and showed me some photos he brought from his country. He seemed to enjoy sharing items from his country, so I asked if he would like to introduce me to a poem in his native language that he likes. He agreed.

At our next meeting, he shared a poem written by his country's first president, Mustafa Kemal, who was honored with the title Ataturk or "Father of the Turkey." The poem was titled *İstiklâl Marşı* (Independence March) that was officially adopted on March 12th, 1921 as the Turkish National Anthem. David read the poem aloud in his native language first. While David was reading, I saw tears in his eyes. I could not understand what the poem was about, but I felt it was such an emotional and powerful piece. David read it slow with pauses between each stanza. He adjusted his voice to show his emotions, sometimes it is soft; sometimes it is strong. I watched David's facial expression while hearing him read. David looked so focused. I was moved.

David translated some of the sentences for me and told me its main idea. The poem described how difficult it was to get the nation's independence. It talked about the war and the spirit of the nation. David also showed me some photos of that poet (their first president) and the war. He told me the reason he came to the U.S. is that he loves

184

his country. He received money from the government, and he is determined to make a contribution to his country when he gets his degree. He sees his country as one of the most important things in his life. I was stunned to hear how patriotic he is. That meeting lasted for two hours, twice as long as our regular meeting. David told me he really enjoyed it. (See Appendix K for the poem he read)

(2) A Digital Poem: The Turkish Independence War

I encouraged David to compose a digital poem. I knew David had experience in creating digital writing during his summer participation in the Missouri Writing Project. Therefore, I did not worry about the technical problems David might have. I told him to make a digital poem about something he is really interested in or which has a special meaning for him.

Two weeks later, he brought me a digital poem, which was about his country's independence war. He said it was a work to show his love for his country. He used a Turkish song about the war as background music and read his poem aloud and recorded in English. It was amazing to see this combination. He used some photos he found about the Turkish Independence War online. It was wonderful to see how proud David was when he talked about his work. He appeared very confident. He said he enjoyed this project very much. Follow the link to watch his digital poem:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ys2-Sh3gMs0

The poem started with an image of a monument with Ataturk Mustafa Kemal's message in 1934. Then David showed several images of the war: soldiers holding guns fighting, died soldiers lying on the battle, horses, tanks, a group of soldiers in the trench, different angles of the hurt soldiers, etc. The theme was clear. It showed many people

were killed in the war. "They shed blood for the nation, they lay side by side…they are our sons, tears and peace" (David reading). The national flag appeared three times to strengthen the message of their great sacrifice for peace, for freedom, for the nation. The readers could understand how heroic these soldiers were in this war with images presented. David embedded some Turkish subtitles in some images and read his poem in English. With David's poem reading and the music in the background, I felt like I was watching a film. The last scene was the statue of Ataturk Mustafa Kemal. It echoed back to the first scene. David worked well in creating retention in the reader's mind. My feeling was aroused by the combination of image, music and text. I had a sensational experience. Figure 4.19 presents selected images from David's digital poem.

Figure 4.19 *Selected Slides from David's digital poem*

The intermixing of the two languages (subtitles in Turkish and reading in English) helped David learn English. David told me: "When I was trying to match the meaning of English and Turkish, I learned better English words to present what I wanted to say in the subtitles. I looked up in the dictionary if I don't know the word or I tried to rephrase the sentence." David explained that this experience is more interesting than just reading poems and memorizing vocabulary. Playing with the technology added more pleasure in learning a language. David claimed he was more motivated and engaged during the composing process.

David's Attitude Change

David became more confident about himself as a writer and a poet. In the first meeting with him, he told me: "I don't want to share my poems in front of those Americans; they would feel my poems are like children's poems." I was sad he felt ashamed of his works. His writings were better than he thought. Yet it was exciting to see David's changes after a couple of months. He became eager to share his poems and read them aloud. He has become more confident about reading and writing poetry. He wrote poems when he felt right. One day, he composed a poem when he visited his friend. He told me, "They are such a happy family and I just felt like I can write a poem

about it." This was not one of the assignments for David, but he chose to do it on his own.

A Happy Family Portrait

The girl asked her father,

"Daddy, why don't we go on a vacation?"

The dad replied, "Where you want to go honey."

"I don't know" said the girl, "but far away from here…"

The dad <u>whispered</u> "such as New York?"

The girl <u>sprang</u> to her feet, and replied "yea, why not?"

"Well, wait a second." said her mommy, "we need to have a good plan"

"So, you have a plan honey", the daddy asked his wife.

"Yea, I am wondering Niagara Falls"

The girl was <u>screaming</u> "Oh my God, Niagara Falls"

"Well, how about this" said daddy, and everyone snapped to attention.

"First Niagara, then New York and Philly"

The girl became crazy, "I was wondering Philadelphia, too"

And continued, "I love you daddy, you are just wonderful"

"You need to thank your mommy, honey" said daddy with laughing.

"I know," said the girl, "I have a wonderful family"

They went Niagara first, then New York, and Philly.

They enjoyed so much, and showed us the beauty of being family.

David used dialogues to successfully place the readers in the scene. The readers can see what happened and feel the emotions. David used strong words (see underlined

words) such as "whisper, sprang, scream," to show the action which can generate images in readers' minds. He effectively presented "Show not Tell " in this piece.

David's English Learning

David has become more confident about reading and writing English poems . He claimed his cultural identity in the foreign land through poetry. Since poems are short but powerful, David has used poetry to express his feelings in an efficient way: using strong words and phrases. As he read and write more poetry, David acquired more effective word choices to use in his own poems. "I was amazed to see how powerful this short line can be. It is richer than an entire novel — "almost like mating cries," said David when he read aloud the last line of his favorite poem, "Instrument of Choice" by Robert Philllips.

David also learned some cultural background of the U.S. of the 1950s by reading "Transistor Radio." When asking about his digital poetry process, David told me that the images and music helped them express his thoughts, as well as generate new ones. David said:

> When I saw the images or heard the music, I sometimes came up with
> some words. Sometimes, I would look up some English words to express
> my feeling. I learned some new words from the online dictionary or
> Google site. But it was hard to translate every word from Turkish to
> English….those images also helped fill the gap. (Class Discussion,
> December 3, 2010)

In sum, David experienced an attitude change toward poetry. He became more confident. David was able to relate to poetry in new and engaging ways as he read aloud, responded to, and integrated technology in his study of poetry. Digital poetry "powered up" David as he gained confidence in playing around with the arrangement of the images, sounds, and text. David emotionally responded to a poem written by Turkey's first president and interpreted it through his own experience. David took an active role in experiencing literature. Rosenblatt's reader response theory (1978) recognizes that meaning-making is a transaction between the text and the reader. David apparently constructed meanings by using visuals and sounds to meet his needs. He might be limited in expressing himself in English, but he had found a way to "turn up" his voice.

Discussion of Major Themes

Some of the examples listed earlier in highlighted cases will reappear in this section. The data will be reorganized and can be read as a summary.

After comparing each highlighted case and referencing data from other participants, five major findings of "What happens when graduate students participated in a poetry class" are (1) Students' attitudes toward poetry and digital poetry changed from negative to positive; (2) Students wrote poetry to cope with life issues; (3) Students experienced self-exploration; (4) International students learned English through reading and writing poetry; and (5) International students were motivated and engaged in English Learning while doing digital poetry. I will give examples to support each finding.

From my first interview with the participants, I found most of them saw poetry as a difficult subject to understand and to approach. Even though those three first-year teachers said they love poetry, they did not feel comfortable with teaching poetry. For international students, they all thought vocabulary and the lack of cultural background were the main obstacles for them to learn poetry. But after a few months of intensive poetry reading, writing, and discussion, their thoughts changed. For example, Hung first told me that he was afraid of poetry since it was too difficult for him to understand and he thought poetry was for a few talented people. Kim in the first interview also told me that she knew poetry was a difficult subject to study and she thought international students could never write as well as English native speakers.

Interestingly, I found their attitudes changed over the semester. Here are the examples of Hung and Kim.

> Poetry is very difficult. Nobody can say it is easy. How to use the right rhyme is very important so we need to use the right words. I am not an American, so it is more difficult for me to learn English poetry. I don't understand many words in a poem and I don't have enough good vocabulary to create a good poem. (First interview with Hung, September 2, 2010)

After two months, when I asked him again about poetry learning, he said he has different understanding about poetry. He is more confident with reading and

writing poetry and he is curious about knowing more and more poems. He
ordered his first poetry book on Amazon in early November 2010.

> Poetry …Poetry… I don't feel so afraid of poetry. Poetry is more
>
> approachable for me now. I am more confident with poetry. Like Atwell
>
> said, everybody can be a poet and I no longer think poetry is just not for
>
> those supermen or superwomen. I can write English poems even I am
>
> an international student. You know I bought a poetry book on Amazon
>
> called….500 something great poems…I can't remember. I haven't got
>
> it. Anyway, I am interested in reading more poems. (Second interview
>
> with Hung, November 4, 2010)

Kim also had a great attitude change. She used to think international students cannot
write good poems but now she is writing more and more poems. She told me she is
trying to publish a poetry book.

> It is so hard for international students to read and write poems. There are
>
> so many difficult words, and we get stuck when we read poems. When
>
> writing a poem, we can't write as well as American students because our
>
> vocabulary is limited. We don't know many good words to use. (First
>
> interview with Kim, September 2, 2010)

> -Two months later-

> I found vocabulary is not my problem in writing poems any more. I
>
> learned I can use simple words to create powerful poems. I love that and I

write more and more poems. I plan to publish a poetry book. (Second

interview with Kim, November 5, 2010)

I also found Tom's attitudes changed. In a reading discussion meeting, he made the

following comments:

This class makes me want to write more about myself, my family which I

haven't done much. My understanding of poetry has broadened. Poetry

can be in various forms. (Reading discussion with Tom after class,

November 10, 2010)

When I asked Tom to explain about "his understanding of poetry has broadened," he did

not want to continue. I could only guess that he was not ready to change some beliefs he

has held about poetry learning for decades. Then, in the third interview with Tom, I

asked him again about "his broadened understanding" of poetry, he told me he is willing

to adopt a variety of approaches to teach poetry and digital poetry is one of them. He is

no longer holding some old beliefs although he still believes "a solid background

knowledge of poetry" is crucial. Since we have students with different personalities,

backgrounds and needs, Tom has sensed it is teachers' responsibilities to give students

more choices about reading and writing. I was amazed to see Tom's attitude change as

he became so open-minded. I was also surprised to Tom's attitude change toward digital

poetry. In the first writing survey, Tom said that he thought images would limit poetry.

But after two months, when I asked him again about digital poetry, he said he was

hooked by this genre. Especially, he created a multimedia project for his teaching lesson:

poetry, music and history. He learned to use computer programs to improve his teaching.

He also recognized the value of media in motivating students. He said he felt like he has become an *"evangelist"* and eager to pull people in.

> Ning: I loved the project you shared with me. Have you shared with others?

> Tom: I shared it with Dr. Fox, you and in Amy's class and everybody I can find … I share with everyone I know. ….(laugh) those people's responses were all very kind to me.

> Ning : How do you feel? Do you want to keep doing it (digital poetry)?

> Tom: Definitely. I would like to do more. This thing is much more fun for me than you (the viewers). I feel like I am a religious person and try to get people join me. Like an **"evangelist"** laugh…

> Ning: I do feel you have a great attitude change.

> Tom: I will not deny that. I will not deny that. **"I am hooked"** The problem is it's a black hole. It will take much time. (Third interview with Tom, February 17, 2011)

Tom said he will teach digital poetry in his class in the future. He is more flexible than before. He used to just teach rules and "straight poetry," but now he will consider incorporating media in his class.

> Ning: So would you use digital poetry in your class when you have the chance to teach poetry again?

Tom: Yes, of course. Students will be much motivated. And I would say,

"You need to do some straight poetry. But you will also do some

combination." And students will respond well since they love the variety.

So I will try to use everything. (Third interview with Tom, February 17,

2011)

Tom's talking raised an important issue. Teachers still need to focus on students'

language. Digital poetry combines "poetry and media," but "poetry," the language part,

still plays an important role and cannot be ignored. When teachers are teaching digital

poetry, they need to also have student work on their "language."

An American student, Willy, who is currently teaching English in a public school

told me that he used to be a "poetry critic" but toward the end of the semester, he became

more willing to appreciate a poem in an aesthetic stance. It is interesting that Willy said,

he used to be "mean" when reading poems:

I used to critique and analyze poems and I enjoyed doing that…you know

? To be "mean" ..but now I will also consider the emotional aspect. (Third

interview with Willy, February 18, 2011)

Willy has also passed on what he learned from this course to his teaching. He had his

students read what they can relate to and find personal meanings. He had students share

their favorite poems. He hoped to encourage more students to learn poetry.

Willy: Many of my students don't care about poetry. I have been thinking

of ways to get them motivated. I have tried " **favorite poem project**."

Like what we said about " aesthetic reading." I let them find what they

like to read. They can bring up some personal meanings.

Ning: You gave them **" freedom**"?

Willy: Yes, that is what I am doing. I let them find something they can

relate to.

Ning: Do you also read poems differently?

Willy: I still like to "critique" poems. But yes, I also consider something

different. Like "**aesthetic reading**." (Second Interview with Willy,

November 15, 2010)

Willy recognized the importance of "choice and freedom" in teaching poetry and started

reading and teaching poems differently himself. "Aesthetic reading, freedom and choice"

were in some discussion topics we had in the poetry class. Willy was influenced by the

assigned readings and classroom discussion.

I learned that students experienced attitude changes from their talking in the

interviews, their written reflection, freewriting response to the assigned reading and my

observation. Students' attitudes changed because of the class assigned readings,

discussions, and doing poetry experiments/digital poetry on their own. Hung no more

thinks poetry is too difficult to approach since he gained confidence from doing and

sharing poetry. He is interested in reading and writing more poems as he found the

pleasure from it. Kim experienced using simple words to create powerful poems so she

no longer thinks international students cannot compose good English poems. Kim gained

confidence and planned to publish her own poetry book. Tom changed his attitude toward digital poetry as he himself experienced the pleasure and the power of creating digital poetry. Through reading and discussing the instructor's selected articles, their teaching beliefs also changed. Many of them realized the importance of "aesthetic reading" "freedom" and "choice" in teaching poetry.

Students Wrote Poetry to Cope with Life Issues

Several people wrote poems to express their frustration and worries as healing. Their pieces are emotional. Below is an example from Tom:

3:00 AM—Can't Sleep—Again

I want to sit with them at the dinner table and sense their state of mind and heart.

I want to hold them without a nagging awareness that the gutters need cleaning.

I want to show them how their lives began, the agonies, the anxieties, the stupidity, and the wonder.

I want to relive all those photo-ops enshrined on the walls of our home.

I want to tell my daughter her diabetes was all a joke and it will be cured next week.

I want to buy her the genius she lacks, so that all—or at least most—of her auditions will succeed.

I want her to know the depth and the power I felt holding her in my arms the day she wrecked her car in the high school parking lot.

I want to make her see—as if anyone could—how precious is her indomitable spirit.

I want to give my son my rib cage and tell him to breathe easy.

I want to shield his heart from all the hurts his skeleton couldn't, even if it were where it's supposed to be.

I want him to see that neither Yale nor Stanford nor Princeton nor Rice would have been as right for him as Kansas—and that speaks well of him.

I want to see him cry. I never want to see him cry.

I want to show him, low as the bar may be, how much better a man he is than I.

Tom could not finish reading this in the writing group. His tears welled up in his eyes. After class, I emailed to thank him for sharing and he responded as below:

> I fought back tears all the way home from class, and then I sat here in my apartment and cried. I sent the poem to my wife and she really liked it. I felt good and I am glad I wrote this poem. **I won't able to say these words if I am not taking this class.** (Email from Tom, September 22, 2010)

Tom and I have taken many classes together, but I have never heard him talk about his worries about his children. I was shocked and touched while hearing him read his list poem. It is real and honest. This poem seems to bring up another side of him to us. He said, "I won't able to say these words if I am not taking this class." Apparently, this poem is taken as an emotional outlet for him (shouting things in the wind.) Like Hung, Tom also took "Writing as Healing" class in spring 2010. Tom's use of poetry to "heal" is a continuous process. Tom understands the "healing" power of writing and has continued doing it in his life.

> Ning: Why do you think this piece helped you "heal?"
>
> Tom: It's the value certainly in clarity that comes with articulating thoughts and feelings. You realize things that you have not understood

before when you write them out. One of the sorts of "sedating" aspect of writing a poem. That's kind of more objective than the feeling you try to express. Also, just shouting the things in the wind, sometimes. (Third Interview with Tom, February 17, 2011)

Tom and I have had reading discussions in a coffee shop for class we took together since we entered the doctoral program. We often met before class and share our opinions about the assigned readings. Sometimes, we just chatted and caught up with each other's life. One day, Tom again talked about what this poem means to him in our "coffee talk."

