

Teachers' conceptualisations of the intuitive and the intentional in poetry composition

ANTHONY WILSON

Graduate School of Education, University of Exeter

ABSTRACT: The status of poetry both in the writing curriculum and in wider popular culture is best described as mixed (Wilson, 2009). In spite of a strong post-war tradition of enthusiasm for the teaching of poetry writing, it is currently felt to be marginalised in the writing curriculum (Dymoke, 2007; Ofsted, 2007). This paper reports on the beliefs, attitudes and values revealed by a small-scale questionnaire survey of teachers of poetry writing. It finds that teachers of poetry writing adhere to a personal growth model of English teaching. Furthermore, there is evidence that teachers believe that intuition is central to the composing process of poetry. However, there is also evidence in their responses of the need for explicit teaching of design processes in poetry composition. It would appear that teachers reconcile the apparent conflict in their adherence to a model of teaching poetry writing which requires both inspiration and shaping by using a very subtle blend of different kinds of teaching prompts in the classroom. On this evidence, teachers' knowledge about pedagogy goes beyond what they know as readers to help children become writers of poetry. I argue that teachers demonstrate flexible thinking in their poetry writing pedagogy and this is evidence both of the wariness they feel towards the performative culture they work within and a celebration of practice which remains outside of formal scrutiny.

INTRODUCTION

The literary status of poetry in England can best be described as mixed (Wilson, 2009). On the one hand poetry is unique among the literary arts in receiving the royal imprimatur of both the position of Poet Laureate and the Queen's Gold Medal for poetry. On the other hand, poetry in the UK is outsold by prose fiction by 51:1; only one percent of the 63% of the population who buy books buy poetry according to the same survey (Smith, 2006). However, it is also true that poetry thrives in the less formal spaces of a multi-layered, grass-roots culture, in "open mic" nights at poetry slams, at festivals, and on internet blogs, as well as already well-established phenomena such as competitions, small magazines and writers in schools (Hollingshead, 2009). There are good grounds, therefore, for saying that public participation in poetry in terms of reading and writing is enthusiastic, but not so enthusiastic to prevent sales of poetry remaining small.

The teaching of poetry writing is also mixed. As O'Neill (2006) puts it, describing the situation in New Zealand, poetry in schools can be described as "peripheral". Locke (2010) goes further: "All is not well with poetry [in schools]" (p. 367). In England, a recent Ofsted report into poetry teaching (Ofsted, 2007), looking at both the reading and writing of poetry, found a mixed picture. It described poetry practice as

at least satisfactory in all the schools visited and good or very good in around two thirds. However, it was weaker than the other aspects of English inspected,

suggesting that poetry was underdeveloped in many of the schools surveyed. Provision was slightly better in primary schools than in secondary schools. (Ofsted, 2007, p. 3)

While the report gives examples of much good practice in schools, it also indicates that in some primary classrooms poetry has disappeared from the curriculum altogether. This was reported on anecdotally some years ago by Henry (2001). Both Ofsted and Henry speculate that the lack of curriculum time afforded to poetry is a direct result of pressure on teachers in the final year of primary schooling 6 to prepare their classes for National Tests, upon which schools are judged (for example, through league tables). The "lack of time" for poetry in the curriculum may explain Ofsted's finding that poetry is the least confidently taught aspect in the subject of English. Another interpretation could be that teachers are losing their professional confidence to teach it in a climate where measurement of standards, in which poetry does not feature, is to the fore. It is interesting to note that Benton's research on poetry instruction (1986) also reported on teachers' lack of confidence with poetry in an era when the regulatory climate of standards in education was very different from the current context. When Benton carried out a similar survey after the introduction of the National Curriculum (DfE, 1995) and National Tests (Benton, 1999; 2000) he did not find the same lack of confidence in teaching poetry. Instead he reported teachers' frustration with the dwindling amount of curriculum time given to poetry, which they attributed directly to the advent of National Tests. Benton calls this the "conveyor belt" curriculum (1999, p. 86). Although Ofsted (2007) does not use similar language, its findings indicate that not much has changed.

The tone of the Ofsted report (2007) will be familiar to readers of a previous official report into poetry teaching in English secondary schools (DES, 1987). This presented evidence of pupils' writing and discussion of poems, while also noting much that was negative:

The current state of the teaching of poetry in many secondary schools does not show much faith either in the wisdom of poetry or in the powers of self-expression of the pupils. Inspection of and visits... indicate that that there is in many of them very little poetry included regularly in the work in English. The findings of specialist one day visits and a number of full inspection reports show that poetry was at the centre of work in English for rather less than five per cent of the English lessons observed. ...Most English department documents have little to say about the teaching of poetry. (DES, 1987, p. 4-5)

It would be possible to draw from this that poetry practice in schools has remained stagnant. This is not the case. In England and further afield there is a strong tradition which promoted the view of The Bullock Report (DES, 1975) on the teaching of poetry. This opposed the "reinforcement of the prejudice against poetry to present [poetry] as something precious, arcane, to be revered":

The teacher is often faced with the task of showing that poetry is not some inaccessible form of utterance, but that it speaks directly to children, as to anyone else, and has something to say which is relevant to their living here and now" (DES, 1975, p. 135).

Since the work of Hourd (1949), writers and teachers have gone to great lengths to endorse this view. This is a tradition which has been added to by many: Benton

(1978); Wilner (1979); Stibbs (1981); Fox & Merrick (1981); Jackson (1986); Walter (1986, 1990, 1993); Lockwood (1993); Taylor (1994); Clements (1994); Rudd (1997); Carter (1998); and Stables (2002). It is important to note, however, that parallel to this tradition of enthusiastic promotion of poetry, a note of caution has also been sounded in the literature. This characterises poetry as marginalised (Benton, 1986, 1999; O'Neill, 2006; Dymoke, 2007; Locke, 2009, 2010), problematical (Kelly, 2005) or controlled (Lambirth, 2007). The ambivalent position of poetry is further highlighted in the way it is somehow regarded as different from other writing. In the US, for example, there is a tradition of separating expressive or "reflexive" writing from that which is "extensive", that is, writing which is "addressed to the teacher as audience" (Dahl & Farnan, 1998, p.7). In the light of this mixed view of poetry in schools, this study sought to explore how teachers conceptualise both poetry and poetry writing pedagogy. It is significant to note that there is an absence of research which addresses teachers' conceptualisations of poetry. This study is an important addition to the literature of research on poetry pedagogy, therefore, because it focuses on what teachers claim they think about poetry thus informing their practice inside the classroom.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In spite of some large claims about poetry writing pedagogy (Rosaen, 2003; Hunley, 2007), empirical research on it is relatively scant (Wilson, 2009) compared to other writing genres. Before hypothesising why this might be so it is worth defining what is meant by "empirical" at this point. Research that is empirical makes claims which are warranted by data. Recent examples of empirical research into poetry pedagogy include Peskin (2007) and O'Neill (2006). Much of the literature on poetry pedagogy could be described as rhetorical, however. This literature is qualitatively different, in that the claims it makes are drawn from a synthesis of practical and rhetorical sources. An example of this is the "handbook" literature of poetry writing pedagogy (Wilson, 2001) in England (Hughes, 1967; Rosen, 1989; Brownjohn, 1994; Pirrie, 1994) and in the US (Koch, 1970; 1973). This literature often includes examples of children's responses to poems or actual poems written by them as a result of inputs which are described. This literature has been influential on generations of teachers. Recent examples of this approach include McClenaghan (2003), Fraser (2006), Sumara & Davis (2006), Schwalb (2006), Strever (2006), Yates (2007), Matthewman (2007), Obied (2007), Stevens (2007) and Dymoke & Hughes (2009). This body of literature on poetry pedagogy is more substantial than that which is empirical and tends not to focus on teachers' conceptualisations of poetry. These conceptualisations are important for researchers and practitioners to understand, as they give us insight into the intellectual lives (Vygotsky, 1978) which teachers seek to draw learners into.

