Partnering with poetry:

Poetry in American education standards from 1971-2010

by

Melissa G. Van Zant

B.A., College of Notre Dame of Maryland, 1995

M.S., University of Kansas, 1999

AN ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Curriculum and Instruction

College of Education

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Abstract

American education is increasingly driven by standards and high-stakes tests. This creates a dynamic in which curricular content addressed in the standards will be subjected to high-stakes tests while that not addressed in the standards risks being ignored. Such a dynamic threatens poetry—a subject whose strength resides in its ambiguity instead of one correct answer. The literature review establishes poetry as an important area of study for K-12 students and explores how the Standards Movement has affected poetry instruction in other English-speaking countries. This research used context-sensitive textual analysis to examine the treatment of poetry in American English language arts standards from 1971 to 2010 as demonstrated in the following three documents: (1) *Representative Performance Objectives for High School English* written by the Tri-University Project in 1971, (2) *Standards for the English Language Arts* written by the National Council of Teachers of English and the International Reading Association in 1996, and (3) the *Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts* written in 2010. Context-sensitive textual analysis (Huckin, 1992) presumes that the contexts in which texts are written and read impact their meanings. The study describes those impacts, their implications, and suggestions for continued study.

Keywords: Context-sensitive text analysis, Education, English, K-12, Poetry, Standards

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I grew up in a military family, all of us thinkers and problem-solvers. We know how to navigate maps, relationships, and cut carpet to fit any floor plan. We value education and the fine arts, which is why it horrified them that I didn't always love to read. Concerned with raising me up right, they each found a way to coax me into books. Daddy became a one-man show at bedtime, turning reading into an event. When I was a toddler, Mama waited until I was happily playing in the tub so she could read to me during bath time. When I was in high school, my sister learned I had not read *To Kill a Mockingbird*. She gave me the gorgeous sweater she knitted herself in exchange for my reading the classic and having a conversation with her about it. They gave me a life with literature—and so much more. I can't fathom who I would be if not for them. Thank you, John, Karen, and Christa Van Zant.

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For the poets. All of us.

CHAPTER 1: Introduction

I love poetry. I cannot recall a time when my brain did not have one to keep me company. My first memories of text are poems in the forms of nursery rhymes, lyrics, books written by Dr. Seuss, and poems made up on the fly by family members who cherished the ability to play with words the way some families cherish athletic ability.

Like many, I struggled with poetry in high school. I did not always see what the teacher said was there. Sometimes I saw nothing. Even then, I considered being able to understand canonical poetry as a club I hoped to have the skills to join someday.

My enthusiasm for poetry overflows in my middle school creative writing classes, where it enjoys a place of privilege in my plans. The majority of my creative writing students come to class saying that they love writing stories, but they do not like poetry. I smile and think, "You don't like poetry *yet*. I'll show you." And I do. Over subsequent weeks I introduce them to spoken word poetry by Sarah Kay and Taylor Mali. We focus on what poetry *can* do instead of what they *must make* it do. Once interested, we talk about how they can use poetry techniques in their writing. Before long they are sharing their poems willingly with their classmates, who respond enthusiastically. Anecdotal evidence of their transformed attitudes comes at the end of the term when they submit their work to the school literary magazine. They decide if and what they will submit. Nearly all of the submissions are poems. Anecdotal evidence also comes in the form of letters and emails from students who write to tell me how poetry has made a difference in their lives. Some are satisfied just to have conquered their fear of reading it, while others go on to embrace themselves as poets and explain how poetry has helped them figure out who they are. As a child, I thought of poetry as a friend. As a teacher, I consider it a powerhouse.

Despite my regard for poetry, I found that it had less prominence in my English class than it did in creative writing. This, in itself, is not surprising. Creative writing comes with more flexibility and fewer overall objectives. English, on the other hand, is packed with *have to's,* the majority of which will appear on the state assessment toward the end of the year. Creative writing permits portfolio assessment, whereas English demands more objective, formative, and summative grades. Parents and administrators want frequent status checks, i.e., predictions of how students will perform on the state assessment.

I had noticed in department meetings, both before and after the adoption of the Common Core State Standards, that some teachers incorporated far fewer poetry texts into their lesson plans than others, a fact that came through in my creative writers' work samples. I could often predict which of my creative writers had which English teachers based on their previous experience with poetry. It puzzled me that some of my colleagues, using the same standards, saw far more opportunity or requirement to include poetry in their English lessons than did others. Some teachers would not teach without it. Others said poetry took too much time. This sentiment was echoed in conversations with other secondary English teachers in my district, state, and across state lines. In informal conversations with people who attended American secondary schools over the last 50 years, I heard the same story. Some had teachers who incorporated poetry into the "heavy rotation" while others recalled little to no poetry instruction at all.

I was confused. I thought poetry had always been a central character in the English curriculum. This prompted my interest in understanding where poetry stands—and where it has stood—in American English education.

Overview of the Issues

Poetry occupies a tenuous position in the English curriculum. On the one hand, it is highly regarded as elegant, noble, and mysterious. Movies such as *Dead Poets Society* paint romantic images of students demonstrating their initiation into poetry by standing on their desks, grabbing their poetry books, and changing their lives forever. Through this lens, poetry is an English class essential, valued for its ability to transform students into more critical thinkers and better language users (Frye, 1963). On the other hand, poetry makes students groan and cry out for reasons that have nothing to do with the literary power of the text. They find its presentation of line by line analysis, interpretations, and rote memorization dull and tortuous. Lacking confidence that they can do poetry justice, many teachers leave poetry out of the curriculum as much as possible (Benton, 1984).

Poetry can be messy and complex. Its strength is in its refusal to settle for just one right answer. Instead it swims in mercurial possibilities. For this reason, it is very difficult to standardize. Forcing poetry into an objective format favored by accountability-motivated proponents of the Standards Movement strips poetry of its complicated identity, turning it into something that it was never meant to be. As with anyone pretending to be something he is not, poetry struggles to find its authentic place. It faces a double-edged sword (Tannenbaum, 2006). It can sign up for the standards, dress itself up in objective clothes, subject itself to confining answers and near lethal levels of analysis, and thus relegate itself to a life of misery. Or poetry can stay true to its authentic, subjective self and embrace a life largely ignored by teachers under pressure to prepare students to score well on the high-stakes tests commonly aligned with the standards.

The Standards Movement privileges the quantifiable over the subjective, and seeks to categorize learners efficiently more than it seeks to understand a more nuanced picture of how a student has grown. Education standards have developed a dependency on high-stakes tests that have tended to narrow the curriculum to include only those things that can be easily tested. The problem for poetry is not necessarily education standards, but the use of standards as devices to hold schools accountable for certain kinds of knowledge at the expense of others (Eisner, 2001). The problem for poetry is that it often must fundamentally change or become homeless.

Statement of the Problem

Poetry, a genre that offers a rich and wide-range of educational opportunities to learners (Burt, 2009), faces potential conflict with the Standards Movement in the United States, which has pushed for the adoption of national standards aligned with high-stakes tests. In navigating this path, we can look to other English-speaking countries that have already adopted high-stakes testing of national standards, which have included poetry. Research has found countries that included poetry in their tested standards saw a trend for poetry to be taught with ill-fitting methods. Countries that did not include poetry have seen poetry neglected or ignored all-together (Dymoke, 2012; Hennessy & McNamara, 2011).

Given the tradition of poetry as an important genre for study, and the United States' increased emphasis on standards aligned with high-stakes tests, a need exists to (1) investigate the state of poetry in the current standards and (2) to understand how standards writers, either intentionally or unintentionally, have shaped that narrative over time.

Primary Research Question

How have the attempts to standardize K-12 English curriculum in the United States over the last 46 years addressed the teaching of poetry?

Subsidiary Research Questions

Q1. To what extent do the standards address poetry as a means to engage with difficult text?

Q2. To what extent do the standards address poetry as a means of gaining cultural capital?

Q3. To what extent do the standards address poetry as a means of gaining personal growth?

Q4. To what extent do the standards address the learning of the mechanics of poetry?

Q5. To what extent do the standards address students writing poetry and their use of poetic language?

Q6. To what extent do the standards allow teachers the freedom to teach or abandon poetry?

Definition of Terms

Poetry: Writing that uses deliberate line breaks (Richardson, 2003) and "formulates a concentrated imaginative awareness of experiences in language chosen and arranged to create a specific emotional response through meaning, sound, and rhythm" (Poetry, n.d.).

Attempts to standardize English curriculum: For the purposes of this research, attempts to standardize English curriculum will be defined by these three documents:

1. *Representative performance objectives for high school English: A guide for teaching, evaluating, and curriculum planning* (Hook, J. N., Jacobs, P. H., Jenkinson, E. B., Lazarus, A., Pietras, T., Seybold, D. A., and Van Mondfrans, A. P.,1971b). This document is also referred to as the Tri-University Project.

2. *Standards for the English language arts* (National Council of Teachers of English, & International Reading Association, 1996).

3. *Common core state standards—English language arts* (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010a).

Difficult text: Text that requires the reader to veer off the direct path to comprehension. Ways text can be made difficult in poetry include when the reader: (1) confronts unfamiliar vocabulary or vocabulary used in unfamiliar ways; (2) struggles to understand the culture, time, or position of the author or his or her person; (3) encounters evidence of the poet layering or "coding" complexity into the text to create ambiguity; and (4) faces ontological difficulties in which the poet has purposefully fractured, condensed, or twisted the language so that it pushes the boundaries of language itself (Bailey, 1989; Steiner, 1978).

Personal growth: The experience of readers when they encounter new ideas that provide insight into oneself, others, the human condition, or the nature of the world. Such activities may provide wisdom to work through personal problems. Personal growth, for the purposes of this study, also includes reading poetry for enjoyment (Hatfield, 1946; Jenkins, 1967).

Cultural capital: The respect or higher status one stands to receive for being well-read; i.e., having made a habit of reading and/or having read widely enough to answer a question central to multiple works. Cultural capital in literature is afforded for understanding a literary work's cultural meaning and significance as well as the context of any allusions to that literary work (Barker, 2004; Ostrower, 1998), or for having the skills to evaluate and explain its quality.

Mechanics: The tools poets use to create poetry including diction, imagery, figurative language, rhythm, rhyme, compressed language, and structure.

Writing poetry: Classroom activities that require students to write original poems, distinct from the use of poetic language in other genres.

Poetic language: Artistic language typically found in poetry, but can also be included in a text type other than poetry. An example is the instruction to write a descriptive paragraph that includes figurative language.

Freedom to teach or abandon poetry: The degree to which the language of a standard specifies poetry use, i.e., how standard language disallows poetry (ex: write a paragraph), makes poetry possible (ex: determine the main idea of a text), lends itself to poetry without requiring it (ex: identify figurative language), or requires poetry (ex: explain the structure of a sonnet).

Significance of the Study

American education is a tapestry woven by various, and sometimes competing, narratives. One of those narratives positions poetry as a fundamental component of being considered well-educated in literature. A separate narrative tracks the push for increased accountability through the use of rigorous standards aligned to high-stakes tests. Other English-speaking countries with high-stakes tests have found poetry stripped of its rich, subjective nature when it was included in the standards, and narrowed out of the curriculum when it was not (Dymoke, 2012; Hennessy & McNamara, 2011). This suggests that poetry and high-stakes standards might be at odds. Given the value that so many in the education community have placed on each, a need existed to examine their relationship and its effects.

Methodology

This study explored the position of poetry in three English standards documents written over the last 46 years. I examined each document for treatment of poetry according to the following categories aligned to the research questions: Difficult Text, Personal Growth, Cultural Capital, Mechanics, Writing, and Freedom to Teach.

As a context-sensitive text analysis, I also researched the situational context of each document including its authors, purpose, and public response. Writers have loyalties to multiple discourse communities, and those loyalties are often revealed in what they write. Likewise, readers bring their own loyalties, values, goals, and purposes to text and may interpret the same text differently (Huckin, 1992). The writers and readers of the standards represent a wide variety of organizations and interests, their loyalties to which surfaced in the standards. This study was concerned with what was linguistically in the standards as well as how they were interpreted.

Context-sensitive text analysis is problem-driven. The purpose of this study was to reveal the overlooked relationship between poetry and the standards in order to inform future standardization endeavors. I combined data collected from the standards with the contextual history of each document found in Chapter 2 in order "to produce converging results that support the plausibility of one's argument" (Huckin, 1992, p. 90).

Limitations of the Study

This study was limited by the scope of the standards, which may predict teaching trends but do not reveal precisely how teachers use poetry in their classrooms. It investigated what messages the standards convey about poetry and how they *could* be interpreted, but did not reveal how individual teachers *actually* interpreted and implemented those messages.

The study was further limited by the number of documents examined. States and local districts have made numerous attempts to standardize English curriculum within the same time. This study does not account for the practical reach of each examined document to determine which or how many students attended schools that adopted the studied standards.

Information about high-stakes tests also limited this work. Other English-speaking countries have already moved to national standards with high-stakes tests. Available research regarding the effect of including or not including poetry in their tested standards is presented in Chapter 2, however such research about the standards in the documents studied here was not available.

Organization of the Study

Chapter 1 introduces the study and issue of poetry in the standards. It includes the statement of the problem, research questions, definition of important terms, and the study's significance, methodology, limitations, and organization.

Chapter 2 presents a review of the literature. It includes a rationale for the inclusion of poetry in the curriculum, a history of the standards movement, an overview of some of the effects noticed when poetry is included in tested standards, and the contextualized histories of each of the three documents in the study.

Chapter 3 describes the study's methodology as a context-sensitive text analysis. It explains text selection, data collection, and data analysis.

Chapter 4 presents the results of the data collection and analysis for each document.

Chapter 5 pulls together the findings from the three standards documents into a cohesive story to answer the research questions holistically. It also discusses the implications for poetry in the standards and makes recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 2: Review of Literature

The treatment of poetry by education standards merges two rich and complex subject areas. First is the rationale for why poetry has been long considered a powerful teaching genre. Second is the evolution of the Standards Movement and its effect on American Education. This literature review is the culmination of reading approximately 300 sources, most of which are evidenced in the review. Those not cited directly still assisted in my understanding of the topic's overall landscape. The review threw a wide net to help me understand the big picture of these two areas, but also dug deep to help me better understand the context surrounding the writing of each document in the study corpus and served as a critical component in analyzing the data. For example, one of the documents was written by organizations seeking to build consensus across diverse groups. Critics of that document argued that trying to please everyone resulted in vague standards. Such an understanding was helpful in interpreting the data.

It was during the review process that most of the subsidiary research questions began to take shape. Ideally, the review would have organized around those subsidiary questions. That proved impractical as several pieces of the story overlap. For example, the study of canonical poetry can be first associated with reading poetry to gain cultural capital, but such poems also typically align with working with poetry as difficult text. For this reason, the literature review is organized to better tell the separate stories of why poetry is appropriate in the English curriculum and how the Standards Movement has shaped education.

The first part of the review is the rationale for including poetry in the K-12 English curriculum, including its ability to reach and engage students across levels in difficult text, and address truth and language differently than other disciplines; both of which help students grow

personally and as language users in ways that are applicable in other English genres, academic disciplines, and outside of school. The second part of the review is a contextual history that reveals the ways in which national events shaped how Americans chose to educate their young, particularly with regard to the Standards Movement. This section demonstrates that education decisions have not been made in isolation, but have been part of a larger, far-reaching narrative. The third part briefly addresses how the use of research changed with the rise of the Standards Movement, and how those changes affected educational decisions. The fourth part outlines the Catch-22 of including poetry in the standards as evidenced by other English-speaking countries, that have more experience following national curricula that include poetry standards. This section also includes a brief explanation of why poetry, despite being highly respected, has often been marginalized in the curriculum. The fifth part presents salient information about each document in the study corpus, including the authors, purposes for writing, document organization, user guidelines, and public response.

Rationale for Including Poetry in the K-12 Curriculum

Accessibility

Teachers praise poetry for its flexibility in addressing students' needs regardless of current ability level (Benton, 1999). In a very real sense, poetry *is* accessible to all and *provides* accessibility to all. The sounds of poetry are innate. Babies have rhythm before they have speech. Their babble mimics what they hear, and they dance to music before they understand the lyrics (McPhillips, 2014). "Poetry appeals to the near universal fondness children have for rhyme and rhythm" (Perfect, 1999), and most children who have not yet begun to read are able to detect poetry's musical elements like rhyme and alliteration (Cumming, 2007). Chukovsky states

children begin as "versifiers" and only later learn to speak in prose (1968, p. 64 as cited in Sloan, 2003, p. 11).

Northrop Frye (1963) asserts that literary education should begin in verse with physical reinforcements such as bouncing a baby on one's knee while reciting a few familiar lines or playing patty cake. He argues the combination is the beginning of responding to poetry in ways that resemble dance and song. It is related to the chanting, singing, and (unfortunately) taunting, that fill young children's speech.

Frye goes on to say that as children enter school, good prose should supplement their study of verse, "but poetry, the main body of which is verse, is always the central powerhouse of a literary education" (1963, p. 26). Over time, students learn about rhythmical energy, "the sinewy and springing dialogue of Shakespearean drama," timing, and cadences. He concludes:

> Literary education of this kind, its rhythm and leisure slowly soaking into the body and its wit and concreteness into the mind, can do something to develop a speaking and writing prose style that comes out of the depths of personality and is a genuine expression of it. (Frye, 1963, p. 26)

A sense of play permeates poetry regardless of the student's age. Even when poems are not playful, they show a delight in the language that comes from a willingness to experiment and play to make new discoveries about what the language can do (Barton & Booth, 2004).

Brevity stands as another accessibility feature. Short lengths appeal to students who may not have the endurance to decode longer readings. Students may consume more poems than short stories or other genres and still take time to process them more deeply. In turn, writing shorter lengths feels more attainable. They receive feedback and experience a sense of accomplishment

faster and in a more satisfying way that further motivates them to take on new work (Atwell, 2006b; Mahoney & Matovick, 2005).

Poetry accommodates needs of students at different levels, including students with special needs or learners of English as a second language. Teachers in Benton's survey (1999, p. 528) wrote that poetry "appeals to and is within the capacity of all, including the less able," that it is "a form at which they can excel," and gives students with special needs "a chance to produce quality work without having to write an essay."

Durham (1997) writes that her students came to her with poor reading comprehension strategies, but benefitted from poetry's use of sound to convey meaning. They found reading poetry together was fun and provided a safe cover for students to figure out the holes in their understanding. Preparing to read poems as a class provided opportunity for repeated reading and vocal practice that could feel awkward in genres that do not lend themselves to performance. Preparation also required repeated reading of the poem, a strategy that boosts comprehension and fluency. Hanauer (1998) found that subjects presented with text shaped as a poem, instead of prose, demonstrated significantly higher information recall.

Second language learners appreciate that poetry uses out of the ordinary language to express universal truths. They can use poems to bring their native cultures to their English-speaking classmates. Poetry, in some ways, levels the playing field because it requires all students to play with language and can highlight how second language learners make interesting and fresh word connections. Choral reading brings them into the safety of a group. Effective ESL instruction "takes place within a zone of proximal development, that area where the child knows enough to function within a group but is attacking the unknown" (Armour, 1994, p. 44).

Nancie Atwell (2006a) appreciates that poetry makes way for personal insights that can be as simple as a student identifying a line or word that he likes, or more complicated interpretations. Students in her class discuss the same poem, but approach it at their own levels. The discussion naturally honors the insights of all while allowing students who are not as critical in their reading to learn from the comments of those who are.

Students who struggle with conventions find freedom in breaking them in their work toward a product that satisfies their own needs and also appeals to other writers. Other genres tend to present rules as arbitrary. Poetry permits students to privilege meaning first, then discover how to use convention to better communicate their ideas (Carbone Ward, 2006). Typical writing assignments that are graded by teachers who mark down for violations of convention frustrate struggling writers who get the sense that they will never have the writing skills to express who they are and how they see themselves. Poetry's more relaxed stance helps alleviate this discrepancy (Shelnutt, 1992) and can serve as a springboard into the larger body of expressive writing (Gallagher, 2011).

Reading and writing poetry becomes cyclical. Reading a variety of poems shows students that poetry is relevant to their lives and short enough to attempt on their own. In writing their own poems, they begin to read poetry as writers. They notice how other writers use language, form, and convention for different effects, and incorporate those techniques into their own writing. Reading and writing become demystified and less intimidating. The combination of lowering apprehension and finding even small successes emboldens them to take on bigger challenges in poetry and in other kinds of writing (Benton, 1999; Durham, 1997; Shelnut, 1991; Spiro, 2007).

Accessibility is the key that sets everything else in motion.

Engagement

Any rationale for poetry in schools must include its ability to engage students with the world around them. *Engage* here means to cause students to participate in and make sense of the world in meaningful ways. Engagement is the center of the poetic process. It is akin to swimming swans in that the fluid grace we see on the water comes from constant churning and working underneath. The final and elegant product of poetry arrives after significant mental churning and working. Those who say poetry is a luxury that takes too much class time overlook how their efforts teach those baby swans how to swim.

The entry into a poem is a form of engagement unlike that produced with other genres (Hess, 2003). Professor Emerita Maxine Greene holds that the object of education "is not to answer (questions) but to engage the student in the search…and to empower the child to search for meaning" (Teacher's College, 2014, 1:07.11). In short, students must learn to make sense of the world if they are to become conscientious citizens of it. Much learning in school is passively committing second-hand knowledge to memory, but reading and writing poetry shifts students to active roles that require them to understand their thoughts and experiences, and make new discoveries (Lies, 1993).

Engagement begins in concentrated observation of nature, people, things, and phenomena until the ordinary reveals new meaning and the previously unexplainable boils down into words. The hard work of the poet is to see the world clearly, identify new discoveries for themselves, and deliver them to the reader. The poet engages his mind with the world in uncommon ways to unveil hidden possibilities and make new connections "just as a microscope enables us to see surprising details of structure in material that can be seen well enough by the naked eye" (Korg, 1959, p. 64). Poetry is about digging past first glances, slowing down, and really seeing. John

Dewey believed that artistic expression like poetry required complete absorption in the observation of an experience and lengthy periods of both activity and reflection (Dewey, 1934). Csikszentmihalyi holds, "When people are creating, they feel more engaged and live more fully than at other times, and the products of their creative work enrich their own and other people's lives" (cited in Connor-Greene, Murdoch, Young, & Paul, 2005, p. 216). Learning to read and write poetry cultivates students who "read the world better" (Lockward, 1994, p. 70) are "critical readers, writers, and speakers" (Fisher, 2005, p. 116).

The result of the poetic engagement process includes the knowing of one's own mind and how to express it. Former United States poet laureate Ted Kooser believes that there cannot be too many poets because he would like to live in a world "in which people actually took the time to think about what they were saying," and is sure it would be "a more peaceful, more reasonable place" (Kooser, 2005, p. 5).

Difficulty

Meaningful engagement in poetry encourages students to grapple with difficulty that they would be less likely to tolerate in other genres. Difficulty with poems, according to George Steiner (1978), can fall into four categories. (1) Contingent difficulties refer to vocabulary issues that may appear simple to resolve with a dictionary, but might also require the reader to uncover and integrate multiple meanings or special uses of a word harnessed by the poet. (2) Modal difficulties arise when the reader does not "get" where the poet is coming from due to significant differences in culture or time. Readers may research their way into a more informed understanding of the text, but will not have the same understanding as one who lived them. (3) Tactical difficulties arise when the poet layers or "codes" complexity into the text to provide for

multiple interpretations. Such coding might be a response to an external pressure or a private need to censor more direct language, but it is also what intrigues readers to see if they can uncover new interpretations or understandings. Tactical difficulties challenge us with the "distinct sense in which we know and do not know, at the same time. This rich undecidability is exactly what the poet aims at" (Steiner, 1978, p. 273). (4) Ontological difficulties, often found in modern poetry, arise when the poet fractures, condenses, or twists language so it pushes the boundaries of language itself. Using language in irrational ways can mirror the irrationality felt in society and offer potential consequences of not addressing it (Bailey, 1989).

Interestingly, students have special expectations of poetry that cause them to make allowances for difficulty and develop strategies to cope with it (Yaron, 2008). In so doing, poetic texts produce in students what Umberto Eco (1990, p. 55, cited in Peskin 2007) calls two model readers. The first is a naïve reader, seeking to understand the words' semantic meanings. The second is a critical reader, who appreciates how the text conveys them.

Two separate but similar studies demonstrate how students distinguish poetry from prose, set unique expectations, and contend with difficulty differently. The Peskin study (2007) provided participants with two sets of texts, identical except for the use of line breaks to indicate prose or poetry. The first set of texts included actual poems, while the second set included non-poetic texts. Half the participants received poems before prose; the other half received prose forms first. The Yaron study (2008) gave poems of varying difficulty to half of the participants and the identical poems written as prose to the other half. The results are discussed below.

Students' comments revealed that their most obvious expectation of poetry is that it looks different from prose. The poet uses line breaks intentionally to determine a poem's shape. Peskin (2007) found that students preferred poetic shape to prose, commenting that the poetic shape was

more "intriguing," "interesting," "important," "effective," and "cool" (p. 28), and that the shape contributed to their engagement and comprehension.

Students' next expectations of poetry operate as a set: (1) They come to poetry with the understanding that poets intend for their work to have multiple meanings, unlike non-literary writers who strive for uniform clarity; (2) They expect to find metaphoric content; and (3) They expect even simple poetry to be significant, so they are prepared to search for what is important (Peskin, 2007, p. 22). Students understand that poetry, as a genre, is uniquely difficult and that they will have to slow down and think critically (Hopkins, 2007). Essentially, they come to poetry prepared to work (Yaron, 2008).

Peskin (2007) found that readers do, in fact, slow down when they read poetry. She compared reader response to identical text in both prose and poetic form. In one example, participants were given the sentence, "Yesterday a drug addict was found in the dark shadows behind the beach homes," as well as:

Yesterday a drug addict

was found in the

dark shadows

behind the beach homes (p. 24)

Regardless of which version participants viewed first, they spent about twice as long on the poetic form than the prose. Their comments demonstrated understanding that words in poetry may have multiple meanings. Comments included, "This may mean more than what it's saying," and, "In poetic form each word they chose has to have a lot of meaning" (p. 25). Participants commented on possible metaphors in the poetic form, wondering if the dark shadows represented evil or madness and offering that the addict in the shadows could represent any person suffering

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through a bad time or situation. Participants commented about the significance of the text in poetic form more than five times as often as they did the prose form (p. 27).

Yaron's study (2008) yielded similar results. Participants responded to difficult poetry with suitable strategies to ascertain meaning, but "refused to cope with the difficulty (of the prose versions). Several deemed the prose texts 'meaningless', 'incomprehensible', 'incoherent', and 'non-cohesive.' Others made simplistic generalizations such as 'this text is about life that generates death'" (p. 132). As found in the Peskin study, poetry readers came looking for meaning and symbolism while prose readers were apt to dismiss it.

In *Attack of the Difficult Poems* (2011), Charles Bernstein advises that difficulty with a poem is grounded in the relationship between the reader and the poem, and that working through that relationship is an enriching learning experience that paves the way to enjoying and appreciating poetry. Fogle (2012) continues this line of thinking, offering that

> if students can have positive experiences with difficult poetry, perhaps they can find ways to cope with other difficult experiences—by investigating them closely, even temporarily immersing themselves in that strangeness, and discerning the inner workings of some new dynamic that at first seemed so far beyond them. (p. 144)

These findings also illustrate that difficulty does not require drudgery. Williams (1998, p. 8) calls a poem "a wonderfully complicated instrument." Robert Pinsky (2007) suggests that difficulty in a poem might be the very thing that surprises and entices readers to return to it. Pike (2000) selected students who disliked poetry for his study. He found that that by emphasizing their personal response to difficult, pre-twentieth century poetry first, the students began to willingly dig into the text and expressed a positive attitude toward the poetry at the end of the task.

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A Different Truth

Part of what makes poetry demanding and difficult is that it often seeks to address the truth of human experiences that other text types do not or cannot. Poetry acknowledges that language is more limited than human experience and attempts to arbitrate that chasm. This makes poetry inconvenient and messy—difficult. Facts are relatively easy to transmit and assess on a test (Mahoney & Matovick, 2005, p. 7), but poems dig in to *felt* experiences and seek a knowing in the reader. Tennyson (cited in Korg, 1959, p. 3) offers us an example of this with his lines:

To Sleep I give my powers away

My will is bondsman to the dark

He did not simply say, "I went to sleep." Instead his words express the feeling of helplessness that comes with being forced to surrender self-control (Korg, 1959, p. 3).

Readers and writers of all ages know that this different and deeper truth telling is necessary. Armour (1994) recounts a fourth grader introducing his poem saying, "This poem describes what skiing is like. This poem will not tell you how to ski, but it will tell you how it feels" (p. xv). Critic Northrop Frye elaborates in *The Educated Imagination* (1964):

 The poet's job is not to tell you what happened, but what happens: not what did take place, but the kind of thing that always does take place. He gives you the typical, recurring, or what Aristotle calls universal event. You wouldn't go to *Macbeth* to learn about the history of Scotland—you go to it to learn what a man feels like after he's gained a kingdom and lost his soul. (p. 63)

In this way, poetry "works at the limits of knowledge, seeking to express the inexpressible" (Korg, 1959, p. 2). Louise Glück demonstrated this when she wrote:

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There is soul in me

It is asking

to be given its body

(cited in Parini, 2008, p. 65)

Jerome Bruner wrote:

We have learned too that the "arts" of sensing and knowing consist in honoring our

highly limited capacity for taking in and processing information. We honor that capacity

by learning the methods of compacting vast ranges of experience in economical

symbols—concepts, language, metaphor, myth, and formulae. The price of failing at this

art is either to be trapped in a confined world of experience or to be the victim of an

overload of information." (Bruner, 1982, p. 6)

Shakespeare wrote about the power of naming feelings that typically allude us:

The poet's eye in a frenzy rolling,

Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven;

And as imagination bodies forth

The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen

Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothings

A local habitation and a name.

(cited in Richardson, 2003, p. 90)

Those "airy nothings" are what those who do not understand poetry's relevance to the

curriculum seek to brush aside, but the naming of them is precisely what connects students to

poetry. Poetry recognizes a different level of truth that is both intensely personal and universal. Poetry recognizes truth as understanding and deems it every bit as relevant as objective fact. In so doing, poetry gives us the language to make sense of our reality, locate wonder and enchantment, become more sensitized to beauty and pain, and arms us to provide comfort. Poetry's personal response to the world activates a personal response from the reader (Atwell, 1987; Certo, Apol, Wibbens, & Hawkins, 2012; Gibbons, 2015; Groves, 1944; Hirsch, 1999; Parini, 2008; Perfect, 1999; & Richardson, 2003).

The emotional content of a poem can disconcert and disturb the reader (McPhillips, 2014) and at the same time give comfort (Carlson, 1968). Georgia Heard explains this is true even for very young readers. She recounts a boy who tried to abscond with the class's poetry anthology under his jacket. He identified with a poem by Myra Cohn Livingston titled "Help" in which a child prays for her father to come home to his family, but doubts that the prayers will do any good (Mahoney & Matovick, 2005). He *needed* to keep that poem with him. The same need is evident in adults. After the 9/11 attacks, memorials plastered in poetry materialized all around New York City. Neither short stories, essays, nor editorials would do (Mahoney & Matovick, 2005). Poetry was the only genre powerful enough to "locate those zones inside us that would be free and declare them so" (Wright cited in McPhillips, 2014, p. 10).

Tsujimoto (1988, p. xiv) writes:

I teach poetry because it gives students a way of crystallizing and publicly expressing private emotions that otherwise might be impossible to communicate. On the other hand, I also teach poetry because it persuades students to hear and recognize the private feelings of others…In this one sense alone lies its most practical function: to humanize

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and elevate our race as a civilized species, cultivating sensitive, open-minded human beings—which is the true vocation for which we are preparing our students.

Poet X. J. Kennedy agrees contending that poetry study is essential to education because it prompts students to take a "longer view of life" and prepare for the unexpected. He asserts that students can be overly aware of how their schooling should prepare them for a career, but shortsighted about the uncertainty of what awaits them. Kennedy contends there is far more practical value in building sensitivity to words than a store of technical information. He recalls "one crusty old IBM executive" who remarked that people

> don't usually fail in business because they don't know their jobs; they fail or have to be dismissed because they can't understand other people. Unable to imagine themselves inside the skin of a co-worker or a customer, they make bad decisions and arouse resentment. (in Duke & Jacobson, 1983, p. 6)

Reading and writing is the key to *emotional* literacy, an intelligence schools too often neglect (Sloan, 2003).

Finding and Using Voice

> "I am not saying people are wicked if they keep their real voice a secret, but they are neglecting a great source of power."
>
> > -Peter Elbow, *Writing with Power, 1998,* p. 294

Acknowledging the power of student voice fosters critical thinking because they then have to turn inward and figure out what they want to say. Poetry, by its nature, prompts students to bring their voices forward (Connor-Greene, Murdoch, Young, & Paul, 2005). Mama C. urges

the importance of voice with her spoken word poetry students by saying, "Use your voice; you can't have powerful words and a weak voice" (Fisher, 2005, p. 115). Voice is essential to creative writing because it allows the reader to understand who the author is, including his or her beliefs, feelings, and perceptions of the world.

Peter Elbow writes at length in *Writing with Power* (1998) about the elusive quality of voice that audiences recognize when they hear it, but have difficulty pinning down into words. He believes voice comes through as power when then the words somehow fit the writer, and not necessarily the reader (p. 280). He first became fascinated with voice when he marked student papers that resonated strength, saying he could not put his finger on why he liked the papers, "but that something special seemed to be going on" (p. 283).

Elbow noticed his students, while trying to recreate that special quality, required more privacy for their writing. Before they felt skilled at writing *correctly* for an audience using an objective, "voiceless" voice, but located their authentic voice only when they wrote for themselves. Writing became less about getting the correct answer and more about exploring their own minds and cultivating their own ideas. Finding their voice required experimenting and risk-taking.

A teacher in Bintz and Henning-Shannon's (2005) study noticed her high school juniors were on the honor roll, but lacked the ability to write authentically. They could write an essay to get an A, but they did not "own" their writing with their thoughts and feelings. "They can't stretch themselves by playing it safe" (p. 33), she lamented. Using poetry for multiple voices, as demonstrated in Paul Fleishman's book *Joyful Noise*, they discovered students willingly dug into difficult topics and wrote from multiple perspectives. Their teacher noticed that students were

not so preoccupied with grades during this exercise, but focused on the reading, creating, and discussing of literature.

Poetry is a vehicle for voice that defines space "in which to be silly or serious, defiant or heartbroken, connected or alone" (Carbone-Ward, 2005, p. 27). It offers opportunity for a young writer to turn inward and discover how his individual voice differs from those represented by culture, school, and family, and also how it contributes to those entities. Through poetry, he learns how he can use language to develop and adopt different personas and decide which ones fit (Parini, 2008). Individual voices can easily get lost in the shuffle of test-driven, accountability-based education (Lies, 1993). Part of creating voice in poetry is acknowledging the valid voices of others and oneself. Taking advantage of poetry's ability to bring unknown experiences and feelings to the reader encourages the pluralistic nature of a democratic society (Hopkins, 2007).

"Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world." –Percy Bysshe Shelley

"Poets are the legislators of the unacknowledged world." –George Oppen

(both cited in Parini, 2008, p. 1)

Political activism is a natural extension of poetry that dates back to at least Ancient Greece when Plato argued against its wide use, asserting that any poetry aside from that used to praise the gods and great men would derail the conduct of the state (Parini, 2008; Van Dorsten, 1966) by challenging established societal norms and privileging newness over tradition (Swanger, 1989). In dismissing the poets, he acknowledged their power to spotlight voices that would be otherwise silenced. Poetry is the language of protest, the medium used by the marginalized to activate empathy in the masses (Grossman, 2009).

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Williams writes, "Poetry is power…Power in the modern world is the ability to change minds, to convince, often against the real interests of those whose desires are being manipulated…. It is the most articulate language we have for speaking directly to the soul" (Williams, 1998, p. 27).

Sometimes we are reminded about the political power of poetry. First Lady Laura Bush postponed a White House symposium on the works of Emily Dickinson, Langston Hughes, and Walt Whitman when she learned that some of the invited poets planned to read work in protest of the war in Iraq. Nine of the poets originally invited to the White House symposium ultimately congregated in an alternate location for an event titled "A Poetry Reading in Honor of the Right to Protest as a Patriotic and Historical Tradition" (Mehren, 2003). (One must imagine how the title fit on a banner or a t-shirt. Newspaper articles covering the event did not include pictures.)

New York Times columnist Martin Arnold wrote about this in his article "Poets Pit Pens Against Swords" (2003) and compared the ultimate role of oft forgotten poets to that of fireman prepared to face an emergency at a moment's notice. He argued that "poets have been clearing away slopping thoughts since the beginning of literature." His article quoted several poets' thoughts on why poetry is both valued and feared politically. Jay Parini believes that poets become important in times of crisis "because our language is pure, and politicians abuse language." David Budbill said, "Telling the truth in vivid language committed to humanity is important for people to hear, because politicians don't." Greg Delanty added, "One advantage poets have is that we are not encumbered like politicians worrying about how our words affect our careers." (All quotes refer to Arnold's online news article.)

Students who are to be active members of society must exercise locating their authority. Former chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts, Dan Gioia, writes:

Poetry is the art of using words charged with their utmost meaning. A society whose

intellectual leaders lose the skill to shape, appreciate, and understand the power of

language will become the slaves of those who retain it—be they politicians, preachers,

copywriters, or newscasters. (2002, p. 17)

Poetry empowers students. As poet-teacher Margot Pepper writes, "Most of my students

are convinced that they are in firm possession of a voice that, when heard, will change the world.

Poetry has already begun to change the quality of their lives" (Steinbergh, 1999, p. 327).

Cross-Training Within and Across Disciplines

Somewhere along the way of academia, a schism split western intellectual thought into

separate camps of science and literature, and those camps persist relatively unchallenged in

schools today. The science camp retained possession of the concrete and the measurable, the

logical and the detached, while the literature camp claimed singular control over passion,

intuition, emotion, and personal truth. Neither represents the whole picture, although modern

education culture privileges measurable scientific thinking (Gorrell & Colfax, 2012).

