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From the Co-Editors

Friends and Colleagues,

This is the sixth issue of the *Journal of Literature in Language Teaching*. This journal is a peer-reviewed publication of the JALT Special Interest Group (SIG) Literature in Language Teaching (LiLT). In this issue, we have submissions relating to literature in practice from around Asia, showing that LiLT is becoming known outside Japan. In this issue we also report on some of the LiLT activities of the most recent JALT PanSIG held in May in Kobe and **Neil Addison** and **Tara McIlroy** describe in some detail the presentations of the sixth LiberLit conference held in February at Meiji Gakuin University.

In this issue, in his literature in practice article, **Justin Nicholes**, drawing on Hanauer to some extent, describes how he used Guo Xiaolu's (2007) short story "Winter Worm, Summer Weed," as a key text to enable scaffolding of meaningful reading and writing.

Next, **Ian Tan** from Singapore presents his action research where he reports on the effect of using literary texts in English language learning as a way to sensitize students to the effects of highlighted language used. He explains the activities in which students develop their confidence in identifying implied meaning and elaborating on the effectiveness of diction. His action research indicates that there was an improvement in the comprehension test results of students who were involved in intervention lessons.

Finally, **Susan Laura Sullivan** details interesting results of her literature in practice project through which she introduced students to 20th century art movements. Her article outlines some of the reasons for selecting the course content, and the overarching methods of instruction. She says that one of the benefits of projects involving creativity is that they incorporate high personal investment from students. The work generated from this input can be used as a "springboard" to deepen general learning.

At the Kobe PanSIG 2015, our members gave interesting presentations about how they have been using literature in ELT both in individual presentations and in a Sunday afternoon forum. We hope you will enjoy summaries from **Frances, Shiobara, Suzanne Kamata, Simon Bibby, Cameron Smith, Neil Conway** and **Gregg McNabb**.

As always, we welcome contributions from LiLT members and from around the world. We welcome your suggestions as well. Your work is being read *globally*, so by all means please don't be shy! For example, in addition to standard academic articles, for the next issue (Winter 2015), you are invited to submit some of your students' writings and how you facilitated their work.

Finally, we would like to extend our continuing thanks to the contributors who graciously published in this journal and to those who have taken the time out of their busy schedules to help in editing and proofreading. Perhaps you may be able to help us in our double-blind review process and enable us to proceed more speedily through the publishing process. We are grateful to readers, reviewers, all members of the editorial team who helped produce this issue and most of all, to you, our readers.

Gregg McNabb

Editor

Kevin Stein

Associate Editor

About the Literature in Language Teaching Special Interest Group

Literature in Language Teaching (LiLT) is a Special Interest Group (SIG) within the NPO JALT. We established this group in 2011 to encourage and promote the use of literature within language classes. The group coordinates with other groups to hold events, publishes an annual peer-reviewed Journal and publishes several newsletters per year.

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Short story analysis and writing in English Composition in China

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Abstract

This paper presents a short-story analysis and writing assignment that was underpinned by David Hanauer's (2012) meaningful literacy instruction and carried out in English Composition classes in China. This paper reviews work that has drawn on or been influenced by Hanauer's approach (e.g., Chamcharatsri, 2013, 2015; Garvin, 2013; Iida, 2012, 2014; Park, 2013) and proposes practical guidelines for applying meaningful literacy instruction in a scaffolded short-story assignment. The instructor argues for the benefits of the lesson, which include learners gaining control of elements of fiction useful for self-and other-understanding, as well as learners quickly becoming engrossed in writing activities about personally meaningful topics.

Short story analysis and writing in English Composition in China

Ever since David Ian Hanauer (2010, 2012) argued for meaningful literacy instruction, research drawing on this approach has been gaining momentum. Meanwhile, the growth of scholarship on connections between literature and language learning, such as here in *The Journal of Literature in Language Teaching*, illustrates vibrant interest in the field. This paper's purpose is to advance the discussion of meaningful literacy instruction and literature in language teaching. Specifically, this paper presents and explains theoretical underpinnings of a short-story lesson guided by meaningful literacy instruction, which was taught in English Composition classrooms in Mainland China. Using a short story set in Tibet that was written by a Beijing author, this assignment encouraged learners to reflect artistically on their own and others' unique humanity.

Meaningful Literacy Instruction

Meaningful literacy instruction is a pedagogical approach that seeks “a way to make language learning a personally contextualized, meaningful activity for the learner” (Hanauer, 2012, p. 106). According to the approach, how we interpret our world impacts not just how we view and interact in the world but also who we are (Hanauer, 2012). How Hanauer defines meaning is important for an understanding of the approach:

To understand the world, to make sense of the world, involves far more than just intellectual activity. It involves affect and intention and integrates personal history and future actions. It is a holistic activity that defines the self at the moment of understanding and a perspective and orientation towards the world (Hanauer, 2012, p. 107).

In meaningful literacy instruction, learners occupy the center of instruction. The approach tries to draw on learners’ autobiographical narratives, individual literacies, and unique humanity.

Empirical Support for Meaningful Literacy Instruction

A brief review of findings from scholarly work that has drawn on or been influenced by Hanauer’s work helps to summarize what we know and where we can go from here.

To begin, Garvin (2013) drew inspiration from Hanauer’s (2010) poetry-as-research methodology in four English Composition research classes in China. Garvin’s context, in fact, was identical to the one described in this present paper. Garvin’s (2013) study aimed “to develop English writing skills, provide space for individual expressions of L2 [second language] identity and voice, and potentially, contribute to L2 writing research” (p. 77). In interviews, learners reported (a) more confidence to write in English, (b) more positive attitudes toward writing English poetry, (c) a renewed interest in Chinese history, (d) greater ability to use a wider

range of English vocabulary, (e) more sensitivity to phonemes in the English language, and (f) a better understanding of poetic conventions common in English poetry (Garvin, 2013, p. 88). Garvin's learners also reported being less inhibited to write in English.

Also drawing on Hanauer's (2010) pedagogical and analytical approach to poetry writing, Iida (2012) examined how personally meaningful haiku affected argument papers of twenty-three Japanese learners of English. Through an analysis of pre- and post-arguments, haiku manuscripts, and interview transcripts, Iida found learners wrote more words, wrote more fluently, and wrote more directly after the haiku intervention. Iida's analysis of interview data found, like Garvin (2013), that writers reported lower inhibition to express their thoughts in English.

Next, Pisarn Bee Chamcharatsri (2013, 2015) analyzed how Thai learners expressed fear and love in writing literary genres in Thai and English. In 2013, Chamcharatsri asked learners to write personal narratives about scary life events. Participants reported not always being able to express fear better in their expert language, Thai. In addition, two of the four participants reported preferring how their English versions expressed fear. Chamcharatsri observed that it seemed easy for writers to compose personally meaningful narratives. In 2015, Chamcharatsri asked learners to write poetry about love in Thai and English. Afterward, learners reported being more aware of the linguistic, cultural, and emotional capacities of both Thai and English. Once again, Chamcharatsri (2015) found writers did not experience "writer's block," which supports that learners found it easy and enjoyable to draw on personal, "significant experiences" (p. 155).

Finally, Park's (2013) study drew on autobiographical-poetic writing to explore her own life as a teacher-scholar. In specific reference to Park's (2013) research project, Hanauer (2013) noted that Park's study represented how "Humanizing the language classroom means recognizing the individuality of consciousness, subjectivity and historical contextualization of everyone who is involved" (p. 4). Through analysis of her poetry, which she organized according to "autobiographical

waves,” Park (2013) offered support of the use of evocative genres such as autoethographic-poetry in teacher-training programs.

The literature on this approach, then, suggests that prompting learners to write in literary genres that draw on life narratives has numerous benefits. It boosts linguistic development, nurtures self-understanding, and is inherently interesting. The current lesson tried to draw on these benefits while asking the following question: To what degree does engagement with fictive modes of characterization expand learners’ ability to understand themselves and others?

Short Story Self-Contextualization: Guo Xiaolu’s “Winter Worm, Summer Weed”

Much work on meaningful literacy instruction has paid attention to English language learners’ production. Yet Hanauer’s (2010, 2012) pedagogy and research methodology has relied on the process of literary writing. This scaffolding involves learners reflecting on features and examples of a target literary genre. In a recent piece that appeared here in *The Journal of Literature in Language Teaching*, Iida (2014) noted how the integration of haiku in language classrooms in Japan followed such a scaffolding method. Similarly, in the short-story assignment to be discussed here, I drew on Guo Xiaolu’s (2007) “Winter Worm, Summer Weed,” a short story that appeared in the U.S. literary magazine *Ploughshares*, to enable scaffolding of meaningful reading and writing.

Context of the Lesson

During my seven years of teaching English Composition in China, I taught Chinese learners of English aged 18-22. As a course requirement, and sometimes as ways to get learners thinking about topics for argumentative writing, I brought in literary fiction and poetry. The learners who have experienced this short-story lesson have been in their freshman years of undergraduate education, with no special fiction writing or artistic skills. They have been enrolled in a dual-degree program involving their Chinese university and my U.S. university English department. Language levels ranged between beginner and low-intermediate.

The Short Story

I chose “Winter Worm, Summer Weed,” a story of roughly 1500 words, for its craft and its being written by a Beijing author. Although I did not choose the story to confront learners with a political issue, I realized its political nature when news of violent clashes between Tibetan and Han Chinese appeared monthly or even more frequently on the news, and students seemed to be watching me carefully as I introduced the story. Westerners in China have been blocked from traveling to Tibet alone, for fear they will get involved with protests.

Chosen for its quality, “Winter Worm, Summer Weed” follows a Tibetan boy named Guo Luo. Guo Luo has a gift for finding a valuable herb on the Kunlun Mountains. The herb is really an insect (冬虫夏草, dōngchóng xiàcǎo) used as an ingredient in traditional Chinese medicine. In the story, a female tour guide leads a group of Japanese tourists to the mountain, where she helps Guo Luo get a good price. Later, the guide asks Guo Luo to come to work with her in the city. Unable to understand, Guo Luo refuses. The narrator in “Winter Worm, Summer Weed” dips into Guo Luo’s thoughts, but never into the tour guide’s. Still, as in many works of literary fiction, character is conveyed through modes of characterization (i.e., description, action, thought, exposition, dialog).

Table 1

Modes of Characterization in Guo Xiaolu’s “Winter Worm, Summer Weed”

Modes	Guo Luo	Tour Guide
Description	He is described in the story as “skinny and about eighteen” (p. 80). He has “thick dark hair” (p. 80). He is “weathered and thinned by the sun” (p. 80). “His features are delicate, his face almost feminine despite his sunburnt skin. His eyes are bright” (p. 81).	She holds a “green flag flapping in the wind” (p. 82). “She is already thirty but wears her hair as if she were younger, in a girlish ponytail. Her plump curves stretch a tight pink sweater” (p. 82). Her “cheeks are rosy” (p. 82).

