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University of San Francisco

Motivating Poetry in the Adult ESL Classroom

A Field Project Presented to
The Faculty of the School of Education
International and Multicultural Education Department

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

By
Lenore Myers
December 2021

Motivating Poetry in the Adult ESL Classroom

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF ARTS

in

TEACHING ENGLISH TO SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES

by

Lenore Myers

December 2021

UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO

Under the guidance and approval of the committee, and approval by all the members, this field project has been accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree.

Approved:

Luz Navarrette García
Luz Navarrette García, EdD
Instructor/Chairperson

December 9, 2021

Date

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ABSTRACT

Current research into motivation in second language acquisition, including Dörnyei (2005, 2009, 2015), offers compelling evidence that adult language learners who develop and habitually strengthen a vision of their future, linguistically capable selves using concrete, sensory imagery are more likely to sustain the necessary motivation to achieve their personal language-learning goals. My thesis proposes that poetry writing can be an effective medium for language learners to build facility in developing concrete, sensory imagery (tactile, visual, kinesthetic, olfactory, and auditory), including creating a motivating vision of their future, linguistically capable selves. Because poetry can directly support and build learner motivation, it offers advantages over specialized motivational training programs that require extra training and stand outside the regular curriculum of the adult ESL classroom. Poetry writing should accordingly be regarded as a valuable instructional resource in adult ESL education. My thesis field project, “The Motivational Writing Project”, is an e-book for instructors of ESL at adult schools and community colleges, especially TESOL instructors with minimal or no background in poetry. The e-book includes a sequence of poetry writing warmups, frames, and prompts for High-Beginning to Advanced adult language learners to write about their present, past, and future using concrete, sensory language. These sequenced exercises gradually build adult language learners’ facility in writing using concrete, sensory imagery, culminating in the creation of a vivid, motivating vision of their future selves as capable communicators in English. The poetry writing exercises are designed to be consistent with current research findings in language learning and motivation, as well as with community college ESL writing standards.

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

As California English as Second Language (ESL) students gradually make their way back to online and in-person classes in fall 2021 during the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, they will continue to face many challenges to their ability to maintain focus and sustain motivation. Adult ESL students who cannot sustain motivation in their classes withdraw early from classes and receive lower grades, putting them at risk of significantly curtailing future educational and job opportunities (Bulman & Fairlie, 2021; Hartshorn & McMurry, 2020). Basic skills courses, which include both remedial English and ESL, were among the most heavily affected by 2020 student withdrawals at the California Community Colleges, with enrollment dropping by 35% (Bulman & Fairlie, 2021; p. 7).¹ The pandemic disrupted the progress of the remaining enrolled students, negatively affecting student course completion rates, withdrawal rates, and grades, especially in spring 2020 (Bulman & Fairlie, 2021; p. 11). According to an informal survey of Bay Area California Community College district administrators, 25-75% of Bay Area community college courses will continue to be online in fall 2021 (Fernandez, 2021). The

1

In the academic year 2019-2020, the coronavirus pandemic spurred a system-wide California Community College spring enrollment decline of 4% (60,600 students), followed by an additional, “precipitous” drop of 15% (235,842 students) in the fall of 2020 (Bulman & Fairlie, 2021; p. 2). Extrapolating from the nonprofit Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) report of 58,000 students enrolled in one or more English as a Second Language (ESL) courses in the 2016-17 academic year, the 2020 enrollment drop (from a somewhat lower overall 2019-2020 population basis) suggests a loss of about 20,000 ESL and remedial students throughout the California community college system (see PPIC, p. 5).

persistence of a near-obligatory local online learning environment poses significant instructional challenges, particularly for students and instructors of adult ESL. Community college instructors face the urgent question of how to directly support the motivation of new and returning adult English language learners in a meaningful and effective way, whether online or in-person, enabling students to achieve their educational and life goals despite ongoing challenges in their personal lives and learning environments.

This thesis utilizes the most current research in the field of motivation in second-language (L2) learning, namely Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System (2005, 2009, 2015), which has been the most influential and empirically best-supported of recent theories of motivation in second language learning. Dörnyei's (2005, 2009, 2015) research in motivation and second language learning shows that learners who can picture themselves as future capable communicators are more likely to be motivated, successful language learners (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). Conversely, those who have no vision of themselves as successful communicators are less likely to sustain the hard work required to progress in language learning (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). Additional recent research (Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011; Hadfield & Dörnyei, 2013) shows that second-language learners' motivation is best sustained by developing imaginative vision, or what Dörnyei & Kubanyiova (2014) term "L2 vision", which is a second language learner's specific, concrete vision of their future, linguistically capable selves.

But how can second-language instructors support the development of L2 vision? Research on so-called "vision interventions" (Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014), which are guided imagery sessions conducted in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms, are additions to

existing curriculum, counter-productively reducing teaching time for curriculum-mandated items and creating additional work outside of class for already overstretched students (see Dornyei & Vlaeva, 2021). Scholars working on finding the right balance between vision-building activities and scheduled lessons are developing research in an intriguing area, but are also proposing solutions that pile on extra work for both teachers and students (see Dornyei & Vlaeva, 2021; Sato, 2020; Sato & Lara, 2019; Safdari, 2019). A more elegant solution to building student vision could lie in re-introducing a linguistic resource long-maligned and overlooked in adult ESL education: poetry.

Unfortunately, many TESOL instructors find poetry reading and writing to be daunting to teach (Liao, 2018). Students, too, might have had previously uncomfortable experiences with poetry in the classroom (Maxim, 2006; Myhill, 2013, Sigvardsson, 2019). It's true: poetry is more known for inducing groans than cheers in classrooms! However, poetry also offers numerous advantages in the context of second-language education, especially with a motivation-challenged student population. The primary advantage for the purposes of developing L2 vision is that poetry specializes in the compelling arrangement of concrete, sensory imagery, via what Pound (1918) called, "direct treatment of the 'thing'" (Hanauer & Liao, 2016; Pound, 1918). Additional advantages include: brevity, beneficial impact on the development of traditional linguistic competencies (Fomeche, 2014; Gazu & Mncwango, 2020; Holmes & Moulton, 2001; Iida, 2012; Khatib, 2011), adaptability to multi-level classrooms (Holmes & Moulton, 2001), modeling and patterning that is readily imitated and adapted by students (Holmes & Moulton, 2001; Iida, 2010, 2012; Ivanova, 2018), and increased confidence and motivation (Aladini & Farahbod, 2020; Cahnmann-Taylor & Hwang, 2019; Dobkowska &

Kuckleman, 2020; Hanauer 2012; Hanauer & Liao, 2016; Henry & Thorsen, 2019; Khatib, 2011; Yacoub, 2020). These combined benefits indicate the desirability and value of poetry as an instructional resource in adult ESL education. Poetry writing can be an effective medium for language learners to build facility in developing concrete, sensory imagery (tactile, visual, kinesthetic, olfactory, and auditory), including creating a motivating vision of their future, linguistically capable selves. Because poetry writing can directly support and build learner motivation, it also offers advantages over specialized motivational training programs that require extra training and stand outside the regular curriculum of the adult ESL classroom.

This thesis therefore proposes The Motivational Writing Project as a potential solution to two problems: 1) as a means of directly supporting and building second language learner motivation in an adult education or community college environment without the addition of extra-curricular training or activities; and 2) as a means of re-introducing a valuable instructional resource in adult ESL education.