This is sad. But right. We four (his family) are living apart….I don't want to be cliché, but …As I am writing this poem, my feeling is getting stronger. **I know how much I love them**. Family is the most important thing in my life. I am not close to my dad… I won't let that happen between my son and me. (Tom's talking in cafe, November 3, 2010)

Writing poetry seemed to reveal things for Tom. Writing poetry is a way for him to express feelings and let out of worries. Also, writing poetry made Tom understand his affection to his family. His home (where his wife lives) is four hours away from the university he is studying in, but Tom drives home as often as he can and he often arranges time to get all family members together. After the poetry class finished, Tom still read and wrote poems. In the third interview with him, he shared a poem with me. It is about his son's broken heart. Tom felt his boy's pain and he did not suffer less than his boy. I witnessed a loving father's deep connection with children. I was moved.

199

Another example is from a first-year-teacher, Helen. She wrote a list poem about her students after a long day of teaching. Below is Helen's list poem:

Second Door on the Right

They are homeless,

Experienced.

They are pregnant,

Destined.

They are sleep deprived,

Talented.

They are neglected,

Lovable.

They are bullied,

Affectionate.

They are pressured,

Outgoing.

They are scared,

Free spirited

They are worried,

Brave.

They are ill,

Funny

They are cynical,

Proud.

They are mine,

Second door on the right,

Straight on till mourning.

Helen said the poem is a therapeutic piece to vent about her students. As a former middle school teacher, I could feel her frustrations.

> The central idea of my poem is the complexity of young people. I wrote
>
> this poem after a long day of teaching and it basically served as a way for
>
> me to reflect and vent about my kids. The lines of the poem stem from my
>
> observations and conversations with my kids. It was actually therapeutic.
>
> (Helen's poetry demonstration, October 13, 2010)

In her poem, she described her students with many adjectives to present their different personalities, talents, problems, etc which also showed the joy, frustrations and issues she has experienced in teaching. The use of opposite words created tensions, such as "sleep deprived vs. talented," "neglected vs. lovable," and "bullied vs. affectionate." The altering of the repetition and rhythm was effective. The last three sentences are impressive: "They are mine, Second door to the right, Straight on till mourning." The readers could feel how she felt on that particular day. The instructor encouraged her to submit her poem to *English Journal*, a professional journal for English teachers, since that is a poem, which many teachers can relate to. Figure 4. 20 shows the analysis. Red text indicates negative words and blue text indicates positive words. And yellow highlighted text shows her emotion shift. This symbol ◊ means the analysis for the yellow highlighted text.

Figure 4. 20 *Helen's Poem " Second Door to the Right" and Analysis*

Helen's poem ***Second Door to the Right***	Analysis

They are **homeless,**
 	
Experienced.
 	
They are **pregnant,**
 	
Destined
 	
They are **sleep deprived**,
 	
Talented.
 	
They are **neglected,**
 	
Lovable.
 	
They are **bullied,**
 	
Affectionate.
 	
They are **pressured,**
 	
Outgoing.
 	
They are **scared,**
 	
Proud.
 	
They are **worried,**
 	
Brave.
 	
They are **ill,**
 	
Free spirited.
 	
They are **cynical,**
 	
Authentic
 	
They are **unconfident**
 	
Funny.
 	
They are mine, ◊
	1. Complex of different adjectives and emotions
	
	2. The use of binary (opposite words) presents both sides and creates tension
	
	  Red and Bold: Negative
	
	  Blue Italics: Positive
	
	3. The structure: the altering of the repetition and rhythm
	
	4. ◊Till the end, she "showed" the progression of the emotion on that particular day. " show not tell"

Dona, another first-year-teacher composed a poem to describe her father's affair years ago. Dona told us she suffered from self-blaming for years about her parents' divorce. When she was four years old, she one day accidently found a woman's hair band in her father's car and shouted it out to get attention. Her discovery led to her parents' big fight and then divorce. Dona thought her parents' divorce was her fault and that guilt was with her as she grew up. She was perplexed, confused and guilty for years. Although her father came back to them after a few years, that history was still a shadow in her childhood. She always thought, "If I didn't find the hair band, Dad wouldn't have been gone for years." Below is her poem titled "Two sided coin."

Two Sided Coin

Breathes, deep and quick—

Eyes close to block it all away—

The deepest peace it brings the mind

And yet, there is the pain…

Kiddy carpool, Disney songs,

"But Krystal! You always get the front!"

Kicking the seat with pink laces untied

Anything to get attention.

Daddy and Krissy don't look back—

never a part of the talks.

"…Too little …Doesn't understand…"

Thoughts are stirring;

They can't be tamed—

They sing so loud and quick:

A melody of all that could be…

Or a melody of foreboding…

A white cloud puff on the floor—

As if dropped down from the sky…

 The mind of a child never stops and questions

Now I sit and wonder why

I never even wondered why….

"Krissy! Your scrunchie!" was my eager shout.

There can be seen ahead

a glittering, sparkling dawn.

There can be seen ahead

a bleak and lonesome death…

Doors slamming, shouts of anger—

A confused little girl begins to cry

Mommy's packing—

Daddy is sad—

My big brave sister won't tell me why.

I go to bed alone and confused:

Why all this unhappiness

Because of me?

A coin may have two different faces—

but what if they be the same?

As you approach your

blackest dawn—

Which side of truth

will you be on?

Figure 4.21 below is the analysis about this issue. The yellow highlighted text indicated the use of dialogue. The reader can hear and see what happened in the car. This symbol◊ means the explanation for the yellow highlighted text. The green highlighted text indicates her description of the fight after her discovery of the "scrunchie." This symbol⊕ gives explanation of the green highlighted text. The pink highlighted text indicates Dona's changing points of view. This symbol * gives explanation of the pink highlighted text.

Figure 4.21 *Dona's Poem " Two Sides Coin" and Analysis*

Excerpt from Dona's poem	Analysis
Two Sides Coin	
"Krissy! Your scrunchie!" was my eager shout.◊	1. ◊This dialogue "showed" what she found and what she said in the car. The use of dialogue effectively put the reader in the scene.
Doors slamming, shouts of anger⊕	2. ⊕Dona showed what happened after she found the " scrunchie"
A confused little girl begins to cry	
Mommy's packing⊕	" slamming, shouts, pack" indicate that " her parents

205

Daddy is sad … ***A coin may have two different faces**** … As you approach your blackest dawn— Which side of truth will you be on?	fought" " Show not tell" 3. * Dona looked at the event in a more objective perspective She said, " A coin might have two different faces." She is considering another side of the story.

Dona explained that writing down the history (the poem) helped her see different perspectives of the same event. Dona said, "A coin might have two different faces." She stepped back and looked at the event in a more objective perspective and she was able to see a clear picture of what really happened. In her poetry demonstration, she told the class:

> I felt that it was extremely important to note <u>that my perspective in the whole situation has not only changed greatly, but that might be the most important aspect.</u> When I was little, I saw the situation very **egocentrically**, and therefore could not understand what had happened. As I got older, I actually started viewing the situation for how it might have felt for my father. Both are extremely important viewpoints, and to compare the viewpoint of a four-year-old girl to her father makes the situation more clear; at least for me. (Dona's poetry Demonstration, December 1, 2010)

206

Looking back on that night, Dona claimed that she could still hear the shouts but more than anything, she remembered the almost painful confusion of truly not being understood. She also realized that her confusion was caused from her "egocentricity." Writing poetry helped her revisit the history and clarify the confusion. Our pain results from not being able to understand. The action of writing enabled Dona to sort out things and achieve order of the painful memory.

In earlier section, I already talked about Hung's piece about his friend's death. Hung also wrote poetry to cope with the pain of losing his loved one. In *Opening Up-the Healing Power of Expressing Emotions*, Pennebaker (1997) states when people are less inhibited, they disclose more deeply and their disclosure helps them form new meaning or insight on their experience. Dona disclosed her deep thought of her parents' divorce, and then she was able to gain another insight into the history. Writing poetry also brought Tom relief for his worries of family. Because the disclosure phenomenon results in better mental health, poetry is therapeutic for students. Poetry helped Helen, Dona, Tom and Hung express what was troubling, and once this inhibition was put on the word, it was easier to deal with. When asking Tom about the relationship between poetry writing and healing power, he told me, "Writing poetry helped me achieve clarity." As the burden inside him could be released, so his thinking became uncluttered. The support from their peers also helped them walk through things that were troubling. Students felt comfortable to talk about and share thoughts. The feedback from the peers often provided comforts to students. Sharing with group members was a way of discharging pent-up feelings and psychic tension. Students found trustworthy, non-judgmental, supportive confidantes in the writing group. Also, writing poetry enabled students to see

their issues in a larger context. Hung saw a positive outlook of death. Hung saw his friend's life in the world as a beautiful memory and his son as a hope. This positive attitude helped him improve his mood. Poetry is therapeutic.

Students Experienced Self-Exploration

Through poetry, many students found their lives have changed and they discovered something different in themselves that they have never noticed before. They now see things differently. They also think they understand themselves more. Below are some quotes from the participants' talking related to this finding: poetry as self-exploration.

I found there are many different me in poetry. I can be dark, I can be energetic, and I can be …someone I want to be… I love to be abstract. Even thought I talked about my ex-boyfriend, nobody will understand when they read my words. (Second interview with Kim, November 5, 2010)

****

I've become a more careful observer. When I see a tree, I am thinking how to transfer it into a poem. Before, the tree is just a tree, but now, I can think it as a person or something else… Poets' eyes are different. (Second interview with Hung, November 4, 2010)

****

Writing poems really made me think through many things, my teaching,

my students, and myself. …I explored who I am and I learned something

more about myself. (Helen's talking in Reading discussion, October 13,

2010)

****

Writing [this] poem makes us think through my life. Being a parent is the

most rewarding thing. I realized how much I love my children. (Tom's

talking in cafe, November 3, 2010)

Most of the participants' poems are their personal stories. People love to write

about themselves. We have some stories we have been carried along in our lives but

have not had the chance to write them down. The poetry class became a place for

students to share personal journeys, to tell what they have been through, to connect

themselves with others. We know more about each individual from their poems. Writing

about our stories leads us to reflect deeply in our hearts and to listen to our thoughts.

Poet Kim Stafford (2010) told me when I did a podcast interview with him in October

2010, "Poetry is paying attention to our inner lives." The participants in our poetry class

have had chances to paying attention to their inner lives and put them on the page to

honor them. Telling the stories is a means for us to understand the value about the human

life and the meaning of being in the universe. Enjoying poetry/literature and taking it as

life long company enables us keep exploring and expressing our life experience.

From talking with some international students and my observations, they reported that poetry is a great genre for them to learn English. They learned some tools to use in their writing, such as metaphor, simile, and imagery. They also learned new vocabulary, better word choice, accurate grammar and pronunciation. Besides, they absorbed culture of the target language from poetry. Kim takes reading and writing poems as the best way for her to learn English:

> I think poetry is the best way to learn a second language. I can show how
> I feel in short sentences. My sentences are usually short and that is not
> good in academic writings but short sentence can be a great poem. I really
> love poems; actually poem is my favorite genre. I am learning how to use
> "Show not Tell" and how to use better words in my poems. (Second
> Interview with Kim, November 5, 2010)

Hung attributed his improvement to the immersion of poetry writing and talking about poetry. He also thinks the writing group helped him a lot. He told me writing group was his favorite part of the class since he was able to fix his writings problems and sharpened his writing skills from the peers' suggestions.

> I found my language has improved since I have more chances to write, to
> think and to talk in English. I am still obtaining language, you know. I
> learned some good skills to use in my poems, such as metaphor, simile,
> and word choices. I learned how to write better. You guys helped me a

lot… it's also good for my pronunciation to read aloud poems. (Hung's

talking on writing group, October 6, 2010)

When working in the writing group, Hung always asked those two Americans for help

when he was unsure of some words' pronunciation. He was careful about word choice in

the revision. He tried to use some poetry tools in his poems.

In the *English Language Teaching Journal*, Hess (2003) states "A poem can be

used as a vehicle for thought, and as an instrument for shaping language" (p. 19). Poems

are short but they are powerful. Students are able to express their feelings in an efficient

way, using strong words and phrases. As the international students read more and more

poetry, they acquired more effective word choices to use in their own poems. As the

international students wrote more poetry, they were shaping language and accumulating

knowledge of the target language.

Poetry is also a great material for learning the culture of the target language.

Language and culture can never be separated. Poems reflect the poets' inward and

outward worlds: poets write poems to tell their stories and their insights; poets also tell

their readers how they are influenced by social relationships, the economics, and the

politics of the times. Learning poetry enabled the international students get the insights

into the culture of the target language. David learned some cultural background of the

U.S. of the 1950s by reading "Transistor Radio." Hung, Kim and Fem learned the US

culture while experiencing and talking about poems with American students. If they keep

reading more American poems, they will likely understand more about American

cultures.

International Students were Motivated and Engaged in English Learning while Doing

Digital Poetry

Kim talked about how powerful it is to arise people's emotions by incorporating sounds and images with poetry. Digital poetry also seems to be more effective in expressing her emotion. Images help people generate ideas and produce words. Visual in poetry has great power in language learning.

> When I read the poem on the paper, the feeling is flat. When I create a digital poetry, I feel I am placed in a 3D movie theater. I can hear the sounds; I can see the images… It is more powerful. I really love it. I will cry when I watch movies, but I don't cry when I read books. When I am doing my digital poetry, I often write the poem first and then google for pictures. **But when I am stuck at one point of the text, I will look for the image and have images help me get ideas the words**. Images are helpful in my writing. They gave me ideas. Like the poetry of my dog. I had difficulty with the 3ʳᵈ stanza, so I found the photo of rainbows first. Looking at the image of the rainbow helped me **produces some words.** (Second interview with Kim, November 5, 2010)

And Hung also reported digital poetry helped him in language learning:

> When I did my digital poetry poem 5, there were many things going on in my brain. I was thinking what photos to use; I am thinking how to arrange the words to go with the images. I was revising back and forth..the

thinking process helped my language learning. (Second interview with

Hung, November 4, 2010)

When asking about their process of doing digital poetry, David, Hung, Fem and Kim told me that the images and music helped them express thoughts, as well as generate new ones. In digital poetry, English language learners were able to relate to poetry in new and engaging ways, as they read aloud, responded to, and integrated technology in their study of poetry. Digital poetry "powered them up" as they earned confidence in playing around with the arrangement of the images, sounds, and text.

Take David for example, he emotionally responded to a poem written by Turkey's first president and interpreted it through his own experience. David took an active role in experiencing literature. Rosenblatt's reader response theory (1978) recognizes that meaning making is a transaction between the text and the reader. David apparently constructed meanings by using visuals and sounds to meet his needs. He might be limited in expressing himself in English, but he had found a way to "turn up" his voice. When students are doing digital poetry, they are more engaged and confident as they develop their reading and writing skills. Digital poetry gave David a stronger voice. And students with stronger voices are far more likely to build on this strength.

Digital Poetry shapes cultural identity and sense of self, which is also beneficial for language learning. David shared his nation's history, his affections for his nation and his dreams. Fem shared her family story. Hung shared his childhood story, his journey to the US, and same examples are among all the international students. They were finding their identities through poetry. For most of the international students,

maintaining self-identity is a big challenge while adjusting to a new culture. Poetry is a way for international students to remind themselves of their roots and build their cultural identity. The combination of music, photos, and texts revealed much more than hearing them talk about where they come from. As well, digital poetry helped me see who they really are. Technology enabled the international students to tell their stories with music, photos, and video, but they realized that process itself is the important part. When students use multimedia to complete assignments, Carroll & Carney (2005) stated, "All the pieces, technological and pedagogical, come together."

Cummins (2001) used "identity text" to describe the text which the English language learners use to show their identities. Cummins et al., (2007) found when students are given opportunities to share their *identity text* with peers, family, teachers and the general public through digital media, they are likely to make gains in self-confidence, self-esteem, and a sense of community belonging through positive feedback. When identity text is built, the English Language Learners easily engage in language learning and learn the language more effectively.

Summary

This study begins with the questions, "What happens when graduate students participate in a poetry class?" Through the words and experiences of these American and international graduate students, I have woven a picture of their experience. According to my interviews with them, and my observation in class, their experience shared the following qualities:

(1) Students' attitudes toward poetry and digital poetry changed from negative to positive.

(2) Students wrote poetry to cope with life issues.

(3) Students experienced self-exploration.

(4) International students learned English through reading and writing poetry.

(5) International students were motivated and engaged in English learning while doing digital poetry.

There are many stories lurking in the classroom and there are many sides of a story. Each story is fascinating and intrigues me to learn more. Some stories are surprising and some support my previous beliefs: Participants who were against digital poetry have become willing to try it and participants no more feel poetry is daunting; several poems they composed were therapeutic; international students found poetry is great for L2 learning and some poetry experiments were successful but some were not.