As long as these two worlds remain divided, students do not learn to synthesize the

learning from each and stunt themselves from the creative analysis and problem-solving skills

we seek to cultivate in them. Reestablishing the connection between the two sides is more than

just something nice we do to mix things up. It is a bringing together of two unnecessarily divided

worlds so that students can more accurately and reflectively view the world, their place in it, and

make well-informed decisions (Gorrell & Colfax, 2012).

Despite the different ways various disciplines privilege information, they share the same

thinking processes. Art Young says, "Reasoning by analogy and communicating by metaphor are

generally recognized as strategies of successful thinkers and writers in every discipline" (Lies, 1993, p. 11). It makes sense then that "there is a convincing literature base showing that teachers in a variety of content areas at all levels have used poetry for many years to enrich their curricula and assist in the learning of concepts, procedures, theories, and terms" (Kane & Rule, 2004, p. 658). Writing performance improves when students write often and have rich writing experiences across content areas. Writing increases reading comprehension (Nagin, 2003). As mentioned earlier, poetry is accessible to virtually all students and extends accessibility to all other areas of study. Poetry is an academic cross-trainer.

Within English. Poetry's first stop is across genres but still within the discipline of English. Nancie Atwell writes, "If poetry has become a workhorse of my curriculum for its brevity and generosity, I count on the opportunities it affords me, as a writing teacher of all genres, to explore the writer's craft with my students" (Atwell, 2006a, pp. 3-4). Atwell says that the daily poem addresses all of her writing lessons except paragraphing (although one might argue that stanza breaks are a reasonable entry into the discussion). She uses poetry to discuss the importance of strong leads and conclusions, the power of first person voice, how to use repetition effectively, and the importance of excellent diction. Poetry teaches writing and grammar conventions by showing what happens when poets take them away or exploit them for effect. The absence of capitalization in the work of e. e. cummings permits students to feel the effect of a run-on sentence (Simmons, 2014, pp. 3-4).

Poetry reading is a natural instrument for writing instruction, an area that is often minimized in English classrooms that emphasize comprehending and analyzing literature (Petrosky, 1991). Applebee (1966) found in his study that teachers taught composition primarily

by correcting mistakes on student work. Poems can maximize the opportunity for observing writing techniques in a short amount of space.

The creative elements of poetry really shine when taken into other content areas. Much of traditional education still centers around students trying to zero in on the one right answer, but there is no one correct way to write a poem. Poetry in the content areas can encourage students to look at ideas differently and see new connections and perspectives. Teachers in these areas can promote students' creativity by rewarding their intellectual risk-taking and encouraging them to imagine situations from other viewpoints (Connor-Greene, Murdoch, Young, & Paul, 2005).

Working with information in a new way can demonstrate to what extent students learned the information. A high score on a traditional test may convince both the student and teacher that the student has a firm grasp of the information, but using the material in new ways could reveal gaps in understanding. Poetry activities can be used prior to a final assessment to allow students to gain a deeper understanding of material (Szabo, 2008). They can also illuminate new solutions to a problem, help students retain information by immersing it in creative ideas, or offer students another way to be successful with the information (Kirman, 2007).

Science. Science lends itself especially well to poetry. Science teacher Bill Keagle points out that his students need poetic powers of observation when taking field notes, otherwise they skip details and "don't see the world all that clearly, and that makes them poor scientists" (Graves, 1992, p. 90). Abisdris and Casuga say that "the language of science is metaphorical in nature. Due to the nature of certain abstract concepts, metaphors are used constantly by scientist to help them understand and conceptualize knowledge" (2001, p. 59). They offer as example Robert Frost's 1936 couplet "The Secret Sits" written from the point of view of an electron:

We dance round in a ring and suppose

But the Secret sits in the middle and knows

(cited in Abisdris & Casuga, 2001, p. 61)

One might presume that such metaphors are the stuff of more mature scientists, but that would discount the work of a third grade class who turned their daily observations of tadpoles into a collective poem:

Tadpoles

A web of jelly,

thousands of grapes.

The eggs of tadpoles like periods,

then commas floating away—

curling up like question marks,

then straightening out like

exclamation points, to help them break free.

Their heads fatter, they look like nails,

jelly around their tails.

Legs push up, beady eyes, beady tongue.

They'll get lungs to breathe in air.

to become frogs.

(Steinbergh, 1999, p. 328)

Science poems can help students synthesize information and commit it to memory as evidenced in this except from "Amethyst" by Audrey Rule:

The amethyst crystal's six-sided spike

Is reflecting and glassy, terminating like

A hexagonal pyramid, but that's an illusion,

Its symmetry's trigonal—an easy confusion.

Amethyst crystals crowd on a surface,

Coating, encrusting, with glittery purpose

Of lining all cracks and filling each hole

Cementing the voids with beauty—the goal

(Kane & Rule, 2004, p. 661)

Another teacher asks her eighth-grade science students to write a poem about a light beam's obstacle-ridden journey from the sun to the earth. The assignment forces students to approach learned information a second time and address it using both intellectual and creative muscles (Lies, 1993).

Student responses to such activities include: "I can remember better because of the visual" (Kane & Rule, 2004, p. 681); "It made me think in a different way. Textbook material is fine for automatons, but we are humans and humans enjoy using their imaginations"; and "I usually forget things after the test is over, but by having funny ways to think of and remember things, I remember them longer" (Lies, 1992, p. 12).

Donald Graves (1992, p. 155) merges the science and literature camps when he writes about his admiration for the monarch butterfly as "more than an insect in a textbook" that tells about its "body parts and habits." In combining his book knowledge and the beauty of the monarch, its garden, and the miracle of its flight with his "own anxiety about the onset of an

early frost," he finds the mixture of hard facts, aesthetics, and his personal involvement to be a natural fit for poetry. He writes:

> For too long we have believed the notion that science is quite separate from personal feelings. Somehow the scientist is the cold, calculating, objective human, distant from the normal emotions of ordinary beings. We have erred equally in the direction of saying that when we express feelings we do not need facts. Yet it is precisely my knowledge of the monarch's hazardous and lengthy migration that gives rise to my feelings about the butterfly. (Graves, 1992, p. 155)

Social Studies. Teachers use poetry to tap into the emotions students often find inaccessible in textbooks. Students can use poems from a time and place in history as primary documents to understand more personal accounts (Kane and Rule, 2004). Poems in the book *I Never Saw Another Butterfly* (Volavkova, 1978) connect the authors, children in the concentration camp at Terezin, to children today, allowing them to feel "how the tentacles of the Final Solution reached out to entrap all Jews, including children" (Danks, 1995, p. 360). History told by other children lands more personally than might articles written by adults.

Civil War documentarian Ken Burns points out that history is not only the acts of presidents and generals, but is "built on the backs of ordinary people. If we are to connect children to the world and to history itself, we must help them see themselves as participants" (Graves, 1992, p. 162). Reading and writing poetry about abstract concepts such as injustice and war helps solidify those concepts in students' minds and "engages children in living history" (p. 160).

Math. One might attempt to relegate math unfairly to the land without artistic expression. After all, most math test questions have one right answer. Still, poetry can be used so students

can explain the relationship between the numerator and the denominator, decimals and percentages (Kane and Rule, 2004), what happens in multiplication, why one flips the second fraction in division, pi, and the relationships between *sine, cosine,* and *tan.* It can remove mystery from math and illustrate whether or not students understand the processes they use.

Mindsets for Success

This rationale began with the claim that poetry is accessible to all and grants access to all. Here is where the "all" comes into view. "All" means more than school subject areas, political insight, inner emotions, and elevated language skills. "All" refers to skills that students cultivate in poetry and can put to use to cultivate the life they wish to live; the skills that make them valued employees, employers, friends, family members, and citizens. This is not to suggest that everyone who reads the work of Shel Silverstein will become a millionaire. It is to suggest that students who engage in poetic pursuits will learn valuable tools that they can generalize successfully to other areas of their lives, namely (1) Becoming lost in wonder (2) living with ambiguity (3) being comfortable with chaos and (4) synthesizing different layers of awareness and meaning.

1. Lost in Wonder. Writing poetry requires the writer to get lost in his observation of a thing. This natural state of mind for younger students can wane with age and distraction. Reading and writing poetry encourages focus and a sense of wonder (Tsujimoto, 1988). Coleman writes that "a challenge in modern management can be to keep ourselves and our colleagues invested with wonder and purpose" (2012, p. 3). In advocating poetry use in school leadership, Richardson suggest that administrators would do well to embody the poet's ability to see the enchantment in everyday routine. Although principals "may not be concerned with enchantment,

the need for transforming the dull and the routine into something more interesting is evident"

(2003, p. 102) and observing like a poet may lead them to see with fresh eyes and find potential

in the problematic.

2. **Living with Ambiguity.** Tolerating ambiguity is one of the "essential attributes of the

creative mind" (Lies, 1993, p. 6). Poetry students learn to hold and appreciate plurality and open-

endedness. They come to understand that it is okay to leave a poem with unanswered questions,

and that a poem's meaning might shift over a lifetime (Lockward, 1994). Often problems in life

mirror poetry in that they can be seen from many perspectives and have several possible

solutions (Myers, 2005). Life is not black and white. Problems do not come with answer keys.

Poetry *provides practice in weighing possibilities, making decisions, and being open to revision.*

3. *Comfort in the Chaos.* "The secret of artists and other creative people throughout the

millennia…is that they know how to collaborate with chaos." (Myers, 2005, p. 13). Creative

people are not in the business of mass production. Each new project begins in uncertainty (Ryan,

1996). The hallmark of a successful creative person is their willingness to throw themselves into

the new and uncertain, and trust that something worthwhile will take shape. "Business leaders

live in multifaceted, dynamic environments. Their challenge is to take that chaos and make it

meaningful and understandable. Reading and writing poetry can exercise that capacity,

improving one's ability to better conceptualize the world and communicate it" (Coleman, 2012,

p. 2). Richardson (2003) argues that schools are also places of complexity that benefit when

leaders focus on people's needs, take time to notice patterns and gain new insights, and

communicate those insights reliably.

4. **Synthesizing.** Sidney Harman, founder of Harmon industries, told *The New York*

Times, "I used to tell my senior staff to get me poets as managers. Poets are our original systems

thinkers. They look at our most complex environments and then reduce the complexity to something they begin to understand" (Coleman, 2012, p. 2). Poets engage in deep awareness that requires attending to complexity and understanding *how* they attend to it. Myers says this is akin to having part of the mind participating fully in a dream while another part of the mind quietly observes the participation, much like Alice trying to wake herself out of Wonderland. The unconscious mind perceives with directness and simplicity; it wants what it wants and feels what it feels. The conscious mind tempers and civilizes those perceptions (Myers, 2005).

Peter Elbow says this is the difference between reason and imagination. First-order thinking is creative and intuitive while second-order thinking is controlled. First-order domination results in undisciplined and uncensored creativity while second-order domination results in overly disciplined and structured critical thought. Merging the two sides brings out the best in each (cited in Lies, 1993, p. 4).

Poets, as Harmon noted, are keenly skilled at bridging the divides, concentrating until the voices speak as one, using language to discover what they did not know (Duke & Jacobsen, 1983), and then conveying it so that others will understand. Writing a poem requires meaning to find form. Trying to find the best form sets the imagination in search of meaning until it arrives at new and more profound understanding than perhaps even the writer knew was there (Connor-Greene, Murdoch, Young, & Paul (2005), p. 215).

5. Willingness to Revise and Collaborate. One of the marks of true poetry students is their willingness and desire to revise. It is the natural progress of students who understand their writing as an expression of their valid voices. They know that what they have to say matters, so they want to say it well. They concern themselves less with being correct and more with being strong and effective (Lies, 1993; Shelnutt, 1991).

Revision engenders collaboration because student writers want feedback from their peers (Mahiri & Sablo, 1996). Poetry is a form of collaboration (Dymoke & Hughes, 2009) because the poet and the reader collaborate to create meaning (Yaron, 2008). Spoken word poets collaborate with their audiences' reactions (Fisher, 2003). *Workshopping* is the selecting and sharing of work to receive feedback. It helps the poet understand how the poem lands with an audience and how it can be made even stronger. Members of literacy communities who share the belief that the art of truth telling is necessary, healthy, and powerful, prize the opportunity to workshop their poems (Fisher, 2005, p. 115).

Employers similarly value revision and collaboration skills because they want workers who are more concerned with best possible solution instead of ones that can simply meet the criteria of correctness. When something does not work, employers want workers who seek to find a better way. Morgan, Lange, and Buswick (2013) discovered that employers who incorporated poetry into their training saw crossover between the revision and collaboration skills of poetry and on-the-job performance.

6. Building Relationships. It is difficult to find a workplace (or a family member or friend) who does not benefit from the ability to build relationships. Relationship building can be the difference between a simple misunderstanding and a lawsuit, the difference between a doctor whose empathy for patients makes them more likely to figure out what is wrong, and the hurried doctor whose unwillingness to put the patient before the chart makes them more likely to misdiagnose. When people do not have their needs met, they "become shortsighted, focused on themselves, and consequently ignore the organization. This leads to a dehumanized workplace where" people put up walls and find other ways to feed their hungry spirits (Richardson, 2003, pp. 95-95).

Coleman writes of a program in Medical Humanities and Arts that now includes poetry in the curriculum to enhance empathy and compassion in doctors. "The intense empathy developed by so many poets is a skill essential to those who occupy executive board suites and regularly need to understand the feelings and motivations of board members, colleagues, customers, suppliers, community members, and employees" (Coleman, 2012, p. 2).

Language Skills

All students need to know how to use language because vows of silence are notoriously tough to keep. Northrop Frye insists that the study of one's native language "is the most practical subject in the world: you can't understand anything or take any part in your society without it" (Frye, 1964, p. 14).

According to W. S. Merwin, poetry seeks to resonate with readers in ways that other genres do not (Myers, 2005), so it uses language differently and with special emphasis (Fenton, 2002). Language, the raw material of poetry, comes with limitations and pitfalls just like the raw materials of other art mediums but also provides opportunities for the artist. Sculptors find ways to make soft curves in stone, painters create depth on a flat surface, and poets stretch "the resources of language beyond their ordinary power" (Korg, 1959, p. 5) to communicate ideas that previously could not be articulated.

This section addresses some of the important devices poets use to sculpt language and benefits that cultivating such expertise affords students. These lists are not comprehensive, for that is beyond the scope of this research; nor do they seek to overstate the benefits of poetic language study to students. The purpose is not to ensure a society in which each member is a prolific poet. It is not necessary for every student to enter the workforce ready to write a

Shakespearean sonnet. It *is* essential they know the power of words and how to harness them to clearly express complex ideas, hear beyond the linguistic clumsiness they are certain to encounter, and respond in ways that will improve the situations life presents them. Poetry stands uniquely qualified to facilitate such an end.

Diction. Just as Steiner (1978) noted vocabulary as a type of difficulty for poetry readers, so does it present challenge—and opportunity—to poetry writers. Howard Gardner believes "the poet must be superlatively sensitive to the shades of meaning of a word" (Gardner, 1983, pp. 75-83). Mark Twain advised aspiring writers, "The difference between the *almost right* word and the *right* word is really a large matter—'tis the difference between the lighting-bug and the lightning" (Bainton, 1890, pp. 87-88).

Over half a century later, George Orwell, apparently fed up with imprecise language, wrote:

> The writer either has a meaning and cannot express it, or he inadvertently says something else, or he is almost indifferent as to whether his words mean anything or not. This mixture of vagueness and sheer incompetence is the most marked characteristic of modern English prose…(which) consists less and less of WORDS chosen for the sake of their meaning, and more and more of PHRASES tacked together like the sections of a prefabricated hen-house. (Orwell, 2010, p. 457)

The poet's quest for the right word is real and eternal. It would be easy to think that the best way to find the right word is to know a great many definitions. It certainly helps to possess a vast vocabulary, but even more beneficial is to be experienced in a word's uses, denotations and connotations, archaic meanings and slang uses (Steiner, 1978). Poets must decide if they will select easily understood, everyday language, or choose a style that is farther removed. They must

decide if they are to place words in their recognized uses, exploit and bend them into something different, or invent a new word altogether. English, deriving from multiple etymologies and encompassing numerous dialects, offers ample alternatives. Like a chess game, each possible move may result in a dramatically different effect (Strachan & Terry, 2000).

Beyond possession of a rich vocabulary is the need to know how words affect each other. Korg explains that a word, in any genre, is like a lump of clay molded by the words around it. The more precise the combination of words, the more their meanings are narrowed and focused. "In poetry this same process is carried to an extreme; the words are whetted against each other so their edges of meaning are made far sharper than usual" (Korg, 1959, p. 38). "The poet's real achievement lies, not so much in picking the right word, as in creating a context for which there is some one word that is right." (p. 33).

Korg illustrates this using Macbeth's proclamation, "Life is a tale told by an idiot" (Shakespeare, 2005, Act 5, Scene 5), after Macbeth learns of his wife's death:

What equivalent expressions are there…? We could say "a confused tale, an incoherent tale, a senseless, garbled, meaningless tale." But it becomes obvious that no collection of adjectives can approach the effect of Shakespeare's phrase. The idiot's recital is not merely a babble of incoherent sounds, but "a tale"; that is, it has some recognizable meaning and consecutiveness. But since it is an idiot's tale, it has only enough sense to be stupid. Its stupidity is offensive, it makes the hearer grit his teeth with irritation, but it is also pitiful. Macbeth is not merely saying that life is senseless, therefore; he is also suggesting that it is senseless in a way that arouses this particularly harrowing mixture of feelings. And Shakespeare's phrase is more than an emphatic way of saying that life is

meaningless; it also brings a fairly complicated attitude to bear on the fact. (Korg, 1959, p. 38)

Imagery. Poets use imagery to appeal to the reader's senses. The reader takes these images into his imagination and makes associations that the poet might not have even considered. "The more vivid the poet's imagery, the more the reader's own imagination comes into play, so that the poet and the reader become partners in this word play of the imagination" (Briley, 1983, p. 294).

Poet Anne Marx was a Jewish and German-born poet who, at the age of 23, arranged for her and her younger sisters to escape Germany during Hitler's rule. This excerpt from her poem "Trembling Like a Woman Desired" uses stark and spare imagery to capture the horror of a young girl in a concentration camp armed only with her last bit of perfume (Briley, 1983, p. 295):

Before they herded her

into the final gangway,

she poured all the perfume

between her budding breasts

Trembling like a woman desired,

head held high, she stepped

into the chamber of showers,

oblivious to the smell of gas.

Strong imagery can also deliver us to happier possibilities, as in "The Toaster" by

William Jay Smith:

A silver-scaled Dragon with jaws flaming red

Sits at my elbow and toasts my bread.

I hand him fat slices, and then, one by one,

He hands them back when he sees they are

done.

(Smith, 1990, p. 17)

How many children (and adults for that matter) would be tickled by the possibility of

having a pet dragon with the ferocious potential to breathe fire, but the devotion to toast their

bread? The reader can see and feel the silver scales, and identify with the comfort of having a pet

at one's elbow. The image of fat bread toasting pulls at the reader's own images of a parent

preparing breakfast for them, while the image of food over an outdoor flame reminds the reader

of a crackling campfire—maybe with s'mores.

Imagery is what makes the reader feel like they are there with the poet, and sharing in the

poet's experience. A poet uses imagery to pull at the reader's senses and invite the reader to join

him.

Personification, the attributing of human qualities to the non-human, allows the poet to

create new ways to interact with animals, objects, and abstractions. Personified, they can be

given motives and intentions, be blamed, lauded, and held accountable. In this excerpt from "My

Number," Billy Collins personifies death in an attempt to negotiate with it:

Is Death miles away from this house,

reaching for a widow in Cincinnati

  or breathing down the neck of a lost hiker

  in British Columbia?

…Or is he stepping from a black car

parked at the dark end of the lane,

shaking open the familiar cloak,

its hood raised like the head of a crow,

and removing the scythe from the trunk?

Did you have any trouble with the directions?

I will ask, as I start talking my way out of this.

(Collins, 2002, p. 15)

Poets can use the device to allow the reader to view life through the personified "mind" and discover entirely new worldviews, as seen in Alice Briley's "Flower Beetle":

Mighty am I

For where I walk

Horizons tremble

On their stalk.

The world is golden

To its brink

And I—and I—am god

I think.

(Briley, 1983, p. 294)

In personifying the beetle, Briley invites the reader to understand its diminutive stature

and experience the bigness of the beetle essentially morphing into Leonardo DiCaprio

screaming, "I'm the king of the world!" Personification is yet another tool at the disposal of the

poet to allow the reader to multiply his or her perspectives.

Symbolism and Allusion. Symbolism is the practice of using symbols to stand for other,

perhaps more significant, ideas or meanings. A dove commonly symbolizes peace, the lamb

symbolizes innocence, a red rose symbolizes true love. Using symbols allows the poet to layer

meaning and present a richer text. Sara Teasdale effectively uses symbols in her poem "Wild

Asters":

In the spring I asked the daisies

If his words were true,

And the clever, clear-eyed daisies

Always knew.

Now the fields are brown and barren,

Bitter autumn blows,

And of all the stupid asters

Not one knows.

(Teasdale, 2012, p. 35)

Daisies bloom in spring and represent young love in all of its *clear-eyed* naivety. *Asters* bloom in late summer and early fall. *Asters, brown and barren* fields, and *autumn* symbolize aging, the passing of time, and the wisdom that comes from experience. A daisy will fall for any handsome, sweet-talker's line, but the aster has grown cautious and *bitter.*

Allusion is closely related to symbolism. Symbolism's references are largely universal regardless of culture; rain represents sadness, red represents love or anger, a mirror represents truth. An allusion differs in that it represents a specific event or piece of literature, so the reader has to be familiar with that work to fully understand the reference. Allusions appear in everyday speech. One must be familiar with the story of the Trojan Horse in order to understand the caution, "Beware Greeks bearing gifts." Only someone who remembers Cinderella would understand that "the car is about to turn into a pumpkin" means that it is getting late. Frost uses allusion in "Nothing Gold Can Stay."

Nature's first green is gold,

Her hardest hue to hold.

Her early leafs a flower;

But only so an hour.

Then leaf subsides to leaf.

So Eden sank to grief,

So dawn goes down to day.

Nothing gold can stay.

(Frost, 2002, p. 222)

Eden sank to grief alludes to the Bible's Garden of Eden and compares the finality of the leaf falling from the tree to man falling from grace. In invoking the allusion, Frost layers the enormity of Christianity's inciting incident into his eight-line poem.

Parini compares symbols and allusions to stones tossed in a pond. The huge first splash conveys the most immediate level of meaning, but further and more nuanced meanings radiate long after and resonate with the reader (Parini, 2008, p. 74).

Metaphor. This part of the discussion will refer to metaphor's general definition as a comparison and will include metaphor's slightly less powerful sibling simile, its technical cousin analogy, and its extended and slightly over-the-top uncle conceit.

The use of metaphor poses challenge beyond what is typically spelled out in a high school English class. According to poet Robert Frost, "The metaphor whose manage we are best taught in poetry—that is all there is of thinking. It may not seem far for the mind to go but it is the mind's furthest" (1995, p. 726). Myra Cohn Livingston agrees: "For me, the finest poems are those that use metaphor well, because they enable us to see, for the first time, images we might never have imagined for ourselves. Once seen, they become a part of us, enriching our perceptions and our lives" (Livingston, 1991, p. 94). In metaphor, the poet allows us to understand one thing in terms of another so that the reader can "comprehend partially what cannot be comprehended totally: our feelings, aesthetic experiences, moral practices, and spiritual awareness" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 193).

In *Metaphors We Live By*, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980) argue that metaphors are more than a poetic device, but concepts that govern our daily functioning. They offer as example the metaphor *argument is war* and demonstrate how it plays out in our daily discourse. We refer to claims as *indefensible*, acknowledge criticisms as being *on target*, *attack*

or *shoot down* weak arguments, and ultimately view the argument in terms of who *won* or *lost.* Our concepts of argument mirror our metaphor.

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) ask us to imagine a culture in which argument is instead viewed as a dance. Performers neither *gain* nor *lose ground*, but instead perform together with the goal of being balanced. "It would seem strange even to call what they were doing 'arguing.' Perhaps the most neutral way of describing this difference between their culture and ours would be to say that we have a discourse from structured in terms of battle and they have one structured in terms of dance" (p. 5).

Metaphors are thoughts so commonly enacted in language that we rarely consider them, yet they shape our actions. "Research in the social and cognitive sciences makes it increasingly plain that metaphorical thinking influences our attitudes, beliefs, and actions in surprising, hidden, and often oddball ways" (Geary, 2012, p. 3). Metaphorical thinking shapes how we see the world and our place in it. Says Robert Frost:

> What I am pointing out is that unless you are at home in the metaphor, unless you
>
> have had your proper poetical education in the metaphor, you are not safe
>
> anywhere. Because you are not at ease with figurative values: you don't know the
>
> metaphor in its strength and its weakness. You don't know how far you may
>
> expect to ride it and when it may break down with you. You are not safe with
>
> science; you are not safe in history. (1995, p. 720)

Metaphor surrounds us and informs us regardless of whether we acknowledge it. Scientists, historians, philosophers, and politicians work through metaphor. What separates poetry is that the writer and the reader actively acknowledge metaphor's use (Parini, 2008, p. 10). In this sense, poetry appears to be uniquely equipped to help students explore how language

shapes their thoughts and to determine for themselves how they will allow it to inform their beliefs and worldviews.

Compression: Quincy Jones and the Coke Bottle. Record producer Quincy Jones spoke to *Life Magazine* in 1985 about the pressure of managing the many talents (and egos) of the artists recording "We Are the World." When it came time to arrange solos, his associate producer said it was "like vocal arranging in a perfect world." Jones replied dryly, "It's like putting a watermelon into a Coke bottle" (Breskin, 1985, p. 45). Such is the beauty and challenge of compression in poetry. Compression refers to spare writing that packs a lot of punch (Mole, 1994, p. 87).

On the most basic level, compression can mean cutting any word the poet does not absolutely need, such as an overstating adjective where a noun will suffice, or a preposition or article that seems to get in the way. On a broader level, compression refers to concentrated language and the layering of multiple meanings into a single representation. Steiner pointed to this as one of the chief contributors of difficulty in poetry:

> Because it is ontologically economical—another difference from prose—the language of the poem implicates a surrounding and highly active context, a corpus, possibly an entire world of supporting, echoing, validating, or qualifying material whose compass underwrites its own concision…A poet can crowd his idiom, his landscape of motion, with the minutiae of history, of locale, of technical process…He can cram Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise with gossip so private that elucidation hinges on an almost street-by-street intimacy with thirteenth-century Florence. (1978, p. 265)

The level of concentration rarely found in prose both challenges and sharpens the senses, leaving the reader to mull over the words and find his own meaning inside the ambiguity (Parini, 2008, p. 36).

Sound effects. Long before the invention of print, poems were communicated orally. Sound mattered most (Strachan & Terry, 2000). Despite the prevalence of poetry appearing on the page, we are still drawn to it sounds. We feel poetry's drumbeat and get catchy lyrics stuck in our heads (Parini, 2008). "Language must find its music before it can become poetry" (Neale, 1983, p. 255), and it exists even for the silent reader. A poem's sound and structure is as meaningful as its content (Csikszentmihalyi, 2013). This is more than making language pretty; it is understanding how to use the sounds of words to create resonance with the reader that regular language does not. Students who cultivate this skill elevate into more critical use of language.

Following are some of the tools poets use as sound engineers. The list is not exhaustive, but presents key elements to illustrate the category's importance. It will first address the "percussion" section of rhythm and meter, then the harmonies of alliteration, assonance, and consonance, then the special category of rhyme. It will conclude with a short excerpt from Coleridge's "Kubla Kahn" that shows what the "orchestra" sounds like when all the sections play together.

Rhythm and meter. Technical discussions about rhythm and meter are often met by poetry students' glazed eyes, which is sad given that poetic rhythm beats in us all. Louis Untermeyer crystalizes this idea in *The Pursuit of Poetry* (2000), suggesting that man inherited poetry from a universe framed in rhythm (from the Greek word *rhythmos* meaning *measured motion)* (Corn, 2008, p. xviii). The rhythmic precision of the planets' movement created seasons, ocean tides, and periods of day and night. Man came to the earth imbued with its rhythms in his

heartbeat, breath, and sleep cycle. "The poet speaks for his fellowmen when he verbalizes these rhythms. He becomes the interpreter of man's inarticulate responses not only by articulating his emotions but also by giving them a form" (Untermeyer, 2000, p. 23).

The argument, then, is that writing with rhythm should be as natural as taking a breath. Indeed, there are writers who seem to write as naturally as musicians who play by ear or dancers who whose feet seem to know what to do without instruction. Poetry probably has its roots in such natural composing when traveling bards pulled together the news of the day in verse for the largely uneducated masses, but that changed as poetry became a studied, scholarly pursuit. Much of early English poetry was composed in formal meter, and *that* is the part that has glazed over many a modern eye.

Meter refers the specific counts of syllables and how they are stressed. *Meter* originates from the Greek word for *measure,* so meter literally means the measurement of a poem. Most high school students become familiar with iambic pentameter, the most commonly used meter in English, while studying Shakespeare. Meter's two-word description explains how a line of poetry is measured. This is where poetry students may begin to wish for a decoder ring.

A poet who embraces this vocabulary is likely keen to study the sound and structure of poetry closely. Writing in meter does not come naturally to today's students because they were not raised on it. Formal meter feels foreign, but understanding it and being able to converse in it is as important to poetry students as is immersion to the serious foreign language student. If you want to understand the people, the history, and the culture, you have to learn the language. Skipping the difficulty instead of reckoning with it as a tool for understanding and growth blunts progress (Oliver, 1994; Pinsky, 2013).

Frankly, it is not advised to have this conversation with beginning students who would do better to come to poetry through play and experimentation with simpler forms. Glyn Maxwell says that teaching such formal metrics to young writers is like "putting a rock in their way" (2013, p. 85), while Mary Oliver says it is "a defeating way to begin" because "most students will simply struggle beyond the fair return of their time and effort" (Oliver, 1994, pp. 15-16).

Even when poets shun the confines of metrical regularities, they still create coherence through language. "Students can hear, understand, and enjoy the jazz rhythms of a Langston Hughes or the syncopations of an e. e. cummings or the suggestive instabilities of such diverse voices as Walt Whitman, Anne Sexton, Robert Lowell, and Adrienne Rich" (Cobbs, 2005, p. 32). In listening to great poetry, students learn to create and orchestrate mood in their own poems. "Short staccato lines for excitement; a variety of lengths for mystery; longer languid lines for a dreamy quality" (McPhillips, 2014, p. 167).

Most poetry written over the last one hundred years falls under the misnomer *free verse*, meaning it is free from formal metrical design. Free verse is *not* free from design all together. Formless poetry does not exist (Oliver, 1994, p. 67; Parini, 2008, p. xii). Free verse "sets up, in terms of sound and line, a premise or an expectation, and then, before the poem finishes, it makes a good response to this premise. This is the poem's design. What it sets up in the beginning it sings back to, all the way, attaining a *felt* integrity" (Oliver, 1994, p. 68).

Free verse relies more heavily on the visual dimension of a poem's line breaks to convey meaning and affect sound. Line breaks can convey tones of heft with solid, lengthy lines, or airiness with shorter ones. It can convey order with even line breaks or mix the lengths to convey agitation. It can use indentation and punctuation to cause the reader to stutter or linger (Boisseau, Wallace, & Mann, 2008), or enjambment to hurry the reader from one line to the next (Finch,

2015; Oliver, 1994). Armour (1994, p. 60) showed how a fourth-grade student used line breaks to recreate the motion of a baseball flying about the field and turn the reader into a sports announcer.

When someone hits a baseball

It goes soaring

across the field

And lands on

the soft grass

And rolls for ten

or more seconds,

And someone goes

running after it

picks it up

And throws it

to first base

But he's too late

the runner's already home

-Donald Welch

A frequent concern of teachers is that requiring students to work within a poetic form will hinder their creativity. They do not want to be a teacher who shoehorns a student's freedom of expression into a box that does not fit. The research offers hope to these teachers by explaining

that students benefit from a balance of freedom and structure, especially when they are starting out. Poetry students, like students of other arts, need time to imitate to practice their skills. No one bats an eye about a student learning to paint, sing, play an instrument, or dance by imitating the best; but writers practicing by imitation are often charged with plagiarism. Writing students need room to practice and emulate the masters so that they can grow their skills and cultivate their own voices (Dorfman & Cappelli, 2007; Gallagher, 2011; Oliver, 1994).

Womelsduff (2005) noted how structure can provide a sense of security to students who may feel overwhelmed by complete freedom:

> Several decades ago a belief became fashionable that school playgrounds should not have fences because they would inhibit children's creative play and sense of freedom. The opposite proved true: With no boundaries, no safe edges, the students felt insecure and huddled in the playground's center. When the fences were reinstalled, the students used every inch of the space; they were secure, knowing that they would not accidentally run into the street or be snatched by a stranger (p. 23).

Womelsduff found success by presenting an unfamiliar form to students with lots of models, then discussing how to approach the form so that their original and meaningful ideas had a place to gather and grow. She notes that she was unprepared for the high quality of work her students produced, and that some of her students were embarrassed that they had written something so beautiful. Womelsduff concludes that the structure gave her students the freedom to write well.

Santesso (2008) notes that Westminster School, Britain's leading school between 1600 and 1750, produced poets such as Dryden, George Herbert, Ben Jonson, and Abraham Cowley. Westminster boys, as there were called, devoted a great deal of time to

producing playful poetry that adhered to specific forms popular at the time. Structure channeled rather than hindered their expression.

   Repetition. Alliteration, assonance, and consonance work with repetition. Alliteration repeats initial consonant sounds, consonance repeats medial consonant sounds, and assonance repeats vowel sounds. More importantly, these sound effects help students bring music and harmony to their poems (Ruby, 1983). They learn that some sounds like *r* and *l* roll mellifluously off the tongue while *m, n,* and *ng* vibrate through nasal passages. *N* sounds whiny and is often negative as in *no* and *non. W* is airy, windy. *M* provides comfort. Most languages use the *m* sound in the word for *mother. M* is the sound of a contented baby, kissing, and relishing food. *Om* is meditative (Bagliore, 1983).

   Repetition of sound contributes to a poem's structure. "In assonant writing each word sound blends (or echoes or contrasts) with the word sounds nearby in the flow; the interplay of word sounds creates patterns and textures, morphs from staccato stabs to luxurious legatos, from frantic allegros to funeral adagios, from solemnity to silliness" (Lydon, 2012, p. 1). A talented poet learns how far to take these effects. Alliteration used sparingly in adjacent words commands attention, but its overuse becomes a tongue twister. Alliteration spaced out takes on the peaks of rolling waves, and the alternation between two or more alliterating sounds brings richness and luster (Drury, 2006).

   Rhyme. One of poetry's heavy hitters of sound, rhyme, carries an echo that "satisfies what must be an ancient need" (Armour, 1994, p. 64). Strachan and Terry (2000, p. 61) theorize that rhyme performs four distinct functions: (1) serving as musical accompaniment to a poem, (2) providing organization, (3) arousing and fulfilling our ears' expectations, and (4) presenting

obstacles for the poet to overcome. Poets demonstrate expertise when they avert easier paths to convey their ideas and satisfactorily navigate the rhyme.

Good rhyming is difficult and provides continual challenge for poets at every level. The poet's job is to make it appear as if exquisite rhyme flowed organically from the pen, hiding any hint that the poet had to arm wrestle it into existence. This is one way that the work of poetry represents the satisfaction of uniting work and play. The youngest poets demonstrate skill by rhyming at all, even nonsense words. Their poems later reveal how well they understand the meanings of their chosen words. Once they know how to use the words correctly, they must confront the decision of whether to sacrifice the meaning for the rhyme (Sloan, 2003). They learn to avoid trite rhymes (such as *love* and *above*) by familiarizing themselves with other works, which reinforces the reading-writing connection. The final and enduring challenge of rhyme is to find that the ones that resonate fully. Beginning rhymes sound like notes plinked on a child's piano. Mature rhymes are masterfully played chords on a Steinway. This is part of what qualifies poetry to help student writers hone their language skills at every level.

Mixing the sound effects. Sounds can be brought together to create effect. Strachan and Terry (2000, p. 51) note Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "Kubla Khan" as an example of a poet orchestrating sound:

In Xanadu did Kubla Kahn

A stately pleasure-dome decree:

Where Alph, the sacred river, ran

Through the caverns measureless to man

Down to a sunless sea.

Strachan and Terry distinguished six unique sound patterns in this single stanza. (1) The rhyme scheme abaab means every line rhymes with at least one other. (2) Each rhyming word at the end of a line alliterates with the word before it: *Kubla Kahn, dome decree, river ran, sunless sea.* Line 4 is a small exception with an added preposition: *measureless to man.* (3) The first line contains assonance of vowel sounds and their mirror image. The vowel sounds in *Xanadu* appear in reverse order in *Kubla Kahn.* (4) Lines 1 and 2 link with consonance of the letter *d.* (5) Lines 2 and 3 are similarly linked with consonance of the letter *r.* (6) Line 4 uses the word *measureless* as a sort of bridge. The first part of the word, *measure,* rhymes with *pleasure* in line 2, while the second part of the word, *less*, repeats in *sunless* in line 5.

Mastering the sounds of poetry provides constant challenge and opportunities for success for students across grade levels. Poems with predictable patterns and rhythms grant beginners access points into the genre, expand their vocabularies, and expose them to language conventions seldom found in conversation and prose. Predictable patterns provide opportunities to engage in text that might be more challenging in prose form. Students may then build on these patterns to explore their own use of language in new and powerful ways (Barton & Booth, 2004).

Poetry taught well is a powerhouse (Burt, 2009). It works because it uses a sense of play to engage students at all levels in a way that balances accessibility with difficulty, teaches students to value and claim agency over their voices, and hones language and critical thinking skills that not only can make learning in other disciplines more meaningful, but can also prepare students for the worlds of work and adult life ahead of them (Morgan, Lange, & Buswick, 2013).

Contextual History of the Standards Movement: An Overview

This research studied three independent standards documents. Understanding why each exists requires a broader knowledge of the role of education in American history. This section provides a contextual history of the Standards Movement by providing a brief overview of major events that shaped and were shaped by education. Additional contextual information will be given in the discussion of each document later in the chapter.