Purpose of the Project

This thesis implements Dornyei's insights (Dornyei 2005, 2009, 2015) into how best to support and develop the L2 vision of adult English language learners, and, in turn, their L2 Motivational Self System, through a sequence of poetry writing exercises. Suitable for High-Beginning to Advanced English language learners, these warmups, frames, and prompts emphasize writing about the present, past and future using concrete, sensory language. The Motivational Writing Project is composed of three parts: 1) "Where I Am", 2) "Where I'm From", and, 3) "Where I'm Going." The sequence directly facilitates the development of L2 vision while developing core linguistic competencies (e.g., vocabulary, grammar). It can exist as

an extension of standard adult school or community college curriculum, or be adopted as a standalone sequence. The sequence provides adult education and tertiary-level ESL instructors with direct, motivational intervention as well as academically sound instructional materials, supporting adult English language learners in building and sustaining the necessary motivation to continue their educational and linguistic progress.

The purpose and intended innovation of this thesis is to show that the sensory modalities (tactile, visual, kinesthetic, olfactory, auditory) necessary for building and sustaining a vivid, motivating L2 vision can be effectively developed through classroom poetry writing exercises. The poetry writing exercises developed for this thesis field project are collected in an e-book, “The Motivational Writing Project.” The e-book includes a sequence of poetry writing warmups, frames, and prompts for High-Beginning to Advanced adult language learners to write about their present, past, and future using concrete, sensory language. These sequenced exercises gradually build adult language learners’ facility in writing using concrete, sensory imagery, culminating in the creation of a vivid, motivating vision of their future selves as capable communicators in English. The sequence is intended for use by community college or adult education teachers who may be unfamiliar with poetry, or are uncomfortable teaching it. All materials are developed to be consistent with current research findings in language learning and motivation, as well as congruent with existing community college curriculum. The lesson plan reduces preparation barriers for teachers who have no specialized background in poetry, and whose semesters are already over-stuffed. The lesson plan and materials offered in this field project are suitable for in-person, online, and hybrid instructional contexts.

Theoretical Framework

According to Dörnyei & Ryan (2015), a learner's success in language learning is a direct function of whether or not an individual has a "vivid and detailed ideal self-image" of themselves as a successful second-language learner (p. 96-97). The more specific, realistic, and vivid their personal image of second-language learning success, the more likely a learner "will be motivated to take action in pursuing language studies than their peers without such a self-image" (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015; p. 96-97). Multiple quantitative studies (e.g., Al-Shehri, 2009; Chan, 2014; Dörnyei & Chan, 2013; Fukada, Fukuda, Falout, & Murphey, 2011; Kim, 2009; Kim & Kim, 2011; Mackay, 2014; Magid, 2014; Sampson, 2012) support the theory that an individual's "L2 vision" of their hoped-for future self can activate the potentiality of a person's dream into a specific action plan with productive results. That dreamed-of self is the language learner's motivational "incentive, direction, and impetus for action" (Dörnyei, 2009, p. 18). Developing a language learner's vision of their hoped-for future self is one direct way an instructor can support second-language learners' goals of becoming capable communicators in another language (Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011; Hadfield & Dörnyei, 2013).

Researchers in motivation and second language learning argue that as a learner improves their fluency in and knowledge of a language, it increasingly involves their "core" self, eventually becoming an essential part of their identity (Dörnyei, 2018; Dörnyei & Kubanyiova 2014; Dörnyei & Chan, 2013; Dörnyei & Muir, 2013; Murray, 2013). To support learner motivation, therefore, instructors can seek out materials that increase the opportunities for students to explore the target language and make it their own (Choi & Wong, 2018; Disney,

2014; Freyn, 2017; Hanauer, 2014; Liao, 2017; Maxim, 2006; Myhill, 2013). Many teachers of adult English language learners already agree on the value of using material that is personally engaging and relevant (Disney, 2014; Fomeche, 2014; Freyn, 2017; Hanauer, 2012; Hanauer, 2014; Judson & Egan, 2013; Liao, 2018; Maxim, 2006; Spiro, 2014). One long-recognized activity that is rich in personal, relevant content and directly engages the inner world is poetry writing (Fomeche, 2014; Hanauer, 2004; Kowit, 2015).

Current research (e.g. Boldireff & Bober, 2021) shows that despite previous stigma against teaching poetry in language learning classrooms, poetry is not difficult for ESL students. Rather, the benefits of poetry to ESL students are clear in several recent qualitative studies, which have found improvements in traditional learning competencies, including reading, writing, and vocabulary, as well as positive effects on emotion and voice (Boldireff & Bober, 2021). Iida (2012) found that poetry writing encouraged L2 writers towards economy, which improved word choice and fluency. Ashton-Hay (2019), Dobkowska & Kuckleman (2020), and Gönen (2018) all found that using poetry in the classroom resulted in improvements in learner confidence. Poetry not only increases student's sense of confidence, but reinforces a positive attitude towards writing in general (Hanauer & Liao, 2016). Additionally, practitioners such as Aladini & Farahbod (2020), Ivanova (2018), Khatib (2011), Park (2011), Preston (1982), Yacoub (2020) all report increased student confidence, personal fulfillment, and motivation in their secondary and college-level EFL and ESL classrooms.

Significance of the Project

This thesis will show how poetry reading and writing, a largely neglected resource for adult ESL education, can support students' motivation to continue the hard, extended work of

language learning by deepening learners' engagement and identification with English while simultaneously developing and reinforcing their visions of themselves as capable communicators. The field project portion of this thesis, "The Motivational Writing Project," can be used to support both the personal and language development of second language learners at adult schools, community colleges, and in writing programs at four-year universities. The intention of the lesson sequence is to increase and develop students' sense of personal belonging in English, especially those for whom the process of learning English has created social, cultural, interpersonal, and intra-personal conflict. By providing an arena for students to directly address these conflicts while also progressing in their language learning, The Motivational Writing Project aims to be part of a creative solution to supporting adult second language learners in their goals of gaining sufficient language skills to secure better employment, complete a certification program in English language skills, transfer to a four-year college, or complete their college or university studies.

Achieving communicative competence generally requires years of sustained effort, and can challenge learners greatly, both in their sense of stability in their identities, as well as in their commitment to progressing in English. Current evidence suggests that adult ESL students and their instructors can, in principle, still be successful online, even if pandemic-driven virtual learning is not optimal for a particular student (Hartshorn & McMurry, 2020; p. 152). Hartshorn & McMurry (2020) report survey-based evidence that while online adult ESL classes are correlated with reduced improvements in speaking skills, the good news for adult ESL learners is that student writing skills continued to show typical improvement, even online (Hartshorn & McMurry, 2020; p. 146, 152). By targeting a core attribute required for language learning,

motivation, while also supporting learners in their emerging identities as capable speakers of English, The Motivational Writing Project develops a neglected area of language study into a powerful tool for supporting English language learner motivation and achievement.

