

BREAKING THE LINE

by

Adam R. Vincent

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF

THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

in

The Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies

(Language and Literacy Education)

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

(Vancouver)

August 2015

©Adam R. Vincent, 2015

Abstract

As a mode of academic discourse, poetry offers pathways that lead to new and diverse ways of understanding. However, in my experiences as a learner and as an Instructional Associate at the Learning Centre at Kwantlen Polytechnic University (KPU), I have found that poetry is not being utilized to its fullest capacity in the teaching of writing and in the exploration of language. The following thesis-performance hybrid is intended to illustrate the value of poetry as an approach to teaching writing and as an academic discourse, demonstrated largely through the medium of poetry itself. The technique of *métissage* has been selected to enhance the performative elements by intertwining life writing, various forms and types of poetry and significant citations from the literature. The life writing in the following text adopts conventions of autoethnography and biography, while the poetry reflects aspects of poetic inquiry. Through embracing a hybrid approach, which fuses various types of texts, the work explores the value in the greater use of poetry and the greater use of hybrid texts and forms of written assignments in the practice of teaching writing. This thesis-performance hybrid seeks to embody the very concepts being explored within it.

Preface

This thesis is original, unpublished, independent, creative work by the author, A. Vincent.

Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
Preface	iii
Table of Contents	iv
Acknowledgements.....	vi
Dedication	vii
The Value of Poetry in Teaching Writing.....	1
POETIC FIELD NOTES -i-	12
Found Questions With Rhetorical Answers.....	16
Poetry as Meaning Maker	17
POETIC FIELD NOTES -ii-	21
Found Your Passion?	22
Literary Métissage	23
Poetry as Mode	24
Confusing Cacophony of Concepts.....	27
Poetry as Paraphrasing	29
Poetry as Idea Generator	29
Poetry and Learning Styles/Learning Preferences	31
Segue to the Essay: Trying... Very Trying	36
Drowning Out the Essay’s Boastful Voice	38
New Forms for New Interpretations	41
Expanding Accepted Types of Texts	43
POETIC FIELD NOTES -iii-	45
Criteria’s Limitations: Can We Fix It? Yes We Can!	46
For Your Consideration	53
Hybridity: Is it in the Budget?	54
POETIC FIELD NOTES -iv-.....	56
Discourse Myopia: Are We Seeing Everything?	58
Voicing Understanding	60
POETIC FIELD NOTES -v-.....	62
POETIC FIELD NOTES -xi-.....	64
Value and Validity of Poetry in Post-Secondary Writing Courses	65
POETIC FIELD NOTES -vi-.....	68

(in)Validity.....	69
POETIC FIELD NOTES -vii-.....	73
Value of Poetry as Discourse in the Illustration of Understanding.....	74
POETIC FIELD NOTES -ix-.....	80
POETIC FIELD NOTES -x-.....	81
Break/ing Context.....	82
Hybridity Not Rigidity.....	84
POETIC FIELD NOTES -xiv-.....	86
Verse. Stanza. Essay.....	88
POETIC FIELD NOTES -viii-.....	90
POETIC FIELD NOTES -xv-.....	91
Modes of Wonder: The Capaciousness of Poetry and Poetic Discourses.....	92
3 Lines, 5-7-5, Nihongo, Mode of Wonder.....	93
14 Lines, ABAB CDCD EFEF GG, Shakespearean (sans iamb), Mode of Wonder.....	94
5 Lines, AABBA, City of Ireland (No, Not Cork), Mode of Wonder.....	95
Vers en Francais (5 at 3 Lines and a 4 Liner at the End, Slightly Modified, Villanelle-esque), Mode of Wonder.....	96
A.C.R.O.S.T.I.C. Mode of Wonder.....	97
Tombstone Talk, Mode of Wonder.....	99
Unlimited, Free-Flowing, Mode of Wonder.....	100
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNPOQRSTUVWXYZ (Though Abecedarian is Easier to Say), Mode of Wonder.....	102
No, It's Not Cement...It's More Like Concrete, Mode of Wonder.....	103
Slam, Just Slam, Mode of Wonder.....	104
8 Lines. ABABABCC. Please Sing a Slightly Higher Pitch (Just an Octave), Mode of Wonder.....	105
Now, That's a Bit of Nonsense, Mode of Wonder.....	106
POETIC FIELD NOTES -xii-.....	107
Concluding Thoughts.....	108
POETIC FIELD NOTES -xiii-.....	112
Breaking the Line.....	113
References.....	116

Acknowledgements

This place of mind has embraced me and my lofty ideas.

Thank you to the staff of the Department of Language and Literacy Education and the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. There is no structure without the infrastructure. Thanks as well to the professors, associate professors and instructors whose paths I have crossed along the way; you have added to this journey.

I owe unfathomable gratitude to my advisor and mentor, Dr. Carl Leggo, whose inspiration and encouragement have significantly impacted the creation of this piece. It is often challenging to hear kindred voices in the hallowed halls of academia, and I am glad that I heard yours.

I am also grateful to Dr. George Belliveau who showed me that to be true to ourselves and to our passions, we cannot limit our roles. Artist, poet, performer and researcher can coexist as one.

Special thanks are owed to my family, colleagues and friends who have supported my whimsical wiles over the years.

Dedication

For my life's muse, Jessalyn
and the colour blue...

Through words
I am
seeker
of
understanding
expression
knowing
teaching
facilitating

Through words
I am
burgeoning
developing
self-
developing
purpose
while
developing
identity
in my culture
of words

The Value of Poetry in Teaching Writing

Throughout my educational experience, I was taught to compartmentalize my academic and personal thoughts in a clear, concise, and widely accepted format—the essay. The Five Paragraph Essay (capitalized for dramatic effect) has been engrained in my mind: a narrative hook, thesis and three topic sentences to form your introduction, the body paragraphs that develop your topic sentences to prove your thesis, and the conclusion where you restate and summarize your ideas. It is a format that for some can be smothering. I felt smothered by it. I felt the need to express ideas in different ways, but found myself adhering to the status quo of my academic context. To counteract the stringent modes of expression in my undergraduate classes, I would write poetry, creative non-fiction and hybrid texts outside of the classroom.

These texts kept my expressive and creative nature alive; they allowed me to question and wonder about course concepts and evaluate notions of what they meant in relation to my own life. I would also write about family, friends, significant life events and struggles. I wanted to use my creativity in my academic classes, but the English degree offered at my university at the time allowed for very little flexibility. I was not permitted to move away from traditional modes of expression and discourse. The classes focused on rhetorical analysis, poetic analysis and asked that the canon of literature be responded to through the classic mode of academic discourse: the essay.

It was not until the last year of my degree that I decided to merge my creative calling with my academic coursework. I enrolled in creative writing classes, where I could further explore concepts and craft my own creative non-fiction and screen plays. I integrated poetry and lyrical language in my course work and continued to write extensively for myself outside of class. I felt at peace. I had classes that fed my more traditional writing side: essays, rhetorical analysis and close readings, which were accompanied by readings of poetry, explorations of academic discourse and critical theory. I had creative classes that allowed for a deeper connection to what I was reading and allowed me to create and share my personal experiences and understandings. After a few semesters of switching between multiple roles: researcher, poet, critical theorist, creative writer, essayist, lyricist, and screen writer, I found that the peaceful feeling was replaced by dis-ease and confusion about who I was as a writer.

Nearing the end of my Bachelor's degree, I enrolled in an interdisciplinary expressive arts class taught by one of my creative writing mentors, Dr. Ross Laird. I went in to the course with barely any understanding of what the course would entail; little did I know that the course would change my academic path and help to forge my identity as a writer. This is the identity

that I recognize as the authentic, ever-developing, ever-honing writer that I am today. The course consisted of academic readings, creative readings, theoretical readings, mythological readings, historical, and poetic readings that all came together to form a large umbrella that we, as students, could interact with. We were granted the permission to use any mode of expression in any way that we saw fit. Under the guidance of Dr. Laird, we could explore concepts, delve deeper in to our identities as learners and find our voices in our roles as students and writers. I combined my own stories with critical theory to illustrate a greater understanding of the theories being explored. I wrote poetically about historical and mythological texts. I drew connections between modes of discourse, built greater understandings of cultures, and considered where I fit in in relation to my own perceived culture and cultures from around the world. I found my voice through amalgamated understanding; through texts and subtexts that would never have met in my other courses. My other courses were focused on the analytical understanding of texts and their significance in the canon of literature as we know it today and had little to do with me as a learner. In taking ownership of my voice, I could combine my various roles to form greater insights of topics, to generate different approaches to commonly explored concepts and inspire other students through my creative illustrations of understanding.

I felt power in my literary voice and took the risk of integrating poetry in to my English literature assignments. The poetry that accompanied my essays was further illustrations of understanding and integration of the concepts. These poems, however, were not fully embraced by my instructors. My hybrid assignments were praised for originality and integration of the concepts in other modes of discourse, however, the next assignment requested the same argumentative or explorative essay, rhetorical analysis or common research questions as in previous assignments. I could not break the line of expected modes of writing. Hybridity, while

praised, did not fit the accepted academic discourse in my university. I could have my poetic voice and have it present in much of my work, but I had to ensure that it fit with the accepted mode and conventions of what the university deemed academic writing. I found it rather limiting, but was pleased to have my voice more present and more readily accepted in my assignments. It gave my assignments more purpose and I felt more invested in my education than I had before.

Ross, they heard my voice
clear and crisp and on pitch
in my composition
they praised me for my creativity
marked me high for originality
yet I am back to the same structures
same questions and answers.
Yes, it is a process
Yes, there are requirements
I hear what you are saying
about hybridity
about patience.
I will work with what I am given
I will ensure my voice is heard
I will give them their structured thoughts
in structured ways to prove my understanding
(For now)

I now work at my alma mater, KPU, in The Learning Centre as an Instructional Associate. I help students work through their five-paragraph essays as is required to meet the requirements of their introductory English courses. I create worksheets. I put on writing and study skills workshops and assist students from around the world who are struggling to fit their ideas, and illustrations of understanding, in to the format of the expository essay. Now and then, I see a student who I can tell is perturbed by the structure, and I encourage them to continue to follow the structure, but to be sure that their voice is present in their work. I also suggest more

playful ways of generating and compiling ideas for their writing. I do this in order to plant the seeds of creativity in places where they may not feel creativity is present in their work. For these students, I suggest using poetry, word play, or creative non-fiction to find greater meaning beyond the structure of the essay and to develop greater personal understanding of their assignments and the purposes behind them. Writing, I suggest to them, is not about a recitation of what someone else in the literature has said, it is about personal understandings and modes of illustrating understandings and generating new ideas to inspire ourselves and others. I work within my institutions' requirements as it relates to English and writing, as it is traditional academia tested and university Senate approved. I do this knowing that the foundational knowledge is valuable, as students were either not introduced to basic writing structures, it did not resonate with them, or they did not work with the tenets enough to retain the ability to write well. I also do this while encouraging students to find their literary voices through the use of poetry. In my experience, students who know their literary voices, even if they have struggles with writing, can more easily navigate the requirements of their writing assignments as they feel more invested in them. This is because they have had a personal part in their creation and did not write a recitation of ideas in another's voice.

I bring my ideas around the use of poetry as a valuable academic discourse to my role as an Instructional Associate where I serve as a coordinator, tutor trainer, and educational facilitator. In our centre, I am known by staff, faculty, tutors and students as a holistic educator who has a primary focus on the use of creativity in learning. At KPU, we support student retention and student success in a variety of ways; a major way is our peer tutoring program which operates through The Learning Centre. Our peer tutors are academically successful, professor recommended students who receive in-house professional tutoring training. I work

with all of our tutors, but spend additional time working more closely with the development of our writing tutors. We teach the writing tutors how to better identify other students' writing challenges, how to guide other students (their tutees) through their academic writing assignments (giving constructive and critical feedback), all while not writing the students' papers for them. Their role requires, as my role does, the ability to assist students in adhering to the university's standards for their introductory writing courses. In our tutor training sessions, we look at good tutoring practice and how to help students to get the most out of their courses. What I additionally impart to our tutors is a more lofty goal of helping other students find their academic voices through the use of writing; I also suggest ways of how we, as educators and tutors, can get students to connect course concepts to their lives. I do this through the promotion of free-writing, active journal writing, and the act of writing poetry. Our writing tutors seem to enjoy this access to alternative modes of written expression for reflection, and for garnering greater understanding of their training materials. In reflecting through various modes of discourse, our tutors are better able to identify and address issues in their tutees' writing and build upon their skills as tutors. The use of poetry, while not yet widespread in our training modules and materials, is seen as a valuable tool in the development of our tutors' skillsets and in their personal meaning making that takes place in their reflective journaling.

Through the following thesis-performance hybrid, I seek to better illuminate the value of poetry as a mode of discourse in the teaching of writing. I also seek to show poetry's value in students' creation of personal meaning as it relates to course concepts, and as a way for students to better illustrate their understandings or lack thereof. In order to do this, I have embarked on a poetic exploration to engage with language. To supplement my explorations and to gain greater understanding of the texts and concepts being explored, I have borrowed elements of

autoethnography (Creswel, 2015). In taking a somewhat autoethnographic approach to the thesis-performance research in this text, where the “research and writing seeks to describe and systematically analyze (graphy) personal experience (auto)” as a way to better understand the larger culture and “cultural experience (ethno),” I seek to acknowledge my place in the culture of teaching writing at KPU (Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2011, p. 273). Additionally, through life writing, exploration of citations and the creation of poetry, I wish to place a significant focus in the performance elements of this text on my personal experiences of teaching writing in The Learning Centre and in my experiences as a learner. Moreover, in this hybrid text, I have employed the technique of literary *métissage* to braid the strands of original poetry, personal narrative and research around the use of poetry in academic contexts with the aspiration to show the merits of poetry as a valuable tool in the teaching of writing. As Chambers, Hasebe-Ludt, et al. (2008) explain, “*métissage* comes from the Latin word *mixtus* meaning ‘mixed,’ primarily referring to cloth of two different fibers” (p. 142). They elaborate further on the etymology of the word, “its Greek homonym is *metis*, a figure of skill and craft, as well as wisdom and intelligence” (p. 142). Also, “Metis, the wife of Zeus, was gifted with powers of transformation. Thus, *métissage* carries the ability to transform and, through its properties of mixing, opposes transparency and has the power to undo logic and the clarity of concepts” (p. 142). I am creating this *métissage* with the intent to transform and expand perspectives on the use of poetry and hybridity in the teaching of writing while simultaneously creating a textually woven piece of art that represents the concepts explored therein.