<p>Action</p>	<p>He stays in familiar places. He “sits” “climbs” “gathers” “travels the fields and catches rats” (p. 80). He “stands” “watches” “looks” (p. 81). “He tightens his hat” and “turns back to the mountain” (p. 83). “He tightens his hat, as if to help him gather his thoughts” (p. 83). He looks at her body “as though hoping he might find some Winter Worm Summer Weed hiding there” (p. 83).</p>	<p>She leads people to new places. She helps him get more money. She tries to go, with him, to a new city.</p>
<p>Thoughts</p>	<p>“He feels as though [the mountain] has never melted in the eighteen years of his life. He can picture the snow line where the white winter lotus used to grow. The white plant was hard to see against the snow. He used to ride his horse up the mountain to pick it and then sell the flowers to the government pharmacy in the town. Now the lotus has almost disappeared, picked to extinction. No point riding up to the snow line now” (pp. 81-82).</p>	<p>--</p>
<p>Exposition</p>	<p>The narrator tells us Guo Luo is “empty and drifting in the afternoon” (p. 82).</p> <p>Similes/metaphors: “He moves like a little prince of the mountains” (p. 81). “The rats move like Guo Luo, slowly” (82).</p>	<p>The narrator says her “heart [is] full of expectation” (p. 83).</p> <p>Similes/metaphors: She is like an “overripe pear tree, heavy with blossoms” (p. 82). She is “like a lone thin cloud hoping for rain” (p. 83). She is “like a bloom that’s lost its freshness” (p. 83).</p>
<p>Dialog</p>	<p>Formulaic, folk knowledge, innocent, language of capitalism: “City girls can pay the right price for my herbs” (p. 83).</p>	<p>“What are you thinking? What do you think about all day? Do you think about girls?” (p. 83).</p>

Setting as Metaphor/ Character	sun ... silent lake ... mountains ... unchanging symbols. "The land has become a desert, a rat-infested desert" (p. 81). "Now the lotus has almost disappeared, picked to extinction" (pp. 81-82).	On a road (p. 82). In a "parched and shriveled former grassland" (p. 83). "Her eyes reflect the land around them, the grassland without any grass" (p. 83). Finally, she "disappears into the sandy landscape" (p. 83).
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As Table 1 illustrates, the modes of characterization in this story show how vastly the two main characters differ.

The Lesson: Short-Story Reading and Writing

The following short-story lesson presents a meaningful and non-political way to allow space for Chinese learners of English to reflect upon politicized discourses, here related to Tibet, through an accessible process of literary analysis and creative writing.

Step 1: Meaningful Pre-Reading Writing

Before learners read the story, they write according to the following prompt: Think about a time when you wanted to help someone, but that person did not accept your help. Write the event as briefly and simply as possible. Explain why the individual did not accept your help.

Here, learners may ask, "How can we know why someone refused our help?" This brings up the difference between *story* and *plot*. A story's *story* is simply *what* happens in chronological order; a story's *plot*, on the other hand, is *why* something happened (Forster, 1927/1955). A good answer to this question is an encouraging, "Guess."

After about half an hour of writing, learners pair up and tell stories to a classmate. The instructor collects the personal narratives, then asks learners to read "Winter Worm, Summer Weed" sometime before the next step.

Step 2: Analysis of the Story's Modes of Characterization

In class, the instructor explains that in literary fiction, modes of fiction, when

analyzed, often reveal more about the story's meaning and its characters' conflicts.

Learners spend half an hour carrying out the following task:

In pairs, go through the story to decide where modes of characterization appear.

After learners have gone through the story, the instructor hands out markers or crayons. Different colors represent different modes. The instructor models how to code. Sometimes, more than one mode will appear in one section. After modeling, the instructor asks learners to carry out the following task:

Use colored markers or crayons to code occurrences of modes. For instance, description (blue), action (red), exposition (yellow), thought (green), and dialog (pink). No sentence should go unmarked.

After learners have worked in pairs, the instructor helps learners place codes into a table, such as in Table 1 (see previous section).

Step 3: Literary Character Analysis

The instructor gives the following prompt:

In pairs, create an artistic portrait of one of the characters in the story. You may use pencil and paper, crayons and markers, or an online tool. Pay attention to how the modes of characterization can be artfully conveyed.

The point is for learners to work together to think about literary fiction in a multimodal way. Some learners in my class seemed embarrassed and were not sure what to do. Soon, however, groups lost themselves in the playfulness of the activity. After learners have created artistic portraits, it is time for individual writing: Reflect on the table of modes of characterization. Now, draft a working thesis statement that explains some aspect of the story you did not realize before.

Step 4: Thesis-Driven Personally Meaningful Writing

After the instructor hands back the personal microstory from Step 1, the instructor gives the following prompt:

Read your story from before. Answer the question: How has your understanding of this life event changed through our reading of "Winter Worm, Summer Weed"? Do you better understand why that person refused your help?

After working through these steps, students may not have had a better understanding of why their help was refused, but they had more to write. Analyzing fictive structures that help to clarify the context of a situation seemed to have given learners more tools with which to think.

Step 5: Personally Meaningful Artistic Rendering

The final step of this sequence asks learners to analyze themselves as if they were a character in a work of fiction. Past research on storytelling in general has shown the benefits of narrative writing, such as: (a) English-learning immigrants were able to explore past, present, and future selves through stories (Early & Norton, 2012; Lee, 2013); (b) classrooms that allowed storytelling to emerge encouraged learners to place themselves in empowering agentive positions in life-history narratives (Early & Norton, 2012; Simpson, 2011); (c) English language learners (ELL) have resisted dominant linear narratives to express the complexity of hybrid identities (Ghiso & Low, 2013); (d) co-construction of narratives has encouraged more vivid tellings and rememberings (Holmes & Marra, 2011); (e) narrative writing has encouraged language development for expressive purposes (Holmes & Marra, 2011; Ko, 2010; Nicholas, Rossiter, & Abbott, 2011); (f) narrative writing has raised genre awareness (Nicholas, Rossiter, & Abbott, 2011); (g) narratives have enabled ELLs to create a sense of community (Nicholas, Rossiter, & Abbott, 2011); and (h) ELLs have reported expanding identity and viewpoint-taking through storytelling (Stillar, 2013). This lesson seeks to draw on these affordances as learners write about themselves with a keener awareness of the fictive modes of characterization now available to them.

Accordingly, the instructor will give the following prompt:

Analyze yourself: your description, action, thoughts, exposition (or what you can tell us about your history), and dialog. Write a thesis-driven description that tells us who you are.

Create an artistic visualization that conveys to others who you are.

The instructor should provide publication opportunities on learning management systems, on free open-source blog platforms, or on a classroom announcement board. Most important, learners should convey themselves through modes of characterization as vividly as possible.

Benefits of the Lesson

The following question guided my lesson: To what degree does engagement with fictive modes of characterization impact learners' ability to understand themselves and others? Though work is underway to modify this lesson to better answer this question, reflections from a teacher's perspective are possible. First, after being scaffolded toward artistic drawing and writing, as well as through analysis of a short story's modes of characterization, learners were able to more easily explain the motives of another person. This teacher reflection resembles earlier findings on narrative writing for language learners (Early & Norton, 2012; Lee, 2013; Stillar, 2013). Second, learners seemed to quickly become engrossed in these activities, seeming to confirm Chamcharatsri's (2013, 2015) observation that learners find it relatively easy to write when the topic is personally meaningful in the sense that it engages autobiographic selves (Hanauer, 2010; Ivanič, 1998).

Conclusion

In a recent volume of *The Journal of Literature in Language Teaching*, Collins (2014) reported on the impact that poetry reading had on exploration of universal human themes. Similarly, Stillar (2013) found that Japanese learners of English writing were able to assume new points of view and identities more fluently after being asked to write stories from the viewpoints of marginalized or vilified members of their own culture. Hanauer (2003), too, has written that poetry as data in applied linguistics can help to disseminate humanizing discourses that combat racist generalizations by giving readers chances to vividly experience another person's artistic self-understanding. The short-story assignment detailed in this paper aimed at similar ends. In addition to asking learners to explore themselves according to

Hanauer's (2010, 2012) approach, this assignment involved learners exploring human dimensions of politicized discourses through fictive modes of characterization, and seemingly expanding their capacity to contextualize themselves and others beyond simple guesswork.

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**Conceptualising and implementing an action research project
targeted at improving secondary school students' English language
comprehension skills through literature**

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Abstract

This action research project looks at the effect of using literary texts in English language learning as a way to sensitize students to the effects of language use which are highlighted in these texts. I examine this through implementing a series of lessons involving reading and close analysis of the language in literary texts, and activities in which students develop their confidence in identifying implied meaning and elaborating on the effectiveness of diction in contributing to the meaning of the text. The results indicate that there was an improvement in the comprehension test results of students who underwent the intervention lessons.

I was conscious of the close link between Literature and English language, as literature has been described as an ally of language (Brumfit and Carter, 1986). There is evidence of an increasing prominence being given to the literary use of language in the GCE 'O' Level English Language syllabus in Singapore. In the revised syllabus document, the comprehension paper sets to test 'the use of language for impact,' which involves reading language for connotation and implied meaning. Also, in the specimen comprehension paper, there is an explicit usage of the literary device 'simile,' as well as questions that involve analysing the language in the passage that evokes feelings of fear and suspense. There is thus a need for students to be conversant in basic literary analysis in order to answer questions in the English language examinations. This research project sets out to investigate whether an intervention in the English language classroom involving exposure to different literary genres can improve students' performance in such comprehension activities

within the question range of the new GCE 'O' Level English Language examinations.

The action research framework allowed me the opportunity to reflect on the gaps in my pedagogical practice and how students' needs may be better addressed through an objective study of my actual classroom environment (Henson 1996). Reflecting on classroom practice as an English language teacher at the start of this process, I realised that my students struggled the most with comprehension questions that focused on analysis of inferential meaning of language and connotative language use, which were precisely the aspects that were becoming more prominent in the revised syllabus for the GCE 'O' Level English language examinations. This acted as motivation to explore the critical literature in greater detail and to design an intervention around Literature and English language teaching.

In terms of the pre-existing literature on the subject, there have been numerous authors who have probed the connection between using literary texts as rich language resources and increased engagement in the English language classroom. Collie and Slater (1987) suggest that reading and analysing literature presents authentic and complex language material and foregrounds the central role of the learner by stimulating personal response. The authors also emphasize the increased interaction in the language classroom, as learners draw connections between the literary texts and their own experiences. Literature presents a powerful mode of linguistic utterance, as it impacts the reader not only cognitively, but also affectively. Widdowson (1983) points out the fact that literary texts are multi-faceted and allow for different responses and interpretations. By allowing students to generate different responses to the texts and exploring how language works to create these multiple hermeneutic outcomes, genuine and motivated interaction with the text and language occurs, leading to greater class participation and engagement.

The integration of English language teaching and the teaching of literary devices has been explored by Sinclair (1982), who argues that any competent command of language involves the understanding of literary techniques, and the two cannot be separated from each other. The student should be conversant not only with the denotative, but also the connotative aspects of language use, which literary language can be said to exemplify. As a literary genre, poetry can be particularly

useful for the teacher in promoting sensitivity towards language use. Ramsaran (1983) argues that poetry fulfils this function in the language classroom because it conveys unconventional and creative meanings through syntax, phonology and lexicography. Collie and Slater (1987) also point out that poetry promotes creative expression by students, an indication of their increased confidence in manipulating the language for varied purposes.

In this study, these research questions were considered:

Can exposure to literary texts in the secondary English language classroom improve students' understanding of the effects of the language as demonstrated through comprehension?

1. Is there an increase in the marks of students in a comprehension test after this exposure to literary texts?
2. Is there an increase in student engagement and motivation during English language lessons after this exposure to literary texts?

Methodology

Samples

For this study, I taught two Secondary Two classes of students aged between 13 to 14 years old that formed the intervention and control groups. The control group consisted of 28 students, while the intervention group consisted of 27 students. These two classes were mixed-ability classes in terms of their knowledge of English. All students in both classes had the same socio-economic status and belonged to the same ethnic group. I was also the English Language and Literature teacher of both classes.

Intervention

The intervention was carried out as part of a comprehension unit consisting of a series of eight lessons, each lesson having a duration of 1 hour. The control group worked on a series of comprehension exercises and answered questions based on them. When analysing the questions and going through answers with the control group, I did not draw attention to literary devices and techniques. The materials used for the lessons involving the control group were comprehension texts with no

particular literary merit to them. With the intervention group, the series of eight lessons focused on the reading and discussion of a series of literary texts that comprised both poetry and prose. The lessons focused on developing students' sensitivity to word choice and language use in the literary texts. The outline of the intervention lessons was as follows:

Lesson 1 – Introduction to Literary Analysis. Students explored a series of literary texts and discussed implied meaning.