CHAPTER II REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Research in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) indicates a strong theoretical and evidential basis for including material in the classroom that increases language learners' sense of personal welcome into the language, while at the same time aiding them in maintaining and increasing their motivation to learn. The idea here is a familiar one, that treating language acquisition as purely instrumental, i.e., as a task-based activity whose waypoints are marked by assessment-driven classroom assignments, ignores the emotional and personal elements that impact the development of the English language learner. Although teachers might focus specific lessons on grammatical structures or aspects of pronunciation in English that can pose difficulties to learners, extra-linguistic factors can be just as powerful in preventing individuals from developing their English language skills. People who experience intra- or inter- personal, familial, or cultural conflicts arising out of their journey into learning a new language may well have the capacity to progress, but end up abandoning their English language learning in order to settle the conflicts that arise out of their language learning activity. Although teachers cannot resolve these dilemmas for their students, they can nonetheless provide opportunities in the course of language learning for students to begin addressing these conflicts in a manner of their choosing. In particular, material such as poetry that privileges creativity, self-expression, and use of concrete sensory imagery can be especially supportive of the development of learners' self-conceptions as increasingly communicatively competent speakers of English. Unfortunately, some of the literature also recognizes that English as a Second

Language (ESL) teachers, as well as some learners, believe poetry to be intimidating and difficult. It needn't be.

A review of the literature supports the claim of this thesis that using poetry in the adult education or university classroom can be an effective tool in motivating English language learners to improve their capabilities as communicators. When a second-language (L2) learner engages with concrete, sensory material like poetry in a manner that reinforces and supports their emerging vision of themselves as speakers of English, they are more likely to sustain the ongoing motivation required to be successful in English. According to Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System (2005, 2009, 2015), when English language learners deliberately imagine a specific, concrete vision of themselves as future speakers of English, they are much more likely to sustain motivation through difficulties, complete necessary tasks, and measurably improve their communicative competence. Poetry in the adult education or university classroom can offer not only a fun and creative use of language, but can also become a means of directly developing students' conception of themselves as future competent speakers of English. To that end, this thesis applies Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self-System framework (2005, 2009, 2015) to an adaptation of Ivanovna's college-level "Where I'm From" ESL writing assignment (2019). Dörnyei's insights are operationalized into a three-part ESL lesson plan designed to support learners in developing visions of their future, competently English-speaking, selves.

Part 1: Dörnyei's Dynamic L2 Self: Motivation and Vision

A different language is a different vision of life.

—*Federico Fellini*, 1941

In the following sections, I first briefly summarize the history of research into second language learning and motivation, and establish the definition of motivation that will be used in this chapter. Then I turn to the most recent work in the field, especially Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System (2005, 2009, 2015), which has been the most influential and empirically best-supported of recent theories of motivation in second language learning. I then discuss in some detail Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System (2005, 2009, 2015), and conclude with a discussion of current research into developing and using imaginative *vision* to develop and sustain motivation in second language learning.

A Brief History of Second Language-Learning Motivation Research

Since the 1950s, researchers in the field of motivation and second language learning have examined and conceptualized notions of the self and its situation in order to understand the impacts of individual attributes on adult second language acquisition (see Boo, Dörnyei, & Ryan, 2015). The individual attribute of *motivation* in second language learning has gained particular research attention. According to Boo, Dörnyei, and Ryan (2015), over 400 journal articles and book chapters were published between 2005 and 2014 addressing links between motivation and second language learning. Motivation has drawn such significant research attention because

individual deficiencies in personality traits and aptitude for second language-learning can be overcome by high motivation, but not the other way around (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015, p. 72).

According to Dörnyei and Ryan (2015), research into motivation and second language learning progressed through three major stages during the 20th-21st centuries (p.73-74). The initial social-psychological period began with Gardner and colleagues in the late 1950s, culminating in Gardner and Lambert's (1972) groundbreaking social-psychological research into how an individual's attitude towards a socially and linguistically defined language group affects second language learning success (Gardner, 1985). In the 1990s and early 2000s, the field turned to a cognitive-theoretical approach, which emphasized the psychology of the English language learner. During that period, researchers (including Dörnyei, 2005, 2009) constructed and attempted to validate various theoretical models of the successful second language-learning self. Since the 2010s to the present, researchers have favored a process-based, dynamic systems approach (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015, p.73-74). The dynamic systems approach regards individuals as complex, ever-changing "product(s) of the constant interactions between their various individual attributes and contexts" (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015, p.11). The question of how individuals develop and maintain motivation in language learning continues to be an area of abundant research activity, and concern to language instructors, worldwide (see Dörnyei, 2012; Dörnyei, Csizér, & Németh, 2006; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011; Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014; Gardner, 2010; Gu, 2009; Hadfield & Dörnyei, 2013; Heinzmann, 2013; Nakata, 2006).

Definition of Motivation

So, what is motivation? There is no current single over-arching theory that explains why humans think and act the way they do (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021). The term admits of many senses in the literature, ranging from a state, trait, or process, and can vary in degree of affective or cognitive content (Liu & Zhang, 2020). In their review of the terminology, Dörnyei and Ushioda (2021) use the term broadly to refer to “what moves a person to make certain choices, to engage in action, to expend effort and persist in action” (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021, p.1). Although their definition is intended to be as theory-neutral as possible, Dörnyei and Ushioda’s (2021) conception of motivation emphasizes the decisions and actions of the individual in a manner that perhaps echoes the older cognitive-theoretical approach (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021). Current research emphasizes the “person-in-context” (Ushioda, 2009), which Dörnyei and Ushioda (2021) describe as “the dynamic ecology of the individual and context in interaction with one another” (p.4). Other scholars, such as Larsen-Freeman (2019), extend the notion of the person-in-context and emphasize *agency* as the element that sets useful boundaries in a research context. For the more general purposes of this chapter, however, Dörnyei and Ushioda’s (2021) non-technical and intuitive definition of motivation is sufficient.

Summary of Dörnyei’s Theory of the L2 Motivational Self System

Dörnyei’s research into second language learning and motivation has been premised on the idea that “the way in which people imagine themselves in the future plays an important role in energising them in the present” (Dörnyei, 2019). The bulk of his work on a second language learning theory of motivation, therefore, is to demonstrate how the act of imagining a future can

direct an individual's present motivational state. In his initial, highly influential investigations during the 2000s into the impact of identity on motivation in second language learning, Dörnyei (2005, 2009) combined Higgins' landmark (1987, 1996) *theory of self-discrepancy* with the concept of *vision* from Markus and Nurius' (1986) classic theory of possible selves. Dörnyei's resulting L2 Motivational Self System (2005, 2009) integrated Higgins' (1987) concept of an idealized self as a motivational "future self-guide" with Markus and Nurius' (1986) imagery-driven possible selves theory. Dörnyei's resulting L2 Motivational Self System conceptualized language learning as guided by an individual's specific, unique vision or image of an ideal future self. This "future self-guide" reacts to discrepancies between an individual's actual and ideal selves, generating strategies for concrete, specific action that can increase the chances of success in second language learning.

Although Dörnyei's 2005 and 2009 theorizing of the L2 Motivational Self System was originally conducted under the cognitive-theoretical model, he has been continuously modifying his model of L2 language learning to bring it into closer accordance with current dynamic systems theory (Dörnyei, 2009, 2015, 2019; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, 2021). Dynamic systems theory recognizes that the social world is dynamic and ever-changing (Dörnyei, 2019, p.56). One result of that dynamism is that individual learning and development is not always linear, reflecting individual differences in how people respond to their environment (Dörnyei, 2019, p.56). For instance, according to Dörnyei (2019), it is not always accurate to refer to a language learner as "motivated" or not in a blanket manner, i.e., in all ways and at all times (p. 51). Rather, it is more accurate to recognize that motivation, like other attributes, has "salient temporal and situational variation", resulting in sometimes surprising and unpredictable outcomes (Dörnyei,

2019, p. 51). As a result, motivation, cognition, and affect “can be viewed as dynamic subsystems...that have continuous and complex interaction with each other and which cannot exist in isolation from one another” (Dörnyei, 2019, p. 52.) Since about 2017, Dörnyei has therefore been adjusting his model of the L2 Motivational Self System to create a model of the future self-guide that is more dynamic, and therefore more representative of “motivational phenomena observed in real-life situations”. Dörnyei’s hope in adapting his L2 Self System model to the dynamic systems approach is to provide “a more accurate analysis of personal development” (Dörnyei, 2019, p.51-56), which should be a welcome adjustment to his theory.