The Early Story: 17th Century to World War II

The early days of American education focused on preparing upper class, male students to attend Harvard with a curriculum centered on classical studies of Latin and Greek, which academics viewed as providing sufficient mental rigor to challenge the mind (Bossing & Cramer, 1965; Stahl, 1965). Education underwent significant change after the Civil War when the country was young and steeped in bloodshed. Some began to see schools as a place to stitch together a less violent national identity. The aims of education began to multiply (Applebee, 1974; Hook, 1979) as schooling spreading to the masses.

The Industrial Revolution, an immigration explosion, and the Progressive movement, including the new discipline of child psychology, heavily influenced education in the early twentieth century. Cities overflowed with people looking for work, but there were not enough jobs to handle the growing population. Sending the adolescents to school eased the competition for jobs, gave the kids on the street a place to go to stay out of trouble, and helped to Americanize the immigrant population (Beane, 2001; Greene, 2000; Howard & Stoumbis, 1970; Wiles, Bondi, & Wiles, 2006). Tensions grew between universities that wanted high schools to conform to their prescribed preparatory curriculum, and high schools that needed to prepare students for a wider range of futures (Hook, 1979).

Edward Thorndike borrowed heavily from physical science methodology to classify, quantify, and predict behavior (Hiebert, Gallimore, & Stigler, 2002) to bring what he and others saw as scientific credibility and cost-cutting efficiency to education. World War I hastened this trend as scientists developed a test to classify recruits according to their potential for different military jobs. The test, the first of its kind, could be administered to large groups, made scoring simple, and evolved into the first administration of the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) in 1926 (Applebee, 1974; Hook, 1979).

This cycle of tension repeated itself in the decades to come. The Depression Era brought high unemployment rates, which resulted in increased school attendance and education costs, and led scientists to look for cheaper options. World War II refocused schools on the war effort and patriotism. Educational opportunity extended to returning veterans through the G. I. Bill doubled the country's college population, while the Baby Boom signaled another wave of increased school enrollment. Surging enrollment brought higher costs and led schools to again call upon scientists to help schools reduce expenses (Hook, 1965; Stahl, 1965).

Sputnik, the Cold War, and the Civil Rights Era

World War II left Americans with a fear of Communism, which spiked in 1957 when the Soviets detonated of a hydrogen bomb and launched Sputnik, the first artificial satellite put into orbit. Many U. S. citizens, some able to see Sputnik flying over their backyards, felt threatened and built underground bomb shelters for their families (Abramson, 2007). The federal government passed the National Defense Education Act in 1958 to pour more than a billion dollars into science, math, and foreign language education. The aim of American education was now to keep the country safe (Abramson, 2007; Hook, 1979).

The end of WWII also influenced the Civil Rights Movement. Images of concentration camps affected American attitudes, and African American soldiers who had fought to end the Nazis' scientific racism returned home less tolerant of racism in their own country (History.com Staff, 2009). The Supreme Court's decision in Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka outlawed racial segregation of public schools (McBride, 2006). Other legislation outlawed discrimination based on race, religion, or nation of origin (Trueman, 2015), and extended educational opportunities to low-income students, females, and students with special needs (U.S. Department of Education—Office of Civil Rights, 1999).

Education theory reflected the dynamics of the time. Progressive education fell from favor, associated with more ideas than substance. Public scrutinized Progressives for lowering expectations to accommodate student comfort, fearing such leniency jeopardizing national security. B. F. Skinner's *Science and Human Behavior* in 1953 advocated behaviorism and behavior-operant conditioning, which suggested that students would learn and behave in response to the teacher's positive and negative reinforcements (McLeod, 2007). His emphasis on observable behaviors lent itself to passive learning, rote memorization, and testing (Hook, 1979).

Harvard-educated psychologist, Jerome Bruner, disagreed with Skinner's approach, believing children to be active participants in their learning who could take on a wide variety of subjects. He wrote, "Any subject can be taught effectively in some intellectually honest form to any child, provided attention is paid to the psychological development of the child" (Schudel, 2016). As a science advisor to Presidents Kennedy and Johnson, he designed curriculum that was widely taught in schools during the 1960s and 1970s.

The Cold War and the Civil Rights Movement represented wildly different interests in society, but were similar in their use of federal action to affect change in education.

Game Changer: *A Nation at Risk*

The 1970s were difficult on many fronts. The Vietnam War sharply divided the country, inflation presented economic hardship, and President Nixon was forced to resign amidst the Watergate Scandal, which further weakened confidence in the government. Racial tension played out in schools as whites fled from cities to suburbs, which re-segregated schools and resulted in the controversial practice of integrating schools through busing (Vinovskis, 1999).

The story of education and the government took on a twist in 1975 when the National Education Association (NEA) joined with other labor unions to form a formidable voting block (Stallings, 2002) and brokered a deal with then candidate Jimmy Carter. NEA backed Carter in exchange for his promise to give education concerns prominence and priority (Siegele, 2014) by creating the new cabinet position of Secretary of Education (Stallings, 2002). This agreement flies under the radar of history, but one could argue it was the inciting incident of education's mass politicization and the creation of the Standards Movement as it is known today.

Republicans viewed Carter's cabinet level post as evidence of the Democrats' gross federal overreach into state control. Republicans traditionally considered education a "soft" issue better left to Democrats, but this violated their belief in small government (Woodring, 1988). When Reagan took office in 1980, he appointed Terrel Bell (Melia, 1989) to the Secretary of Education post with the single instruction to eliminate his own position. Bell set to make the necessary arrangements but hit a snag when he tried to preserve scholarships opportunities such as the G. I. Bill, which he had used to put himself through school. In the end, Bell was politically out-maneuvered and told his plan was dead on arrival in the Senate. He neither succeeded at eliminating his own job or preserving all of the scholarship funding (Woodring, 1988).

It was a dark time for Terrel Bell. Stuck with a department to run and virtually nothing to lose, Bell decided to rally the nation around its schools. Wielding federal authority to which he thought no one was entitled, he appointed the National Commission on Excellence in Education (NCEE) to examine the quality of American education. The Commission's report, *A Nation at Risk (Risk),* pronounced America's poor-quality schools would be the nation's undoing. It cited lowered test scores and increased college remediation classes, and it included hard-hitting language:

> Our Nation is at risk…The educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a Nation and a people…If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war (NCEE, 1983, Introduction).

The strong wording riled the already rattled Cold War America. The report caused such media frenzy that a February 1984 *Newsweek* poll reported that the public was more concerned about education than it was inflation or relations with the Soviet Union (Gardner, 2005). *Risk* successfully linked economic prosperity, freedom, and schools in the public mind. The message clearly defined education's new aim: America's students will ensure the nation's freedom and economic prosperity by achieving top scores on every international test (Rothstein, 2008).

The implications of *Risk*'s uproar reached far. First, *Risk* alerted politicians to education's power to galvanize the public. Reagan, who showed little interest in *Risk* until he saw the media firestorm it caused, made it the centerpiece of fifty-one campaign speeches while seeking reelection (Ansary, 2007). He just as quickly dropped his focus on *Risk* and education after he won a second term. Meanwhile, politicians realized education was a political football useful for

winning elections. This is most telling in Bell's own words from his memoir: "The high political payoff stole the education issue from Walter Mondale—and it cost us nothing" (Ansary, 2007).

Second, *Risk* sparked wide-scale accountability reforms. The language of *Risk* construed education shortcomings as an act of war, making reform an answer to that declaration. Republicans painted Democrats as soft on education. Democrats who wanted to win elections would have to advocate an equally strong stance.

Finally, *Risk* changed how research was used in education decision making. The NCEE ignored readily available research that would have pointed to the role of poverty and other social factors in student achievement, misinterpreted data to make it appear that test scores fell when they actually stayed constant or rose, and omitted in-text citations or endnotes that would have allowed readers to substantiate the report's claims. *Risk*'s inflammatory language distracted from the fact that it had buried the research (Bracey, 1995). In fact, NCEE's chairman scrapped earlier drafts calling them "scholarly in tone" and claiming they "read more like a master's thesis," and would have been "of interest to almost no one" (Gardner, 2005, pp. 118-119). Research was useful to the extent that it supported the NCEE's predetermined conclusions.

This point was underscored when the Department of Energy submitted the *Sandia Report*, which concluded that not only had *Risk* painted an inaccurate picture of American education, but also inspired misguided reform and conflicting initiatives that were unlikely to produce gains. It further cautioned that calls for reform sans acknowledgement of success resulted in unfounded public criticism of public education that was taking its toll on teachers in a way that would hurt future education quality (Huelskamp, 1993, p. 720). President H. W. Bush sent *The Sandia Report* into a lengthy peer review, effectively suppressing its findings during an election year (Bracey, 1995; Project Censored, 1994).

The Standards Movement: From *Risk* to *Common Core*

State governors who rode *Risk*'s wave of public concern back to their home states played an important next step in the Standards Movement. Two notable examples were Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton, who went on to enact education policy as a governor and a president, and North Carolina Governor James Hunt, who went on to be a key player in organizing the push for the Common Core standards.

Although federal interest and participation had grown, policy was still largely left to the states. As noted in the *Sandia Report*, the call for higher standards often included policies that lacked unity at best and were contradictory at worst. The reforms of the 1980s mostly raised graduation requirements and broadened course offerings, but did not substantially change teaching methods or raise student achievement (Wixson, Dutro, & Athan, 2003). In addition, Secretary Bell instituted a wall chart to compared states according to ACT and SAT scores. Recognizing the limitations of collecting data only on college-bound students, governors sought ways to compare K-12 students, adding further fuel to standards discussion (Vinovskis, 1999).

The declining schools narrative continued while the call for a more central, top-down approach to solve the problems of public education gained traction. This shift to strip educators from discussions of education policy is evident in President H. W. Bush's 1989 education summit in Charlottesville, Virginia, that included forty-nine of the fifty governors as well as business leaders and members of the Bush administration. No educators were invited (New York State Education Department, 2009). The closed sessions bypassed Congress and the general public, and limited the ability of the decision makers to engage in thorough discussions with other interested parties. Federal presence in education relied on the governors (Vinovskis, 1999).

The summit released a joint communiqué that reiterated *Risk*'s claim that the nation's

economic policy rested on student achievement. The aim of American education was for students

to come in first on tests. The communiqué included the following:

The President and the nation's Governors agree that a better educated citizenry is the

key to the continued growth and prosperity of the United States…. As a nation, we must

have an educated workforce, second to none, in order to succeed in an increasingly

competitive world economy….We believe that the time has come, for the first time in

U.S. history, to establish clear, national performance goals, goals that will make us

internationally competitive." (Vinovskis, 1999, p. 38)

The communiqué is noteworthy in its clear and public articulation that education

decisions had been removed from the educators. The President and governors now called the

shots. President Bush outlined the summit's six goals for the year 2000 in his 1990 State of the

Union address. The goals included assessments of student performance "in critical subjects at the

4th, 8th, and 12th grades," and that "U. S. students must be first in the world in math and science

achievement" (Vinovskis, 1999, p. 44).

Despite general consensus that common language between states made sense, politicians

reflected public caution about the creation of a national curriculum. Parents largely supported

their local schools, but agreed that something had to be done to fix all the other ones whose

failures were devastating the country. They wanted to raise standards, but did not want to lose

influence on their neighborhood schools. Any resemblance to a national curriculum would have

to be voluntary for states (Wixson, Dutro, & Athan, 2003).

The Department of Education turned to professional teaching organizations to develop

their own content standards, thinking that their central governance would bring unity to states'

efforts. The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) published its *Curriculum and Evaluation Standards for School Mathematics* in 1989 to generally positive reception and was seen as a model for other professional organizations seeking to build their own content standards (Wixson, Dutro, & Athan, 2003). This call for content standards resulted in the writing of *Standards for the English Language Arts,* the second document in this study.

President Clinton, who had been a key player at the Charlottesville summit, enacted the Goals 2000 policy that consisted of a grant program to support states and professional organizations in the development of standards and the implementation of standards-based reform (New York State Education Department, 2009). Most states set to writing their own content standards. This was new ground in states that had previously defined education through course offerings and Carnegie units (Wixson, Dutro, & Athan, 2003).

Texas Governor George W. Bush received over $100 million for his state under the Goals 2000 program and used the funds to build a comprehensive system of standards and aligned assessments (New York State Education Department, 2009) including an assessment required for high school graduation. The published results documented fewer students dropping out, climbing graduation rates, increasing National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) scores, and a narrowing of the achievement gap between white and minority students. Bush called his success the Texas Miracle. With less than six months to go before the presidential election, the March 21, 2000 *USA Today* ran an editorial calling for the Texas accountability system to be implemented nationwide (Carnoy & Loeb, 2002; Haney, 2000).

As with *Risk,* the Texas Miracle did not hold up well to scrutiny. Researchers revealed fraudulent reporting on numbers of students who dropped out, many of whom were minority students who had been retained in grade to avoid having them take the test. *60 Minutes* reported

"the Houston school district reported a citywide dropout rate of 1.5 percent, but educators and experts…put Houston's true dropout rate somewhere between 25 and 50 percent" (Leung, 2004). School officials, who received monetary bonuses for having a low dropout rate, misreported dropouts using acceptable codes such as the student returned to his home country, transferred to another school, or decided to pursue a GED. Professor Walt Haney from Boston College's Center for the Study of Testing, Evaluation, and Educational Policy concluded that some portion of the gains in the tenth-grade state assessment pass rate were "illusory" because the number of students classified as "in special education" (therefore not counted in the school's accountability ratings) doubled between 1994 and 1998. In addition, a Texas court found that the state tests set with discriminatory cut scores that adversely affected minority students (Haney, 2000). Haney's report titled *The Myth of the Texas Miracle in Education* was published August 19, 2000, well before the November presidential election. As with *Risk*, the criticism received comparatively little to no notice. President Bush took office and almost immediately put forth the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, effectively implementing the Texas accountability system nationwide.

NCLB mandated that any school receiving federal funding must demonstrate that 100% of its students scored at the proficient level or above on standardized math and reading tests by 2014. It further required schools to disaggregate their student data according to race, income, English language learners, and students with identified special needs, and report adequate yearly progress for each subgroup (New York State Education Department, 2009). The legislation sidestepped accusations of mandating a national curriculum because states created their own assessments based on their developed content standards, and state participation was technically voluntary. States could decline NCLB's requirements if they also declined federal funding, but economic need ensured that states participated (Wixson, Dutro, & Athan, 2003).

The Department of Education's Strategic Plan for 2002-2007 revealed its support for scientific research that shared Thorndike's ideas of quantitative measurement. Strategic Goal 4 read: "Transform education into an evidence field" (Erickson & Gutierrez, 2002, p. 22). The supporting explanation continued:

> Unlike medicine, agriculture, and industrial production, the field of education operates largely on the basis of ideology and professional consensus. As such, it is subject to fads and is incapable of the cumulative progress that follows from the application of the scientific method and from the systematic collection and use of objective information in policy making. We will change education to make it an evidence-based field. (U. S. Department of Education, 2002, p. 51)

The Department's release of this document seems to make clear that federal funding will go to support only those educational practices which can be classified and proven using quantitative methods (Erickson & Gutierrez, 2002).

President Obama took office in 2009 in the middle of an economic recession which, once again, jeopardized school funding. Schools felt the pressure of NCLB's increasing demands that raised adequate yearly progress benchmarks each year. Schools complained about lack of resources to support and assess students, parents complained about the over-testing of their children, and policy makers complained that the test scores had no comparative value because they were modeled on fifty different sets of standards. Governors believed that the country was ready to reopen discussion of national standards, but wanted to ensure their efforts success.

According to McDonnell & Weatherford (2013), the National Governors Association (NGA) had learned a lot in their attempts to achieve national standards over the preceding twenty years. The Charlottesville conference taught them that closed sessions helped them accomplish

more, but the public preferred transparency. The success of *Risk* demonstrated that they could select research to define and meet their needs. They learned that even when the public echoed the desire for common tools to make comparisons, they would object to anything that looked like the federal government usurping state control of schools. Success hinged on the appearance of voluntary participation. Finally, they knew that such an endeavor would be costly and require sufficient funding from private industry.

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation financially backed the Common Core State Standards Initiative (CCSSI), including over $70 million in Core related grants and another $35 million to the NGA and Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO, the organization for state superintendents of education and their governing bodies) (CCSSO, 2016) to direct the initiative, essentially funding most of the project (McDonnell & Weatherford, 2013).

Research Use in the Standards Movement

A major criticism of the Standards Movement is its treatment of research. Because it privileges quantitative data, it discounts the possible benefits of artistic pursuits (Erickson & Guiterrez, 2002; Hiebert, Gallimore, & Stigler, 2002; Siskin, 2009). It limits the scope of how poetry and other subjective subjects can contribute to growth and learning (Coulehan, 2010; Heimes, 2011), and keeps invested parties focused on numbers, which prevents them from inquiring about what quantitative data would see as *soft* evidence.

Risk set a precedent for policy makers to use research to define education. McDonnell and Weatherford (2013) detail how policy makers have consistently used research in three stages to achieve their ends.

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Stage one is to define the problem and promote a solution. Defining the problem is important because it sets the dynamic for who be held responsible for the problem and who will benefit from the solution. *Risk* defined the problem by claiming that low test scores posed a national threat. Its inflammatory language held schools responsible and assigned them the burden of proof, while the solution of tougher standards benefitted politicians who were viewed as saving the country from itself.

Stage two is to act quickly and design policy that will "maintain support and blunt opposition" (McDonnell and Weatherford, 2013, p. 6). President H. W. Bush demonstrated this technique when he held the Charlottesville summit to strengthen support for tougher standards while sending the *Sandia Report* into peer review. *Sandia*, oriented in traditional research with clear citations, refuted *Risk*'s unsubstantiated claims. Had *Sandia* received *Risk*'s presidential notoriety, it may have stirred the public to question the role of schools in national security and the economy, and led them to look at national policy (and its policymakers) instead.

Stage three is for building sufficient support and enacting the policy. Building support borrows from stage one's talent for framing information in a self-indulging light. Reform proponents are not as likely to ask if higher standards are necessary as they are to ask, "Don't you agree that our children deserve a world-class education?"

The political use of research precludes the national conversations that some education researchers would like to have. Those conversations would center around questions such as:

(1) Is there sufficient evidence to support standardizing education in a society that values diversity (McCluskey, 2010)?

(2) Do students' scores on international tests predict global competiveness (Mathis, 2010; Tienken, 2012; Tienken, 2011; Rothstein, 2008; McDonnell & Weatherford, 2013)?

(3) Is it beneficial to presume every student wants to go to college (Mathis, 2010; Rothstein, 2008)?

(4) What do we have to learn from other countries about educating our students (Levin, 1998; Berliner & Biddle, 1995; Tan, 2010, Tan & Conway, 2010, Zancanella & Moore, 2014; Furlong, 2008; Archer, 2006; Fairtest, 2007)?

(5) What are the possible unintended consequences of adopting rigorous standards (Koretz, Madaus, Haertel, & Beaton, 1992; Madaus, 1994; Goodson & Foote, 2001; Firestone, Camilli, Yurecko, Monfils, & Mayrowetz, 2000; Bomer & Maloch, 2011; Diamente, 2014; Hinde, 2009; Ketcham, Lewis, & Stotsky, 2014; Gamson, Lu, & Eckert, 2013)?

(6) Is there convincing evidence that the use of rigorous standards raises student achievement (Mathis, 2010; McCluskey, 2010; Whitehurst, 2010; Wang, Haertel, & Walberg, 1993; Elmore, 1993; Hedges & Waddington, 1993; Kliebard, 1993; Peterson, 1993; Singer, 1993; Ritchie, 1971; Kridel, Bullough, & Goodlad, 2007; and Tienken, 2011)?

(7) Does affixing high-stakes tests to standards increase learning (Carnoy & Loeb, 2002; Amrein & Berliner, 2002)?

(8) Are standardized tests designed to withstand threats to reliability, validity, and latent error to such a degree that it is reasonable to use them in high stakes situations (Clarke, Madaus, Horn, & Ramos, 2000; Rhoades & Madaus, 2003)?

(9) How do we ensure that cut scores are reasonable (Glass, 1977 cited in Rhoades & Madaus, 2000; Mathis, 2010)?

(10) What recourse should test consumers have against faulty products (Clarke, Madaus, Horn, & Ramos, 2000; Rhoades & Madaus, 2002)?

Poetry in the Standards—A Catch 22 and an Image Problem

Poetry, as a creative endeavor, faces a bit of a trap with education standards (Tannenbaum, 2006). Anything given prominence in the standards must be easy to test. Putting poetry through the testing battery reduces student involvement to objective treatment where students' responses can be labeled right or wrong, eliminating the personal engagement that makes poetry valuable. If poetry is left out of the standards to preserve its dignity, then it risks relegation to the pile of plans teachers will consider *after* students take the test. In short, including poetry in the standards ensures it will be taught, likely using methods that ensure students will hate it.

Much of what can be learned about national standards and poetry comes from other English-speaking countries that have followed national curricula for many years. Poetry has traveled farther through the standards in these countries, and can provide helpful insights. What follows is a more detailed explanation of the poetry trap and an alternate explanation for why poetry has long posed challenge to English teachers and students, earning it a bit of an image problem.

Poetry as Test Prep

Standards proponents are often careful to stipulate that curriculum is separate from the test, and the presence of a test does not necessitate the attachment of high stakes. That is technically true, but evidence of the test impacting implementation is overwhelming. It would be irresponsible to discuss standards without acknowledging the effects, intended or unintended, of high-stakes tests (Amrein & Berliner, 2002; Au, 2007; NCTE, 2014).

Peter Benton (1984; 1999) surveyed teachers before and after England instituted the National Curriculum with an emphasis on poetry. Because he used most of the same survey questions, his work provides comparisons that studies conducted only after the curriculum change cannot. England's National Curriculum corresponds with high-stakes tests comparable to the high school exit exams in some American states. The 1984 survey revealed that while many teachers saw value in teaching poetry, they were hesitant to present it. Several teachers lacked confidence in their ability or right to comment on a student's poem, treating it as sacred instead of a craft to be cultivated (1984). Some teachers acknowledged that their reverence for published poetry debilitated their ability to teach it, fearing that they would harm the poetry by dissecting it or by not saying enough about it. As a result, they ignored it all together.

By the 1999 survey, schools had implemented the National Curriculum, which required students to both read a wide range of poetry and develop their own distinctive style for writing it. Teachers no longer had the option of ignoring poetry lessons. The later survey showed that more teachers felt comfortable teaching poetry and critiquing student work, but they also had concerns about the effects of the high stakes tests that accompanied the curriculum. "There is a common feeling that, to quote one teacher, 'narrow academic bias' has crept in and that early enthusiasm is in danger of being killed by the too early introduction of the formal essay" (p. 530) to respond to poetry. Because students needed the "right" answer for the test, teachers reported feeling that they spent too much time on test-prep and technicalities. Sixty-five percent of teachers agreed with the statement: "I feel constrained by the examination to spoon-feed my classes rather than let them develop their own views about poems" (p. 530).

Fuller (2010) looked at poetry of students who learned to write with England's National Curriculum. She notes evidence in the students' work suggests they wrote with their eye on the

test. "There was a clear emphasis on aspects of assessment" and "a clear sense of children writing to meet pre-specified criteria…Those criteria appeared to be the surface features of writing rather than the deep features of thought, content, and expression" (p. 159).

Dymoke (2012) found that the deemphasizing (and in some instances discouraging) of poetry in high stakes assessments in England and New Zealand shrank the space for poetry in the curriculum. Teachers expressed regret at the loss of poetry, and only two of the twenty-four teachers studied were said to have "reclaimed poetry for their students from the examination conveyor belt" (p. 32).

Hennessy & McNamara (2011) surveyed 200 Leaving Certificate students in eight post-primary schools in Ireland about their experiences of their respective poetry classes. The curriculum in place at the time sought to move poetry instruction away from dry techniques and toward innovative methods that would cultivate personal, powerful experiences with poetry. The authors observe "the translation of vision into practice is frequently mediated through the lens of assessment and the commodification of knowledge" (p. 208). Pressure to score well on the test confined students to largely passive roles of memorizing and taking notes over the teachers' interpretations. Rote memorization of notes was the most cited study strategy. Individual critical and subjective analysis was the least cited at 1.5% (p. 214). Students discredited their own interpretations with comments such as "I find meanings that are not there," and "my opinion may be wrong" (p. 214). Others said they were not imaginative enough to write their own poems.

These findings corroborate other research. Amabile (1983) found that extrinsic constraints like high-stakes tests "can make the individual reluctant to take risks" (p. 100). London (1989) states "preoccupation with whether or not we are sufficiently prepared for creative enterprises inevitably creates profound barriers to creative enterprises; so does anxiety

about being right or being wrong" (p. 56). Nickerson asserts that fear is "a major reason why children hesitate to express their ideas, especially perhaps unconventional ones. Fear of failure, fear of exposing one's limitations, and fear of ridicule are powerful deterrents to creative thinking, or at least to public exposure of products of creative efforts" (1999, p. 413). Creativity will be a struggle for those under great pressure to conform. Students need to build confidence with successful experiences. They need "an environment that encourages and rewards creative effort" even when that effort is not successful. (Nickerson, 1999, p. 414). Connor-Greene, Murdoch, Young, & Paul (2005) suggest low-stakes, ungraded writing is a better catalyst for student learning than high-stakes tests.

Overcoming Poetry's Image Problem

It is difficult to argue that standards and high-stakes tests are the only reasons why students resist poetry because evidence of negative attitudes predates the Standards Movement. Ruth Groves wrote in 1944 of a senior boy who hypothesized, "I think the reason more pupils do not enjoy poetry is because teachers do not teach us poetry; they just give it to us" (p. 292). Decades later, middle school students responding to Wade and Sidaway's questionnaire indicated that they were actually interested in poetry, but that the teacher's approach led to a negative experience (cited in Cumming, 2007, p. 97).

There is an impressive body of literature to suggest that a great deal of English teachers themselves have negative attitudes toward poetry leftover from their student days, and continue to pass their negativity on to their own students (Berger, 1973; Fuller, 2005; Gutteridge, 1972; Hopkins, 2007; Linaberger, 2004; Mecklenberger, 1970; McVee, Bailey, & Shanahan, 2008). Hughes and Dymoke (2011) researched teacher candidates' attitudes toward poetry and found

they coalesced around these themes: (1) Poetry is boring; (2) Poetry is for the elite; (3) Poetry in inaccessible; (4) Poetry is a frill; (5) Student poetry is too difficult to evaluate; (6) Analysis is at the heart of understanding, and it kills poetry; and (7) Poetry is a solitary art. One participant in their study recalled her English teacher telling the class that she did not like poetry any more than the students did.

Negative teacher attitudes pose an additional challenge to teaching poetry if, as Groves suggested, a child's appreciation for poetry depends on the teacher's appreciation (1944, p. 293). Lambirth, Smith and Steele (2012) encountered challenges of both standards and attitudes. They found that schools in their study that used England's National Curriculum saw poetry flourish when subject leaders (like resource specialists in American schools) took up to provide teachers with poetry resources, planning, and implementation. The subject leaders in the study broke down barriers in teachers' negative attitudes by showing them how poetry could win over students. Teachers began to teach poetry with enthusiasm, and although the curriculum kept poetry in particular units, teachers and subject leaders integrated poetry throughout the other units.

Both teachers and students have been found to warm up to poetry when they realize what it can do (Andrews, 1991; Davis, 1997). Connor-Greene, Murdoch, Young, and Paul (2005) state, "Teachers who assign poetry should not be discouraged if students react negatively when they first hear of the assignment. The transition from negative to positive after writing the poem may reflect a sense of mastery after confronting a difficult challenge" (p. 219). Glenn (2007) found that when students were treated and trained as authentic writers, they began to read like writers with an eye for appreciating the craft of other poets and understanding how they could use similar techniques to improve their own work. Gorlewski and Fogle (2012) discovered that

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when students were prompted to draw on personal responses, they dug deeper, asked more questions overall as well as more sophisticated questions, increased interest, and cultivated better analysis skills. Similarly, Schaefer (1973) found that students responded positively to poetry when the teacher valued their personal experiences with poetry instead of requiring the students to take on the teacher's impression of a poem. Lockward (1994) asserts that teachers become better equipped to teach students to write poetry when they practice writing it themselves.

Travers (1984) asserts that the teacher makes the difference in poetry. Teachers who share the poet's comfort in ambiguity are better equipped to develop positive attitudes toward poetry in their students. A teacher who feels a need to control the poetry lesson will choose poems without student input, dominate the discussion, fail to accept students' views that do not align with the answer key, and make students fearful of getting the wrong answer.

Good poetry teachers genuinely like poetry, show enthusiasm for it, and emphasize the pleasure of reading it. They consult students about poem selection, encourage students to have different views and personal experiences with poetry, and expect students to work at it. They allow for informal discussion and demonstrate flexibility in lessons that can be experimental, novel, and fun (Travers, 1984).

The Standards

Following is information about the standard documents included in this study. Information for each document includes the authors and the purposes for writing the document, how the document is organized, user guidelines, and the public's response to its publication.

Representative Performance Objectives for High School English: A Guide for Teaching, Evaluating, and Curriculum Planning (Hook, Jacobs, Jenkinson, Lazarus, Pietras, Seybold, & Van Mondfrans, 1971b). This document is also referenced as the Tri-University Project or the 1971 document.

  Authors and purpose. The title page credits authorship to the Tri-University Project on Behavioral Objectives under the co-directorship of J. N. Hook, University of Illinois at Urbana; Paul H. Jacobs, University of Illinois at Urbana; Edward B. Jenkinson, Indiana University; Arnold Lazarus, Purdue University; Thomas Pietras, Purdue University; Donald A. Seybold, Indiana University; and Adrian P. Van Mondfrans, Purdue University.

  Their work originated in response to a call in early 1969 from the Research Branch of the United States Office of Education "for proposals for the preparation of a catalog of behavioral objectives for English in grades 9-12, specifying that the objectives should 'serve as guides for the selection of curriculum content and as criteria for appraisal of students' progress'" (p. iii). In the project's final report, its co-directors point out that the proposal request stipulated "an important safeguard" (Hook, et al, 1971a, p. 4) that the catalog was to be leveled according to the general aims of education (Level 1) and the general objectives of English study (Level 2), but the body of the catalog was to be devoted to objectives for the sub-areas comprising high school English (Level 3). This necessitated that the preparers "constantly held in mind not only mechanical and easily measured aspects of the subject but also the humanistic goals to which teachers of English generally subscribe" (1971b, p. 4). Going beyond the parameters of the request, the authors also included a fourth level of representative enabling objectives to clarify and illustrate how the performance objectives *could* be translated into classroom practice. They

emphasize that the objectives are *representative* of the multitude of possibilities teachers could consider, and should not be misconstrued as mandates for every classroom.

On page 16, the authors specify their intention to avoid "following any party line" in the objectives debate, taking precautions not to "reflect either the rigidity of the early Robert Mager and the later James Popham or the almost complete planlessness apparently advocated by some participants in the Dartmouth Conference." Instead they strive to find common ground between objectives' leaders and critics, focusing on the interconnectedness of the cognitive and affective domains of learning which they declare "are not really separable in English, nor should they be." They applaud the work of Bloom, Krathwohl, and colleagues and of Piaget and identify these three common ingredients "present in almost all recent thinking about objectives, about curriculum, and about learning of English" (p. 17) to inform the Tri-University Project.

1. *English is a process, not a thing*. For example, writing is a process that requires more than a set of skills and pieces of knowledge. It requires students to practice the parts of the process and discover which steps work best for him.

2. *The process can usually best be learned inductively*. Active participation and experience fosters more understanding than does listening to a teacher lecture about his or her active participation and experience.

3. *Learning must be centered on the student—on what the student does, not what the teacher does or what the content means.*

Organization of document. The document, published as a hardback book, is organized into a preface, seven chapters, and an index. The chapters are titled as follows:

1. Caution: Read Before Using

2. Sending and Receiving Non-Verbal Messages

3. Speaking and Listening

4. Language

5. Reading and Responding to Literature

6. Writing

7. Exploring the Mass Media

The first chapter goes far beyond what today's teachers have probably come to expect in the way of explaining, justifying, and cautioning against the misuse of the objectives to follow. Many of the nearly thirty pages are given to meticulous details about the seemingly equal importance of both having clear performance objectives and guarding against abuse in their implementation.

Each of the remaining chapters is centered on a subsection of English study and begins with a rationale for its inclusion. Other than the rationale, the chapters follow the leveled organization introduced on this report's previous page. The chapter's area of study serves as the Level 1 objective. Level 2 consists of broad, numbered goals. Within each goal are performance objectives (Level 3) coded by the corresponding goal followed by a capital letter. For example, Goal 1 is followed by Performance Objective 1A. Many of the performance objectives contain a subset of representative enabling objectives that are listed by lower case letters. The performance objectives offer specific tasks students could follow to demonstrate the performance objective. Some goals also include a representative entering performance objective that offers a more accessible starting point. The authors suggest it may be helpful for earlier grades or students who are not yet ready for the performance objectives.

Other than the first chapter, the book is sequenced like a cookbook. Earlier chapters are not more important than later ones, nor are goals offered in order of difficulty; however,

performance objectives within goals are arranged according to difficulty where possible. The authors discourage working from the first page to the last, and instead recommend users be selective and operate as cooks, "choosing from anywhere in the book the recipes that appear appealing and suitable to one's family, that taken together will provide a balanced menu, and for which the ingredients are available" (1971b, p. 16) and substituting as needed or wanted.

User guidelines. Compared to the other documents, the user guidelines here are extraordinary. The care given to explanation and cautionary use likely reflect the political climate of the time and at least one author's position within English education's scholarly community. Nick Hook was a prominent member of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) whose work was often featured in *English Journal,* the organization's flagship publication (Hook, 1979). Such a vantage point would have put him in the crossfire between staunch behavioral objective proponents and their equally convicted critics. Testifying to the authors' desire for their work's careful consideration and use is the first of many instructions in all caps: "PLEASE READ THIS CHAPTER CAREFULLY BEFORE USING ANY OF THE OBJECTIVES IN THE OTHER CHAPTERS" (Hook et al, 1971b, p. 4).

Defining performance objectives and their need. The first section of the chapter provides for the need of performance objectives to pinpoint those behaviors indicative of desired learning. The authors stipulate their preference for the term *performance objectives* to name what the wider body of literature at the time called *behavioral objectives,* explaining that the word *behavior* was too often associated with (1) being good or not misbehaving, and (2) Skinner's behaviorist psychology, a model that was too limited for their use (and was a hot-button term for critics of any attempt to write objectives). Furthermore, the authors associated *performance* with doing, or what the student should be able to do that he could not do before. Performance

objectives are identifiable because they are (1) stated using strong, active verbs to explain what the learner will do in a given context; (2) situated as a specific part of a larger learning goal; and (3) measurable. The learner either performs the task or he does not.

The dangers of performance objectives. The second section speaks to the potential dangers of performance objectives according to their use or abuse. The authors first address the danger of trivialization:

> For example, if the objective is "The student identifies similes," the student may learn to pounce upon sentences containing *like* or *as* and, in a test, to pick out successfully all the similes in a poem. But that is an essentially empty, mechanical exercise. It leaves out of consideration such questions as why people use comparisons or other figurative language, what types of communication figurative language makes possible, and what the esthetic values of imaginative comparisons may be. (Hook et al, 1971b, p. 8)

The authors contend that performance objectives are just as susceptible to trivialization as has been earlier instruction, and implore users to evaluate if an objective should be changed or deleted. Returning to the earlier example, they suggest that the teacher ponder why the student should be able to identify similes: "Will doing so really contribute to literary appreciation? Will it make him a better man? Can he serve mankind better because he passes a test on picking out similes? Is there, perhaps, something more valuable to do with figurative comparisons than just to identify them" (pp. 8-9)?

They next tackle the danger of overemphasizing measurement. They explain that early users of behavioral objectives sometimes prioritized their usefulness in measurement and evaluation over child development. This led to examples that were easiest to measure and "omitted some of the most important learnings because they could not devise any numerical

system of measurement for them" (p. 9). They remind the reader that not all evidence is equally quantifiable: "The response to a piece of literature may be a gleam in a student's eye, a quickening of his pulse. How can you measure a gleam? Can you ask a student to report on his heartbeat or his respiration" (p. 9)? Measurement, they insist, should not be exaggerated and should be seen as a symbol of accomplishment, not accomplishment itself.

The next danger is listed as "The Danger of No Time for Fishing" and serves as a response to an article by Robert F. Hogan in the March 1970 issue of *Media & Methods* titled "On Hunting and Fishing and Behaviorism," expressing his concern that the current focus on behavioral objectives threatens to strip English students of their right to enjoy their experience by having time and flexibility to explore and respond to literature on their own terms:

> We need time, Hogan says, for fishing—not so much to catch fish as to enjoy "the good sea air, some sunshine, and a few other fishermen." In English class we shouldn't always be stalking a quarry; we should have fun with literature, should enjoy serendipity, and should allow for the possibility that today Jennie just doesn't want to write a five-sentence outline because Jennie yesterday discovered "Annabel Lee" and "would really prefer to write poems about star-crossed lovers."

> Hogan's caution is appropriate. Certainly an inexorable march from objective to objective to final destination can be tiring and dull. Certainly everyone, even a student, needs time for fishing…Not everything in life can be planned. Not everything in school should be. But much ought to be (p. 10).

The authors next address the danger of too strict tie-ins with accountability. They concede it is difficult to argue against demands for accountability because "no one likes to be considered unaccountable for his actions" (p. 10). The danger in education rests in the

impossibility of fairly applying a completely objective scale of accountability. Teachers of students with special needs or from disadvantaged homes, working in poorly equipped schools with large class sizes, have to produce more dramatic results than do teachers of advanced students with more home supports working in well-equipped and comfortably-staffed schools.