There is, therefore, little strong empirical research into poetry writing pedagogy. Some poetry writing research which is empirical can be described as surveying the professional practice of English teachers (Benton, 1986; 1999; 2000), but this does not address teachers' conceptualisations. Furthermore, theoretical models of writing proposed in cognitive psychology (Flower & Hayes, 1980; Hayes 1996) do not address the cognitive demands of poetry writing. These models are generalised models of the writing process: they offer plausible accounts of the sub-processes in writing, particularly the triarchic structure of idea generating, text creation and reviewing. The emphasis on the non-linearity of the writing process and the concept

of the monitor, proposed in Flower & Hayes (1980), which tacitly manages the switches between these sub-processes, could have real relevance for a consideration of the composing process of poetry. But none of the cognitive models address poetry as a genre: indeed, they are silent about writing genres altogether, other than a few small studies on argumentation. Bereiter and Scardamalia's (1987) work on a developmental model, focused much more closely on younger writers and their trajectory from knowledge-telling to knowledge transforming, also has some resonance with the poetry writing. Their argument that as writers become more mature they are better able to shape and craft written language to meet their rhetorical goals has obvious connections with poetry as a crafted aesthetic artefact. Nonetheless, it remains true that serious investigation of the cognitive process of composing poetry is entirely absent.

The rhetorical nature of much of the literature on poetry pedagogy is characterised by two tenets: adherence to the notion that children are "natural" poets (Koch, 1970, p. 25; Styles, 1992, p. 74); and assertions about the benefit of poetry writing for young writers. These assertions have antecedents in Romanticism (Benton, 1986; Andrews, 1991), with repeated arguments for "freedom", "voice", "discovery", "self-acceptance" (Pirrie, 1994, p. 5) and "grace" (Hughes, 1967, p. 12). The problem with these is twofold. First, they are not based on empirical research; and second, that the literary and theoretical positions underpinning them is not clearly stated. (Hourd (1949) and Hourd & Cooper (1959) are exceptions in openly acknowledging their debt to Romanticism.) It could also be argued that the influence of Romanticism within this literature, with its emphasis on self-expression, is potentially so dominant as to leave teachers guessing as to the role of poetry writing within the curriculum. The literature of poetry writing pedagogy, while compelling, is, therefore, not wholly successful in providing a rigorous rationale explaining its purpose to teachers dissatisfied with the instrumentalism of the current context in English schools. This may leave teachers' conceptualisations of poetry writing less theorised than other aspects of the writing curriculum.

There is a body of literature which explicitly addresses the writing and drafting of poetry from the perspective of experienced poets (Curtis, 1996; Crawford, Hart, Kinloch & Price, 1995; Wilmer, 1994; Wilson & Somerville-Arjat, 1990; Hughes, 1994; Brown & Paterson, 2003; Brown, 2004). This emphasises the importance of risk-taking (with form and with language) as a way of characterising and observing progress (Gunn, 1994; Ash, 1995; O'Hara, 2000). As Dunn (2001) says: "Every good poem is evidence of a step taken into the unknown or vaguely known" (p. 142). Poets from diverse traditions use two important descriptions to describe their writing process: as "discovery" (Adcock, 1995; Lochhead, 1990; Longley, 1996; Koch, 1996; Donaghy, 2000; Didsbury, 2003) and as "trust" in a process which is never fully understood (Sansom, 1994; Stafford, 1994; Olds, 1995; Paterson, 1996; Gunn, 2000; Levine, 2002). Longely says of the former: "Writing a poem is an experiment, an exploration. You do not know beforehand what you are going to say. If you do, you are merely versifying opinion" (1996, p. 119). Gunn says of the latter; "The process of writing a poem... is a reaching out into the unexplained areas of the mind, in which the air is too thickly primitive or too fine for us to live continually" (2000, p. 144). While these accounts are useful in what they tell us about the working processes of creative practitioners, they do not take into account the needs of younger learners, nor the constraints of a curriculum which does not appear to reward endeavours in this

area. As Emig (1994) says, there are a number of problems with writers' accounts of their composing, namely that they are usually retrospective, can be idiosyncratic, and are "almost exclusively" about the "imaginative modes" of writing (). Emig concludes that they are also predominantly about writers' difficulties rather than "an examination of the act itself" (Emig, 1994, p. 4). The combined effect of the above leaves discussions of poetry writing pedagogy, both in terms of practitioner-based literature and theoretical literature, at a disadvantage. This is not a situation likely to benefit teachers' conceptualisations of poetry.

Curricular recommendations for poetry writing

The exalted yet marginalised status of poetry writing is mirrored in the curricular recommendations of a wider international context. None of the following recommendations sideline poetry completely, but few are the examples of giving it a central status. For example, recommendations from Queensland, Australia (Queensland Government, Department of Education, 2007) include a rationale which foregrounds learners "operating in a national and global society and economy", and which promotes a "body of knowledge, skills, understanding and capacities which are essential for that context" (Queensland Government, Department of Education, 2007, p. ii). In England, the National Literacy Strategy (NLS) (DfEE, 1998) and Primary National Strategy (PNS) (DfES, 2006) were the first documents of their kind to systematically lay out a programme for poetry teaching in primary schools. In this sense, they promoted the teaching of poetry, requiring teachers to raise their own awareness of poetry especially in terms of subject knowledge. Poetry writing was largely but not exclusively promoted through an engagement with set forms (Queensland Government, Department of Education, 2007: 12) or through analysis of poetic techniques (Queensland Government, Department of Education, 2007:14). Recommendations of New York State's (University of the State of New York, 2005) English Language Arts (ELA) curriculum, written in response to US federal *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) (2002) mandates, mention poetry only in the context of analysis of poetic techniques, distinguishing between poetic forms, and evaluating the effect of imagery, poetic forms and figurative language (University of the State of New York, 2005, p. 73, 82, 105).