This class could be deemed as a success; however, there were some negative things occurring with the students. Beside their fear of poetry and David dropped when the semester started, some students had different opinions about the course requirement and activities. One of them told me he thought the digital poetry was a forced assignment. It was not necessary to apply digital poetry in three poems (the class required students to compose at least three digital poems). He thought some poems just do not need images and music. He made himself compose three to meet the requirement

215

but actually he just felt one of them is good. One student told me he did not like writing group that much. He preferred to share work in the whole class since he could hear more people's opinions. One student told me that she did not like the "Think Aloud" activity since she felt that was too scary.   If she was picked to be the "on the spot" person, she could not say a word in front of the class.

Also not all the poetry experiments worked well. Many students listed Poem Seven "side-effect poem" as their least favorite experiment. Here are some of their comments:

- I have a hard time composing this poem. I was struggling. I didn't like how it turned out.
- Why should I put "side-effects may include…" in sentences to write a poem? I felt I was constrained in composing this poem.
- The commercial clip Dr. Fox showed us was not funny at all. I did not understand American jokes. I did not know why you were laughing.
- This assignment doesn't make sense to me.
- It is not a poem.

The instructor also commented in class that he did not see much impressive work for this experiment. The instructor restated the importance of "play" and "risk taking." This process is a worthy learning experience.

In the next chapter, I conclude with several lessons learned detailed from my research findings. I give implications and recommendations to educators. I also offer suggestions for future research. In the end, I give my final thoughts.

CHAPTER FIVE: IMPLICATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Purpose of the Study

Procedures

Summary of Results

Lessons Learned

Other Implications and Recommendations for Instruction

Suggestions for Future Research

Limitations

Final Thoughts

This chapter offers lessons learned from the findings detailed in Chapter Four. I make recommendations and implications based on what I have learned from this study. I first do a brief overview of this study, including the purpose, procedures and summary of the results from Chapter Four. I explain the major findings, which can be drawn from this study of students and their instructor who participated in this study. I also explore the pedagogical implications for educators who wish to teach poetry and incorporate media in the classroom. I offer suggestions for future research, and I end this chapter with some final thoughts.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study, "Poetry, Media, and, Second Language Acquisition" was to discover what happened to the learning, writing, reading, thinking and

technology-use of international and American graduate students when they participated in a graduate level poetry class. The poetry learning was generally defined as reading and composing poetry in various modes, such as written text and digital poetry. I was interested in finding out:

Poetry Reading and Writing

- What are students' experiences with and attitudes toward poetry reading and writing when beginning and completing the course?

- What happens when students work in peer response groups?

Poetry and Media

- What are students' experiences with and attitudes toward digital poetry?

- What happens when students compose their digital poetry?

Poetry and Second Language Acquisition (SLA)

- What are the influences of poetry learning on international students' learning of English?

- What are the influences of digital poetry composing on international students' English learning?

Procedures

This study is a qualitative study (Creswell 2007; Denzin & Lincoln 2000), and I used the combination of two approaches: the case study approach and phenomenology which means describing the case (the class) and exploring the experiences of the participants. The research took place in a Midwestern university, with a diverse

enrollment of 30,200 students, including undergraduate and graduate students. The participants were eight graduate students and their instructor in the class "Writing, Reading and Teaching Poetry" fall 2010 semester. The consent form was distributed in the first class meeting and they all agreed to participate in this study. One of the students, David, dropped the class after the first meeting, but he was still willing to work with me individually. Four of the students are Americans and four are international students. The major data collection took place during 2010-fall term over the course of 16 weeks. Each class was observed and recorded; writing samples were collected, and the students were interviewed. The material I collected included students' freewriting responses to the assigned readings, poems and reflections, digital poems and reflections, teaching projects, photos I took during class, videos I took during class, recorded interviews, notes on informal communication, the instructor's comments and entries in my journals for observation and reflection. A writing survey was giving in the first class meeting on August 25th, 2010. The first interview was held in early September 2010, the second interview took place in middle November 2010, and the follow-up interview was held in February 2011.

Summary of Results

The exploration of the three categories of research questions led to themes that reveal insights into how poetry and digital poetry work in students' language learning and personal lives. Five major findings of "Poetry, Media and Second Language Acquisition" are (1) Students' attitudes toward poetry and digital poetry changed from negative to positive; (2) Students wrote poetry to cope with life issues; (3) Students experienced self-

exploration; (4) International students learned English through reading and writing poetry; and (5) International students were motivated and engaged in English learning while doing digital poetry

Students' Attitudes Toward Poetry and Digital Poetry Changed from Negative to Positive

The international students, Hung, Fem, Kim and David experienced attitude changes in poetry learning. At the beginning of this course, most of them felt anxious about poetry. Hung and Fem thought poetry learning would be a great challenge and David even dropped the course because of the fear and the lack of confidence. All of them had unpleasant past experience, and they were unfamiliar with this genre. After a few months, Hung and David turned to be confident in poetry learning. They no longer took poetry as a difficult genre, which only a few talented people can enjoy. Fem became more comfortable with sharing her personal thoughts. Kim no longer thought only Americans can write good English poems and she is interested in writing more poems and she has planned to publish her poetry book. An American student, Tom, experienced a turn-around attitude change toward digital poetry. He first thought images and music would limit poetry; however, toward the end of the course, he turned to love digital poetry and claimed "he was hooked" by it and he felt like he become an "evangelist" who wants to draw more people in doing digital poetry.

Another American student, Willy who is currently teaching English in a public school told me that he used to be a "poetry critic" but toward the end of the semester, he changed his attitudes and became willing to appreciate a poem in an aesthetic stance. He no longer just teaches students to analyze and critique poems. He has had his students

read what they can relate to and find personal meanings. Willy has passed on what he learned from this course to his own students.

In sum, most students experienced attitudes changes over the semester. There were several factors, such as the assigned readings, classroom discussions, different poetry experiments and pleasant group work.

Students Wrote Poetry to Cope with Life Issues

Several students wrote poems to express their pains, frustrations and worries as healing. Hung, wrote about his best friend's death and poetry writing helped him see "death" in a different perspective. It is not just about sorrow and pain any more, his friend's death means "memory and hope in his son" to Hung. Dona gained another perspective in her parents' divorce through poetry. She used to think she was responsible for the divorce and felt guilty. Yet, through writing and revisiting the history, she was able to sort out the confusion in her head and see the history more clearly. Writing enables us to link feelings with events in details and achieve clarity; writing helps us discover the wholeness of things; and writing helps us to bring the bigger context into the issues…(DeSalvo, 1999). Willy wrote about his father's death. He claimed writing poetry had a "cathartic effect" on him. According to Mazza (2001/2003), the poetic experience provides a sense of meaning and control over disturbing events. Poetry empowered those students to be the authors of their painful history and be able to move on. Mazza (2001/2003) also states that poetry provides a release of strong feelings, such as worries, anxiety, angry, and confusion. Tom wrote poetry about his family. He worried about his children's health and studies. He felt bad about each family member living apart in different cities. He took poetry writing as an outlet to express his feelings.

221

Tom learned more about what family means to him and how much he cares about them, which makes him cherish each moment they can get together. Tom said, "I know this is cliché, but I realized how much I love them."

Helen wrote poetry to express her frustration in teaching. She took poetry as a way to release the stress. Poetry has had great impact on those participants' lives. Fem said reading poetry has become her way to regain breath in a busy life. Alschuler (2000) states that poetry can be a new leisure or relaxation skill. After the course, Fem still reads poetry and she takes poetry reading as her time to slow down, think and regain energy.

In sum, when writing poetry, students were less inhibited, they disclosed more deeply and their disclosure led to positive thoughts of their issues. Students were able to bring in a bigger context into their issues, see things in a more objective perspective and achieve order in their chaotic mind. They also gained the support from peers. The community comforted them as they move on their journeys.

Students Experienced Self-Exploration

In this study, many students found their lives have changed and they discovered something different in themselves through poetry and digital poetry. They started to see things differently. They found they have understood themselves more. Kim thought she has different personalities in poetry; Hung found he has become a more careful life observer; and Helen said poetry makes her think through many things in her life, such as teaching, family and herself. And she got new understanding of her life. This study supports Sherry's statement (2003, cited in Mazza), "Poetry has its power to reveal and illuminate" (p.4).

International Students Learned English through Reading and Writing Poetry

In interviews and formal communications, international students reported that poetry is a great genre for them to learn English. My analysis of their artifacts also led to this finding. They learned English and had some improvement in their language through reading and writing poetry. They learned some tools to use in their writing, such as metaphor, simile, and imagery. They also learned new vocabulary, better word choice, accurate grammar and pronunciation. Besides, they absorbed culture of the target language from poetry. Some factors figured into their success, including anxiety released, intensive readings, extensive writings, small group work, the instructor's comments, their individual conference with the instructor, and peers' feedback. My findings coincided with some SLA (Second Language Acquisition) theories, such as Vygotsky's (1978) social interaction and ZPD, the zone of proximal development), Krashen's (1982) "Affective Filter Hypothesis" and Swain's (1998) "Noticing" and "Modifying" theory.

Krashen (1987) believes the "affective variables," such as, motivation, self-confidence and anxiety, play a facilitative and important role in second language acquisition. When the filter is low, the positive affective factors arise, and then the effective acquisition will take place. In my study, the friendly and comfortable learning environment helped lower international students' anxiety; they were not afraid of making mistakes in class. They were motivated and engaged in reading, writing and sharing poetry and they earned self-confidence. Fem reported that working in the small group helped her release the anxiety. She said, "When the semester started, I was very anxious. But gradually, I felt relaxed in class. I knew I would be fine. Also, I knew my group

would help me improve; they were not there to judge my work." Hung also said he felt comfortable in class, he took his writing group as his family and he earned confidence while sharing poems and digital poetry. He said, "I didn't need to worry if I would make mistakes. I felt comfortable. I loved people's feedback. I felt great working in class."

Vygotsky's (1978) Sociocultural Theory states that cognition can best be understood in a social faculty. A language learner gains knowledge from affordance in the environment. Vygotsky also claims that through an advanced learner's help, a learner could reach to ZPD—the zone of proximal development. In other words, a language learner develops ability to do certain task through an advanced learners' scaffolding (assistance and guidance). In the poetry course, Fem, Hung and Kim claimed that they learned much from American peers. They learned better word choice and correct grammar, etc. For example, Kim said she learned to fix her word, "crystal candy" in her digital poem since this word does not make sense to Americans. Hung learned to fix some grammatical errors in his poems such as "care" to "care for" in his poem. They could also correct some of their pronunciation issues when they read their poems aloud.

Swain's (1982) " Noticing Hypothesis" means that language learners notice the gap between what they can say and what they intend to say. The awareness enables them to take action to modify their language. When I talked with the international students in the interview, all of them mentioned the feeling of "I could not fully express what I wanted to say in English." They did take actions (look up in the dictionary, Google online, or ask questions) and tried to convey the meaning. When they found some words or phrases they used did not work, they modified them to reach better communication. The "Noticing" and "Modifying" occurred very often in their poetry revisions, writing

224

group discussion and class discussion. For example, David looked up in the online dictionary for some translation when he tried to describe his country's independence war to me; Hung asked the group how to describe an objective with strong protection. He learned a word, "bullet-proof."

 International students learned not only the linguistics aspects of English but also American culture from readings and discussions. For examples, David learned some cultural background of the U.S. of the 1950s by reading "Transistor Radio." Hung, Fem and Kim learned some of American culture after watching a side-effect commercial clip and the class discussion. They also learned the American humor or sarcasm.

This course also helped students develop critical thinking and analytical writing skills. The instructor provided a variety of ways to improve students' analytical writing ability, including response to the assigned reading, reading discussion, reflection on the writing process, and teaching inquiry project. According to Johnson (1966), analytical writing is that writers read and evaluate the text, distinguish the importance of the text, and relate one idea and its details to another. In analytical writing, writers need to do critical thinking when read the text, then present their opinions and explain reasons to support their statement.

Fox (2011) states, expressive language helps develop critical thinking. In a variety of classroom assignments (freewritng response to assigned readings, poem reflection, teaching projects, poetry demonstration, and final synthesis project), students were engaged in wrestling with words and thoughts, synthesizing and analyzing, presenting ideas (whole ideas) and fixing individuals (words/phrases) and linking relationships and connecting ideas. All the writing skills mentioned cultivate mature

writers in the academic area. Britton (1975) states that the writing continuum helps build the foundation for critical thinking. The writing continuum is a process from expressive writing, which is personalized and self-revealing to transactional writing, which is public, explicit and product-oriented. Forcing expressive writing into a specific writing format helps the students begin to distinguish between opinion, assertion, and grounded argument. In other words, students are able to make thinking visible on page and they are more likely to revise ideas, expand ideas, connect ideas and evaluate ideas (Fox, 2011; Britton, 1975; Fulwiler, 1979). Just like Fox (2011) said, "Such active manipulations of language and ideas constitute 'critical thinking'" (p. 6).

Below is an excerpt from Hung's freewriting response to Atwell's "Finding Poetry Everywhere." I did the analysis based on the notion of analytical writing.

Excerpt from Hung's freewriting	Analysis (follow the numbers to see corresponding analysis.)
(1) I think poetry is a great source from which a world of feelings stems. (2) I often write a poem when I have a sense that I have to speak out something; I have to articulate a particular state of my emotions. In other words, poetry is an outlet for my feelings burst. (3) For example, when I saw an old man dragging on an empty street on a blistering day, I searched my mind and associated the image with that of a lonely leaf lying on a sidewalk when night fell. That was when poetry jumps in and scaffolds my emotions.	(1) Statement of his opinions (2) Connection with previous experience (3) Giving examples and relevant reasons (4) Statement of his opinions about the text (5) Personal examples (6) Embedding the quote to strengthen his argument. Overall, Hung organized, developed and expressed his critique of the statement "Poetry could be anything." Hung demonstrated

(4) Yes, I agree that we can write about almost everything. Poetry can be about any theme or subject. (5) I've written about dreams, my childhood, my daily routines, my observations, recent TV news, and so on. "Poetic topics were not limited to love, despair, roses, and rainbows. Poetry could be about anything" (p. 81)	"summary," " synthesis," and " connecting ideas."

In the freewriting response, Hung organized his thoughts, developed and expressed his critique of the statement "Poetry could be anything." Hung demonstrated "synthesis," "analysis" "embedding ideas" and "making connections" which are crucial skills in analytical writing.

International Students were Motivated and Engaged in English Learning While Doing Digital Poetry

In digital media, language learners likely make gains in self-confidence, self-esteem, and a sense of community belonging through sharing their cultures (Cummins, 2001; Peyton& Ridd, 2001; Rosaen, 2003). In this study, international students shared the history and culture of their nations through digital poetry. Hung composed "Where I belong" and David introduced me a Turkish poem and composed poetry for the Turkish Independence War. Fem did not write about her country, but she embedded Turkish music in her poems to present her family story. They used digital media to present themselves, their roots and their identities. The combination of music, photos, and texts revealed much more than hearing them talk about where they come from.

In my study, digital poetry has "turned up" international students' voices, which means the images and music made their message stronger, and they built confidence in themselves – the media enhanced their communication ability. They gained pleasure from composing digital poems. The images and music filled up some gaps in the communication. Their pieces were personal and unique. When making and watching digital poetry, they are active learners who took control in the meaning making. I also learned that the skills in editing a digital poem could be transferred in writing rhetoric. Students learned writing rhetoric such as purpose, audience, voice, organization, theme, and flow.

Digital poetry is a chance for students to play with music, image, and language. They were motivated and engaged in the composing process. Their thinking, writing and language learning has improved while they are having fun. Gardner's (1993) Multiple Intelligences (MI) raised our awareness of students' different aptitudes, learning styles and needs. Digital poetry could meet the students' needs, as it is a combination of text, image and sound (visual, linguistic, kinesthetic, musical capacities). My findings also supported Thoman & Jolls (2005)'s insights that incorporating media makes students more motivated and engaged in learning and that also increases students' self-esteem and confidence.

Lessons Learned

In this section, I offer some lessons learned from this study, coming from the findings in Chapter Four.