The authors include in this section advice that reflects a time before the unilateral adoption of state-wide standards took much of the decision making out of the teachers' hands:

> If the current emphasis on accountability continues, as it probably will at least for financial reasons, teachers will need to clarify for the administration and for the public what it is that they are trying to accomplish, show that those goals are worthwhile, and demonstrate the degree to which they are succeeding, given the limitations imposed upon them….When…a teacher can explain clearly and specifically what he is attempting, he can go far to answer criticism, assuming that the goals and objectives he has selected have genuine social value. (p. 11)

The final danger addressed is that of unwise administrative pressures. The authors recount with horror how one state in 1969 threatened that objectives in every course in every public school would have to be stated in behavioral terms by the following year or risk losing state aid. Teachers, many of whom were unfamiliar with behavioral objectives, were in an uproar, and "all were offended by the high-handed, dictatorial stance of the state department" (p. 12). The authors condemn "such unconscionable tactics" and insist that "hastily prepared objectives are likely to be trivial, will fail to consider adequately the depth and breadth of the subject, and will short-change students by failure to explore sufficiently" which objectives should be retained, rephrased, modified, or deleted. "Above all, we believe that teachers and

departments should enter upon the construction of performance objectives because they believe in them, not because they are forced to write them by a command from higher authority" (p. 12).

How to use the handbook. Teachers should remember that the objectives are representative, not exhaustive. They are presented as a catalog of recipes for jumping off points and open to substitutions, additions, and omissions. The authors hope the catalog will help teachers understand what performance objectives are, provide examples of "ways to obtain greater student involvement in classroom activities" (p. 13), and call attention to desirable facets of English education that often go unacknowledged. They also seek for the catalog to be a resource for departments engaged in curriculum revision, teachers seeking alternatives to formal tests, and teacher preparation programs.

The objectives were written for high school English, although field-testing showed that many objectives were also suitable for seventh and eighth grades. The catalog includes objectives for students at various levels of ability and with different experiences and backgrounds. The objectives are not given grade-level labels, "largely because of the likelihood of abuse" (p. 15) such as a teacher limiting the scope of her class's objectives to a given grade when other objectives might be more appropriate.

The authors hope that the use of quality performance objectives will cause students to become more active participants in their learning. Teachers may find that giving students choices in their objectives results in more intrinsically motivated learning. At the very least, students should be clear about the objective before them. The authors note that in a particularly "innovative field-testing school, students participated extensively in decision-making about almost all facets of school life, including curricular matters such as what courses should be

offered and what the goals of each course should be" (p. 24). The students in this setting found the preliminary draft of the catalog helpful in designing their courses.

Public response. A review of the literature does not bear out tremendous public reaction to the Tri-University Project so much as it reveals the debate, particularly within the English scholarly community, of the time. This may reflect the project's position in the early years of the Standards Movement when the conversation about what standards (then called objectives) should look like still resided in the domain of educators more than politicians. The document, although funded by the federal government, was directed by educators, cited education researchers, addressed the specific concerns of educators, and was field-tested in twenty-four schools.

The behavioral objective debate is evidenced in journal articles published in the year leading up to the Tri-University Project. Key arguments include acknowledging the public expectation that schools will be accountable, a professional desire to know if one's effort are effective, and suspicion of how behavioral objectives could be used by those outside of education, particularly government agencies (Kirkton, 1971). Passions ran high. James Moffett, slated to be one of the project's co-directors, withdrew from the project "on the rationale that behavioral objectives distort the learning process, that they deny the truth of the individual's own description of his inner life and his own assessment of learning, and they are nothing more than 'the manipulation of others toward one's own ends'" (Standley, 1971, p. 44). His article titled "Misbehaviorist English: A Position Paper" predicted three negative consequences of the project: "the inadequacy of such formulation to do justice to the goals of English, the unintended mischief that will almost surely result from publishing behavioral goals, and the bad precedent set for future relations between government and education" (Standley, 1971, p. 44).

Some attempted to find a middle ground. In the April before the August publication of the Tri-University Project, Peter W. Airasian (1971) wrote a response to Hans P. Guth's September 1970 *English Journal* article titled "The Monkey on the Bicycle: Behavioral Objectives and the Teaching of English." One probably need not read Guth's article to infer his position. Airasian replied, "I read the article, and, after what is best termed a visceral rejection of its arguments, proceeded to inspect Guth's statements in a more objective light" (p. 495). He proceeded: "There are no absolutely right or wrong objectives for English teaching—or for teaching any other subject for that matter. What is important is that the objectives selected by each of us reflect the needs of our students" (p. 496). In response to accountability concerns, he argued "the people who foot the bill for education have some right to ask accountability-type questions," but then stated that his true concern is the "accountability of the teacher to himself and to his students" (p. 497). He concludes with a bit of an olive branch:

> No measurement expert would assert that the indicators of a student's appreciation, attitudes, feelings, or imagination can be completely tapped by paper and pencil instruments. But measurement does not imply only paper and pencil, multiple-choice tests…In the end, sensitive teacher observation is probably more powerful than paper and pencil tests for determining the success of instruction. (p. 499)

One argument stands apart from the rest. Alan Purves (1970) explains that the problem as he sees it is not so much the fault of behavioral objectives, but their unusual relationship with English teachers. He offers that teachers, regardless of their position in the debate, would not teach if they did not want to change behaviors. "Writing behavioral objectives is not necessarily the devil's work" (p. 794), but the process in English simply is not as smooth as it is in other disciplines. He describes a previous attempt to work with teachers to draw up behavioral

objectives, but no one could find a place to start. The interconnectedness of the objectives resulted in conversation about one skill leading to debate about how privileging one objective could marginalize several others. He grew frustrated by his misplaced belief that he could "avoid the Scylla of Gradgrindism and the Charybdis of gushy emotionalism" (p. 795).

> When an English teacher meets a behavioral objectivist and says he wants people to read *Gulliver's Travels* out loud, the behavioral objectivist asks why—as he is supposed to do. The English teacher gets flustered and remembers the cardinal principles and other statements from a philosophy of education course. Because he is a "humanist" he has a crisis of conscience and thinks that the whole of ethical and moral training falls on his shoulders, not to mention artistic training and language training. The mathematics or science teacher or the driver education teacher doesn't get into this trap; he simply says "I want them to pass the driver's test and stay alive and not kill other people when they drive." (pp. 796-797)

The Tri-University Project's final report concludes that teachers in the field-testing schools did not indicate that using the objectives interfered with their ability to address humanistic instructional goals, that measurement did not trivialize the curriculum, and that students and teachers used the objectives to gain clear understanding of their goals and objectives, which led to greater student involvement and initiative (Hook et al, 1971a).

Standley called the project an "audacious…enterprise" (1971, p. 41). There is also evidence that Arnold Lazarus, one of the co-directors, had tense moments at the NCTE annual convention related to the project. His January 1972 article stipulated, "It is not the purpose of this article to reply point by point to the teachers who attacked the *Tri-University Catalog of*

Objectives in English, Grades 9-12 in Atlanta" (p. 52). The article goes on to address the chapter

on Reading and Responding to Literature, which was the "chief target of the attack" (p. 52).

Standards for the English Language Arts (National Council of Teachers of English and the International Reading Association, 1996)

    Authors and purpose. This document was authored jointly by NCTE and the

International Reading Association (IRA), who note that the project involved "thousands of

educators, researchers, parents, policymakers, and others across the country" (p. v). The

introduction states:

> Our shared purpose is to ensure that all students are knowledgeable and proficient users
>
> of language so that they may succeed in school, participate in our democracy as informed
>
> citizens, find challenging and rewarding work, appreciate and contribute to our culture,
>
> and pursue their own goals and interests as independent learners throughout their lives.
>
> (p. v)

    The project began in 1991 when the then NCTE and IRA presidents responded to a

Department of Education call for the voluntary writing of English standards. The thinking was

that "if the federal government were to fund a voluntary standards project in English, then IRA

and NCTE wanted to be involved" (p. v) to ensure that the standards would be grounded in

current research and theory about how students learn to use language.

    The Department of Education awarded the project grant in 1992 to the Center for the

Study of Reading at the University of Illinois with the understanding that the center would work

closely with IRA and NCTE. Federal funding ended in 1994, at which point IRA and NCTE

pledged $500,000 each to fund the project themselves.

The writers centered their work on two key principles:

1. Because there is not one best way to organize subject matter in a given field of study, rigorous national standards should not be restricted to one set of standards per subject area.

2. Content standards should embody a coherent, professionally defensible conception of how a field can be framed for purposes of instruction. They should not be an exhaustive, incoherent compendium of every group's desired content (p. v).

The two principles echo points made in the Tri-University Project, but act on those points differently. The earlier project also acknowledges that theirs is just one way of organizing standards but includes different subject headings; this document collapses them all into one.

Two additional similarities between the documents are not stated in the key principles. First is the desire to reflect a wide range of interests and concerns. Second, the extensive use of field-testing the work. A distinction from the Tri-University Project to address high school need is that this document addresses K-12 standards (p. 1).

Organization of document. This standards document consists of four chapters and six appendices. The chapters are as follows:

1. Setting Standards in the English Language Arts

2. Perspectives Informing the English Language Arts Standards

3. The English Language Arts Standards

4. Standards in the Classroom

The six appendices are as follows:

1. List of Participants

2. History of the Standards Project

3. Overview of Standards Projects

4. State and International English Language Arts Standards

5. Resources for Teachers

6. Response to *Standards for the English Language Arts*

Chapter 1 defines and lists the standards, and articulates the need for them. Where the Tri-University Project emphasized that their performance objectives detailed what students should be able to do, this document deals with *content standards* that define what students should know and be able to do. This document also uses a broader definition of *text* to include spoken language, graphics, and technical communications. *Reading* includes listening and viewing different text forms.

In addressing the need for standards, the authors include some pointed reminders. They want standards to help create a shared vision of how high expectations for language skills can prepare students to meet literacy demands, but then they confront the failing schools narrative arguing "evidence suggest that students today read better and write better than at any other time in the history of the country" (p. 4). They explain:

> By readministering the same tests over time, "then and now" studies examine trends in student achievement based on past standards of literacy. Of the several dozen studies of this nature, all but one conclude that more recent students outperform earlier students (Farr, Tuinman, & Rowls, 1974). The exception was found in a study comparing the skills of pre-1930 students and post 1935 student in oral reading, an area that was de-emphasized in the reading curriculum in the early 1930s….A review of test restandardization reports indicates that, since the mid-1970s, scores have increased by about 2 percentile points per year for five of the six most widely used achievement tests

in grades 1 through 9. Changes in scores at the high school level have been mixed, with scores increasing slightly on some tests and decreasing slightly on others. (Berliner & Biddle, 1995; Linn, Graue, & Sanders, 1990; Kibby, 1993, 1995; Steadman & Kaestle, 1987)

The authors suggest that teachers are performing well despite an ever-expanding definition of literacy, conflicting messages about how to perform their jobs, the struggle to prepare students to take high-stakes tests that do not reliably reflect the true demands of language, and an unbalanced opportunity for some students to learn. They advocate a focus on metacognitive skills in safe, equitably funded and supported schools.

Chapter 2 discusses the four interactive dimensions of literacy and language learning that were used to prepare the standards: content, purpose, development, and context. Students require a broad range of content and "must develop a repertoire of processes or strategies for creating, interpreting, and analyzing texts. And they need to know about the underlying systems and structures of language" (p. 11), including the grammar, punctuation, and spelling required to compose various texts for different audience. Students should know how to apply their knowledge to the four purposes of language use: obtaining and communicating information, literary response and expression, learning and reflection, and problem solving and application. The dimension of development refers to (1) how students acquire knowledge and develop competency over time and (2) that students should be able to use language clearly, strategically, critically, and creatively. The inclusion of the creative use of language speaks specifically to the nature of this study. Its complete reference follows:

Students use language creatively when they are encouraged to stretch or reimagine received forms and vocabularies, or to invent new ones, to embody their own ideas. In

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composing their texts, creative language users pursue imaginative risks, departing from

established conventions and well-worn formulations. Like critical thinkers, creative

language users draw on their experiences, personal observations, strategies, and prior

knowledge as they explore the boundaries of texts and forms. They move beyond surface

meanings and appreciate the complexities and nuances of language. (p. 15)

The dimension of context focuses mostly on how language development and use are both

private and social.

Chapter 3 contains the 12 content standards. Each is followed by one to two pages of

detailed discussion about the standard.

Chapter 4 provides a series of vignettes that model how the standards can work together

in the classroom to provide a rich learning experience. There are seven elementary vignettes, six

middle, and five high school, although the fourth high school vignette is omitted from the

"online version due to copyright considerations" (p. 44). Each vignette includes discussion

questions at the end.

Chapter 5 provides a one-page conclusion.

Chapter 6 is the glossary of 97 terms used in the earlier chapters. Some of the words

included are analysis, canon, CD-ROM, diversity, listening, metaphor, moral, prior knowledge,

rhetorical devices, spelling, text, and writing process. The list is near painful in its thoroughness.

It is understandable to define *text* to reflect its widening definition beyond traditional print, but

one must wonder if any reader of ELA standards would need clarification that spelling is "the

process of representing language by means of a writing system, or orthography" (p. 51).

Appendix A is a list of participants that supports earlier claims that the standards were informed by the input of thousands. The participant list is a whopping thirty pages long, impressive given that the chapter that explains the standards contains only fifteen pages.

Appendix B provides a chronology of the project's activities and events from its initiation in 1992 to its publication in March of 1996.

Appendix C acknowledges the many other standards projects that ran concurrently with this one.

Appendix D provides citation and contact information for the English language arts standards for each of the fifty states, the District of Columbia, as well as international standards from Australia, England and Wales, New Zealand, Scotland, and seven of the ten Canadian provinces.

Appendix E supplies resource lists for teachers available from IRA and NCTE. Topics include standards; assessment; building literacy communities; emergent literacy; English as a second language; family literacy; inquiry; integrating the English language arts; language, linguistic and cultural differences; literature; reading; research on teaching and learning; speaking and listening; technology and media; and writing.

Appendix F is a one-page questionnaire for the reader to supply feedback about the standards.

User guidelines. User guidelines include a reminder that the twelve standards are not meant to be taken in isolation, but used together to provide rich learning experiences. In similar fashion, the authors caution the reader from taking the vignettes too literally. They are included to provide clarification, demonstration, and to encourage discussion about the many other ways to include the standards in the classroom.

Public reception. Understanding the public response to the standards requires an understanding of the expectation they were intended to meet. The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) released standards that reflected a decade of consensus building and decision making about the principles and content essential to the field—all without federal funding. Their positive reception prompted Education Secretary Lamar Alexander to solicit other national professional organizations in other disciplines to follow suit. If it worked, he would have orchestrated the leaders in each major academic field to build consensus and standardize themselves without the need to create a federal agency to control the process. In theory, it would save the feds time, effort and a few layers of bureaucracy, all while avoiding the appearance of federal overreach into education (Wixson, Durto, & Athan, 2003).

Consensus, as presented in the Tri-University discussion, is not something English language arts people reach as easily as mathematicians. Multiple chasms required bridging, starting with the authoring organizations, which had historically (if not officially) tended to different subareas of the discipline. IRA represented mainly elementary reading and drew from foundations in psychology and linguistics. NCTE represented primarily secondary and college level English with foundations in literature, composition, and rhetoric (Wixson, Durto, & Athan, 2003).

A second, somewhat related difference to be bridged lurked in the name *English language arts. English* emphasizes literature study while *language arts* connotes literacy, language use, and how it affects learning across the curriculum. Another divide centered around the use of standards at all. Some members favored standards, others were leery of standards but supported NCTE/IRA involvement so they would at least have a voice at the table. Others believed standards would assist in professional discourse, but did not want to entertain standards

of specific content. By February of 1994, the writers were seeing some threads of consensus emerge: (1) meaning in English is socially constructed and complex, (2) students gain knowledge of language by using and reflecting on it, (3) language is an "instrument of power and self-creation" (Myers, 1994, p. 70), and (4) language provides a way to structure or liberate human relationships. The writers' emphasis on process instead of product led some to believe that the standards advocated a whole language approach at the expense of phonics (Mayer, 1999).

The federal government pulled funding from the project after eighteen months citing insufficient progress. They also were not pleased by the effort's insistence on incorporating opportunity to learn standards (Diegmueller, 1994, December 7). NCTE and IRA decided to continue writing on their own, putting up a reported one million dollars split evenly between the two organizations (Diegmueller, 1994, May 4). The Department of Education had hoped to find a replacement to carry on the work, but decided to wait it out after receiving dozens of letters in support of NCTE/IRA, many from teachers refusing to support any standards without groups' input (Diegmueller, 1994 September 7). Morale within the groups fatigued before the standards were finished with many members just wanting them finished so they could move on.

Critics did not hide their ire upon the standards release. Some critics echoed the federal reviewers' concerns of the 1994 draft. They lamented the document's content and accused the writers of putting multicultural political correctness and jabber about the processes of language where the literary canon and Formal Standard English should be (Suhor, 1994). Henry Maloney, (1997) in his article "The Little Standards That Couldn't," bemoaned that the two organizations had spent a million dollars "to become midwives to a pot of lukewarm porridge" (p. 86) that lacked enough specificity to help any classroom teacher plan a lesson. Jeff Zorn (1997) wrote an article titled "The NCTE/IRA Standards: A Surrender," in which he argued that insufficient rigor

and lack of emphasis on rigor would widen the achievement gap between elite learners and the rest of their classmates.

Supporters contended that what critics had pointed out as weaknesses were actually strengths. Jim Burke (1996) argued the standards were intentionally vague because they were designed to prompt discussion instead of giving teachers a playbook. He wrote:

> Vagueness is essential, though. We do not live in a homogeneous society where one curriculum will fit all. And yet, all roads must lead to the same destination: the graduation of fluent, effective writers and readers who can engage in meaningful social dialogue about politics, social issues, and stories while also demonstrating their mastery of skills necessary to succeed in today's workplace. (Burke, 1996, p. 35)

The Minneapolis Star Tribune was one of the few publications to praise the standards for expanding definition of literacy:

> Conservative groups are annoyed by positive references to multicultural perspectives and an endorsement of bilingual education. A senior adviser of the U. S. Department of Education has decried the absence of measurable objectives…These complaints miss the mark. But taken together, they constitute a backhand endorsement. If these are the sharpest barbs that can be hurled at the International Reading Association and the National Council of Teachers of English, then the teachers must have done a pretty good job…In articulating the elements of literacy and sound general strategies for achieving it, they have given the nation a useful starting point and a commendable set of ultimate goals. (Myers, 1996, p. 3)

Another group of critics bemoaned that NCTE and IRA had entered into the standards conversation at all. University of Wisconsin Professor Michael W. Apple did not hold back when

he said, "National standards and national testing are the first steps toward educational apartheid under the rhetoric of accountability (Diegmueller, 1995, pp. 4-5). Kenneth Goodman, a leading advocate of whole language, took issue with the underlying assumption that standards will remedy unsuccessful schools whose "kids and teachers aren't trying hard enough." He regarded the standards movement as "a smoke screen to cover an attack on universal public education," adding that they "reveal their underlying values when they reject the need to be concerned for accessibility to educational opportunities by the urban and rural poor." Goodman called standards "undemocratic" and insisted "schools in a pluralistic society do not have the right to force everyone to become alike" (Goodman, 1994).

The contentious reaction certainly was not what Education Secretary Alexander had in mind. He had hoped that the national organizations for English would, like NCTM had for math, write standards that unified the discipline. The impact of the poor response to the NCTE/IRA standards was compounded by a similar uproar to proposed national history standards. Political attention shifted away from national professional organizations to state level standards. Seeking a nongovernmental agency to evaluate the quality of state standards, governors and corporate leaders created Achieve, Inc. in 1998. Achieve would go on to be a major player in the Common Core State Standards Initiative (Wixom, Dutro, & Athan, 2003).

Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and the Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010a)

References to this document or any related documents on the website are hereafter noted *NGA Best.* Documents created solely by the National Governors Association are noted *NGA.)*

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Authors and purpose. According to the branding guidelines (NGA Best, 2010f) the

Common Core State Standards were authored by the National Governors Association Center for

Best Practices, and the Council of Chief State School Officers. On July 1, 2009, the NGA

announced on their website that the standards would be developed in work groups

> composed of content experts from Achieve, Inc., ACT, and the College Board. This
>
> group will be expanded later in the year to include additional experts to develop the
>
> standards…Additionally, CCSSO and the NGA Center have selected an independent
>
> facilitator and an independent writer as well as resource advisors to support each content
>
> area work group throughout the standards development process. (NGA, 2009)
>
> To understand who authored the standards, one needs to know more about Achieve, Inc.,

ACT, and the College Board. ACT, Inc., publishes the ACT college admissions test (ACT,

2016), the College Board publishes the SAT college admissions test (College Board, 2016), and

Achieve, Inc. is, according to its website:

> an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit education reform organization dedicated to
>
> working with states to raise academic standards and graduation requirements, improve
>
> assessments, and strengthen accountability. Created in 1996 by a bipartisan group of
>
> governors and business leaders, Achieve is leading the effort to make college and career
>
> readiness a priority across the country so that students graduating from high school are
>
> academically prepared for postsecondary success (Achieve, 2016).
>
> The initial workgroup was comprised of members of the group that the NGA put together

to push for common standards, and representatives from test publishers. The group was led by

Student Achievement Partners founders David Coleman and Susan Pimentel (Goldstein, 2012;

Student Achievement Partners, 2016). Feedback groups and a validation committee provided

input after the standards were drafted. The feedback groups included professors, current educators, and members of state level departments of education (NGA, 2009).

The ELA standards were written to "fulfill the charge issued by the states to create the next generation of K-12 standards in order to help ensure that all students are college and career ready in literacy no later than the end of high school" and "lay out a vision of what it means to be a literate person in the twenty-first century (NGA Best, 2010a, p. 3). Such students:

> readily undertake the close, attentive reading that is at the heart of understanding and enjoying complex works of literature. They habitually perform the critical reading necessary to pick carefully through the staggering amount of information available today in print and digitally. They actively seek the wide, deep, and thoughtful engagement with high-quality literary and informational texts that builds knowledge, enlarges experience, and broadens worldviews. They reflexively demonstrate the cogent reasoning and use of evidence that is essential to both private deliberation and responsible citizenship in a democratic republic. In short, students who meet the Standards develop the skills in reading, writing, speaking, and listening that are the foundation for any creative and purposeful expression in language. (NGA Best, 2010a, p. 3)

The standards say they achieve this end by being "(1) research and evidence based, (2) aligned with college and work expectations, (3) rigorous, and (4) internationally benchmarked" (NGA Best, 2010a, p. 3).

Organization of the document. The 66-page document is comprised of seven unnumbered sections. This is an online document and does not use traditional book nomenclature like *chapter*. The appendices are separate downloads from the same page on the main website.

- Introduction

- Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Sciences, and Technical Subjects: K-5

- Standards for English Language Arts: 6-12

- Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Sciences, and Technical Subjects: 6-12.

- Appendix A. Research Supporting Key Elements of the Standards; Glossary of Key Terms; Supplement to Appendix A: New Research on Text Complexity (NGA Best, 2010a and 2010e)

- Appendix B. Text Exemplars and Sample Performance Tasks (NGA Best, 2010c)

- Appendix C. Samples of Student Writing (NGA Best, 2010d)

"Introduction" includes the table of contents, introduction, key design considerations, explanations about what the standards do not address, literacy characteristics of students who are college and career ready, and instructions on how to read the document. It also explains that the K-5 standards for English language arts and the content areas are combined to reflect the nature of elementary school in which one teacher often provides the instruction in all areas. The 6-12 standards are separated to reflect that secondary students usually receive instruction from multiple teachers (NGA Best, 2010a).

Language Arts. The next two sections concerning language arts standards follow nearly identical organization. Both contain sections to address standards in the following order: reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language. Each section follows the same general structure. The first pages present the anchor standards for the strand, ten each for reading and writing, and six each for speaking and listening, and language. The anchor standards in both sections are identical. The first page also contains a "Note on Range and Content" that differentiates somewhat between the K-5 and 6-12 sections. The pages following the anchor standards in each

section are translate the anchor standards into grade-specific standards. The K-5 chapter provides standard progression for each grade, while the 6-12 chapter gives standard progression for each of the grades 6-8, but organizes high school into 9-10 and 11-12 bands (NGA Best, 2010a).

While the sections for writing, speaking and listening, and language follow this straightforward structure, the reading section is more complicated. The ten anchor standards are interpreted into grade-specific standards for literature, and then re-interpreted for informational texts. The K-5 chapter includes an additional set of grade-specific standards for foundational skills in print concepts, phonological awareness, phonics and word recognition, and fluency (NGA Best, 2010a). The end of each reading section elaborates on Reading Standard 10, specifically how to determine text complexity, the proportion of text types students should read, and titles of exemplar texts according to grade level (NGA Best, 2010a).

Literacy. The next section interprets the reading and writing anchor standards for literacy in history/social studies, sciences, and technical subjects for grades 6-12. Unlike the previous two chapters, it does not address speaking and listening, language, or revisit Reading Standard 10. Otherwise, it shares much of the earlier sections' organization (NGA Best, 2010a). It begins with a section on reading and concludes with the section on writing. Each starts with the same anchor standards provided in the language arts sections. The grade-specific standards combine grades 6-8 into a single band, as continue with the high school grade band organization of 9-10 and 11-12. (NGA Best, 2010a).

There are two sets of grade-specific standards for reading in the section on literacy. The first set interprets the reading anchor standards for use in history and social studies with language that focuses on the use of primary sources and skills such as distinguishing fact from opinion and evaluating point of view. The second set interprets the reading anchor standards for use in

science and technical subjects, focusing on skills like following procedures precisely and synthesizing information from texts and experiments to gain coherent understandings and make sound judgments (NGA Best, 2010a).

The anchor standards for writing are interpreted into a singular set of grade-specific standards that do not distinguish between content areas.

Appendix A includes supplemental research and explanations to support each of the areas of reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language, giving special emphasis to the issue of text complexity (NGA Best, 2010b; NGA Best, 2010e).

Appendix B features exemplars of excepts from stories, poems, and informational texts that meet the text complexity criteria for grade bands K-1, 2-3, 4-5, 6-8, 9-10, and 11-CCR (College and Career Ready at the end of twelfth grade). It also provides a sampling of performance tasks for each text type (NGA Best, 2010c).

Appendix C provides annotated student writing samples for each grade level that meet the criteria for adequate performance for argument, narrative, and informative/explanatory text types. Poetry is not included in this offering (NGA Best, 2010d).

User guidelines. The introductory chapter asks readers to note these major points.

Text complexity. The standards emphasize the need for students to read increasingly complex texts, make connections within and between texts, consider "a wider range of textual evidence" and become "more sensitive to inconsistencies, ambiguities, and poor reasoning in texts" (NGA Best, 2010a, p. 8).

Research and media skills. To prepare for college and the world of work, students will answer questions and solve problems by conducting original research emphasizing evidence. In

conducting and sharing this research, they will consume and produce a variety of print, non-print, and digital texts (NGA Best, 2010a, p. 4).

Text type alignment with NAEP. The standards mandate text type alignment with the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). The 2009 NAEP Reading Framework distributed reading passages between literary and informational text. Text distribution is 50% literary/50% informational at grade 4, 45% literary/55% informational at grade 8, and 30% literary/70% informational at grade 12 (NGA Best, 2010a).

The NAEP Writing Framework is similarly divided according to text to persuade, to explain, and to convey real or imagined experience. The grade 4 distribution is 30/35/35; grade 8 is 35/35/30; and grade 12 is 40/40/20 (NGA Best, 2010a).

The standards justify this alignment with the following explanation:

Most of the required reading in college and workforce training programs is informational in structure and challenging in content; postsecondary education programs typically provide students with both a higher volume of such reading than is generally required in K-12 schools and comparatively little scaffolding. (NGA Best, 2010a, p. 4)

Shared responsibility for the literacy standards. "The standards insist that instruction in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language be a shared responsibility within the school" (NGA Best, 2010a, p. 4). The percentage division of text types "reflect the sum of student reading, not just reading in ELA settings. Teachers of senior English classes, for example, are not required to devote 70 percent of reading to informational texts. Rather, 70 percent of student reading across the grade should be informational" (p. 5). The anchor standards for reading and writing apply to texts across disciplines, meaning that students can "develop mutually

reinforcing skills and exhibit mastery of standards for reading and writing across a range of texts and classrooms" (p. 5).

What the standards are not. The writers seem to anticipate claims that the standards will constitute a narrowed, nationalized curriculum, and respond with an outline of what the standards do *not* cover. They specify that the standards are benchmarks of what is most essential, not exhaustive. The standards are not meant to dictate the teacher's decisions regarding specific lesson plans, activities, strategies, or interventions and supports for English language learners or students with special needs. They "do not define the nature of advanced work for students who meet the Standards prior to the end of high school" or replace content standards (NGA Best, 2010a, p. 6).

Public reception. Common Core has been met with mixed public opinion. People generally continue to like their local schools but believe that education on the whole needs improvement (Henderson, Peterson, & West, 2016). Parents have voiced their displeasure with how Common Core made them feel incompetent to help their children with their homework (Stump, 2015; Wong, 2015). Reaction to the standards coalesces around the testing component associated with the standards (which is too big a topic to cover in this review), the federal government's role in education, the process used to engineer the standards, and the content of the standards themselves.

Federal role. Criticism remains high that the standards constitute federal infringement on states' rights. Proponents of the Core argue that although the hope was to have common national standards, that states maintain the right to opt in or follow their own standards. Critics argue that funds tied to standard adoption demonstrate overreach. The Obama administration's *Blueprint for Reform* (U. S. Department of Education, 2010) reiterates the call for national standards, high

stakes assessment, and costly consequences for the lowest performing schools. The included

Race to the Top initiative implemented a funding structure in which schools compete for grants.

The Race to the Top application awarded extra points to states that had adopted Common Core.

Process. Criticism of Common Core's policy cycle can be viewed through McDonnell

and Weatherford's (2013) previously discussed framework with three stages: (1) define a

problem and promote a solution, (2) act quickly and design policy that will "maintain support

and blunt opposition" (p. 6), and (3) build sufficient support and enact the policy.

Critics argue that Common Core's policy cycle was flawed from the beginning because

of who was defining the problem and the selecting the solution to promote. Unlike previous

efforts to create standards that called upon professional teacher organizations, education

researchers, and state boards of education, Common Core was sponsored by NGA, CCSSO,

Achieve (created by the NGA), and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (McDonnell &

Weatherford, 2013), which provided the financial capital needed to get a lot done in a short

amount of time. The foundation has spent well over $200 million to develop and promote

Common Core. The money was spread to diverse entities including teachers' unions, businesses,

states, and think tanks. It funded research by both liberal and conservative scholars who

promoted Common Core (Layton, 2014, June 7). The foundation backed so many Common Core

endeavors that it gave the appearance of providing a closed circuit of Gates-funded research

feeding Gates-funded policy, and led critics to argue that public education was for sale to the

highest bidder. Parry, Field, and Supiano (2013) investigated this idea more thoroughly in "The

Gates Effect."

The policy set as the problems that students left high school ill-prepared for college and

work, lagged behind international peers, encountered inconsistent standards when moving

between states, and suffered an income-based achievement gap. They proposed a solution to adopt rigorous, internationally-benched, national standards (McDonnell & Weatherford, 2013). Critics pointed out that the NGA and CCSSO listed in-house reports with limited reference to empirical studies except for those from standardization advocates (Tienken, 2011).

Common Core has been criticized for its success of stage two's direction to act quickly to "maintain support and blunt opposition" (McDonnell & Weatherford, 2013, p. 6). Policy designers maintained support by labeling the standards "evidence-based," "internationally benchmarked" and "informed by the experience of teachers, content experts, states, and leading thinkers, and feedback from the public" (NGA Best, 2010g).

McDonnell and Weatherford (2013) assert that (1) designers were focused more on working quickly than thoroughly, and (2) blunting opposition was achieved by limiting who had input and when they could give it.

Previous attempts to create standards through professional teaching organizations such as NCTE and IRA had been due to committee members debating theory and pedagogy and trying to reach consensus (Wixson, Dutro, & Athan, 2003). Using a small group of likeminded writers allowed the committee to work faster. Because conclusive research was not available, the committees worked with expert advice, accepted research that was not peer-reviewed, and settled for the best evidence they had at the time. The work group that created the first draft did not include educators or the public. They were brought in at later intervals to give feedback on what had already been created. In lieu of rigorous research to support the standards, members of the committee trusted the work of the original group because of the members' previous work in helping individual states develop standards. Teachers who served on the review committee reported that they came to the table understanding that this limited contribution was their only

opportunity to have a voice. The policy designers used their participation to advertise that the standards had been written with teacher input, thus building support. The validation committee was designated to ensure that the writers had used evidence to develop the standards. (McDonnell & Weatherford, 2013).

Professor Sandra Stotsky served on the validation committee for the English language arts standards and was one of five members of the 25-member committee that did not validate the standards. She emerged as one of Common Core's leading critics (Esolen, HIghfill, & Stotsky, 2014; Stotsky, 2013, September 9; Stotsky, 2014, March). Stotsky testified before the Texas House of Representatives Committee on State Sovereignty in 2011 about Common Core's lack of transparency and lack of research to support decisions. Her testimony, transcribed from videos of the proceedings uploaded online in two parts, is identified at the end of each paragraph as being from either part one (Stotsky, 2011a) or part two (Stotsky, 2011b), followed by the time.

> The development of the standards violated almost every civic procedure that I have been familiar with in my life. I understand that both the NGA and CCSSO…are private groups and are not bound by the same civic procedures that a government appointed body would have to follow…but since what they were creating…were standards to serve as our national standards, there should have been an open process. (Stotsky, 2011a, 4:01)

> I was appalled from the very beginning that we could never get an explanation on the validation committee of why people were chosen for membership on the standards writing committee that created college readiness standards; why people were chosen to be on the grade level standards writing committee. What were their qualifications? What were the procedures we were to use? There was a number of issues that kept coming up,

particularly to the question of …where were the international benchmarks? And where

was the evidence—the research evidence—to support whatever Common Core was

coming up with? And we were never given the evidence or the international

benchmarking. I did my own review of the literature and could never find any

international benchmarks. Professor Milgram will say the same thing in mathematics. We

are not internationally benchmarked…. (Stotsky, 2011b, 0:21)

The lack of transparency that dominated the development of Common Core's standards

to the point where…the validation committee was appointed in September of 2009, and

we were told that our function was to ensure that Common Core's standards were

internationally benchmarked and supported by a body of evidence, which we never got.

In December of that year, the PTA predicted that both sets of standards would be

simultaneously approved in February of 2010. I thought to myself, "Well, how are they in

possession of this knowledge of when we are going to simultaneously approve both sets

of standards when we haven't even seen any of the details, nor were the standards

developed by then? (Stotsky, 2011b, 2:08)

….This was all happening behind the scenes. We never could find out, so five of us on

the 25-member committee never signed off. The others did and they never saw the

evidence, but apparently, it didn't matter (Stotsky, 2011b, 3:32).

….They finally sent out a public comment draft. When I asked to see the public

comments because I was in the Department of Education, and I know they all have to be

available…In no way could I see the comments. They would produce a summary themselves of the comments, and that was all the public ever saw. But there is no public examination of these comments that were sent in…There were never any details, rationales, justifications, why we chose these people (instead of) those people, and what was going on behind the scenes (Stotsky, 2011b, 8:50).

Stage three, build sufficient support to enact the policy, was assisted by the accelerated time frame. Proponents estimated it would take at least three years for a majority of the states to adopt the standards, but the time line was shortened to a few months when the federal government incentivized Race to the Top funds and set an early due date for applications. States that wanted to apply for the funds had to adopt the standards quickly. Mathis (2010) observes that the push for adoption during the summer months limited the likelihood that qualified practitioners would be available to engage in thoughtful discussion about the standards. The CCSSO and NGA provided supporters with messaging tool kits that included template letters to the editor and sample op-ed articles that could be adapted for an audience of business leaders, teachers, civil rights leaders, or parents (McDonnell & Weatherford, 2013).

Reception of the English language arts and literacy standards. Surveys of teachers by the National Education Association (Busser, 2013), the American Federation of Teachers (Mrowka, 2013), and Education Next (Henderson & Peterson, 2014) found they generally supported the standards, but indicated they needed time to plan and implement aligned lessons.

Researchers noted concerns about some of the key shifts in focus. Ketcham, Lewis, and Stotsky (2014) argued the inclusion of literacy standards for history and social studies essentially subordinates history instruction to ELA. They asserted that such implementation, combined with

emphasis on cold readings (Hechinger Report, 2014), will lead to two possible outcomes. Either English teachers will be presenting historical documents, or history teachers will use historical documents to teach literacy skills. They believe each possibility demonstrates a misunderstanding of the different purposes each discipline has for text. English teachers engage students in literary analysis to deepen understanding while history teachers seek to contextualize documents in a wider understanding of human history. The English teacher is not trained to address historical relevance while the history teacher is not trained in literary analysis. Meanwhile, teachers spend time teaching concepts outside their expertise instead of engaging students in ways appropriate to their respective disciplines. Furthermore, Ketcham, Lewis, and Stotsky contend that exemplar historical texts in Appendix B do not align with the grade level courses as they are commonly taught.

Gamson, Lu, and Eckert (2013) take issue with Common Core's claim that "While the reading demands of college, workforce, training programs, and citizenship have held steady or risen over the past fifty years or so, K-12 texts have, if anything, become less demanding" (NGA Best, 2010a, cited in Gamson, Lu, & Eckert, 2013, p. 2). The authors of Common Core cite separate studies by Hayes, Wolfer, & Wolf (1996) and Chall, Conard, & Harris (1977) to support their claims. The Hayes study, which analyzed American reading textbooks published between 1860 and the 1990s, found that the most rigorous texts were published between 1860 and 1918, and then difficulty decreased. Gamson, Lu, & Eckert point out that the most rigorous texts cited in the Hayes study were *McGuffey's Eclectic Readers*—adult texts given to children to practice elocution, not comprehension. Textbook difficulty declined as instruction recalibrated to teach students to read for understanding. Gamson, Lu, & Eckert charge that including *McGuffey*'s in the Hayes study artificially skewed the results and gave the appearance of declining rigor.