In the Canadian province of Ontario (Ministry of Education, Ontario, 2006) the stated rationale is that language development is not only about skills but has a central connection to learners' social and intellectual growth: "[Learners] come to appreciate language both as an important medium for communicating ideas and information and as a source of enjoyment" (Ministry of Education, Ontario, 2006, p. 4). It is possible to argue that the presence of poetry writing which proceeds from this is more holistic than those cited above, with explicit links to "oral, print and media texts" (Ministry of Education, Ontario, 2006, p. 76), as well as performance, presentation and anthologising of learners' work (Ministry of Education, Ontario, 2006, p. 84). As in the PNS (DfES, 2006), the favoured model of poetry writing pedagogy is one where learners are encouraged to write "variation[s] of a familiar poem" or "variation[s] of a patterned poem" (Ministry of Education, Ontario, 2006, pp. 44, 57).

More progressive rationales for language and literacy teaching can be found in the recommendations of the Canadian provinces British Columbia (Ministry of Education, Province of British Columbia, 2006, p. 134-139) and Quebec (Quebec Education Program, 2001). The former takes its definitions of literacy from Snow

(2005) and from a British Columbian Ministry of Education and Ministry Responsible for Multiculturalism and Human Rights document (1991, p. 29). This document describes a social-constructivist view of education, placing the emphasis on progress as a meaning-making process influenced and driven by communities of learners. Going even further, the model of language and literacy development offered by Quebec (Quebec Education Program, 2001) takes its rationale from Freire's notion (1987) of knowing how to read the world. It is not surprising, therefore, to see that recommendations for poetry writing pedagogy in these provinces are broad based. In the case of British Columbia (Ministry of Education, Province of British Columbia, 2006,) they include suggestions for writing, stimuli and guidance for learners' self-assessment and teacher assessment. The curricular recommendations for poetry from Canada contrast with those from England and New York, in that they position poetry writing as a meaning-making activity that is a unique form, rather than placing greatest emphasis on the formal aspects of poetry.

THE STUDY

The problems with poetry described above, both in terms of the curriculum and under-theorised representations in the literature, have an influence upon teachers. In a context in which results for other kinds of writing are so highly valued, an investigation into the conceptualisations of teachers about this prized and specialised area of the writing curriculum would seem necessary. Understanding teachers' thinking might inform policy and practice in the teaching of poetry writing.

Underpinning this research, therefore, is the socio-cultural theory of Vygotsky (1978), and developed by Bruner (1986), where learners "grow into the intellectual life of those around them" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 88). The site of intellectual interest in this study is teachers' conceptions of poetry and poetry-writing, and claims about the pedagogy which flows from them. Underpinning this survey is the desire to understand how far teachers who are sufficiently enthusiastic about poetry writing pedagogy to attend in-service training on it offer learners in their classes a "sense of belonging to a culture" (Bruner, 1986, p. 127). How far this can be said to be influenced by teachers' intellectual lives is central to the enquiry. The following questions lay behind the research enquiry:

- What can be learned from the thoughts of the people who claim to be enthusiasts for poetry writing pedagogy?
- What are the models of learning which are modelled both consciously and unconsciously by these teachers?

Methodology

The study was a small-scale questionnaire survey of thirty-three primary and secondary teachers. (See Appendix) Participants taking part in the research were invited to do so at two in-service training events, the subject of which was poetry writing pedagogy. In one setting, the questionnaires were disseminated to participants at the training event itself, and in the other, participants were sent the questionnaires as a follow-up activity to the day's events. All questionnaires were written anonymously and were analysed with the consent of each participant. The length of service of participants ranged from within the first year of teaching to thirty-five

years. The gender-split was approximately 50/50, as was the split of primary to secondary teachers.

The questionnaire was divided into two sections. The first asked respondents to answer questions about their conceptualisations of poetry, poetry writing and its place in the writing curriculum; while the second invited detailed responses on their instructional practices, including their views on poetry writing and assessment.

Strauss & Corbin (1990) promote a model of inductive coding which encourages researchers to analyse their data by choosing labels which are “embedded in a particular logic” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 57). As these codes grow they become progressively fine-tuned. This ensures the integrity of the data remains intact while allowing its complexity, for example as themes overlap, to also emerge.

The teachers' responses were coded in an iterative conversation with a mentor-researcher (Strauss & Corbin, 1990), where themes and their respective sub-themes were checked for consistency at each step of the process. At the end of this process, the micro-level coding was categorised into four over-arching themes: language; pedagogy; personal growth; thinking and feeling. The first two of these themes contained a great deal of data and were shaped in large part by the questions asked. For example, one could have predicted, in a survey where half of the questions pertained to pedagogy, that this would feature as a dominant theme in the data. However, the final two themes, personal growth, and thinking and feeling, were responses which were not directly solicited and it is this data which provides the principal empirical foundation for this paper. The four themes were defined as below:

- **Language**
This theme represents responses which attempted to capture the multi-faceted nature of poetry. At one level this included material on poetic techniques and features; on another level this incorporated responses concerning the “power of language”, in which teachers reflected upon craft and control, the impact on the reader; condensation of poetic form. Responses in the language category also included reflections on how the process of poetry writing differed from that of writing prose.
- **Pedagogy**
Responses in this category were concerned with both the rewards and difficulties of poetry writing pedagogy; typical, effective and less effective teaching strategies; and teachers' philosophy, including attitudes to assessing poetry writing according to National Curriculum (DfEE, 1999) levels.
- **Personal growth**
This theme represents the many responses of participants which directly quoted from, or could be linked to, quotations by Romantic poets defining poetry (for example, Coleridge's “best words in the best order”; or Wordsworth's “emotion recollected in tranquillity”). Initially, these data were coded under the heading of “Self”, as many of the responses to the question about “getting better” at poetry writing included this very word, making a direct link between personal discovery in the act of writing and progression within the subject. As the iterative process of refining the definitions continued, this working definition was changed to “Personal growth”. This was because of the strong influence of the post-war literature on poetry

writing pedagogy (Hourd, 1949; Hourd & Cooper, 1959; Marshall, 1963; Clegg, 1964; Holbrook, 1961), and classified as “personal growth” by Cox (DES, 1988).

- **Thinking and feeling**

Responses collected under the theme of thinking and feeling related to the composite thinking skills teachers found necessary for poetry writing. Some of these related to explicit mental processes (for example, about language, design choices in writing, or awareness of the reader) during composition. Others related to less conscious processes such as the role of the unconscious and that of the imagination. It was noted that responses coded within this data-set were the most complex to categorise, relating not only to specific skills of learners but also the attitudes and dispositions of their teachers.