My interpretations of the literature, where others have previously explored the use of poetry as a mode of discourse and have previously spoken to the value of playing with language, are represented in this thesis-performance hybrid through various modes of text. They are

explored through the creation of personal narrative, with my chosen descriptor of this exploration being “life writing,” and through the creation of original poetic responses, which Monica Prendergast (2009) calls *vox theoria* (p. 545). In utilizing various modes of text, with a significant emphasis on poetry, I am able to create personal interpretations of the literature. Moreover, through the creation of the thesis-performance hybrid text itself, I am able to illustrate poetry’s value and power in the teaching of writing for learners and educators in the post-secondary system.

In this hybrid text, I tap in to my experiences as a learner and as an Instructional Associate in The Learning Centre, where I have experienced first-hand how the power of poetry, as a mode of expression and discourse can be instrumental in students’ transformative learning processes (Mezirow, 1991). I have consciously broken away from traditional thesis conventions, including obvious chapters and the frequent use of subheadings, with the intent to illustrate the value in the creation of hybrid texts with a hybrid text itself. In this non-traditional approach, I weave my sensibilities as a researcher and as a poet in ways that do not subscribe to conventional ideas of what makes a thesis or what characterizes a poem. I create a text that borrows from various types of texts to form an *Other*; a text that illustrates greater understanding and allows for a deeper exploration of forms of language as tools in the teaching of writing. As Hasebe-Ludt, Leggo & Chambers (2009) state:

Writing is not simply self-expression. Writing is a way to seek lines of connection and intersection with others, to compose creative and lively possibilities for living stories, for making up stories, for revising stories, for turning stories inside out and upside down so that they are always transforming and transformative. (p. 37)

Poetry has been selected as a major mode of discourse in this thesis-performance hybrid in order to:

1. Interact more closely with language.
2. Explore and bring a personal context to the literature around the concepts and discussions of teaching writing and alternative approaches to teaching writing.
3. Move away from more common modes of rhetorical analysis and responses found in many literature reviews and theses, thereby gaining and presenting new perspectives and understandings of the concepts being explored.
4. To actualize the ideas being explored—this text uses poetry and prose in a hybrid model to explore ideas while it is a hybrid itself.

Moreover, poetry has particular conventions that will later be explored in this text that further illustrates its value in the teaching of writing. It has the possibility of somewhat easier to follow formulaic structures, yet also calls on the author to pick emotive words, original phrases, and metaphors to state their message. These techniques are important for our students to interact with and understand as it builds their command of language. In my experiences, I have found that students who are able to better wield written language find that their academic and personal goals are more viable. In giving students greater interactions with poetry, through utilizing poetry in our teaching of writing and through granting students access to poetry as a mode of illustrating understanding, they can better understand and develop their language skills.

Poetry has the power to adhere to convention, or a series of conventions, or to break or play with them. It requires complex thinking to take place, in many cases, as concepts must be internally synthesized and pared down to more economic terms on the page. I wish to show through this thesis-performance hybrid that in the creation of poetry, the author/poet/student

dives deeper in to the content than they would with prose. This allows students to create personal meaning with important course concepts and, through working with the content beyond recitation, can also show students understanding or deficits of understanding through their own writing. Cahnmann (2003) explores “the craft, practice, and possibility of poetry in educational research” and claims that “a poetic approach to inquiry requires the careful study of our own written logic, technique and aesthetic” (p. 32). Poetry requires the poet/author to use word economy to clearly state their ideas and/or put forth an emotive argument and/or explore a topic/theme on a more personal level than prose found in most first-year university students’ essays. It requires their voice to be present.

I am not asserting in this thesis-performance hybrid text that poetry needs to become the dominant mode of discourse used in teaching writing. I am exploring its value in the teaching of writing in hopes that we may use it more in conjunction with other forms of academic discourse to create and illustrate our understanding beyond the format of the essay. Furthermore, in venturing outside of the essay, and utilizing *métissage* to weave strands of poetry, life writing and citations in to a new form of text, I hope to create a performance that has the power to inspire others to expand their interactions, both inside and outside of the classroom, with poetry. As Helen Sword (201b2) writes:

Stylish academics do not write ‘outside the box’ merely for the sake of showing off their intellectual audacity and skill. Their aim is to communicate ideas and arguments to readers in the most effective and engaging way possible—even when doing so means defying disciplinary norms. (p. 169)

I have known the power of poetry as a discourse to better illustrate my own understanding during my undergraduate studies. I have seen students struggle with academic discourses and worked

with them through their resistance to the strict format put forth in my/our university's first-year writing requirements. I have seen the glint in the eyes of students who glean greater understanding through an exploration of concepts via the use of poetry. I have seen them become better able to address their writing assignments with greater understanding, zest and excitement as they can relate, through poetry, their understanding in their own terms.

I know that poetry has power to teach, to communicate, to illustrate understanding and to generate new ideas. I know that using poetry in conjunction with other forms of texts also reaches students on different levels than one mode alone. Through this text, I wish to illuminate these ideas, explore the possibilities of language and explore the uses and creation of hybrid texts to use in the teaching of writing.

Let us break the lines
 in our teaching
 in our modes of accepted discourse
 in our explorations of language
let us value creative writing
let us value the essay
let us allow expression and understanding
through the power of words
 broken at the line
or continued to the margins.

in “Why are you doing this?”

Liberating myself and others from the confines
of assignment expectations
formulaic forms that take away
the option of expression in text
in lieu of robotic, formulaic text
despite the significance of the reader
of the writer
to the combined meaning of the text.

Did we forget Louise Rosenblatt?
She shone a light on
the invisible reader in the 70’s
who now visible for decades
is seen
yet pushed aside in the classroom.

Through poetry
I wish to
bring context of the text
to the Geist
inhabiting the body
who finds meaning
in the words
is as integral
as the words themselves.

Is Hamlet insane?
Supply textual evidence to support your claim.
If we talk about Shakespeare’s poetic
iambic pentameters in monosyllabic diatribe
are we not missing something?
Are we truly experiencing and understanding?

“That I essentially am not in madness,
But mad in craft. 'Twere good you let him know”
Plain language says
I am not crazy, but crafty
yet in the tone and rhythm
which it was meant to be said

“That I esSEntialLY am NOT in MADness
But MAD in CRAFT. Twere GOOD you LET him KNOW”

Gives emphasis and mood and purpose
and makes the wonder of the words grow.

We need to be able to express
our understanding in terms that we understand
allowing others to understand
and interpret their understanding
in a copacetic exchange

Hamlet is not mad as he tells us so
leaves little but a bruised nose from the hit
of diction
Yet reply in iambic pentameter
showing understanding of form and content
and something more grows:

Is Hamlet mad is what is asked of us.
He dares say, I am not full of madness
Can we trust a man of his character?
full of boasts and rants and incoherence?
Others in his life speak of his madness
some speak of his melancholic grief
His actions are strange and unique at best
Though it could all be part of his revenge
He positions himself in the end
Using his madness to confuse his prey
He avenges his father’s slaying
And finds solace in his death in the end.

Not only is there interaction
with the text
there is voice
in the candor of exploring the text
canter in its presentation on the page
knowing that
with time
the voice would grow stronger
argument in tow
“The rest is silence”

We must foster this unclasping
unbar the door
free thoughts
yet lock in
knowledge and skills that we strive to teach

Critical thinking
Questioning
Interpreting
Understanding
Expression beyond the pale page
past the importance of the 5 paragraphs
toward something more
to be explored and developed.

I need to show my inspiration
I need to show my passion
I need to keep the door opened

Anxiety

aside

Found Questions With Rhetorical Answers

What does it mean
to say
that we know
something?
How can we discover
if what we know
matches
or conflicts
with
what others say
they know?
How can we be sure
that
what we know
isn't just bias
or
received opinion
or
idiosyncratic?
And if it is idiosyncratic,
or shared
by only a small group of people,
does that make it
less valuable
or less true
than widely-accepted knowledge?
Can a poem tell us
as much
about human behaviour
as an experiment?

Should all knowledge
claims
be supported
in the same way?

(Paré, 2008, p. 221).

Poetry as Meaning Maker

I am becoming the Other
contradictory statement
as the Other dies
when embodied
I only note I am the Other
when I reflect reflexively
when I know that I am
not
who I was before
this process.

I am hybridity

I am conjoined

I am academic

I am creative

I am researcher

I am poet

I seek to make meaning

through a

multitude of ways

through a

multitude of discourses

I want to break the line of prose

allow poetry's power to be felt

in my modes of expression

and communication

Academic

creative

or intertwined.

As a student, I found that when I limited myself in my written exploration, or iteration of my views around a topic or as a way of illustrating my understanding, that something was missing. In limiting my discourses, in what I felt adhered to the standards set out by my instructors and the institution, I was unable to fully articulate my understanding; I could not illustrate *my* meaning. Brady (2004) talks about utilizing writing to illustrate meaning and how poets' ability to make meaning is valuable and distinct:

As meaning makers, we are also meaning-seeking creatures, compelled to “make sense” of our experience. But it is mostly only the poets...who write about experience consistently from a sensual perspective—centering, decoding, reframing, discovering, and discoursing the clutter of the Made World, literally as “embodied” participants and observers, full of touch, smell, taste, hearing, and vision, open to the buzz and the joy and the sweat and the tears—the erotics—of daily life, hoping to reveal that world for what it is, as it is experienced reflexively and self-consciously in its patterns and its puzzles, as it can be shared with co-participants, with Others, by drawing on their common humanity, through the rules and screens of culture. That kind of reporting, of course, has traditionally been labeled “literary,” and the social sciences are not immune to it. (p. 628)

It was only later in my undergraduate education that I embraced the idea of exploring meaning in my course texts and concepts through my own original poetry. While this did not necessarily mean submitting poetry with every writing assignment, I utilized the act of writing poetry to better internalize what was being explored and to create personal meaning. I was also able to better understand the writers' implied meaning to texts and implement my more rounded view in my assigned work. Today, in my Instructional Associate role in The Learning Centre, I seek to as Brady (2004) suggests, connect lived experience in to the teaching of writing through more

conventional means and through poetry. I implore students to set their assignments aside, to not focus on the logistics of the words on the page, and explore their ideas differently. I encourage the use of poetry to express their ideas and understanding, and to create their personal meaning and what they wish to say before adhering to the conventional essay format. In this exploration, students tend to identify their thesis more easily and are invigorated by their changing perspectives on their assignments. The required coursework has greater personal meaning and students tend to care more about their work thereafter.

I know first-hand, as a learner and as an Instructional Associate that students who engage in poetry are able to create evocative, humanistic, visions of the concepts being explored in course texts. They are not simply restating the ideas put forth by other authors or academic theorists as it relates to the human experience and how to communicate said experience; they are creating meaning as critical thinkers. As an Instructional Associate, I want to know that students are grasping concepts and understanding what is being asked of them. I am not looking for a restatement of what has been said, I want them to illustrate in their language (both written and verbal) that they have a measurable level of understanding of the work being explored. I want them to be able to respond to questions and provide answers with confidence to reflect their understanding.

For me, having students write poetry allows them to utilize methods akin to autoethnography and biography without realizing they are doing it. They are able to create their own meaning while exploring the meaning of the literature as it was written and with the purpose that it was written. Additionally, using poetry in this context gives students a tool to develop the skills to become critical thinkers. Through playing with language and form, students can gain other understandings. As Brady (2004) re-affirms:

Poets do not report their collected facts by talking about them in the typical manner of the social sciences. Instead of writing or talking through abstract concepts about the “facts” of life and some sense of their placement in the lives of the people studied without ever immersing deeply in their Made World, as one might proceed in writing or applying scientific theory, poets write in and with the facts and frameworks of what they see in themselves in relation to Others, in particular landscapes, emotional and social situations. (p. 631)

Poetry stirs the imagination. Students, who then become poets in their own right, are able to see themselves in their work. They personalize and internalize, they create meaning, and bring their writing forward as an important illustration of who they are in relation to their studies.

In my exploration of language, through my poetic play, performance and promotion of poetry as a valuable discourse in the teaching of writing, and through my various modes of meaning making, I have *sutured* the role of a poetic researcher (Anderson & MacCurdy, 2000) to my identity. In embracing this role, I am better able to relate my experiences as a learner and educator to the norms of the first-year writing culture that students who visit The Learning Centre are members of. Through poetry and experience, I am equipped with the tools necessary to make meaning of the texts that explore the teaching of writing. I am able to voice my interpreted meaning through response poetry, through *vox theoria*, while not silencing the voices that came before (Prendergast, 2009, p. 545).

POETIC FIELD NOTES -ii-

(February 8, 2015)

I now know that I am an interventionist
implanting myself in a society of words
a living community built atop journals, essays,
books, articles and the like
Their discourse is my own
to adopt, decipher, decode and interpret
in my own voice
intertwining discourses to create understanding
traveling down boulevards of understanding
to understand differently
in an attempt for something more

I am the kind stranger on the road
pointing out paths previously unseen
to travelers who trudge along the well-trodden path
no longer with spring in their steps
who wish for more beyond the compulsory destination
set forth years before

I am the facilitator
who wears the same shoes
who speaks the same tongues
who can explain and promote
in other dialects
Support transformative learning
through discourses
structured, line broken, lyrical, technical
or otherwise
to better this world as-is.

Found Your Passion?

Passion and commitment
are stylistic qualities
that academic writers often praise
in other people's writing
but suppress in their own.

Most academics
would describe themselves as passionate, committed researchers;
they love what do
and
undertake their work
with a strong sense of personal engagement.

Many actively desire
to make a difference in the world,
whether
by finding a cure for a deadly disease,
by enlarging our understanding
of natural
and cultural phenomena,
or
by changing the way people think.

Yet
these same researchers
have typically been trained,
either implicitly or explicitly
to strip
all emotion
from their academic writing.

What would happen
if they allowed
even a modicum of
the passion
they feel
to color
their prose?

(Sword, 2012, pp. 159-61)

Literary Métissage

I am braiding, mixing, interweaving ideas
of many
of my own
of the literature
of prose
of found poetics
and poetry of thought
with original poetic understandings
through personal discourse
educational discourse
paragraphs, grammatically correct
sentences and citations through
The Essay
the antithesis to this thesis
in some respects
yet an important strand
Its fabric needs to be woven
to the weaving of understandings
of theorists, educators, artists and poets
alike
akin in the goal of teaching
lessons
preparation of life
in the weave of humanity
to strengthen and grow
to learn and become
whole.