Gamson, Lu, and Eckert also take issue with the Core's treatment of Chall, Conrad, &

Harris' (1977) study:

Chall did not necessarily argue, as the Standards' authors contend, that her own textbook

analysis revealed "a thirteen-year decrease from 1963 to 1975 in the difficulty of grade 1,

grade 6, and (especially) grade 11 texts" (NGA Best, 2010a, p. 3 cited in Chall, Conrad,

& Harris, p. 383). What Chall actually concluded is somewhat different…Although Chall

did find some declines in language difficulty, especially in the years between 1947 and

1962, she also identified several important *reversals* to these trends. In first-grade

textbooks, she detected a shift toward greater challenge, starting in a rather limited way in

the early 1960s but ultimately resulting in a dramatic increase in challenge between 1968

and 1975 (p. 16). Chall pointed out that she had previously detected a trend toward more

rigor in her earlier work (1967), one that had been confirmed by Popp's (1975)

investigation of textbooks for beginning readers published between 1968 and 1975. Chall

even suggested that these increases in the rigor of early reading textbooks may have

already resulted in some observable outcomes in reading assessments. (p. 383)

The Gamson study further notes that Chall's collection of studies found "either a

consistency or a noteworthy increase in textbook challenge and difficulty beginning in the early

1960" (p. 383). Gamson chastises the authors of the Common Core for using a "tight and closed

loop of researchers citing one another" to present "an artificially heightened sense of scholarly

agreement about a decline in textbook complexity." They charge that the effect paints a

romanticized view of "the good old days" of American education that overlooks "its often elite

and exclusory nature" (p. 383).

Gamson, Lu, and Eckert then explain the results of their own research into text complexity of elementary reading textbooks. "Put simply, our findings offer compelling evidence that the complexity of reading textbooks, at least at the third- and sixth-grade levels, has either *increased or remained noticeably consistent over the past three-quarters of a century*" (p. 388). They conclude: "Given that our corpus of 10 million words is richer, that our time period is longer, and that our measures are more extensive than those employed by previous studies, our investigation offers serious challenges to the historical research embedded in the CCSS" (p. 388). They charge that the Common Core's writers attempted to solve a non-existent problem and risked harm to students who may, as a result, find themselves in an accelerating achievement gap, especially if text complexity is raised without first seeking to understand the right level of challenge for each student (pp. 388-389).

Zancanella and Moore (2014) observe that "text complexity" was not a term commonly found in the research or state standards prior to Common Core. They note that the term was used only one time each in *Reading Research Quarterly* and the *Journal of Literacy Research* since 2005, and those instances used the term in a fundamentally different way than it is used by Common Core. Noting the lack of scholarly presence, they note "That is not to say that scholars and teachers did not discuss the difficulty of texts and the related implications for curriculum and instruction. But it would be hard to argue that the issue was considered a driving force or major focus of inquiry in literacy education" (p. 277).

They trace the concept to Achieve's American Diploma Project, a college and career readiness project heavily funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and the New England Common Assessment Program. Zancanella and Moore echo Gamson, Lu, and Eckert's concern about the Common Core operating on a closed loop of research, contending text

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complexity was given prominence in the standards because of Achieve's unchallenged presence at the drafting table.

The Massachusetts Factor. Massachusetts' residents and educators had a distinct reaction to the Common Core Standards. The state set was widely regarded as "the gold standard for public education in the United States" (Khadaroo, 2012). The Massachusetts standards were hailed as the national model by a diverse group that included the American Federation of Teachers, Diane Ravitch, the Thomas B. Fordham Institute, noted standards experts E. D. Hirsch and Sandra Stotsky, and Achieve (Stergios, Gass, & Chieppo, 2012). Executive director of the CCSSO, Gene Wilhoit, called Massachusetts' education reform "one of the major success stories in the country" (Khadaroo, 2012). The standards were highly regarded and considered to be superior to the Common Core standards on some topics (Walberg, 2011). Massachusetts was "the state to beat" (Voorhees, 2016, January 7).

The state's reputation was built on the Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993, a bi-partisan effort that sought to increase funding, adopt ambitious standards, and include high-stakes accountability measures. The reform effort was assisted by the Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education (MBAE), an organization reached out and listened to other stakeholders to build consensus and create buy in (Brawer, Meo, Mehrling, & Albert, 2003).

The reform effort did not propose merit pay, eliminate teacher tenure, close lowest performing schools, or offer vouchers for private schools. It stayed the course, even when challenged. Reformers chose to view initially low test scores on the new state assessment as evidence that they were on the right track, and articulated confidence that the scores would rise with time (Chang, 2013). Transparency in the reform process included several "Take the Test"

events in which the public could see and try on the new tests for themselves (Brawer, Meo, Mehrling, & Albert, 2003).

Increased test scores caught national attention. SAT scores rose for 13 consecutive years, and Massachusetts became the first state to sweep the four major categories of the NAEP (4th grade reading, 4th grade math, 8th grade reading, and 8th grade math). They had the highest scores in each of the four categories in 2005, 2007, 2009, and 2011, and saw the achievement gaps based on race and class narrow. E. D. Hirsch called Massachusetts the state to move to "if you are a disadvantaged parent with a school-age child" (Stergios, Gass, & Chieppo, 2012).

Common Core created a stir. There seemed little need to adopt new standards when the ones in place ushered the state to the top. Ironically, it was the lure of Race to the Top funding that made the difference. States that adopted Common Core received an extra 20 points on their Race to the Top applications. Massachusetts, having not adopted the new standards, was denied a Race to the Top grant in the first round. This prompted then state education secretary, Paul Reville, to concede, "There's a lot of disappointment and anger in Massachusetts that our outstanding track record in education reform was not recognized" (Morell, 2010, June 10). Massachusetts officials initially said they would not adopt national standards that were not as strong as the ones currently in place. Eventually, the financial incentive led them to change their minds. Massachusetts adopted Common Core, reapplied for Race to the Top funds, and were awarded $250 million (Morell, 2010, June 10; Stergios, Gass, & Chieppo, 2012; Walberg, 2011).

The Massachusetts standards are mentioned here because of their position within the Common Core debate. The standards were so highly regarded that they were used as a model for the Common Core standards, but the chief complaint about the Common Core's ELA standards

has been that they do not follow Massachusetts' lead with regard to literature (Bauerlein, 2013, July, 10; Esolen, Highfill, & Stotsky, 2014; Goldstein, 2012; Katz, 2014, September 14).

Massachusetts built a liberal arts-rich curriculum using high-quality literature that made up about 80-90 percent of the English content. By comparison, Common Core includes half as much classic literature (Stergios, Gass, & Chieppo, 2012). "Standards for English (in the Massachusetts framework) used to be based largely on classic literature and poetry, which have a rich vocabulary, but the Common Core emphasizes more informational text" which some view as a fad focused on soft workplace skills (Khadaroo, 2012).

Massachusetts' previous standards included General Standard 14: Poetry, which stated: "Students will identify, analyze, and apply knowledge of the themes, structure, and elements of poetry and provide evidence from the text to support their understanding" (Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2001, pp. 5-6). The explanation of the standard states:

> From poetry we learn the language of heart and soul, with particular attention paid to rhythm and sound, compression and precision, the power of images, and the appropriate use of figures of speech. And yet it is also the genre that is most playful in its attention to language, where rhyme, pun, and hidden meanings are constant surprises. The identification and analysis of the elements generally associated with poetry—metaphor, simile, personification, and alliteration—have an enormous impact on student reading and writing not only in poetry, but in other genres as well. (Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2001, p. 40)

The standard's explanation also includes specific examples of how it could be implemented within different grade bands (Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2001). The state was in the process of revising the standards into grade-specific expectations as evidenced by a 2010 working draft (Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2001), but adopted Common Core instead.

States that adopt Common Core agree to include all of the standards but may supplement an additional 15 percent of their own content (Kendall, Ryan, Alpert, Richardson, & Schwols (2012). As part of its 15% state supplement, Massachusetts created its own reading list (Pandolfo, 2013), and added several statements to the grade-specific standards within the Reading Literature and Writing strands (including Pre-K standards that fall outside of the Common Core's K-12 range) (Kendall, Ryan, Alpert, Richardson, & Schwols, 2012). Several of the state's added statements specifically mention poetry (Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2011).

Summary

Poetry is a unique genre that offers abundant opportunities to students. Its rhythmic and playful nature makes it accessible to even the youngest and most challenged students, while its ability to speak to deep-seated truths ensures its relevance to all readers. Reading poetry allows students to see different views of seemingly ordinary topics and requires students to deal with ambiguity. Teachers can take advantage of poetry's compact form to instruct students on a variety of writing techniques and grant them access to difficult text and literary themes. Through writing poetry, students learn to find their voices and articulate the ideas that are important to

them using powerful and elegant language. The skills students learn in working with poetry are applicable to other academic disciplines, careers, and dealing with the complexities of life.

Poetry's subjective nature has put it at odds with the Standards Movement, which privileges easily measurable information. The attachment of high-stakes tests to standards makes it important for students to be able to identify the one correct answer that the test makers had in mind. While poetry *can* be subjected to objective measures, doing so can fundamentally alter how poetry is approached in the classroom, as has been demonstrated in other English-speaking countries that have attached poetry to standards and high-stakes tests. The literature reveals that generations of English instruction that treats poetry as something that can be correct or incorrect has resulted in both students and teachers having negative attitudes toward poetry. Conversely, the literature shows that those attitudes can be reversed when teachers approach poetry as an open conversation and encourage learners to cultivate their own experiences and understandings of poetry.

American public education is increasingly standards-driven, and the stress of high-stakes tests often leads to a curriculum narrowed to the tested standards. For this reason, it is essential to choose standards thoughtfully, mindful of how we ask learners to approach subject matter. The three standards documents proposed for inclusion in this study represent unique (and sometimes opposed) perspectives, purposes, and priorities, which when combined weave a rich narrative about what kinds of information are valued in English instruction in the United States. The purpose of this study is to tease out how that narrative has addressed poetry instruction over time.

CHAPTER 3: Methodology

This qualitative study was designed to examine the treatment of poetry in English instruction as presented by attempts to standardize curriculum over the last 46 years. This context-sensitive text analysis was grounded in the framework of Thomas N. Huckin (1992) with the following epistemological assumptions:

(1) Texts are the products of a writer's attempt to communicate meaning to the reader;

(2) Meaning exists according to how writers and readers interpret it and base it on their own values, goals, purposes, and other community-based variables;

(3) There are no two ways of saying exactly the same thing; even minor details can significantly alter a text's meaning; and

(4) Writers belong to multiple discourse communities, and the texts they write often reflect their divided loyalties.

These assumptions were important in understanding what the standards imply for the value of poetry instruction in American education. As demonstrated in Chapter 2, the standards were written to communicate to teachers and the general public what is essential in K-12 English instruction. The writers and readers of these standards represent a wide variety of organizations and interests, chiefly education, politics, and business. Responses to the standards as described in the earlier chapter show how these loyalties surfaced in the writing of the standards. This research was concerned both with what is linguistically in the standards, how the standards are left open to interpretation, and how the documents were initially interpreted by others within and outside of the authors' communities.

There are 4 methodological characteristics of context-sensitive text analysis:

First, it is driven by a problem, not a theory. Different theories may guide the work, but its purpose is to solve a problem. This research sought to untangle the relationship between poetry and the standards.

Second, it attempts to account for as much of a document's context as possible "without becoming overly speculative" (Huckin, 1992, p. 89). It assumes that contextual factors (social, cultural, etc.) influence writers' compositions. Such factors were addressed in Chapter 2 as part of the contextual histories of the examined documents.

Third, context-sensitive text analysis "relies on plausible interpretation rather than on any kind of proof" (Huckin, 1992, p. 89). Because of its broad scope, it is not highly testable, nor can it control for all variables or insist on a singular interpretation. "It can only try to assemble enough evidence to make a strong case for a certain point of view" (p. 89).

Fourth, context-sensitive text analysis attempts to mitigate its lack of controllable variables by combining multiple forms of analysis. This study combined the contextual history of each document with the document itself in order "to produce converging results that support the plausibility of one's argument" (Huckin, 1992, p. 90). Investigating the contextual histories included reading the background information provided in the examined documents, media releases about the release and reaction of each, details, where available, about specific people involved in the development of the standards and their organizations. It also investigated the effect on standards writing as authorship transferred from professional educators to political entities, particularly the use of research within the *Common Core* policy cycle.

Primary Research Question

How have the attempts to standardize K-12 English curriculum in the United States over the last 46 years addressed the teaching of poetry?

Subsidiary Research Questions

Q1. To what extent do the standards address poetry as a means to engage with difficult text?

Q2. To what extent do the standards address poetry as a means of gaining cultural capital?

Q3. To what extent do the standards address poetry as a means of gaining personal growth?

Q4. To what extent do the standards address the learning of the mechanics of poetry?

Q5. To what extent do the standards address students writing poetry and their use of poetic language?

Q6. To what extent do the standards allow teachers the freedom to teach or abandon poetry?

Selection of Text

Although the United States does not support a national curriculum, different entities have attempted to write standards to appeal to a national audience. Each of the documents in the study corpus represents a distinct effort to affect English teaching across the states. The Tri-University's 1971 effort demonstrates the work of a small group of educators to present a catalog of possible standards beginning with central ideas and becoming more specific with concrete performance objectives. The 1996 document from NCTE/IRA represents an attempt to unify a vast multitude of educator voices into key, essential standards that could be generalized into any language arts setting. *The Common Core State Standards* (2010) are more informed by business, political, and test publishers' interests than the earlier documents, and represent the closest

approximation to national standards since the majority of states adopted them in some form. Together, these three documents represent a narrative of the Standards Movement in the United States. Their voices are unique, but together paint a portrait of American English education.

Defining Text Parameters

This section details which part of each document was examined in the data collection process and a rationale for excluding other portions of the document.

Representative performance objectives for high school English: A guide for teaching evaluating, and curriculum planning **(Hook et al, 1971b). (Also referred to as** *The Tri-University Project.)* The data collection from this document was limited to Chapter 3: Speaking and Listening, Chapter 4: Language, Chapter 5: Reading and Responding to Literature, and Chapter 6: Writing. It did not include Chapter 1: Caution—Read Before Using, Chapter 2: Sending a Receiving Non-Verbal Messages, or Chapter 7: Exploring Mass Media. Chapter 1 was examined as part of the literature review. Chapter 2's focus on non-verbal communication disqualifies the use of verbal and written language (and therefore poetry), looking instead at symbolism through gestures, signs, clothing, color, and the like. Chapter 7 focuses on the effects of mass media, chiefly the news, journalistic technique, propaganda, and persuasion.

Standards for the English language arts **(NCTE/IRA, 1996).** The data collection from this set of standards was limited to Chapter 3: The English Language Arts Standards, and Chapter 4: Standards in the Classroom, which includes vignettes for implementation and discussion. The remaining chapters and appendices are addressed in the literature review.

Common core state standards—English language arts **(NGA Best, 2010a).** The data collection from this document was limited to the following "Standards for English Language

Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Sciences, and Technical Subjects: K-5 (excluding reading standards for informational text); Standards for English Language Arts: 6-12; and the sample performance tasks for poetry from Appendix B: Text Exemplars and Sample Performance Tasks. It did not include Introduction, which was addressed in the literature review; Chapter 4: Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Sciences, and Technical Subjects: 6-12, as these standards specifically address texts outside of the realm of traditional literature/poetry; Appendix A: Research Supporting Key Elements of the Standards; Glossary of Key Terms; Supplement to Appendix A: New Research on Text Complexity, which does not include standards or work that stems from them; and Appendix C: Samples of Student Writing.

Data Collection

Clarifying the Definitions

Data collecting is easier when you can categorize something in a singular box, but language arts is a tangled discipline that rarely offers such luxury. One language arts skill serves multiple functions, and poetry skills strengthen other areas of writing. For example, *evaluating ideas and quality* is listed as a general language skill because it is essential to all types of literature, but it is also a component of Question 3 (Cultural Capital). Dealing with difficult vocabulary (Question 1) builds word choice (Question 4). Finding the balance between honoring the interconnected nature of the language arts and isolating skills to look through the lens of each question caused consternation. Resolving it came in the form of tables to define each question, establish categories, and identify key words and considerations for each (See Appendix A).

The tables evolved throughout the data collection as I discovered how the documents use language differently. For example, Table A.2 defines and explains Question 2: Personal growth,

which includes the category of enjoyment. The key words on this table remained consistent while examining the 1971 and 1996 documents. Both reference students enjoying reading by finding work they find humorous or that they liked. The keyword *humor* also appears in the 2010 document but not in the same way. Instead of finding work humorous personally, students are to use literary analysis to identify humor as a technique cultivated by the author. This lead to updating the table by adding that students must identify the work as something they enjoy instead of acknowledging the use of humor as a writing technique. Before any update was made, I re-examined all previous uses of the modified keyword or phrase to ensure its consistent use. Please refer to Appendix A for a detailed disaggregation of the categories, keywords, and considerations for each of the subsidiary research questions.

Tables A.6, A.7, and Figure 1 look a little different from Tables A.1-A.5 to reflect the distinct nature of Question 6, which addresses freedom to teach poetry. In this question, each standard must be sorted into one of the four categories (1) requires (2) lends (3) makes possible or (4) disallows. Figure 1 (see below) is a decision chart to facilitate the funneling of each standard through the categories. It starts by asking if a standard meets the criteria for *required*, then proceeds through lends, makes possible, and disallows. On rare instances, the standard made it all the way through to *mismatch*. Those occurrences led me to go back and clarify the coding tools, as described above.

Figure 3.1: Question 6 Decision Chart

Start

Does the standard specifically call for poetry, either alone or in addition to other texts? — Yes → **Requires**

No ↓

Does the standard address one or more poetry skills including rhythm, rhyme, or language that is coded, compressed, or figurative; or do the implementation examples include poetry in a way that addresses poetry skills? — Yes → **Lends**

No ↓

Does the standard address a general language skill required to navigate many text types including poetry; or do the implementation examples include poetry in a way that addresses one or more general language skill? — Yes → **Possible**

No ↓

Does the standard specify a skill used exclusively or nearly exclusively on non-poetry texts, or would using poetry to address the standard greatly distort its point? — Yes → **Disallows**

↓

Mismatch

The decision chart served as a helpful visual, but I also needed be able to go back to the definitions and specifics for each category. Table A.6 provided that additional information including the definition of *standard* and *implementation example* in each document and keywords for poetry skills, general language skills, and skills that typically disallow poetry's use. Table A.7 offers a specific list of general language skills identified in this research.

Data Tables

My research was aided by the use of a variety of data tables, some of which included totals. Tables and tallies were not attempts to *quantify* the data, but to see each document from different perspectives both in its parts and as a whole. This is a qualitative study and, like students, these documents are not defined by their numbers. You have to get to know them. In schools, we find a plethora of ways to learn about our students. Yes, we look at test scores, attendance, and grades, but we also look at how they present themselves, who they hang out with, and what they write on their papers. We listen to what they have to say. I approached these documents with the same spirit.

I examined the documents in order of publication. Collecting data began with the individual standard, vignette (1996), or performance task (2010). I started with a data collection table as pictured in Table 3.1 below, entering the document's year, the chapter or strand, standard number, and the standard itself at the top of the document. I did not enter implementation examples at the top for space considerations.

Table 3.1: Sample Data Collection Table

1971: R.13			The student recognizes or discovers certain conventional structures of poetry.
Q1	Difficult Text		
Q2	Personal Growth		
Q3	Cultural Capital		
Q4	Mechanics		
Q5	Writing		
Q6	Freedom	Disallows	
		Possible	
		Lends	
		Requires	
Notes:			

As I read through a standard and its examples, I referred back to the coding information for each research question. I looked at Question 6 first because it asks *if* poetry may be used to address a standard. If the standard disallowed poetry, then there was no need to go on to Questions 1 through 5. Once the determination was made that poetry was at least possible, the other subsidiary questions presumed its use. This gave poetry a wide berth. For example, if a standard suggested a story to address a general language skill, I allowed for the possibility that the story could also be a poem such as *Twas the Night Before Christmas* (Moore, 1949), which functions as both.

I recorded information that addressed the research questions, indicating its precise location in the document. I entered performance tasks in their entirety at the top of their respective data tables, but summarized the lengthier vignettes. In the metaphor of documents as students, filling out an individual data table was akin to assessing a short assignment. Each gave me an isolated snippet of information to use in the analysis of the data.

Data Analysis

Chapter Summaries

Once all the standards from a chapter or strand were processed, I wanted to get a sense of how they worked together. For this I used chapter summary tables, the results of which are found according to document in Appendices B-D. I labeled rows according to standard number and columns according to research question, including the 4 categories for Q5/Writing, and the 4 categories for Q6/Freedom to Teach. I shaded in boxes according to which questions (or categories of questions in the cases of Q5 and Q6) they addressed. This allowed me to visualize trends in each section of the document, and was especially helpful in processing the 1971 and 2010 documents since they contain several chapters or strands each. Totals for each question were calculated in the bottom row.

Document Summaries

After I completed all the chapters from a document, I copied the total rows from the chapter summary tables to a document summary table. Having gathered all the small pieces of information together, I began to learn about the document as I would learn about a student if I were to construct a table of contents for his or her work portfolio. I started to see areas of

emphasis—where the document had strong ideas about a given question, and where it was less focused.

Outlines and Disaggregation Tables

By this point, I had a comfortable amount of general information. I had read every standard (the short assignments) and considered the collection as a whole (the portfolio), but still needed to see specifically how a document addressed the research questions collectively.

This time I turned to the reliable, albeit modified, outline. The outline for each document was organized first by subsidiary research question for Q1-Q5, then category, and then by chapter. While the chapter and document summaries showed which and how many standards addressed the questions, the outline specified *how* each document addressed the questions. Instead of seeing one small bit of information at a time, I was able to compare and contrast how a document addressed the questions throughout its chapters. Figure 3.2 on the next page shows a sample page of the outline.

This was like conducting a student interview in that I had raw data in front of me, but also could make inquiries about specifics. For instance, if I noted that a document emphasized poetry's mechanics (Q4), I inquired *what about* mechanics it found interesting. Was it more interested in structure or word choice? Was is satisfied by recognizing metaphor, or was it also necessary to understand what distinguishes a strong metaphor from a weaker comparison? Did it confine poetry to literary analysis, or did it push students to write it as well? Organizing the details of the entire document by question, like an interview, allowed me a more intricate understanding of each set of standards.

Figure 3.2: Sample from Outline of Document Summary by Question

Question 1: Difficult Text (Total references=41)

Chapter 3: Speaking and Listening: 2

1. Demonstrate ability to cope with old-fashioned language (SL.4.A)

2. "…given recordings of literary selections, some written by Chaucer, some by Shakespeare, and some by Burns, for example…" the student points out how language changed over time (SL.4.A.f)

Chapter 4: Language 8

1. "Given a passage of Old English with corresponding modern English text, the student discovers that Old English used many more inflections than does modern English" (L.4.B.b).

2. "Given a list of strong (irregular verbs, the student traces to Old English the reasons for their irregularities" (L.5.C).

3. "Having discovered the fact that some of our modern English verbs retain similarity to Old English, the student, through reading and research, further discovers and explains how the modern English verb makes less use of inflections and how the modern English verb has gone to the *–ed* ending to express past tense" (L.5.D).

4. "Language changes because of what happens to people" (L.6).

5. "The student understands the effect of historical and social conditions that affected the English language during the period of 1650-1800" (L.7).

As the outlines took shape, I kept track of the numbers of references in each question and category as outlined for Q1-Q5. These are called *Disaggregation of References* and located in Appendices B-D, specifically Tables B.6-B10 (1971), Tables C.4-C.8 (1996), and Tables D.8-D.12 (2010). The outlines and disaggregated references provided much of the structure for writing Chapter 4: Results.

Assessing Strength of Emphasis

The next layer of data analysis came from reflecting on the trends of emphasis in each research question from document to document, noting how the treatment of poetry changed from 1971 to 1996 and 2010. As I compared the documents, I was careful not to focus strictly on the number of references each contained for specific categories. I continued to think of learning about the documents as I would learn about students. Each is its own entity that uses numbers differently. The 1971 document contains 100 standards, while the 1996 document contains 12. The 2010 document provides required, grade-specific standards, usually without elaboration, while the 1971 document provides standards as a menu or cookbook from which teachers may choose. The numbers, while noted, represent different approaches to writing standards. I viewed the numbers for the three documents as I would test scores for three individual students in different grades at different kinds of schools in different parts of the country.

More important than the number of references was the strength of what those references contained. The following questions provided guidance during this reflection:

1. Are the references made to a certain category given prominence by inclusion in the standards, or do they exist more in the examples?

2. Do the references make general statements about a category, or do they specify particular attributes of it?

3. Do the references specify poetry, or does poetry fit in as one of many suitable texts?

While reflecting on these questions, I noted key observations in a new set of tables, one for each subsidiary research question (see Appendix E). The tables arranged columns by documents in chronological order. Categories within each question were arranged into rows. Once I had finished notations for one question across all three documents, I went back and color coded them according to how strongly they addressed each category. Shades of blue signified strong emphasis, green signified moderate emphasis, and yellow signified weak or no emphasis. Darker shades of a given color indicated greater emphasis than lighter shades.

The process of color coding the strength of each document in addressing different categories of the research questions helped me look for an even more nuanced picture than the one I had seen before. Although I had noted the number of references with respect to each category, seeing them together clarified the need to push beyond them and compelled me to look more closely at what was behind the numbers. Documents that gave prominence to categories by addressing them directly in the standards were considered stronger than documents that reserved references for illustrative examples. Within *Common Core,* anchor standards were considered stronger emphasis than grade-specific standards. Specific references were considered stronger than general ones, and references that specified poetry were considered stronger than one that treated poetry as one of many suitable texts. I left the table for Q6/Freedom to Teach without color codes as most of the data was addressed in other tables. Nonetheless, it was still helpful to keep in mind the degree to which each document required, lent itself to, allowed, or required poetry.

Finally, as I traced the timeline of each question through the documents, I kept referring to their contextualized histories. Who wrote it? Why? What were their purposes and loyalties? How might the answers to these questions be reflected in the documents themselves? How do they work together to tell the story of poetry within the standards? This final layer of analysis helped me address the primary research question.

Summary

This qualitative inquiry used context-sensitive text analysis to examine the treatment of poetry in English instruction as presented by attempts to standardize curriculum over the last 46 years. Data tables and outlines were used to collect, interpret, and compare information from each of the three standards documents. The data collection process was governed by research questions, definitions, and categories defined at the beginning of the research and refined as needed during the collection process. Any refinements made are reflected in the coding tools. Any data impacted by those adjustments were reevaluated with the new criteria. The collected data were combined with the contextual histories of each document in the literature review to address the primary research question: How have the attempts to standardize K-12 English curriculum in the United States over the last 46 years addressed the teaching of poetry?

CHAPTER 4: Results

This chapter provides the results for each of the six subsidiary research questions. Those

questions are shortened as follows for the purpose of reporting: Q1/Difficult Text, Q2/Personal

Growth, Q3/Cultural Capital, Q4/Structure, Q5/Writing, and Q6/Freedom to Teach. The data is

presented by document in order of publication date and then by question. Within each question is

a further breakdown of how a standard met the criteria for that question. Q1/Difficult Text

includes the subcategories time, culture, coded complexity, and vocabulary. Q2/Personal Growth

includes enjoyment, understanding self, and understanding others, the human condition, or the

nature of the world. Q3/Cultural Capital includes becoming well-read and evaluating quality.

Q4/Mechanics includes word choice, poetic or compressed language, figurative language,

imagery, structure, tone, literary devices, and rhythm and rhyme. Q5/Writing includes writing

poetry possible but not specified, writing poetry possible and named, writing poetry required,

and writing poetic language in other named genres. Q6/Freedom to Teach reports out by the

categories requires, lends, makes possible, and disallows.

Representative Performance Objectives for High School English, 1971

Four chapters of this document were reviewed to answer the subsidiary research

questions: Chapter 3/Speaking and Listening (SL), Chapter 4/Language (L), Chapter 5/Reading

and Responding to Literature (R), and Chapter 6/Writing (W). Each chapter has numbered goals,

each goal comes with corresponding performance objectives (noted by a capital letter), and many

of the performance objectives further house representative enabling objectives (noted by a

lowercase letter). In this document, goals and objectives function differently. A goal is like a

standard in the other documents. Its corresponding objectives are examples for how students *may*, but are not required to, demonstrate competency in the goal.

Goals and objectives are abbreviated as follows: Chapter.Goal number.performance objective.representative enabling objective. For example, the second goal in the language chapter is noted as L.2, the first performance objective for that goal is noted as L.2.A, and the third representative enabling objective is noted as L.2.A.c.

Difficult Text

Of the 100 goals examined, 24 view poetry as a means to engage with difficult text (SL.4, 5, 15; L.4-14, 22; R.11, 16, 28, 32, 35-37, 43; W.4). When goals are combined with their corresponding objectives, there are 41 total references that allow poetry use to engage students with difficult text.

Fourteen references ask students to deal with the difficulty of understanding English language from the past. Students should understand "old-fashioned language" (SL.4.A) and listen to recordings of literary selections from writers such as Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Burns to note how the English language has changed over time (SL.4.A.f).

The document emphasizes how "language changes because of what happens to people" (L.6). Students use this understanding to demonstrate how historical events (L.10), such as the Norman Conquest and the Renaissance (L.4.B.b), and social conditions, particularly during the period of 1650-1800 (L.7), contributed to the development of modern English. They connect how Old English grammar affects modern English (L.5.C, L.5.D) and track how society, culture, economics, and technology continue to evolve language over time (L.14.A.a-b). Students use their "knowledge of language history to assist in the interpretation of literature of the past" (L.8).

The theme of building bridges from the past to the present is found as students read works from earlier centuries or eras and distinguish "between the past significance of certain archetypal characters and the present significance of similar archetypes" (R.28.F), as well as "between expressions contemporary with that era and expressions, especially poeticisms, that are now archaic" (R.32.H). Students look closely at setting elements of works from different time periods, compare them to the present, and identify how the relationships between the events, customs, beliefs, values, and behaviors differ or remain the same (R.16). The last example (R.43.G) asks students to compare and contrast lyrics from a contemporary song to a short poem "of an earlier vintage," "focus on lifestyles and attitudes expressed in each," and explain why they accept or reject "one or more of the values in either milieu." The text offers for example Paul Simon's "The Sound of Silence" and Edna St. Vincent Millay's "Recuerdo."

The examined text makes 14 references to encountering difficulty by way of navigating different cultures. One reference requires students to understand how culture affects literary works (R.16), while the others pertain to the role of dialects within language. Students explain how events (L.10; L.10.B) and social groups based on profession, gender, age, and interests (L.12.A-D) change language (L.10.A; L.11) and create different dialects. Students are multilingual by way of their fluency in these dialects (L.12). They identify the elements of a dialect by noting the similarities and differences between British and American English (L.9), and varieties of regional American dialects (L.11.A). Students identify and respect "idiosyncratic and dialectical speech differences" (SL.4; SL.4.B), and point out examples in recorded selections written by Paul Laurence Dunbar, Langston Hughes, and Robert Frost (SL.4.B.e).

Students recognize how society often attaches value judgements to dialects (L.13) and explain how dialectal differences "can hinder clear communication" since people representing

these groups may use words and phrases differently (L.22.B). For example, *cookie* means something different to an internet provider than to a five-year-old.

The examined text includes 13 coded complexity references, some of which address poetry more specifically than others. General references ask students to distinguish between unequivocal and ambiguous language. Students suggest ways to clarify "vague, confusing, or ambiguous" writing (W.4.D.c). "Given a proverb, the student demonstrates his understanding of obfuscation by rewriting the proverb in high-flown, ambiguous language" (SL.5.A.d). They rewrite "spare, concise speech" as "elegant, extravagant, ambiguous" prose (SL.5.A.e), and discern "differences between textual and subtextual communication" (SL.15).

Coded complexity references that address poetry more specifically include R.11, in which students understand the *I* in fiction and poetry is often a narrator instead of the author. This demand is easier in fiction where authors usually make delineation obvious by giving characters different names. Had the goal specified only fiction, it would likely not meet the criteria for encountering difficulty. The fictitious *I* in poetry is more complicated because a character's name is often concealed. Poets may use the ambiguity of the unnamed *I* to play with possibility, leaving the reader to wonder if the poet is writing on his or a character's behalf. The tool codes complexity into the text and may protect what the poet does not wish to reveal directly.

References within R.35-37 require that students delve below the literal to explore other layers of meaning. This begins with students pointing "to places in poems where ellipsis or condensation occurs…and spells out, in the light of context, what the compression has implied" (R.35.C). It continues with understanding that the symbolic language of poetry "represents, through suggestion rather than explicit statement, multiple meanings several times removed from

the given objects and images" (R.36). They are asked to follow the progression from images to metaphors and then to symbols (R.36.B), and identify "possible symbolic meanings" (R.36.A). Students understand some of a writer's coding tools, including paradox, irony, satire, allegory, and parody, which the authors call "a kind of game playing" (R.37). Students combine the multiple layers of meaning and put them in their own words. For example, read "a poem containing several serious or poignant paradoxes and ironies" (R.37.B), or a literary work "containing several layers of meaning—literal, allegorical, symbolic, mythic and the like," and write a brief explanation (R.36.C; R.37.E).

The document addresses vocabulary through the aforementioned references in Time and Culture. Vocabulary is also addressed through objective exercises such as word lists and dictionary skills (L.16-19) that do not involve poetry directly.

Personal Growth

Out of 100 examined goals, 16 view poetry as a way to encourage personal growth (SL.1; R.1-7, 16, 18, 31, 38; W.1, 13, 16-17). When the goals were combined with their corresponding objectives, there were 25 references allowing poetry's use for personal growth.

Ten examples allow for working with poetry for personal enjoyment. Students will "feel comfortable and find pleasure in various types of speaking-listening situations" that could include poetry (SL.1) and rank them accordingly (SL.1.A.d). They use writing as an outlet for their imaginations (W.16) and play with words to gain new insights as to their uses (W.16.C.c). Six references in this category seem to walk in pairs. The first looks for enthusiasm in the form of a student who "develops a reading appetite that escalates in its need for satisfaction" (R.1), and participates in choral reading of verse "with gusto" (R.1.E). He values reading as "a

humanizing experience" (R.3) and respects everyone's right to read (R.5). Lastly, the student "develops a sense of humor" from reading (R.7; R.38).

Understanding self, others, the human condition, or the nature of the world finds 15 references in the text, eight of which go specifically to students' understanding themselves. They use literature to explore their own identities, define admirable qualities of character (R.2), conduct "soul searching" (R.2.B), and note how fictional accounts relate to their lived experiences (R.18.B). They respect people's different literary experiences and responses (R.6). Students keep a journal and write "for self-expression" (W.1.B). Writing helps them "discover" themselves by increasing their awareness of, and sensitivity to, their "perceptions, emotions, and ideas" (W.17), which they record carefully to avoid miscommunication (W.17.A). Students use writing to explore and clarify problems, issues, or emotions that they do not fully control (W.17.B).

When it comes to understanding others, the authors issue a simple directive: "The student values human experiences enough to read about them" (R.4). They understand how archetypal experiences relate to the human experience (R.18.B), explore multiple worldviews (R.31), and explain the difference between them (R.31.A.a). Several examples look for students to be recursive in their use of literature to understand outside views and refine their own. Students read works set in cultures different from their own, explain the similarities (R.16.C; W.13.A.f-h), and use insights obtained from reading about other cultures to inform their understanding of their own (R.16).

Cultural Capital

The examined text includes 21 goals that offer opportunities to use poetry as a means to gain cultural capital (SL.5, 14; L.8, 9; R.5, 6, 9, 18-19, 25-27, 29, 31, 33, 40-41, 43-44; W.13, 14). The goals combined with their objectives make forty-six references to being well-read and evaluating literary quality.

The Tri-University Project expects students to be well-read, as demonstrated by 24 distinct references. General calls are made to "read closely and widely" (R.43.Entering Objective A), read "a wide variety of literary work" (R.6), and become well-educated in literature and the arts (R.25). The authors note the importance of having a variety of literary experiences (W.14.B) as a member of a culturally diverse society (R.5). This variety includes "a substantial amount of British literature" (L.9.B), modern literature, literature from the past (L.8.A-C), genres in depth (R.33.B), authors with contrasting visions (R.29.B.a, R.31.A), and versions of the same work presented in different media (R.40.B). Students make and explain connections between themes in various literary works (R.18, R.18.A-B, R.19) in different genres, including poetry (R.31.A.a). Students should be so well-read that they can identify allusions to one work embedded in another (R.9.F), identify authors from passages of their work (R.33.A), and compare stylistic decisions of authors writing about the same subject (W.13.A.c).

The authors expect students to read a variety of poetry such that they are able to distinguish between common forms (R.26.H). Poetry read should include contemporary and Victorian poems (R.43.J), and several poems by one specified poet (R.27.G). They should relate the tone of a poem to a painting with similar qualities (R.25.A.b), and compare thematically similar poems from different eras (R.43.G) and points of view (R.31).

The authors of the Tri-University Project are not satisfied with students who are well read. They are also looking for literary critics, and use 22 references to paint a strong picture of

the sort of consumer/critic they hope students will become. They expect students to understand that evaluating quality is "not the exclusive possession of a cultural elite" (R.5), and understand their own potential as objective literary critics (SL.14; R.43). As they develop critical tastes (R.40), students sort out their "value responses" to aesthetic literary events (SL.5; R.6.H), accepting that their opinions are among many interpretations (R.6.A) worthy of respect (R.6). They distinguish among the different views and explain the differences to their peers (R.31.E.a).

Students should show maturity in their assessments by attending to details such as how a work was effective or ineffective in evoking a response (R.43.A); "rising above banality" (R.43.C); why they judge a work to be "successful or unsuccessful, serious or trivial" (R.43.D); original within its genre or school of thought (R.43.M), and its characters believable (R.43.E) and distinguishable from other characters in the same work (R.43.F). They should speak to the advantages and disadvantages to work presented through different media (R.40.B).

The authors want students to suspend their judgements until the end of the work (R.5.B), test their criticism skills against other knowledgeable opinions (R.31.E), and decide if they agree or disagree with those critics (R.41). Once practiced, students show willingness to reevaluate their original judgements after time passes or after hearing other people's thoughts (R.44).

Specific to poetry, students explain why they judge a contemporary poem to be original or not (R.43.O). They state why they judge a poem as "(a) obtrusive, noisy, or jingly; or (b) unobtrusive—perhaps because of the run-on lines (enjambment) instead of end-stopped lines; perhaps because of conversational tone" (R.43.I).

Mechanics.

Poetry mechanics finds its way into 38 of the examined goals (SL.5-6, 8, 13, & 16; L.8, 11-12, 15, 20-22; R.8, 13-14, 20-28, 32-33, 36-39, 43; W.4, 6, 11-14, 16). The goals and corresponding objectives combined offer 100 references to word choice, figurative language, structure, style and tone, literary devices, and rhythm and rhyme.