FINDINGS

Once this process had been completed, the number of responses in each of the four main themes was tabulated and counted as follows, showing the subsets of themes:

Summary of themes and sub-themes			
Language			
	Knowledge of poetry	10	
	Poetic features	11	
	• Of/in models	10	
	Difficulties	18	
	Meaning	3	
	Power of Language		
	• Craft and control	13	
	• Impact on reader	4	
	• Condensation of form	6	
	• Personal discovery	6	
	The writing process	11	
	• Difference from prose	14	
	Non-Romantic definitions	16	122
Pedagogy			
	Importance of poetry in writing curriculum	36	
	Process of writing	22	
	Getting better at poetry writing	12	
	Levelling (assessing)	43	
	Typical strategies	106	
	Effective strategies	28	
	Less effective strategies	24	
	Models	47	
	Rewards	38	
	Difficulties	31	
	Teacher Stories/Philosophy	12	399
Personal growth			
	Risk taking	16	
	Rules & constraints: pedagogical	19	
	Rules & constraints: within writing	14	
	Making Meaning		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on reader • Impact on writer • Impact on teacher 	18 38 4	
	Experience	20	
	Romantic definitions	15	
	Enjoyment	6	150
Thinking and feeling			
	Thinking/decisions in writing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • About language • Cognition • Reader awareness 	4 24 7	
	Unconscious in writing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • imagination 	8 6	
	Thinking in reading	13	
	Re-thinking	20	
	Social aspects of learning	2	
	Emotional aspects of learning	20	104

Table 1. Summary of codes

The numbers in each column are instructive insofar as they relate to *differences* between responses. On one level, therefore, it was useful to note that the definitions of poetry used by participants, which were not attributed to quotations by Romantic poets, actually outnumbered those that were, when it had appeared on first reading that it was the other way round. That the sample of teachers can be said to hold a strong personal growth model of poetry writing pedagogy, however, is borne out by the number of responses within each of the four main categories underpinned by that model. These include:

- the large number of responses foregrounding the needs of the writer ahead of the reader;
- the importance of risk-taking and experiment;
- the importance of the unconscious and the imagination;
- the strong resistance to assessing poetry writing.

Lincoln & Guba (1985) and Miles & Huberman (1994) define the “saturating” of coding categories as “when all of the incidents can be readily classified... and sufficient numbers of regularities emerge” (1994, p. 62). Three ideas were repeatedly found to be present in all four of the main coding themes:

1. Teachers view the intuitive as playing a particular role in the writing of poetry.
2. Teachers nevertheless place considerable emphasis upon deliberate processes of making design or rhetorical choices in the composition of poetry.
3. Teachers resolve this apparent conflict by also stressing the importance of offering learners a variety of prompts to aid their writing. This could be seen as a tacit admission that the personal growth model of poetry writing is not always successful for them *as teachers*.

The ideas above were found in greatest density in the “Language” and “Thinking and feeling” themes. These themes were then selectively coded (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 116), so that the different kinds of strategies teachers claimed they used could be listed and categorised. I have called these strategies “prompts”. By this I mean claims teachers make about reminders they use with learners, prompting them to remember certain techniques or ways of thinking when they write poetry. Responses coded under these headings were subdivided into five subheadings, using teachers’ remarks as titles for categories. Readers familiar with what Craft calls “possibility thinking” (Cremin, Burnard & Craft, 2006) will note that the first of the categories in the table below also draws on theoretical literature of creativity and pedagogy. Two of the categories appeared under the heading of “Language”, while three appeared under the heading of “Thinking and feeling”:

Type of responses	Responses coded in “Language” category	Responses coded in “Thinking and feeling” category	Total responses
<i>Possibility thinking</i> (“[seeing] the possibility of a new way of doing things”)	0	14	14
<i>Making connections</i> (“one kind of thinking throwing light on another”)	6	12	18
<i>Developing confidence</i> (“getting to the place where words come more easily”)	4	12	16
<i>Language as artistry</i> (“a form of expression which condenses ideas by the use of language which is sparse and strong”)	33	2	35
<i>Developing awareness of poetry</i> (“understanding how poetry works and how different it is to other writing”)	9	9	18

Table 2. Types of prompts used by teachers

It was possible to distinguish two distinct types of teaching prompts, which appear in all five of the above subcategories: the prompting of learners to use specific techniques and prompting of habits of mind/how to think when writing. These are both explicit in their intentions. An example of the first kind of prompt can be seen in the response which promotes “[using] different processes – for example, marshalling facts, sometimes analysing”. An example of the second kind of prompt can be seen in the response: “I try to get them to see what is going on in a piece of writing or what is

most interesting may not be what is most explicitly present". These kinds of teaching prompts are discussed in more detail below.

DISCUSSION

The role of intuitive thinking in poetry writing

The extent of the influence of Romanticism on the teachers in the sample can be seen in the way that they emphasised the role of the unconscious in the process of writing poetry: "[it is] difficult to teach as much [of it] is instinctive"; "[it is also] instinctive, spontaneous...a totally unselfconscious state" (same respondent). Recalling Keats' famous letter stating that poetry "should come naturally or not at all" (Mee, 2002, p. 66), another respondent stated that getting better at poetry writing was "getting to the place where words came more easily/naturally". There is a hint in some of the respondents' answers of seeing poetry writing as an oppositional form to other taught modes of writing. "A danger," writes one, "is of introducing a more conscious craft of poetic form". There is a potential dilemma here, between seeing poetry as an agent for personal development, and yet one which cannot be fully explained or taught through rational means.

This is underlined further in the responses which promote the development of the imagination of young writers as the best way of reaching this "spontaneous" state or place. Evidence for this can be seen in responses which link the imagination and creative/imaginative ideas to the concepts of poetry, improving in poetry writing and the importance of poetry writing. One respondent stated this strongly, making the case for poetry "unlocking" the imagination. Another went further: "Y6 and 7 have very little confidence in listening to their imagination and in writing it down because they are taught towards text types". This comment can be seen to work on perhaps three different levels. Firstly, it can be read as a lament for detectable changes in children's enthusiasm for playfulness with language as they grow older. Secondly, it is perhaps an implied criticism of curricular recommendations and a National Testing system which sideline poetry writing. Thirdly and most interestingly, it can be seen as a tacit admission that some kinds of writing ("text types") are easier to teach than others. Perhaps it is the case for some teachers that the kind of instruction involved in "listening to [the] imagination" is simply outside of their remit or not practicable.

The complex nature of poetry writing pedagogy can also be seen in responses which emphasised both the unconscious, unplanned aspects of writing as well as the more conscious. In a section of statements coded "The writing process", there were a number of comments which alluded to the potential of poetry writing as a site of playfulness, risk and experiment yet with distinct purposes and goals. These can be summed up in one respondent's metaphor of poetry as "a valuable playground for trying out techniques".

Design processes in poetry writing

However, it appears that for every mention of experimentation, fluidity and playfulness, there is also an awareness of effects, word choice, structure and meaning. In other words, these teachers both validate the Romantic project and give credence to poetry's need to earn its keep within the world of the classroom as it were. The

hybridity of poetry has been described in the criticism of Heaney (1988, p. 106) as the need for “dream truth as well as daylight truth”; and by Murray, in a poem about poetry, as “concert[ing]/ our daylight and dreaming mind” (1992, p. 272). This would seem to indicate that experienced practitioners of poetry both value and recognise the importance of two different kinds of thinking in generating poetic texts. This kind of thinking has been referred to as “divergent” or “janusian” (Rothenburg, 1976; Sharples, 1999), and will be returned to in the concluding discussion.