Lesson One: Teachers Should Give Students Freedom and Choice in Poetry Learning

Teachers should give students freedom to read and write what they love. Personal interest is the factor that makes students life-long learners. Teachers should strive for flexible teaching. Students get pleasure from choosing what they love to read and write. Over-emphasizing the cognitive analysis and interpretation of poetry rather than response (Hastings, 1997) results in more avoidance and complaints about poetry. When teachers believe that poetry analysis must be taught and that a single "correct" interpretation exists for any poems, then they, too, avoid poetry. It can become a vicious cycle when students hate poetry and teachers become afraid of teaching poetry. Teachers often fall back on what they know from their own in school experience (Stuart, 2010), and pass the unpleasant experience to their students. In David's case, I gave him the freedom to find his own ways into poetry. I believe he will be an effective teacher when he teaches poetry in the future. In the last meeting, David stated that,

> The best part was you introduced me to some good examples of poems, and told me in what way a good poem can be written. Then, you gave me the opportunity to choose my way. It was a good way to teach poetry. (David's talking in the meeting, December 3, 2010)

Inside the graduate level poetry course, although there were guidelines for the assignments, they were not rigid rules to restrict students' thinking and writing. Those themes were used as a springboard to generate students' writing ideas. The instructor often said in class, "If you meet dead ends, you can write something else. And you need to explain in the reflections. Not all the experiments will be successful, but we have to try and see what happens." The instructor's openness made students feel they were in a

free and safe learning environment. For one experiment, we saw students bring in

different topics of poem. For example, when students were required to write a digital

poem about memory, they brought in poems about family, pets, siblings, traveling, and

journey. We set poem eight as a free poetry week. There were no guidelines for this

poem, and students just wrote whatever they like. Students seemed to enjoy the freedom

very much. When I asked the participants what their favorite poetry experiment was,

many of them said they love poem five (digital poem about memory) and poem eight (no

theme). For example, Hung said:

> Poem eight is my favorite since I could do whatever I liked. I enjoyed the
>
> freedom of writing about what interests me. I got annoyed about the
>
> election, so I wrote about it for my poem eight and I loved it. (Second
>
> interview with Hung, November 4, 2011)

Lesson Two: Teachers Should Encourage Students to "Play" in Poetry Learning and

Facilitate a "Risk-Taking" Environment

One of the assumptions in this poetry course is "Poetry is PlayPlayPlay." Beside

the choice of writing, students told me they enjoyed this class because they could "play"

and earned pleasure from it. In class observations, I jotted down their quotes from

classroom discussion, chatting during breaks, and writing group discussions.

> " I love *playing* with the words. It is interesting to see how many different
>
> meanings we can create from the same wordpool" (Hung's talk in
>
> classroom discussion, September 8, 2010).

" I had a great time doing my side effect poem. I *played* with the words

trying to make it funny" (Informal talk with Tom, November 3, 2010).

" I love playing with images…Poem 5 is my favorite because I can *play*

with images. I love to see poems with images. You know? I am a visual

learner and I feel digital poetry is more powerful than written poems."

(Second interview with Kim, November 5, 2010).

"Language is an amusing toy to *play* with." (Kim's freewriting response,

September 7, 2010).

Vygotsky (1997) stated the role of "play" in language development: *play*

influences learners in both cognitive and psychological aspects. When students have fun,

their anxiety is released and affective filter (Krashen, 1987) is lower so that they can

learn better. In the poetry course, the instructor encouraged students to play and provided

a safe ground for *risk-taking*. His openness of embracing mistakes promoted students'

creativity. Students grew and learned from the process when they were willing to try new

things.

This study provides ten poetry experiments that we used in the graduate poetry

course. Interested teachers can adopt some of them in their own class. Teachers should

also invent or search some new approaches since teachers themselves also need to take

risks in adopting new strategies. Also, teachers should remember that some experiments

may not be successful, but the process itself is a kind of learning.

Lesson Three: Teachers Should Let Students Know That "Poetry Is Anything But Lofty."

Many people think poetry is lofty, and only a few people can enjoy it. From the writing survey collected in the first class and my first interviews with the participants, many of them described how people have been intimidated by it, or people have felt they have to be well educated in order to be able to access it or walk into that world. For example, Hung in the first interview told me that poetry is for *elite* people and only a few people can understand it. And Fem told me in the first interview that she thought poetry is a myth and only people with special talent can enjoy it. Poets in many people's mind are associated with "artistic, elite, and talented."

However, after taking this class, students had different understanding toward poetry. They realized poems hang out where life is. Hung claimed that he can find poetry everywhere in his ordinary life. Kim said everyone is a poet. I have seen participants write about family, home, their pets, facebook, elections, TV commercials, etc… all of the topics are what their daily lives and personal stories. Many of students in our poetry class came to the class with misconceptions and fear of poetry. But as time passed by, they found themselves not afraid of poetry and even enjoy it more. By breaking down the wall between them and poetry, poetry became part of their lives.

Lesson Four: Teachers Should Not Expect All Students Will Have Much Improvement in a Short Time.

Teachers should not expect all their students will experience success in a short time. I learned from this study that students might not improve constantly and sometimes they "move forward and move backward" along the way. For example, Fem showed

improvement in her poem nine, a dialogue poem where she used specific terms to present "Show not Tell," yet, in her poem ten, she still used very general terms.

Poem Nine	Poem Ten
Excerpt from Poem nine (edited) *Movies and Books* How can you not see <u>Scout</u> sitting On <u>Atticus's lap</u> Don't you hear <u>Tess</u> crying For losing <u>Angel</u>. Don't you feel the accent of <u>Pip</u> talking to <u>Estella</u>	Excerpt from poem ten (edited) *For a Better World* <u>We</u> thought the sea would take away <u>all the</u> <u>trash</u> <u>We</u> thought soil would consume <u>all the dirt</u> <u>We</u> threw away, we wasted, and we trashed <u>We</u> fought, we bombed, and we killed
Note: The underlined words are specific terms. Fem showed her improvement here.	Note: The underlined words are still very general. She did not improve constantly.

Although Fem did not improve much in her language over the semester, she showed significant change in her attitudes. She told me she still kept reading poems every day and she is more comfortable with poetry. Learning is a process, and I believe her improvement is on a continuum.

*Lesson Five: Teachers Should Create a Learning Community*

When I asked the participants about their favorite part of class, many of the students told me it was the writing group. In the writing group, they took turns to read

aloud their works, and got feedback and suggestions from their peers. The writing group really worked well in our poetry class. They were eager to share their work and get feedback from their peers.

The class atmosphere was usually relaxing and friendly. I could often hear laughter from groups. I think one of the reasons is because of the instructor's sense of humor, and another reason might be the classroom setting. We were using a computer lab as our classroom. When we did not work on the computer for freewriting, we pulled our chairs to the front of the classroom and make a circle. When we got together, we were able to face to each other. I often saw Dona and Helen just sit on the floor. Some other times, Dona lay on the floor when watching people do poetry demonstration. Everyone seemed relaxed in this class. I believe a reason for us to freely share personal stories is that we trusted each other. We belonged to this group and gained support from it. There was no need to hide or to pretend. This class grew as a trusted community. Figure 5.1 shows photos taken from the class.

Figure 5.1 *Photos taken from the class*

| Students sat in a circle | Students sat and lay on the floor |
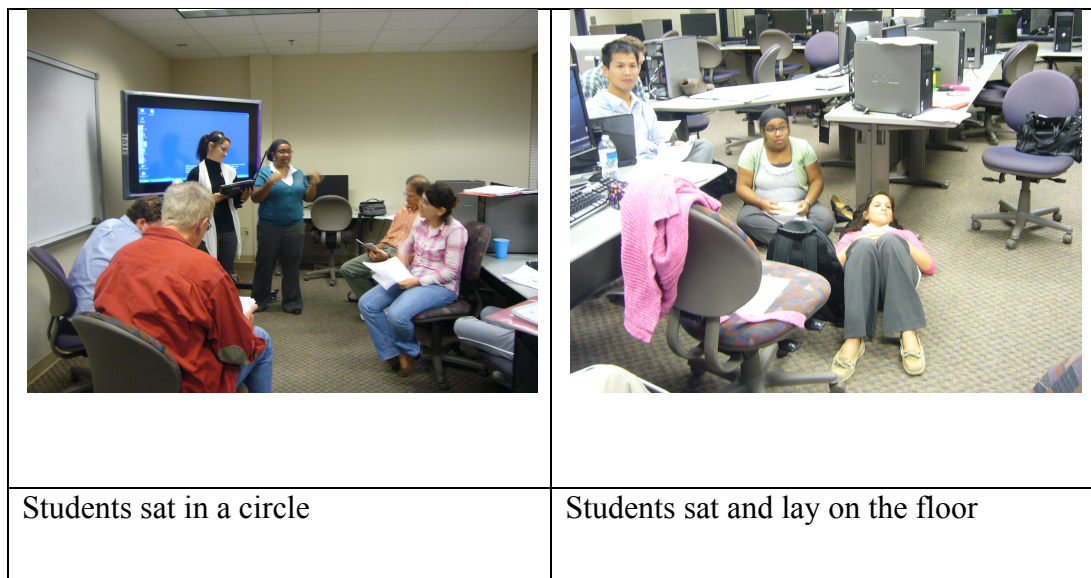
The quotes below also prove that students enjoyed being in the learning community:

"My group members always give me good suggestions. Tom is like a

father, and you and Dona are my sisters. We are like a family" (Hung,

November 4, 2010).

"I love the feeling of reading my poem aloud and I love getting different

opinions."(Willy, September 15, 2010).

"I really like my writing group. They are so smart and funny. I can get

many writing ideas from them." (Fem, February 18, 2010).

"I really love this kind of collaborative learning. I also do it in my class."

(Dona, September 8, 2010).

Dona started doing writing groups in her own classroom because her pleasant

experience in this poetry class.

Lesson Six: Teachers Should Model How to Read and Compose a Poem and Create Digital Poetry

"Think aloud" was discussed as the class's main theme as they demystified poems

in class. There is difficulty in many poems, but it is essential to let students know there

are strategies to break down the difficulties and how to apply those strategies. It is

important to guide students through the reading process and gain meaning from it.

Teachers should encourage students to keep trying, staying with the text and gaining meanings from poems. If students have chances to keep practicing, they will be able to internalize the knowledge and it will become a habit when they approach any poems. They will be able to enjoy poems and gain pleasure from poems.

Teacher modeling worked well in the poetry demonstration and list poem. For poetry demonstration, the instructor shared several drafts of his poem and talked about the writing process. (See Appendix D) He successfully demystified the complexity of composing a poem and let students understand how a poem grows. It was also great to hear him read his published list poems aloud. Students learned how to compose list poems from his modeling. It is wonderful that the instructor can read and write with students.

Here are some of the concepts of teaching poetry as teacher modeling: (1) Make thinking visible as modeling and (2) Read and write with students as modeling. Atwell (1998) said that here is only one requirement for the teacher who wants to teach poetry: "Read it."

> Read it and be amazed at what contemporary poetry does: this is the poetry we never got to in high school and college. Read it and understand how contemporary poetry means, how it reflects and resonates our lives and feelings. Read it for yourself first, to fall in love with it. Than begin to collect the poems you love to share with your students. (Atwell, 1998)

> As for reading and writing as modeling, Wilhelm (2001) mentioned that kids have motivational zone of proximal development as well as cognitive one. If we wish them to develop new interest, we must assist them by starting from the interests that they already

possess" (Wilhelm, p. 35). That is Vygotsky's ZPD theory: Teachers offer scaffolding instruction to support the learner's development and providing support structures to get to that next stage or level. An important aspect of scaffolding instruction is that the scaffolds are temporary. As the learner's abilities increase the scaffolding provided by the more knowledgeable other is progressively withdrawn. Finally the learner is able to complete the task or master the concepts independently (Chang, Sung, & Chen, 2002, p. 7).

Teacher modeling also worked well in our digital poetry. Although I uploaded some tutorials on the Blackboard, many students were still afraid of trying it. But after I demonstrated how to use Photostory 3 in class, students felt safe to try. I also walked around to offer help while they were working on the computers in class. The teacher's modeling and troubleshooting helped students create and complete works. They built the competence through teacher's scaffolding. For assignments with technology challenges, it is crucial for the teacher to walk them through the process step by step. Teachers can never assume that students will know how to use technology on their own or they have already known it. I saw many students struggle with photo and music formatting. I also learned that teachers should be careful about the technology language. Many people are still not familiar with common technology terms, such as mb, gb, pixel, convert, export, etc. Photostory 3 is recommended to be used in the beginner class, as it is the easiest. But Photostory 3 has limited editing effects. When students become more tech savvy, they can try iMovie, which is more complicate. iMovie provides amazing video editing tools.

Lesson Seven: Teachers Should Encourage Students to Do Various Revisions

It is important to know how a poem grows, develops and changes. Teachers can encourage students to date and number each revision of a poem and share the process with the class. It is beneficial for students to reflect on their thinking. The instructor encouraged students to try different revisions. He told the class, "Your revision might not be better than the original draft and they would be different and you need to show different possibilities." Understanding the difference each reformulation makes helps students develop flexible thinking. When making a digital poem, they need to record where and how they obtained the idea, where they collected the image, why they chose certain images and music, the sequence of making the poem, how image and words interacted and any problems they encountered. The reflection promotes deeper engagements in the process and the conversation within their minds helps students develop language skills.

Lesson Eight: Teachers Should Focus Both on "Input" and "Output"

"Output" (Swain, 1998) is as important as "Input" (Krashen, 1987) and teachers should give students equal amount of time in reading and writing poetry. "Input" indicates everything that language learners receive, see, hear and read. It can be both implicit and explicit. Krashen (1987) emphasized the importance of "input" and took it as the main factor of language learning. However, Swain's (1998) theory somehow contradicts Krashen's (1987) theory. Swain (1998) stresses the importance of language output such as speaking ability and writing ability. Swain (1998) states that effective learning means learners can produce correct language. From this dissertation study as

well as my own learning experience, I learned "output" and "input" are equally important. All the international students in this study and I have only read English poems in our native countries and never experienced English poetry writing. Our education merely focused on poetry reading. That did not have a positive influence on us. When international students write poems (work on the output), they have the chance to actively construct the knowledge.

Lesson Nine: Teachers Should Give ESL/EFL Students Opportunities to Compose Poems About Their Homes, Themselves or Their Family History

Cummins (2001) stated that when language learners' self identities are built, it is easier for them to engage in language learning. Although the instructor did not ask students to write about themselves, their homes or their countries, they all chose to so. Writing poems enabled students to claim their cultural identities and build self-esteem. Many ESL/EFL students are struggling with maintaining their identities in a foreign country. The chance for ESL/EFL students to write about and present themselves offers them a venue to claim who they really are by doing so. They will also be able to better adjust themselves in the foreign country.

Lesson Ten: Teachers Should be Aware of Individual Differences

In one class in September, I brought in a poem "Be a person" by William Stafford, which is one of my favorite poems. I read it aloud and wanted them to talk about their favorite lines and words. I told them to bring up personal experiences and make connections with themselves. I was expecting that they would find what the poem

means to them. I thought they would love it but I was wrong. Dona said, "I just feel it is so flaky, what is it about?" and Helen said, "I just don't like it, why the wind, the nature, and all together…what is it about? It is so weird…. " I was a little disappointed, but I was also glad they expressed their feelings. That made me realize their individual differences. Teachers should keep in mind that the poems they love may not interest their students, and each individual has different interests and needs.

Lesson Eleven: Teachers Should Teach Poetry Craft to Meet Students' Needs

According to Atwell (1998), "Poetry does not have to rhyme. Poets do play with rhyme, but they also play with form, sound, and language with feelings and symbols and images. Poets play with the rules and bend them to suit their subjects and themselves" (p. 69). While it is important to understand how poems grow and what tools to use, poetry craft should not be the focus of introducing poetry to students since that will kill students' interests. Atwell also said, "Poetic forms should be introduced but as means to serve individual students' needs as poets" (Atwell, 1998, p.93).

Teachers should explain some poetry craft to students according to their needs. Students need to know how the word works to touch people's hearts. For example, the rhythms, the sounds and the repetition often influence people's emotions. It is one way to appreciate the language. But poetry craft should not be taught as discreet elements. Overanalyzing the poem will kill students' interests and ruin the beauty of the poem. Teachers should let students know poets rhyme because it feels right, not because they need to; poets play with the form, not follow the form. Do teachers need to teach poetry

craft? The answer is "yes" but the purpose is to meet the students' needs and to explore the possibilities of the craft.

Lesson Twelve: Teachers Should Integrate Technology and Reader Response

One successful approach to teach poetry involves integrating technology with reader-response theory. Rather than focusing on a close analysis of the text itself being central to reading, reader-response encourages students' engagement with the text. Reading and responding to literature becomes an engaging "event" (Stuart, 2010, p. 27). In David's case, his manipulation of the image and his control of sounds and flow of the video affected his emotions and thinking. Other students also reported that his words became stronger after mixing them with the music and image.

Engaging students in technology provides students a chance to physically take part in making meaning in a piece of literature. We can view composing poetry and the traditionally written poem as two experiences. When students compose digital poetry, they turn their poems into their own experiences through the more active processes of integrating images, voice, music and text. As Stuart (2010) states, "Digital poetry is a way to bridge the study of and respond to poetry through the media of the 21st century student" (p. 30).

When students create digital poetry, they can become more engaged and confident. My study suggests that digital literacy matters in developing students' reading and writing skills. Digital poetry is a more engaging and meaningful process in terms of students' learning. Poetry connects people and creates a community. The instructor and

I were able to know more about students and build friendships with them through our poetry discussions.