Word choice occupies about a fifth of the references and begin with the understanding that "words influence thoughts, attitudes, and behavior" (L.22), and hold different meanings for different receivers (L.15; L.20.A-B; W.4.B), so students need to choose the right words for their intended effect (L.21.A.a-c). Students are aware of how dialectal differences (L.8.A-B; L.11.A; L.12.A-D) affect word choice. Sensitivity to the nuances of language and understanding the roles of denotation, connotation, euphemism, and emotive language are important (SL.13; R.39.A; W.6.A). Students examine word choice in poetry (R.43.H), and in various authors writing about the same subject (W.13.A.c), connect word choice to tone (R.24) and characterization (R.24.B), and determine criteria for defining diction as poetic (R.43.J). They play with word combinations (W.16.C.c), explore concrete and abstract words (W.6.B), and embellish concise language (SL.5.A.e). As they grow in their understanding of word choice as a powerful communication tool (W.6), they apply their learning to their own revisions (W.12.A).

Figurative, compressed, or otherwise poetic language offers 19 examples beginning with general references for students to interpret figurative language (R.14.A) and distinguish it from non-figurative language (R.32.B). Students define diction as poetic (R.43.J) and understand the condensed or compressed language often found in poetry (R.14.D.b).

Beyond these general statements is a clarion call for teachers to show students the power of figurative language in terms of metaphor, imagery, and symbolism. The authors reaffirm their lack of interest in the "trivial distinctions" that make this area easier to test (Hook et al, 1971b, p.

8). Instead of splitting hairs over whether a stanza contains a simile or a metaphor, they want students to discriminate "between a less imaginative and a more imaginative comparison…the more imaginative comparison depends upon the actual unlikeness of the two compared objects—except for one surprisingly believable aspect, that of 'right surprise'" (R.32.C).

Students point to the relationships between metaphor and the main idea of a work (R.24.G). They know how imagery recreates vision for the reader (R.22.A.b) by using "sensuous appeals" (R.22.A.c) that reveal the speaker's attitude toward what is being described, and understand that readers respond more strongly to imagery than they do direct statements (R.22.A.d). Students see "the role of imagery in creating relationships between the author or speaker and the reader" (R.22) and identify such examples encountered in their reading (R.22.A; W.13.A.c). They understand how the symbolic language of poetry allows writers to communicate or hint at multiple meanings with a single image (R.36, R.36.B), use their knowledge of symbolism to infer different possible meanings (R.36.A), and explain those different layers of meaning (R.36.C).

As writers, students find examples of poetic language in their own writing as well as published writings of different genres (W.16.C.a), record poetic lines in their journals (W.16.C.b), and balance the reader's need for language that is "primarily logical and structural, but may also be sensuous" (W.4.G).

Tending to poetry's structure plays prominently in this document with 16 examples. It begins with an acknowledgement that identifying poetry necessitates at least a basic understanding of its structure (R.8.A) and vocabulary such as *stanza* (R.13.B). Nods are made to regular poetry forms such as limerick, haiku, ballad, and sonnet (R.13.A), and more flexible patterns as found in narrative verse (R.28). Students compare and contrast poetry forms (R.26.H)

and explain how a poem's pattern can make "some of the content inevitable" (R.21.K). More importantly, the authors want students to understand how structure contributes to a poem's meaning and tone (R.21.H), how a concrete poem's shape contributes to the poem's effect (R.21.H.a), how a refrain marks off sections of a poem, but also gives readers a sense of expectancy that the poet can play with through its variations (R.20.D) as in Edgar Allan Poe's "The Raven," which used *nevermore* as a "hammering repetition" of a "gruesome echo" to "add insult to the injury already suffered by the speaker in the loss of his beloved Lenore" (R.21.H.b). Students compare plays written in prose and verse to identify differences, distinguish between blank and free verse, and cite an advantage and a limitation of each play form (R.27.E).

In their writing, students experiment with conventional poetic forms (W.16.C.f), decide when sentence fragments are acceptable (W.4.D.a), alter conventions for desired effects (W.11.I-J), and revise structure (W.12.A). Students should be able to explain how writers use the rules of structure to control and manipulate the relationships within a work (W.4.H).

Style and tone includes 16 references including students using their voices effectively to create style (SL.16) and tone (SL.6.A.c), specifically with regard to poetry (SL.8.A.b). They note how language (R.24), narration (R.23.A; R.23.A.c), non-verbal media (W.14.A), word position (R.21.I), repetition (R.24.A), and structure relate to a poem's meaning and tone (R.21.H; W.14.B). The authors offer that readers may find conversational tone in poetry less obtrusive (R.43.I), but challenge students to take on poems with more tension to discover how it affects tone and meaning (R.21.J). Students should also identify different authors by their writing styles (R.33), describe similarity in tone between poems and other media such as paintings (R.25.A.b), and demonstrate skill in both responding to tone and creating it within various media (W.14).

Literary devices occupy seven references including narration (R.27.F), *in medias res* (R.20.A), flashback (R.20.A.a-b), paradox, satire, parody, irony, ironic humor, and allegory (R.37, R.37.B, R.37.E, R.38.B).

Rhythm and rhyme references total 14. Students present poems effectively by using their voices to create character, mood, and tone with devices such as shifts in pitch, level, rate, intonation (SL.6.A.c), and "rhythm, tempo, and pause" (SL.8.A.b). In choral reading, they demonstrate a "thorough understanding of the function of the punctuation marks" (SL.8.A.e).

Students are encouraged to experiment with rhythm by composing poems to their own invented patterns, including "stanza, rhyme scheme, meter, word count, and the like" (R.13.B). They should understand how poets use words to create sound effects (R.14) and rhythms like galloping (R.22.A.a). The authors want students to describe which sound effects they find impressive "without necessarily naming such effects as alliteration, assonance, consonance, onomatopoeia, and the like" (R.14.D.a). Students identify meter by tapping it out with a pencil, and may start using traditional terminology like *trochaic* and *iambic* (R.27.D). They explore how sound effects, including repetition (R.24.A), pitch, stress, and pause (R.32.D), and poetic word order (R.32.G) affect tone and meaning. Students should also understand how finer structures, such as enjambment, affect how the reader hears the poem (R.43.I). Students should play with words in their writing (W.16.C.c) and identify ways to revise their writing for "smoother rhythm, less monotony, or a different effect" (W.4.D.b).

Writing

Students have 37 opportunities to write poetry or poetic language through activities presented in 16 distinct goals (SL.5-6; L.23; R.13, 21, 43; W.1, 4-6, 11-14, 16-17), three of

which (W.1, 14, 16) pertain to more than one of the categories (a) writing poetry possible, but not specified (b) writing poetry possible and named (c) writing poetry required and (d) writing poetic language in other named genres.

The Tri-University Project includes 27 examples that provide students the possibility of writing poetry without requiring them to do so. These examples feature skills used in many writing types, so students may use poetry or a different genre to address them. They include writing to influence others (L.23; W.1.D), in different modes about a single subject (W.5), for various audiences (W.11) and purposes, and using a variety of forms and techniques (W.17.C). Students write to emulate an author's style (R.43.N), explore "the potentials and restraints inherent in language" (W.4), and find power and flexibility in words (W.6). They manipulate (W.11.I-J) and willfully break rules of convention to achieve new effects (W.4.H.a). Students keep a journal and write for self-expression (W.1.B) as an outlet for the imagination (W.16), to record poetic lines (W.16.C.b), convey ideas (W.1.D), discover their own thoughts (W.17), and explore problems, issues, or emotions they do not fully control (W.17.B).

Students find value in revision (W.11.B, W.12), clarifying writing that is needlessly vague or confusing (W.4.D.c), smoothing out sentences for clarity and rhythm (W.4.D.b), and fulfilling the reader's need for language that balances the logical with the sensuous (SL.5.A.e; W.4.G), and the concrete with the abstract (W.6.B). They revise to help ensure that their readers will interpret their writing as intended (W.17.A) with a clearly defined point of view (W.13.B) and tone (W.14.B). Students submit their work for publication (W.11.B.d).

Writing poetry is possible and named eight times. Because this document delineates goals that can be met by a variety of objectives, objectives naming poetry do not *require* the student to write it. In each instance, the student could choose a different objective to meet the goal. With

that in mind, the named opportunities to write poetry are as follows: create tongue twisters (SL.6.A.f), write poetry when one chooses (W.16.C), experiment with poetic forms (W.16.C.f) including concrete poetry (R.21.H.a), invent a new poetry pattern and compose within the self-imposed limits (R.13.B), write a poem to present with other media (W.14.A.d), work with the class to create a group poem (W.16.C.d), and write song lyrics (W.16.C.e).

Two examples call for writing poetic language in other genres. Students identify poetic use of language in prose (W.16.C.a) and record poetic lines in their journals (W.16.C.b).

The Tri-University project does not require students to write poetry.

Freedom to Teach

Of the 100 goals evaluated, eight require the use of poetry, 15 lend themselves to the use of poetry, 69 make poetry possible, and 13 disallow it. When the totals for *required, lends,* and *possible* are combined, it shows that 87% of the examined goals in the Tri-University Project allow for inclusion of poetry.

The goals that require poetry's use are R.11, 13, and 28. The first states, "The student understands that the *I* in fiction and poetry is more often than not a fictive narrator rather than the author himself" (R.11). The next requires that the "student recognizes or discovers certain conventional structures of poetry" (R.13). Lastly, "While reading such literature as fiction, drama, and narrative verse, the student not only sorts out the *dramatis personae* at face value (Goal 9) but also distinguishes among the subtler traits that distinguish one character from another" (R.28). The last goal specifically calls for poetry, along with other genres, to address the general language skill of characterization. Had the goal not specifically called for poetry to address this skill, it would have been coded *possible.*

Fifteen goals lend themselves to poetry (SL.5, 6, 8, 15; R.14, 20-22, 24, 26-27, 32, 36-37, 43). These goals address coded complexity (SL.5.A.d-e; SL.15; R.36-37); figurative, compressed, or otherwise poetic language (R.14.D.b, 22, 24.G, 32.B-C, 36, 43.J); rhythm and rhyme (SL.6, 8.A.b&e; R.14, 14.D, 14.D.b, 24.A, 27.D, 32.D&G, 43.I); and poetic structure (R.20.D, 21.H.a, 26.A, 27.E).

Several goals disallow poetry by focusing on non-poetry texts or skills (SL.9-11; L.16-19; R.42; W.7-10, 15). While a determined teacher or student could find a way to incorporate poetry, to do so would distort the intention of the goal. The 13 goals that disallow poetry address parliamentary procedure (SL.9); accurate and objective reporting with regard to news broadcasts and police reporting (SL.10; W.7&9); ethical considerations in political speech, advertising, and debate (SL.11); dictionary skills such as a dictionary's organization (L.16), how to use its various components (L.17), determine word origins (L.18), and distinguishing between different dictionary types (L.19); essays and editorials (R.42); research papers (W.15); writing dialogue (W.10); and writing without artistic interpretation (W.8).

The remaining 69 goals make poetry possible because they address general language skills needed for many genres, including poetry. The qualifying general language skills follow; however, specific keywords and phrases are located in Appendix A, Table A.6. The general language skills addressed are speaking and listening (SL.1-4), purpose and audience (SL.7; W.3-5 & 11), evaluating reasoning (SL.12), denotation and connotation of words (SL.13), evaluating literary performance (SL.14), elements of style (SL.16), grammar (L.1), spelling (L.2), sentence structure, active versus passive voice (L.3), variations of English (L.4-14), word choice (L.15 & 20-22; W.6), persuasive technique (L.23), reading for fun and personal growth (R.1-7, R.38), exploring genres (R.8), comprehension (R.9-10, 15, 29-30), plot elements (R.12, R.23),

comparing and contrasting, making text connections (R.16-19, R.25, R.31), style and voice (R.33), making inferences (R.34-35, and R. 39), evaluating literary quality (R.40-41, 44), general writing (W.1, 16-17), structure of text types (W.2), revision (W.12), point of view (W.13), and tone (W.14).

Standards for the English Language Arts, 1996

This research reviewed two chapters of the document: Chapter 3: The English Language Arts Standards, which contains the 12 standards, and Chapter 4: Standards in the Classroom, in which the authors present vignettes of teachers incorporating the standards into their classrooms. Chapter 3 is referred to as *the standards.* Chapter 4 is called *the vignettes*. While the Tri-University Project packaged standards like recipes in a cookbook and encouraged teachers to choose what works best for their students, the authors of the NCTE/IRA standards expect teachers to use all 12 standards in their teaching.

Each standard in this document appears in bold print and is followed by a page or more of discussion. Notation for this section provides the standard number followed by the paragraph number from the discussion where applicable. For example, one refers to language located in the standard itself, but indicates information found in the third paragraph of discussion following the first standard. The authors did not number the paragraphs in the document, but this notation allowed for quicker referencing during the research process.

The 17 vignettes are noted by grade level and number: elementary school 1-7 (E1-7), middle school 1-6 (M1-6), and high school 1-3, and 5 (H1-3, 5). (The document's online version omits high school vignette 4 due to copyright issues.) Because the vignettes present holistic activities, paragraph numbers are not noted.

Difficult Text

Of the 12 standards examined, five allow teachers to use poetry as a means to engage with difficult text (1-3, 8-9), representing 42% of the total. A total of 25 references are made to this category with 18 in the standards and seven in the vignettes.

Time is the source of difficulty in five instances. The standards require students to read "literature from many periods" (2), and include examples of students working on historical fiction-based interdisciplinary units (1.8). In Standard 9, students trace "the evolution of various dialects and speech patterns" to "learn about the interconnectedness of language and social history" (9.5). The high school vignettes present two examples in this category. In the first, students dig into the history of a fictitious past relative to better understand the everyday life someone of that era. Such research would likely include popular songs and literature of the time (H1). The other high school vignette depicts students researching the history of a foreign culture, including its literary texts (H2).

Culture presents potential for difficulty in 10 instances. The standards mandate using literature to build understanding "of the cultures of the United States and the world" (1). Students read works that "reflect the diversity of the United States' population in terms of gender, age, social class, religion, and ethnicity" (1.7). They explore literary worlds to gain "perspectives which may contrast and conflict with their own lived experiences" (2.3) so that they may be better equipped to imagine new possibilities and "challenge different worlds" (2.6). The standards seek for students to use technology to bridge the gap between cultures, as two classes from different states did in a video pen pal project (8.3). In working with the standards, students "develop an understanding of and respect for diversity in language use, patterns, and dialects across cultures, ethnic groups, geographic regions, and social roles" (9), better understand peers

of different cultural backgrounds (9.2), and see how language and culture shape each other (9.3). The vignettes depict students engaging in a cultural exchange to make sense of text (E4) and sharing folktales from their respective cultures (M3).

Although this research sought to categorize standards in neat boxes, the standards presented four instances in which time and culture stubbornly (and rightfully) intertwined. Standard 1 encourages the use of African folk narratives and Greek myths as "cultural, religious, or philosophical histories of particular regions or people" (1.3). It states students should have an "understanding of our society and its history" (1.7), and suggests reading as the lens needed to build this understanding (1.9). Finally, texts provide students opportunities to engage in "ethical and philosophical reflection on the values and beliefs of their own cultures, of other cultures, and of other times and places" (2.5).

The document makes two references to coded complexity. A vignette depicts students who, as part of their study of *Hamlet,* compare different film versions to the text and note ambiguous interpretations. They further investigate by running the scenes to look at it from a director's point of view. They find creating storyboards helps them both visualize the events and "interpret the images and lines for themselves and their classmates" (H5). The exercise shows how text may reveal more than one plausible interpretation. The activity featured students studying a play, but it could also be adapted to narrative poetry.

The document also includes a more questionable reference in Standard 1: "Complexity is another important criterion. Students benefit from reading texts that challenge and provoke them; they also benefit from simpler texts that promote fluency" (1.6). The comparison to simpler, fluency-promoting text could indicate that complexity simply means more challenging, but not

necessarily ambiguous. On the other hand, the call for provocative texts hints at multiple layers of meaning and ambiguity. This example is included in coded complexity as a weaker reference.

A third example uses the term *ambiguity* differently stating, "If they are having a conversation with someone whose language patterns are very different from theirs, they may need to use a range of strategies…to resolve ambiguities that arise" (3.9). Although *ambiguity* is a keyword for coded complexity, it is used here to mean a communication breakdown in which a correct interpretation exists. This is different from ambiguity in poetry that does not come with an answer key, but instead leaves the reader to ponder different possibilities. For this reason, the example was not included in the coded complexity count.

Difficulty from vocabulary arises in five instances. Students discover features of literary texts and develop the "skills and vocabulary needed to experience and appreciate literature fully, in all of its various forms" (2.1). Students encountering challenging text employ word identification strategies (3) and "may need to pause frequently to search for graphic, phonological, syntactic, and semantic clues that will help them make sense of the text" (3.8). They use "various skills and context clues" (E1) and "work together to discover the meaning" (E4) of challenging words.

Personal Growth

The majority of the standards, nine out of 12, allow for the use of poetry to explore personal growth. These nine standards (1-3, 5-6, 8-9, and 11-12) represent 75% of the total. There are 49 references to personal growth in the reviewed chapters: 38 in the standards and 11 in the vignettes. In fact, the standards state early on that "Readers often read for several purposes—some internal, such as personal growth" (1.3).

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The authors include seven references to reading for enjoyment that could be applied to poetry. Students read "for personal fulfillment" (1), and use language arts for their own "enjoyment" (12). Students realize how reading provides "the intrinsic pleasure of linguistic and imaginative activity" (1.1). The vignettes show teachers helping students connect to books they like (E6; M1), or taking advantage of student interest in a text to expand an area of study (H2). Students in one vignette contribute their work to the school library for others to enjoy (M3).

Students use text to better understand themselves in five instances in the standards. First, they "construct rich, personal meanings from what they read" (1.2) and "learn that literary texts are often relevant to their own lives" (2.3). Next, they "discover the significance of inner experience" through literature (2.5). They witness characters struggle to know themselves and make decisions (2.5), which students may find instructive. "As students interpret and evaluate texts, they explore their own feelings, values, and responses to the ideas presented. Thus, they make their own responses to texts an integral part of their reading experiences" (3.10).

The authors make 22 references to understanding others, the human condition, or the nature of the world. In this area, the authors speak with clear conviction and expectation about the type of learning environment schools should provide: "Schools are responsible for creating a climate of respect for the variety of languages that students speak and the variety of cultures from which they come. Students as well as teachers need to recognize and appreciate linguistic and cultural variation, for it is truly an asset, not a liability" (9.4).

The authors emphasize how to use language arts to see from different points of view, explaining the "need to foster this understanding is growing increasingly urgent as our culture becomes more diverse" (9.1). Students use literature to gain "a window into lives beyond their own" (11.6; E4; M3). They seek text that depicts "different representations of the world" (1.1)

and "the many dimensions…of human experience" (2). They investigate how they see the world differently (9.3-4), looking beyond "visible markers of difference" (9.3) to understand cultures (9.2; H1; H2), perceptions, interpretations (9.3), and insights (M4). Students respect diversity with regard to language use and dialects (9), express their views thoughtfully while respecting others' perspectives (12.4) and look to "build the groundwork for unity and shared experience" (9.2). They use technology to learn about cultures (8.3).

The standards call for students to seek out and meet others' needs. Reading should, according to the standards, prepare students to think about how others feel (1.2) and to "respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace" (1). Students "recognize and evaluate human experiences as well as the literature in which those experiences are represented" (2.6) so they can learn to read culture and society from an informed, thoughtful perspective" (6.7).

The NCTE/IRA document synthesizes the use of literature to understand self and others in 14 references. Students read literature that "provokes reflection" and "introspection" (1.1), and allows them to "build an understanding of themselves, and of the other cultures of the United States and the world" (1). "Self-discovery and cultural awareness are intertwined. As students…discuss and reflect on what they read, they develop an understanding of themselves both as individuals and as parts of a larger social whole. Their literacy skills and their social knowledge grow together" (1.9).

Literacy is an "exploration in which students' own worlds and experiences open themselves to those of many others," where they "engage in ethical and philosophical reflection" (2.5), and "reflect critically on alternative ways of knowing and being" (2.3). Students read literature to see how characters learn "to act within a larger society" (2.5), discuss text

connections with peers (E1; M1), and use gained insights to find and evaluate their "place in the world" (1.1; 2.5).

Literacy can build empathy to "work through difficult and tangled emotions" (5.2). "Students who explore the moral and ethical dimensions of literature see that reading can deepen their understanding of the complexities of human life, often affirming their own experiences or casting them in a new light" (2.5). Students discover these possibilities through literature (2.5) and become "more apt to consider alternatives rather than simply accepting things as they are" (2.6).

Cultural Capital

Poetry can be used in five standards (1-3, 6, and 11) as a means to gain cultural capital. These standards represent 42% of the total and encompass 22 references; 17 from the standards and five from the vignettes.

Becoming well-read is the focus of 14 references in the text. Of these, seven make a general call for students to read "widely" or "extensively" (1; 1.3; 1.9; 2; 3.1; 3.2; & M3). The others focus on students using their variety of reading experiences to make connections to other texts (1.8), draw conclusions about the connections between theme and form in poetry (2.4), or use literature to deepen understanding about a given topic (3; 3.6; E4; M2; and H2).

Evaluating literary quality garners eight references within the examined chapters. Students "recognize and evaluate human experiences as well as the literature in which those experiences are represented" (2.6). Students critique work, including recordings of their own presentations (M3). They recognize that fluency in literary analysis terminology is "essential for

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responding to, discussing" and "critiquing" text (6.1), and it enriches the reading experience (2.4).

Lastly, the standards speak to the importance of discussing quality as part of a literary community (6). It is in community that students hone their knowledge of form and convention; compare spoken, written, and visual language; compose their own work; and exchange critiques with others openly (6.2). "They may listen to one another read aloud, critiquing the performance for fluency and effectiveness, or sharing their personal responses to an author's work" (11.5). Working with others fosters "the ability to step back and critique our work with an eye to improving it," which is essential to cultivating quality in written and spoken word (6.6).

Mechanics

Poetry's mechanics are addressed in five standards (1-2, 4, 6, & 9) which represent 42% of the total and include 15 references—12 in the standards and three in the vignettes—to word choice, figurative language, structure, literary devices, and rhythm and rhyme. The standards do not address style or tone.

The standards address word choice by encouraging "word games and playful talk" (1.5).

Figurative, compressed, or otherwise poetic language merits five references. Students learn "that literary language is rich with metaphor, imagery, rhyme, and other figures and devices" (2.1); "apply knowledge of…figurative language…to create, critique, and discuss print and nonprint texts" (6); and recognize "that ethnic or racial bias is often embedded in language or metaphor," which "may lead students to a deeper understanding of the power of figurative language to shape perception" (9.5). Standard 6 depicts a student who realizes a need for explicit instruction when "readers are baffled by his or her use of conflicting metaphors in a paragraph"

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(6.3). A vignette presents a student realizing that they need to include "more sensory detail and descriptive language" (H3). Compressed or otherwise poetic language is not addressed.

Working with structure appears in five instances, although most examples are nebulous. Students need to "learn how literary works are constructed, how they share certain artistic forms, and what makes each a distinct work" (2.4). They "understand that attention to structure and form is an essential part of the process of creating and revising text" (6.2). "As they compose different types of works, students call on their knowledge of texts and text features" (4.3).

Poetry structure is specified twice. The first instance calls attention to connection between a poem's theme and form (2.4). In the second, a teacher asks his third-grade student if she would like to restructure her letter that contains rhyme into a poem. She declines (E5).

Literary devices receive one mild reference which states students learn "that literary language is rich with metaphor, imagery, rhyme, and other figures and devices" (2.1).

Rhythm and rhyme merit three mentions from the examined chapters. As stated above, students learn "that literary language is rich with…rhyme" (2.1). The discussion of Standard 2 notes that "poetry and rhyme help young readers connect sounds to words and help them enjoy the musical, rhythmic qualities of language" (2.2). This must be true as it was demonstrated by the student mentioned above. Before she decided not to turn her letter into a poem, she acknowledged that it did, in fact, contain rhyme (E5).

Writing

The writing of poetry or poetic language in other genres is made possible in five standards, although none specifically require it. These standards (4-6, 8, 12) represent 42% of the total, and with the vignettes present 16 opportunities for writing poetry or poetic language.

Writing poetry is possible, but not specified 12 times. As students write for different purposes and audiences, they adjust their use of language, writing strategies, and the writing process (4, 5, 6.1-6.7, 12; E2). They apply new learning to their writing (6.2), include figurative language (6), participate in writer's workshop (6.5), use technology (8) and publish work independently and in collaboration (8.2). In the vignettes, students retell folktales (M3), and creating a multi-genre presentation (H2).

There is a single instance in which poetry was named as a possibility. In fact, it almost happened by accident. The teacher invited that elementary student to turn her rhyming letter into a poem. Alas, she declined, as was her right (E5).

Writing poetic language in other named genres comes in three references. Students use their knowledge of figurative language to create texts (6), which could include poetry, but the discussion presents it as narrative writing (6.3-4). It is counted here and above with poetry possible but not specified. The other two examples come from the vignettes. One shows a high school student who identifies a need to add descriptive language to her essay (H3). The other is devout letter-writing, third-grader who incorporated rhyme into her work (E5).

The NCTE/IRA standards do not require students to write poetry.

Freedom to Teach

Out of the 12 examined standards, none require poetry, two (17 %) lend themselves to poetry, nine (75%) make it possible, and one (8%) disallows it. When the totals for *required, lends,* and *possible* are combined, it shows that 92 % of the examined standards in the NCTE/IRA document allow for inclusion of poetry. Vignettes are not included in this total.

Two standards (2, 6) and three vignettes lend themselves to teaching with poetry. Standard 2 addresses several general language skills, but the examples address the poetry skills of imagery, artistic language, figurative language, metaphor, rhythm, the musical quality of language, rhyme, structure, and form. It spells out that "students need to read and study literary texts in a variety of genres, including poetry, short stories, novels, plays, essays, biographies, and autobiographies" (2.2). The second standard mentions poetry six times (2.2-2.5), but because all of these mentions are in the standard's discussion instead of the standard itself, it is coded *lends* instead of *requires*.

Standard 6 lends itself to poetry because it calls for figurative language (6). Vignettes E5, H3, and H5 also lend themselves to poetry. E5 is the one with the rhyming letter, H3 addresses sensory detail, and H5 addresses ambiguity in Shakespeare.

The majority of the standards and vignettes make poetry possible. The nine standards are 1, 3-5, and 8-12, while the 12 vignettes are E1-E2, E4, E6-E7, M1-M4, M6, and H1-H2. The main general language skills addressed are reading or reading for fun (1; E6), comprehension (3, 10; E1, E7, M1-M2, M4, H1-H2), purpose and audience (4-5), technology integration (8), variations of English (9; E4), and speaking, listening, and writing (11-12; E2, M3, M6).

A single standard (7) and two vignettes (E3, M5) disallow the use of poetry. E3 and Standard 7 focus on the research process. The other vignette incorporates formal letter writing (M5). This may appear to contradict the situation in E5 with the rhyming letter; however, M5 addresses letter writing of a more serious nature. While letter writing does not automatically disallow poetry or poetic language, to use it in this particular situation would have distorted the purpose of the activity.

***Common Core State Standards-English Language Arts*, 2010**

This study examined standards in the strands Reading Standards for Literature (RL),

Reading Standards: Foundational Skills (RF), Writing Standards (W), Speaking and Listening

Standards (SL), and Language Standards (L). It also included Sample Performance Tasks for

Poetry (PT). Each strand is made up of anchor standards noted by their strand and number, so

R.6 refers to Reading anchor standard 6. (The anchor standards for reading apply to the reading

standards for both literature and informational text, the latter of which this study excludes.)

Grade-specific standards are noted by their strand, grade, and number (and letter where

applicable), so that W.4.3 stands for Writing, grade 4, standard 3, and W.5.1a stands for Writing,

grade 5, standard 1a (NGA Best, 2010a, p. 8). Standards are grouped to indicate multiple grade-

specific standards, so that W.1-4.8 stands for Writing, grades 1-4, standard 8. The document

groups high school standards by grade bands for 9-10 and 11-12, making W.9-10.1 a single,

grade-specific standard. The document combines performance tasks for stories and poetry

according to grade bands in a bulleted list. They are noted here by grade band followed by a

lowercase letter, so PT.6-8b indicates the second task containing poetry in grade band 6-8.

The previous documents contain many suggestions for implementation, either through the

"cookbook" approach or discussion. This document does not. The grade-specific standards *are*

the required standards for that grade. Suggestions come only from the sample performance tasks.

Difficult Text

Of the 36 anchor standards examined, nine offer the possibility of using poetry to engage

with difficult text (R.1, 2, 4, 6, & 9-10; L.3-4, 6) as do two of the 12 performance tasks (PT.11-

12a; PT.11-12b). When combined with the grade-specific standards, there are 15 references to this category.

Students encounter difficulty by way of time and culture through anchor standard R.10's range of text types (NGA Best, 2010a, pp. 33 & 57), which requires reading "texts selected from a broad range of cultures and periods." The standards expect students to read literature in which "language evokes a sense of time and place" (RL.9-10.4), and authors transform works from earlier eras, "e.g., how Shakespeare treats a theme or topic from Ovid or the Bible or how a later author draws on a play by Shakespeare" (RL.9-10.9). Students demonstrate knowledge of American literature from earlier centuries (RL.11-12.9); read, compare, and contrast stories from diverse cultures (RL.2-3.2; RL.2&4.9); analyze a "point of view or cultural experience reflected in a work of literature from outside the United States" (RL.9-10.6); and "compare and contrast the varieties of English (e.g., dialects, registers) used in stories, dramas, or poems" (L.5.3b).

Coded complexity is presented five times in the secondary grades. Anchor standard L.4 requires all students to "Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and consulting general and specialized reference materials, as appropriate" (L.4). Although "multiple-meaning" is part of each grade-specific standard, students in K-5 appear to bypass coded complexity with the use of straightforward strategies to resolve the meanings of unknown words. "Multiple-meaning" moves into the realm of ambiguity in grades 6-12 with the added instruction to "verify the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase" (L.6-12.4d), suggesting there will be additional mental wrestling as to what the word actually means or represents. Furthermore, students in grades 11-12 determine where text "leaves matters uncertain" (RL.11-12.1) and analyze how words with multiple meanings impact a text's overall meaning and tone

(RL.11-12.4). The performance tasks depict students who analyze how poets use language to convey multiple meanings (PT.11-12a), and read "Ode to a Grecian Urn" by Keats to determine meanings conveyed by the figures decorating the urn and "where the poem leaves matters about the urn and its decoration uncertain" (PT.11-12b).

Vocabulary is addressed in two anchor standards with three total instances. Kindergarten students "ask and answer questions about unknown words" (RL.K.4). All students "demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge" (L.6) by using "context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and consulting general and specialized reference materials" (L.4).

Personal Growth

Nuances in word choice posed coding challenges for this question. Despite these challenges, there are nine opportunities in six standards (RL.2-3, 6; W1; SL.1, 3) to work with poetry to gain personal growth.

Five standards have key words and phrases that come close to addressing personal growth by way of enjoyment, but are sidelined by emphasis on literary analysis. The first four in this groups are as follows: (1) "Analyze how differences in the points of view of the characters and the audience or reader create…such effects as suspense or humor" (RL.8.6); (2) "Analyze how visual and multimedia elements contribute to the meaning, tone, or beauty of a text" (RL.5.7); (3) "Analyze the impact of…language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful" (RL.11-12.4); and (4) "Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text…contribute to…its aesthetic impact" (RL.11-12.5).

The words *humor, beauty, engaging, beautiful, comedic,* and *aesthetic* appear to go to enjoyment, but the standards encase these words in a call for students to analyze how these

effects are achieved. Analysis does not equal enjoyment. A student can identify humor in a text that a teacher deems humorous without finding the work funny personally. A student who does not care for Shakespeare can analyze his language and understand that it is widely regarded as beautiful. Likewise, anchor standard W.3 instructs students to "write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences." The purpose of imaginative writing here is to produce well-crafted work, but not to engage the mind in the playful exercise that brings enjoyment. Students can meet each of the standards in this group without taking personal delight in any of them. Whether this is a result of semantics or a purposeful omission is unclear; however, according to this study's definition, poetry for enjoyment is not addressed.

Understanding self is nearly addressed twice, but also finds a single opportunity in the standards. The two "misses" require students to "describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges" (RL.2.3) and use that knowledge to determine theme (RL.5.2). Worded differently, both would qualify in this category. When readers witness characters wrestle with decisions that will shape their identities, it *can* give the reader insights as to how they might do the same. At issue is that neither of these standards mention the characters or the students' gaining insights, making self-discoveries, acknowledging inner experiences, or the like. A deeper understanding of self could be a byproduct of working with these standards, but it is not stated.

The solitary standard that does fit into this category is W.K-5.1, which requires students to compose opinion pieces and supply reasons to support those opinions. Part of the challenge of writing is finding the right words to organize abstract or unspoken thoughts into a printed message that will make sense to the reader. Meeting the standard necessitates that students examine and understand their own thoughts sufficiently to explain them to another.

Searching the standards for examples of students' understanding others, the human condition, or the nature of the world continues to deliver "close call" results. Again, several standards approach the definition without going to the heart of it. In privileging literary analysis, the standards require students to understand the interplay of plot elements and character development, but often stop short of expecting students to generalize what they find in literature to their personal interactions. Students describe a character's thoughts, feelings, and motivations (RL.3-4.3) without having to understand them or use newly acquired insights to understand others. They acknowledge characters' different points of view and identify how those viewpoints affect other aspects of plot (RL.2, 4-5, 8-10.6), but do not have to use this knowledge to understand how differing points of view also drive conflict in the real world.

Despite the close calls, five standards exist that fit the definition for understanding others, the human condition, or the nature of the world. The requirement to demonstrate understanding of a story's central message or lesson or moral (RL.1-3.2) fits since lessons and morals offer commentary on human behavior. To understand the lesson or moral suggests an understanding of others or the human condition. Students in SL.1 must understand their classmates' ideas sufficiently to build a conversation around them. They ask questions to clear up confusion as well as to clarify (SL.1-3.1c) and deepen their understanding of a speaker's message (SL.K-2.3). Beginning in ninth grade, students "respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives" (SL.9-12.1d).

A final group of standards works together to address understanding. W.1, the same standard that led students to better understand themselves by writing opinion pieces, shifts to argumentation in grade 6 with students addressing alternate or opposing claims in grades 7-12 (W.6-12.1). Elsewhere students distinguish their own point of view from those presented in the text by the narrator or other characters (RL.3.6). The act of identifying the extent to which their

point of view aligns or departs from another implies at least basic understanding of each. The final example states that, beginning in grade 7, students demonstrate a willingness to modify their views in light of new evidence (SL.7-8.1d).

Cultural Capital

Opportunity to gain cultural capital figures into 10 of the 36 standards (RL.4-7, 9; W.1, 5, 8; SL.2; L.5) and eight of the 12 of the performance tasks for a total of 36 references made.

Most of the 26 references to students being well-read involve reading multiple texts for a single task (R.9; W.8), including texts of single author (RL.3, 5.9), diverse types (RL.1.5), media and formats (R.7; SL.2), forms and genres (RL.6.9), and multiple versions of a text (RL.4, 7-12.7; RL.2.9). Comparing and contrasting texts is found in four standards and seven performance tasks (RL.8.5; RL.4.6; RL.K-1.9; RL.7.9; PT.K-1a; PT.K-1b; PT.4-5a; PT.4-5b; PT.6-8a; PT.9-10b; and PT.11-12a). Allusion also contributes to being well-read. Students determine allusion's meaning and impact on other texts (RL.8.4), including mythology (RL.4.4), traditional stories, Shakespeare, and religious works such as *The Bible* (RL.8.9; RL.9-10.9; L.7.5a; PT.6-8b).

Students gain cultural capital by evaluating quality with 10 invitations to hone their skills as literary critics. Beginning in kindergarten, students write (or dictate) opinion pieces about the books they read (W.K-2.1). This standard's language shifts from books to "topic or text" in third grade, and from opinion to argumentation in grades 6 through 12 (W.3-12.1). As writers, students at all grade levels bring a critical eye to their own work to strengthen their writing using feedback from adults and peers in grades K-8, and on their own in high school (W.K-12.5). Anchor standard R.7 states students will "Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats." This translates into grade-specific standards in which fifth-grade students

"analyze how visual and multimedia elements contribute to the…beauty of a text" (RL.5.7), eighth graders evaluate choices made by the director or actor in filmed or live productions (RL.8.7), and juniors and seniors "analyze multiple interpretations of a story, drama, or poem (e.g., recorded or live production of a play or recorded novel or poetry), evaluating how each version interprets the source text" (RL.11-12.7). Juniors and seniors work with additional standards, which require them to explain how an author's structural choices throughout a work "contribute to its…aesthetic impact" (RL.11-12.5), and analyze the effect of "fresh, engaging, and beautiful" language (RL.11-12.4). PT.11-12a depicts students considering the work of Emily Dickinson and John Donne with respect to the use of "fresh, engaging, and beautiful" language.

Mechanics

Mechanics garners more mentions than any other research question, claiming 13 standards (R.4-7; RF.2, 4; W.3-4; SL.3-4; L.3, 5-6), eight performance tasks, and 97 total references, one of which is a general reference to how poetry techniques contrast with those used in informational text (PT.6-8a).

Word choice figures prominently in the standards with 32 references. Anchor standard R.4. begins with K-2 students who identify words that are unknown, suggest feelings, or supply rhythm and meaning (RL.K-2.4). They go on to examine word choice in terms of literal or figurative language starting in grade 3 (RL.3-5.4), and analyze the impact of word choice on meaning and tone in grades 6-12 (RL.6-12.4). Secondary students use "precise words and phrases" in narratives (W.6-12.3d) and evaluate a speaker's word choice in grades 11-12 (SL.11-12.3). PT.6-8b addresses word choice in Walt Whitman's "O Captain! My Captain!"