Lessons 2 and 3 – Effectiveness of Diction and Word Choice. The teacher explored short poems with the class and students discussed word choice in the poems and how it contributes to the effectiveness of poems. Students rewrote poems into prose and explored the differences, thereby understanding the significance of diction.

Lessons 4 and 5 – Introduction and Analysis of Figurative Language. The teacher introduced literary devices such as metaphor, simile and personification to students using poems and short prose passages. Students identified and picked out examples of these literary devices and discussed how they made the poems interesting.

Lessons 6 and 7 – Examining Prose passages. Students looked at selected literary prose passages and discussed how language and literary devices aid the writer in portraying character, setting and the main themes of the passage.

Lesson 8 – Students wrote short responses on questions concerning the effectiveness of literary language in conveying implied meaning, as a summary of what they had learnt to that point. The teacher looked at responses and discussed areas for further improvement with the students. Some suggestions included how students could move beyond summarizing and paraphrasing the literary text towards analysis of literary language in the text, and how students could improve their powers of expression in their responses by choosing more appropriate adjectives and adverbs. The suggestions provided were in the form of written feedback on student responses, and individual consultations with particularly weak students. The students responded to the feedback by rewriting their responses, which generally showed that they were able to consider the feedback given and to use it to

improve their writing.

Data collection

A pre-test (Appendix A) comprised of a 20-mark comprehension exercise that followed the question range of the new GCE 'O' Level English Language examinations was given to the two classes before the intervention lessons. The scripts were scored and marks were recorded. One class was used as a control group while the other class was given intervention lessons involving literary texts carried out over a period of two months.

After the period of intervention, the two classes of students sat for a post-test which was a different comprehension exercise that comprised the same question types and marks as the pre-test. The marks were recorded and compared with the pre-test to establish whether there was any improvement in grades in the two classes after the intervention. Students from the intervention group also responded to reflection questions about the whole process and their learning experience. The data used was thus both a quantitative measure of their performance in the English language and a qualitative evaluation of whether reading literary texts had enhanced their learning of English.

Results

1. Quantitative

Table 1 shows the average marks of students from both the control and intervention classes for the pre-test and the post-test.

Table 1
Average Marks for Comprehension Test (SD in Parentheses)

Class	Pre-Test (20 marks)	Post-Test (20 marks)
Control Group	13.2 (2.23)	12.16 (2.12)
Intervention Group	13.15 (2.54)	13.37 (2.27)

As can be seen from the Table 1 above, the average mark for the two classes in the pre-test was very similar at 13.2 for the control group and 13.15 for the intervention group. The standardized mean difference (SMD) for the pre-test was 0.02, indicating that the difference was negligible (Cohen, 1988). The results of a *t* test indicated that the marks of the two classes were not significantly different, $t(52)=0.09$, $p=0.93$. The results therefore establish that the two classes were very similar in ability before the intervention period.

At the end of the intervention, the average mark for the intervention group had increased from 13.15 to 13.37. The SMD for the post-test was 0.57, which indicated a slight increase from the pre-test, but not significant enough to establish a large effect (Cohen, 1988). From the results of a *t* test comparing the post-test results of the two classes, there was a borderline statistical improvement in the marks of the intervention group, which was contrary to expectations of a noticeable statistical improvement in the intervention group, $t(50)=1.98$, $p=0.05$.

2. Qualitative

After the administration of the intervention lessons, a post-intervention questionnaire was distributed to the students in the intervention group. The questions were as follows:

1. What are three important things that you have learnt throughout this series of lessons?
2. Are you more confident in analysing implied meaning in texts after this series of lessons?
3. Do you think your comprehension skills have improved?
4. What suggestions for improvements can you make?

Sample student responses for Question 1 are as follows:

“I’ve learnt the importance of word choice and how they can emphasise certain meanings and make the text more impactful.”

“I’ve learnt that word choice affects the meaning of the whole text.”

“Poems have implied meaning which can be quite challenging to find but when you find it you’ll feel a sense of accomplishment.”

These responses indicate that students felt that they had learnt meaningful lessons about the importance of diction and language use, and how they could contribute towards the impact of the texts that they had read and analysed. In terms of the objectives of the research project, student feedback indicated that they had understood the aims of the project and had increased their appreciation of the importance of implied meaning in texts, and were more confident in analysing implied meaning.

For Question 2, 88% of students felt that their confidence had increased after the intervention lessons, although some indicated that the improvement was slight. For Question 3, 92% of students felt that their comprehension skills have improved after the lessons. Based on their responses, students in the intervention group generally felt that the lessons did have a positive impact on their ability to handle comprehension questions targeting inferential meaning.

For Question 4, sample student responses are as follows:

“Do more comprehension questions with different question types. [I would have liked more] practice on the questions because practice makes perfect.”

“[Practise] more analysis under pressure, because we don’t always have the luxury of time.”

These responses indicate that students felt they needed more practice in answering specific types of comprehension questions in order to score better in a comprehension test. While most students enjoyed the range of activities that involved them discussing implied meaning in literary texts, they also wanted more practice on how to answer examination questions and to provide the ‘right’ answer under examination conditions.

Discussion

The study and analysis of the results indicated that there was an increase in average marks in the comprehension post-test for the intervention group compared to the pre-test. Comparing the post-test results for both groups, the intervention group also scored higher average marks than the control group for the post-test. Their answers to questions involving analysis of implied meaning were generally more accurate and incisive. However, the statistical analysis of the data indicated that the improvement in marks for the intervention group was only barely significant. Possible reasons as to why the results were not more statistically significant could include not having a large enough sample size to carry out research, due to the fact that I was only in charge of teaching two classes in the level. The period of intervention was also too short, and this did not enable me to revisit and consolidate key learning concepts with students. Also, reflecting on the intervention strategies I put in place, more emphasis could have been given to developing students' competencies in writing and expressing their understanding of implied meaning on paper and in response to various types of questions about the literary texts explored in class.

Qualitatively, the students in the intervention group indicated that they were generally more confident in answering comprehension questions that involved analysing diction and literary techniques. Through their responses to Question 1 of the post-intervention questionnaire, students reflected that they were also more engaged in the lessons and were less apprehensive about handling literary texts like poetry. However, in analysing student responses to Question 4 of the questionnaire, I noted that there was some feedback that students needed more practice in answering specific types of comprehension questions, as there was a danger of misinterpreting the demands of the question and not phrasing their answers in a way that suited the question.

Reflecting on my experience of the action research process, it allowed me to become a more reflective practitioner, motivated to look into my own personal classroom practices and beliefs as an English Language teacher. It was also an extremely useful way to target the gaps in student learning and to systematically examine whether new pedagogical strategies implemented can address and remedy

this gap through quantitative measures like the pre-test and post-test and qualitative measures like the post-intervention questionnaire. Most importantly, feedback from this process as to what worked and what did not can be used to inform further pedagogical interventions, leading to improvements in my teaching.

Conclusion

The results of this action research project support the idea that the use of English language literary texts has a positive impact upon English language learning. An increased focus on using literary texts as rich resources of language could be beneficial in sensitizing students' awareness of the nuances of language use, and developing their confidence in analysing literary language and discussing the inferential aspects of language.

Further studies could look at how the usage of literary texts in the classroom can be blended with more 'traditional' modes of comprehension teaching like analysing the demands of the comprehension question and dissecting the comprehension passage.

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Appendix A

The text below describes the experiences of a young Maori¹ woman working in a bank. Read it carefully and answer Questions 5 – 13.

- 1 Although Pari had been working at the bank for over seven months, there were times when she felt like quitting her job. It started when she thought she had overheard her colleagues whispering about her being the only Maori in the bank. She would begin to feel as if she stuck out like a sore thumb. In a way, it was all so silly because she got on very well with her colleagues, and, most of the time, did not feel any hostility from them at all. Every now and then however, a casual glance from them in her direction would cause her to grip her seat tightly, and she had to forcibly stop herself from shaking. 5
- 2 Once, she overheard a customer comment to the accountant about how surprising it was to see a Maori girl serving as a teller¹. The remark seemed innocent enough and Pari took no further notice. However, Pari noticed the accountant's raised eyebrows and how he fidgeted, concerned he was not keeping a closer check on the accuracy of her work. Just a few weeks ago, Sharon, another teller, had mentioned to Pari that her boyfriend and she were going to a party. Her boyfriend had a friend who was undecided about going as he did not have a date. To persuade him to go, Sharon had said she would ask her colleagues if anybody would be interested to attend the party. 10 15
- 3 Pari knew that Sharon had been intending to ask her but, suddenly, she saw that startled look again. She looked into Sharon's eyes and read her thoughts. She could almost hear Sharon thinking: Oh dear, that friend of Bob's might not like the idea of going out with a Maori. Pari looked down at the ground, pretending that she had never looked at her.
- 4 Sharon had not asked her. Yet, she was Pari's best friend at the bank. For the rest of the day the two girls avoided each other. The next morning, they grinned at each other again. Pari had become just the girl who worked at the bank once more, part of what the manager, Mr Morley, liked to call his 'team' and not apart from it. 20
- 5 Mr Morley was the worst of the lot when it came to making her feel different. For months, Pari had felt his beady eyes drilling into her back, his expression as hard as stone. Each time he walked past her, she would try to remain inconspicuous. She used to imagine that he was waiting for her to make one wrong move or perhaps, even better, to resign. Also, there were times when his eyes would flicker alarm – when her daily cash did not balance or when she joked too easily with customers. 25

¹ The Maori are the indigenous people or natives of New Zealand.

² A teller is an employee of a bank who deals with customers.

- 6 After seven months, Pari began to wonder whether she did belong at work. This carried on until the day she saw a woman hasten into the bank. She kept tapping her feet on the floor, shifting one foot to the other and looking round. As Pari called to her, she gave an audible sigh of relief and stepped quickly to where Pari was standing. However, as she looked up and saw Pari, her eyes became veiled and she pulled back from the counter. 30
- 7 The next thing she saw was Mr Morley approaching the woman. His face was stern. 35
- 8 “Would Madam care to step this way?” he asked, indicating his office.
- 9 Pari felt a sudden lump in her throat. She stood up and walked past her friends to the washroom. She ran water into a basin, rubbed soap into her hands and began to wash her face. Oh dear, why must they make me feel so different?
- 10 A few moments later, Sharon opened the door and suddenly hugged Pari. 40
- 11 “Guess what!” she screamed. “Mr Morley wrote a cheque for the woman and shouted: ‘We don’t need you as a customer here, Madam!’ You should have seen her, Pari! Her face went red! She stormed out in a real temper!”
- 12 “You mean Mr Morley did that?” Pari asked.
- 13 “Yes, Pari!” Sharon answered.
- 14 As Sharon and her other colleagues started crowding around her, grinning and comforting her, Pari felt as if at any moment she would start to bawl. She suddenly felt a painful joy overcome her. Although there would still continue to be times when they might make her feel different she would at least know they had a lot of support for her too. 45

Adapted from *A Sense of Belonging* by Witi Ihimaera.

Questions

At the beginning of this text Pari was thinking about her time at work. Explain how the language used in paragraph 1 conveys how self-conscious she was about being different from her colleagues.

Support your answer with three details from paragraph 1.

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
..... [3]

At the start of paragraph 2, the writer says Pari 'had overheard a customer comment to the accountant about how surprising it was to see a Maori girl serving as a teller' (lines 8 – 9).

What does the word 'surprising' suggest about the customer's attitude towards the Maori race?

.....
..... [1]

'However, Pari noticed the accountant's raised eyebrows and how he fidgeted, concerned he was not keeping a closer check on the accuracy of her work' (lines 10 – 11).