That very dynamism makes real-life situations harder to study in a controlled way, however (Dörnyei, 2019, p.51-56). Dörnyei cautions that his own study results applying dynamic principles to the L2 Motivational Self System model have been “mixed” (Dörnyei, 2019; 56), in part due to difficulties of adapting reliable study methodologies to accommodate the assumptions of the complex dynamic systems approach (MacIntyre, Dörnyei, & Henry, 2015; MacIntyre, MacKay, Ross, & Abel, 2017). There have been more recent, promising, studies conceptualizing future self-guides as dynamic elements (Henry, 2015, 2017; MacIntyre, Dörnyei, & Henry, 2015; Teimouri, 2017; You and Chan, 2015). However, most of the empirical support for the validity of the L2 Motivational Self System is based on the older, cognitive model of 2005 and 2009. Accordingly, for my argument here, I rely on the older, 2005 and 2009 model with the more robust empirical data supporting it, despite recognizing that data supporting the dynamic model of L2 motivation and learning may emerge in the near future, making the dynamic model the preferred one.

L2 Motivation and Possible Selves

Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System (2005, 2009) draws heavily from social psychologists Markus and Nurius' (1986) imagery-driven possible selves theory. Rooted in the successes of 20th century personality psychology, Markus and Nurius' (1986) theory places the self at the core of motivation and action (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015, p. 86). At the center of the interplay between cognition, fantasy, and motivation, possible selves "represent an individual's ideas of what they might become, what they would like to become, and what they are afraid of becoming" (Markus and Nurius, 1986, p. 954). Ideal selves include "the successful self, the creative self, the rich self, the thin self, or the loved and admired self", with the feared selves including "the alone self, the depressed self, the incompetent self, the alcoholic self, the unemployed self, or the bag lady self" (Markus and Nurius 1986; p. 954). The middle ground, "might-happen" self seems to be the self that will be actualized if one falls short, as it were, of achieving both a perfect ideal and a worst fear. According to Dörnyei and Ryan (2015), possible selves can be understood as "specific representations of one's self in future states," manifesting one's goals, aspirations and fears (p. 87).

Although there is no direct evidence supporting Markus and Nurius' (1986) possible selves theory, the relevance and benefit of using possible selves theory in visualization exercises has been well-supported in educational contexts (e.g., Hock et al., 2006; Oyserman, Terry, & Bybee, 2002; Oyserman et al., 2004; Sheldon & Lyubomirsky, 2006; and Yowell, 2002). Ruvolo and Markus (1992) offered a survey-based empirical study demonstrating the beneficial impact of imagining a successful possible self before completing academic tasks. Additional research into neurobiological motivation using brain scanning and neuroimaging (e.g., see Schumann,

1998, 1999, 2001a, 2001b; Schumann et al., 2004) has produced encouraging results identifying brain regions where incentive motives and stimulus appraisals seem to engage brain regions related to memory, values, and emotions. Based on his neurobiological research, Schumann (2004) has proposed an evidence-based mechanism for stimulus-dependent goal-oriented behavior in second language acquisition. However, despite the encouraging research support, there are a couple internal issues with Markus and Nurius' (1986) theory that must be addressed.

Markus and Nurius' possible selves theory (1986) suffers from a degree of incompleteness. First, their model of the self leaves unclear how an individual's ideal self is supposed to be formed in relation to (or in reaction to) the attitudes and representations of other people (Dörnyei, 2005; Nasby 1997). The omission is problematic, as individual selves are formed in relation to other people and their expressed attitudes, feelings, and opinions (Dörnyei, 2015, see p. 101). An account of the structure of the self must also include some element of the effect of the representations of others on an individual's self-representations (see Dörnyei, 2005; Higgins, 1996). Furthermore, Markus and Nurius' (1986) theory does not explain the internal mechanism or process by which changes in motivation are effected (Dörnyei, 2015, see p. 100). In order to explain changes in motivation, the structure of the self must include some means by which motivational changes can be intentionally directed by the individual (see Higgins, 1996).

Dörnyei accordingly turns to Higgins' psychological discrepancy theory (1987) to flesh out a model of how an individual's conceptualization of possible selves enables them to develop and sustain motivation in an L2 learning context. Similar to Markus and Nurius (1986), Higgins (1987) developed his psychological theory of "possible selves" to define the relationship between an individual's current self and their ideas of future potentialities. According to Higgins

(1987), the “actual” self is the way a person currently sees themselves, while the “ideal” self includes the individual’s hopes, dreams, and aspirations (1987, p. 320-321). Whereas, the “ought-to” self incorporates the individual’s perception of their duties and obligations, and their sense of who they should be (1987, p. 320-321). In Higgins’ model, each of those various selves can derive from either the individual’s view of their own attributes (actual, ideal, or normative), or from how others see those attributes (actual, ideal, or normative) (1987, p. 320-321). Higgins’ (1987) model of possible selves fills in a gap in Markus and Nurius’ (1986) theory by articulating a structural element of the self through which social, familial, and other interpersonal factors can shape an individual’s self-conception, as well as identifying a mechanism by which an individual can be moved to action.

Another important feature of Higgins’ (1987) model of the self is how it conceptualizes the ideal and ought-to selves as future-oriented “self-guides” that change in relationship to one another over time, going in and out of alignment with one’s actual self (p. 321-322). When there is a failure of fit between the current, actual self and an ideal or ought-to self, the individual experiences discomfort. According to Higgins (1987), motivation just is the desire to reduce the uncomfortable gap, or *discrepancy*, that arises between one’s actual self and the projected attributes of one’s ideal or ought-to selves (p. 321). When the future self-guide encounters meaningful discrepancies between its ideals and the realities of the actual self, the future self-guide generates strategies for reducing those discrepancies by adjusting the alignment among those selves (2009, p. 18). Higgins (1987) hypothesized that discomfort about discrepancies between what he called the “actual”, “ideal”, and “ought-to” selves is what motivates an individual to change their behavior (1987, p. 322).

As in Markus and Nurius' (1986) theory, Higgins' (1987) possible selves serve two functions: first, evaluating the current, actual self; and second, motivating an individual to act. Dörnyei adapts Markus and Nurius' (1986) possible selves theory into a theory of the L2 learning self, conceptualizing how second language learners envision their future selves in an L2 language learning context. He also adds elements from Higgins' (1987) model of discrepancy-driven motivation to further explain how L2 learning motivation can be triggered, sustained, or derailed. Pulling these two major psychological theories together, Dörnyei hypothesizes that "if proficiency in the target language is part and parcel of one's *ideal* or *ought-to* self, this will serve as a powerful motivator to learn the language, because of our psychological desire to reduce the discrepancy between our current and possible selves" (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009, 4). While Dörnyei (2005) is in part a theoretical account, or description, of how motivation affects adult second language learning, it is also part of a larger, prescriptive project that aims to harness the ongoing, lived discomforts of low second-language capability in a way that does not also entirely demotivate the second language learner. The prescriptive challenge for Dörnyei (2005, 2009), therefore, is how to construct an account of motivation that is both accurate to the current research, while also being perspicacious in applying that research to optimally marshal learners' inner resources as they pursue the significant challenge of second language learning.