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Anchor standards for language weave throughout the grades. L.3 states, "Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening." Working with this standard, students "choose words and phrases for effect" (L.3.3a), "to convey ideas precisely" (L.4.3a) and concisely (L.7.3a); distinguish verb use between both active and passive voice, and conditional and subjunctive mood (L.8.3a); and vary syntax for effect (L.11-12.3a). L.5 requires that students "demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings" (L.5), including distinguishing shades of meaning among verbs (L.K-1.5d, L.K-2.5b), verbs that describe states of mind or degrees of uncertainty (L.3.5c), adjectives that are closely related or of differing intensity (L.1.5d; L.2.5b), and between word connotations and denotations (L.6-8.5c, L.9-12.5b). It also includes work with euphemisms (L.9-10.5a) and the word relationships of opposites/synonyms (L.4.5c), homographs (L.5.5c), analogies (L.7.5b), cause/effect, part/whole, and item/category (L.6.5b). In anchor standard L.6, students "acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases." Grade-specific standards address adjectives and adverbs (L.CCR 2.6), words signaling spatial and temporal relationships (L.CCR 3.6), actions, emotions, states of being, words basic to a given topic (L.CCR 4.6), and words that show contrast, addition, and other logical relationships (L.CCR 5.6). Secondary students "gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression" (L.CCR 6-12.6).

Figurative, compressed, or otherwise poetic language makes 18 references in three anchor standards (R.4; W.3; L.5) that carry into the performance tasks. R.4 calls for interpreting figurative meanings, which extends into the grade-specific standards as "identify words and phrases in stories or poems that suggest feelings or appeal to the senses" (RL.1.4); distinguish

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literal from nonliteral language (RL.3.4); and interpret metaphors, similes (RL.5.4), and analogies (RL.8.4). Secondary students have a general call to interpret figurative meanings (RL.6-12.4), while students in grades 11-12 analyze "language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful," including Shakespeare (RL.11-12.4). R.4 is the basis for three performance tasks in which students examine word choice in Paul Fleischman's poem "Fireflies" (PT.2-3), Carl Sandburg's poem "Fog," William Blake's "The Echoing Green" (PT.4-5b), John Donne's "Valediction Forbidding Mourning," and Emily Dickinson's "Because I Would Not Stop for Death" (PT.11-12a). By way of W.3, narrative writing includes sensory details, reworded *sensory language* in 6-12 (W.4-12.3d). L.5 mandates that students understand figurative language, specifically literal versus nonliteral language (L.3.5a); simile and metaphor (L.4-5.5a); idioms, adages, and proverbs (L.4-5.5b); personification (L.6.5a); and hyperbole (L.11-12.5a).

Poetry's structure is addressed in a single standard that carries into the performance tasks and accounts for 12 total references. In R.5, students "analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole." Specifically, students identify poems as a text type (RL.K.5); explain how stanzas build on each other (RL.3.5) to form poems (RL.5.5); and the major differences between poems, drama, and prose (RL.4.5). Secondary students "analyze how a particular…stanza fits into the overall structure…and contributes to the development of the theme, setting or plot" (RL.6.5); "how a…poem's form or structure… contributes to its meaning (RL.7.5); compare and contrast structure for impact on meaning, style (RL.8.5); and aesthetic impact (RL.11-12.5). Several performance tasks address this standard. Kindergarten and first-grade students look at Tomie DePaola's *Pancakes for Breakfast* and Christina Rossetti's "Mix a

Pancake" to distinguish storybooks from poems (PT.K-1b), fourth- and fifth-grade students identify structural elements (e.g., verse, rhythm, meter) of Thayer's "Casey at the Bat" and contrast the impact of those elements with a prose summary of the poem" (PT.4-5a). Middle schoolers "analyze how the opening stanza of Robert Frost's 'The Road Not Taken' structures the rhythm and meter for the poem" (PT.6-8c).

Style and tone figure into all examined sections with the exception for "Reading Standards: Foundational Skills," although some mentions exclude poetry in favor of writing argumentation (W.1), information, and explanatory texts (W.2). The relevant 16 references analyze the effect of word choice (R.4; RL.6, 8-12.4; PT.6-8b; PT.11-12a) and visual or multimedia elements on tone (RL.5.7); and the effect of text structure (RL.8.5), sentence fluency (L.5-6.3a), point of view, and purpose on style (R.6). Students write (W.4; W.6-12.4) and present information (SL.4; SL.9-12.4) with a style appropriate to task, purpose and audience; employ a variety of techniques to build tone (W.11-12.3c); make effective choices regarding style (L.3, L.9-12.3); and maintain consistency in both style and tone (L.6.3b).

Literary devices account for seven references. Students interpret and understand the use of flashback (RL.9-10.5), puns, irony, satire, sarcasm, understatement (L.8.5a; RL.8.6; RL.11-12.6), first- and third-person narration (RL.4.6), oxymoron (L.9-10.5a), and paradox (L.11-12.5a).

Rhythm and rhyme merit 11 mentions beginning in the early grades with students' recognizing and producing rhyming words (RF.K.2a). First- and second-grade students read text orally with appropriate rate and expression (RF.1-2.4b), and the standard shifts in the third grade to specify reading poetry instead of general text (RF.3-5.4b). Students understand how poetry's musical qualities affect texts as they "describe how words and phrases (e.g., regular beats,

alliteration, rhymes, repeated lines) supply rhythm and meaning in a story, poem, or song" (RL.2.4); identify verse, rhythm, meter in poems (RL.4.5); and choose punctuation for effect (L.4.3b). Seventh-grade students "analyze the impact of rhymes and other repetitions of sounds (e.g., alliteration) on a specific verse or stanza of a poem or section of a story or drama" (RL.7.4). Students in grades 5-12 use pacing in their writing (W.5-12.3b) and discuss how it manipulates structure (RL.9-10.5). Two performance tasks focus on rhythm and meter (PT.4-5a; PT.6-8c).

Writing

Collectively, 12 of the 36 standards allow for students writing poetry or poetic language in other genres (W.3-6, 10; SL.4-6; L.1-3, 6). This represents 36% of the standards.

Broad standards make writing poetry possible without naming it 13 times. Students produce clear and coherent writing (W.4), develop and strengthen writing through revision (W.5), and use technology to produce and publish (W.6). In addition, students attend to grammar, usage (L.1), capitalization, punctuation, and spelling (L.2). They use a wide range of words and phrases (L.6), make effective choices in their writing (L.3), and write for a variety of tasks, purposes, and audiences (W.10; W.3-12.10). The broad goals narrow slightly by requiring students to "report on a topic or text, tell a story,…recount an experience (SL.3-4.4), or present an opinion…" (SL.5.4). Students may also find an outlet for poetry in the expectation to use "digital media and visual displays of data to present information and enhance understanding" (SL.5), and "adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks" (SL.6).

The only naming of poetry with regard to writing comes from SL.5 discussed in the paragraph above. The grade-specific standards require second-grade students to "Create audio

recordings of stories or poems; add drawings or other visual displays to stories or recounts of experiences when appropriate to clarify ideas, thoughts, and feelings" (SL.2.5). Third-grade students "Create engaging audio recordings of stories or poems that demonstrate fluid reading at an understandable pace; add visual displays when appropriate to emphasize or enhance certain facts or details" (SL.3.5). It is unclear if students are to record published texts or their own.

The *Common Core State Standards* do not require students to write poetry.

Students write poetic language in other named genres by including sensory details/language in their narrative writing (W.4-12.3d).

Freedom to Teach

Out of the 36 examined standards, three (8%) require poetry, six (17 %) lend themselves to poetry, 26 (72%) make it possible, and one (3%) disallows it. When the totals for *required, lends,* and *possible* are combined, it shows that 97% of the examined goals in the *Common Core State Standards* allow for inclusion of poetry.

Of the 36 examined standards, three (or 8%) require the use of poetry. Grade-specific standards in the foundation skills require that students "read grade-level prose and poetry orally with accuracy, appropriate rate, and expression on successive readings" (RF.3-5.4b). Anchor standard R.5 does not *necessitate* poetry with the inclusion of *or* in the wording: "Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole." Even so, the grade-specific standards for third and fourth grade do require poetry by changing *or* to *and*: "Refer to parts of stories, dramas, and poems when writing or speaking about a text, using terms such as chapter, scene, and stanza; describe how each successive part builds on earlier sections"

(RL.3.5); and "Explain major differences between poems, drama, and prose, and refer to the structural elements of poems and drama when writing or speaking about a text" (RL.4.5).

The standard that swings the most poetic heft is R.10. It does not look poetry-centered in its anchor standard form, stating simply, "Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently." The power here comes in its grade-specific standards for grades 1-12. Part of the first-grade standard is to "read prose and poetry" (RL.1.10). Students in grades 2-5 "read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poetry…" (RL.2-5.10). The range of text types for grades K-5 specifies "nursery rhymes and the subgenres of the narrative poem, limerick, and free verse poem" (NGA Best, 2010a, p. 31). Secondary students "read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems" (RL.6-12.10), which "includes the subgenres of narrative poems, lyrical poems, free verse poems, sonnets, odes, ballads, and epics" (NGA Best, 2010a, p. 57). Regardless of what the other standards dictate, R.10 mandates that poetry be a part of every student's literary diet.

By addressing poetry skills, six of the 36 standards (17%) are coded as lending themselves to poetry. Two address coded complexity/ambiguity (R.1; L.4), two address figurative language (R.4; L.5), one addresses rhythm (L.3), and one addresses rhyme (RF.2).

The only standard that disallows poetry is R.8, which states, "Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence." R.8 has no grade-specific standards in the literature strand, the space states. The spaces where they would go states, "Not applicable to literature."

The remaining 26 standards (72%) make poetry possible by addressing general language skills that pertain to many text types, including poetry. The skills addressed are idea development (R.2-3), purpose and audience (R.6; W.4; W.10), comprehension (R.7; W.7-9), compare and

contrast (R.9), decoding (RF.1; RF.3), organization (W.2-3), speaking and listening (SL.1-6), conventions (L.1-2), vocabulary (L.6), the writing process (W.5), citing textual evidence (W.1), and technology integration (W.6).

Summary

Chapter 4 provided a nuanced account of how each of the examined documents addresses the subsidiary research questions in preparation for Chapter 5's discussion of how these documents work together to tell the story of poetry within American English standards.

CHAPTER 5: Discussion

I came to this research hoping to tell the story of poetry in American education standards. Concerned by how poetry fits into an educational landscape that increasingly prioritizes objective accountability, I went looking to see where poetry had been hiding—and continues to hide—in the standards. In truth, following poetry's journey has led me on one of my own. Parts of this journey were filled with familiar scenery, while others revealed surprises. This chapter presents my findings, beginning with the answer to the primary research question. It then discuses areas of this research that confirmed what I already suspected and surprises I encountered along the way. I next propose solutions to the problem of poetry's penchant for wandering throughout standards without a lot of thought. The chapter concludes with recognition of this research's contribution to field of study, suggestions for future research endeavors, and closing thoughts.

The Answer Revealed: A Genre Concealed

This research began with the primary question: How have the attempts to standardize K-12 English curriculum in the United States over the last 46 years addressed the teaching of poetry? It ends with an understanding that poetry has survived by disguising itself differently for each incarnation of standards. It is wearing a mask and working the crowd.

It did not start off that way. When Nick Hook and the other co-directors of the Tri-University Project began their endeavor, the Standards Movement was distant, but on the horizon. It may not have made mainstream headlines as *Common Core* would some 40 years later, but colleagues within NCTE saw it coming and voiced their concerns in *English Journal.*

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Although some felt that tax payers had a right to ask accountability questions (Airasian, 1971), others saw the document as a bad omen of things to come, warning that English is not a discipline that fits well with standards, and published standards would lead to their misuse and an uncomfortable relationship between government and education (Kirkton, 1971; Purves, 1970: Standley, 1971).

One can see that Hook and his Tri-University Project colleagues took these concerns to heart. Their finished product is, as they intended it, a catalog of resources meant for teachers. They make it clear throughout the text that no set of standards can or should replace the teacher's professional opinion about meeting students' needs, and they include an entire chapter of caution against misusing the standards in ways that trivialize instruction. They were moving forward but, with loyalty to English teachers and students, they wrote standards that attempted to marry the measurable with the humanistic goals important to the discipline (Hook et al, 1971b).

The resulting document richly addresses poetry in every subsidiary research question (as related in Chapter 4), naming particular poets, speaking to specific ways poetry codes complexity into the text, encouraging students to hone and honor their voices as well-read poetry critics, diving into an array of poetry patterns, and ensuring students know *how* figurative language, sensory language, and a poet's use of sound effects contribute to the poem's ability to connect to the reader. The document, without requiring students write poetry, encourages them to read it, write it, and befriend it in ways that will bring them humor, delight, comfort, and an ability to understand themselves and others.

By the time NCTE partnered with IRA to produce the 1996 document, the Standards Movement had progressed. That cloud on the horizon in 1971 had come within range, and the authors were taking precautions. If the federal government was looking for professional

organizations to standardize their disciplines, then NCTE and IRA intended to be at the table to ensure any outcome was based in current research about how students learn to use language (NCTE/IRA, 1996).

It is unclear how the people at the table regarded poetry, particularly since it is not largely represented in the text. This document differed dramatically from the Tri-University Project. It addressed grades K-12 instead of only high school, surveyed *thousands* of stakeholders, and attempted to address all of the English-language arts disciplines with the same 12 common standards (NCTE/IRA, 1996).

It is unknown why poetry donned a mask in 1996 and started flying under the radar. Perhaps the sheer volume of participants from different disciplines divided loyalties among the writers. Perhaps the writers felt a need to protect poetry from the dangers of standardization, which NCTE's vocal members warned of more than two decades before. Perhaps, as the document's critics asserted, they left the standards vague to resist putting forth anything specific to standardize, thus leaving it to teachers to make decisions based on practices discussed in the standards (Burke, 1996; Mayer, 1999).

Why poetry went into hiding is not clear, but the effect is. As this version of standardization moved in, poetry began to conceal some of its best features. The first document included strong support for poetry in each of the subsidiary research questions, but this document all but extinguished it across the board. Coded complexity, so richly addressed before, was reduced to identifying multiple interpretations of *Hamlet* and reading texts that provoke thought. Emphasis on mechanics was reduced to figurative language, some minor mention of the benefits of rhythm and rhyme, and cursory attention to the relationship between theme and form. It offered contrasting sonnet with haiku as an example, which does not pose much in the way of

challenge. Gone were the strong encouragement to write poems (with the exception of the letter writer in the third grade) and the embrace of learning to use one's voice as a poetry critic.

Poetry's main shelter in the 1996 document is in personal growth, a fertile ground for poetry to be sure. Still, how much will poetry grow when its name is rarely mentioned? Here begins another quandary for poetry: Is a teacher's freedom to include it enough, or must the standards address it in order to ensure its academic existence?

The lack of specificity in the 1996 document seems to have contributed to the hastening of the uncomfortable relationship between education and government that Hook's colleagues foresaw in 1971. Having paid half a million dollars for untestable standards led the government to look elsewhere, specifically to other government agencies. The Standards Movement had evolved such that state standards with spring assessments were the norm. The state governors wanted to be able to compare scores between states and internationally, and had made several unsuccessful attempts to reach common standards. They created and hired Achieve, Inc., to evaluate state standards and, eventually, draw up the standards for *Common Core* (Wixom, Dutro, & Athan, 2003).

For English teachers hoping to maintain autonomy while the cloud on the horizon moved in, the arrival of *Common Core* likely felt like a downpour. Politicians, education reformers, and representatives from test publishers authored these standards instead of educators, who were restricted to feedback groups (Goldstein, 2012; NGA, 2009; Student Achievement Partners, 2016). They were on a mission to make sure American students came in first on international tests, and their loyalties were to common standards that could be easily assessed by quantitative methods (Erickson & Gutierrez, 2002; McDonnell & Weatherford, 2013; U.S. Department of Education, 2002; U.S. Department of Education, 2010; Wixom, Dutro, & Athan, 2003).

The problem for poetry is that its strength is not in caring about who placed first. Once again, it had to don a disguise. This time it had to be accessible and assessable. Within *Common Core,* poetry became a testable tool for analysis. As addressed in Chapter 4, the decision to prioritize analysis completely stripped poetry for enjoyment from the standards and weakened it as a means to achieve deeper understanding of self, others, the human condition, or the nature of the world. Arguably, one of poetry's greatest gifts is its ability to make personal connections and give words to thoughts and feelings that were previously unnamed. How can we know if students truly understand the function of poetry if they have never experienced its ability to transform their perceptions? Or to make them feel like the poem understands them better than they understand themselves? Relegating poetry to analysis is like inviting it to the party, but asking it to check its heart at the door.

Elsewhere, poetry encountered other adjustments. Coded complexity made a slight rebound from 1996, but did not meet the standard set in 1971. The document does not address specific coding techniques of poets, electing instead to discuss how words and phrases may have multiple meanings or leave matters uncertain. Although these are K-12 standards, any hint at coded complexity is left until the secondary grades, particularly grades 11 and 12. Mechanics saw areas of strength in word choice, figurative language, and rhythm and rhyme. The areas of style and tone made comebacks, but did not specify poetry. There were several mentions of poetry's structure, but most of the referrals were to determine how stanzas built on to each other to make a poem. In this way, the poem is literally considered a sum of its parts. Like the other previous documents, this one emphasized the importance of being well-read and evaluating quality, although its guidance to being a literary critic was not quite as substantial as the 1971 document.

Where has poetry been? In the costume closet. Sometimes it dresses up as the Invisible Man, and sometimes it dresses up as prose or someone who knows how to work a calculator. The Standards Movement has not always welcomed poetry to come as it is and celebrated its glory, but true to poetry's ancient form, it survives.

Suspicions Confirmed

I came to this research looking for answers. I had developed certain suspicions about poetry and the standards over the years as a middle school language arts teacher. It was important to me to test those suspicions against the wider body of knowledge and find out which ones merited my continued belief. My journey through the research confirmed and strengthened three suspicions.

1. Poetry is a powerhouse worthy of dedicated focus within the curriculum.

2. Poetry's nature puts it at odds with tested standards.

3. It is important to know the loyalties and intentions of those we entrust with writing standards.

Paying Poetry Its Due Respect

As I stated in Chapter 1, I have always loved poetry. We are lifelong friends. I've never questioned its greatness, but I also had never taken the time to dig into what makes it great. I could speak in generalities from my personal interactions and my work in the classroom, but preparing the rationale for poetry in the curriculum as part of the literature review was a game changer. It was like I had done an online search of my best friend, who likes to sing while she

drives, and found out that she was a rock star. I always knew poetry had talent, but I had no idea it was *this* amazing.

I have long had the sense that one of poetry's perks was its accessibility because I had seen my students, particularly those who are easily overwhelmed by pages of prose, gravitate toward shorter poems and find satisfaction in their ability to understand them. This research unlocked the layers of reasons behind this. Yes, the shorter length helps (Mahoney & Matovick, 2005), but so does the fact that children have rhythm before they have speech (Cumming, 2007). They come to us as "versifiers," and learn to speak in prose later (Chukovsky, 1968, p. 64 as cited in Sloan, 2003, p. 11). Now I have the tools to explain how poetry's musical qualities invite and assist *all* students, especially those who struggle with other genres or are second language learners, to comprehend and personalize meaning, and go on to produce their own texts (Armour, 1994; Benton, 1999; Durham, 1997; Gallagher, 2011; Shelnutt, 1992; Spiro, 2007).

I knew my students usually liked it when I showed them how to line break their paragraph into a poem, but now I understand that poetry's shape boosts recall (Hanauer, 1998), and signals students to slow down and approach the text differently than they would prose. Even as teacher who loves poetry, I had been guilty of trying to shield students from its difficulty. Now I know that students not only expect poetry to be more difficult, but that they tolerate difficulty in poetry differently than they would elsewhere, bring specific strategies for the occasion, and may spend twice as long on poetry than prose—even when the wording is exactly the same (Peskin, 2007; Yaron, 2008).

Finally, I have always felt that one of the reasons I enjoyed poetry was it required me to slow down and see things differently, but that can be a hard sell to room full of middle school writers. I did not have the justification to require them to put down their devices and quietly

ponder, but now I do—and it has fundamentally changed the way I teach. Dedicating time to reading and writing poetry is no longer about just introducing my students to my friend, it is about engaging their brains in higher order thinking and making a difference in their lives. We talk about the soft skills—the ones the quantitative spring assessment will not address. I tell them that the poem they write today may or may not make a tangible difference in their lives in the years to come, but having learned to see things differently will. So will learning to get lost in wonder, live with the unknown, and be comfortable in the chaos. Learning to synthesize different layers of meaning in a poem will prepare them for reconciling diverse issues in their lives. Being able to find their voice and use it to bridge divides, illuminate understanding, and change minds will give them power and possibilities (Coleman, 2012; Morgan, Lange, and Buswick, 2013; Myers, 2005; Tsujimoto, 1988).

Instead of shushing my students when it is time to quietly concentrate, I can now provide them a purpose to their silence. It is no longer a hard sell because we have transformed our conversation. Instead of having a teacher who thinks poetry is great, they have come to see how working with poetry allows them to do great things. They aspire to become skilled like the poets whose work they read, and those aspirations make them more willing to collaborate and revise, skills which will also serve them well.

I have always loved poetry. It has always been my friend. Now, because of this research, I am its knowledgeable advocate and prepared to show others why we owe it to our students to place it prominently in the curriculum.

A Genre at Odds

I have always cringed at the idea of testing poetry. For years, I have told my students to stop worrying about earning points and start focusing on getting *the* point. The beauty of poetry is in its ambiguity and artistry, neither of which lend themselves to objective, quantitative assessment. This puts poetry at odds with the standards.

Poetry's assessment issues are rooted in the same reason why the Olympic figure skating judge will always have a more difficult and intricate job than his counterpart at the speed skating rink. One is assessing artistic interpretation and quality of skill while the other is watching the clock. Figure skating judges have had their share of controversy and have refined their judging methods as a result, but notice that the Olympic committee has not come in and told the figure skating judges to adopt the scoring methods used in speed skating. Doing so would fundamentally change the sport. To win, skaters would have to train differently and sacrifice what made figure skating their joyful pursuit and means for self-expression. Likewise, when outside entities require us to measure student progress using ill-fitting methods, it fundamentally changes how we define success and how we coach our students to meet that definition.

Research of countries with years of experience working with poetry standards in national curricula corroborated my belief. Prior to the inclusion of poetry in England's National Curriculum, teachers largely saw value in poetry but hesitated to teach it. After poetry standards were added to the tested curriculum, teachers reported feeling that test preparation constrained their approach to poetry and led them to spoon-feed analysis to their students (Benton, 1984; 1999), whose writing suggested they were focused on meeting predetermined criteria instead of developing their individual voices (Fuller, 2010). When poetry was largely removed from the assessments in England and New Zealand, it nearly vanished from the classroom (Dymoke,

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2012). Hennessy & McNamara (2011) reported similar findings in Ireland, where despite efforts to include poetry more authentically, students kept their eye on the test determined to get the right answer.

Therein lies the problem with our established paradigm. Standards present extrinsic constraints that look for right answers. Students trying to find the right answers tend to have lower thresholds for the risk taking required for creative pursuits (Amabile, 1983; London, 1999). Removing poetry from the tested standards should, in theory, lower pressure and foster creativity (Connor-Green, Murdoch, Young, & Paul, 2005; Nickerson, 1999), but teachers preoccupied by test scores are apt to abandon poetry to focus on standards that are still tested.

Although this research did not investigate how teachers translate individual standards, a similar pattern is seen in the documents at the center of this research. The Tri-University Project in 1971 addressed poetry in ways that could not be assessed by an objective test. It allowed teachers to use other means to see if students had met their goals. A teacher using those standards may find that a student enjoys poetry when she sees him reading in the corner, laughing, and then sharing the poem with a friend. Nearly 40 years later, the *Common Core Standards* wrote all standards to be objectively testable. In the process, they tied poetry to analysis instead of enjoyment.

Poetry is at odds with the standards both internationally and at home. In the metaphor of poetry as Olympic figure skating, what we have done is tantamount to turning it into speed skating, or removing from the games.

Says Who?

As a child growing up in a military family, I learned to identify who was issuing the orders. As a first-year teacher, I did not step into my classroom before I met the superintendent and shook her hand. Since then, I have learned the importance of suspending my disagreement with coworkers until I have had the chance to ask, "What does this look like from your chair?" It is ingrained in me to understand the mindset of the person calling the shots. Only then can you know their true intentions. For this reason, when my department chair handed me a copy of the brand new *Common Core Standards*, I flipped through the pages and asked, "Who wrote these?" I soon learned that I had asked a complicated question, but I kept returning to it because I believed the answer to be relevant. In a pluralistic and democratic society, it is incumbent upon us to understand how people rise to positions of power and to whom they owe their loyalty.

Digging into the history of the standards documents confirmed this understanding. The earliest document was authored by seven professors with strong ties to their professional organization, NCTE. The other documents were authored by organizations; the 1996 document authored by two organizations for English teachers, and the 2010 document authored by political organizations. The former listed thousands of names. The second listed none. I discovered that when organizations author documents, it gives individuals more room to hide. It becomes difficult for an individual reader to discover the loyalties and priorities of the authors when they are vast in number or cloaked behind organizations. There was no way I could have met the author of *Common Core* and shaken his or her hand.

I have learned that it is important to unshroud authors and understand their loyalties so that I know where I stand. Vocal supporters and opponents to the 1971 document took to NCTE's various forums such as *English Journal* and the organization's annual conference to

argue their position. The authors named on the title page responded to their peers. The other documents, authored by organizations instead of people, did not enjoy the same direct debate. Whether or not the intent was to shift responsibility, it is the result.

In the discussion of education standards, where should the authors' loyalties lie? Should the authors be loyal to individual students or to a nation? Do they define success as everyone having identical knowledge, or individuals learning to develop their gifts? Do they privilege one type of evidence over another, or do they look for different types of evidence to work in tandem? Finally, where are we to have these discussions? Do we develop our answers in our local schools, at our state houses, or at the national ballot box?

This is an important conversation to have on all aspects of education, but this research is about poetry's particular journey. For the time being, standards are the central focus of much education debate. As discussed, poetry is still here, masked and hiding. It has accommodated the demands made by the Standards Movement. At what point do we require those at the planning table to invite poetry to lower its mask and remind our students why it endures?

Surprises in the Data

It feels good when research confirms our hunches, but I also encountered four surprises. Each has caused me to rethink my understanding about how to move forward with this topic.

The first eye-opener in the data is that, according to the standards examined for this research, students do not have to write poetry. While each document allows it, and the 1971 document actively encourages it, none of them requires it. *Common Core* specifies in "Appendix A" that the decision to include poetry writing is left to teacher discretion (NGA Best, 2010b, p. 23). This did not align with my lived experience as a student or a teacher, and the realization has

led me to mixed feelings. On the one hand, I have always been a little leery of forcing students to write poems. Their final products seem to be stronger when the choice to write poems is their own. On the other hand, I am comforted to know that teaching poetry writing happens as much as it does, despite its absence in the standards. In any discussion about poetry in the standards, how do we decide whether to require, encourage, or ignore its writing.

The second surprise was in realizing how much autonomy the standards grant teachers to incorporate poetry. Taking into consideration the standards that require or lend themselves to poetry, teachers could bring poetry into their classroom through working with 92% of the standards on average. This figure rises to 97% in the current standards. State and local decisions notwithstanding, this grants considerable opportunity to include poetry in the curriculum. Most of this opportunity comes from standards that address general language skills that apply to a wide variety of texts. Perhaps part of moving forward as poetry's advocate includes demonstrating how poetry fits into areas traditionally considered with other text types.

The thing that most startled me in the data was the realization that many English teachers have negative attitudes toward poetry (Berger, 1973; Fuller, 2005; Gutteridge, 1972; Hopkins, 2007; Linaberger, 2004; Mecklenberger, 1970; McVee, Bailey, & Shanahan, 2008). This was unthinkable to me! I understood that my personal attachment to poetry was on the stronger end of the spectrum, but it never occurred to me that the other end included teachers who find poetry a boring, elitist, and inaccessible frill that is difficult to evaluate (Hughes & Dymoke, 2011). Some English teachers carry negative attitudes from when they were students and told to analyze the enthusiasm out of a poem. Others fear they are not skilled enough to teach poetry in a way that will lead students to enjoy it. Whatever their reasons, the question remains: How do teachers spread enthusiasm for poetry that they do not feel themselves?

My final surprise during this research did not come in the data so much as it came through the process. I learned that I enjoy historical research, a statement I am certain would shock any of my past history teachers. This revelation, while personal, is important. Conducting this research helped me to think of history differently—likely in the way each of my history teachers hoped I would.

As a teacher, I have long been interested in listening to my students share their stories because it helps me understand how their lives have shaped their thinking. It illuminates how I work with them and allows me to see them more clearly. I've never *wondered* if I need to learn more about my students. I *know* doing so equips me to better meet their needs. I realize now that I had not brought that same lens to my discipline. Education is subject to fads, and I have often allowed the pressure to move on keep me from reflecting on where we had been. In following poetry through the standards, I have dug deep into its history and found myself, as with my students, better equipped to meet its needs. Along the way, I discovered the importance of preserving this knowledge for future generations of educators.

Solving the Problem

I undertook this research to investigate poetry's state in the standards and how its story had been shaped over time. Earlier I characterized this as addressing poetry's penchant for wandering throughout standards without a lot of thought. That needs to be reframed. Poetry has not been thoughtlessly wondering. We, as a nation swept up in the Standards Movement, have treated it thoughtlessly. The Tri-University Project wrote in goal R.4 that students "would value human experiences enough to read about them." Part of poetry's problem is that we have not

valued its experience enough to consider it. In one regard, that makes the solution simple. Let us consider it.

Now that we know poetry's great worth to ourselves and our students, and we know where it has been, it is time to be more thoughtful about where we steer it next. I see this as two branches of one conversation. One branch is dedicated to being thoughtful in how we treat poetry when we write the standards. The other branch is dedicated to implementation.

Readdressing the Standards

It is time for an honest conversation about the impact of standards on poetry, specifically, but also on other artistic pursuits. As seen in the course of this research, poetry's position is particularly tenuous as an artistic pursuit within the tested area of language arts. It is time to push past the conversation about *if* standards impact poetry's treatment. We know they do. Now the conversation must move to how we address it.

Some have argued against having standards at all (Ohanian, 1999), but given that they appear here to stay for at least the near future, then the first part of this conversation should go to determining the loyalties and values of those charged with writing them. Do we want educators or politicians to be at the helm? Will the writers dedicate themselves to setting the stage for students to cultivate and honor their individual strengths and interests, or would they rather our students outscore those in other countries? As a society, what are our educational aims?

To answer these questions, those of us in the field of education need to demystify qualitative research for those who prefer to see things by the numbers. We need to do a better job of showing why qualitative research is also important. Quantitative and qualitative work together to different ends. Quantitative research can tell us if a recipe for apple pie is going to be

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successful in producing an apple pie, but only qualitative research can tell us how it tastes. We need both. As educators and researchers, we must stop allowing people who see only from a distance to go unchecked as they attempt to put our work and our students on an assembly line. Privileging a limited, quantitative perspective does not meet our students' needs any more than privileging a qualitative perspective would meet the needs of the passengers on a plane. The plane may be shiny, gorgeous, and comfortable, but it needs the quantitative perspective to make sure it flies—and lands.

If we are to advocate for poetry's use, we must validate and reclaim the qualitative voices and redeem them for reformers blind to poetry's true worth. Furthermore, this conversation must extend to the range of stakeholders. Parents, school boards, and community members must be shown how poetry addresses the myriad of soft skills that employers value and look for in the hiring pool. As guardians of English education, it falls to teachers and researchers in the field to initiate these conversations and oversee their continuation.

Implementing with Care

The implementation discussion must address two key points discovered in the research: (1) The standards give teachers a great deal of autonomy to include poetry; and (2) A notable section of teachers given the autonomy to include poetry lacks the confidence or enthusiasm to do so. It does poetry little good to work with autonomous teachers if their instinct is to ignore it. The earlier conversation extends to all stakeholders in public education, but this conversation must be addressed in house. English teachers with negative attitudes about poetry have asserted that they can trace those feelings back to being students whose English teachers had negative attitudes about poetry (Berger, 1973; Fuller, 2005; Gutteridge, 1972; Hopkins, 2007; Linaberger,

2004; Mecklenberger, 1970; McVee, Bailey, & Shanahan, 2008). Interrupting this cycle requires us to look inward.

To foster enthusiasm for poetry, teachers need resources and opportunities to engage authentically with poetry both as readers and writers. One approach is found in the study by Lambirth, Smith, and Steele (2012), in which resource specialists gathered poetry resources, planned, and implemented lessons. As the specialists modeled lessons, they saw poetry win over students and teachers alike. Technology could also be used to foster enthusiasm. Platforms already exist for teachers to record and post lessons for other teachers. Although this option would lack the personal connection found in face to face interactions, it may offer inroads in schools with more limited resources.

Another approach to guest teaching could be found in partnering with area poets willing to serve as poets in residence. It makes sense to let the people who love poetry show students and teachers what poetry can do. It would also bring authenticity to the classroom since poets talk about poetry differently than do teachers who regard poetry as lessons to cover instead of a way of life to live. As teachers build their own writer/poet identities, practicing poets can show them the way.

To help teachers build their writer/poet identities, I can think of no better model than the National Writing Project (NWP). Organized in university-based sites serving every state, NWP is a federally-funded program that brings teachers of all disciplines together to learn about writing. Teachers spend their time learning from relevant research about effective writing instruction practices, and honing their writing skills. My own experience at the summer institute of the Flint Hills Writing Project taught me not only how to be in a writing community, but also how to build such community with my students. They participate in choosing texts for the class, share their

writing in an open mic setting, and share their longer works on a class message board where

peers give specific feedback. A more professional, personal, and authentic tone became the norm

in my classroom. It is best summed up by the poster I wrote and hung by my door and have left

in place since I returned from the summer institute. It reads:

> We are a community of scholars:
>
> All of students,
>
> All of teachers,
>
> With valid voices.
>
> Welcome.

NWP does not specifically address poetry, but its framework is designed to foster

enthusiasm for writing in all areas, and specializes in helping teachers obtain and refine the skills

they need to establish writing communities in their classrooms. Here the seeds can be planted

and cultivated to make inroads for poetry, one classroom at a time. Similar approaches should

also be considered for preservice language arts teachers, who would be prepared from the

beginning to take positive attitudes toward poetry into their respective buildings.

Contribution Made to the Field

I came to this research with genuine curiosity. I wanted to know how American schools

had regarded poetry over time. Before I set out to conduct this study, I looked for answers in the

existing literature and could not find them. Since then, I have read hundreds of documents and

examined three very carefully. From this I have mined the beginnings of poetry's story through

the standards, and made a strong case for its inclusion in the curriculum.

The knowledge presented in this study contributes to the field in several ways. First, instead of addressing the effects of the Standards Movement in general, it tells the story of one discipline's experience. Whereas other important research has looked through a wide lens, this one looks through a magnifying glass to illuminate the impact on poetry.

Next, I have provided a resource for people engaged in standards writing and English curriculum design. Reflecting on our history is not always a part of writing standards, but it should be. For those so inclined, this research offers a history of where poetry has been in regard to the standards. It is my hope that what I have learned will inform others in positions of power to determine where we go next.

This research is helpful to teachers who may not realize their autonomy with regard to poetry, and to those who hesitate to teach it. In providing a rationale for the importance of poetry in the curriculum and suggestions to address negative teacher attitudes toward poetry, I hope teachers will find reasons to reevaluate their current practices and open to the idea of pursuing poetry's advantages.

Ultimately, this work benefits students, most of whom are unaware of how poetry can enrich their learning both in and out of the classroom. What I have learned in the course of this study has already made me a stronger poetry teacher, better able to convey its importance to my students and help them develop their own positive and personal relationships with the genre. With this body of research in tow, I hope to embark upon a new journey to empower teachers with both conceptual knowledge and practical information that will help them harness the power of poetry for themselves and pass it on to the students in their care.

Moving Forward: Future Roads for Research

This research examined text to construct a history of poetry within the Standards Movement. The laying of this foundation opens opportunities to further research poetry's position within American education.

Studying text helps us see history, but studying teachers allows a more nuanced picture of the present. Replicating Peter Benton's studies (1984; 1999) on teacher attitudes toward poetry before and after implementing England's National Curriculum would be a good place to start. When Benton conducted his first study in 1984, he did not foresee that he would replicate it fifteen years later to reflect national curricular changes central to his work. Instead, when opportunity presented itself, he was able to repeat the study to present an authentic before and after account. We can reasonably predict that American education will continue to change, so now is the time to capture the before picture and lay the groundwork for future comparisons.

As a result of replicating the Benton survey, researchers would identify teachers who consider themselves as poets who teach poetry. This suggests a higher sense of authenticity in approach. Future research could study those teachers to identify specific components of their pedagogies with regard to poetry and if those components have an effect on student attitudes and uses of poetry. Such research would inform other teachers and teacher preparation programs.

Another area for future study is to examine teacher preparation programs to identify how we prepare future elementary and secondary language arts teachers to include poetry in their lessons. Such research could begin by casting a wide net to determine level of emphasis on poetry, and then taking a closer look at schools with high and low levels of emphasis. Another layer of study could follow teachers into the classroom and investigate how their students experience poetry differently.

Since this research suggested methods to improve teacher attitudes toward poetry, it makes sense to study those methods. What are the differences in teacher and student attitudes before and after implementing suggestions such as the ones stated here, namely a teacher who participates in the National Writing Project or similarly structured program, works closely with a resource specialist, or partners with a poet to create a poet in residence program?

A final area for suggested future study pertains to those concerned with writing standards and interpreting them for their districts. What are their loyalties and goals? How do they prioritize poetry as an artistic pursuit? What are their understandings about how standards impact poetry? What information do they consider before making curricular decisions? Research of this nature would be illuminating at any point during an implementation cycle, but would be particularly well-placed prior to writing the next iteration of English standards. If standards writers understood that researchers were asking such questions, it may give them the sense that we are paying attention and have a positive effect on transparency in the process.

Closing Thoughts

Poetry has always been a companion to me. This study was my way of being a companion to it. Our journey together has deepened my respect for the genre and my commitment to bringing it to teachers and students. It has confirmed the importance of knowing the identities, loyalties, and priorities of those who set policy for the rest of us to follow, and being mindful of how their policies shape outcomes for things, like poetry, which may have never been in their lines of sight. The Standards Movement has addressed education on the wide scale, but as the study of poetry teaches us, it is important to look for layers of meaning and synthesize them for a more refined and accurate understanding.