Identify two-word phrases in the above sentence which suggest that

- (i) the accountant was startled [1]
- (ii) the accountant was suspicious of Pari [1]

Explain fully why Sharon gave Pari ‘a startled look’ (lines 16 – 17).

.....

.....

..... [2]

In paragraph 5 ‘Mr Morley was the worst of the lot when it came to making her feel different’ (line 24). Is Pari’s view about her manager accurate? Give one piece of evidence to support your answer.

.....

.....

..... [2]

In paragraph 5 the writer says that Pari had ‘felt his beady eyes drilling into her back, his expression as hard as stone’ (line 25).

What do these expressions suggest about Pari’s impression of Mr Morley’s attitude towards her?

Expressions	Pari’s impression of Mr Morley’s attitude
‘beady eyes drilling into her back’	
‘his expression as hard as stone’	

[2]

In paragraph 6 ‘her eyes became veiled and she pulled back from the counter’ (line 34).

What two things does this suggest about the woman’s reaction to Pari attending to her?

.....

.....

.....

..... [2]

In paragraph 14, Pari 'suddenly felt a painful joy overcome her' (lines 47 – 48).

What is unusual and effective about the phrase 'painful joy'?

.....

.....

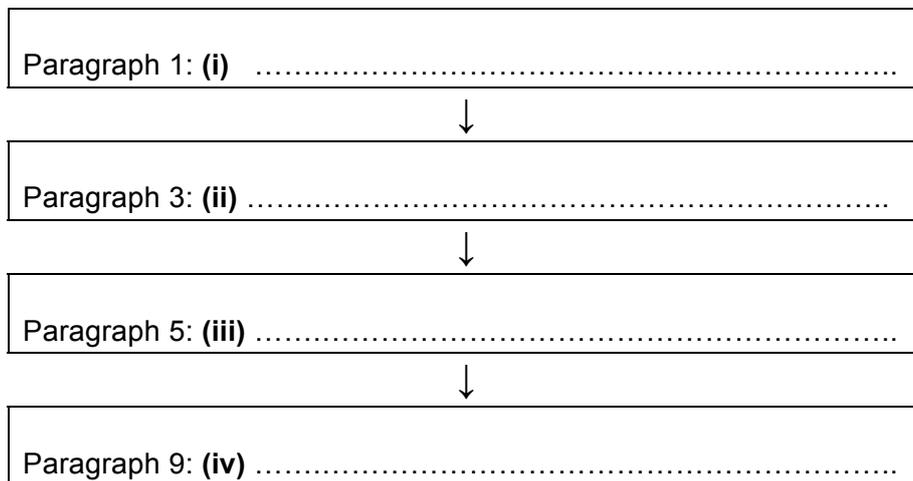
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The story reflects Pari's feelings as she reacts to her colleagues, manager and the situation she encounters at work. Complete the flow chart by choosing one word from the box to summarise the main feeling described in certain parts of the story. There are some words in the box you do not need to use.

Pari's feelings

Embarrassment	Thrilled	Anxiety	Despair	Relief	Timid	Joy
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Flow chart



[4]

Student autonomy through creativity

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Abstract

Creative writing, creative projects, and projects involving creativity incorporate high personal investment from students. The work generated from this input can be used as a “springboard” to deepen general learning. When conducted in English Medium Instruction classes (EMI), or in classes with related forms of teaching, the learning of English as an Additional Language (EAL) can be enhanced as a by-product (as implied by Allwright, 2013, p.6). As part of an EMI course designed by the author, second-year undergraduate comparative culture majors at a Japanese university explored aspects of creativity by researching elements of twentieth century art movements, including writing methods. From these literary guidelines students produced their own creative work, which ultimately appeared as part of a whole-class poster presentation. Among other features, students focused on the history and certain literary personalities of the movements as part of their research. The main interests of this article are learner autonomy, agency and growth generated a) from using this creative student-produced work, and b) from engagement with the research and creative material. It shares details of class activities and evaluations from the yearlong course, including examples of student literature. Learner rather than language development holds the stronger focus of the paper. However, as the lessons were conducted in a foreign language (English), aspects of language development are touched upon.

Key words: student autonomy, student agency, creative writing, cognitive proficiency, creativity, student-produced materials, Futurism, Cubism, Dadaism, Surrealism, Gutai, Fluxus

For the final assignment of a two-semester EMI comparative culture course, vaguely titled Pre-Seminar II and Seminar I, students initially and ostensibly explored the writing methods of the Avant Garde Futurist, Cubist, Dadaist, Surrealist, and Gutai/Fluxus art groups. Gutai and Fluxus contain similarities, so they were studied together. This essay outlines some of the reasons for selecting the course content, and the overarching methods of instruction. It then discusses some of the benefits of literature/creativity in practice, including the personal development and growth that can stem from project-based work. Examples of student writing and feedback are provided.

The Art Movements

Developments in industry, economics, society and culture in the early twentieth century ushered in art movements such as Futurism, Cubism, Dadaism, and Surrealism. These European movements contained literary components, and these were influenced by new technology, reaction to the horrors of World War I, and Freud's theories, among other stimuli. Certain members were aligned with or discarding various political beliefs, such as Fascism, Communism, Anarchism and Socialism (Centre Pompidou, 2005/2007; Duchamp, Naumann, Obalk & Taylor, 2000; Museum of Modern Art [MoMa], 2009). During World War I, pacifist Dada members established Cabaret Voltaire in Switzerland (Rumens, 2009). World War Two saw members, including women, joining the French resistance, avoiding or being sent to German concentration camps, and surviving or dying in those prisons (Academy of American poets, n.d.; Glover Goldlewski, 2001). Protagonists held great sway in creative circles across the world, were possibly murdered by Stalinist agents, had multiple affairs and ménage-à-trois, and committed suicide at an alarming rate (Karpel, 2007). Both sexes were active and extraordinary (Gammel & Zelazo, 2011; Glover Goldlewski, 2001). In the 1950s and 60s in Japan and the U.S., Gutai and Fluxus also sprang from and reacted against the values that had taken nations once again to war (Pollack, 2013; Willette, 2012). The agents of the art movements lived in interesting times and held interesting lives, so the source material is potentially rich for learner engagement. Bibby writes of Japanese students operating in a "conceptual vacuum" in terms of understanding how prior events can influence current ones, particularly politically (2014, p. 21). Approaching world events through the people,

literature and art of the times can strengthen students' general awareness on many levels and helps fill that vacuum. This new knowledge can lead to deeper understanding of the interconnectedness of past and present, and leave students with a wider global outlook. Aspects of this are explored below.

“Learners are capable of taking learning seriously”

The above is a quote from Allwright (2010, p. 2). The assumption behind the statement might be common sense for many teachers, but language teachers and learners often face uninspiring material, particularly if at a university level the students are non-English majors and instructors have no control over course materials (extrapolated from Yoshida, 2009, p. 6, p. 10; as suggested by Seeroi, 2012). Both Allwright (2006, in Gieve & Miller, p. 20) and Yoshida (2013, pp. 9-10) outline former students harbouring resentment toward both general and language learning, perhaps due to having been “captive learners” when younger (Allwright), or from facing unrealistic expectations of language use and evaluation based on native-speaker-like goals of production (Yoshida). These attitudes and circumstances can extend into higher education.

When the opportunity arises, teaching content using exercises involving learner interaction and negotiation might help ameliorate possible student aversion toward lessons conducted in non-native languages (Allwright, 2013; Gieve & Miller, 2006). However, there is a higher cognitive “processing load” when learning in a foreign language, so greater aversion is also possible (Skehan, among others, 1996, p. 54). Avant-garde art movements are not necessarily well known to native speakers of English let alone EAL students. As such, this topic can be removed from students' life experiences and seem to hold little relevance. Accordingly, the risk of aversion increases again. On the other hand, when students try to find answers to that which “puzzles” them, as opposed to finding definitive answers to “problems”, it can be argued that curiosity and cognitive engagement are piqued, and new concepts can gain validity (Allwright & Lenzuen, 1997 in Kumaravadivelu, 2006; Allwright, 2000, in Kumaravadivelu, 2006; Gieve & Miller, 2006; Kapur, 2008). Creating puzzlement, confusion *and* interest could be seen as stock-in-trade for the art movements mentioned above, for example, Dadaist Marcel Duchamp's art piece, “Fountain” (a

urinal), or Yoko Ono's Fluxus performance art. When students work together to create, discuss and reach conclusions on that which might initially confuse them, this interest and shared burden of learning can provide the impetus to negotiate a way through cognitive complexity, especially if a connection is made with the material (Gieve & Miller, 2006, p. 22; Hadley, 2001).

Though they might seem abstract in nature, the creative composition methods of the art groups are tangible in execution, and this tangibility can link learners to the work and movements. Creating like pieces of work can thereby lessen the cognitive burden of application while addressing the upper and lower echelons of frameworks for learning, such as those outlined in Anderson and Krathwohl's 2001 modified version of Bloom's taxonomy (as cited in Krathwohl, 2002, among others). That is, "... simple to more complex and challenging ways of thinking" are employed when completing assigned tasks, such as understanding how to make creative work, producing it and then pursuing other areas related to the subject matter (Wilson, 2013, p. 2).

Students in Japan are enrolled in a wide variety of courses, including liberal arts, international communication and comparative culture. Within these fields, a tradition exists of encouraging participant interest in global perspectives. In fact, it seems to have been a Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) aim for some time for students across all levels of education (MEXT, 2008-2009, 2009; Yoshida, 2009, 2013). With the formation of the Global 30 universities – institutions selected as centres for internationalisation – courses encouraging diversity of thought have arisen or are being implemented in a number of establishments (13 to date). Global *jinzai*, a domestic programme with the aim of encouraging more outward-looking attitudes among students, reinforces this aim. Some aspects of this diversity, among other hoped-for outcomes, will conceivably be reflected in students being able to confidently make decisions and relate to others on a local and global level (Brown, 2014, p. 52; MEXT, 2009, 2012, n.d.). Many non-Global 30 universities run courses with similar aims (Brown, p. 3).

This diversity can also be reflected in ideas generated from higher education and research. New ideas are often first encountered at university (Sen, 2015, in Colangelo, 2015). They also stem from giving students opportunities to take their

learning “seriously” (Allwright, 2010, p. 2). Our students are young adults, not children. In keeping with the previous paragraph, having enrolled in liberal arts or similar courses, they may already have a disposition towards the wider world around them, and may be mentally ready for cognitively challenging and diverse topics, such as non-mainstream twentieth century art movement philosophies. *However*, their English ability might not be commensurate with their curiosity (Yoshida, 2009, p. 10; Sullivan, 2014b). A number of students taking EMI courses might find they have reasonable Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS), but are lacking in Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP, as defined by Cummins, 1976 as cited in 1980, 1999, 2000a & 2000b; Yoshida, 2009, 2013; see also Sullivan, 2014b). The reasons why this is so range beyond the scope of this essay, but MEXT is hoping to address the situation at an elementary and secondary school level through the New Course of Study. If successful, new graduates will be more able to easily undertake EMI courses at a tertiary level in the future (Yoshida, 2009, pp. 2-10).

In the meantime, students may not yet have developed CALP to deal with divergent topics, but if they are never exposed to divergent topics they may never get the chance to develop it. Yoshida argues that if Japanese can use their “own” English, a form of plurilingualism, to achieve higher cognitive levels of language use, such as debating or persuasion, then the chances of them becoming more self-assured in their non-native language is a possible side-effect (2013, p. 14). Even if students are unable to flawlessly express opinions in the target language, it does not mean that learning how to, and being given the chance to express themselves is a waste of time. To the contrary, it can lead to satisfying some of the general aims of global *jinzai*, such as instigating the ability to “. . . reason, argue and debate . . .”, broadening perspectives, and can lead to personal growth at the least (Cabinet Office, 2012 in Yoshida, 2013, pp. 2-3).