Lesson Thirteen: Teachers Should Teach Vocabulary through Poetry to English Language Learners

Limited vocabulary was a big challenge for international students when reading a poem. In David's case, he stumbled through when he first read "Transistor Radio." It was hard for him to guess the meaning from the context since there were just too many unknown words. As the findings of previous research suggest, limited vocabulary is ESL/EFL students' major obstacle. Yet, poetry may be the best way to learn vocabulary and the use of the target language. Teachers should teach ESL/EFL students to learn vocabulary from the context. Many international students have their electronic dictionaries with them when reading. They rely on the dictionary. The constant looking up in the dictionary disrupts the reading flow. I am glad to hear Kim say that she no longer needs to keep looking up words in the dictionary since she learned how to get the meaning from the context. Below are her observations in the third interview:

> Another change I had after taking this course is …. [laugh] I do not have
>
> my dictionary with me all the time. I now believe I can get the meaning
>
> from the context…. I also think dictionary will not give me the "right"
>
> meaning of the word, because there is no "right" answer. (Third interview
>
> with Kim, February 18, 2010)

It is also important to let ESL/EFL students know that the words' meaning differs from context to context. The answer in their dictionaries might be wrong. Also, there is

no one "single" interpretation of a word and they should feel safe to have their own interpretation. The teachers' guidelines play an important role in students' learning. Here, I offer a model for teachers to introduce poems in the ESL/EFL classroom:

- Read the poem aloud to ESL/EFL students and have them feel it.

- Have students talk about their feelings and the words/lines which most impress them.

- Have them circle the unknown words, which inhibit their understanding.

- Have them read aloud line by line and articulate their questions, connections, visualization, and hypothesizes.

- Ask students to try to interpret unknown vocabulary words by considering the larger context.

- Talk about the poet and the cultural background

In those ways, poetry learning becomes more meaningful as it is kept as a whole experience, with the vocabulary teaching enhancing their understanding of the poem.

Lesson Fourteen: Teachers Should Allow ESL/EFL Students to Share Poems in Their Native Language

Teachers should allow ESL/EFL students to share poems in their native language. That will make the learning community more connected. Teachers can invite students to translate the main ideas of the poem to others. Although poems lose some meaning in

translation but the translating process could help ESL/EFL students develop language ability. They might learn some new words and phrases to express their ideas.

Although I don't understand Turkish, I could feel the emotion of David's poems. When David read the Turkish poem about the Independence War, he had tears in his eyes. He stated that he loved poems very much. It is necessary to allow international students read to and write poems in their native language. When they do, it is easier for them to reveal voices and emotions since they feel more comfortable. Poetry is a genre that touches our hearts and conveys our emotions, no matter what language it is written in. David explained the poem's main idea to me and also translated some sentences from the poem. David learned to describe the war and the Turkish first president in English, which involved some new vocabulary words, phrases and grammar knowledge.

Lesson Fifteen: Teachers Should Have Students Work on Their "Language"

Doing digital poetry helps students build up confidence and find pleasure in reading and writing. However, I would like to address the importance of working on the language after students are hooked by the incorporation of multimedia. In the third interview with Fem, she said, "I love digital poems because I do not need to worry too much about the words. The images and music will do the work." Fem seemed focused too much on the media. I sensed that some international students were also distracted by the image and music. It is essential for teachers to remind students of keeping working on language. Teachers should be careful about the distraction students might have through images and music. Teachers should praise students' impressive work in digital

poetry and then they need to ask students to take out the elements of image and music and focus on the written text.

Most of the students (Fem, Kim, Hung, Willy, Tom, Dona and Helen) told me they usually had written poems first and then added images and music to make digital poems. Teachers should still have students hand in and share their written poems and give comments on the written text.

Lesson Sixteen: Teachers Should Provide Opportunities to Connect Analytical and Expressive Writing

In this course, the instructor provided a variety of ways to improve students' analytical writing ability, including response to the assigned reading, reading discussion, reflection on the writing process, and teaching inquiry project. The instructor successfully connected students' expressive language experience with analytical writing ability. The thinking, writing and creating process were merged and continually influence one another. Students had plenty opportunities to think, to talk and to write. They have grown as more mature thinkers and writers who can make sense of their worlds.

Other Implications and Recommendation for Instruction

In this section, I offer educators some other pedagogical recommendations and implications.

1. Teachers should create opportunities for freewriting. It is important to let students know that many poems come from narratives, prose or lists. They are not required to come up with a poem suddenly. Freewriting helps students get writing ideas and could

be the first step to write a poem. According to Lannin (2007), "Freewriting means nonstop, timed writing during which the writer has freedom to follow ideas regardless of where he started"(p. 4). I suggest teachers have student freewrite for 15 minutes to generate writing ideas. After freewriting, teachers can encourage students to reformulate their draft as a poem.

2. Teachers should encourage students to both respond to and critique the poems they read. It is important to help students become critical readers. Students can respond not only to the poem but also the poet; students can respond not only to the word, but the image and the sound. The variety of responses could be served as a springboard for diverse thought and discussions. Students can discuss their initial impressions, favorite lines and phrases, personal interpretations, questions and opinions.

3. Teachers should draw students into the poem by having them visualize and feel the images in their minds. Some possible ways to do this include sketching, drawings or altering some images they could find online. It helps students make sense of the words they encounter in the poem. In writing poetry, they will internalize the skills and create sensory details. They also learn to select strong words to extend their ideas and thoughts.

4. Teachers should form writing groups appropriately. Participants in this study benefited much from their writing group. A social learning environment comprised of a small group of peers facilitates students' learning. When dividing students into groups, teachers should consider each individual's language proficiency level, nationality, background, personality, and gender. In this study, the instructors divided the same amount of male and female students in each group. Each group had two Americans and two international students. He put Dona and Helen in different groups on purpose as they

are close friends and had known each other well. The instructor hoped to give them opportunities to work with different people.

5. Teachers should create teaching opportunities for students, such as assigning a teaching project for students like the one the course had. (See the syllabus in Appendix A) Take Fem for example, she claimed that she learned the most when she taught others poetry. I have mentioned this finding and gave examples in Chapter Four. Teaching is one of the most effective ways to practice and learn a new thing. Fem ever struggled with presenting " Show not Tell," but she finally "got it" while teaching others this strategy.

6.Teachers should teach students how to respond to and analyze a digital poem. When analyzing a digital poem, some elements need to be discussed:

- Theme: Does this work have a clear theme? What is its main theme?

- Voice: Does this work present the author's unique voice?

- Transition: Does this work flow well? Does the digital poet use proper transition effects?

- Image effect: Are the images clear with at least pixel resolution? Does the digital poet use proper effect to enhance the meaning? If not, what can be done to improve?

- Text effect: Does the digital poet use proper text effect to strengthen the meaning? Does each slide contain the proper amount of text? If not, what are ways to improve it?

- Pacing: Does each slide show in a proper speed?

- Music: Does the music distract the meaning or enhance the meaning? How did the music influence your interpretation of the poem?

When responding to a digital poem, some questions could be discussed:

- Respond to the text: What images are impressive for you? And why?

- Respond to the sound: What do you think about the music and recording?

- Responding to the poet: What do you want to say to the digital poet?

- What is the difference between reading the text and watching the video?

- What does this digital poem mean to you or does it remind you of something?

My recommendations are applicable for students at all ages and grade levels. In my study, three participants are current teachers: Willy is teaching English in a high school and Dona and Helen are teaching English in a middle school. They are all first year teachers. In the interview, they three all expressed their interests in adopting digital poetry in their class but none of them had started doing it. They had a major concern of the time. For example, Willy said in the third interview "I think teaching students to create digital poetry projects, with just the logistic aspect would take so long to do in itself. I wonder if the benefit of that creation would outweigh the time spent instructing on just the logistic side of windows movie- maker."

It is still important to let teachers know that although it is time consuming, it is very worthy to try. Also applying group work will help facilitate students' learning and save some time. They can put one or two advanced learners in each group to help other

learners and encourage them to collaborate with others. My point here is that there are

approaches to solve the time issue, so teachers should not be intimidated and hesitate to

try.

Willy told me he was continually surprised at how little his students know about

computer programs like Microsoft Office or even Power Point. This supports what I

have discussed in my findings that teachers can never assume that students have already

known how to do technology. Even though they have iPhones, they text a lot, they play

online games all the time, and they are surrounded by media, that does not mean they

know how to use media to do thoughtful writing.

Some scholars have labeled people as "digital natives" and "digital immigrants"

and ignore the individual differences. These terms were firstly created by Marc Prensky

in 2001 and have been overused by people. According to Prensky (2001), "Today's

students – K through college – represent the first generations to grow up with new

technology. They have spent their entire lives surrounded by and using computers,

videogames, digital music players, video cams, cell phones, and all the other toys and

tools of the digital age" (p. 1). It is important to raise a just insight about those terms.

Actually, the labeling obscures the diverse backgrounds of different students. Teachers

should keep in mind that there are still many young people do not have access to

computers and do not know how to use basic computer tools. Labeling them as

"natives" is to characterize students as a homogenous group and ignore each individual's

different needs. I would say we should see each student as different digital individuals

and should engage them in learning through digital tools.

Suggestions for Future Research

More Exploration in Digital Poetry in SLA

As I mentioned in Chapter Two, there is some research about poetry in the ESL/EFL classroom and there is some research about digital media in second language learning, yet I did not find many previous studies about the application of digital poetry in the ESL/EFL classroom. The few I found are about how digital poetry helps ESL/EFL students build self-identity, gain confidence and improve language learning. We need more examples and explanations in this area. My study could tap into the need but it is not enough. This is an area that more scholars and educators should investigate. Each of my findings could be explored further.

A Handbook for Teaching Digital Poetry

For practical instruction, there are some resources online but they are not organized. There is a need to have a guidebook for teaching digital poetry with detailed instructions and tips for practitioners. More resources about digital poetry instruction and assessment are needed.

In early chapters reported, I noticed that video editing skills could be transferred to students' writing skills. Video editing could be taught as writing rhetoric. Hence, we need a book to highlight and to point out the connections. My own experience suggests that this is a fruitful area to explore.

Use of Poetry/Digital Poetry to Cope with Difficult Issues

The digital media in this study offers one example of what poetry exploration could look like in a digital environment. With a medical purpose and with appropriate modification, digital poetry could be used with other groups of people, such as patients who suffer from physical and mental illness. There is much research contributed to poetry therapy, but there is not much in digital poetry therapy. I recommend more researchers investigate in this area. Digital poetry could be applied in different places such as hospitals, consulting centers, rehabilitation centers, etc.

Poetry and Digital Poetry in Other Foreign Language Learning

It would also be interesting to do a comparative study that examines how foreign language teachers teach poetry and digital poetry in their classroom, such as French class, Spanish class, etc. I took a research class with one of my committee members, Dr. Zephir who is the chair and instructor in Romance language department. In her class, I had a chance to learn and share with other French teachers and Spanish teachers. I found we share many common issues among language teaching and learning and it would be great if they all could try digital poetry in their classroom.

Limitations

Where is the Line?

There were limitations to this study. My analysis was somehow influenced by my relationships with the participants. All the participants are in the same education field, English Education and Literacy Education and I have been a friend with many of them.

At times, my analysis was biased because of my friendship with them. I tended to neglect the negative aspects when analyzing their work. I realized that I mainly focused on the positive things after hearing my dissertation advisor's opinions in revision meeting with him. I had to work hard to draw the line and to present both positive and negative sides. Lincoln and Guba (1985) discuss the problems of investigating people the researcher knows. In the interviews, our conversation was often mixed with "friend talk" and "research talk." I have had to work hard to distinguish the two and select appropriate parts of the interview and conversations.

Extensive Reading vs. Intensive Reading

In this course, "Writing, Reading and Teaching Poetry," the professor had students do intensive reading activities such as "Think Aloud" and "Reading Theodore Roethke's Ten Poems." Yet, we did not have students do much extensive reading. Poetry reading should cover both parts, but extensive reading is missing in this study. In my follow up interview with the participants, Hung, Willy, Tom and Fem stated that they still keep reading poems on their own, but I could not offer the evidence of how many poems they have read and how has that has influenced their learning and teaching. There is no evidence to show that connection between students' improvement and extensive reading.

Final Thoughts

This dissertation study argues that poetry and digital poetry should be taught in the classroom. As I have learned, many people still have negative experiences in poetry

learning, including Americans and international students. The misconception of poetry

learning is still among people including poetry teachers. Teachers teach their students in

the same way that they were taught and pass on the negative impacts. It is essential for

educators to be open to change. They should abandon the template, they should free

students from the rules, and they should be bold to try new strategies in poetry teaching.

Regarding digital poetry, some teachers are afraid of technology and feel the use of

digital tools is too overwhelming. However, this study and other previous research

suggest that teaching digital poetry has positive impacts on students' learning. Teaching

matters and the change teachers make will influence students' lives. I urge teachers to

open their minds and be brave to try it.

APPENDIX A

Writing, Reading, & Teaching Poetry

Studies in English Education, 8640 Syllabus

Fall, 2010
Wednesdays, 4-6:45 pm
Townsend Hall, TBA

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University of Missouri
Phone: 884-8862; Email: FoxR@missouri.edu
Office Hours: by appointment

Chih-Ning (Lynn) Chang
Graduate Research & Teaching Assistant
(Participant/Observer)
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Poetry has two characteristics. One is that it is, after all,
Undefinable. The other is that it is eventually unmistakable.

--Edwin Arlington Robinson

It is difficult to get the news from poems, yet men die miserably every day for lack of what
is found there.

--Lawerence Ferlinghetti

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course focuses upon poetry in the middle, secondary, and college classroom—the writing, reading, teaching, and learning of poetry. This course is intended for advanced English/Language Arts teachers and others who want to explore selected processes and strategies for writing, reading, and teaching poetry, and who want to better understand and apply literary theories in the classroom, such as New Criticism, Reader Response

Theory, Marxist Criticism, and Feminist Criticism. This course values "extensive" and "intensive" reading of poetry and other genres. This course also views "writing" as consisting of word, image, music, sound, voice, etc.

COURSE ASSUMPTIONS

➢ Poetry = Playplayplay.
➢ English/Language Arts teachers must also be writers themselves—especially of poetry.
➢ Poetry writing should often be linked to actitivity or "doing."
➢ Writing, reading, and teaching poetry must run hot, as well as cold.
➢ Poetry is not reserved exclusively for the glittering literati or belletristic among us.
➢ Poetry does not depend upon visits from a muse or any other mystical entity.
➢ Poetry carries no restrictions—no rules in genre, conventions, themes, language, etc.
➢ Writers construct and discover meaning through many recurring experiences in writing and reading poems—and reflecting on their processes and products.

REQUIRED COURSE TEXTS

1. *The Elements (and Pleasures) of Difficulty.* Salvatori and Donohue, 2006.

2. The following articles placed on ERES or BlackBoard. Please note that some readings may be added or deleted:

   • Appleman, Deborah. *Critical Encounters in High School English: Teaching Literary Theory to Adolescents*. 2000.
   • Woodridge, Susan Goldsmith. *poemcrazy: freeing your life with words.* 1996.
   • Wilhelm, Jeffery. *Improving Comprehension with Think-Aloud Strategies.* 2001.
   ▪ "How Does a Poem Mean?" or "On the Way to the Poem." Ciardi
   ▪ "Finding Poetry Everywhere," Atwell
   ▪ "Theory and Research," Anderson and Rubano
   ▪ "Creative Writers and Daydreaming," Freud
   ▪ "Poetry and Abstract Thought," Valery
   ▪ "The Language of Affective Communication," Hayakawa
   ▪ "Poetry and Advertising," Hayakawa
   ▪ "The Teacher as Reader, Writer, and Editor," Bizzaro
   ▪ "Grading Student Poems: Adaptations of the New Criticism and Reader-Response Criticism," Bizzaro
   ▪ "Historical Background of The List Poem," Fagin

- ▪ "Responding to Poetry: Create, Comprehend, Criticize," Travers
- ▪ Poems and other articles handed out in class.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. ***"DOING POETRY" ACTIVITIES—20%.*** The following activities are graded on a Pass/Fail basis (Pass = 5 pts.; Fail = 0).

    A. **Written responses to assigned readings and web sites**. These informal responses will be completed in class, as time allows, and at home. In addition to written comments and questions, these may sometimes be evaluated ala check-plus; check; check-minus; or zero.

    B. **"Think-Aloud" Demonstrations**. In class, 1-2 people will think aloud about a poem just received. This approach helps your students to "demystify" the poetry-reading and interpreting processes. You may more than one of these!

    C. **Poem Writing Process Demonstrations**. Each class, one person will show several drafts of a poem and talk about its genesis—where the ideas came from; how the poem might be related to other texts and experiences; what was difficult/easy; what future plans are for revision of this poem, as well as ideas for future poems, etc. The rest of us will give advice to the poet on what to do next.

    D. **Poetry Experiments**. We will do these individually and in teams and groups, as time allows, during class, usually every week. These can "feed" other course activities and requirements. Examples include loose and tight imitations; list poems; visual poems; oral poems; interview poems; jigsaw poems; and found poems; novel in verse; poems for two voices; digital poetry; palindromes.

2. ***"DIFFICULTY" PAPERS—30%.*** These papers are 3-5 pp. each, in which you articulate in writing where, how, and why you're experiencing "difficulty" in understanding an assigned poem. You will often share these in small and/or large groups.