The need for this divergent thinking could be seen as a paradox, where teachers both place trust in the imagination of learners, while also putting considerable emphasis on the conscious processes of writing as creative design (Sharples, 1999). This is borne out by several responses which indicate awareness of the deliberate and intentional aspects of poetic composition. I have chosen two series of these to comment upon. The theme of conscious control over language (Table 3) is consistently expressed, with emphasis placed upon choosing/word choice, crafting and mastering:

Language	
Sub-theme	Craft and control over language
Power of Language	“understanding of word choices and word orders and making decisions about them”; “choosing words that work better and improve the overall feel”; “crafting of words around space and space around words where every single word means something, has resonance”; “a craft to be mastered”; “mastering the lyrical and dramatic moment”.

Table 3. Conscious control over language

Thinking and Feeling	
Sub-theme	Reader awareness
	“shaping an original impulse”; “beginning to listen to what you’ve written and having some of the tools with which to edit”; “greater ability to take and shape ideas”; “making their own rules and structures”; “using different processing – for example, marshalling facts, sometimes analysing”; “connecting emotion with judgement in a more fluent way”; “thoughtful word choice”; “I try to [...] teach the importance of titles in manipulating response”.

Table 4. Connecting emotion with judgement

The theme of conscious control over language is deepened in responses coded in the “Thinking and feeling” category (Table 4). Not only is control over language highly

prized by these respondents; the question of its effects upon the reader also comes into play. This is hinted at in the responses above which mention “resonance” and the “overall feel” of the poem. In language which links and overlaps with that already discussed, there is an explicit connection being made to “directing” the unconscious processes involved.

This list of processes can be categorised under Sharples' (1999) concept of “rhetorical choices” in the writing process in his reading of Bereiter & Scardamalia (1987). This is a useful model to describe concepts like choice, ordering and shaping of ideas in writing, but does not fully account for many of the processes involved in poetry writing. It would appear that these teachers believe there to be generic or transferable writing skills which lend themselves to direct modelling in the above list: the “tools with which to edit”, the “importance of titles in manipulating response”, “marshalling facts, sometimes analysing”. However, in the same list of responses above, there are also responses which appear to imply other factors which seem more elusive and unpredictable to teach (in terms both of poetry and creative writing in general): the “making of rules and structures”, “connecting emotion with judgement”, and “listening to one's own writing”. What is interesting to note, therefore, is that while respondents to the questionnaire balanced their emphasis on the importance of the unconscious within poetry writing with that on conscious, rhetorical/design choices, they still appeared to assume that there are aspects of poetry writing which are difficult to teach and assess. One possible interpretation of these comments is that in spite of the emphasis teachers place on observable skills in the classroom, there remains a tacit adherence to the Romantic/personal growth model of poetry writing.

The importance of teaching prompts in going beyond personal growth

Superficially, teachers' beliefs in the need for both the intuitive and deliberate choices in poetry writing would seem contradictory or irreconcilable. But are they? How these beliefs are reconciled by teachers through the teaching prompts they offer pupils is now considered. The following table presents responses, like those above, from the “Language” and “Thinking and feeling” themes, where data for the three main findings were greatest in density.

Skills listed by teachers as requiring direct teaching input	Strategies used by teachers to teach these skills
“[using] figurative devices”; “understanding the impact of word choices and word orders and making decisions about them”; “[using a] meaningful progression of images”; “not stooping to cliché”; “mastering the lyrical and dramatic moment”; “[focussing] on the precision of chosen words”; “manipulating language”; “using new words”; “[using] adventurous words”.	“[the] teaching [of] many stiff forms is disarming”; “using surprising metaphors, different layouts, deletions and additions”; “[using] the tight sonnet structure as a model”; “writing in the style of a good model”; “condensing novels down to 10-line poems”; “teaching the importance of titles in manipulating response and changing the tenor of what follows”.

Table 5. Teaching prompts to go beyond “personal growth”

These responses indicate that, although there is a strong adherence among teachers to the inspiration model of teaching poetry writing, they also recognise the necessity of using strategies in the classroom which explicitly require both the teacher and pupils to perform certain tasks in order to gain greater expertise, experience and so on. One could argue that these responses promote a view of the teacher as both the expert learner choosing “good” models for pupils to work from and the initiator of discussions about how best to adapt them.

The social aspect of learning implicit in these remarks can also be seen in the descriptions teachers gave on how they modelled and prompted learners' thinking about poetry writing to their pupils. The following responses are characteristic of a number of remarks in which teachers wrote down questions and strategies they used to provide a structure for helping learners re-evaluate their own writing:

- It's a chance to see “what happens if...”
- [they] make their own rules and structures – “I didn't want to do that so I decided to ...”
- ...growing understanding of what you are doing in a poem. Why are you doing it? What are you trying to convey?
- I try to get them to see what is going on in a piece of writing or what is most interesting may not be what is most explicitly present;
- We examine how one thought follows another and so we try to write a class model of ordering thoughts.

All of the above could be said to be representative of a view of pedagogy which is interactive: there is a sense of dialogue and even debate behind each of these statements. What is also distinctive about these habits of mind is the way that they do not relate specifically to the teaching of one poetic technique or skill in particular. They could perhaps be categorised as ideal ways of being:

- [I let] them see with the eyes of a child again;
- [we are] not aiming for perfection;
- [we are] using serendipity;
- [I encourage them to] listen to their imagination.

It is possible to argue, therefore, that in terms of social-constructivist theory (Vygotsky, 1978; Bruner, 1986), teachers view their practice as drawing learners in to a culture of what might be called immersion, both of knowledge (for example, about poetry) and skills (for example, how to write in certain poetic forms). The “intellectual life” which makes this possible is shown to be flexible, inhabiting both a Romantic view of poetry writing and a socio-cultural view of pedagogy.

CONCLUSION

The above findings show us that teachers' conceptualisations of poetry writing are balanced and flexible. These conceptualisations are strongly influenced by the personal growth/Romantic tradition, but they also indicate awareness of the needs of pupils who may not have the same awareness of poetry's “power and scope” (Heaney, 1980, p. 221). Research on teacher attitudes has shown what a powerful influence the personal growth tradition has on teachers (Goodwyn, 1992; Marshall, 2000; Bousted

2002), so perhaps it is not surprising to find in these results a strong allegiance to it. But how far apart these apparently different models of thinking about poetry and about pedagogy are is open to question. It is, perhaps, more usual for us to recall Keats' line, quoted above, that poetry should always come naturally to the poet (Mee, 2002) than it is to think of Coleridge's description of the composing process as the "ordeal of deliberation and deliberate choice" (Engell & Bate, 1983, p. 142). That teachers seem to recognise in their responses the need for a set of influences which draws its language from both numinous values as well as pedagogical knowledge indicates that poetry writing pedagogy can be seen as a composite of complementary skills, attitudes and subject knowledge.