Poetry as Mode

There is, as would be expected, a great deal about how to understand poetry in university textbooks, in countless books in the non-fiction section of the local bookstores and online. There is also a great deal in the literature about how poetry can make one feel (Leggo, 2011; Pennebaker, 2007), how poetry can be used for healing (Anderson & MacCurdy, 2000; Furman, 2004; Lengelle, 2008; Orr, 2002; Zimmerman, 2002), illustrations of poetics being used to iterate experiences (Leggo, 1999) or to validate the use of poetic inquiry (Cahnmann, 2003; Gitlin & Peck, 2005) or *how to* manuals to teach poetry in academic context (Spiro, 2007; Nica, 2011), but I wish to place more focus on poetry as a valuable mode of communication in the teaching of writing. As a mode of expression, poetry speaks to me in ways that prose does not. It may be the resonance of words when read aloud or in my mind; it may be the ideas that are born or my affinity for reading between the lines. Either way, I find myself impassioned by poetry and I try to inspire others to find their voices through the mode.

As an Instructional Associate who often spends a great deal of time in post-secondary institutions, I have found that I am a part of my institutions academic culture. In this culture and in my role as a learner in my graduate studies, I am inspired by the use of alternative forms of expression being used to teach and illustrate understanding through the proponents of performed research (Saldaña, 2011; Lea, Belliveau, Wager & Beck, 2011; Belliveau, 2012). Articles exploring performed research, ethnodrama, autoethnographic performance, and performance a/r/tography are more frequently found in the literature. These articles give greater power to the practice of arts-based research and open the proverbial door for further arts-based explorations that utilize more poetry. These fellow explorers inspire me.

I see you there
on stage
from my page
still researching as you recite
your findings
though never complete
in your cycle of learning

Your monologue
downstage left
bringing language to life
giving a face
to often faceless
transcription
of personal interaction
inspires me

I see your value in the academy
and hope that you will see mine
too, poetically, through
this whatchamacallit
through this voice
on the page.

I have also come across a rather in-depth area of research/literature around the use of using poetry to teach writing to EAL (English as an Additional Language) and EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners. These courses aim to expand the learners' English vernacular and that, if adapted, can readily apply to a wider range of learners (with various levels of English comprehension). For example, Hanauer (2012) shares the structure of his course, working with EFL students at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, which can be utilized as a model for working with all learners to develop their abilities surrounding the use of poetry in an academic context:

- (1) Introduction to poetry writing – reading others' poetry;
- (2) Thinking, imagining, reliving and talking about a significant life moment;

- (3) Investigating and exploring the genre of poetry;
- (4) Exploring personal experience – listing memories, discussion of unique, personally meaningful experiences; valuing one’s personal history;
- (5) Poetry writing experimentation – checking your poetry in relation to its ability to ‘show not tell’ and to recreate your experience in another reader;
- (6) Classroom reading of poetry, peer and instructor interaction and the sharing of poetry with individuals the poet writer considers to be of significance beyond the classroom; and
- (7) Production and sharing of a complete poetry book. (p. 113)

This example illustrates that there is literature around the shared experiences in the ESL/EFL community/classrooms where poetics have been used to bridge the gap between learners’ language skills and serves as a reminder to all of us working in literacy that poetry’s power as a mode of teaching is there for us to use. I want to use it more in my own facilitation in The Learning Centre, with ESL/EFL and first-language learners, and I want to continue to use it as a tool for personal understanding.

Confusing Cacophony of Concepts

Academic discourse
mystifies and confuses more than unifies
Rhetorical analysis is Greek
(how appropriate)
to most learners
Argumentative essays are argued against
Gerunds seem jarring
Verbs are vexing
Paragraphs are paralyzing
Grammar grates on grades
as learners get held up on the rules

We interrupt this poem with a further poetic translation of terms...

Speak the way academics speak
Rhetoric is how we use and construct language
(Yes, it is Greek)
Arguments prove your point
while squashing the rest
talk about your side and the others
to prove who is best
choose how you will do it
alternating points or a block
to prove that you are not only right
but can talk all that talk
Gerunds are nouns made from verbs
turning 'read' in to 'reading'
the concept is superb
(I am glad you're still reading)
Paragraphs hold your sentences
Yes, please more than one
Grammatical rules are how it's all done
Chosen language can falter
and skew understanding
it can make tasks with language
seem overly demanding
Exploration through prose may work for some
yet for me, I retain more
when the language is fun
Poetry can be silly
serious or dour

Yes, for me it's the discourse
with all of the power.

Poetry acts as an intermediary; a mode between discourses of courses, concepts and theories that can seem daunting, and everyday modes of communication. It gives students an opportunity to think about their thinking; they become aware of their thought processes (yes, poetry as mode of metacognition) and are able to express their ideas through writing.

Poetry as Paraphrasing

Poetry can be used as a powerful tool for paraphrasing, be it paraphrasing concepts, content, or understanding. Often, in my own experiences as an Instructional Associate I find that students are not comfortable using new, academic discourses; they have a need to internalize and personalize what they are learning before they feel comfortable expressing themselves and demonstrating their understanding to others. Poetry allows students to play with concepts, language and form in ways that are in direct contrast to the essay, but put the students in direct contact with the concepts that their instructors are looking for in their essays. In paraphrasing with poetry, students are able to explain or interpret another person's ideas in their own words through their poetic and/or scholarly voice. Their poetry illustrates their understanding of what is being said and can also show deficits in their understanding.

Poetry as Idea Generator

I use this technique when students are having difficulty understanding the main concepts or themes being explored in their readings. As with mind-mapping or webbing, I ask them to pick out the keywords and explore how those key words and concepts link back to what is being addressed in their course. What is different in the utilization of poetry in this method, is that the categories act as free verse poems of idea exploration and also act as paraphrases of the major tenets of their assigned readings. When read aloud, students can recognize their levels of understanding or recognize their deficits through their own words (yes, metacognition again). They compartmentalize or chunk ideas and are able to formulate a poetry-like structure with their stanzas of understanding. This can then be brought back to their essay assignments.

Poetry, as Parisi (1979) explores, is a way to bridge students' understandings with their potentially limited access to language. It is a bridge "between the students' literary naiveté and the professor's sophistication" (p. 62). It gives students the ability to express themselves, to illustrate their understanding and to interact with ideas without extreme pressure of formatting and adhering to the strict rules often associated with the essay.

Poetry and Learning Styles/Learning Preferences

Paraphrasing and poetic webbing are only a few ways that the power of poetry can be utilized in the teaching of writing. We, as teachers and educational facilitators, consider students' learning styles when creating curricula and when working with students through their writing challenges. Two common models for addressing and assessing learning styles are Fleming's VARK model (visual, aural, read/write, kinesthetic) and Gardner's research as it relates to multiple intelligences (Fleming, 1992; Gardner, 1993). In The Learning Centre, we consider how students learn to help us to better guide them through their learning. I have found that identifying students' learning preferences and/or learning styles allows me to adapt my approach and play off the strengths of the students that I am working with.

Poetry can be used to connect with visual, auditory, reading-writing and kinesthetically leaning learners using Flemings' four identified learning styles through the following ways that I have used or would consider using in my practice as an Instructional Associate.

Visual learners and poetry:

Poetry can be used to reach visual learners as it often has a distinct appearance on the page. Stanzas are often easier to read than paragraphs and can be utilized to assist visual learners in writing their ideas down in a more succinct way. Concrete poetry is also a way to reach visual learners. Using words to create an image on the page (see Modes of Wonder, p 93) can further students' understanding. For example, writing about pastoral poetry while creating streams of words reinforces the ideas for the learner. This feeds their need for graphic learning.

Auditory learners and poetry:

Auditory learners learn best when they hear the content. To reach them, read a poem aloud. Have them hear the meter, cadence and cadence of the way the author wrote it or hear their own interpretation of the meter and musicality of the text. Read it differently. Have them read a paragraph aloud. Ask them to give it meter, cadence and cadence the way it makes sense to them as a learner. The information will be processed differently and be better retained when the words are given a voice as opposed to being in their text or on their screen.

Reading-Writing learners and poetry:

These learners appreciate words on a page. To learn, reading-writing learners appreciate re-writing their notes and participating in mock tests so that they are writing the answers down. With the infusion of poetry, these learners can break their notes down into concise lines and form stanzas of understanding that, when written often, can allow them to retain knowledge in ways not previously experienced.

Kinesthetic/tactile learners and poetry:

“The doers” as I like to think of them. Kinesthetic learners want to experience what they are learning first hand. Smell, taste, sound and sight are important to these learners. Interacting with concepts, through poetry, in locations being explored in the literature may help. As in the previous example, doing a close reading of pastoral poetry outside may allow the concepts to become more firm for the learner. Also, the emotive nature of most poetry can allow the learner to feel what the author intended. Strong imagery, present in some poetry, would benefit these learners as they can tie their experiences with the content being explored.

Poetry can also be used to elevate the learning of the eight categories identified by Gardner (1993):

Verbal/Linguistic intelligence and poetry:

Poetry read aloud meets these learners' preferred style extremely well. Turning course texts in to poetry that can be read does great things for their absorption and retention of information. Reading about grammar and mechanics as if the textbook was written poetically can benefit these students.

Logical/Mathematical intelligence and poetry:

Sonnet anyone? Many forms of poetry use meter to relay their message. Iambic pentameter in poetry, most notable Shakespearean, would benefit these students. Also, the creation of Haiku, with its strict syllabic requirements can also speak to these students and aid in knowledge retention. These learners may have little interest in the tone of what is being said, but if we show them structures and equations that are important then we draw them in to the content.

Visual/Spatial intelligence and poetry:

Three dimensions with poetry may seem difficult, but it is not when you consider using mind mapping, in conjunction with poetry or metaphors, to liken the ideas explored in course texts and lectures to the real world. These learners may also appreciate concrete poetry or using poetry to create 3D representations of course content.

Body/Kinesthetic intelligence and poetry:

“The doers” are back again. Utilizing movement with the reading of poetry or during a poetic reading of a text can benefit these learners. Turning texts in to poetry with a movement associated with key concepts/stanzas can benefit these learners.

Musical/Rhythmic intelligence and poetry:

Did you hear that? That is the sound of poetic readings to music. In utilizing a process where course texts become lyrics, we are playing to the strengths of these learners. Even without literal music, poems read aloud create rhythm and beat that these learners can use to better retain knowledge.

Intrapersonal intelligence and poetry:

These learners are self-aware and benefit from writing poetry to further explore their thoughts and feelings. Working with learners who know that they are not strong writers benefit from poetry as they can explore how they are feeling about assignments and what they wish to say in their assignments without being reminded of possible literacy limitations. Once their ideas are out, through poetry, these learners can then gain new insights in to what works best for them as learners.

Interpersonal intelligence and poetry:

These learners are sensitive to others and have a great deal of empathy. Poetry, for these students, can be a way to better understand what the author is saying by putting themselves in their proverbial shoes. Having students take on others' roles through poetry allows them to tap in to their skills while gaining more insights in to their coursework. In the teaching of writing, these learners will also take on the passion of the teacher and may approach the content the same way.

Naturalistic intelligence and poetry:

These learners are attuned to the world around them. Pastoral poetry often speaks to these students. In the teaching of writing, likening ideas to their lived experience can be helpful. Using metaphors through poetry, these learners can see an essay as a tree (root structures and all) and comma splices as a tree faller's axe. These learners wish to connect the physical world with their learning and poetry is a great segue between course content and learners ideals.

I can hear it
when I read it
1, 2, 3
1, 2, 3
See its form on the page
as I sit
smelling the freshly mowed grass
on a warm spring day
I can project what I am learning
on the tree
Its base strong as a concept
bows branching off
and flowering
with supporting thoughts

It is all around me
taking my text and breaking
it

apart
in to couplets of content
to help me understand
what the author had planned
and what I see
is being expressed
through my own eyes
to help me to personalize my learning

Segue to the Essay: Trying...Very Trying...

As both students and educators can relate, there is a level of pride in being able to express ideas in ways that resonate and make others think. We take pleasure in enlightening others and proving our points to the degree that they cannot be refuted. This illustration of our knowledge often comes in the form of the five-paragraph, expository essay. Examples of the admiration for the essay go back generations, yet talk of hybridity is sparse. As I made my way through the tomes and online texts, I stumbled upon an article from *The Galaxy: A Magazine of Entertaining Reading*, published in 1866, where Theodore Clarence espouses the merits of the essay in his article *Essays and Essay Writing*. I read his words and shared my thoughts in hopes that he would hear, knowing full well that the writer is long gone. His words, however, continue to generate thought.

Clarence (1866) writes initially of the long-standing use of the essay, giving stock to its socio-historical significance:

Although the scope, variety and finish of the modern English essay are in a great degree owing to the exigencies and the prestige of periodical literature, yet the original biases toward didactic writing-the tendency to comment, reflect, describe and speculate on life, manners and character-is identified with the very earliest specimens of English prose, and is characteristic of our vernacular literature long before the origin of newspapers. (p. 678)

As I read, I responded, “Yes, Mr. Clarence, it has been around for some time; many hundreds of years, in fact, but why should we use it? What are its merits? What about poetry? What about combining types of texts?”

His response:

More than any other kind of composition, the essay is printed talk, or should be so; its ideal is the best kind of conversation, admitting both philosophy and wit, anecdote and description, reasoning and humor, statement and illustration. Its social influence cannot be overrated. (p. 679)

My retort: “Its social influence is no longer as overrated in practical terms, but is still held in prestige, high upon its pedestal in academia. We are still using the essay today, our five-paragraph go-to, and many would support your 19th century claims, Mr. Clarence, as the essay has strengths, but the world is not the same place. Perhaps we should expand our modes of discourse; perhaps we should use more poetry. The world has changed.

What’s that you say, Mr. Clarence?”

The essayists were efficient lay-preachers, and a critical study of their writings affords the best intellectual test and picture of society, scholarship, opinion and character at any special period. Such being the history and influence of the essay, we repeat that it has claims to more earnest consideration as an element of popular literature than critics usually award. (p. 679)

Let me rephrase my argument in poetry...