3. ***PROJECT RE: TEACHING POETRY TO "POETRY-AVERSE" STUDENTS —25%.*** Using information and concepts from this course, teach poetry reading and writing to 2-3 students who are unfamiliar or apprehensive about poetry. Document exactly what you do, along with all of their responses.

4. ***COLLECTION OF TEN OF YOUR POEMS, INCLUDING ALL DRAFTS, DATED AND NUMBERED--25%.*** You will write at least one poem per week. At least three of them should be digital compositions using multimedia such as

photostory 3, movie maker, power point or iM ovie. You will need to collect your personal photos, create images, and select music and / or record voices to make it into an artifact. These poems, written throughout the semester, should ultimately appear in thematic and concrete form, as per class examples. An Introduction should accompany this project. Also include all drafts—titled, dated, and numbered—of all poems. An Introduction should describe your writing processes, evolution of ideas and theme. I will need to keep this, so construct two such toys. If you like, you may choose to compose one of these poems in your native language.

BLACKBOARD IS USED IN THIS CLASS. SEND YOUR ASSIGNMENTS TO THE ASSIGNMENT MANAGEMENT BY ITS DUE DAYS.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

I. Introduction to the Course

AUG. 25:   Making poems; introduction of class, course content, requirements, presentations,etc.

II.   *What is Poetry?*

SEPT. 1:   Discuss Chapters 1-3, *poemcrazy* (Wooldridge); Discuss "The Language of Affective Communication" (Hayakawa) and "Poetry and Advertising" (Hayakawa). Poetry demos, experiments.

SEPT. 8:   Discuss Chs. 1-3 in Wilhelm; Poetry demos, experiments.

SEPT. 15:   Discuss "Poetry and Verse" (Lukens and Cline) and "Historical Background of the List Poem"; Poetry demos, experiments.

SEPT. 29:   Discuss "Creative Writers and Daydreaming" (Freud); "Poetry and Abstract Thought" (Valery). Poetry demos, experiments.

III.   *Reading & Responding to Poetry*

OCT. 6: Discuss "On the Way to the Poem" and/or "How Does a Poem Mean?" (Ciardi); Poetry demos, experiments.

OCT. 13: Discuss *The Elements (and Pleasures) of Difficulty*; Poetry demos, experiments.

OCT. 20: Poetry demos, experiments. **Difficulty Paper 1 due.**

OCT. 27: Discuss "Finding Poetry Everywhere" (Atwell); Poetry demos, experiments.

IV. *Teaching Poetry and Literary Theory*

NOV. 3: Discuss Chapters 1-3 in Appleman; Poetry demos, experiments. **Difficulty Paper 2 due.**

NOV. 10: Discuss "Theory and Research in Reader Response" (Anderson & Rubano); Poetry demos, experiments.

NOV. 17: Poetry demos, experiments. **Difficulty Paper 3 written in class as "competition."**

THANKSGIVING BREAK: NOV. 20-29

DEC. 1: Discuss "The Teacher as Reader, Writer, and Editor" (Bizarro) and "Grading Student Poems: Adaptations of the New Criticism and Reader-Response Criticism (Bizzaro); Poetry demos, experiments. *Poetry Collections due (which should include 3 digital, multimedia poems).*

DEC. 8: Poetry Room Exhibit Day "Verse and Visual". We will set up our classroom as a multimedia room to display our digital poetry collections.

DEC. 15: Complete class evaluation. Sharing Poetry Collections and Teaching Poetry Projects. *Collections and Projects due*

SOME OF YOUR INSTRUCTOR'S NEW POEM APPROACHES:

1. Writing poems from boring information.
2. Side Effects May Include… poems
3. List poems.
4. One-Syllable Lines poems.
5. Current Issue poems.
6. Make the Ugly Beautiful poems.
7. The Most Mundane/Common poems.
8. Internet/Technology poems.
9. Digital poetry.
10. Palindromes.

Writing, Reading, Teaching Poetry: Selected References

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Writing Survey for Studies in English-Reading, Writing and Teaching Poetry

Fall, 2010

Date: Aug 25, 2010
Name: _____

1.   How do you define "poetry"

2.   How were you taught poetry in and/or outside of school?

3.   How have YOU taught poetry? If you have never taught it, please explain.

4.   How often, overall, do you read poetry?

1	2	3	4
Never	Once in a while	Fairly often	Frequently

Comments:

5.   How often, overall, do you write poetry?

1	2	3	4
Never	Once in a while	Fairly often	Frequently

Comments:

6.   How confident or comfortable are you, right now, with creating multimedia or "digital" poems?

1	2	3	4
Never	Once in a while	Fairly often	Frequently

Comments:

APPENDIX C

Informed Consent
UMC Research Project:
Writing, Reading, and Teaching Poetry in a Graduate Student Class

Purpose of the Project. To discover what happens to the learning, writing, reading,
thinking,
and technology-using processes of graduate students when they participate in a poetry
class.

Nature of Participation. Participation in the project will involve:
(a) The reading, writing and teaching poetry is a 3 hour graduate level course taught
over 15 weeks. The researcher (as well as an enrolled student in this class) will
observe the students' class participations. The researcher will also participate in
classroom activities and discussion.
(b) The research participants will be asked to talk about their attitudes and
experience with poetry learning (past and current; in or out of the class), writing
and thinking processes of assignments during audio taped interviews. Two
interviews will occur during the semester in a mutually agreed upon, quiet
campus corner for about 30-60 minutes. One is scheduled for early September and
the other in Mid November. A follow-up interview will be held after the semester
ends.
(c) Research participants' free writings, drafts of writing, case study, digital
poetry assignments, final projects and any other writing pieces and works done
for this class will be collected and analyzed.
(e) Photographs of research participants will be taken during class.
(f) Reading discussion, class activities or writing group discussions will be
videotaped during class.

Participation is Voluntary. Participation in this study is strictly voluntary. You may
choose not to participate or withdraw participation at any time. Permission to conduct this
study has been obtained through the University of Missouri's Institutional Review Board
and school administration. For additional information or to ask questions regarding
human participation in research, please feel free to contact the UMC Campus IRB Office
at (573) 882-9585.

Confidentiality. Every effort will be made to keep each individual's information and
identity confidential. All information that is collected will be stored in a secure area. In
presentations and publications, the researcher will use pseudonyms and/or assign
numbers instead of names of real people and places. Data will be stored for three (3)
years beyond the completion of the study and at that time it will be destroyed. Data will
be made available to the participant and family upon request.

Risks. This project does not involve any risks greater than those encountered in everyday life. Every attempt will be made to keep the participants' identity confidential and to conduct interviews in an environment that is open, trusting, and warm.

Benefits. This research will contribute findings to the field of education that assist teachers in working with students, broaden/deepen their understanding of poetry reading and writing and improve the quality of teaching. The study will provide a safe environment in which participants can talk about their thinking and writing in a thoughtful way. Hence, participants will likely enjoy the opportunity to expand their poetry learning experience and thinking in deeper, more complex ways.

If you have any questions about this research study, please feel free to contact me, Chih Ning(Lynn) Chang at cc3k5@mizzou.edu. The faculty advisor for this study is Dr. Roy Fox
foxr@missouri.edu.
*   *   *   *   *

*I have read and understand the Informed Consent form and **will participate in this study**.*

Printed Name   Date

Signature   Date

Home Phone Number: _____

Work Phone Number: _____

Email: _____

The Instructor's Poetry Demonstration Power Point Slides

DRAFT 2

(#2) 12-30-95
8:30

Any man,
Alone ~~within~~ his thoughts,
Has ~~with~~ his cat:

Creeping, paddling across
Silent shelves / ~~and~~ desk tops,
Reflecting off of glass
Honoring and crouching,
~~in splendid~~, encased silence
Just to demonstrate ~~in great~~ exquisite
It it belongs to him.

②

DRAFT 3 Having Your Cat (#3) 12-30 midnight

Any man, thin winter,
Alone in his thoughts,
Has his cat:

Creeping, paddling across
Silent shelves,
Reflecting off of glass
Desk tops,
Honoring, crouching,
Encased in exquisite silence,
Just to Demonstrating
It all belongs to him. ③

267

Having Your Cat

DRAFT 4   (#4)

12-30-95

Having Your Cat

Any man, in winter,
   with his books,
Alone ~~in his thoughts,~~

Has his cat:

Creeping, padding across
Silent shelves,
Reflecting off of glass
Desk tops,
Hovering, crouching,
Encased in exquisite silence,
Demonstrating ~~various distance~~
All belongs to him.   ④

DRAFT 5   (#5)

12-30-95

Having Your Cat

Any man / in winter,
Alone with his books, /

Has his cat:

Creeping, padding across
Silent shelves,
Reflecting off X glass
Desk tops,
Hovering, crouching,
Encased in exquisite silence,
~~Demonstrating all~~
~~Belongs to him.~~   ) Too much (TMI!)   ⑤

DRAFT 6

Having Your Cat

(1-2-96)

(#6) Any man,
Alone in the dead
Of winter with his books,
Has his cat:

Creeping, padding across
Silent shelves,
Reflecting off glass desktops,
Having it crouching,
Encasing ...
Exquisite silence

⑥

DRAFT 7

Having Your Cat

(1-9-96)

(#7) Any man,
Alone in the dead
Of winter with his books,
Also has his cat:

Creeping, padding across
Silent shelves,
Reflecting diamond cat heads
in glass desktops,
Hovering, crouching,
Encasing all
In hypnotizing stares,
Exquisite silence.

⑦

DRAFT 8

Having Your Cat (handwritten, circled "1-9-96", "#8 9:05AM", circled "8")

DRAFT 9

Having Your Cat

Any man,

Alone in the dead

Of winter with his books,

Also has his cat:

Creeping,

Padding across

Silent shelves,

Reflecting diamond cat crystals

In glass desktops,

Hovering, crouching,

Smooth-humming,

Encasing all

In frozen,

Perfectly level,

Exquisite silence.

270

Having Your Cat

DRAFT 10

Any man,

Alone in the dead

Of winter with his books,

Also has his cat:

Creeping,

Padding across

Silent shelves,

Reflecting diamond cat heads

In glass desktops,

Hovering, crouching,

Smooth-humming,

Encasing all

In leveled, frozen,

Exquisite silence.

#10 1.13.96

(10)

Draft #10; 1/13/96; 10 aa

Notes on "Having Your Cat"
(Process & Product)

NOTES ON PROCESS & PRODUCT

● What is the Immediate Context of Your Central Idea?:

The end of the poem is where I arrive at the "main point" or main idea, as fuzzy as it seems. I revised this over and over because I wasn't sure myself how to put "it" into words. The "it" was nothing more than a nanno second when "Lee" our 6-month old all-black kitten walked across my desk, while I was sitting there engrossed in something. It was night, my family was gone, and it was very cold outside. The desk lamp was on and I recall the cat turning his head downward toward the glass desktop. And everything was so godawful quiet.

(11)

● Underline {What is the History or Larger Context of Your Central}

{Idea?:}

NOTES ON PROCESS & PRODUCT

I thought of none of the following things throughout the writing of this poem; all of these are possible links made after draft #10 was completed!

1) Tommy and Buford, old cats.

2) Jennifer the Jettisoned Cat from 1991.

3) That semester (Fall 95), students had read Eliot's Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats and written papers about it.

4) That semester, saw "Cats" on Broadway for first time; That semester, good friend depressed over her cat, Eva's death-cat I had found wild, tamed, and given to her for her birthday 19 years ago. This friend had visited from N.C. a few days earlier.

5) That semester, we finally broke down and let our daughter get a kitten (in addition to the dog we got when Jennifer left).

⑫

● Tell about the Title.

NOTES ON PROCESS & PRODUCT

First title was "Every Man Has Had a Cat." Odd since I never refer to "man" or "men" or "women" in my writing. The original instinct was to make it gender specific—men and cats! That's why it's there. It's about my own experience, ergo "man."

(It's also true, in all honesty, that I don't think I usually associate women as being alone with their books; I always think of men in that way, which I know doesn't make sense!)

● What Do You Drop, then Return To—and Why?

I returned to the earlier "cat heads" and not "cat crystals" cause it's homier, more down to earth, plainer. I also like the sound much more, suggesting catfish and gar and suckers—keeps the cat from becoming too pretentious and high falutin'.

● What Do You Drop—and Why?

Drop "crystal" cause it seems too trendy, too easy. Changed level to "leveled" cause it suggested more of an ice-skater on a pond (?). Fixed lines so it ends up with 14 (sonnet), but doesn't work like one is supposed to—is that good? These changes also make reading more natural?

⑬

● <u>What Do You Cherish, but then Give Up--and Why?</u>

As entranced as I become with certain words and sounds (e.g., "crystal" which I also thought about using as "crystallizing") I'm lucky if I can realize that they're misplaced or sound too hoaky or pretentious or the syntax is too something--too hard to say, draws too much attention to itself, etc.

NOTES ON PROCESS & PRODUCT

● <u>What Remained Throughout--and Why?</u>

The title shifted but is basically the same. "Silent shelves" remained. While writing Draft #6 on January 2 (long after draft #1!), I realized that this phrase is somehow connected to Eliot's *Lovesong of J. Alfred Prufrock*: "a pair of ragged claws scuttling across the floors of silent seas."

This must've influenced my choice here! When I realized this on Jan. 2, I remember toying with the idea of changing my line to, "padding across the floors of silent shelves." However, I didn't even write it down cause it was just too much of a rip-off, would distract readers, etc.

The colon at the end of the first part of the poem remained throughout the writing. It threw emphasis toward what every man has. Later, I debated adding the "also"--"also has his cat." I decided to do this because the syntax sounded more natural, somehow, and it provides an air of albatross-around-your-neck sense to the assertion. Though, in the end, the cat is seen positively.

⑭

Guidelines for "Notes on Process & Products" of Poems:

1. The above are not the only questions to answer about your poems. Each situation can dictate different questions. Be sure to ask and answer at least a few of your own questions! Other questions may likely come from course readings.

NOTES ON PROCESS & PRODUCT

2. Jot very brief notes while you're writing, but this is "reflective" which means you try to reflect and record as you go, but it's self-defeating if this meta-stuff distracts you from the poem you're writing! If it distracts you at all during the actual writing process, then do all your reflecting after a final draft (or near there).

⑮

HAVING YOUR CAT

YOU THOUGHT THIS POEM WAS DONE?

DRAFT 11 9-23-10

any man
alone with books
on January nights
never escapes his cat:
creeping across
cold shelves,
diamond cat heads
reflecting in glass desktops,
crouching, then arching
smooth humming,
encasing
the midnight globe
in horizontal
hard silence.

APPENDIX E

Guidelines for
Writing, Reading, & Teaching Poetry
(Research) Project

Overview of Project

Select 2-3 student junior or senior high school writers who are "averse" to poetry—do not know it, understand it, or like it. Get a digital tape-recorder, if possible, and dive in. Aim for at 3-5 sessions, about one hour each. During these sessions, try out 4 or more of the methods we have used in class (see the Bb site for the list), addressing both the reading and writing of poetry. Collect ALL drafts of your poet's work, all recordings, etc.

Notes on Research Approach

To Get Started: Once you've had your first session, create a document asap including all of the subheads A-G below. Next, enter your observations, notes, direct quotes from the writer, etc.—AS YOU GO, after each session. Then, near the end of the semester, it's a matter of selecting, discarding, revising, and moving text into different categories (some evidence can overlap into different categories).

This project involves informal, "ethnomethodological" research. That is, you begin as prepared as you can: you've read and thought about what you are teaching and how. Arrive armed with questions, both open-ended and focused on the text, the student, and the poem-reading and poem-writing.

HOWEVER, expect your person(s) to swirl off in all manner of unanticipated directions. That's okay. Their unfettered and open responses come first. In short, go in prepared--but please do not impose your previous preconceptions and patterns upon your interviewees in an attempt to wrestle them into going where YOU think they should go. Instead, allow them to tell you--not vice-versa. Then, if need be, return to your questions when relevant.

Very important: Always doggedly pursue follow-up questions--especially the five-year-old's five all-time favorite inquiries: 1) "Why?" 2) "Why?" 3) "Why?" 4) "Why?" and 5) "Why?"

Format: First, please use subheads, creatively **and** descriptively titled. For example, "Conclusions: Tracking the Reckless Reviser of Poems." This would be a good subhead for a conclusion section because it contains the descriptive term, "Conclusions"--but it also contains an intriguing "hook" after the colon--and

the reader should expect that the notion of "recklessness" would be central to the interpretation.

Second, please include the information requested by the standard parts of a standard research report, as outlined in the following pages:

- Introduction
- Literature Review
- Methods
- Results/Conclusions
- Works Cited
- Appendices.

Following are some reminders for certain parts:

- Use readings (required for this course and maybe a few that are specific to your topic) extensively in the Intro--to explain and clarify what crucial issues are involved when people engage in writing and reading poetry.