We can hypothesise why the teaching of poetry writing should be a site in which the personal growth model would seem to naturally appeal to teachers. We might describe part of this appeal as the opportunity to use flexible or Janusian thinking, that is, the ability to look two ways at once. These are demonstrated more easily in a context of "freedom", where the remit of National Tests does not fall and where the stakes are thus correspondingly low. In this low-risk environment, teachers perhaps feel more prepared to model and prompt thinking about processes which are both explicit (allied to specific techniques and skills) and implicit (allied to habits of mind). It is possible, therefore, that the teaching of poetry writing represents a kind of fertile space in which a range of pedagogical knowledge, skills, beliefs and values are "put to the test" in a more holistic way than in other aspects of English teaching.

However, it is also possible, as Goodwyn suggests (2001), that teachers absorb the goals of different traditions of English teaching "without real consciousness". Do teachers consciously plan to model both explicit techniques and more implicit habits of mind, or is this balanced modelling a fortunate by-product of the attractiveness of this part of the curriculum? What is not revealed by the responses to this questionnaire is how far teachers say they are influenced by theoretical perspectives of creativity, or whether they adhere to an inspirational model of the same in a reaction against a "performative" culture of education (Troman 2008, p. 621). The attractiveness of the personal growth model may be attributed to its perceived "incontestability", therefore. Personal growth as a model is, perhaps, more complex than these teachers had time or space to articulate. As Bousted says (2000), teachers promoting a personal growth model of English will inevitably make value judgements about what is "acceptable" for pupils to speak and write about in their work. Furthermore, the term "personal growth" does not fully reflect the richness and complexity of individual teachers' beliefs throughout history (Bousted, 2002). One important implication of this study, therefore, would be to carry out further research into the teaching prompts teachers say they plan for explicitly. Significantly, this study demonstrates that, despite the prevalence in the literature of Romantic, personal growth conceptualisations of poetry writing, these teachers' conceptualisations of poetry writing appear to hold in tension the intuitive and the intentional, the Romantic and the rhetorical. I argue that the flexible statements of these English teachers demonstrate both wariness of the culture they find themselves operating within, as well as a celebration of practice which no one can either punish or evaluate: "Writing poetry allows a freedom from the usual directives operating in English classes. There is just the poetry, the children and me".

REFERENCES

- Adcock, F. (1995). Fleur Adcock [Interview by R. Marsack]. In R. Crawford, H. Hart, D. Kinloch, & R. Price (Eds.), *Talking verse: Interviews with poets* (pp. 11-20). St Andrews and Williamsburg: University of St Andrews and College of William and Mary.
- Andrews, R. (1991). *The problem with poetry*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Ash, J. (1995). John Ash [Interview by D. Kennedy]. In R. Crawford, H. Hart, D. Kinloch, & R. Price (Eds.), *Talking verse: Interviews with poets* (pp. 28-32). St Andrews and Williamsburg: University of St Andrews and College of William and Mary.
- Benton, M. (1978). Poetry for children: a neglected art/. *Children's Literature in Education*, 9(3), 111-26.
- Benton, P. (1986). *Pupil, teacher, poem*. Sevenoaks, England: Hodder and Stoughton Educational.
- Benton, P. (1999). Unweaving the rainbow: Poetry teaching in the secondary school I. *Oxford Review of Education*, 25(4), 521-531.
- Benton, P. (2000). The conveyor belt curriculum? Poetry teaching in the secondary school II. *Oxford Review of Education*, 26(1), 81-93.
- Bereiter, C., & Scardamalia, M. (1987). *The psychology of written composition*. Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Bousted, M. (2000). Rhetoric and practice in English teaching. *English in Education*, 34(1), 7-16.
- Bousted, M. (2002). Personal growth through English – Policy and practice. *Changing English*, 9(2), 185-196.
- BC Ministry of Education and Ministry Responsible for Multiculturalism and Human Rights. (1991). *Thinking in the classroom resources for teachers. Volume 1: The context for thoughtful learning*. Victoria: British Columbia.
- Brown, A. (Ed.). (2004). *Binary myths 1 & 2: Conversations with poets and poet-editors*. Exeter, England: Stride.
- Brown, C., & Paterson, D. (Eds.). (2003). *Don't ask me what I mean: Poets in their own words*. London, England: Picador.
- Brownjohn, S. (1994). *To rhyme or not to rhyme?* London, England: Hodder and Stoughton.
- Bruner, J. S. (1986). *Actual minds, possible worlds*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Carter, D. (1998). *Teaching poetry in the primary school: Perspectives for a new generation*. London, England: David Fulton Publishers.
- Clegg, A. (1964). *The excitement of writing*. London, England: Chatto and Windus.
- Clements, N. (1994). Poetry on the pulse. *Reading*, 28(2), 18-22.
- Crawford, R., Hart, H., Kinloch, D., & Price, R. (Eds.). (1995). *Talking verse: Interviews with poets*. St Andrews and Williamsburg: University of St Andrews and College of William and Mary.
- Cremin, T., Burnard, P., and Craft, A. (2006). Pedagogy and possibility thinking in the early years. *Thinking Skills and Creativity*, 1(2), 108-119.
- Curtis, T. (Ed.). (1996). *How poets work*. Bridgend, Wales: Seren.
- Dahl, K. L., & Farnan, N. (1998). *Children's writing: Perspectives from research*. Newark and Chicago: International Reading Association and National Reading Conference.