Drowning Out the Essay's Boastful Voice

Perhaps in the time of cholera
the essayists could speak for all
I argue otherwise
when a Korean man in sunglasses
pretending to ride an imaginary horse
is seen by more people
more times
than Shakespeare's works were read in the same year
when expression comes by way of Facebook, Twitter and Instagram
when our philosophers are on the radio
they are discourse instigators
chanting about how fancy they are
tell Becky to "look at her butt"
remind you not to ___ with their love
riding wrecking balls in the buff
Iggy, Nicki, Ed and Miley
are usurping
Darwin, Mendel, Chernyshevsky, Dewey, Ghandi, and Nietzsche
from thought
and guide the masses
driven by popular media
our current creators of accepted discourse

The lyricist and bards, the poet in disguise, form the vernacular
the discourse and dystopia of today
used in all forms of contemporary communication
yet we hold our students to forms described in the 19th century (and before)
giving little stock to the creative, inconsequential, unit
made compulsory by the Ministry of Education
whose disjointed criteria fails to meet the purpose behind expression
We give examinations where we critique
5 paragraphs of exposition
that mostly mimics the 5 paragraphs
of the other hundreds of thousands of students
giving little credit for original thought
while we, as a culture,
of popular culture
praise the
Iggys, Nickis, Eds and Mileys

more than the Deweys who remain.

Where is the balance in language and meaning?

I see an alternative.

We can fracture the essay
break the restrictive line
asphyxiating discourses that represent
illustrate understanding and “meets expectation”
and may even exceed it
through playing with language
through poetry
hybrid texts and discourses.

Many educators fear the panopticon
of moving beyond the prescribed criteria
Loving their jobs for the difference they can make
and need a slight push to go beyond the 5 paragraphs
embrace the language of now
breaking convention where convention has ruled.

Expanding language in the ivory tower of academia
to other tongues
not only our mother tongues
unbolting the silos that we hold so dear
where we can mimic and embrace our poetic popular culture
will give students the opportunity to explore
integral concepts
connecting previous constructs of the essay
with contemporary language and forms
that have been veiled and relegated
to a few units
of freedom per year.

We mustn't kill the essay
nor deny its significance
but we mustn't mute the melody
of expression and understanding
attained through playing with the language
and forms
of today

We must listen graciously
hearing and seeing
that
expectations are being met.

Mr. Clarence did not respond

New Forms for New Interpretations

Any writer must be half a reader of himself; one cocks an ear to what he or she writes and speaks of revisions as the reader; they are responses not to something '*written wrong*' but to something that '*sounds wrong*.' (Parisi, 1979, p. 62)

We are concerned with evaluating the particular writing behavior which is termed *expository*, i.e., writing that sets forth and explains, as distinguished from narration, description and argumentation. (Johnson, 1962, p. 570)

Something is wrong.

I have checked clocks
calendars
hieroglyphics of many nations
and all point to it not being 1962
not 1886
yet when I enter the classroom
I see the broken spines
of tattered tomes
held in the hopeful hands
of our educators
Ties around their wrists
barely visible amidst the misdirection
of their zest and passion
but they are there
restricting the possibilities
hampering students' progress.

Something is wrong.

We have made *expository*
the reigning regime that rules
over all levels of academic writing
We accept the essay

as the primary form of expressing
understanding
without an attempt at
anything else

Something is wrong.

We accept narrative inquiry
poetic inquiry
performed research
ethnodramas
all arts based research to take place
and be embraced
once proof of assimilating
the essay
has been made.

Something is wrong.

Revolution must take place
to allow students
and teachers
the freedom to break the five paragraph
illustration of understanding
Taking shape in different
often deeper ways
through multiple texts
and interpretations.

Expanding Accepted Types of Texts

The educated mind is fundamentally one with capacity for free thinking, an inventive and self-directing agent. It is the human who is able and vitally concerned to participate in the conversation that is its culture, who is therefore learned in the great texts and ideas that make up that conversation and, no less important, capable of taking it further and relating it to one's own existence. Education at a more fundamental level of analysis is not an outcome or a science but a life process that has no end beyond itself. (Fairfield, 2009, p.25)

Educators seek to create sentient learners
self-directed
full of self-efficacy

As a student:

If I am free thinking then why am I limited to singular forms
of discourse with recourse if I venture from their pre-subscribed notions?

Why is my culture limited in scope by these discourses?

Why can I not explore with leeway
and latitude
and fusion
of texts and understandings
while not venturing too far from home
grown fundamentals of accepted forms of
my proof that I get it?

As an educator:

Why can't I let my student explore thought
and concept without conventional ties
like concrete
holding them to form?

Am I not here to extend beyond correct and incorrect?

Am I not here to teach them to think, feel and assess
to question and to wonder?

As student and educator:

I want to be free of expected forms

I want to show my understanding

Develop new insights and question conventions

through different text and discourses

without fear of failing grades.

I want that for all in the realm of education

Liberation not strict evaluation

I believe that this balance can be met

for the benefit of lifelong learners

in our places of mind

wherever they may be.

POETIC FIELD NOTES -iii-

(March 9, 2015)

The immersion and submersion
in discourses
of this educational culture
have become my predominant verses
that I chant
championing for change
to the system
My dystopic refuting of
only
Introduction
Topic X3
Body X3
Conclusion
has seen the revolution spark in the eyes
of others.

I am inspired by the possibility
of change
allowing others the privileges
that I was not afforded through
much of my education
I feel pride
in teaching others the merits
of poetics
as paramount prose alternatives
Seeing them questioning the status quo
seeking small integration of these ideas
in their own work as educators
spreading the gospel to others
Integrating, fusing and amalgamating
what is best in essays
what is best in poetry
to offer what is best for education

Criteria's Limitations: Can We Fix It? Yes We Can!

If we want our work to be consequential - to have an impact in the world - we owe it to our readers to write with conviction, craft and style. (Sword, 2012b, p. 36)

In order to better help students today, I find that it is important to know what may have shaped their perspectives of writing in their secondary school educations. On the same note, it is also important for me to remember that many post-secondary writing teachers have their roots in the secondary systems, be it a few years or a few decades of teaching at that level. Based on my daily interactions with students who are braving first-year, required, writing/English courses I understand the correlation between students' secondary and first-year writing experiences. How their teachers before taught them writing and how they view the practice now are important factors to help them through their writing challenges.

Before assisting students, these are some questions that I ask myself and also ask the student:

- What do they feel about writing?
- How were essays presented/taught to them in their previous educational experiences?
- How was poetry presented/taught to them in their previous educational experiences?
- How was their writing previously graded?
- How do they feel about exploring language and ideas through forms other than prose?
- Are they open to the idea?

Leggo (1997) writes of many secondary school writing teachers' approaches to teaching poetry:

The teacher creates an artificial environment in which readers are granted entry to the poetic text through the door of his or her own perspective. Armed with a battery of notes and a special guidebook, the teacher gives a lesson designed to manipulate the students to

reiterate the teacher's encounter with the poem in the hope that meticulous and appropriate attention to two dozen poems per year will prepare the reader for reading poetry with satisfaction and enthusiasm. (p. 7)

I see this type of teaching occurring in my current post-secondary environment as well. Students are presented with the instructor's standardized perceptions and interpretations of the poetry being studied, and are inclined to reflect those interpretations in their assignments. This style of recitation has been engrained in some of the students' minds. I do not blame their secondary school teachers for this perception. They are passionate educators who often work in strict environments where the prescribed learning outcomes must be met or they will not be re-hired. This harkens back to the criteria put in place on students, teachers, instructors and educational facilitators alike. With that said, I feel that it is necessary to explore how students' views of writing may have been shaped and what lenses they are looking at writing through. The best approach to quell this wondering is by exploring the criteria of the BC secondary system as it relates to writing.

I have found information from the BC Ministry of Education (2009) that outlines what the government deems to be quality types of writing. Writing of merit falls in to four categories. This, as outlined in the document, is to make standardized evaluations easier for teachers. In the section of the document aptly titled "Qualities of Writing," four elements necessary for writing that 'meets expectation' are outlined:

Meaning

- ideas and information, including development and use of detail
- the writer's appreciation and unique perspective on the topic (voice)

Style

- word choice: clarity, variety, and impact of language
- sentence fluency: sentences are varied, flow smoothly, and enhance meaning

Form

- attention to the “rules” of the particular form of writing (e.g., stories, instructions, poetry)
- organization of ideas and information

Conventions

- spelling, punctuation, grammar, sentence structure, and legibility (p. 11)

The five paragraph essay
needs to show meaning
as does poetry
both need the writer’s voice
though not all may speak
in the discourse of the essay

The essay needs style
with word choice and flow
to impact and heighten meaning
as does poetics
where choice of words
line break and enjambment
can make or break
meaning for the reader

Form and following through
with the rules
as set out by convention
with clear organization can be found
in both forms
5 paragraph, 5 stanza or 5 line

The above ensuring to me
comprehensible, decipherable
enjoyable at the same time

The same boxes need to be ticked
to meet expectations
set out by the powers that be
Perhaps we have been blinded
by the structure of one
its seemingly easier way to assess en mass
when both share root criteria
giving students room to grow.

A mixture of texts
to show
greater understanding
through style
in unique forms
breaking convention
creating new convention
confirming learning
could be the solution
for students seeking
to meet expectation
not just for the criteria
but for themselves.

Through connecting course concepts in their personal writing, I have seen students become better equipped for the writing expected in their introductory, post-secondary writing courses. They internalize and personalize content and find the process extremely beneficial on personal and educational levels. As not enough emphasis is given to the merits of personal writing in the BC Performance Standards (2009) document, let's have a bit of erasure to explore what more emphasis on that category could look like.

~~“The BC performance standards for writing describe student achievement in three types of writing: personal writing, writing to communicate ideas~~

~~and information,~~ and literary writing.

~~Personal Writing~~

~~Students often write to explore and extend their thoughts, feelings, and experiences. They react and reflect on current issues, on materials they have read, viewed or listened to, and on their own learning. Some personal writing is intended for an audience; however, often the writing is primarily intended to explore ideas.~~

~~Writing to Communicate Ideas and Information~~

~~Student success in and out of school is strongly related to their ability to communicate ideas. Writing to communicate ideas and information includes work that is intended to present information (e.g., articles or reports), outline procedures (e.g., instructions), and persuade others (e.g., editorials).~~

~~Literary Writing~~

~~Students learn to appreciate the power and beauty of language as they explore a variety of literary forms, including stories and poems. Expressing ideas and imagination in literary forms can be a lifelong source of satisfaction and enjoyment and helps to connect students to the social and cultural life of their communities. In the English Language Arts Integrated Resource Package, literary writing is referred to as imaginative writing (p. 8)~~

Condensed for greater legibility:

Writing achievement

personal writing

to communicate

literary writing

explore and extend thoughts

feelings and experiences

React and reflect

on current issues

materials read, views or listened to.

Learning.

Writing is intended to explore

communicate ideas in and out

of school

to present information

and persuade others

Literary students learn to explore
express ideas
and imagination
and enjoyment
and connect to life

Imaginative.

I cannot help but wonder if a lack of significant engagement with poetry in the teaching of writing comes back to obvious uncertainty of what to do with poetry as a mode of discourse in the North American, marks-based system. As Dymoke (2003) notes, “[the] problem of teachers’ uncertainty about poetry assessment is further exacerbated by the limited number of examples of assessed poetry provided by curriculum authorities. Without more exemplars, prose will understandably be viewed as a safer assessment route” (p. 151). In essence, we need to show how the current marking criteria and compulsory assignments can be adapted from high school, through to the university system for use with poetry and subsequent hybrid texts that utilize poetry as a mode of discourse. These examples can then benefit those educators who may not be comfortable or familiar with poetry as a mode of discourse and expression of understanding. They can then try exercises that integrate poetry as a tool for expanding understanding.

The exemplars are there
though shrouded by convention
by ensuring ‘meets expectation’ is known
to those with the budgets
to keep the doors opened
to keep the minds growing
to make a difference through it all

Few realize
that the current criteria sheets
Ministry approved
can be cauterized
to encompass poetics

That the form
need not be left to bleed
with purely aesthetic hearts
but that
meaning
check
style
check
form
check
convention
check
applies to poetry
needing only slight various
in the need for validation
that it
meets expectation

For Your Consideration

May I convince you
through poetry and hybridity
to look beyond complacency
to remind you why we teach
writing
To express
communicate
argue
to inflate our knowledge
beyond predetermined confines
(without popping)
To explore
create
expand upon knowledge
and the human experience.

Please consider
for students, educators and me
the use of hybridity
expanded use of poetry
in accepted modes of writing
academic and everything therein.

Hybridity: Is it in the Budget?

I cannot help but wonder
if teachers
wouldn't mind shelling out
\$300 more for
one more credit
and a bit
more effort
to be better equipped
to help their students
by way of their increased knowledge
by way of required course adaptation
or
an additional professional development course
where
they can become even stronger
in
how to use previously set criteria to assess said assignments
in
creative writing: poetics, narratives, drama, lyrical works or a métissage of works
to
expand their students minds
expand what they can do to reach their mental quotas
decreed by the Ministry
to
increase student success and retention
while creating critical thinkers
through transformative learning
by taking a bit more time
and spending a bit more money
securing students futures
and their own

To create post-secondary
pugilists who would fight
poetically for a unity of discourse
to allow "meets expectation"
to fall to the wayside
as they continue towards their futures
through poetry

prose
stanza
paragraph.

Illustrating the power of poetry in teacher education programs and suggesting a greater use of poetry and hybrid texts to reach more students in first-year post-secondary writing classes, at institutions such as my own, seems like too easy of a fix. Can I write a full line of text where I explore a base concept and interweave it with poetry where I take many angles

internalize and personalize
my interpretations
and language
in conjunction with the literature
to generate new or previously unexplored
understandings
or
am I simply looking too far inward?

Am I missing the viability of hybrid models that use a greater amount of poetry to illustrate understanding in academic contexts? Am I seeing all angles or am I naval gazing?

POETIC FIELD NOTES -iv-

(April 30, 2015)

Poetically practicing what I preach
while prideful and promising
is weary making
challenging the systems
and conventions
feeling like a blasphemer
from the Thomases who doubt
and others in the field full of fear of change

I continue to slog down the path
less travelled with Frost's imagine recurring
Directing others down the same way
or
such similar paths
than the well-trodden road
that it cannot help but intersect
from time to time

The conventional travelers appear
less worn
less dusty
yet
seem to have less zest
than others on my path
or such similar
more verdant paths
when they first set out
Extending away from the road
with wonder

I am the stranger on the road
I direct to other places
I bring new ideas
I am the messenger
I will continue to seek others

along the path
to explore the ideas with me
the Lost on the main road or confused near it

We
a society of like-minded Nomads
roam often apart
but are unified as a people
a society
of those who see beyond
presubscription and prescription
of dreamers
of poets
of those wanting more.