The L2 Motivational Self System

Dörnyei (2005) synthesizes the psychological possible selves theories of Markus and Nurius (1986) and Higgins (1987) into his own model of motivation and second language

learning, the L2 Motivational Self System (2005, 2009). Relying also on related, contemporaneous research by Noels (2003) and Ushioda (2001), he offers an admittedly “broad” construct, the L2 Self System (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 105-6). It has three parts, presented in the order in which they will be discussed here:

1) The *L2 Learning Experience*, “which concerns situation-specific motives related to the immediate learning environment and experience” (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 106).

2) The *Ought-to L2 Self*, which refers to “the attributes that one believes one *ought to* possess (i.e., various duties, obligations, or responsibilities) in order to *avoid* possible negative outcomes” (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 105-6).

3) The *Ideal L2 Self*, which refers to “the L2-specific facet of one’s ideal self: If the person we would like to become speaks an L2, the *Ideal L2 Self* is a powerful motivator to learn the L2 because of the desire to reduce the discrepancy between our actual and ideal selves” (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 105).

While a person’s willingness to invest effort in language learning, and persist in it, is a direct function of the interactions of all three elements of the L2 Motivational Self-System construct, the *effectiveness* of an individual’s effort or achievement in language-learning can be strongly predicted by the environment, or setting, in which their learning process takes place (see Csizér & Kormos, 2009; Islam, Lamb, & Chambers, 2013; Kormos & Csizér, 2008; Lamb, 2012;

Papi, 2010; Papi & Teimouri, 2012; Taguchi, Magid, & Papi, 2009). The first part of the L2 Motivational Self-System, the L2 Learning Experience, refers to a language learner's present experience within the immediate, language-learning environment, as well as the kind and degree of motivation activated within that environment (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015).

Csizér and Kálmán (2019) reference multiple studies establishing clear links between emotions and motivation that are established or triggered in the classroom learning environment, as well elements outside the classroom that heavily impact learning within the classroom. These studies were undertaken specifically to validate the L2 Learning Experience portion of the L2 Motivational Self-System construct (see Henry & Thorsen, 2019; Pavelescu, 2019; Hiver, Obando, Sang, Tahmouresi, A. Zhou, & Y. Zhou, 2019; Du, 2019; Kikuchi, 2019; Pigott, 2019; and Gearing, 2019). Specific language-learning features impacted by how the L2 Learning Experience is experienced include “the impact of the L2 teacher, the curriculum, the peer group, and the experience of success” (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015, p. 88). The L2 Learning Experience captures how motivation is affected by how an individual reacts to, and internalizes, various social constructs, including social interactions, institutions, or material products of social processes (Dörnyei, 2019). The L2 Learning Experience captures the reality that traditional classrooms, language centers, and other learning-focused environments can change the motivational forces operative within an individual, changes that can be both short- and long-term in effect (Dörnyei, 2019).

Relatedly, the Ought-to L2 Self captures a person's awareness of external pressures, including both other people's opinions of one's language learning activities, and various negative outcomes dependent on the success or failure of those activities (both social and linguistic)

(Dörnyei, 2005, 2009). Accordingly, the Ought-to Self can include both demotivators (e.g., the disapproval of friends and family members towards one's efforts to learn English, or anti-English language views of what qualities make a "good" or "real" member of the native-language community), as well as highly motivating possible negative outcomes (e.g., not being able to get a desired job and support one's family because of lack of proficiency in English) (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009). The Ought-to L2 Self is not intended to be an internally consistent construct—it is more a sum of external pressures, some of which can serve competing values and goals.

Environmental, cultural, and social detractors, as well as individual deficiencies in aptitude, can negatively impact second language-learning; these factors are largely beyond an individual's direct control (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). Fortunately, demotivating tendencies in these areas can be overcome by persistence and high motivation from other sources (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015, p. 72). The remaining element of the L2 Motivational Self-System, the Ideal L2 Self, is the single aspect of Dörnyei's construct that is directly under the control of the language learner, and accordingly the primary target site within the L2 Motivational Self-System for developing and strengthening a person's motivation to learn a language (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015, p. 72).

The Ideal L2 Self represents an individual's imaginative capacity. If a person's Ideal L2 Self is robust, they will be able to imagine themselves as a highly capable speaker of English, envisioning specific scenarios in which they are using the language successfully and achieving their personal goals (Dörnyei, 2005). The more specific and vivid the envisioned positive outcomes of the Ideal L2 Self, the more likely the Ideal L2 Self will activate a person's current motivational state, especially if there is a great discrepancy between the imagined outcomes and the likely outcomes of a person's present behavior (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009). In Higgin's

(1987) language, the greater the discrepancy, the greater the psychological pain, and therefore the greater the impetus to act in order to diminish the pain state. Together, the Ideal L2 Self and the Ought-to Self, two central constructs of the L2 Motivational Self-System, constitute the basis of the motivational power of future self-guides and their ability to counteract demotivating pressures.

Dörnyei's 2005 model of interaction between the Ought-to Self and the Ideal L2 Self occasioned tremendous research interest at that time. Scales designed to measure Dörnyei's postulated ideal and ought-to selves were first developed by Ryan (2008), with empirically validating studies soon to follow, especially Al-Shehri, (2009), Csizér and Kormos (2009), Ryan (2009), and Taguchi (2009). In 2009, Dörnyei and Ushioda summarized a number of then-recent empirical investigations. According to their report, Dörnyei and Ushioda "found solid confirmation" for the proposed self system (2009, p. 31). After Dörnyei and Ushioda's 2009 report, research interest in the L2 Motivational Self-System exploded, with over 400 studies appearing worldwide (see Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015, p. 19). According to Dörnyei and Ryan (2015), "virtually all the validation studies reported in the literature found the L2 Motivational Self System provid[es] a good fit for the data" (p. 91). Ghanizadeh and Rostami (2015) confirm the verification of the model "in virtually every context" (p.15). Boo, Dörnyei and Ryan (2015) argue that the dominance of the model is due to its versatility and ability to accommodate a variety of theoretical orientations. Of the 417 validating studies examined by Boo et al., over half—178—were quantitative, 71 were qualitative, 73 were mixed methodology, and 13 used innovative methodologies. These studies apparently provided overwhelming confirmatory evidence of the L2 Motivational Self System model of motivation in second language learning.

However, a 2018 meta-analysis by Al-Hoorie of 678 “journal articles, book chapters, and unpublished manuscripts” published between 2005-2018 found a more complex research validation picture with respect to the L2 Self System—and the conceptualization of the ideal L2 self, in particular (p. 728). Al-Hoorie’s (2018) meta-analysis sought to find a correlation between each of the three components of the L2 Self-System and various educational outcomes, using both subjective and objective measures (p. 727). Studies that used the subjective measure of “intended effort” established the strongest support (.61 positive correlation) for the predictive validity of the L2 Self-System (Al-Hoorie, p. 735). Al-Hoorie (2018) calculates that the ideal L2 self accounts for 37.2% of the variance in intended effort (p. 735). However, the meta-analysis found that the ideal L2 self correlates at only .20 with objective measures of “achievement”, accounting for only 4.1% variance in levels of achievement (Al-Hoorie, 2018; p. 735).