- Department of Education and Science. (1989). *English for ages 5 to 16: Proposals of the Secretary of State for Education and Science and the Secretary of State for Wales* (The Cox Report). York: National Curriculum Office.
- Department for Education. (1995). *English in the national curriculum*. London, England: HMSO.
- Department for Education and Employment. (1998). *The National Literacy Strategy: Framework for teaching*. Sudbury: DfEE Publications.
- Department for Education and Employment and Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. (1999). *English: The national curriculum for England (Key stages 1-4)*. London: The Stationery Office.
- Department for Education and Skills. (2006). *Primary national strategy: Primary framework for literacy and mathematics*. Retrieved April 29, 2010 from <http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/primaryframeworks/literacy/planning/>.
- Department of Education and Science. (1975). *A language for life: The report of the Bullock Committee (The Bullock Report)*. London, England: HMSO.
- Department of Education and Science. (1987). *Teaching poetry in the secondary school: An HMI view*. London, England: HMSO.
- Didsbury, P. (2003). That old time religion. In C. Brown & D. Paterson (Eds.), *Don't Ask Me What I Mean* (pp. 51-2). London: Picador.
- Donaghy, M. (2000). My report card. In W. N. Herbert, & M. Hollis (Eds.), *Strong words: Modern poets on modern poetry* (pp. 243-244). Tarsset: Bloodaxe Books.
- Dunn, S. (2001). *Walking light: Memoirs and essays on poetry (New Expanded Edition)*. Rochester, N.Y.: BOA Editions.
- Dymoke, S. (2007). Editorial. *English in Education*, 41(3), 1-4.
- Dymoke, S., & Hughes, J. (2009). Using a poetry wiki: How can the medium support pre-service teachers of English in their professional learning about writing poetry and teaching poetry writing in a digital age? *English Teaching: Practice and Critique*, 8(3), 91-106.
- Emig, J. (1994). The composing process: Review of the literature. In S. Perl (Ed.), *Landmark essays on writing process* (1-22). CA: Hermagoras Press.
- Engell, J., & Bate, W. J. (Eds.). (1983). *The collected works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge: Biographia literaria, Volume 1*. London, England: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Fox, G., & Merrick, B. (1981). Thirty-six things to do with a poem. *Children's Literature in Education*, 12(1), 50-55.
- Fraser, D. (2006). The creative potential of metaphorical writing in the literacy classroom. *English Teaching: Practice and Critique*, 5(2), 93-108.
- Freire, P. (1987). *A pedagogy for liberation: Dialogues for transforming education*. Westport, CT: Bergin and Garvey.
- Flower, L. S., & Hayes, J. R. (1980). Identifying the organization of writing processes. In L. W. Gregg & E. R. Steinberg (Eds.), *Cognitive processes in writing* (pp. 3-30). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum Associates.
- Goodwyn, A. (1992). English teachers and the Cox models. *English in Education*, 26(3), 4-11.
- Goodwyn, A. (2001). Second tier professionals: English teachers in England. *L1: Educational Studies in Language and Literature*, 1, 149-161.
- Gunn, T. (1994). Thom Gunn [Interview with C. Wilmer]. In C. Wilmer (Ed.), *Poets talking: Poet of the Month interviews from BBC Radio 3* (pp. 1-7). Manchester, England: Carcanet.

- Gunn, T. (2000). Writing a poem. In W. N. Herbert, & M. Hollis (Eds.) *Strong words: Modern poets on modern poetry* (pp. 143-144). Tarsset: Bloodaxe Books.
- Hayes, J. R. (1996). A new model of cognition and affect in writing. In C. M. Levy & S. Ransdell (Eds.), *The science of writing* (pp. 1-30). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Heaney, S. (1980). *Preoccupations: Selected prose 1968-1978*. London, England: Faber and Faber.
- Heaney, S. (1988). *The government of the tongue: The 1986 T.S. Eliot memorial lectures and other critical writings*. London, England: Faber and Faber.
- Henry, J. (2001, November 2). Warning to cool the test frenzy. *Times Educational Supplement*, p. 8. Retrieved from <http://www.tes.co.uk/article.aspx?storycode=354943>.
- Holbrook, D. (1961). *English for maturity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hollingshead, I. (2009, October 9). Standing up for pure poetry. *The Telegraph*. Retrieved from <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/6274634/Standing-up-for-pure-poetry.html>.
- Hourd, M. (1949). *The education of the poetic spirit*. London: Heinemann.
- Hourd, M., & Cooper, G. (1959). *Coming into their own*. London: Heinemann.
- Hughes, T. (1967). *Poetry in the making*. London: Faber and Faber.
- Hughes, T. (1994). *Winter pollen: Occasional prose* (Ed. W. Scammell). London: Faber and Faber.
- Hunley, T. (2007). Rhetorical theory as a basis for poetry writing pedagogy. *Educational Insights*, 11(1), Retrieved from <http://ccfi.educ.ubc.ca/publication/insights/v11n01/articles/hunley.html>.
- Jackson, D. (1986). Poetry and the speaking voice. *English in Education*, 20(2), 30-42.
- Kelly, A. (2005). "Poetry? Of course we do it. It's in the National Curriculum": Primary children's perceptions of poetry. *Literacy*, 39(3), 129-133.
- Koch, K. (1970). *Wishes, lies, and dreams: Teaching children to write poetry*. New York: Chelsea House.
- Koch, K. (1973). *Rose, where did you get that red? Teaching great poetry to children*. New York: Random House.
- Koch, K. (1996). *The art of poetry: Poems, parodies, interviews, essays and other work*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Lambirth, A. (2007). Poetry under control: Social reproduction strategies and children's literature. *English in Education*, 41(3), 94-107.
- Levine, P. (2002). *So ask: Essays, conversations and interviews*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic enquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Lochhead, L. (1990). Liz Lochhead [Interview with R. E. Wilson]. In R.E. Wilson & G. Somerville-Arjat (Eds.), *Sleeping with monsters: Conversations with Scottish and Irish women poets* (pp. 8-17). Dublin, Ireland: Wolfhound Press.
- Locke, T. (2009). The disappearance of enjoyment: How literature went wandering in the literacy woods and got lost. In J. Manuel, P. Brock, D. Carter & W. Sawyer (Eds.), *Imagination, innovation, creativity: Re-visioning English in education* (pp. 123-138). Putney, NSW: Phoenix Education.
- Locke, T. (2010). Reading, writing and speaking poetry. In D. Wyse, R. Andrews & J. Hoffman (Eds.), *The Routledge international handbook of English, language and literacy teaching* (pp. 367-378). London & New York: Routledge.
- Lockwood, M. (1993). Getting into the rhythm: Children reading poetry. *Reading*, 27(3), 50-53.