- Use the assigned course readings for your Review of Literature section.

- Use readings when analyzing your Results/Conclusions as "tools" for interpreting your results and **hypothesizing <u>why</u> people responded the way they did**. Use as many points from the readings as you can find that apply, i.e. "leave no stone unturned!" Even if the readings seem to contradict each other, explain which of the 2-3 is "most true" and why. Your readers do not want to do this work; they want YOU to do this work for them!

- In your Methods section, describe everything you <u>did</u> in executing this project--your student(s) and the physical details of everything, such as where you met, the date of each meeting, the length of each meeting, etc. Identify and explain the reading and writing strategies you chose to try out with your students.

  Also, please describe your interviewees--age, previous experiences with writing, especially writing and reading poetry, their background, etc.

<u>Length</u>: Try to stay within 25 double-spaced pages for the actual text of the report, i.e., not including appendices (which are always titled and lettered). Some of you may run longer.

<u>Tone</u>: Informal, clear, concrete and specific, more narrative than anything else.

<u>Conducting Teaching Poetry Sessions:</u>

1. You may need to interview one student more than the others. If so, **select the student who can, preferably, think aloud while writing something.** You will constantly be nudging people to verbalize what they have likely never verbalized or even thought much about before. And this requires patience from everyone. If you are not a Teaching Fellow, you will need to obtain a signed Parental Consent Form and Youth Assent Form.

   Hence, select people who will not throw a lamp at you when you grill them with "Why do you think that?" or "What makes you think so?" or "Can you point to something specific that prompts your thinking?"

2. **Assign pseudonyms to students; never use their real names.** Select pseudonyms that "sound" like or remind you of their real name—this will keep things straighter in your own mind.

3. **Try to work undisturbed with your interviewee(s).** Try a quiet spot in the study hall if that's possible!

4. **Provide a list of questions ahead of time**. Even if your interviewee just glances at them, it will help! Broad, open-ended questions will help you begin: "Why did you choose to write about this topic?" "How did you generate ideas for this poem?" How did you feel when this writing was completely finished?"

5. **Many (but not all) questions should address a few of the main issues which emerge once you've met one or more times.** Some particular issues in students' writing processes, written products, and attitudes about writing often don't surface until after you've met for a time or two. If you're stumped for main issues, return to the main headings of the course!

6. **Ask questions in a neutral way**. Do not in effect tell your interviewee <u>how</u> to respond by framing questions which reveal <u>your</u> point of view. For example, "Do you think that you'd be a better writer if you spent more time proofreading?"

7. **Ask open-ended questions.** Try to minimize questions that can be answered with yes/or or specific answers. Such questions will not get your interviewee talking about his or her writing processes and products.

8. **If at all possible, ask your student(s) to compose aloud without any distractions or interruptions. Then listen to the tape together and stop it whenever either of you wants to say something or ask a**

question. The main advantage of this approach is that everything is very fresh in the writer's memory.

9. **Remember to pursue both cognitive AND affective thinking**. Keep both broad categories in mind and pursue when and how each is used, when, degree of interaction, etc. Questions related to cognition will focus on logic, sequence, linearity, cause-effect, syntax, editing, etc. But it's possible the writer will think about one of these topics in an affective manner, because he's confused or actually thinks this way.

   On the other hand, questions about the affective domain will focus on images, imagination, silence, intuition, chaos, and the other topics explored in course readings. Similarly, it's possible for a writer to think about one of these topics in a cognitive manner because she is confused about the question or actually thinks that way.

10. **Make your interviewee(s) feel at ease as quickly as possible.** Tell him or her what you are doing and emphasize that there exist no right or wrong answers--that you're mainly interested in hearing what THEY have to say.

11. After your first session, you will know what **adjustments to make in questions, approaches and methods to revise, time, etc.,** for the next session.

12. **Periodically check your machine to make sure it's working!**

Analyzing Tapes

1. **Be alert and fresh when you analyze tapes.** Otherwise, everything will sound boring and useless! Analysis of tapes requires extremely active, vigorous listening--something that's foreign to most of us.

2. **Replay the tape** and listen to it again and again, even if you think you've hit upon something interesting.

3. **Stop what you're doing and jot down** any perceptions, questions, or analyses about what you're earlier listened to on the tape. Such lightning may strike while you're washing windows or watching Beavis. If so, jot them down!

4. **Listen to tapes while you sit at the computer**, so you can immediately transcribe portions that strike you as interesting or intriguing, even if you don't yet know why. Include **exact** wording, along with all pauses and "duhs" and "uhs" IF they are important to the point you want to make about the utterance.

5. **You should not transcribe every word** on your tapes--only the good stuff. Also, you will likely have to select portions from this to actually use in your paper.

HOWEVER, be very wary of stretches of tape in which you feel that "nothing is going on." Many people miss the most interesting parts.

6. **Patterns (multiple instances of X) are not necessary for this project.** Rather, you're looking for **single instances** of responses that are noteworthy in some way. (You likely won't have enough data on tape for patterns to emerge, though you <u>may</u> see a few. If so, that's great; describe them and give examples and analysis.)

7. **Please keep tapes to turn in with your project.** I will return them; once in a while I need to listen to them.

8. **Analyze the tapes holistically--your instinct will tell you if something is intriguing**. After you seize it, go back and review the utterance through the prism of class readings, what research specific to your topic says, and your own knowledge.

9. **Consider using unconventional questions**. Examples: 1) Have you ever <u>dreamed</u> about writing or a topic you wanted to write about? 2) Since it would be hard to describe X, could you <u>write or draw a picture or diagram</u> about what you mean? 3) If X is too hard to explain, what could you <u>compare</u> it to?

10. **Report and analyze observations about your interviewee's behavior, situation, or other elements that may seem unrelated to what the person says on tape.** Your observations about everything are fair game and should not be ignored just because it was not taped.

GUIDELINES FOR WRITING THE CASE STUDY

1. Try to choose the age of the students you teach or are most interested in. Use no more than three people. (Small group members, especially those who already know each other, can effectively "play off of each other.")

2. Make sure that the parents of each person has signed a consent form. Turn this form in to me as soon as possible and keep a copy for yourself.

3. If you'd like to read, "Research Reports," which provides instructions for writing such documents, it will be placed onto our Bb site. Also see the chapter, "Ethnographies." Note, however, that your chapter should be more accessible and lively than the standard, dry research report.

4. Your paper must contain the following sections, though your headings should be livelier:

A. INTRODUCTION AND OVERALL STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

    1) The student (age, gender, physical characteristics; academic abilities; major interests, such as sports, hobbies; etc.)
    2) The student's immediate family, peers, and community, including relationships to each.
    3) The student's "writing history"—previous courses and key experiences with writing.

B. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE. Given your subject, your student's main issues with writing, and the nature of your inquiry, summarize and critique the 3-5 most relevant *categories* of secondary sources. For example, everyone should review the most relevant sources for cognition as well as afffective thinking and writing. This will include those most relevant ones read for class, as well as any more specialized sources. Another category or two reviewed should focus just on the few most relevant issues which *emerged* from your writer(s) during the study. For instance, if the processes involved in generating ideas emerged as a dominant theme, then you should cover this area in the Lit. Review.

C. METHODOLOGY. In this section, describe everything that you did in conceiving of your study and in executing it. Include 1) the number of interview sessions conducted; 2) location of interviews; 3) the list of questions (or "protocol") which you used; 4 the various promptings you employed to relax your student and help her articulate responses; 5) the procedures followed for protecting your student's identity, including the human subjects review, etc. Also, 6) describe how you "double-checked" or corroborated or "triangulated" your results (e.g., by allowing your student to read and respond to your preliminary observations, by having peers read and critique your observations, matching the transcript against your discussion, etc.).

D. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION. This section will comprise the lion's share of your report. To begin, think in terms of your student's 1) thinking; 2) language, and 3) behavior. These *can* serve as your main subheadings in this section (e.g., "How John Thinks about Revision"). Then, *within* these broad categories, determine the most interesting results and use a subtitle for each. Next, clearly define and describe each category. *Make sure to fully illustrate each of your categories with direct quotes, anecdotes, specific observations, etc.* Note that some of your results will be language or behaviors that *occurred several times* and that hence represent a "pattern." This should be noted. Other results will be comprised of language or behavior that only occurred once. Neither type is more desirable than the other.

E. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS. In this section, first, describe what it all means. Answer the "So what?" question. Address this question, "What are

the main reasons that Sarah said and did what you reported she said and did?" Why and how? Second, explain how some of Sarah's main behaviors or uses of language might have *interacted with each other*. For example, Sarah may have stated that she has a "mental block" about editing her writing—but that you noticed the same thing at work whenever she tried to generate ideas. Third, explain how certain theories or research in your "Literature Review" section did and did *not* operate.

That is, readers must see how your study fits within the material you discussed in your Lit. Review section. Fourth, in the "Implications" section, explain what your conclusions mean for media consumers, teachers, parents, and communities large and small. Also explain the "implications for future research" (this can be a subhead): what should other researchers investigate? Overall, this section should clarify how can we encourage the good things and improve upon the bad things.

F. **WORKS CITED**. Using MLA style, provide *complete* bibliographical information for each source, including those you did not directly quote. Do not forget page numbers!

G. **APPENDICES.** Include the longer sections of transcripts from which key quotes come. Make sure to include the complete paper that you have have used excerpts from in the body of your report.Also include other relevant information that readers may want to consult.

WRITING AND KNOWING

MORE SUGGESTIONS & POSSIBLE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. You MUST be clear on the basic differences between quantitative research and qualitative research. If not, your thinking and writing will be muddled, as you may confuse these paradigms.

2. Remind students that this information will be kept strictly confidential and that there are no right or wrong answers. Also remind them of the information on the consent letter.

3. You might want to work with another person(s) and set up a small Afocus group≅ of sorts, regardless of the type of media you=re investigating. Pairs or small groups can help participants= quantity and quality of responses.

1. Focus on <u>what</u> people say, just as much as on <u>how</u> they say it.

2. Whenever your student says something interesting, "reflect back" to her, to make sure you have it right, as well as to encourage her to elaborate.

3. If you're working with a small group, you might want to focus on the one person who is most interesting, who has the most to say and then conduct sessions with just him ("key informant").

4. You can use some or all of the following research approaches (list not exhaustive). Be sure to audiotape all of your sessions. Label, date, and keep all tapes, since I will need them turned in with your paper.

   A. Observe your student writing alone, silently (sit across the room, remain silent and unobtrusive, and take notes).
   B. Observe your student writing as she thinks aloud. Do not interrupt or distract her. Next, play the tape, as you and your student stop at various junctures for questions and comments. Do the same thing, only you, not the student, decide where to focus.
   C. With a specific piece of writing in front of you, sit beside the student and talk about it, pointing to specific places, reflecting on why and how she did something.

Possible Research Questions:

Broad questions are usually best, especially to get started. Once you're on to something, try to become as specific as you can re: why, how, when, and point to specific examples. ***Always follow everything up with why.***

1. Can you explain *how* you write something?
2. How do you define "poetry"?
3. What is your worst/best experience with poetry?
4. Why did you choose to write this piece?
5. If you did not have a choice (or enough of one), what would you have written instead? Why?
6. If you had to describe your past writing experiences with just a word or phrase, what would you say? Explain.
7. If you had to describe the kind of thinker you are with just a word or phrase, what would you say? Explain.
8. How do you go about writing an assignment for school? What are the best and worst parts?
9. How do you go about writing something that is NOT required for school? What are the best and worst parts and why?
10. When you're writing something, what happens when you stop or pause?
11. What do you find most difficult or challenging when writing?
12. Do you revise your writing? Explain.
13. Do you edit your writing? Explain.
14. How do you get ideas for writing?
15. Do you ever get ideas (for writing or other things) when you're not thinking about them specifically? Explain.

16. Do you think about readers or audiences when you write? Explain.
17. How, when, and why do you achieve "flow" when writing?
18. What do you think "the writing process" means?
19. How is a writer's process connected to her final product? How does one influence the other, if at all?
20. Can you "write fast"? When and why?
21. When and why do you write slowly?
22. Does music or some kind of noise help you write? When and how do they hinder your writing?
23. When and how does silence help you write? When and how does silence hinder your writing?
24. Can you "see" or visualize the things you write about? How and when?
25. Can you show me an example in your writing when you were able to "see" your topic or something about your topic?
26. Do you ever visualize or imagine your audience? Examples?
27. Do you ever think out loud when you write or talk to yourself? If so, why and when is it effective? If you never think out loud, why not?
28. Do emotions ever help or hinder your writing?
29. What do you have to know in order to feel comfortable and secure about your writing?
30. Has writing about something ever helped you understand or learn something? Explain.
31. Has writing ever made you feel better? Explain.
32. Has writing ever made you feel bad? Explain.
33. Do you ever write *without* thinking about what a teacher or other reader will think or say?

Interview Questions

Interview I. (September 2010)

1. What did you expect to learn when you signed up for this class?

2. Why did you take this class?

3. Talk about your poetry learning/teaching experience?

4. What difficulties do you have in reading, writing and teaching poetry?

5. Can you describe your feelings when you are working in class?

      a. freewriting b. poetry experiment c. classroom discussion

      d. writing group e. poetry demo

6. What is your favorite part of our class so far? Why? Explain it!

      a. freewriting b. poetry experiment c. classroom discussion

      d. writing group e. poetry demo f. Class assignment

7. How do you define "poetry"?

8. I will ask them questions regarding something I noticed in their freewriting, classroom

observation and assignment.

Interview II. (November 2010)

1.   Last time, you told me poetry is_____, do you still think so?

    What do you think about your attitude change?

2.   What difficulties do you still have in reading, writing and teaching poetry?

3.   What is your favorite part of our class so far? Why? Explain it!

a. freewriting b. poetry experiment c. classroom discussion
        d. writing group e. poetry demo f. Class assignment

4. Could you describe the process of composing your digital poem?

 (a) Where did you get the idea?

 (b) Did you have the poem first or the images first? Where did you gather those images?

 (c) How/Why did you choose that music?

 (d) Did you encounter any difficulties?

 (e) What did you learn from this experience?

5. Do you think learning poetry helps in your English learning (to international students)? How and why?

6. What is the most significant benefit of learning poetry in language learning?

10 Do you think doing digital poetry helps you in English learning (to international student)?

7. Have you noticed any changes in your life after you read and write more poems?

8. What is your favorite poetry experiment so far? Why?

9 What activities will you use in your class if/when you are teaching poetry?

10. Other questions regarding something I noticed in their freewriting, classroom observation and assignment.

Interview III. (February 2011)

1. Are you still writing poetry? Talk about what you have written?

2. Are you still reading poetry? What are you reading?

3. Do you think it is beneficial to keep reading and writing poetry? Explain it.

4. How has this class influenced your poetry teaching and learning?

5. What activities have you used in your class (to current teachers)?

6. Have you taught digital poetry in your class (to current teachers) Why/Why not?

7. What is (are) your favorite poetry experiments? What will you use in your future teaching?

8. How will you plan your poetry lesson if /when you have a chance to teach poetry?

9. I will ask them questions regarding something stand out in our conversation.

10. How do you define poetry?

Those Winter Sundays (Poem)

Sundays too my father got up early

and put his clothes on in the blueblack cold,

then with cracked hands that ached

from labor in the weekday weather made

banked fires blaze. No one ever thanked him.

I'd wake and hear the cold splintering, breaking.

When the rooms were warm, he'd call,

and slowly I would rise and dress,

fearing the chronic angers of that house,

Speaking indifferently to him,

who had driven out the cold

and polished my good shoes as well.

What did I know, what did I know

of love's austere and lonely offices?

--By Robert Hayden

APPENDIX H

Transistor Radio (Poem)

Summer nights I huddled under
bedsheets in the hot dark
of my own breathing, ear pressed
against my father's radio.
It was forbidden; listening
to songs of cheating lovers,
lost unrecovered love,
drink, song itself, and making
believe. I yearned and feared
to suffer that suffering
so hurt would justify
my pure unhappiness
at last. And now we march,
conscripts of sorrow who first
were volunteers. But what
did I know then, a boy
in love with music first
and only later the mournful
forbidden words. I hummed,
ignorant of what it meant:
walking the floor, you've got
that far-away look
in your eyes. But knowing that
I would inevitably
find out, I hummed, ear pressed
to older worlds, in the hot
dark of my own slow breathing.