Unfortunately, Al-Hoorie’s (2018) meta-analysis does not discuss whether improvements in intended effort are correlated to improvements in achievement. Al-Hoorie (2018) acknowledges that one avenue to improving the predictive validity of the ideal L2 self with respect to objective achievement measures could be found in satisfying the other conditions for actualizing the ideal L2 self concept, which were originally identified by Dörnyei (2009), and elaborated in Dörnyei and Kubanyiova (2014), including the availability of vivid and plausible future self-guides (Al-Hoorie, 2018, p. 736).

Indeed, the greatest strength Dörnyei originally saw in Markus and Nurius’ (1986) possible selves theory was that it elaborated how individuals use images as well as the senses in forming a *vision* of the self’s future possibilities. In an overview, Markus (2006) expanded on the role of imagination in possible selves theory:

We were impressed by the fact that people spend an enormous amount of time envisioning their futures. We now know that this imaginative work has powerful consequences. Possible selves can work to energize actions and to buffer the current self from everyday dragons and many less overt indignities as well. . . . (xii)

As described in Markus and Nurius' (1986) theory of possible selves, the act of imagining is crucial to both the evaluative and motivational functions of possible selves. One can think of possible selves as vividly imagined futures that people experience as real (Markus & Ruvulo, 1999; Segal, 2006). Dörnyei (2009) in particular seizes on the “powerful motivational function” (p. 17) of fantasy and imagination, especially when it is integrated into an individual's future self-concept.

L2 Vision

In a 2017 talk, Dörnyei characterizes the act of imagination as the creation of “a vivid mental image, especially a fanciful one” (Dörnyei, 2017). The creation of vivid sensory images may be called *imagery*, “an internal representation of a perception of the external world in the absence of that external experience” (Hall, Hall, & Leech, 1990, p. 28). Imagery can transcend (or collapse) time and space, as the imagination does when “looking at the apple seed and seeing a tree” (Wenger, 1998; p. 176). When tangible images are intentionally tied to future goals, and directed purposefully, one has created a *vision* (Dörnyei, 2009; Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015; Dörnyei, Henry & Muir, 2016; Markus, 2006). Creating or having a vision is not the same as having a goal

for the future; one's vision is an internal representation, or image, that *incorporates* certain goals one wants to achieve in the real world. For our purposes here, *L2 vision* can be understood as a vivid, sensory image of one's ideal L2 self, concocted through any of the sensory modalities (tactile, visual, kinesthetic, olfactory, auditory), that is related to achievement of the specific, future-oriented goal of becoming a capable speaker of another language (Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011; Hadfield & Dörnyei, 2013).

Hiver and Al-Hoorie (2019) observe that the connection between vision, motivation and achievement was first operationalized as interventions in the field of sports psychology decades ago (Hiver & Al-Hoorie, 2019). Dörnyei (2009, 2020) points out that conscious, focused, guided imagery has been demonstrably effective in improving performance in sports and music (Morris et al., 2005), as well as in medical practice (p. 35). Additionally, according to Vlaeva and Dörnyei (2021), the positive motivational impact of vision has been demonstrated in business management (Kouzes & Posner, 2017), and psychotherapy (Skottnik & Linden, 2019). Sato (2020) cites additional studies showing that vision intervention increases the sport confidence of athletes (Callow & Hardy, 2001), as well as surgical performance in medical students (Sheldon & Lyubomirsky, 2006). Dörnyei and Ryan argue, "the capacity of mental imagery to simulate reality is at the heart of the concept's motivational potency" (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015; p. 96). Brain imaging studies by Decety and Grèzes (2006) lend support to Dörnyei and Ryan's (2015) claim, finding that "a simulated action can elicit perceptual activity that resembles the activity that would have occurred if the action had actually been performed" (p. 5).

Although vision interventions have also been successfully conducted in education contexts (Hock et al., 2006; Oyserman, Terry, & Bybee, 2002; Oyserman et al., 2004; Sheldon &

Lyubomirsky, 2006; and Yowell, 2002), Hiver and Al-Hoorie (2019) warn that “educational psychology has...received with skepticism the application of mental imagery as an instructional tool” (p. 53). Some, including Dunlosky, Rawson, Marsh, Nathan, and Willingham (2013), have found results to be “mixed,” and regard imagery to be of low utility in the classroom (p. 24-25). Studies in vision intervention in second language teaching contexts are newer, and more limited. Nonetheless, research in this area has been increasing. Results from the field are promising.

Several recent quantitative studies (e.g., Al-Shehri, 2009; Dörnyei & Chan, 2013; Kim, 2009; Kim & Kim, 2011) have examined the specific connections between L2 learning motivation, future self-guides, and vividness and quality of imagery. Consistently, these studies have found that second language learners who consider motivation to be an ongoing effort and process of *envisioning*, as distinct from being a form of strictly cognitive *goal-setting*, are more willing to put time, effort and energy into language learning activities (see Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015, 96). Dörnyei and Chan (2013) found that learners who combined visual imagery with additional sensory variables (e.g., auditory) enjoyed strengthened future self-guides, and other researchers have found substantial correlation between improved imagery and future self-guides (e.g., Al-Shehri, 2009; Kim, 2009; Kim & Kim, 2011, 2014; Yang & Kim, 2011). Moreover, the degree to which an individual can articulate a vivid, sensory image of their ideal and ought-to selves has been shown to be positively correlated to how much actual effort and energy that individual puts into language learning (Rajab, A., Roohbakhsh Far, H. & Etemadzadeh, A., 2012; & Al-Hoorie, A., 2018). Further qualitative studies into the impacts of imagery and visualization on language learning (e.g., Chan, 2014; Fukada, Fukuda, Falout, & Murphey, 2011; Mackay, 2014; Magid, 2014; Magid & Chan, 2014; Sampson, 2012) have confirmed that language

learners who undergo imagery training increase their visualization skills and experience improved motivation to continue their language learning activities.

The bulk of past and current research into vision, motivation, and L2 learning seems to support Dörnyei and Ryan's (2015) conclusion that "learners with a vivid and detailed ideal self-image that has a substantial L2 component are more likely to be motivated to take action in pursuing language studies than their peers without such a self-image" (p. 96-97). It would nonetheless behoove us to bear in mind that the bulk of research into L2 motivation and vision primarily uses self-reported (i.e., subjective) outcome measures, as opposed to objective achievement measures (see Hiver & Al-Hoorie, 2019; Vlaeva & Dörnyei, 2021). Moreover, the field of study into L2 motivation and vision has "not yet fostered a replication culture", as Hiver and Al-Hoorie (2019) politely express it (p. 69). However, the body of *available* research evidence implies that vision constructed from tangible, concrete senses supports motivation in language learning. Moreover, a vividly imagined future self-guide seems to be important to developing and maintaining the kind and degree of direction and focus necessary for an individual to sustain second language-learning.