Discourse Myopia: Are We Seeing Everything?

I have experienced the limited interaction with poetry in first-year writing/English classes. Poetry is only read. It is not created to illustrate understanding or to connect ideas to the students' lived experiences. Students are asked to write their interpretations of the instructor's selected, approved poems in essay format and not through the medium of poetry of which they are reading and responding to. This partial interaction with poetry limits the exploration of language and limits students' modes of discourse. Leggo (1997) speaks to the inadequate use of poetry in most literature classes. He notes that most exploration of poetry comes through poetic analysis which is almost exclusively presented through an expository essay:

The critical analysis paper attempts to excavate the poem, to force it into a single perspective, and to close down the subject. It is interested only in the final product, a coherent, unified explanation of the way the parts of the poem are interrelated. Any inconsistency, incoherence, gaps, undecidability in the language and meaning will be ironed out or ignored. (p. 36)

To meet prescribed outcomes, we, as educators and facilitators of writing education are often limited to teaching students that the poem is to be taken apart and that there is a *right* interpretation and a *wrong* interpretation (as per our course outcomes and previous research around the poem). When I reflect on my own practice, I must balance my wishes to expand students' literacies and use of poetry with their need for fundamental understanding through close readings and standard forms of prose-based expression. This is not a deterrent. It allows an opportunity to instill the merits of hybridity to students. Through using poetry and hybrid modes of discourse, I have found that students glean more insights in to their assignments and what they wish to say in their writing. Students are able to navigate their course texts and

concepts in ways that were previously unbeknownst to them as they were transfixed on the required discourses and formats of their assignments.

As a learner, utilizing the capaciousness of poetry allows me to create my own interpretations of course content which I can then use to expand my understanding and link back to the concepts illustrated by the professor, by the textbooks and by the research. For the students who I work with in The Learning Centre, having them explore their ideas through poetry helps them to create their own understandings that they can then transpose in to their writing assignments. Poetry allows for the discovery of literary voice which is important for students who feel laryngitis when writing through the medium of the five-paragraph essay. It has also proven beneficial for those who struggle with getting their thoughts or feelings out in writing. With poetry, I can hear students' voices more clearly, I can guide them better, and I can continue to become a stronger educator because I have listened to them.

Voicing Understanding

Writing with no voice *may* be saying something true, important or new; it may be logically organized; it may even be a work of genius. (Elbow, 1998, p. 287)

Did you hear that? Did my voice carry too far?

I apologize.

I did not mean to besmirch your character
and sully your name
as I know that you try

Essai

Please know
my intentions were to introduce my friends
Creativity and Free Thinking
to your friends
though we ultimately ended up speaking of your shortcomings.

You have been a good friend
you are organized
usually quite direct and repeat yourself
often
often in different ways while saying the same thing
I get you, I understand you
you are quite predictable most of the time
It is almost like I could plot
or outline you
and, for some,
consistency
is beautiful.

For me, however
you are missing something
more substantive-
voice, juice,
personification of the position behind what you say
I want to know what makes you tick
yet in your pragmatic personality

I do not get that.

I want to hear your contextual bravado
I want to know what brought you to creation
I want to feel the importance of what you say
without the need for constant textual evidence
I want YOUR story.

Don't get me wrong;
knowing that you have read the literature
is important

Referring to it differently would work for me too
but our conversations are often quite drab.

Please do not take it personally
but I have since spoken with the group
and we are going to venture with Creativity and Free Thinking
for a while

I have met their friend Hybridity
who has some of your best traits
but whose voice I hear
more clearly
with a tone that resonates
with me

We will come back and see you
but our lifestyles are different than when we first met
We want different things.

I'm sorry, essay
Goodbye.

POETIC FIELD NOTES -v-

(May 18, 2015)

It is strange to push poetically
and huff with hybridity
for people who do not know it
To give of myself without obvious award
to fight for free thoughts and expression
to give others the opportunity to grow
by an expansion of what is acceptable
for marks
for which our society gives emphasis

I am trying to give them a way
to get that A+
sought after by so many
who become halted
and stunted by set criteria
I am trying to give them new enthusiasm
for learning
For learning is not about restricting
but enlightening
and should be awarded as such.

I presented my ideas to but a few colleagues
seeing most move away from the radical
idea of expression
having as much merit as mechanical answers
watching them participate in what's on trend
The lack of participation initially caused disheartening
until the sparkle did dance in the eyes of the few
the poet in the audience
the layman and the confused

The (r)evolution continues
adopting and converting as it goes
We do not seek destruction of language

nor do we burn the effigy of 5 paragraphs
we simply endorse a ratification of thought
for those who feel the bonds of convention.

We can fuse words
and worlds of genre
of texts
to give language more intention
beyond the conventions currently
in place
Can't we?

POETIC FIELD NOTES -xi-

(June 7, 2015)

Tectonic plates of tradition
strike/slip with little notice
most days
the ground does not move
the changes are too small
to notice

It is only when the strike/slip
along the fault lines
is significant
that the magnification reverberates
outward
building with momentum
shaking the foundations
ringing the wind chimes without wind
We take note.

This research
this conjecture
this effigy
this performance
this text
this métissage
is dancing along the fault lines
incrementally coaxing a connection
 of the gap
to close
to strike
to shake up and crack
tradition
to possibly slip this plate atop
the plate of tradition
overlap these ideas with the current

I must close the gap
the twane must meet
the landscape
of accepted forms of discourse
needs to change

Value and Validity of Poetry in Post-Secondary Writing Courses

For me, teaching with poetry, expressing concepts, sharing ideas and connecting poetry with our lives and the lives of our learners is a passion. Creativity and expression through writing speaks to my role as an educator, my role as a student, and my role as a writer/poet. I disagree with the idea that was put before me early on in my educational career, the idea that introductory academic writing needs to be utilitarian. We, as facilitators and educators, need to continue to illustrate our passion for education to our students, and allow them to know the value of *our* personal connections to our subjects. This will then allow them to make personal connections to their learning. If we expand our exploration of language to include more poetry, we can expand our overall understanding and create stronger bonds between what we are learning or teaching and why we are learning or teaching.

I cannot help but wonder, as Sword does: “What would happen if [some educators] allowed even a modicum of the passion they feel to color their prose?” (2012a, pp. 159-61). Where did the passionate prose go in so many institutions’ introductory writing courses? Why are we trapped in the traditions of tacit topics that yield the same answers and the same ‘original thoughts’ each semester? Why not give poetry a try? Rich Furman and his students did.

Rich Furman, a proponent of poetics as therapy and valid form of expression, teaches a course entitled *Introduction to Social Science 123: Beyond the Literary Uses of Poetry* at the University of Western Washington (UWT). The course seeks to expand students’ use of poetics beyond the exploration of its literary merits as found in most introductory literature classes on the post-secondary level. Furman (2014) shares an excerpt of the course description in his article *Beyond the Literary Uses of Poetry: A class for university freshmen* in the *Journal of Poetry Therapy*:

In this course, you will explore the nonliterary uses of poetry. Unlike courses that explore the literary merits of poetry, in this course you will come to view poetry as a vehicle through which social and personal aims are achieved. You will learn to view poetry as a means of documenting and presenting human experience and social research, as a tool in therapy and change and community engagement, among other topics. You will learn to use poetry as a means of exploring key aspects of your own lives, and as a means of acquiring the important skills of self-reflection, data analysis and public speaking. (p. 206)

Furman's course offered at a notable university illustrates that not all educators see poetics as a blip in their introductory university level writing courses. In his course, he gives students a foundational knowledge, and experience of what it means to become an ethnographer and illustrates how poetics can better utilized in research. These ideas are expanded upon in the course goals. As Furman's (2014) article outlines:

Goals of the course:

1. Students will develop an understanding of the nonliterary use of poetry.
2. Students will gain an understanding of the multiplicity of human experience as depicted through poetry.
3. Students will acquire skills and become familiar with the research method of autoethnography, and will develop research skills congruent with this method.
4. Through understanding how poetry is used as a tool for community development and social change, students will define their roles and responsibilities as members of a broader community.

5. Through various writing exercises, students will increase their ability to write to various discourse communities. Students will develop the capacity for public speaking and performance. (pp. 206-7)

This course gives an example of shows the value of poetry in post-secondary classrooms through its creative, theoretical and empirical use of qualitative methods (autoethnography, ethnography, poetic inquiry) where poetry is the primary form of discourse. Moreover, the course illustrates and teaches students other ways that they can utilize poetics and poetry beyond the scope of Furman's particular post-secondary course. I am inspired by his hybrid course where students are able to explore poetry, find its power, find their own voices in writing and integrate their findings in to concepts surrounding well-established research methodologies. Furman's course affirms Brady's (2004) idea that was explored earlier in this performative exploration, the idea that poets seek to connect lived experience with course content to create greater and various levels of understanding.

Through using language in different ways and allowing themselves free reign to play with language in their poetry, poets seek to find truth in the concepts, feelings, ideas and theories that they are exploring. I know from my own experiences as a learner, poet, and educator that poetry is a valuable tool for understanding and meaning making and I am glad when I see students given that opportunity as well.

POETIC FIELD NOTES -vi-

(May 23, 2015)

I have embraced the idea of our modern day wordsmiths
being those who may have one day been seen as bards
the radio, the online music sources, and the bay of pirates
The repetition of lyrics create new discourses
seeing generations moving away from traditional sentences
feeling lost in the classroom and not understanding why
My vigor continues for the expansion and hybridity
of expression beyond the binary.

Please give me your essay
with some creative
interwoven words
I will know that you understand
I will see that you understand
I will reach your thoughts
Allowing you to transform
to become that which you
wish to become.

I will have met my purpose
as an instigator of language
and as an educator.

Poetry has personal value for learners, where they gain greater and subjective understandings of ideas; it is also a valid and valuable method for learners to illustrate their ideas. Poetry does not need rhythm and rhyme to be poetry. It needs only the poet's intent to share their ideas. I argue that the creation of poetry holds a great deal of authenticity. Through allowing license to play with language, the creation of poetry is a way for the poet's perspective to be presented in personal contexts. Poems can illustrate where poets are on their journeys to understanding and meaning making.

Validity speaks to why we should trust a representation of reality or an evaluative account. One way to think about validity is not so much cutting the difference between truth and its pretenders, but providing us with a sense of the limitations of knowledge claims. Despite its objective connotations, validity is important in evaluation precisely because of the socially constructed, fallible, provisional, and incomplete nature of knowledge and the personal and political propensity to act as if this were not the case.

(Norris, 2005, p 442)

(in)Validity

Poetry as binary
to prose
is antithetical to the purpose of education
Paul Fairfield, like Dewey, reminds us that academia
is both scientific and artistic
not neither nor

The present enthusiasm for technique and instrumental rationality must be reminded of its limits and be regarded with a larger context of education as a cultural practice and art

(Fairfield, 2009, p. 25)

We do not educate to stunt
and yet, we often block thoughts
with block quotes
supported by close readings
reviewed only by professionals
who remark on how well we have expressed
our points
in the confines provided as
safe places for thoughts to grow.

The validity of words
dare not
should not
be restricted by formatting

A rose is a rose
as an interpretation of text
is an interpretation of text
be it in 5 paragraphs
5 stanzas
or a hybrid

Requirements for assignments:

Clarity of argument
Proper grammatical usage
Textual Evidence
and, the ever popular,
je ne sais quoi
exists in diverse forms

Poetry allows the voice
the essence of the writer
the juice (as Elbow would say)
to come forth
tying the author
to the illustration of the criteria

Allowing the text to breathe
in the responses

outside of the pretenses
creates an independent mind
that can show you what needs to be shown

Creative writing can bridge the distance
between
the students' literary naiveté-----and-----the professor's sophistication
(Parisi, 1979, p. 62)

Poetry need not have highfalutin language
to express what needs to be expressed
through rhetoric and charm
knowledge claims are made
requirements are met
and await evaluation.

Fusion of forms
lyrical and lexical
ventures beyond value and validity
brings exploration of language
and utmost importantly
understanding
back to learners.

In my work, I have seen how the creation of poetry can give students an alternative way to look at language and generate meaning. It acts as an *Other*: a realm where exploration is unbridled and can tie concepts together in ways not experienced before. In allowing inquiry through poetry, we as educators give students/learners the freedom to extend beyond structured responses. This freedom can not only further understanding of academic discourses, but allow knowledge to tie in to, as Gitlin & Peck (2005) note, various types of knowledge that are derived from personal experiences. In this unrestricted, sometimes playful encounter with knowledge through the use of poetry and multiple types of texts, learners can garner understandings not previously encountered in prose. New pathways are created that build toward overall understanding while creative and critical thinking skills are developed. I have experienced this idea when teaching learners to critically assess and explore concepts through poetry and through the creation of hybrid texts (beyond the essay). Through this interaction with language, we are

giving them tools that extend beyond the first-year, university, writing experience. We give them tools for educational, personal and social change.

Gitlin & Peck (2005) write:

Instead of viewing the world produced by approaches to inquiry as better in some sense of the word, the import of inquiry, especially inquiry conceptualized within an educational poetic, is that it operates within the space between forms of knowledge or cultural communities in order to examine the way all forms of knowledge (including the knowledge produced through the inquiry process) may be seduced by commonsense. By doing so, inquiry has the potential to challenge the affirmative aspects of culture, which stand in opposition to freedom. (p. 30)

Students learn that the act of interacting with concepts and ideas in their courses are as meaningful, if not more meaningful than being correct or incorrect. They learn to synthesize their own understandings and learn to express them in non-formulaic modes of discourse that can later be transposed, if required, to other modes. Poetry gives educators and facilitators a way to teach students critical and analytical thought in ways that are less ‘on the nose’ and are geared towards more personal interactions with course content. Through its ability to personalize and internalize ideas, the act of creating poetry asks students to become invested in the course and ultimately in their educations. Through the creation of hybrid texts, which utilize poetry and prose, we are granting students access to language that does not exist when we limit their modes of discourse to either poetry or the essay. This gives value to the use of poetry and the use of hybridity, but does not lessen the importance of the essay.