The philosophical ideas of the aforementioned art groups have held some universal appeal at various times in history, including within Japan. Students, as stated above, may find connections to these ideas on numerous levels, as many people have before them. Avant-Garde groups challenge mainstream norms, and university is a safe place to scrutinize thoughts beyond the hegemony. Youth is often the harbinger of change. EAL student-created literature and cognitively challenging topics taught in

a non-native language can create pathways into wider worlds, even if only on a level of personal enjoyment.

The Creative Nexus

Futurism, Cubism, Surrealism, Dadaism and Gutai/Fluxus all have writing methods which give students the chance to “. . . becom[e] creatively literate . . .” (Disney, 2014, p. 7). Disney, speaking generally about second language learners undertaking creative writing courses, says that when this happens, “. . . [c]reative Writing (SL) students are invited to enter a ‘life transforming conversation’ within a community of mentors, peers and literatures” (p. 7). And beyond. For teachers who can expand a literature course, or implement a course which has some components of literature, looking at and using not only these methods, but also exploring the movements’ philosophies, times, politics, influences, work and people, means that students examine literature not only as something worthy of analysis and reflection, but also as a living, breathing, metamorphosing entity. With student-generated work “spiralization” (Taylor, 1976, p. 317) can occur, where original creations interact, like baker’s yeast, with their environment and are converted into all manner of interconnected activities and learning opportunities, including many which encourage language use and development.

Within the EAL field, “Creative Writing (SL) . . . avoids the use of canonized texts as ‘read-only’ artefacts” (Disney, 2014, p. 7). Through producing work, students develop an ownership of the language that is inclusive of them, especially as they are the ones manipulating it. As such both the work and language are more likely to have relevance and validity to them. This relevancy, a form of learning proficiency, can lead to language proficiency through intrinsic motivation (Vallerand, 1997, in Dörnyei, 1998, p. 121; Dörnyei, 1998, Allwright, 2013). Guided exploratory activities can lead to students taking responsibility for their learning, which is an aspect of both independent and interdependent attitudes towards study. Teaching from the inside out rather than the outside in – that is, students create work and study it rather than studying and analysing the creative work of others, or incorporating elements of both approaches – helps avoid the pitfall of passivity. When students have created the literature, they are the originators of the source material and are more able to express

their cognitive and abstract understanding when given appropriate academic training and scaffolding.

Art Movement Poster Presentations

The second half of the Seminar 1 course detailed was devoted to creating poster presentations of the art movements. As a precursor to the course, first semester Pre-Seminar 2 students explored and produced certain types of poetry, including shape poems. They learned poetry analysis skills, and posted reflections on the creative work of their peers on a class blog. For examples of student work and further explanation see Sullivan, 2014a.

The beginning of semester two continued the poetic theme. Students made a “Words in Freedom” poem in pairs (see Figure 1). Words in Freedom is an Italian Futurist idea from the early twentieth century. The founder, Marinetti, wished to create a new language, free from grammar and syntax (MoMa, 2009). His poems reflect this. Words in Freedom are based on onomatopoeia and typography, and this form of poetry was selected because sound is an almost universal experience and easily accessible in concept. Further exploration of the Words in Freedom poems can be found at Sullivan, 2014b.

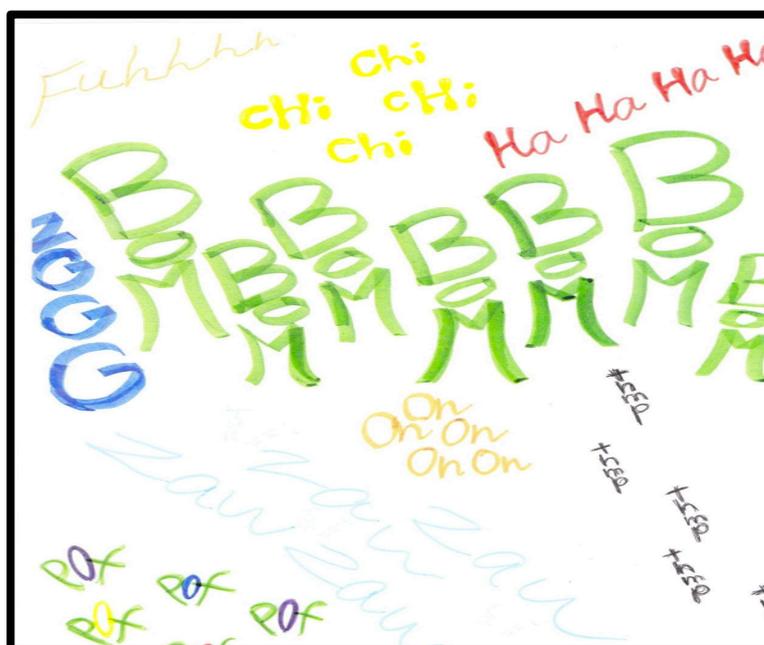


Figure 1. Words in Freedom poem: “Jungle”. (S. Yamamori, S. Yamauchi & S. Takeuchi, personal communication, 2012; see also Sullivan, 2014b)

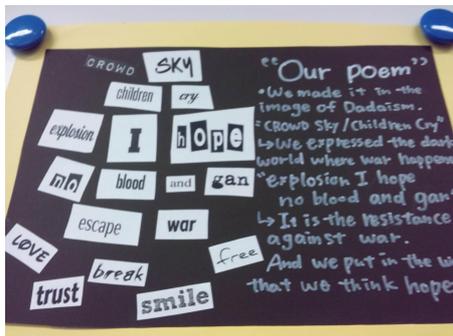
These activities led to the most challenging assignment of the year, the creation and implementation of a poster presentation of the five art groups. Despite the overall difficulty, the entry points to the topics explored were approachable. As with Futurism (Words in Freedom poems), tangible production methods (sound) led to the abstract (the representation and explanation of sound). The practical *application* of abstract ideas leads to further practical *examples* of the abstract. Students were protagonists and learners. Autonomy stems from creation, and understanding of chosen or allocated topics.

In groups of three or four, depending upon the size of the class, students chose one of the five art movements. The end product was a poster comprising 10-12 categories including: Philosophy and history; a famous writer and biography; creative work of the famous writer, and reasons for selection; a group poem using the art group's writing method; an explanation of the student group poem; the art movement's writing method, and a Japanese proponent of the movement (could be a visual artist), among others.

Analysis of the creative work selected was not necessary, but most students, drawing from first semester's experience, did some form of it, thereby independently recycling their learning. Output improved through practice. Students demonstrated acquisition of the life-long learning skills that Allwright holds as a core objective of a successful classroom by doing this, because they acted autonomously (2013, p. 9).

Writing Methods

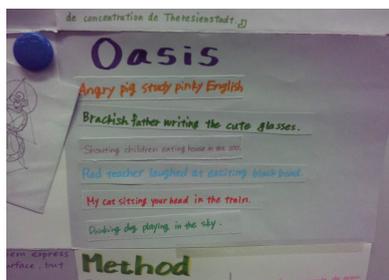
Futurism, has the writing method of sound. Cubism uses the familiar method of shape poetry encountered in the first semester, although it also incorporates other aspects, which were often explored and used. Dadaism has the easy to execute method of "cut-ups" and found poetry. Surrealism has fairly easy to execute, due to time constraints and randomness, methods of exquisite corpse/cadaver, or automatic writing (see Figure 2 for an explanation). Gutai/Fluxus have a number of different methods, including small instructive "events" or "happenings"; mail art; a simple, everyday concept of writing, and the idea of there being no limits to what is considered poetry (see Figure 2).



Dada cut-up poem (M. Hayashi, M. Koshino, H. Takaki, personal communication, 2014).

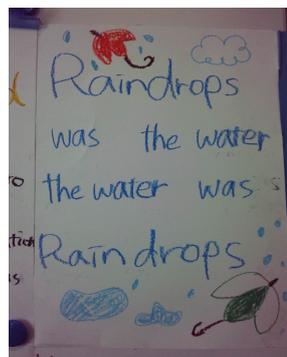


Guitai/Fluxus Mail Art (H. Murayama, K. Sawada, K. Usui, personal communication, 2014). Students chose to make mail art using global headlines, published on the same date, to highlight the shared experience of negative occurrences.



Surrealist poem (M. Morishita, S. Sakai, S. Miyachi, personal communication, 2014)

Exquisite corpse/cadaver: Members individually write a number of sentences at the same time. Sentences are cut up, placed face down on a surface, and randomly selected. The order in which they are chosen determines the poem.



Cubist poem (R. Ichihashi, M. Kokai, S. Yamamoto, personal communication, 2014).

Shape poems were explored, but Cubism also involves play on words and a cyclic sense of no beginning or end.

Figure 2. Examples of student work employing the art movement writing methods

The Process

The philosophies of the movements, particularly in the cases of Guitai/Fluxus and Cubism, can greatly influence the work produced. This indicates student absorption and

reflection of different outlooks through their creative work. They create in similar ways to those who have gone before them. Power is gained in knowing they can do this, and knowing they have the freedom to do so (Disney, 2014, p. 3). For example, Figure 3 shows a pile of chairs one upon the other. The students of a Gutai/Fluxus group strew paper figures at the base of the structure, leaving one figure precariously atop. When asked about meaning, they said it represented the pressures of society. When asked why or how it was a poem, they replied, “We believe the Gutai idea that not all poems are written” (C. Ishihara, S. Kuroda, M.K. Kang, Y. Z. Zhao, personal communication, 2012). They became experts in the classroom in their area of study to some degree, as opposed to novices (as defined by Duff, 2005, p. 56), and illustrated this through their creative work. Their reasoning was very clear to me and to their classmates, which, in addition to illustrating learner agency, again tied into general MEXT aims of wanting students to be able to express and support their opinions and ideas (Committee to Discuss Development of Language Ability, translated in Yoshida, 2009, p. 3).

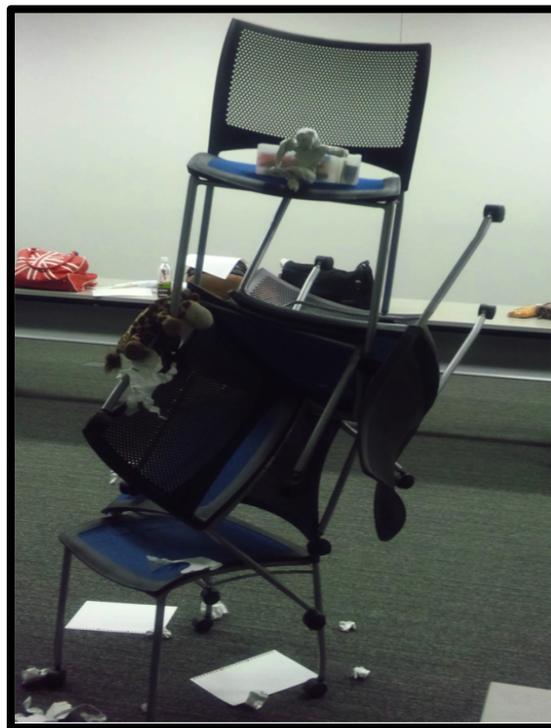


Figure 3. Gutai poem, (C. Ishihara, S. Kuroda, M. K. Kang, Y. Z. Zhao, personal communication, 2012).