Developing L2 Vision in the ESL Classroom: Next Steps

So, how can second-language instructors support the development of L2 vision? Since 2010, there have been 14 "vision intervention" studies investigating how various educational techniques can develop learners' L2 vision. These studies mostly implement versions of specific strategies outlined in Dörnyei and Kubanyiova (2014) (see Dörnyei & Vlaeva, 2021; Appendix I). Thirteen of these interventions are generally multi-part guided imagery sessions conducted in

EFL classrooms, implemented as additions to existing curriculum (see Dörnyei & Vlaeva, 2021). Intervention sessions range from four one-hour visualization sessions plus writing assignments and action timelines (Magid, 2011), or eight briefer sessions of group communicative activities integrated within scheduled 90-minute classes (Sato & Lara, 2019).

Studies reporting results from vision intervention sessions have reported mixed but promising results, suggesting that vision interventions can be effective in building and supporting student motivation (see Dörnyei & Vlaeva, 2021). However, scholars such as Dörnyei and Vlaeva (2021) and Sato and Lara (2019) acknowledge that the interventions are by no means runaway successes. Although learners in one study seem to strengthen their envisioned ideal selves, they do not necessarily report improvements in motivation (Sato & Lara, 2019). Learners in another study seem to experience a boost in intended effort, but did not sustain their efforts after the intervention (Dörnyei & Vlaeva, 2021).

Dörnyei and Vlaeva (2021) remark that although interventions might increase student motivation to some extent, the intervention model also reduces teaching time for curriculum-mandated items, or takes time away from developing study skills or “learner’s obvious need to develop L2 mastery.” When an instructor attempts to make up for these deficits by assigning additional work outside of class, students report that they are already overstretched, and consequently experience increased stress in meeting all their study goals and obligations (see Dörnyei & Vlaeva, 2021). Similar drawbacks of vision intervention design are present in 12 other studies, including Chan (2014), MacKay (2015), Magid (2011, 2014), Sampson (2012), and Sato and Lara (2020).

Scholars working on finding the right balance between vision-building activities and scheduled lessons are developing research in an intriguing area. However, most vision interventions also entail a significant burden of additional work and outside time for both teachers and students (cf. Dörnyei & Vlaeva, 2021; Sato, 2020; Sato & Lara, 2019; Safdari, 2019). As existing vision interventions have been burdensome on students (and perhaps teachers) to implement, and with unclear payoff, this thesis proposes building L2 vision by integrating the process of envisioning with direct study of language skills, by way of using a linguistic resource that has been long-maligned and overlooked in adult ESL education: poetry.

Conclusion

Mastery of a foreign language requires substantial effort sustained over an extended period of time—progress may at times seem effortless, yet at other times appear to stall or plateau (Dörnyei, 2018; Dörnyei, Henry & Muir, 2016; Henry, 2020). Dörnyei’s evolving theory of the L2 Motivational Self System conceptualizes language learning as guided by an individual’s specific, unique vision, or image, of an ideal future self that is a competent speaker of a second language. Dörnyei’s model of the self includes the Ideal and Ought-to selves derived from Higgins (1982) and Markus and Nurius (1987), described above, as well as the vision of actualizing an imagined future self. As multiple studies show (e.g., Al-Shehri, 2009; Chan, 2014; Dörnyei & Chan, 2013; Fukada, Fukuda, Falout, & Murphey, 2011; Kim, 2009; Kim & Kim, 2011; Mackay, 2014; Magid, 2014; Sampson, 2012), the more realistic and concrete that vision, the more likely an individual’s future self-guide can transform potentiality into a specific action plan with productive results. According to Dörnyei, that “dream or image of a desired

future is the core content of the ideal self” (Dörnyei, 2009, p. 17), providing the motivational “incentive, direction, and impetus for action” (Dörnyei, 2009, p. 18). The next section will turn to discussion of poetry as a linguistic resource that is especially well-suited to the development and substantiation of language learners’ images of their future, ideal selves.

Part 2: Uses of Poetry in the Adult ESL Classroom

*We grow accustomed to the Dark
The Bravest — grope a little —
And sometimes hit a Tree
Directly in the Forehead —
But as they learn to see —*

*Either the Darkness alters —
Or something in the sight
Adjusts itself to Midnight —
And Life steps almost straight.*

—*Emily Dickinson*, “We grow accustomed to the Dark”, 1862

Despite the widespread exclusion of poetry from second-language curricula, recent studies have identified benefits to second language learners when they engage in poetry writing and reading in adult ESL classrooms (see Boldireff & Bober, 2021; Paran, 2017; Xerri, 1016). Prior to the 2000s, there was little empirical research into adult ESL classroom uses of poetry. The situation has changed dramatically since then, with about 200 qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods studies conducted during that time. In a comprehensive review of the recent surge in research on the English language instructional uses of poetry, Boldireff and Bober, (2021) found that, regardless of study methodology or competency effect or perception measured, all the studies they examined were universal in finding value in including poetry in classrooms for second language learners (p. 21). As shown in several quantitative, survey- or

interview-based studies, benefits to students range from conventionally recognized language competencies (Gazu & Mncwango, 2020; Iida, 2012; Kim & Kim, 2020), to increased confidence and motivation (Aladini & Farahbod, 2020; Cahnmann-Taylor & Hwang, 2019; Dobkowska & Kuckleman, 2020; Hanauer 2012; Hanauer & Liao, 2016; Henry & Thorsen, 2019; Khatib, 2011; Yacoub, 2020). Benefits to teachers include poetry's adaptability to multi-level classrooms (Holmes & Moulton, 2001), and its susceptibility to modeling and patterning that is readily imitated and adapted by students (Holmes & Moulton, 2001; Iida, 2010, 2012; Ivanova, 2018).

These combined benefits and advantages reduce the friction of introducing poetry into the second-language learning classroom. Some potential pitfalls or challenges to adding poetry to an ESL language arts curriculum include instructor unfamiliarity with the material, anxiety, or refusal (Liao, 2018; Gönen, 2018), as well as inapt text selection, such as incorrectly leveled vocabulary or grammar, or overlong text (Gazu & Mncwango, 2020; Khatib, 2011). The overwhelmingly encouraging results of recent research into poetry's potential benefits to adult language learners suggest, however, that its exclusion from adult ESL curriculum is a lost opportunity for adult learners. Moreover, poetry's intrinsic facility with image development makes it a natural fit for developing L2 vision for the purposes of supporting motivation in second language learners.

This section will discuss the history of poetry use in second-language learning, as well as the benefits and pitfalls outlined above. This section will also discuss the primary advantage of poetry for the purposes of developing L2 vision: the image. Poetry specializes in the compelling arrangement of concrete, sensory imagery, via what Pound (1918) called, "Direct treatment of

the ‘thing’” (Pound, 1918). This thesis will rely on a very simplified understanding of Pound’s (1918) sense of “image”, one suitable for English language learners and their instructors.

Poetry in ESL: “Inaccessible”, “Irrelevant”, and “Inappropriate”?

The exclusion of poetry from second-language education dates back to the 1960s, when practitioners and theorists such as Topping (1968) argued for setting aside literature from the ESL classroom altogether. Topping (1968) considered literature an “endless morass” from an instructional perspective, filled with terrible models that would only be detrimental to a second language learner; besides which, broadening someone’s cultural horizon simply wasn’t in his job description as a language teacher, according to him (p. 100). Topping’s (1968) prioritization of grammar and vocabulary in the classroom reflected the Grammar-Translation method dominant at the time (Richards, 2001), which set aside culture, overall literacy, or enjoyability of instructional material as irrelevant to teaching (Carter, 2007).