POETIC FIELD NOTES -vii-

(May 25, 2015)

The more I delve in to educational culture around words
the more I feel justified in my work
the more I feel justified in my moments of dissuasion
the more I feel reinvigorated when the moment passes
the more words bounce through my mind
the more ideas give me hope
the more promise I see in this time spent
the more energy ebbs and flows
the more guttural swells of passion for words rise
the more creativity sparks the kindling of ideas
the more pleased I am to be able to share these assertions
the more individuals will profit from this work
the more my métissage braids
the more I am braided in to the educational culture around words
the more I traverse this process
the more I wish the literature would cooperate
the more keywords come to mind
the more I try alternative methods of poetic expression
the more I embrace hybridity
the more I hope this resonates
the more I want this work to be successful
the more people I wish to reach
the more transformations can occur
the more joy can exude
through language.

Value of Poetry as Discourse in the Illustration of Understanding

Through my exploration of language and expression, I have seen that poetry requires knowledge and interaction with concepts that goes beyond recitation of the content and ideas that came before. It also requires, in most cases, brevity that calls on the poet to share what they have learned in a small space on the page. Brasel, Roberts, & Crawford (2014) agree with the idea that “in contrast to the thick, rich description generated through more traditional qualitative data points, poetry, in a sense, has already been condensed to its smallest element because of the economy of words and the compactness of emotion” (p. 179). The concepts have been considered and filtered in such a way that the poet can share them with their audience and allow the audience to insert their own interpretations. Poetry also allows for multiple interpretations to occur around the same idea(s) from the same poet. Brasel, Roberts & Crawford (2014) write that “poetry in its organic essentialism seems to provide an inherent synthesizing process of sorts, so that the poems generated have identified the essence of the topic, without the researcher having to do so” (p. 179). The poet can empathize and experience without having to go back in time to ask Shakespeare what he meant or ask Byron what he was feeling. Moreover, an interesting idea that expresses the value of poetry by Brasel et al. (2014), as it relates to traditional qualitative research methodologies/inquiries with language, is that “the process of poetry writing using formula poems provides an internal and integrated member checking” and that this member checking through “poetry offers an additional emotional tone that perhaps a survey, interview, or focus groups may not necessarily come close to approaching or gauging” (p. 179). In essence, the capaciousness of poetry allows the poet to synthesize ideas, express them through various modes of poetic discourse and allows for participants voices, if applicable, to be better heard in the research/writing. In a similar way, Cahnmann (2003) notes that “a poetic approach to inquiry

requires the careful study of our own written logic, technique and aesthetic” (p. 32). The creation of poetry and the use of multiple texts allows for further proof that the student understood, thought about, and has their own interpretation of the ideas being explored in course content. Writing response poetry requires that the student illustrates their own understanding. It does not ask the student to articulate the understanding of the teacher/facilitator/educators’ perspective; it asks for their own interpretation of the text. Like the essay, the poem allows teachers/facilitator to check for understanding and checks for an internalization of ideas. The poem created is the proof of understanding beyond the scope of concepts being reiterated by the expository essay, even if the essay is still utilized as the primary mode of illustrating understanding.

Furthermore, having students write poetically can illustrate their refinement of the concepts being explored. Their illustration of understanding through poetry *can* also include verbatim content from the course akin to quotations in an essay or be presented in a hybrid mode of poetry and prose. This content can be integrated in such a way that further illustrates students’ comprehension of ideas or illustrates deficits in their understanding of said content. It is the act of writing and expressing understanding that is important. According to Fisher and Frey (2007), “writing clarifies thinking...for that matter, writing is thinking” and “analyzing student writing is a great way for teachers to determine what their students know (p. 57). Why would we not allow various forms of written expression through poetry, prose or hybridity so that we may better gauge students’ level(s) of understanding?

Poetry does not only use facts to explore, it uses poetic devices such as metaphor, and poetic conventions, such as line-breaks to illustrate deeper understanding of the poet (or in our case, students/leaners who become poets). Of the importance of metaphor, Cunningham (2012)

writes, “simply put, metaphor is thinking, speaking or writing about one thing in terms of another; however, this definition does little justice to the prevalence of metaphor in thought and communication” (p. 535). He goes on to note that “deeper studies into linguistics, psychology and neuroscience have yielded similar conclusions that human beings naturally think in a metaphorical way. The brain's tendency towards categorization is substantially aided by metaphor as it instils both connectivity and distance among our thoughts” (p. 535). This is a testament to the power and value of poetry as, “not only do people discover similarities among concepts and objects by metaphoric linkages (often characterized as conceptual metaphor), but they also uncover wider flexibility within our world views as they metaphorically connect seemingly disparate concepts (typically labelled as linguistic metaphor)” (p. 535). Through metaphor, through linguistic expression, concepts are linked and braided, thereby creating more complex and more fruitful understandings. Metaphor allows for multiple ways of looking at concepts and explaining concepts; this is, as aforementioned, a beneficial tool for students’ articulation of knowledge.

Through using metaphor, I have witnessed how students are able to show deeper levels of thinking and understanding. More to the value of metaphor in student’s poetry and use of poetry in exploring concepts is that metaphor can show connections to various ideas through their appropriate use of metaphor and can also show possible deficits in understanding with their inappropriate use of metaphor i.e. a mixed metaphor that has no connection to the work being explored. Moreover, students are able to show deeper interaction with course content through these metaphoric linkages and presenting their synthesized ideas to other students and the instructor for further consideration. *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* under the

section *Knowledge, Poetry As*, attributed to Jenkins (2012), speaks to the truth found in poetry, specifically through the use of metaphor:

Metaphorical truth moves beyond arbitrary word-truth and encapsulates a role of poetry. It concedes or ignores the truth of the arbitrary signifier and moves in the opposite direction. While meaning can be perceived as just as unstable within metaphor as in lang., metaphor transcends the sign (sound-image and concept), and meaning at the edge of lang. emerges. (p. 1323)

Metaphor transcends and thereby poetry has the power to transcend and create deeper meaning as it relates to course concepts. In utilizing poetic discourse, including the use of metaphors, students/learners are able to illustrate certain truths that prose can leave behind. They can rework language in ways not previously used in the context of the coursework and can create new avenues of understanding and meaning that are embedded in their use of poetry. This is meaning that would not have been present in another form of written expression. As such, utilizing metaphor in academic poetry and hybrid texts are valuable tools for students and teachers/facilitators to be aware of.

The line-break is another poetic device that students can utilize with their poetry and poetic discourse to show understanding. The line-break itself is difficult to explain and its uses are significantly personal. Line breaks can change the meaning of a line significantly and cause multiple meanings. Kjørup (2010) speaks to the ambiguity of the line-break in the abstract of his linguistic paper around the definition of the line-break. He writes:

Apart from the surprising fact of being in lack of lexicographical description, *line-break*, a term widely used in poetic criticism, will be seen to be highly polysemous. What the

term refers to, simply, is far from always clear; not only does it seem capable of changing with contexts referred to, it tends to do so in the extremely volatile fashion of attracting contrary or even contradictory referential meanings. (p. 20)

While Kjorup (2010) attempts to paint the line-break as a complex expression used by word lovers, with little concrete meaning, he inadvertently illustrates its power in poetic discourse. Line-breaks can change the context of the message from affirmative to contradictory and back again. In conjunction with enjambment, “the continuation of a syntactic unit from one line to the next without major juncture or pause; the opposite of an end-stop line,” line-breaks create a multiplicity of meanings and truths/authenticities that often do not exist in traditional prose (Scott, Brogan & Monte, 2012, p. 436). An effective expository essay will have a clear thesis, clear topic sentences; it will have evidence in the body that links to the topic sentences and will link to the thesis and the conclusion. An effective poem or hybrid text that uses poetry will have a thesis, will cause the reader to think or feel, and will leave the reader with a renewed or different perspective on the content than they had before reading it. For me, if students are able to write poetry utilizing metaphor, line-breaks, enjambment, meter, rhyme, simile, onomatopoeia, blank verse, free verse, and/or haiku (the list can go on) then they will have more experience with language that they can bring to their essays and other writing-based assignments. They will be able to use their ever-improving language to write an affective, emotive, student-voiced text. If we, as teachers and facilitators demonstrate poetry as a valuable mode of discourse in academia, we will be able to impart concepts to students who may have not grasped the concepts in our textbooks or lectures and will be able to better assist students in becoming excellent communicators.

Through the word economy necessary for many forms of poetry, students show that they have not only thought about ideas, they will show that they have thought about how to express them in their own terms, in their own (poetic) discourses to inform their own understandings. The product (the poem) may also illustrate deficits in understanding that may not have been found when students filled in the blanks of their formulaic essays. Poetry can show gaps in conceptual understanding, whereas a student could concoct a convincing essay by following an essay formula (hook, thesis, topic sentences, body paragraphs with quotations, conclusion). Moreover, students' use of poetic conventions will allow more of their written voices to be heard and allow students to find/create their own writing identities. We, as teachers and facilitators, can help students to find their voice through the allowance of poetry in writing intensive classes and in the teaching of writing. Through exploring ideas through poetry and the creation of hybrid texts, we are developing their skillsets as writers and critical thinkers.

Many students are afraid to speak with their academic or poetic voices in their writing. They feel that they must follow specific discourses laid out by their instructor, or their perceptions of what academic language is. Their meaning making and illustrations of understanding are stunted by fear of not adhering to set criteria. Poetry asks the student to explore their thoughts, their understandings and their perceptions in ways that extend beyond the stringent criteria of the essay.

POETIC FIELD NOTES -ix-

(May 27, 2015)

As I reflect
refract and refocus
the words of those before
I see new images

As I submerge in conversation
buoyant ideas
float to the surface
like buoys once lost to the tides
forgotten by their owners
with new ideas in tow

As I navigate the labyrinth
of thought
of texts
of dead ends
of original ideas
perhaps not as original as first hoped
I find new pathways of understanding

This process' dissemination
of words has adopted me
My language
no longer
simply words
before or after
I have become one with the language
the language one with me

Cacophony
now symphony
of understanding
with further nuance to ascertain.

POETIC FIELD NOTES -x-

(June 4, 2015)

The voices and words of
unmet allies
now friends
seeps through the tomes
the keyboards
the screens
with citations whispering
to explore
the words of those who spoke to them
who lead them to this place of understanding
not yet populated by many
though the gate is opened wide

Only today did I seek
a face
to the voice(s) of
Monica Prendergast
Rich Furman
Helen Sword
fortunate to have the voice
of Carl Leggo
in-text
by ear
as mentor
who does not boast of his canon of writing
or his sailing in a concrete boat

These pioneers
have kept the garden in tact
with cabins made of sustainable lumber
powered by solar energy
and by words

The garden is vast
I have yet to meet them all
but will continue to explore
following the whispers
while whispering beyond the gates myself.

Educational researchers can benefit from arts-based approaches to research that question the limits of tradition just as an architect might question the institutional use of cinderblock walls. For example, we often instruct students to use citations rather than teaching them to explore their own words and imaginations. This reduces knowing. Rather, we need to teach students to develop their own voices. Poetry can be an important means to that end. (Cahnmann, 2003, p. 32)

Break/ing Context

Why can't my prose skip a line
and break

Break

With the same message that I would give you in paragraph format such as this. The I's are still dotted. The T's are still crossed and yet when I break

Break

You see it as less than its complete
sentence counterparts

When really,
all words are symbols
though
the meaning changes within

or outside of context

Do you not hear my voice
more clearly
with resonance
when you think of my expression as poetics?

Peter Elbow (1998) himself said, "writing with no voice is dead, mechanical, faceless"
though when I read it poetically:
Writing with no voice is
dead

mechanical
faceless...
I feel it
I believe it
Do you not hear it?

The merit of my words should not change due to their location on the page. The chosen delivery of the message through written language should not change the value of what is being said. The author's intent is to share their message with you and to make you feel, believe, and think about what is being said. Does a line break

Break
really make that much of a difference
in your overall understanding?
Perhaps the break
Break
up of thoughts
show more
than their 5 paragraph counterparts
and give more than first expected.

Should we reawaken Derrida
to deconstruct the pieces
to validate how a simple break
break
sees dimension and transformations?

Hybridity Not Rigidity

As I have been exploring and considering in this performance, the use of poetry and hybrid texts in the teaching of writing can be utilized to reach more students. Poetry and poetic discourse extend beyond the binary of one reading or another, beyond right or wrong. It often allows for multiple readings and interpretations of the same text and brings about new thoughts and concepts as they relate to standardized ideas that are asked in some courses and that students come to me with in The Learning Centre. The same question asked in literature classes who study *Hamlet* in Vancouver, is the same question being asked in Toronto, being asked in Regina, and being asked in Corner Brook: “Is Hamlet mad?” Thousands of students have answered this in expository essays in literature classes around the world. Yes, it is an important question when reading that particular play, but the same lines of Shakespearean language are used in nearly every response, framed in a similar response, concluded with a similar response of the binary: yes, he is, or, no, he is not.

This hybrid approach of combining the ideals of the essay and poetry is represented in the Canadian canon of literature. Anne Carson’s (1994) *The Glass Essay* explores, through poetry, the dissolving of her/the speaker’s marriage and the steps she takes to move beyond the event. The essay follows the format of a traditional essay: a narrative/poetic hook, introduction (including thesis), body paragraphs that tie in to her thesis, and a conclusion. Her structure echoes the clarity of an essay, while her poetic discourse leads the reader on a journey of internal thought, real life events, emotional struggle, and a clear conclusion that ties back to her thesis. I realize that while students are not necessarily poets who will have Carson’s nuanced control over language, I argue that they should be allowed to explore their thoughts and show their understanding in ways that fully realize their aptitudes. Limiting students to the binary of

writing essays in literature classes and writing poetry in creative writing classes, we, as teachers and educators, are stunting their expression and illustration of their comprehension. Hybridity can help students find and illustrate their ideas.

My argument is to open
up the criteria
to expand the essay-centric
allow for other discourses to be braided.

I have experienced how braiding of texts allows students the opportunity to explore, if they so wish, and use discourses in ways not previously afforded to them.

In having experienced the power of poetry
to build upon and expand ideas
only to have those ideas stunted
by required formats
by required modes of discourse
I can empathize
with students who feel
 locked in
by restricted formats.

If the requirements of academic discourses were less stringent and more open to hybrid models of writing, I know that I would see fewer confused students. They would have the chance to explore their thoughts, their understandings and interpretations before going to task with their essays, a part of education that many find intimidating.