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Table A.1: Definitions, Key Words, and Considerations for Q1/Difficult Text

Definition: Text that requires the reader to veer off the direct path to comprehension. Ways text can be made difficult in poetry include when the reader: (1) confronts unfamiliar vocabulary or vocabulary used in unfamiliar ways; (2) struggles to understand the culture, time, or position of the author or his or her person; (3) encounters evidence of the poet layering or "coding" complexity into the text to create ambiguity; and (4) faces ontological difficulties in which the poet has purposefully fractured, condensed, or twisted the language so that it pushes the boundaries of language itself (Bailey, 1989; Steiner, 1978).

Category	Key words and phrases		Considerations
Time	• Evolution • Time • Old fashioned	• Old English • History/historical/names a historical time period	To deter overlap, *time* includes culture that is the product of living in a time (i.e., the culture of the 1920's).
Culture	• Culture • Dialectal differences • Different worlds	• Other countries, referred to generally or by name • Reading reflects diversity	Does not include culture that is the product of living in a different time (i.e., the culture of the 1920's).
Combined: Time and culture	• Cultural histories • Other cultures, times, and places	• Society and its history	Combined when presented together as a singular expectation within the standard.
Coded complexity	• Ambiguous/ambiguity • Subtext/subtextual meaning • Several layers of meaning/multiple meanings	• How the poet leaves matters uncertain, including the identity of *I* • Symbolism • Unknown	Standard must contain an element of uncertainty. If simple strategies resolve the meaning of unknown words, then it is a matter of vocabulary.
Vocabulary	• Use strategies to deal with especially challenging text • Develop special skills and vocabulary from reading texts	• How existing words take on new meanings	Does not include vocabulary associated with different times and cultures.

Table A.2: Definitions, Key Words, and Considerations for Q2/Personal Growth

Definition: The experience of readers and writers when they encounter new ideas that provide insight into oneself, others, the human condition, or the nature of the world. Such activities may provide wisdom to work through personal problems. Personal growth, for the purposes of this study, also includes reading poetry for enjoyment (Hatfield, 1946; Jenkins, 1967).			
Category	**Key words and phrases**		**Considerations**
Enjoyment	Through reading and or writing, student finds: • Humor* • Outlet for imagination	• Intrinsic pleasure • Personal fulfillment • Pleasure/enjoyment • Playful opportunity	*Must be clear that *student* finds work humorous. Does not include identifying use of humor as an objective device or genre.
Understanding self	• Self-discovery • Soul searching • Inner experiences • Finds relevance to own life • Writes for self-expression.	• Understands self or own experiences • Explores identity through admired characters • Respects own literary experiences and responds to them.	Standard must address authentic student understanding in a way that would transfer to the student's personal life. Isolated examples of analysis are insufficient.
Understanding others, the human experience, or the nature of the world	• Better understand others • Deepen understanding of the human experience • Respects/responds thoughtfully to different perspectives • Explore other world views • Compares views to own	• Relates archetypal experience to human experiences • Values human experiences enough to read about them • Understand moral of story	Ex: Identifying character traits is analysis, but a student aspiring to be like a character goes to understanding. Identifying different points of view is analysis, but responding thoughtfully to them connotes a desire to understand.
Combined: Understanding self and others, etc.	• Builds groundwork for shared experiences • Compares outside perspectives to own • Rethinks own ideas as result of reading others' • Reading creates empathy	• Reflection and introspection • Evaluate place in the world • Self-discovery and cultural awareness are intertwined	

Table A.3: Definitions, Key Words, and Considerations for Q3/Cultural Capital

Definition: The respect or higher status one stands to receive for being well-read; i.e., having made a habit of reading and/or having read widely enough to answer a question central to multiple works. Cultural capital in literature is afforded for understanding a literary work's cultural meaning and significance as well as the context of any allusions to that literary work (Barker, 2004; Ostrower, 1998), or for having the skills to evaluate and explain its quality.		
Category	**Key words and phrases**	**Considerations**
Well-read	• Reads extensively • Reads widely • Reads a genre in depth • Variety of literary experiences • Content from diverse media	• Reads two or more texts for a single assignment or standard • Well-educated in literature and the arts • Explains significance of allusions to other texts	
Evaluates quality	• Assess quality • Evaluate quality • Critique • Develops critical tastes • Reads literary criticism • Becomes a literary critic	• Accepts that multiple valid interpretations of a text exist • Sorts out his or her own value responses to literature and/or literary events	Does not repeat standards in Well-Read, but presumes being well-read is a requirement of being able to evaluate quality.

Table A.4: Definitions, Key Words, and Considerations for Q4/Mechanics

Definition: The tools poets use to create poetry including diction, imagery, figurative language, rhythm, rhyme, compressed language, and structure.

Category	Key words and phrases		Considerations
Diction/Word choice	• Choose words/word choice/wording • Diction • Denotation/connotation • Dialectal differences • Different contexts of word use • Euphemism • How words work	• Language that spare, extravagant, or emotive • Nuances of language • Rhetoric • Syntax • Wide range of words • Word relationships	
Language that is figurative, compressed, or otherwise poetic	• Adages and proverbs • Analogy • Artistic language • Beautiful language • Compressed language (as poetic, not difficult) • Descriptive language • Figurative language • Hyperbole	• Idiom • Imagery/images • Metaphor • Non-literal • Personification • Poetic • Sensory details • Simile • Symbolism	
Literary devices	• Allegory • Flashback • *In media res* • Irony • Narrator • Other devices	• Oxymoron • Paradox • Pun • Sarcasm • Satire • Understatement	Does not include devices that are addressed elsewhere within the research question.

Rhythm and rhyme	• Alliteration • Assonance • Beats • Consonance • Effect on meaning • Enjambment • Meter • Musical qualities • Onomatopoeia • Pacing • Pause	• Pitch • Punctuation as sound effect • Rate • Repetition • Rhyme • Rhythm • Sound effects • Stress • Tempo • Vocal effects • Word order or position	Addresses the musical qualities of poetry.
Structure	• Names a poetry form or pattern • Parts of a poem • Recognize poetry	• Refrain • Stanza • Structure • Verse • Use fragments for effect	
Style and tone	• Style • Tone		Specific components of style and tone, such as word choice, are embedded in other Question 4 categories.

Table A.5: Definitions, Key Words, and Considerations for Q5/Writing

Definition: Classroom activities that require students to write complete original poems, distinct from the use of poetic language, artistic language typically found in poetry, but included in a text type other than poetry. An example is the instruction to write a descriptive paragraph that includes figurative language.		
Category	**Key words and phrases**	**Considerations**
Poetry possible—not specified	• Compose • Create • Present • Writing	The standard: • Comes from a standard coded as possible or lends in Question 6. • Requires students to write. • Does not specify either poetry or poetic language in another genre. • May address general language or poetry skills as noted in Table A.6.
Poetry possible— named	• Cinquain • Haiku • Limerick • Poetry/poem • Song lyrics • Sonnet • Tongue Twister	The standard: • Requires students to write. • Names poetry in general or a specific poetry form as an option to meet the standard.
Poetry required	• Cinquain • Haiku • Limerick • Poetry/poem • Song lyrics • Sonnet • Tongue Twister	The standard: • Requires students to write. • Names poetry in general or a specific poetry form as an option to meet the standard. • States no other option for students to meet the standard.
Poetic language in other named genres	• Artistic language • Figurative language • Poetic language • Sensory detail • Names a genre other than poetry	The standard: • Requires students to write. • Names a genre outside of poetry. • Requires students to incorporate figurative, compressed, or otherwise poetic language.

Table A.6: Definitions, Keywords, and Considerations for Q6/Freedom to Teach

Definition: The degree to which a standard's language specifies or allows for poetry's use.	
Requires	The standard calls for poetry or a poem, either alone or in addition to other texts. It does not consider discussion, suggestions, or examples outside of the goal. *Standard* in each document refers to: • 1971: The numbered goal (i.e., R.2). It does not consider the objectives, which are noted by letters following the numbered goal (i.e., R.2.A). • 1996: One of the 12 standards. It does not include discussion or the vignettes. • 2010: The anchor standard or any of the grade-specific standards. It does not include any of the sample performance tasks (PT) for poetry.
Lends	The standard addresses one or more poetry skills as indicated below, or its implementation examples use poetry to address one or more poetry skills. Implementation examples refer to objectives in the 1971 document, discussion and vignettes in the 1996 document, and performance tasks in the 2010 document. Poetry skills: • Ambiguity/Coded/complexity • Figurative language, compressed, or otherwise poetic language • Poetry structure: forms or parts of a poem • Rhythm and rhyme
Makes possible	The standard or its implementation examples (as specified above) address one or more general language skills (GLS) required to navigate many text types, including poetry. GLS refers to any language arts skills not specifically designated as a poetry skill under *Lends* or as a skill that disallows poetry as noted below. GLS includes reading (decoding, comprehension, text connections, and analysis), the writing process, speaking, listening, and viewing (including group work), word work/vocabulary skills, and evaluating ideas, reasoning, or quality. See Table A.7 for a more detailed list of general language skills referenced in this research.
Disallows	The standard addresses a skill used exclusively or nearly so with non-poetry texts. Using poetry would greatly distort the its purpose. Disallowed skills may vary according to the language of each standard. For example, two standards may focus on essay writing: one on structure and process, the other on incorporating sensory detail. The skills disallowed by this definition include: • Argumentation & debate　　• Formal letter writing • Dialogue　　　　　　　　• Formal speeches • Dictionary skills　　　　　• News articles and broadcasts • Editorials/essays　　　　　• Parliamentary procedure • Explanatory text　　　　　• Research papers

Table A.7: General Language Skills

Following are specific general language skills identified during this research.

• Active vs. passive voice	• Persuasive techniques
• Attributes of text types	• Plot elements (point of view, characterization, theme)
• Citing textual evidence	• Public speaking
• Compare and contrast	• Punctuation
• Comprehension/close reading	• Purpose and audience
• Conventions	• Read and respond to text
• Decoding	• Reading aloud
• Denotation and connotation	• Reading for fun or personal growth
• Diction/word choice	• Retelling stories
• Drawing conclusions	• Sentence structure
• Evaluate quality of literature or literary performance	• Speaking and listening
• Evaluating ideas and quality	• Spelling
• Evaluating reasoning as logical or illogical	• Style
• Grammar	• Summarization
• Idea development	• Technology integration into text production and consumption
• Identifying genre	• Tone
• Inference making	• Variations of English
• Listening to a speaker for a specific purpose	• Vocabulary
• Making text connections	• Voice
• Organization	• Writing process
• Participation in a literary community/group work	

APPENDIX B: Data Analysis for
Representative Performance Objectives for High School English (1971)

Table B.1: Chapter Summary for 1971, Ch. 3—Speaking and Listening

	Q1 Difficult text	Q2 Personal growth	Q3 Cultural capital	Q4 Mechanics	Q5 Writing poetry possible-not specified	Q5 Writing poetry possible-named	Q5 Writing poetry required	Q5 Writing poetic language in other genres	Q6 Disallows	Q6 Possible	Q6 Lends	Q6 Requires
1		gray								gray		
2										gray		
3										gray		
4	gray									gray		
5	green		green	green	green						green	
6			green			green					green	
7										gray		
8				green							green	
9									red			
10									red			
11									red			
12										gray		
13				gray						gray		
14			gray							gray		
15	green										green	
16				gray						gray		
Speaking and Listening Subtotal	3	1	2	5	1	1	0	0	3	9	4	0

Table B.2: Chapter Summary for 1971, Ch. 4—Language

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5				Q6			
	Difficult text	Personal growth	Cultural capital	Mechanics	Writing poetry possible-not specified	Writing poetry possible-named	Writing poetry required	Writing poetic language in other genres	Disallows	Possible	Lends	Requires
1										■		
2										■		
3										■		
4	■									■		
5	■									■		
6	■									■		
7	■									■		
8	■		■	■						■		
9	■		■							■		
10	■									■		
11	■			■						■		
12	■			■						■		
13	■									■		
14	■									■		
15				■						■		
16									■			
17									■			
18									■			
19									■			
20				■						■		
21				■						■		
22	■			■						■		
23					■					■		
Language Subtotal	**12**	**0**	**2**	**7**	**1**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**4**	**19**	**0**	**0**

Table B.3: Chapter Summary for 1971, Ch. 5—Reading and Responding to Literature

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5				Q6			
	Difficult text	Personal growth	Cultural capital	Mechanics	Writing poetry possible-not specified	Writing poetry possible-named	Writing poetry required	Writing poetic language in other genres	Disallows	Possible	Lends	Requires
1		gray								gray		
2		gray								gray		
3		gray								gray		
4		gray								gray		
5		gray	gray							gray		
6		gray	gray							gray		
7		gray								gray		
8				gray						gray		
9			gray							gray		
10										gray		
11	cyan											cyan
12										gray		
13	cyan			cyan		cyan						cyan
14	green			green							green	
15										gray		
16	gray	gray								gray		
17										gray		
18		gray	gray							gray		
19			gray							gray		
20	green			green							green	
21	green			green		green					green	
22	green			green							green	
23				gray						gray		
24	green			green							green	
25			gray	gray						gray		
26	green		green	green							green	
27	green		green	green							green	
28	cyan			cyan								cyan
29			gray							gray		
30										gray		

31		gray	gray							gray		
32 (green)	green			green							green	
33			gray	gray						gray		
34										gray		
35	gray									gray		
36 (green)	green			green							green	
37 (green)	green			green							green	
38		gray		gray						gray		
39				gray						gray		
40			gray							gray		
41			gray							gray		
42 (red)									red			
43 (green)	green		green	green	green						green	
44			gray							gray		
Reading and Responding to Literature Subtotal	8	11	15	19	1	2	0	0	1	29	11	3

Table B.4: Chapter Summary for 1971, Ch. 6—Writing

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5				Q6			
	Difficult text	Personal growth	Cultural capital	Mechanics	Writing poetry possible-not specified	Writing poetry possible-named	Writing poetry required	Writing poetic language in other genres	Disallows	Possible	Lends	Requires
1		X			X			X		X		
2										X		
3										X		
4	X			X								
5					X					X		
6				X						X		
7									X			
8									X			
9									X			
10									X			
11				X	X					X		
12				X						X		
13		X	X	X						X		
14			X	X	X	X				X		
15									X			
16		X		X	X	X		X		X		
17		X			X					X		
Writing Subtotal	**1**	**4**	**2**	**7**	**10**	**2**	**0**	**2**	**5**	**12**	**0**	**0**

Table B.5: Document Summary for 1971, Ch. 3-6 Combined

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5				Q6			
	Difficult text	Personal growth	Cultural capital	Mechanics	Writing poetry possible-not specified	Writing poetry possible-named	Writing poetry required	Writing poetic lang. in other named genres	Disallows	Possible	Lends	Requires
Chapter 3: Speaking & Listening (N=16)	3	1	2	5	1	1	0	0	3	9	4	0
Chapter 4: Language (N=23)	12	0	2	7	1	0	0	0	4	19	0	0
Chapter 5: Reading & Responding to (N=44)	8	11	15	19	1	2	0	0	1	29	11	3
Chapter 6: Writing (N=17)	1	4	2	7	10	2	0	2	5	12	0	0
Total (N=100)	**24**	**16**	**21**	**38**	**13**	**5**	**0**	**2**	**13**	**69**	**15**	**3**
Document Total in Percentages	**24%**	**16%**	**21%**	**38%**	**13%**	**5%**	**0%**	**2%**	**13%**	**69%**	**15%**	**3%**

Table B.6: Disaggregation of References Within Q1/Difficult Text, 1971

	Chapter 3: Speaking and Listening	Chapter 4: Language	Chapter 5: Reading and Responding to Literature	Chapter 6: Writing	**Document Total**
Time	2	8	4	0	**14**
Culture	3	10	1	0	**14**
Coded Complexity	3	0	9	1	**13**
Vocabulary	0	0	0	0	**0**
Document Total	**8**	**18**	**14**	**1**	**41**

Table B.7: Disaggregation of References Within Q2/Personal Growth, 1971

	Chapter 3: Speaking and Listening	Chapter 4: Language	Chapter 5: Reading and Responding to Literature	Chapter 6: Writing	**Document Total**
Enjoyment	2	0	6	2	**10**
Understanding Self	0	0	3	4	**7**
Understanding others/human condition/nature of the world	0	0	4	0	**4**
COMBINED: Understanding self/others/human condition, nature of the world	0	0	3	1	**4**
Document Total	**2**	**0**	**16**	**7**	**25**

Table B.8: Disaggregation of References Within Q3/Cultural Capital, 1971

	Chapter 3: Speaking and Listening	Chapter 4: Language	Chapter 5: Reading and Responding to Literature	Chapter 6: Writing	**Document Total**
Well-Read	0	2	20	2	**24**
Evaluate Quality	2	0	20	0	**22**
Document Total	**2**	**2**	**40**	**2**	**46**

Table B.9: Disaggregation of References Within Q4/Mechanics, 1971

	Chapter 3: Speaking and Listening	Chapter 4: Language	Chapter 5: Reading and Responding to Literature	Chapter 6: Writing	**Document Total**
Word Choice	2	7	5	7	**21**
Figurative/ compressed/otherwise poetic language	0	0	15	4	**19**
Structure	0	0	11	5	**16**
Style and Tone	3	0	10	3	**16**
Literary Devices	0	0	7	0	**7**
Rhythm and Rhyme	3	0	9	2	**14**
Document Total	**8**	**7**	**57**	**21**	**93**

Table B.10: Disaggregation of References Within Q5/Writing, 1971

	Chapter 3: Speaking and Listening	Chapter 4: Language	Chapter 5: Reading and Responding to Literature	Chapter 6: Writing	**Document Total**
Writing poetry possible— not specified	1	1	1	24	**27**
Writing poetry possible—named	1	0	2	5	**8**
Writing poetry— required	0	0	0	0	**0**
Writing poetic language in other named genres	0	0	0	2	**2**
Document Total	**2**	**1**	**3**	**32**	**37**

APPENDIX C: Data Analysis for *Standards for the English Language Arts* (1996)

Table C.1: Chapter Summary for 1996, Ch. 3—The English Language Arts Standards

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5				Q6			
	Difficult text	Personal growth	Cultural capital	Mechanics	Writing poetry possible-not specified	Writing poetry possible-named	Writing poetry required	Writing poetic language in other genres	Disallows	Possible	Lends	Requires
1	⬛	⬛	⬛	⬛						⬛		
2 (🟩)	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩							🟩	
3	⬛	⬛								⬛		
4				⬛	⬛					⬛		
5		⬛			⬛					⬛		
6 (🟩)		🟩	🟩	🟩				🟩			🟩	
7 (🟥)									🟥			
8	⬛	⬛		⬛	⬛					⬛		
9	⬛	⬛	⬛		⬛					⬛		
10										⬛		
11		⬛	⬛							⬛		
12		⬛			⬛					⬛		
Standards Subtotal	**5**	**9**	**5**	**5**	**5**	**0**	**0**	**1**	**1**	**9**	**2**	**0**

Legend: ⬛ = gray shaded, 🟩 = green shaded, 🟥 = red shaded.

Table C.2: Chapter Summary for 1996, Ch. 4—Standards in the Classroom (Vignettes)

	Q1 Difficult text	Q2 Personal growth	Q3 Cultural capital	Q4 Mechanics	Q5 Writing poetry possible-not specified	Q5 Writing poetry possible-named	Q5 Writing poetry required	Q5 Writing poetic language in other genres	Q6 Disallows	Q6 Possible	Q6 Lends	Q6 Requires
E1	▪	▪								▪		
E2					▪					▪		
E3									▪			
E4	▪	▪	▪							▪		
E5	▪			▪	▪			▪			▪	
E6		▪								▪		
E7										▪		
M1		▪								▪		
M2			▪							▪		
M3	▪	▪	▪		▪					▪		
M4		▪								▪		
M5									▪			
M6										▪		
H1	▪	▪								▪		
H2	▪	▪	▪		▪					▪		
H3				▪	▪			▪			▪	
*H5	▪										▪	
Vignettes Subtotal	6	8	4	2	5	0	0	2	2	12	3	0

*For reasons of copyright, high school Vignette 4 (H4) was omitted from the online version examined by the research, so it is not included here.

Table C.3: Document Summary for 1996, Ch. 3-4 Combined

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5				Q6			
	Difficult text	Personal growth	Cultural capital	Mechanics	Writing poetry possible- not specified	Writing poetry possible- named	Writing poetry required	Writing poetic language in other genres	Disallows	Possible	Lends	Requires
Chapter 3: The ELA Standards (N=12)	5	9	5	5	5	0	0	1	1	9	2	0
Chapter 3: Percentages*	42%	75%	42%	42%	42%	0%	0%	8%	8%	75%	17%	0%
Chapter 4: Standards in the Curriculum /Vignettes (N=17)	6	8	4	2	5	0	0	2	2	12	3	0
Chapter 4: Percentages*	35%	47%	24%	12%	29%	0%	0%	12%	12%	71%	18%	0%
Document Total in Raw Numbers (N=29)	**11**	**17**	**9**	**7**	**10**	**0**	**0**	**3**	**3**	**21**	**5**	**0**
Document Total in Percentages*	**38%**	**59%**	**31%**	**24%**	**34%**	**0%**	**0%**	**10%**	**10%**	**72%**	**17%**	**0%**

Percentages rounded to the nearest whole percent.

Table C.4: Disaggregation of References Within Q1: Difficult Text, 1996

	Chapter 3: The English Language Standards	Chapter 4: Standards in the Classroom (The Vignettes)	**Document Total**
Time	3	2	**5**
Culture	8	2	**10**
COMBINED: Time and Culture	4	0	**4**
Coded Complexity	1	1	**2**
Vocabulary	3	2	**5**
Document Total	**18**	**7**	**25**

Table C.5: Disaggregation of References Within Q2: Personal Growth, 1996

	Chapter 3: The English Language Standards	Chapter 4: Standards in the Classroom (The Vignettes)	**Document Total**
General statement	1	0	**1**
Enjoyment	3	4	**7**
Understanding self	5	0	**5**
Understanding others, human condition, or nature of the world	17	5	**22**
COMBINED: Understanding self, others, human condition, or the nature of the world	12	2	**14**
Document Total	**38**	**11**	**49**

Table C.6: Disaggregation of References Within Q3: Cultural Capital, 1996

	Chapter 3: The English Language Standards	Chapter 4: Standards in the Classroom (The Vignettes)	Document Total
Well-Read	10	4	**14**
Evaluate Quality	7	1	**8**
Document Total	**17**	**5**	**22**

Table C.7: Disaggregation of References Within Q4: Mechanics, 1996

	Chapter 3: The English Language Standards	Chapter 4: Standards in the Classroom (Vignettes)	Document Total
Word Choice	1	0	**1**
Figurative, compressed, or otherwise poetic language	4	1	**5**
Structure	4	1	**5**
Style and Tone	0	0	**0**
Literary Devices	1	0	**1**
Rhythm and Rhyme	2	1	**3**
Document Total	**12**	**3**	**15**

Table C.8: Disaggregation of References Within Q5: Writing, 1996

	Chapter 3: The English Language Standards	Chapter 4: Standards in the Classroom (The Vignettes)	Document Total
Writing poetry possible—not specified	9	3	**12**
Writing poetry possible—named	1	0	**1**
Writing poetry—required	0	0	**0**
Writing poetic language in other named genres	1	2	**3**
Document Total	**11**	**5**	**16**

Table D.1: Summary for 2010, Reading for Literature

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5				Q6			
	Difficult text	Personal growth	Cultural capital	Mechanics	Writing poetry possible-not specified	Writing poetry possible-named	Writing poetry required	Writing poetic lang. in other genres	Disallows	Possible	Lends	Requires
1 (green)	green										green	
2	gray	gray								gray		
3		gray								gray		
4 (green)	green		green	green							green	
5 (cyan)			cyan	cyan								cyan
6	gray	gray	gray	gray						gray		
7			gray	gray						gray		
8 (red)									red			
9	gray		gray							gray		
10 (cyan)	cyan											cyan
Standards Subtotal	6	3	5	4	0	0	0	0	1	5	2	2

Table D.2: Summary for 2010, Reading—Foundational Skills

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5				Q6			
	Difficult text	Personal growth	Cultural capital	Mechanics	Writing poetry possible-not specified	Writing poetry possible-named	Writing poetry required	Writing poetic lang. in other genres	Disallows	Possible	Lends	Requires
1												
2												
3												
4												
Standards Subtotal	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	1

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Table D.3: Summary for 2010, Writing

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5				Q6			
	Difficult text	Personal growth	Cultural capital	Mechanics	Writing poetry possible-not specified	Writing poetry possible-named	Writing poetry required	Writing poetic lang. in other genres	Disallows	Possible	Lends	Requires
1		■	■							■		
2										■		
3				■				■		■		
4				■	■					■		
5			■		■					■		
6					■					■		
7										■		
8			■							■		
9										■		
10					■					■		
Standards Subtotal	**0**	**1**	**3**	**2**	**4**	**0**	**0**	**1**	**0**	**10**	**0**	**0**

Table D.4: Summary for 2010, Speaking and Listening

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5				Q6			
	Difficult text	Personal growth	Cultural capital	Mechanics	Writing poetry possible-not specified	Writing poetry possible-named	Writing poetry required	Writing poetic lang. in other genres	Disallows	Possible	Lends	Requires
1		▨								▨		
2			▨							▨		
3		▨		▨						▨		
4				▨	▨					▨		
5					▨	▨				▨		
6					▨					▨		
Standards Subtotal	**0**	**2**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**1**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**6**	**0**	**0**

Table D.5: Summary for 2010, Language

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5				Q6			
	Difficult text	Personal growth	Cultural capital	Mechanics	Writing poetry possible-not specified	Writing poetry possible-named	Writing poetry required	Writing poetic lang. in other genres	Disallows	Possible	Lends	Requires
1												
2												
3												
4												
5												
6												
Standards Subtotal	3	0	1	3	4	0	0	0	0	3	3	0

Table D.6: Summary for 2010, Sample Performance Tasks for Poetry

| | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Q5 | | | | Q6 | | | |
	Difficult text	Personal growth	Cultural capital	Mechanics	Writing poetry possible–not specified	Writing poetry possible–named	Writing poetry required	Writing poetic lang. in other genres	Disallows	Possible	Lends	Requires
K-1a			X									X
K-1b			X	X								X
2-3				X								X
4-5a			X	X								X
4-5b			X	X								X
6-8a			X	X								X
6-8b			X	X								X
6-8c				X								X
9-10a												X
9-10b			X									X
11-12a	X		X	X								X
11-12b	X											X
Standards Subtotal	**2**	**0**	**8**	**8**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**12**

*Sample performance tasks were selected *because* they require poetry. The majority of the sample performance tasks *do not* require poetry, but instead call for other specific texts.

Table D.7: Document Summary for 2010, All Sections Combined

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5				Q6			
	Difficult text	Personal growth	Cultural capital	Mechanics	Writing poetry possible-not specified	Writing poetry possible-named	Writing poetry required	Writing poetic lang. in other genres	Disallows	Possible	Lends	Requires
Standards												
Reading for Literature (N=10)	6	3	5	4	0	0	0	0	1	5	2	2
Reading Foundational Skills (N=4)	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	1
Writing (N=10)	0	1	3	2	4	0	0	1	0	10	0	0
Speaking & Listening (N=6)	0	2	1	2	3	1	0	0	0	6	0	0
Language (N=6)	3	0	1	3	4	0	0	0	0	3	3	0
Total (N=36)	**9**	**6**	**10**	**13**	**11**	**1**	**0**	**1**	**1**	**26**	**6**	**3**
Total Percentages	**25%**	**17%**	**28%**	**37%**	**31%**	**3%**	**0%**	**3%**	**3%**	**72%**	**17%**	**8%**
Sample Performance Tasks for Poetry												
Total (N=12)	**2**	**0**	**8**	**8**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**Not calculated.			
Percentages	17%	0%	67%	67%	0%	0%	0%	0%				
Document												
Total (N=48)	**11**	**6**	**18**	**21**	**11**	**1**	**0**	**1**	**Not calculated.			
Percentages	23%	13%	38%	44%	23%	2%	0%	2%				

*Data rounded to the nearest whole percent.
**Data not calculated since only those tasks requiring poetry were included in the study.

Table D.8: Disaggregation of References Within Q1: Difficult Text, 2010

	Reading Literature	Reading Foundational Skills	Writing	Speaking & Listening	Language	Performance Tasks	Document Total
Time	3	0	0	0	0	0	**3**
Culture	3	0	0	0	1	0	**4**
COMBINED: Time and Culture	1	0	0	0	0	0	**1**
Coded Complexity	2	0	0	0	1	2	**5**
Vocabulary	1	0	0	0	2	0	**3**
Document Total	**10**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**4**	**2**	**16**

Table D.9: Disaggregation of References Within Q2: Personal Growth, 2010

	Reading Literature	Reading Foundational Skills	Writing	Speaking & Listening	Language	Performance Tasks	Document Total
Enjoyment	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Understanding self	0	0	1	0	0	0	**1**
Understanding others, human condition, or nature of the world	1	0	0	4	0	0	**5**
COMBINED: Understanding others, human condition, or nature of the world	1	0	1	1	0	0	**3**
Document Total	**2**	**0**	**2**	**5**	**0**	**0**	**9**

Table D.10: Disaggregation of References Within Q3: Cultural Capital, 2010

	Reading Literature	Reading Foundational Skills	Writing	Speaking & Listening	Language	Performance Tasks	Document Total
Well-Read	15	0	1	1	1	8	**26**
Evaluate Quality	6	0	3	0	0	1	**10**
Document Total	**21**	**0**	**4**	**1**	**1**	**9**	**36**

Table D.11: Disaggregation of References Within Q4: Mechanics, 2010

	Reading Literature	Reading Foundational Skills	Writing	Speaking & Listening	Language	Performance Tasks	Document Total
General Statement	0	0	0	0	0	1	**1**
Word Choice	4	0	1	1	25	1	**32**
Figurative, compressed, or otherwise poetic Language	7	0	2	0	6	3	**18**
Structure	9	0	0	0	0	3	**12**
Style and Tone	5	0	3	2	4	2	**16**
Literary Devices	4	0	0	0	3	0	**7**
Rhythm and Rhyme	4	3	1	0	1	2	**11**
Document Total	**33**	**3**	**7**	**3**	**39**	**12**	**97**

Table D.12: Disaggregation of References Within Q5: Writing, 2010

	Reading Literature	Reading Foundational Skills	Writing	Speaking & Listening	Language	Performance Tasks	Document Total
Writing Poetry Possible—Not specified	0	0	5	4	4	0	**13**
Writing Poetry Possible—Named	0	0	0	2	0	0	**2**
Writing Poetry—Required and Named	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Writing Poetic Language in Other Named Genres	0	0	1	0	0	0	**1**
Document Total	**0**	**0**	**6**	**6**	**4**	**0**	**16**

Table E.1: Strength of Emphasis Color Key

	More Emphasis		Less Emphasis
Strong	Strong throughout	Mostly strong	Barely strong
Moderate	Approaching strong	Middle	Barely moderate
Weak	Approaching moderate	Very weak	Non-existent

Table E.2: Strength of Emphasis Between Documents for Q1/Difficult Text

	1971	1996	2010
Time and Culture	• 10 goals • 28 references • rich, detailed examples	• 3 standards • 19 references • some specificity in examples, but mostly broad statements to learn about culture through peers of that culture	• 1 anchor standard • 8 total standards • R.10 drives text selection for all of the other standards & includes poetry • not terribly specific with regard to time and culture
Coded Complexity	• 3 goals • 13 references • clear, specific examples that aren't addressed in the other docs • Several examples pertain specifically to poetry	• 0 standards • 2 weaker references • no addressed head on • multiple interpretations of *Hamlet* & reading provocative texts	• 1 anchor standard • 5 total standards • examples reserved for secondary grades, particularly 11-12 (poetry twice in tasks) • does not address K-5 • limits to multiple meanings & uncertainty • doesn't address specific tools for coding poetry.
Vocabulary	• Not addressed in poetry apart from time and culture	• 1 standard • 5 references • specifies some types of vocabulary strategies	• 2 standards • 3 instances • specifies some types of vocabulary strategies

Table E.3: Strength of Emphasis Between Documents for Q2/Personal Growth

	1971	1996	2010
Enjoyment	• 7 goals • 10 references • mostly specific in looking for different avenues to enjoy literature. • emphatic	• 2 standards • 7 references • lighter on ways to find enjoyment. • emphatic	• 0 anchor standards • 0 references • anything approaching definition mired in analysis instead of enjoyment. • lacks direct references.
Under-standing self, others, the human condition, and the nature of the world	• 6 goals • 15 references • nice balance between self and others. • explicit about personal growth, and builds with several examples. • "soul-searching" • "discover" themselves • how literature relates to human experiences • use insights about others to understand self.	• 2 standards • 41 references • emphatic • "rich, personal meanings" • "relevant to own lives" • "explore their own feelings, values, and responses" • "need to foster understanding…urgent" • "learn to read culture and society" • "reflection" and "introspection" • "work through… tangled emotions" • "self-discovery and cultural awareness are intertwined"	• 2 anchor standards • 9 mostly weaker references • anchor standards are still not direct instructions to understand. • understanding is a byproduct of building a conversation or winning an argument.

Table E.4: Strength of Emphasis Between Documents for Q3/Cultural Capital

	1971	1996	2010
Well-read	• 5 goals • 24 references • specifics balance out calls to read widely. • poetry included with specifics.	• 3 standards • 14 references • mostly broad calls to read widely. • emphasizes text connections. • addresses poetry specifically once.	• 4 anchor standards • 26 references • compare and contrast emphasized heavily • variety of other ways to read 2 or more texts for a task • allusion is both general and specific to particular text types.
Evaluating quality	• 8 goals • 22 references • highly detailed. • states students are to become literary critics. • some references specific to poetry. • students look to experienced literary critics as they learn how to develop their skills. • students go back to reevaluate earlier assessments.	• 1 standards • 8 references • critique own work and work of others. • emphasis on working in community. • states need for literary analysis terminology is "essential" and that it enriches the learning experience. • does not address seeking out experienced literary criticism.	• 1-3 anchor standards • 10 references • 1 standard is clear; the others not as direct • "fresh, engaging, beautiful language" specified in poetry • more emphasis in secondary, but still present in elementary grades • apply critical eye to own writing. • lacks clarity about seeking out other learned opinions in literary criticism. • heavier on analysis than critique.

Table E.5: Strength of Emphasis Between Documents for Q4/Mechanics

	1971	1996	2010
Word choice	• 5 goals • 21 references • variety of specific details • specifies poetry • differs from 2010, but still strong	• 0 standards • 1 references • almost non-existent if not for "word games and playful talk"	• 4 anchor standards • 32 references • very specific • right effect and how to achieve it • differs from 1971, but still strong
Figurative language	• 1 goal • 19 references • some general references • no "trivialization" • specifies poetry and students considering their own writing	• 1 standard • 5 references • speaks mostly in generalities • stresses power to shape perception/ create bias • doesn't specify poetry	• 4 anchor standards • 18 references • interpretation emphasis • analysis • writing includes only sensory details in narrative • does not address poetry
Structure	• 1 goal • 16 references • many specifics pertaining to poetry structure	• 0 standards • 5 references • mostly general to any text type • effect of poetry's theme on form.	• 1 anchor standard • 12 references • emphasis on how parts contribute to the whole • poetry in broad terms (stanzas), form/theme
Style and tone	• 4 goals • 16 references • parts of style and tone • specifies poetry	• 0 standards • 0 references	• 7 anchor standards • 16 references • many broad references • does not specify poetry
Literary devices	• 1 goal • 7 references • specific particular ones without a broad call to tend to them as a group	• 0 standards • 1 references • is part of literary language	• 0 anchor standards • 7 references • list broken down by grade • not attached to any particular standard
Rhythm and rhyme	• 1 goals • 14 references • specifies poetry • addresses bigger and more nuanced pictures of how "sound effects" contribute to meaning and overall effect • speaking and listening	• 0 standards • 3 references • is part of literary language • helpful to young readers	• 0 anchor standards • 11 references • specifies poetry • several specifics • includes speaking and listening

Table E.6: Strength of Emphasis Between Documents for Q5/Writing

	1971	1996	2010
Possible-not named	• 7 goals • 27 references • Lots of broad goals, but also specifics	• 8 standards • 12 references • Broad goals • 1 includes figurative language	• 10 anchor standards • 13 references • Broad goals • Not many specifics
Possible-named	• 0 goals • 8 references • lots of encouragement to try poetry • Offers specifics	• 0 standards • 1 reference • only reference was in the vignette. Poetry almost happened.	• 0 anchor standards • 2 references • record poetry, but unclear if it must be students' own work
Required	• 0 goals • 0 references	• 0 standards • 0 references	• 0 anchor standards • 0 references
Other genres	• 0 goals • 2 references • poetic language in journals and prose	• 1 standard • 3 references • Use figurative language to create text. • 2 samples from vignettes.	• 0 anchor standards • 1 reference • Include sensory detail in narrative writing

Table E.7: Strength of Emphasis Between Documents for Q6/Freedom to Teach

This table intentionally left without color codes since most of the data is addressed in other tables.

	1971	**1996**	**2010**
Required	• 3 goals • coded-complexity • conventional poetry structures • Narrative verse to address GLS	• 0 standards	• 3 anchor standards • oral reading • part/whole structure of poems (stanza building) • Know difference between drama and prose • Requires poetry as key player in selecting poetry texts, specifies types of poetry for different grades
Lends	• 15 goals • coded complexity • figurative, compressed, poetic language • rhythm and rhyme • poetry structure	• 2 standards • figurative and poetic language • rhythm and rhyme	• 6 anchor standards • coded complexity • figurative language • rhythm and rhyme
Possible	• 69 goals • 8 goals address personal growth, may help encourage poetry	• 9 standards • concentration on personal growth may encourage poetry	• 26 anchor standards • emphasis on analysis of text
Disallows	• 13 goals • 4 goals are dictionary skill, which will indirectly support poetry eventually	• 1 standard/research process	• 1 anchor standard/R.8 says "Not applicable to literature."
Overall percent allowing poetry	• 87%	• 92%	• 97%