- Longley, M. (1996). A tongue at play. In T. Curtis (Ed.), *How poets work* (pp. 111-121). Bridgend, England: Seren.
- Marshall, B. (2000). *English teachers – The unofficial guide: Researching the philosophies of English teachers*. London: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Marshall, S. (1963.) *An experiment in education*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Matthewman, S. (2007). But what about the fish? Teaching Ted Hughes' "Pike" with environmental bite. *English in Education*, 41(3), 67-77.
- McClenaghan, D. (2003). Writing poetry – and beyond. *English Teaching: Practice and Critique*, 2(2), 96-102.
- Mee, J. (Ed.). (2002). *John Keats: Selected letters*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, M. A. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Ministry of Education, Province of British Columbia. (2006). *English language arts grade 3: Integrated resource package 2006*. Vancouver, Canada: Ministry of Education.
- Ministry of Education. (2006). *The Ontario curriculum: Grades 1-8: Language* (Revised). Toronto, Canada: Ministry of Education.
- Murray, L. (1992). *Collected poems*. London, England: Minerva.
- Obied, V. (2007). "Why did I do nothing?" Poetry and the experiences of bilingual pupils in a mainstream inner-city secondary school. *English in Education*, 41(3), 37-52.
- O'Hara, F. (2000). Personism: A manifesto. In W. N. Herbert & M. Hollis (Eds.), *Strong words: Modern poets on modern poetry* (pp. 132-134). Tarsset: Bloodaxe Books.
- O'Neill, H. J. (2006). Once preferred, now peripheral: Poetry and the national assessment for Year 11 students in New Zealand post-primary schools. *English Teaching: Practice and Critique*, 5(3), 93-126.
- Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted). (2007). *Poetry in schools: A survey of practice, 2006/07*. London, England: Ofsted.
- Olds, S. (1995). Sharon Olds [Interview with S. Stewart]. In R. Crawford, H. Hart, D. Kinloch, & R. Price (Eds.), *Talking verse: Interviews with poets* (pp. 187-191). St Andrews and Williamsburg: University of St Andrews and College of William and Mary.
- Paterson, D. (1996). The dilemma of the poet. In T. Curtis (Ed.), *How poets work* (pp. 153-172). Bridgend, England: Seren.
- Peskin, J. (2007). The genre of poetry: Secondary school students' conventional expectations and interpretive operations. *English in Education*, 41(3), 20-36.
- Pirrie, J. (1994). *On common ground: A programme for teaching poetry* (2nd ed.). Godalming, England: World Wide Fund For Nature.
- Québec Education Program. (2001). *Québec Ministry of Education curriculum documents*. Retrieved from http://www.mels.gouv.qc.ca/DGFJ/dp/programme_de_formation/primaire/pdf/educprg2001/educprg2001-051.pdf.
- Queensland Government, Department of Education, Training and the Arts. (2007). *English essential learnings*. Queensland Government, Department of Education, Training and the Arts and Queensland Studies Authority. Retrieved from: http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au/downloads/p-9/qcar_el_english_yr3.pdf.

- Rosaen, C. L. (2003). Preparing teachers for diverse classrooms: Creating public and private spaces to explore culture through poetry writing. *Teachers College Record*, 105(8), 1437-1485.
- Rosen, M. (1989). *Did I hear you write?* London, England: André Deutsch.
- Rothenberg, A. (1976). The process of Janusian thinking in creativity. In A. Rothenberg & C. R. Hausman (Eds.), *The creativity question* (pp. 311–327). Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Rudd, A. (1997). Putting poetry at the heart of the work. *The Use of English*, 49(1), 64-71.
- Sansom, P. (1994.) *Writing poems*. Newcastle Upon Tyne, England: Bloodaxe Books.
- Schwalb, N. (2006). East of the river: Crossing borders through poetry in middle schools. *English Journal*, 96(1), 40-45.
- Sharples, M. (1999). *How we write: Writing as creative design*. London: Routledge.
- Smith, D. (2006, 29 January). *Poetry? It'll soon be about as popular as Morris dancing*. Retrieved from <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2006/jan/29/poetry.books> .
- Snow, C.E. (2005, July/August). From literacy to learning. *Harvard Education Letter*, 21(4). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Graduate School of Education. Retrieved from <http://www.hepg.org/hel/article/290>.
- Stables, A. (2002). Poetic experience: Found or made? *English in Education*, 36(3), 28-35.
- Stafford, W. (1994). A way of writing. In S. Perl (Ed.), *Landmark essays: On writing process* (pp. 231-233). Davis, CA: Hermagoras Press.
- Stevens, D. (2007). "Draw your own conclusions": Teaching pre-twentieth century poetry in an arts context. *English in Education*, 41(3), 37-52.
- Stibbs, A. (1981). Teaching poetry. *Children's Literature in Education*, 12(1), 39-50.
- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Strever, I. A. (2006). "Who makes much of a miracle?" The evolution of a school's poetic culture. *English Journal*, 96(1), 66-69.
- Styles, M. (1992). Just a kind of music: Children as poets. In M. Styles, E. Bearne & V. Watson (Eds.), *After Alice: Exploring children's literature* (pp. 73-88). London, England: Cassell.
- Sumara, D. J., & Davis, B. A. (2006). Correspondence, coherence, complexity: Theories of learning and their influences on processes of literary composition. *English Teaching: Practice and Critique*, 5(2), 34-55.
- Taylor, A. (1994). "On the pulse": Exploring poetry through drama. *Children's Literature in Education*, 25(1), 17-28.
- The University of the State of New York. (2005). *English language arts core curriculum: Prekindergarten – Grade 12*. New York: The University of the State of New York/The State Education Department.
- Troman, G. (2008). Primary teacher identity, commitment and career in performative school cultures. *British Educational Research Journal*, 34(5), 619-633.
- U.S. Department of Education. (2002). No child left behind act. Retrieved from <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/107-110.pdf>.
- Vygotsky, L.S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher mental processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Walter, C. (1986). The many years of telling: A tradition of failed practice of teaching poetry in the primary school. *English in Education*, 20(3), 32-38.

- Walter, C. (1990). Sound in content: Some under-regarded possibilities for the teaching of poetry in school. *Education Today*, 40(2), 54-60.
- Walter, C. (1993). A better way to begin together: The value of a comparative approach to teaching poetry in school. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 16(2), 179-190.
- Wilmer, C. (Ed.). (1994). *Poets talking: The poet of the month interviews from BBC Radio 3*. Manchester, England: Carcanet.
- Wilner, I. (1979). Making poetry happen: Birth of a poetry troupe. *Children's Literature in Education*, 10(2), 86-91.
- Wilson, A. (2001). Brownjohn, Hughes, Pirrie and Rosen: What rhymes with oral writing? *English in Education*, 35(2), 3-11.
- Wilson, A. C. (2009). Creativity and constraint: Developing as a writer of poetry. In R. Beard, D. Myhill, M. Nystrand & J. Riley (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of writing development* (pp. 387-401). London: Sage.
- Wilson, R. E., & G. Somerville-Arjat (Eds.). (1990). *Sleeping with monsters: Conversations with Scottish and Irish women poets*. Dublin, Ireland: Wolfhound Press.
- Yates, C. (2007). Writing like writers in the classroom: Free writing and formal constraint. *English in Education*, 41(3), 6-19.

Manuscript received: July 4, 2010

Revision received: November 27, 2010

Accepted: December 13, 2010

APPENDIX**Questionnaire: small-scale survey of teachers' views of teaching poetry**

What age range do you teach?	How long have you been a teacher?	Are you male or female?

What do you think? Your opinions.

- Can you give your working definition of what poetry is?
- How would you describe the importance of writing poetry within the writing curriculum?
- Do you think the process of writing is different or the same when writing poetry compared with other writing in the curriculum?
- What does "getting better" at poetry writing mean to you?
- Do you think you could/should give NC levels to children's poetry writing? Please explain your answer.

What do you do? Your classroom practice.

- Describe the typical teaching strategies you use to teach poetry writing.
- Describe one teaching strategy you have found effective
- Describe one teaching strategy you have found less effective
- Have you used any poems as models to teach poetry writing? If yes, please give examples, and explain why you chose these particular poems?
- What do you find most rewarding about teaching children to write poetry?
- What do you find most difficult about teaching children to write poetry?

Do you want to add any further thoughts about teaching poetry writing?