<div align="center">--Andrew Hudgins</div>

APPENDIX I

Instrument of Choice (Poem)

She was a girl

No one ever chose

Fro teams or clubs,

Dances or dates,

So she chose the instrument

No one else wanted

The tuba. Big as herself,

Heavy as her heart,

Its golden tubes

And coils encircled her

Like a lover's embrace

Its body pressed on hers

Into its mouthpiece she blew

Life, its deep-throated

Oompahs, oompahs sounding

Almost , like mating cries

--Robert Philips

APPENDIX J

Doctoral Students are…(Poem)

People who have coffee on the desk

People who never have enough sleep

People who always skip meals

People who haven't done laundry for weeks

People who work during the weekends

People who mark many meetings on the calendar

People who study boring Vygotsky but have to call it "interesting"

People who are busy but lonely

People who have no money in the wallet

People who have been asking "Are you surviving? "

--Lynn Chih-Ning Chang

İstiklâl Marşı(Poem)

Korkma, sönmez bu şafaklarda yüzen al sancak;
Sönmeden yurdumun üstünde tüten en son ocak.
O benim milletimin yıldızıdır, parlayacak;
O benimdir, o benim milletimindir ancak.
Çatma, kurban olayım çehreni ey nazlı hilâl!
Kahraman ırkıma bir gül! Ne bu şiddet bu celâl?
Sana olmaz dökülen kanlarımız sonra helâl,
Hakkıdır, Hakk'a tapan, milletimin istiklâl!
Ben ezelden beridir hür yaşadım, hür yaşarım.
Hangi çılgın bana zincir vuracakmış? Şaşarım!
Kükremiş sel gibiyim, bendimi çiğner aşarım;
Yırtarım dağları, enginlere sığmam, taşarım.
Garbın âfakını sarmışsa çelik zırhlı duvar,
Benim iman dolu göğsüm gibi serhaddim var.
Ulusun, korkma! Nasıl böyle bir imanı boğar,
"Medeniyet!" dediğin tek dişi kalmış canavar?
Arkadaş! Yurduma alçakları uğratma sakın!
Siper et gövdeni, dursun bu hayasızca akın.
Doğacaktır sana vaadettiği günler Hakk'ın;
Kim bilir? Belki yarın? Belki yarından da yakın!
Bastığın yerleri "toprak" diyerek geçme, tanı!
Düşün, altındaki binlerce kefensiz yatanı!
Sen şehit oğlusun, incitme, yazıktır atanı;
Verme, dünyaları alsan da bu cennet vatanı.
Kim bu cennet vatanın uğruna olmaz ki fedâ?
Şüheda fışkıracak toprağı sıksan, şühedâ!
Canı, cananı, bütün varımı alsın da Hüdâ,
Etmesin tek vatanımdan beni dünyada cüdâ.
Rûhumun senden, ilâhi, şudur ancak emeli;
Değmesin mabedimin göğsüne na-mahrem eli!
Bu ezanlar ki şahadetleri dinin temeli,
Ebedi yurdumun üstünde benim inlemeli.
O zaman vecd ile bin secde eder varsa taşım;
Her cerihamdan, ilâhi, boşanıp kanlı yaşım,
Fışkırır rûh-i mücerret gibi yerden nâşım;
O zaman yükselerek arşa değer belki başım!
Dalgalan sen de şafaklar gibi ey şanlı hilâl;
Olsun artık dökülen kanlarımın hepsi helâl!
Ebediyyen sana yok, ırkıma yok izmihlâl.
Hakkıdır, hür yaşamış bayrağımın hürriyet;
Hakkıdır, Hakk'a tapan milletimin istiklâl!
                    --*By Ataurk* Mustafa Kemal

291

Independence March

Fear not! For the crimson flag that proudly ripples in this glorious twilight, shall never fade,
Before the last fiery hearth that is ablaze within my nation is extinguished.
For that is the star of my nation, and it will forever shine;
It is mine; and solely belongs to my valiant nation.
Frown not, I beseech you, oh thou coy crescent,
But smile upon my heroic race! Why the anger, why the rage?
Our blood which we shed for you might not be worthy otherwise;
For freedom is the absolute right of my God-worshipping nation.
I have been free since the beginning and forever shall be so.
What madman shall put me in chains! I defy the very idea!
I'm like the roaring flood; trampling and overflowing my dyke (weir),
I'll tear apart the mountains, fill up the open seas and still gush out!
The lands of the west may be armored with walls of steel,
But I have borders guarded by the mighty chest of a believer.
Recognize your innate strength, my friend! And think: how can this fiery faith ever be killed,
By that battered, single-fanged monster you call "civilization"?
My friend! Leave not my homeland to the hands of villainous men!
Render your chest as armor and your body as trench! Stop this disgraceful rush!
For soon shall come the joyous days of divine promise...
Who knows? Perhaps tomorrow? Perhaps even sooner!
View not the soil you tread on as mere earth - recognize it!
And think about the shroudless thousands who lie so nobly beneath you.
You're the noble son of a martyr, take shame, hurt not your ancestor!
Unhand not, even when you're promised worlds, this paradise of a homeland.
What man would not die for this heavenly piece of land?
Martyrs would gush out should one simply squeeze the soil! Martyrs!
May God take my life, all my loved ones and possessions from me if He will,
But may He not deprive me of my one true homeland for the world.
Oh glorious God, the sole wish of my pain-stricken heart is that,
No heathen's hand should ever touch the bosom of my sacred Temples.
These adhans, whose shahadahs are the foundations of my religion,
May their noble sound last loud and wide over my eternal homeland.
For only then, shall my fatigued tombstone, if there is one, prostrate a thousand times in ecstasy,
And tears of fiery blood shall flow out of my every wound,
And my lifeless body shall gush out from the earth like an eternal spirit,
Perhaps only then, shall I peacefully ascend and at long last reach the heavens.
So ripple and wave like the bright dawning sky, oh thou glorious crescent,
So that our every last drop of blood may finally be blessed and worthy!

Neither you nor my race shall ever be extinguished!
For freedom is the absolute right of my ever-free flag;
For independence is the absolute right of my God-worshiping nation!

Coded Interview Sample (Hung/Tom/Kim)

(1) First Interview with Hung September 2 2010

Me: Did you learn poetry before?
H: A lot in my native language. A few in English when I was in college.
Me: Could you talk about your poetry learning experience?
H: My past poetry learning experience was very awkward
      Teachers had prescribing ways to teach poetry.
Me: What are prescribing ways?
H: I mean every teacher taught in the same way. They asked us to Read, analyze, underline
      some words, memorize - we said that was " learn by heart, and then they gave tests to see
      if we understood. We were supposed to understand the author's intention of writing their
      poems; Understand why they used those words; understand some words' hidden
      meanings. Teachers provide answer keys. It was very weird.
      But I knew it is really hard to understand the meaning the author implies in the poem.
      Teachers or others designed some patterns for us to analyze the poems. Or I can say it is
      easy for teachers to teach since maybe they themselves didn't understand the poems
      either. They asked us memorize the answers for test. Teachers taught for tests and we
      studied for tests. If we had some different ideas about that poem, we were not allowed to
      say. Our ideas wouldn't be right. In order to get a good score, we followed the right
      answers. I first learned English poetry when I was in college. We even had a dictation
      competition. Teachers read a poem to us, and we had to write down what we heard.
      We memorized poems. I can still memorize" The world is a stage "by Shakespeare.
Me: Were you able to choose what poems you wanted to read?
H: No.. No..No.. It's impossible.
      We didn't have choices to read what we want to read.
      The school curriculum was already set. Teachers followed the school curriculum and we
      followed teachers' plan.
      I knew they didn't have choices to teach what they wanted to teach.
Me: What else did you do with the poems besides memorizing and dictation?
H: Understanding poems in certain ways to get good score…

Me: Did you like poetry at that time?
H: hum…. No…Only few poems had connections with me that I can still remember. Most of
      poems slip away after the exams. I can say I learned poetry just for exams not for
      personal interests.
      Most of the times, I didn't understand what poems about and we listened to teachers'
      explanation. Poetry is very difficult.
Me: Have you taught poetry before?
H: No, I taught translation, a little bit literature but never poetry. Poetry is difficult.

> **Comment [1]:** EP/P: Past experience with poetry

> **Comment [2]:** ATT/P
> Attitude toward poetry before taking this course

> **Comment [3]:** ATT/P + EP/P
> Attitude toward poetry +past experience with poetry

Poetry is SUPPOSED to be difficult. It is not touchable for most people.. I didn't want to teach that genre since I don't have the expertise. I myself can't understand it and how can I teach it. I will take a lot of efforts.

Me: What makes English poetry difficulty to you? What difficulties do you have when reading poetry?

H: English poetry?

Me: Yeah!

H: The main difficulty is "vocabulary" There are many difficulty words.
The metaphor embed in the poem. It is hard to understand why the author used metaphor in their poem
Culture stuff in the poem is so difficult.
We are not grown in different culture background and it is hard to understand the context of the poems

Me: What difficulties do you have when writing poetry?

H: still vocabulary. It is hard to express what I wanted to say with the right words.
I need to think of some beautiful, special and meaningful words in poems. I know the words in poems are different from the words we use in conversations.
And also … like sometimes I have ideas about what I want to write in the poem but I got stuck in the rhymes. It takes time to make the poem rhyme well.

Me: So, you think poems need to rhyme.

H: Yeah.. Yeah… Good poetry needs to rhyme. But freewriting doesn't need to rhyme. Poetry is not like freewriting. Of course, good poetry needs to rhyme. It is necessary….

Me: What makes you think poems need to rhyme? Did you learn this in school?

H: Maybe I was influenced by my past teachers.. I am not sure! Most of the poem we read in school had rhymes. And we studies how they rhyme. Like AABBC or 6868. something like that…
So I guess makes me think good poetry must have some structure and rhyme in the right way.
So when I compose poetry, I need to look for my already limited vocabulary bank in my head and find one word to rhyme. Most of the time, I need to spend time looking up the dictionary, search some good words. … Writing a poem takes a lot of time.

Me: Did you enjoy it?

H: laugh….being honest, No.

Me: could you talk about the poetry class. What part of the class do you like?
How do you feel about the class

H: I enjoy it so far. It requires me to do a lot of the thinking. I need to think about the reading.
It gives me opportunity to relearn poetry. What surprised me is that I can understand a poem in my own way. There is no certain way to read a poem which is really different from what I learned in Vietnam.
I can reflect it with my own experience. Talk about the poem in my own words. I enjoy reflection. I learn I can selected some words and make personal connection.

H: I also like the activities we do. For example, Voice thread is really fun.

Me: You like it?

Comment [4]: ATT/P
Attitude toward poetry

Comment [5]: Diff/P
Difficulty in understanding poetry

Comment [6]: ATT/P +EP/P
Attitude toward poetry +Past experience with poetry

Comment [7]: Diff/P
Difficulty in expressing ideas

Comment [8]: EP/P
Experience with poetry in this poetry course

H: Yeah. It's a fun tool. I like to see others' responses. I like we can type, record and draw to respond. It's really fun. And doing the magazine poem was very enjoyable, It was my first time to do the found poem. I will also try it in my class. It is really interesting activity and students can show their creativity.

(2) Third Interview with Tom February 17th, 2011

Me: The course is finished, do you still write poems?
T: Yes, I have been writing poems after the course is finished.
      Recently, I wrote a poem for my son.
Me: What is it about?
T: My son has been devastated. It is about his broken heart.
Me: What was the purpose of writing that poem? To heal yourself or to encourage him
T: I didn't share it with him but I did share it with my wife.
      I should say it is for healing myself.
Me: After writing it, after sharing it with your wife , you have got better?
T: Probably.
Me: Even thought he is still devastated.
T: Those things only time can heal. It's harder for him than for me. Cause I've been there and done that.
Me: How can writing poems help you heal?
T: It's a complex questions. It's the value certainly in clarity that comes with articulating thoughts and feelings. Because we both know and have known that you realize things that you have not understood before when you write them out.
      One of the sort of " sedating" aspect of writing a poem. That's kind of more objective than the feeling you try to express.
      Also, just shouting the things in the wind, sometimes.

Me: You will keep writing and reading poems?
T: Sure
Me: Would you keep doing that and using digital tools as mediums to teach?
T: Yes, yes, I would I would
Me: Would you like to talk about the process and how you felt about doing it?
T: It's recursive process: The more you do, you get more ideas. Working on that project was overwhelming.. I didn't expect it would be that meaningful for me. But it turned out very very powerful. In the sense, I felt it corrupted my thinking but when you do fit the right elements together. In this case, " right" means chronologically be the same. Phew... that's what my dissertation about
      This project verified it that this is more powerful for combing image, music and poetry altogether.

T: I think students will love it. : It will deepen students' experience with literature. Because that's what it does.
Me: It's also multiple intelligence

296

I love putting images but the problem is I need a lot of time to deal with the technology. I have limited technical skills with computers so I didn't make the video which I wanted.

Kim: What do you mean?

In the digital poetry for my dog, I had some music in my mind but I couldn't find it. I didn't know where to download it. I am not very happy with that.

Me: What music did you want to use? I can try to find it for you

Kim: Oh that would be wonderful…. I really appreciate it. That song is prefect with my ideas and poem.

Kim: I think I get help from images with language. I talked to myself to get the words out when I work alone.

But I got support from my writing group with word choice. You know many words I used are Korean style English and that doesn't make sense to Native American speakers. There is always a gap. But my after talking and explaining to my writing group, the helped me find the word I need.

The conversation with my American friends helped me fix some of my language problems I need to improve. I would never know notice this if I didn't talk with them. My English poems are often organized in Korean ways and sound weird to American people. Although I think in English, my native language influences my writing. The style is something just not right. I used English words in Korean way. I felt I improved a lot. In the beginning, my wiring group fixed many things. and now they fix fewer and fewer problems. I think my English is getting better and better.

| Comment [21]: Diff/DP |
| Difficulty in digital poetry (combing music) |

| Comment [22]: SLA |
| English Improvement in word choice, grammar… through writing group's help/ images |

of the ideas for my next poem assignment. Today is Fri, but I am already thinking of what to do for our poem 8. I have a meeting with a friend to talk about my idea after this. We are recording for our poem.

Me: That's very cool.

Kim: When I write poetry, I got the idea early and I feel excited about doing my plan. Putting my words on the paper.

Me: Talk about your friend

Kim: He is one of my co-workers in Asian Affair center and He is an American.(a native speaker). He has been teaching English in Asian Affair center for many years and he has helped me with my poems since I took this class. He sees how my poems change and he knows how to help me with the language. We often have writing conference to talk about my poems and he helped me to get the right words to express what I want to express. He likes my poems and he said, maybe one day we can publish a poetry book. I don't know if we can really get that done, but I am really excited about this.

Me: Wow, I can't wait to read your poetry book

Kim: Laugh… you know poetry is my favorite genre and I think I am really good at it. But I just didn't like the way they taught it when I was in school (Korea). If the instruction was more opened…If I was able to explore poetry like what I dong now, I would have become a poet. Laugh…

Me: **I agree…**

Kim: Here in America, I love poems. I love writing poems and thinking of poems. I am able to learn English through poem. I mean..
I leaned …oh my god, many vocabularies through reading and writing poems. I also lean how other people think. Writing in English and writing in Korean is different, you know. I learn how to express thinking in English better through poetry learning. Now, I kind of more senses on how to show my emotions.

You know … before I felt my writing didn't make sense to most American people and other international students. They felt my words are awkward or my English usage was wrong. (It was because my Korean background) I couldn't express what I really wanted to say in English. Now, I have improved. I know it is not perfect but I am much better.

Me: What did you learn from doing digital poetry?

Kim: I like digital poetry better than just written poems because I am a visual person. I am also a audio person. I love images and music. When I write poems just in written text, I feel it is flat. When I do a poetry video. I feel I am in a space of a three –dimensional theater. The poem comes to life and I can see, I can hear it and I can feel it more easily. My memory story is played in the room with sound and images surrounded. The memory is very vivid and concreted. The emotion is powerful and stronger. I am sadder in the sad part , and I feel more delighted in the happy moments. The same in reading others' poems. I don't often cry when reading others' poems or novels, but I cry a lot when I watch movies and digital poetry. The emotion is stronger.
The images and music … so good.

APPENDIX M

The Instructor's List Poem Example

(1) The examples the instructor published in Journal of Creative Work

Roy F. Fox
Professor and
Chair University of
Missouri
foxr@missouri.edu

20 Kernel Sentences about a Newborn

Father
sleeps. Child
cries. Mother
drains.
Mother
wanes.

Mother
sleeps. Child
cries. Father
blithers.
Father
withers.

Child cries.
Mother cries.
Father cries.
Neighbors
sigh.

Child sleeps.
Mother
sleeps.
Father
sleeps. Horn
bleeps.

House
creaks. Fan
tweaks.
Faucet
leaks.
Father
freaks.

299

(2) Another example the instructor posted on Blackboard on September 16, 2010

Inventory: Psychosocial Toolbox

Roy F. Fix

1 bow saw for cutting red tape.

2 ball-peen hammers for accessing any package containing electronics.

3 rolls of Botch Tape for non-stick corrections.

4 screw-drivers for loose hinges.

5 cans of WD-40 for cerebral corrosion.

6 pliers for pulling out hair and teeth.

7 crescent wrenches for loosening anti-Muslim nuts.

8 vice-grips loosening gun nuts.

9 putty knives for caulking cracks.

10 paint scrapers for layers of oxidized bullshit.

11 cans of pine-scented antibacterial ego-wipes.

12 pairs of safety goggles for reading "poetry."

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