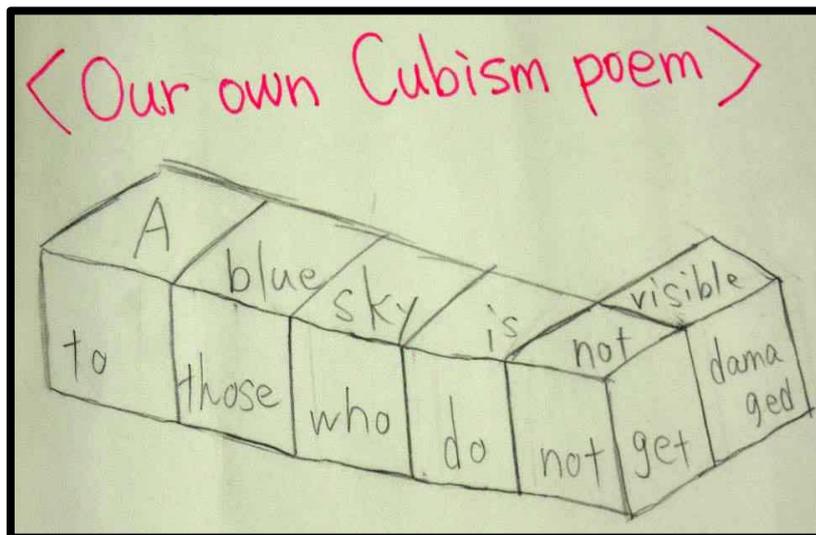


Figure 4. “A blue sky is not visible . . .” (M. Y. Hee, C. Niimi & R. Mizuno, personal communication, 2013; See also Sullivan, 2014b).

Figure 4 illustrates a Cubist poem. The group’s work shows a deep understanding of some Cubist literature tenets, such as unclear starts and beginnings, word play (implying multiple meaning), circular, continuous sensibilities and the actual physical shape (for a deeper analysis, see Sullivan, 2014b).

Being able to produce creatively gives students access to both the lower and upper rungs on the ladder to academic proficiency and/or academic language use, and also to broader learning proficiency. Through this process, their ownership and expression of the second language, as stated before, increases. In fact, it could be argued that a form of Creole (Disney, 2014, p.1), or interlanguage is developed (Selinker, 1972), although much of the work succeeds beyond TESOL labels (Chin, as cited in Jose, ¶ 5). Disney writes,

ESL/EFL proto-writers deepen connections with their own emergent voice: indeed, placing pressure on expressivist modes can motivate the second-language learner to expand their L2 material . . . L2 proto-writers are asked to re-read L1 literatures while exploring possible responses to the question, ‘how can I do something *materially akin* to what has been done in this text?’ (2014, p. 3, emphases in the original).

The examples of work in this essay show that students do indeed ask this question, and tie their creations into traditions that have gone before them. Often research on the topic or

chosen writer was not available in Japanese, so students had to put their English skills to work when researching and writing the assignment, and when explaining it to their classmates. Furthermore, just as many NNS writers wrote in French, some students read French poems in English translation, and were, not only in method, but in terms of writing in another language, following literary antecedents.

Peer Discussion Classes and Student-led Instruction

Students produced their posters within a three-week period. Included in their posters were their poems or prose, and the other areas detailed above. The following two weeks were committed to poster presentations, which took half the class time. Initially, one half of a group interacted with students from other groups who asked questions about the posters. In all, there were five teaching groups. The next week group members changed roles. The last forty-five minutes of these classes was devoted to students instructing one another in the writing methods of their art movement through collaboration. As most methods allowed speedy execution, teaching was done on a rotating basis with each group given a limited time to produce work. As there was little time for reflection, the work produced was nascent, but the activities strengthened the students' BICS and some CALP, consolidated and validated the knowledge they had gained, and flagged them as experts in their fields of study within the classroom. They taught three to four times, which helped develop automaticity and confidence (see Sullivan, 2014b, p. 14).

All activities generated a lot of enjoyment through curiosity, and created confidence through interaction and explanation (Sullivan, 2014b, p.12; Seminar I student feedback, personal communication, 2014). Allwright (2013), citing Trim (1988) argues that the benefits of students administering their "own learning" has long-reaching effects, including the transference of learning skills into other areas of life beyond the course in which they first acquired and applied them (p. 9). Learner development leads to language development (p. 6). Major aspects of the former encourage interaction and negotiation between students. When these are used for "truly useful learning opportunities" (p. 8) they lead to the life-long learning referenced above. Student creative writing, both in the form of production and analysis, is a way for students to develop strong connections with the content, and therefore closer connections with trajectories from the content, including the actual progress and direction of their own learning.

Language use

Student feedback indicated that while the participants enjoyed interaction with their peers, they were aware of shortcomings in their own vocabulary and scope of expression. They were pleased to be able to communicate in their “own English”, an aspect of plurilingualism (Yoshida, 2013), but were keen on having similar chances to study and use English so that they could learn to convey their ideas more efficiently (Seminar 1, personal communication, 2014). This possibly reflects students wanting to impart their knowledge beyond the fulfilment of task requirements. It definitely reflects the concept of “noticing” as a tool to improve language use (Schmidt, 1990, 1995; Swain, 1995, 2005; Sullivan, 2014b, p 14).

Within written language, focus on form was reflected in the analyses and reports, and students noticed the incidences where weak structures inhibited reader comprehension. Speaking and listening activities were mainly used to encourage communication, confidence, instruction, fluency and forms of automaticity. As the students experienced a number of similar peer activities throughout the year for previous assignments, improvement was seen, even in pupils with a lower ability, in terms of trying their best to convey meaning in English. It could be argued that this motivation to speak came from a personal investment in the materials. As the work produced was unique, creators could not rely on others to explain or clearly infer the meaning. The creators understood certain idiosyncrasies and seemed determined to inform other students of the significance of aspects of their work. Student feedback reflected delight and surprise at some conceptual representations, such as ideas behind the mail art seen in figure 4 (Seminar 1, personal communication, 2014). Students browsed their own and other students’ posters, even during breaks, which not only reflected engagement beyond class requirements, but also developing autonomy and the use of learning strategies, as they could use that information for upcoming interactions with their peers.

Throughout the five weeks, all macro skills are addressed, as are many “macro-strategies”, such as heuristic learning, in that circumstances are created whereby students can independently discover new information (as defined by Kumaravadivelu, 2006, p. 68-69). Krashen’s input plus one (1982, 2009, p. 33) was encountered as a matter of course. Nearly all situations were initially not part of students’ general schemata, but meaning was ultimately discovered and manufactured by them.

Conclusion

English accepts many forms and is the language of choice for a number of non-native writers (Disney, 2014, p. 1). Creative work is an area where students can “let their guard down” a little as they break or beautify the rules of language, whether knowingly or unknowingly. This is not to say that more rigorous and practically useful language is without value in classes which have some focus on creative output. It plays its part in the form of research, explanation, analysis, discussion, and listening, among other areas. The capacity to explain ideas clearly and effectively, to develop an understanding of deeper notions, and to give one’s opinion, are sought after skills (Committee to Discuss Development of Language Ability, translated in Yoshida, 2009, p. 3). By believing that students have the capability to understand ideas they may never have encountered, and that one way to open them up to new ideas is through experiential learning with a focus on creativity, challenging and surprising works of literature can be produced. These can create a very real connection with English, and a world of wonder and exploration for students and teachers alike.

Acknowledgement

Alternate versions of portions of this paper were previously published elsewhere (see essay and reference list). The findings, argument and analysis presented here are original to this paper.

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The Twits by Roald Dahl

I have been using literature to teach undergraduate university students and bilingual elementary school students at an International School for many years. In the International School I usually read the story aloud to the students then they respond to it through discussion and drawing pictures. In the university, students generally read the stories at home. I have used a variety of books and authors, but my favourite author is Roald Dahl for his character descriptions, sense of humour and moral advice. The stories are easily understood by any age and level of English learner. I would recommend any book by Roald Dahl, but 'The Twits' is a particular favourite.

Character Description

Roald Dahl is matchless in character description. I have used this book to teach adjectives or writing character descriptions. This description leads well into students trying to draw their own pictures of 'Mr Twit.' Students can then try to describe people they know or people from pictures.

Mr Twit was one of these very hairy-faced men. The whole of his face except for his forehead, his eyes and his nose, was covered with thick hair. The stuff even sprouted in revolting tufts out of his nostrils and earholes.

The hair on Mr Twit's face did not grow smooth and matted as it does on most hairy-faced men. It grew in spikes that stuck straight out like the bristles of a nailbrush.
(Dahl, 2007, pp. 4-5)

Humour

Roald Dahl has a childish sense of humour, which can appeal to all children and children at heart. Many textbooks are very serious, encouraging students to discuss deep topics of the day, but this book allows them to just enjoy laughing at the disgusting scenarios. My students also learned words like 'disgusting,' 'revolting' and 'gross.' The language is simple enough and the scene easy enough for anyone in any culture to understand.

Mrs Twit sneaked out into the garden and dug up some worms. She chose big long ones and put them in a tin and carried them back into the house under her apron. At one o'clock, she cooked spaghetti for lunch and she mixed the worms in with the spaghetti, but only on her husband's plate. The worms didn't show because everything was covered with tomato sauce and sprinkled with cheese. (Dahl, 2007, p. 15)

Good Wins Over Evil

In all Roald Dahl's children's books there is a clear message that the good and the weak win over the bad and the bullies. Even if this is not necessarily true in real life I think that is a great message to share. For example, when the evil Mr Twit is trying to catch the boys stuck (literally) in a tree:

One of the boys: "Listen I've just had an idea. We are stuck by the seats of our pants. So quick! Unbutton your pants and fall to the ground." Mr Twit had reached the top of the ladder and was just about to make a grab for the nearest boy when they all suddenly tumbled out of the tree and ran for home their naked bottoms winking in the sun. (Dahl, 2007, p. 38)

The Twits is only 76 pages including illustrations, divided into 29 chapters, making it very easy to break up into a series of readings. Although it is written as a children's book the story is very appealing to adults, too.

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Suzanne Kamata
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The Summer of The Black Widows by Sherman Alexie

I'd like to introduce *The Summer of The Black Widows* by American author Sherman Alexie. I chose this book more because of the author than the content. I think Alexie's work, in general, is well-suited to Japanese students. His style is clear and accessible. He writes in a variety of forms, from six-word stories to screenplays. He has written and won major awards for novels for both adults and young adults. He has also written many short stories of various lengths, and made a movie, "Smoke Signals," based on one of his short story collections. In addition to his accessibility, his work brings up a number of social issues. He's a Native American who grew up poor on a reservation, and his background figures into much, if not all, of his work. His subject matter is serious, but he has a great sense of humor which is evident in his work.

As an example of this book's accessibility, his poem "Totem Sonnets" is basically a series of lists. As a whole, these lists create a kind of self-portrait of the artist. I have had students make similar autobiographical list poems. Even those with the most minimal English ability can manage to create a list poem.

Another activity that seemed to work quite well with this book was the writing of cento poems. To prepare students for this activity, I gave them the definition of a cento, which is a poem in which each line comes from another poem. They can be lines of poems by the same poet, or different poets. I also told them that they had to cite the exact source of each line. They were required to list the name of each poet and the name of each poem following the cento. I brought along poetry books from my personal collection, but students were also allowed to access poems on the Internet. As a variation, you could have them write poems in class and use each other's poems to create centos. Because my students are often inclined to do only the minimum required amount of work, I gave them a line limit. In one class, they had to write at least 5 lines. In another, I made them write 10.

Frankly, I expected many of them to write the first five lines they came across in order to finish quickly, but they actually became quite engaged in this activity. They chose their source

material deliberately and lingered over the books. A couple of students stayed in the classroom past the bell. Some students became engrossed in reading entire poems, and spontaneously shared them with classmates. The poems that they produced in class had thematic unity and narrative progression. I found that this was a good exercise in skimming, in citing, and in reading comprehension. As a bonus, students were exposed to contemporary American poetry.