POETIC FIELD NOTES -xiv-

(July 1, 2015)

Processes are particular
particular prose is paramount
in poetry
in expression
in word economy
of the presentation of ideas.

The prose is limiting
my poetry
in the exploration of language

My commentary is packed
particularly the poetry
with feeling and passion
which was not being infused in my prose

I was contradicting myself by trying to show
the value
the use
the need
for more poetry through more prose

My lyrical voice in my writing had to be found
my stories had to be presented
as my own valuable literature
The Literature and Research
not all powerful
not my voice
must then be
where it should have been
all along
as supplemental

To try and match the tone
in this case
to promote poetry through others prose
in this case
giving their words more authority
defeated my purpose

saw me as lost as the students
who need poetry as a greater
language in their lives.

Fusion of forms has given me hope
has allowed me to see the viability
in the expansion of education
in the teaching of writing
in expression as a whole.

Verse. Stanza. Essay.

Language languishes when formatting means more.

Poetic discourse allows
learners the freedom
to express their understanding
through discourses
not readily utilized
not readily accepted

Opening assignment criteria
allowing poetic discourse
allows
learners to articulate
their interactivity
their synthesizing
their understanding
of concepts
and
ideas

Articulation of exploration
conceptual, textual, hypothetical
tangible and imaginary
relatable or conflate-able
venturing with questions
and what ifs

Fusing, amalgamating, braiding
in-class evidence
with
real world experience
the armchair learner
the first-hand doer
generate whole ideas
with ownership
as their own

Line-breaks, metaphors, simile
enjambment, consonance, assonance
rhyme and verse

give license to dance with discourse
Thoughts, words and imagination
combine with course concepts
to show understanding
in ways much deeper and dense

Discourses of lived poetics
confirm collaboration
of learners and lexicons
show synthesizing with syntax
elucidates educational explorations
beyond the paragraphed parameters.

Hook. Introduction. 3 Topic Sentences. 3 Body Stanza-graphs. Conclusion. The above poem had all of the parts of the traditional expository essay. The word economy required different ways of relating the same message, as in an essay, and quotations could be added or paraphrasing could be added from other material to give even greater dimension. How would the message change in traditional formats? Would you not lose some of my voice and intention? Was the message not as strong if not stronger? Poetry and exposition are stronger united than apart.

POETIC FIELD NOTES -viii-

(May 26, 2015)

My power as poet is being internally noted more
as I go
reading
greeting
the few others
[in texts and textual citations]
who share in the idea
that poetic discourse
is-no, exists, no e x t e n d s beyond

the realm of constrained discourse
that we limit ourselves
and each other to
is rousing inspiration
when our lines cross on the page

I have moments where
I do
sit alone in prose and poetics
like a more balding Rapunzel
in my tower of tomes with only the few visitors
[in text]
who share my zest for poetics' power
I then scour for others
to bring in to the fold
unite the troubadours
lead them in
battles of lyrical proportions
towards emancipatory expression
breaking free from polished paragraphs
able to explore
ideas, words, thoughts, feelings, beliefs
beyond the paltry paragraphs
archaic in their restrictiveness
though not without their uses

POETIC FIELD NOTES –xv–

(July 5, 2015)

I have come to value the process
as I show value in poetry
in teaching writing
through poetry
removing the stigma of assignments
remembering the value in writing
the way

I suggest students do
in my daily interactions
Knowing that language exploration
is on-going
ever-changing
and adaptive
meaning making
at its best
when language is embraced
without restrictions

Hybridity yields new understandings
found through process
finished product
unlike anything created before

Modes of Wonder: The Capaciousness of Poetry and Poetic Discourses

Our friends at Merriam-Webster (2015) helped with the following definitions:

¹mode

noun \ 'mōd \

Definition of *MODE*

a: a particular form or variety of something <flying and other *modes* of transport>

b: a form or manner of expression : style

¹wonder

noun won·der \ 'wən-dər \

a: something or someone that is very surprising, beautiful, amazing, etc.

b: a feeling caused by seeing something that is very surprising, beautiful, amazing, etc.

c: to have interest in knowing or learning something : to think about something with curiosity

I wish to wonder
what the world would be
if we opened accepted discourses
Allowed all learners to be authors
to speak their speculative understandings
of course content
to question academic questions
which are unfathomable to question
as the answer has been the same
for centuries
What would that look like?
How can poetic discourses be used
to express and explore and evaluate?
I wonder

I wonder...

3 Lines, 5-7-5, Nihongo, Mode of Wonder

1.

Poetry can grow
Beyond the borders of prose
Expression is key

2.

Do not limit me
I can show more than you think
Beyond the blank page

3.

No more restrictions
My words flow without borders
Allow me to breathe

14 Lines, ABAB CDCD EFEF GG, Shakespearean (sans iamb), Mode of Wonder

...the poet seeks to grasp the tenuous, tentative, tangled, tensile threads of questions,
unraveling with tantalizing possibilities for analysis. (Leggo, 2012, p. 153)

Why do we not put more value in this explorative method of thought?
Why do we feel that prose has more value in the classroom than poetry?
For fear that we cannot assess if the student is 'right' or not?
We hold narrative inquiry, ethnography and poetic inquiry up, you see
Sing the praises of our ability to open doors, to understand much more
Yet when a student wishes to express themselves differently, the question is 'why?'
I feel like we should open windows of possibilities and the doors
If students are limited by thesis location, strict rules apply
And are unable to draw things out of themselves as they draw from the text
What type of learners are we creating, do you suppose?
I'm afraid it may be the type who cannot see what is next
The kind who cannot see past their nose
To create learners who can interpret in multiple ways
Will see their education blossoming beyond their school days

5 Lines, AABBA, City of Ireland (No, Not Cork), Mode of Wonder

1.

There once was a question of poetry
Can it be as good as an essay to me?
The forms may all change
But the thoughts are the same
Now we need the academics to see

2.

I wrote poetic lines for my class
Though I would need an essay to pass
I hoped that my instructor would see
What my expression meant to me
But was told to follow en mas

3.

Voice in language can be found
When ideas are free and unwound
The student and text become one
They see that language can be fun
The results tend to be quite profound.

**Vers en Francais (5 at 3 Lines and a 4 Liner at the End, Slightly Modified,
Villanelle-esque), Mode of Wonder**

I tried to express myself today
Though the form caused distress
I wish there was another way

I did not want to betray
As my instructor knows what's best
But I felt my passion slipping away

I kept attempting to say
What I wanted to express
But the form allowed for no play

To the office I went to portray
How my words were becoming less
The instructor was confused, in dismay

I tried my best to sway
Though I didn't want to pest
The instructor said it was to be that way

I was bound to the 5 paragraph essay
Another form would be my quest
I tried to express myself today
I wish there was another way.

Myth 1: Academics are not allowed to write outside of strictly prescribed disciplinary formats.

‘Not allowed’? By whom? Academic writing is a matter of making appropriate choices, not of following ironclad rules. When confident writers push back against disciplinary conventions, those conventions often shift to accommodate the new style... (Sword, 2012a, p. 36)

A.C.R.O.S.T.I.C. Mode of Wonder

Pundits of punctuation puff posthumously
pertaining to prose
picking out promise
persuading primers to
pull poetics from prominence
in post-secondary classrooms.
Poetics produces provoking problems
Overtly obvious
or
obscurely opaque
overly obtuse observations
Of others ideas
often
opening opinions
Evoking evolving
enquiries
of education
Elements
enrich the experience
enjoyment exudes in the
ever-changing encounter
Through thinking
thoroughly and thoughtfully
time after time
of
tidings in texts

as total tellings of
truths
Inside the inquiries
inherent
and intrinsic
instinctively inside illustrations
inclusive of words
inferred, innate or
inherited
Conceiving cherished concepts
crafted cleverly
or covertly
by consonance
of the consonants
creating chimes of
comprehension
Seeping
sometimes searing
supportive and sympathetic
schemes in to the systems
of
subordination to single-minded
single-text
showcases of skill.

Tombstone Talk, Mode of Wonder

A long life of idea containment is what the essay did best
now the restrictions on accepted language have been laid to rest
Of the modes of discourse, it embodied what it was meant to do
to make writing easy, a neat formulaic model for you
Though this loss will be hard for many to recover
now hybridity and other forms of discourse can be re-discovered

Oh, we will miss its structured paragraphs with a body, so curvy
with its long-winded expressions, oh yes, it was wordy
We must carry on, with a life less confined
with poetic discourses which, too, are refined
To expand our horizons is what essay would desire--
Oh wait, it's not dead, please don't call me a liar

The essay is alive and thriving you see
You are now only mourning rigidity
Poetics can live with essay in tact
Multiple modes of discourse will illuminate more facts
Let us join together for all modes of expression
never again should we worry about our voices suppression

Unlimited, Free-Flowing, Mode of Wonder

While the locus of hybridity is a theoretical space, the locus of métissage is an inhabited historical place... The ethos of métissage is to seek rapprochement among disparate unequal groups...without erasing the differences. (Hasebe-Ludt, Leggo, & Chambers, 2009, p. 37)

I am inspired by the métissage
of life
where I can braid
what I am learning
what I am living
what I am feeling
in to one text
context of complex
intertwined threads
that represent who I am
as educator, learner
husband, friend
and other sutured roles
that I embrace or shudder under the weight of

In education
I find liberation in the ability to express myself
in essays that allow for a deviation from the norm
of the exacting paragraph formatting
that takes away my manifestation of understanding

I wonder why we only allow
students beyond 120 credits to explore
meaning and channel arguments of change
when all students should be allowed
to be free thinkers
who can show understanding in all forms.
This not only allows for freedom
of expression
but requires the student to understand
more than one
standardized

convention
presubscribed by the curricula
presubscribed by the Boards or Ministry
who rarely step foot
in the footsteps
of students
or teachers.

Teach a student to write
they can tow and recite the company line
Teach a student that it is okay to express
they can open avenues through their writing
to increase their understanding.

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ (Though Abecedarian is Easier to Say), Mode of Wonder

All words have meaning
Because we give them meaning
Careful consideration is made for word choice
Deciding what is best and what should be avoided
Everyone does, or should consider
Finite meanings behind words
Given the nature of our educational constraints
Human nature asks us to express ourselves
In ways that go beyond 5 paragraphs
Jumping from connecting thought to connecting though
Keeping our minds sharp and allowing
Language to express what could not be expressed otherwise
Most of our assessment criteria
Noticeably misses the human element of academic expression
Others see it, but cannot place it in their curricula
Perhaps we are too strict in our
Quantitative needs for
Reporting at the end of term
Students respond responsibly if we let them
Taking away some of the restrictions
Understanding that they are capable
Verifying
What we already know
X-ing out the doubts and realizing that
Youth need more expressive options in the classroom
Zealous are the students who learn while being themselves.

No, It's Not Cement...It's More Like Concrete, Mode of Wonder

Poetry

Brings Learning
Circle Full

If
we can teach
students how to think
critically through the use of
poetry and hybridity, we will only elevate
their understandings and interactions with
standardized course concepts and common place
ideas thereby giving them the tools necessary to glean
new and deeper understandings accompanied by the ability
to analytically analyze the world around them and think for themselves

Poetry allows for multiple views of the same concept
tpecnoc emas eht fo sweiv elpitlum rof swolla yrteoP

tpecnoc emas eht fo sweiv elpitlum rof swolla yrteoP
Poetry allows for multiple views of the same concept

Poetry allows for multiple views of the same concept
tpecnoc emas eht fo sweiv elpitlum rof swolla yrteoP

Slam, Just Slam, Mode of Wonder

Forgive me if this comes across rudely but
These verses have been hurtin my head
Since someone said that I cannot say what I want to say
How I want to say it
but now I get to say it today

I'm sick of all the hoity-toity talk of language
That discourses in courses have to be one way
I'm sick of all the complaining over stanzas or paragraphs
Let us just say what we need to say

We treat learners like turtles
Slow and steady wins the race
Never thinking that we should be checking for their own pace
Through their own words and discoveries
not relying on standardized tests
Let em speak in their language
Let them speak it with truth
ever knowing that no assignment
is universal

Give them back their voices
Through many modes of text
though don't leave to flounder
gotta keep them in check

Amalgamate thoughts
don't discriminate forms of expression
learners need to learn in ways
that builds their comprehension.

**8 Lines. ABABABCC. Please Sing a Slightly Higher Pitch (Just an Octave),
Mode of Wonder**

We need to open the channels of the articulation of learning
only then can we come closer to perceiving
if our students truly know or are their wheels only turning
trying to guise their lack of believing
the notions that we teach without fully discerning
not understanding the ideas we are conceiving
Through hybrid expression of words without borders
We create free thinkers, not simply those who follow orders

Now, That's a Bit of Nonsense, Mode of Wonder

Gibberish and mish-mosh
are interesting ways to learn
babble, ramble and free thought
can give more to discern

Discourse has recourse
recursive words fall flat
connection and interaction
not sure what's wrong with that

Whimsical and rhythmical
we can expand to teach
no more muddled and fuddled
understanding can be reached

Flapjacks and setbacks
the journeys aren't the same
why words are accepted
and others seen as lame

Mobility in movement
of modes of education
poetry has value
move away from subjugation

POETIC FIELD NOTES -xii-

(June 9, 2015)

Proof

over-proof

121

is the goal

to be potent in proving

that poetic discourse is valid

hybridity is helpful

for not only this performance

this métissage

at this university

for that piece of paper

for the prestige with the title

and accomplishment

but

to gift the expanded acceptance

of language

through its creation

to the hallowed halls of academia

to the small portables

to the community centres

and homeschoolers alike

Shots of proof need to mix

as my métissage mixes

me, you, them and us

quote me, explore me,

poeticize and criticize me

create and conceive

new old ideas

to (in)form the expansion

of what 'meets expectation'

Concluding Thoughts

Why are we here?