Simon Bibby

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Texts that work: Three suggested literary texts for the language classroom

The most frequently asked question since starting the Literature in Language Teaching SIG back in 2012 has been “Can you recommend some good texts to use?” The 2015 SIG Forum offered answers to this very question from multiple participants. I perhaps cheated a little, in attempting to give more value for money, by suggesting three texts. In my short allocated time, I noted the reasons for using the texts, suggested a process for using them, noted key themes for discussion, and gave a quick overview of the texts.

Using texts with a range of high level students who tested into content courses, but who were nevertheless non-English majors, I first set multiple questions for students' own personal responses, which then lead into pair and group discussions (as discussed in detail prior, in Bibby, 2014). Second, comes the reading, which I prefer to have students do at home. Class time is then more productively spent on the third activity of discussion and idea sharing.

The first text discussed was Kurt Vonnegut's satirical dystopian *Harrison Bergeron*, a tale of imposed equality. This story is ideal for the language classroom due to its relative brevity, the spoken nature of much of the text, the limited number of characters, and the relatively low lexical level. Further to this, there is a short film available, 2081, which, at 26 minutes, is a suitable length to be shown in class to support the written text. The multiple themes arising of equality, freedom, difference, individuality and revolt have proven readily discussable.

The second suggested text was *The Ones Who Walk Away From Omelas* by Ursula le Guin. This text is useful to use as a utilitarian thought exercise for students – what price is worth paying? The tale is told in three parts: a utopia, a horrific description of a price that needs to be paid for the utopia to be sustained, and a final choice. This tale takes students aback in the horror of the payoff, and usefully so, to set up some passionate discussions.

The third of the suggested texts is Katherine Mansfield's *Miss Brill*, a sad story of an elderly lady enjoying going about her Sunday routine, observing participating in 'park life,' and overhearing comments of casual malice. Students in the previous semester chose this as the

favourite of all the texts studied – the crashing sadness, from an earlier participatory dreaminess, is indeed affecting.

Quite differing texts, but what these sort stories do have in common, in addition to their convenient brevity, is an uncommon depth and their universality.

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Cameron Smith
Aichi Gakuin University

The Song of Hiawatha: Impact and Uses

Here I describe how the opening lines of *The Song of Hiawatha*, the famous 1855 poem by H.W. Longfellow that retells an amalgam of native American legends, that can be used for two purposes – one linguistic, another cultural – based upon the novel impact of its rhythmic features.

The initial task is simple: the students read the opening 20 lines in unison (the excerpt inset here shows the first nine lines). The vocabulary is not that challenging, and footnote

The Song of Hiawatha (opening)

*SHOULD you ask me, whence these stories ?
Whence these legends and traditions,
With the odours of the forest,
With the dew and damp of meadows,
With the curling smoke of wigwams,
With the rushing of great rivers,
With their frequent repetitions,
And their wild reverberations,
As of thunder in the mountains ?*

translations of difficult words should suffice. As students read together, the trochaic quadrameter that Longfellow borrowed from the Finnish epic *Kalevala*, and that seems to emulate the beat of a drum, comes out clearly: DA-da-DA-da, DA-da-DA-da.

In my experience, this exercise elicits genuine expressions of amazement from many students 「すごい！」 (“Amazing!”). This may be the first time many students have read a

poem like this out loud. Rhythm and meter, along with rhyme, are typically excluded from the English language curriculum in secondary and even tertiary Japanese education, despite their importance in language play and in the valorized texts of international pop culture that students feed on. The activity can be repeated in pairs, with one student tapping the rhythm and the other reading, so that the teacher can check understanding of the teaching point. With students engaged by the impact of the poem’s striking rhythm, the teacher can move the lesson in one of two directions.

The first direction is rhythm and meter, an appropriate teaching target given the omission of such items in curricula mentioned above. Students try to write verse of their own. Of course, they can try to write in the same trochaic meter, which is especially suited to practicing prepositions of place: *On the table in my room/ there is a Panasonic TV*. However, now aware of the idea (if not the terminology) of feet and meter, students can quickly grasp the idea of

iambic pentameter, a meter more suited to natural spoken English, and one that has a certain cachet as the meter used by Shakespeare. In attempting such tasks, students are required to manipulate sentence structure in a way that requires a focus on meaning, grammar and pronunciation (rhythm) at the same time to form a kind of “whole language” activity as they try to fit their writing to the meter (see inset, right). What should be noted is how this kind of exercise – which prescribes a poetic form and structure – can start to bring out expressive, emotional or even funny material that is aesthetically satisfying both to student and teacher.

*A “whole language” activity:
Editing to fit iambic pentameter.*

My mother likes going for long walks in the mountains.
→ *My mother likes (~~going~~) to go for (~~long~~) walks.*
→ *My mother really likes to go for walks.*

My mother really likes to go for walks.
Long mountain walks can make her feel so calm.

The second use of the poem’s impact is to draw attention to issues of colonialism, cultural appropriation, and literary value. *The Song of Hiawatha*, although written by a white author, has generally not been seen as an egregious case of cultural appropriation: Longfellow seemed authentically interested in retelling

Racism and Colonialism:

“As an Indian Saga, embalming pleasantly enough the monstrous traditions of an uninteresting, and one may almost say, a justly exterminated race, the Song of "Hiawatha" is entitled to commendation...Hiawatha, we feel, will never add to Mr Longfellow's reputation as a poet. It deals with a subject in which we of the present day have little interest; a subject too, which will never command any interest upon its own intrinsic merits. These Indian legends...are too clumsy too monstrous, too unnatural to be touched by the Poet.”

The New York Times, December 28, 1855

native American stories, even if some of his sources were somewhat unreliable. On the other hand, *The Song of Hiawatha* has been identified as an instantiation of the *noble savage* myth. But perhaps, most striking is that the poem was the subject of a famously scathing and racist review in the New York Times excerpted left.

This shocking review, along with the initial impact of reading the poem aloud, can provide a memorable introduction for more advanced students to questions of respect for minority literatures,

championing minorities vs. cultural appropriation, and the Noble Savage tradition.

Neil Conway
Musashino University

Authentic tasks and testing for university English literature classes

This presentation looked at issues connected with the assessment of students studying English literature in university courses which seek mainly to teach literature rather than EAP skills. The question of what kinds of assessment to use with L2 literature students was embedded within the context of the kinds of testing most commonly carried out in Japanese university language departments and the problems associated with a quantitative approach to testing.

Since the origins of EAP and L2 literature testing practices are traceable in part to language testing research, it has seemed natural to assume that methodologies that, for example, were used in the testing of vocabulary uptake be “brought over” to literature. This has meant that quantitative tests have appeared that are claimed to measure reading ability and knowledge of literature. An example of this, albeit extreme, can be found in the materials made available for students to practice for the ETS GRE Literature in English Test (2010). The quantification of student performance in summative testing was argued to be a misstep, and it was argued that a better approach is available that is more satisfying for teacher and students, but which fulfills the requirements of the fairly restrictive university grading system.

Based around Knowles’ (1968; Knowles, Holton & Swanson, 2005) ideas on adult learners, and drawing on the discussion of Authentic Assessment (Mueller, 2014), the practice of linking rubrics to practical and relevant tasks was recommended as an approach which allows teachers to measure and assess student performance in a way which produces meaningful feedback and encourages students to see their learning as part of a lifelong project of engaging with English literature.

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Boosting cultural awareness through short stories

One of the challenges facing instructors at the university level throughout Japan (although not exclusively limited to Japan) is how to come to terms with a mandate to afford students a full range of learning opportunities in spite of their weak grasp of grammatical structures and nascent vocabulary. Most instructors likely will agree that in addition to developing students' knowledge of grammar and vocabulary, we also need to give them ways to reflect on and appreciate various cultures' customs, attitudes and beliefs through explicit instruction, activities and interaction with authentic literature. I tried to achieve some of these using one story in my book of short stories.

Many of my students struggle due to their lack of motivation to try to improve their English. For them English just isn't their strong suit. Ask them to make a duplicate of a high precision brass connector screw to replace one you lost on your high-end speakers and they can acquit themselves admirably. But ask them to read two A-4 pages of text and it's similar to demanding some of us to negotiate two A-4 pages of kanji.

I had thought about buying sets of graded readers and using them with Moodle Reader, but to spend a lot of money and set up the system for ultimately what would be a small number of students, seemed counterproductive. Therefore, at the time when a new print-on-demand machine was being trialed, I tested it with a small, bespoke run. I rewrote some selected stories to suit my students' level that I had originally written for native readers, then supplemented them with some language-building/confirmation activities and published *Fifteen Little Stories for English Language Learners*. The stories ranged from 400-1400 words, some were distinctly foreign in theme. Several of these stories were better received than I had been expecting. In particular, one about an experience in China entitled "The World's Loudest Phone Call," worked well with two groups of students with the weakest English skills because it offered them an opportunity to read English out loud in an over the top way. I had encouraged them to compete in teams. Building on their enjoyment, they were asked to survey foreign students and staff at

this university from six countries about telephone and train manners, eating habits, classroom conduct and group dynamics. A desire to introduce students to simple, but culturally authentic content, turned into incidental values clarification. In particular, students who hadn't respected Chinese (and others) changed their thinking.¹

For supplementary language practice, I gave students a 10-question Moodle quiz, introduced them to Quizlet so they could try self-study and used Eyercize online speedreading software to make them aware they needed to try to read at a constant rate.

1. Recent surveys have shown that around 60% of Japanese oppose immigration, particularly from China. See McNabb, R. Gregg (2015). The Immigration Situation in Japan: a Follow-up from 2006. *SIST Bulletin*. Vol. 23. (49-57).

Conference report on the sixth LiberLit conference, Meiji Gakuin University

Neil Addison, *Tokyo Woman`s Christian University*

Tara McIlroy, *Kanda University of International Studies*

The 6th Liberlit conference was held at Meiji Gakuin University, Shirokane campus, on February 16th. This year's theme was *Teaching for Transformation* which drew a wide range of presentation topics and was explored by 21 presentations. The purpose of this year's theme was to discuss the processes involved in bringing the often dry language of literary texts alive, and attendees and presenters were asked to consider how best to transform ink spots on the page into 'A-ha' moments of student epiphany which might also transform learners into better, stronger, fuller versions of themselves. Yet again, the quality of the presentations was high, ranging from discussions on how a reader's response to texts changes over time, how a Deleuzian approach can better explicate our understanding of who a literature reader is, an exploration of the relationship between personal experience, empathy and poetry composition, and practical suggestions for testing students' literature comprehension.

Plenary

The plenary talk was titled *Texts as Transformative Tools* by Ira Nadel from the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada. In this presentation Professor Nadel examined the reading and teaching of literature through a reader response paradigm, and discussed both how lives transform lives and how lives transform texts, asking his audience to consider what a literary text *does* rather than what a text *means*. Approaching literature from the perspective of Stanley Fish's affective stylistics and Jans Hauss' perception theory, Nadel invited the audience to consider literature as a performative art -- a temporal rather than a spatial entity, and employed works of art and imagery to explicate these ideas. Drawing on Samuel Beckett's famous quote "Perhaps that's what I feel, an outside and an inside and me in the middle" from *The Unnamable* (1970), and from other examples such as W.B Yeats' political poem "Easter

1916,” Jean Rhys *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Virginia Woolf’s *Orlando*, and the poetry of Milton, Professor Nadel discussed how one’s approach to a text is transformed as one changes, with the meaning of literature always coming into being, or becoming qualified, through the reader’s changing experiential connections to it. Nadel’s talk also examined how texts transform a reader’s awareness of being a reader, discussing how James Joyce’s *Ulysses* contains a number of references to Homer’s *Odyssey* that the reader is meta-aware of while the characters are not, thus illustrating how a text can remind one to remember details and transform one into an active reader. Nadel’s talk thus re-appropriated the authority of the text, emancipated the reader and invited literature teachers and their students to consider themselves as an important transformatory part of the activation process of meaning. Yet, Professor Nadel also acknowledged the dichotomy of university students being often too young to fully understand the wider experiential implications of such texts, while, in relation to an L2 literature reading context, the crucial problems of linguistic and cultural difference were left largely unaddressed.