Exploring value of poetry as an academic discourse
fusion of forms and hybridity of texts
as a way to illustrate understanding
confirm comprehension
Through sutured roles
researcher, poet, autobiographic
interventionist
building connections to close the gap
adhering to styles of learning
and
assessing the state of writing in-context

Braided roles in braided texts
adjusting the lenses
in an attempt to fix the blur
of discourse myopia

Addressing the essay
and the cost of creativity
For the value of
poetic
discourse
as illustrator of knowledge
advocating
hybridity in the modes
of wonder

This thesis-performance hybrid has been created to explore and illustrate the value of poetry in first-year, university English courses and as a way of teaching writing. It shows how poetry can be braided into assignments to grant students greater access to language and concepts. An emphasis has been put on the concept of hybridity as a way to convey ideas to students and for students to illustrate their ideas in writing. This focus has been selected as I have discovered that unifying modes of texts has greater value than selecting a single mode of discourse to impart knowledge or show understanding. By delving in to concepts of value, the conceivability of a

change to current assessment models to support hybrid texts, suggesting how poetry can be integrated in to the current system, and by bequeathing wonder to support the ideas explored, I hope that further research will be done on the concept of hybridity in the teaching of writing.

The thesis-performance hybrid text has used autobiography, poetic inquiry and facets of literary métissage, biography and autoethnography of my stories and place in the culture of writing in my university to address and analyze the literature around accepted forms of academic discourse in many post-secondary writing environments. Moreover, through various modes of writing/types of texts: anecdotal evidence, government documentation, educational theorists' ideas and ideals, writing and ESL/EFL professors' course structures and content, the value of poetry and hybrid texts in the teaching of writing were explored. The braiding of poetry to reply to the literature, through *vox theoria*, and the utilization of poetry to create and explore new ideas, has allowed for a closer interaction with the texts, while the personal narrative elements allowed my first-hand experiences in the teaching of writing to be drawn upon to give strength to the work. The life writing and poetry acted as a counterbalance to the exploration through traditional discourses with their accompanying citations in such a way that neither element overpowered the other. Each facet allowed for a unique perspective in to the concepts being explored. A further distinctive element of this work was that the power of the creation of hybrid texts was not only discussed, but employed in the creation of the work itself. This thesis-performance hybrid text uses various forms of poems, creative non-fiction i.e. the personal essay, and the expository essay in conjunction with quotations from the literature to produce a text that not only shares my findings to support the use of hybridity, but as a hybrid itself, embodies the concepts therein.

The initial purpose of this text was to identify, through an exploration of language and types of texts, if poetry was being utilized to its full potential in the teaching of writing at the post-secondary level. These interactions with language then led to the use of hybridity to generate deeper and more personal understandings of the ideas being considered. The use of hybridity allowed for a closer academic and artistic interaction with language in that I could analyze the texts, yet also address them as works of literary art. Furthermore, in enacting a hybrid approach to interacting with the literature and in the creation of my text itself, I was able to reflect upon concepts and ideas in ways that a single mode of expression would not fully afford. I took my own experiences and stories and combined them with poetry and the literature to gain a greater understanding of not only the use of poetry in the teaching of writing, but to further explore the use of hybrid texts in the teaching of writing in my own context. Further, I created the text with the hope of being an exemplar for other educators. My hope is that through the ideas explored in this text that they may now question and consider how they teach writing and how they utilize types of texts in their classrooms. Drawing from the use of hybridity in my own work, and in others' research, led to the formation of this hybrid document.

This work relies less on a stringent theoretical framework. It instead draws on multiple methodologies to illustrate the value of poetry and hybridity in the teaching of writing. I did not select a methodology that can be easily reproduced, but instead chose to illustrate how borrowing from various methodologies can lead to the creation of new ideas. Had I kept exclusively to narrative inquiry, poetic inquiry, or ethnography, I feel that the nuances and findings of this work would have been represented very differently. The work itself is a hybrid and I felt that the theoretical framework had to mimic the same format or something would have been lost in adhering to a singular convention. The work represents an expression of the use of poetry and

hybridity in the teaching of writing. It is an example of how language can be utilized in different ways to further students' understandings of concepts and conventions when learning how to write.

Further research is needed as it relates to the utilization of hybrid texts and their effectiveness as it relates to quantifying student success. This thesis-performance hybrid reflects my own interactions with poetry and hybridity in conjunction with others' experiences from the literature, but it is not a generalization on the practice of teaching writing. Case studies that look at students' interactions with multiple texts, in contrast with those with students who only interact with single modes of texts, may shed further light on the value of hybrid texts in the teaching of writing.

This thesis-performance hybrid text illustrates the power of poetry and hybridity to demonstrate understanding and generate different ideas. The creation of poetry can create more critical, sensuous and transformative moments with language for students and give greater personal meaning to their assignments. This text can be utilized by other researchers as a point of reference when addressing issues around forms of accepted academic discourses and may lead to adaptations of assignments implemented in writing intensive classes on the post-secondary level. This text may also be utilized by other arts based researchers who are striving to illustrate their ideas in ways that extend beyond conventional methods and readily accepted forms of discourse. Language can create greater understanding, especially when we are willing to break the line of what is expected.

POETIC FIELD NOTES -xiii-

(June 10, 2015)

Poetic discourse has become my discourse
lyrical language languishes in my emails
tercets trickle in to my text messages
research wriggles in to my thoughts
I am full of hope that the bravado
boasting about poetic discourse
will cause change
that hybridity has shown lucidity
of thought

Soon

I will be some part of the research
Perhaps in
the literature review of another
my words may be quoted
my ideas may be quoted
my attempt to
essai this non-essay
may end up known to many
or to few

Will any of this have made a difference?

In case you missed the message in the prose...

Breaking the Line

I preach creativity while I teach
5 paragraphs
that
adhere to my
institution's objectives
I infuse my voice in my teaching
wanting learners
to see creativity and academic writing
as complementary
in the hallowed halls
where our thoughts reside

Poetry has value as discourse
be it through the facilitators' formulation
of ideas and concepts
through the teaching of rhetoric
with poetic language and modes
or through learners' lines of poetry
proving their understanding

Hybridity, be it prose and poetry
or some other form of writing
can show multiple understandings
where it may not have existed before
Taking the best of prose
and poetry
creates a powerful tool
in teaching and leaning

The essay tries
(yes, that's a play on the French *essai*)
let's be honest
it succeeds
in being the dominant
academic discourse
taught to students
in many universities
(including my own)

Facilitators
Educators
Instructors
Learning centre staff
Writing centre staff
often utilize the essay
as THE discourse
that echoes through the hallowed halls

We, the Royal and me, do this
not only because We are told to
We believe that We do this
because We believe
We can more easily identify gaps
through prose
We wish to help our students to use language effectively
We, the Royal and me, need to use more hybridity
and poetry

Through reframing
adjusting our lenses
even wiping our pretenses
with a plush cloth
(to avoid scratching)
We can see that hybridity
bridges the gap
between
what is being taught
and
who is comprehending it

We should not
need not squint to seeme
how the two major discourses
poetry and prose connect
How they are not that different
how We can have both modes
at our disposal
to expand our educational territory

Through poetry
discourses meld and unite
Through poetry

students' understanding
is illustrated
interaction with concepts
is illustrated
Through poetry and prose
fused in to one mode of understanding
We educators, researchers and scholars
(We poet-educators, poetic researchers, poet-scholars)
can find cracks in learners understanding
can find how to better cement our lessons
to close the cracks before crevasses occur.

Through hybridity
discourse dances in to
understanding
We, yes the Royal and me, give structure and freedom
through poetry and the essay
We give analytical and creative
We give rhetorical and poetical
We challenge convention
We create critical thinkers
We facilitate and teach our craft

We wonder
how knowledge can be shown
through poetry
and hybridity
all modes of exploration
all modes of illustration
for the propagation
of education
with the declaration
of poetry
as a valuable mode
of understanding.

References

- Anderson, C. & MacCurdy, M. (2000). *Writing and healing: Toward an informed practice*. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.
- British Columbia Ministry of Education. (2009) *Worksheet for BC performance standards* Retrieved on May 8, 2015 from the British Columbia Ministry of Education website: https://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/perf_stands/worksheet_intro.pdf
- British Columbia Ministry of Education. (2009) *BC performance standards: Writing*. Retrieved on May 8, 2015 from the British Columbia Ministry of Education website: https://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/perf_stands/writing_intro.pdf
- Belliveau, G. (2007). An alternative practicum model for teaching and learning. *Canadian Journal of Education / Revue Canadienne De l'Éducation*, 30(1), 47-67.
- Brady, I. (2004). In defense of the sensual: Meaning construction in ethnography and poetics. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 10(4), 622-644. doi:10.1177/1077800404265719
- Brasel, N. A., Roberts, S. K., & Crawford, P. A. (2014). Poetry as praxis: An exploration of poetry discourse as qualitative inquiry. *Journal of Poetry Therapy*, 27(4), 167-181. doi:10.1080/08893675.2014.948262
- Carson, A. (1994). The Glass Essay. *Raritan-A Quarterly Review*, 13(3), 25-63.
- Cahnmann, M. (2003). The craft, practice, and possibility of poetry in educational research. *Educational Researcher*, 32(3), 29-36.
- Chambers, C., Hasebe-Ludt, E., Donald, D., Hurren, W., Leggo, C., & Oberg, A. (2008). 12 Métissage: A research praxis. In *Handbook of the arts in qualitative research: perspectives, methodologies, examples, and issues*. (pp. 142-155). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications doi: <http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/10.4135/9781452226545.n12>
- Clarence, T. (1866). *Essays and essay writing*. New York: American Periodicals Series III.
- Cunningham, J. (2012). Metaphor. In D. Coghlan, & M. Brydon-Miller (Eds.), *The SAGE encyclopedia of action research*. (Vol. 13, pp. 535-537). London: SAGE Publications. doi: <http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/10.4135/9781446294406.n198>
- Creswel, J. (2015). *Educational Research: planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*. Lincoln, NE: Pearson Education.
- Dymoke, S. (2003). *Drafting and assessing poetry: A guide for teachers*. Thousand Oaks, CA; London: Paul Chapman Pub. doi:10.4135/9781446216668
- Elbow, P. (1998). *Writing with power: Techniques for mastering the writing process*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Ellis, C., Adams, T. E., & Bochner, A. P. (2011). Autoethnography: An overview. *Historical Social Research / Historische Sozialforschung*, 36(4), 273-290.

- Fairfield, P. (2009). *Education after Dewey*. New York; London: Continuum International Pub.
- Fisher, D. & Frey, N. (2007). *Checking for understanding: Formative assessment techniques for your classroom*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Fleming, N.D. & Mills, C. (1992). *Not Another Inventory, Rather a Catalyst for Reflection*. *To Improve the Academy*, 11, 137-155.
- Furman, R. (2014). Beyond the literary uses of poetry: A class for university freshmen. *Journal of Poetry Therapy*, 27(4), 205-211. doi:10.1080/08893675.2014.949521
- Furman, R. (2004). Using poetry and narrative as qualitative data: Exploring a father's cancer through poetry. *Families, Systems, & Health*, 22 (2), 162-170.
- Gardner, H. (1993; 2007). *Frames of mind: The theory of multiple intelligences* (10th anniversary ed.). New York, NY: BasicBooks.
- Gitlin, A. D., & Peck, M. (2005). *Educational poetics: Inquiry, freedom, & innovative necessity*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Hanauer, David I (2012). Meaningful literacy: Writing poetry in the language classroom. *Language Teaching*, 45(1), 105-115, DOI: 10.1017/S0261444810000522
- Hasebe-Ludt, E., Leggo, C., & Chambers, C. (2009). *Life writing and literary métissage as an ethos for our times*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Jenkins, N (2012). *Knowledge, poetry as*. *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Johnson, L. V. (1962). Problems in evaluation of writing. *Elementary English*, 39(6), 570.
- Kjørup, F. (2010). Exploring the conceptual implications of poetic line-break: From terminology to phenomenology. *Acta Linguistica Hafniensia*, 42(1), 20-50. doi:10.1080/03740463.2010.482314
- Lea, G. W., Belliveau, G., Wager, A., & Beck, J. L. (2011). A loud silence: Working with research-based theatre and a/r/tography. *International Journal of Education & the Arts*, 12(16)
- Leggo, C. (2012). Living language: What is a poem good for? *Journal of the Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies*, 10(2), 141.
- Leggo, C. (2012). *Sailing in a concrete boat: A teacher's journey* (1st ed.). Papendrecht, NL: Sense Publishers.
- Leggo, C. (2011). Yearning for words, learning with words: Poetic ruminations. *LEARNIng Landscapes*, 5(1), 149-155.
- Leggo, C. (1999). Research as poetic rumination: Twenty-six ways of listening to light. *The Journal of Educational Thought*, 33(2), 113-133.

- Leggo, C. (1997). *Teaching to wonder: Responding to poetry in the secondary classroom*. Vancouver, BC: Pacific Educational Press.
- Lengelle, R. (2008). *Blossoms and balsam: Poems that reveal and heal*. Edmonton, AB: Black Tulip Press.
- Mezirow, J. (1991). *Transformative dimensions of adult learning*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Nica, M. (2011). Teaching poetry to undergraduate students. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences (11)* 215-219. doi:10.1016/j.sbspro.2011.01.064
- Norris, N. (2005). Validity. In S. Mathison (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of evaluation*. (pp. 439-443). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications. doi:
<http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/10.4135/9781412950558.n567>
- Orr, G. (2002). *Poetry as survival*. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press.
- Parisi, P. (1979). Close reading, creative writing, and cognitive development. *College English, 41(1)*, 57-67.
- Paré, A. (2008). Ways of knowing. *McGill Journal of Education, 43(3)*, 221-224. doi:10.7202/029696ar
- Pennebaker, J. (2007). *Emotion, disclosure & health*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Prendergast, M. (2009). Poem is what? Poetic inquiry in qualitative social science research. *International Review of Qualitative Research, 1(4)*, 541-568.
- Rosenblatt, L. M. (1994). *The reader, the text, the poem: The transactional theory of the literary work*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Saldaña, J. (2011). *Ethnotheatre: Research from page to stage*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press
- Scott, C., Brogan, T. V. F., & Monte, S. (2012). *Enjambment*. The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Spiro, J. (2007). Teaching poetry: Writing poetry — teaching as a writer. *English in Education, 41(3)*, 78-93. doi:10.1111/j.1754-8845.2007.tb01167.x
- Sword, H. (2012a). Narrative trust. *Times Higher Education, (2066)*, 36.
- Sword, H. (2012b). *Stylish academic writing*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Shakespeare, William. *Hamlet*. III.iv.187-88, V.ii 34. Retrieved on May 1, 2015 from <http://www.bartleby.com/46/2/>
- Zimmerman, S. (2002) *Writing to heal the soul*. New York, NY: Three Rivers Press.