Selected Presentations

Joff Bradley’s interesting theoretical presentation *On Becoming-Literature* attempted to define the concept of literature as outlined by French philosopher Gilles Deleuze. Bradley, who teaches at Teikyo University in Tokyo argued that literature is read by people in a state of in-becoming. Drawing on Leander and Boldt’s research on youth multiliteracies (2013), and the concept of youngsters desiring to *become* something in aggregate rather than *possess* a direct object, Bradley then examined how such desire is constructed in relation to studying literature. He discussed how university students fall in love with the idea of being literature readers more because of their romantic, aggregate associations than because of the texts themselves, yet experience *zerrissenheit*, or torn-apartness, as such artistic sensibilities fail to be reconciled with the objective world. Finally, in relation to the classroom, Bradley cited the observations of Colombia Professor Inna Semetsky who notes that such frustrational breakdowns, or *crack-ups* are not always negative, and argued that by means of such cracks, or *craquelure*, subjective student thought occurs.

David Kennedy’s presentation on *Transindividuation and Empathy: Becoming Other in Hypomnesic Milieus* examined the effects that information and communication technologies

have had on human society, before turning this focus towards the classroom. Kennedy, who teaches at Toyo University, discussed the concept of *transindividuation*, and the processes of people in society becoming *transindividuals* through connections to each other which are mediated via technology. Kennedy observed that a epigenetic evolution has occurred, where smartphones have changed the way students behave and see the world both in and out of the classroom, and argued that while engagement with literary texts promotes thought and empathy, modern technology obstructs students from being reflective, creative and inventive.

Barnaby Ralph gave a presentation entitled *Transformation and the shifting of the foundations of allusion: Reflections on The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* in which he used a 2007, award winning novel as a prism through which to look at literary allusion in the information age. Ralph is interested in literary texts as well as critical theory amongst other academic topics, and his enthusiasm for these wide-ranging fields is tangible. In this highly engaging presentation, participants were invited to consider their own feelings on reading and recognising literary allusion when presented by it. These emotions could range from feeling part of an *inside* group who read and understand literary references through their own knowledge and educational backgrounds, to humiliation and sometimes shame on feeling *outside* understanding and unable to make connections through a lack of knowledge. Using Junot Diaz's novel to illustrate how modern-day references to television, comics and geek culture could be mixed amongst other classical references and literary allusions. Through this Ralph showed that the shifting sands of cultural awareness and understanding make new demands on the reader and can be stimulating for teachers and learners alike. Finally, the presentation also invited participants to consider the positioning of the language learner amongst the context of reading such challenging texts.

Presentations by members of the LiLT SIG

Liberlit was once again strongly represented by members of the LiLT SIG, either as presenters or attendees, which was excellent as it provided members of the SIG a rare opportunity to meet and discuss literature and language teaching face-to-face. One of the afternoon sessions contained three consecutive talks by LiLT SIG members. While we have members based all over Japan, it was a special treat to have visiting LiLT SIG members from as far afield as Kyushu and Shikoku attend the event in Tokyo, and the post-conference party in the evening in the Meguro Tavern.

Here we report on the talks by LiLT SIG members from this year's LiberLit.

In this presentation, *Investigating the Sparkle of the Shining Prince: Some of the Hows and Whys of Teaching Japanese Classics in English Translation in Japan*, Frances Causer, who teaches at Seijo University in Tokyo, approached some well-loved Japanese classics in a course she created about Japanese literature in translation. Her premise is that, regrettably, Japanese classics are not read in enough depth in high school contexts due to examination pressures and the use of pre-defined materials and that this leads to a missed opportunity for cross-cultural communication using literature. Understanding culture and looking at various ways in which meaning can be interpreted with language in order to see how misinterpretations can occur may be an even more important issue in global affairs now than it ever was. With this in mind, Causer led the participants through some challenging excerpts from classic texts in Japanese and in translation, including the Tale of Genji, The Pillow Book and some modern and contemporary classics.

Hugh Nicoll gave a talk entitled *Reading Seventeen Syllables: Learner Understandings of Hisaye Yamamoto's Stories* in which he described some different reactions to works by Japanese-American writer Yamamoto (1921-2011). Nicoll, who teaches at Miyazaki Municipal University in Miyazaki prefecture, talked about his own interest in the author going back to his youth and introduced the author's influence on him personally as well as describing her cross-cultural appeal. Next he described how different groups of students have responded to the themes in Yamamoto's work and some of the challenges which teachers face when looking back retrospectively on a year of teaching. He also described some writings and discussions in class which were drawn from classroom activities and made suggestions for teachers in different contexts.

Neil Conway's presentation on *Content-Validity in Testing English Literature in Japanese University Classes* addressed issues of assessment in relation to literature. Conway, who teaches at Meiji Gakuin University first foregrounded two major forms of assessment, and discussed the merits and demerits of both Criterion Referenced Measurement (CRM) such as TEFL and TOEFL and Norm Referenced Measurement (NRM), in which departments mandate a certain percentage of S, A, B, or C grades. He then differentiated between EAP and literature, making the point that while the former is easier to assess using these models, literature is not.

Conway finally argued for a more holistic, productive form of literary assessment, noting that all students are different, and that any two students don't necessarily have to same type of understanding.

Wendy Jones Nakanishi's presentation on *Accomplishing Transformation by the Use of Authentic Literary Texts in English-Language Classrooms in Japan* discussed the importance of a qualitative, empathetic approach towards introducing students to literature. Nakanishi, who teaches literature at Shikoku Gakuin University, proposed the use of authentic literary texts in English language classrooms in Japan so that students are able to gain access to the full richness and complexity of the English language whilst additionally considering important literary themes related to the human condition. Nakanishi also introduced her recently released literature textbook *Real Reads: An Introduction to Literature* by Perceptia Press (2014), which contains a number of authentic literary texts, author biographies, summaries and Japanese glossaries.

Eucharia Donnery's presentation, *Transformation in A Night in November: Deconstructing Hegemony* approached issues of national identity and nationality through the lens of literature, a perfect vehicle to explore the blurred and sometimes indistinct subtleties of national identity which affect individuals and groups in sometimes surprising ways. First, in clarifying some issues around geographical boundaries and terms used to refer to the British Isles, Great Britain, England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, Ireland and the United Kingdom, an understanding of the complexities of nationality in these locations was achieved. The setting of the text was a particularly sensitive situation in Northern Ireland in the 1990s involving a soccer game between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Although any discussion of the Self and Other dichotomy in such geo-political situations can potentially set the stage for conflict, the presentation gave some perspective on how prejudice can be overcome and be replaced by tolerance.

Atsushi Iida's talk, *Poetry Writing for Healing: Implications for the Second Language Classroom* described a personal and transformational process in writing poetry in response to a calamitous event. Iida, who currently teaches at Gunma University, was in the U.S. completing his doctoral thesis at the time of the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake and documented his feelings and responses in the period which followed through poems. From a humanistic perspective and utilizing an autoethnographic approach, Iida analysed his poems and talked

about the expression of emotion through this medium, arguing for effective use of poetry in the L2 language classroom to help writers in L2 settings express feelings more effectively.

Jane Joritz-Nakagawa gave a talk entitled *Poetry, Individual Differences, and Transformation* in which a wide-ranging selection of teaching ideas selected from her extensive knowledge of literature, philosophy and educational theory. One example of theory and practice was the application of Jung's theory of personality types to a selection of poetry activities which could be used in a range of teaching contexts. Moving from general course description to specific examples helped the participants of the session clearly understand the goal of the presentation, which was to illustrate how social change and personal change combine effectively in classroom contexts. The sample activities were well-received by participants and a lively discussion followed the session.

Neil Addison and Neil Conway's presentation *Words of Worth: Enriching EFL Reading With Wordsworth's Sonnets* discussed cultural specificity in L2 poetry teaching, and outlined a qualitative approach which sought to ease this problem. While it was acknowledged that texts are a product of and a negotiated response to cultural time periods and milieus, the presenters discussed how they explicated authentic romantic poetry such as Wordsworth's sonnets through emphasising its thematically universal and stylistic properties. Addison outlined how the landscape art of J.M.W. Turner was used to foreground romantic poetry's thematic focus on nature, before then discussing how challenging adjectival language and poetic structure was scaffolded. Conway then discussed post-reading comparative questionnaire response data, which indicated that students had found these methods accessible and useful.

Kayo Ozawa's presentation on *The Awakening and A Separate Peace through Different Lenses* introduced a course taught at ICU High School in which various forms of critical theory were introduced and applied to the literary texts *The Awakening* by Kate Chopin and *A Separate Peace* by John Knowles. Ozawa discussed how she strove to transform students from passive readers of these authentic texts into more autonomous learners, and how different literary approaches in tandem with the use of multimedia technology were employed to encourage different student responses.

Future directions

More information can be found at <liberlit.com.> In the closing comments at the end of the day, Michael Pronko thanked all literature-related groups for their support and the LiLT SIG was given some publicity time to mention the SIG and invite LiberLit participants to write for our journal. At the end of the conference a new change of venue for 2016 was revealed, and it was announced that the 7th Liberlit conference will be hosted by Neil Addison and Professor Noriyuki Harada at Tokyo Women's Christian University in Suginami-ku.

About the authors

Neil Addison has a BA in English Literature from the University of Kent, an MA in Applied Linguistics from the University of Southampton, and is currently undertaking his PhD at the University of Birmingham. His research interests reflect his passion for using literature in the language classroom to improve students' critical thinking abilities.

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Announcements



Information about the next issue of *The Journal of Literature in Language Teaching*

Issue 4.1 featured various literature in practice papers from around Asia as well as summaries from member presentations at JALT's PanSIG conference in Kobe on May 16-17.

Issue 4.2 is expected to be published in December 2015 and submissions are being accepted now. You do not necessarily need to be a member of JALT to publish in this journal. We are hoping to feature some student work in 4.2, so if you have shepherded any of your students' writings in ways that readers may find interesting and useful, please send in your submission. Further information is available from the LiLT SIG website <liltsig.org> and from the editors of this journal via email to liltsig@gmail.com. For the time being, you can also submit directly to greggmcnabb@gmail.com.

Editorial Policy

Literature in Language Teaching Journal, the refereed research journal of the Literature in Language Teaching (LiLT) Special Interest Group, invites research articles and research reports on using literature in language classrooms in Japanese and Asian contexts. Submissions from international contexts are accepted if applicable to language teaching in Japan. Further details can be found at <liltsig.org>

The editors encourage submissions in six categories:

- (1) FEATURE ARTICLES: Full-length articles, (Feature Articles, FA) detailing research or discussing theoretical issues. Between 2500-4000 words.
- (2) LITERATURE IN PRACTICE: Slightly shorter, more directly practical than Feature Articles. Descriptions of how teachers use literature in their classes. Explain clearly for other teachers to be able to readily apply. 2000-3000 words.
- (3) Interviews with SIG members: about themselves, their ideas and their teaching experiences using literature. Maximum 2500 words.
- (4) Write-ups by presenters themselves of their recent presentations (format somewhat akin to proceedings)
- (5) Conference reports by attendees at literature-themed events.
- (6) Comments on previously published *LiLT Journal* articles (*Talk back*).
- (7) Book and media reviews (*Reviews*).

Articles should be written for a general audience of language educators; therefore, statistical techniques and specialized terms should be clearly explained.

Authors are responsible for the accuracy of references and reference citations.

Style

The *LiLT Journal* follows the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 6th edition. We recommend that authors consult recent copies of *JALT Journal* or *TESOL Quarterly* for examples of documentation and references.