Hesitancy towards using poetry persisted among ELT scholars, due to its supposed unsuitability for language learning. It may not have been a concern entirely without warrant; Russian formalist and literary theorist Jakobson (1980) once famously described poetry as “organized violence committed on ordinary speech”. He flagged divergences in “sound-structure (alliteration, assonance, rhyme, meter); choice of words (metaphor, archaism, variety); and combination of words (unusual collocations, inverted word order, marked parallelisms, ellipsis)” (Hall, 2005; p. 14). In the domain of second-language instruction, Gower (1986) worried that poetry can be “inappropriate”, Or (1995) shook his head over its “inaccessibility”, and Edmonson (1997) charged poetry with overall “irrelevance” to second language instruction.

Edmondson (1997) based his refusal to teach English using poetry on the lack of any empirical study investigating whether or demonstrating that literary materials improve students' language acquisition or learning (see p. 44). Indeed, Carter (2007) confirms that prior to 2000, empirical studies on using literature for second language acquisition purposes were "absent from the research radar" (p. 10; also see Paran, 2008; p. 19). However, Edmondson's (1997) main argument is that there is no *special* role for literature in the language-learning classroom (p. 44). Just because, he argues, an instructor formulates a "highly creative, stimulating, and enjoyable" lesson, another instructor may produce just as effective a lesson using "street signs, advertisements, and so on" (Edmondson, 2007; p. 48-49). This thesis has no particular fight to pick with Edmondson's refusal—the question considered here is the somewhat minimal one of whether there are good reasons to avoid using poetry in an adult ESL classroom, or whether there is any adult ESL education benefit to be had in its presence (cf. Fomeche (2014), which reports statistically significant higher vocabulary retention when taught via poetry vs conventional methods, especially in technical registers. See Fomeche, 2014; p. 105). Years of objections to the use of poetry in the adult second language classroom have been largely theoretical, yet those objections have been highly influential in creating a persistent stigma against using poetry as an English language instructional material (Boldireff & Bober, 2021; Paran, 2008).

With the rise of Communicative Language Teaching in the 1980s, the attitudes of second language instructors towards using literature for instructional purposes split off from the views of linguists and ELT scholars, accordingly softening towards literature somewhat (see Paran, 2008; p. 10). Nonetheless, despite the paucity of empirical research evidence at that time for, or

against, using literature in language education, many U.S. ESL programs in the 1990s and 2000s regarded literature and literary language as a subject of primarily academic study (see Paran, 2008; p. 16). Researchers such as Belcher and Hirvela (2000) and Vandrick (2003) remark that the curricular push of that time was to teach ESL students purely information-based reading and writing skills, despite concerns that limited materials seemed to contribute to weaknesses in student writing skills related to limited student exposure to more varied “rhetorical and linguistic resources” (Belcher & Hirvela, 2000; p. 29).

Poetry’s Difficulties

The years of stigma against teaching poetry in adult ESL seem to have had their effect, as English language teaching curricula up to this day, in the 2020s, has continued to largely exclude poetry (see Boldireff & Bober, 2021; Fomeche, 2014; Paran, 2017; Xerri, 1016). In addition to longstanding theoretical skepticism towards the value of using poetry for instructional purposes in the ESL classroom, there is evidence from interview-based studies that some ESL teachers today face the prospect of teaching poetry with personal trepidation (Fomeche, 2014; Iida, 2012a; Liao, 2018; Liao & Roy, 2018). As a teacher trainee surveyed in Ferez et al. (2020) remarked, “To understand a poem in English you have to read it several times. This is really boring and I usually get fed up.” Existing fear of or frustration with poetry can overwhelm even those teachers who agree in surveys that it can be a valuable instructional resource (Liao, 2018). In a small survey of 10 ESL instructors, Fomeche (2014) reports greater likelihood that instructors with a background in literature are more likely to include poetry in the classroom, and feel more comfortable teaching it (p. 105-106). Additionally, some teachers feel over-pressed for

time and do not know how to integrate more material into an already-pressured term (Gönen, 2018). In a multimethod study of 21 EFL student teachers in Turkey, Gönen (2018) confirms that although the teacher-learners completed the study feeling more positive about the value of using poetry in the classroom, they still retained concerns about “including poetry in a tight curriculum”, and were daunted by the “time and effort required and difficulties in material selection and design” (p. 35). Text selection (Gazu & Mncwango, 2020; Khatib, 2011) and assessment (Iida, 2008) also stand out as potential trouble areas for teachers unused to teaching poetry in ESL contexts. Ironically, surveys by Masbuhin and Liao (2017) as well as Xerri (2016) point to the curricular exclusion of poetry in teaching programs as a source of later instructional challenge for those teachers who attempt to teach it later on.

Moreover, recent surveys of ESL students show that a minority of students seem to share the views of some of their teachers that poetry is intimidating or scary (Alvi & Alvi, 2019; Maxim 2006, Myhill 2013, Sigvardsson 2019). In a qualitative interview-based study of 18 MA TESOL students, Liao (2018) found that although some students may begin a poetry writing task feeling anxiety, self-doubt, and frustration—especially those who have studied English literature before—the great majority of students concluded the task feeling more confident and having enjoyed themselves (p. 9). Khatib (2011) conducted a multimethod study comparing the effects of different teaching methodologies for reading poetry on the attitudes and proficiency of 200 college-level EFL students in Iran. The study revealed that any problems with teaching poetry did not rest in students’ attitudes, but in heavily teacher-centered teaching methodology or inappropriate text selection (Khatib, 2011, p. 165). Gazu and Mncwango (2020), in an interview-based study of 34 college-level ESL students in South Africa, also found that texts that

are over-long, combined with existing lexical impoverishment on the part of the students, can cause difficulties in poetry writing and reading for second-language students (p. 16290).

In their comprehensive review of 43 post-2005 studies into the uses and difficulties of poetry in second language instruction, Boldireff and Bober (2021) identified no findings of intrinsic difficulty with teaching or learning poetry. Boldireff and Bober (2021) analyzed 16 studies since 2005 specifically investigating teacher or student perceptions of poetry. The studies ranged in type (i.e., quantitative, qualitative, and mixed method), and included surveys and interviews. The studies were coded accordingly: difficulty of material, number of syllables, difficulty of vocabulary, student difficulties with self-expression, student difficulties with memorization, abstruse cultural seasonal references, curricular misalignment, lack of teacher training, teacher time-pressure, and general lack of interest or perception of usefulness on the part of either teacher or students (see p. 14). Boldireff and Bober (2021) found “no clarity or unison on poetry’s difficulty” when poetry is used as a tool in second language instruction (p. 13). On the contrary, Boldireff and Bober (2021) find that the actual poetry text itself does not seem to pose problems in the ESL classroom (p. 22).

If one bears in mind the potential trouble areas of text selection and length reported in Fomeche (2014), Gazu and Mncwango (2020) and Khatib (2011), the bulk of current research supports the conclusion that most students do not find poetry intrinsically over-difficult to learn from (Boldireff & Bober, 2021). The findings of Fomeche (2014), Gönen (2018) and Liao (2018), and to some extent Khatib (2011), do suggest, however, that instructors may benefit from systematic guidance and specific frameworks for incorporating poetry successfully into an ESL classroom. Gönen (2018) finds that such a framework promotes increased motivation, creativity,

and self-expression on the part of learners. Teacher concerns regarding curricular tightness and reduced time to develop materials incorporating poetry suggests that ESL instructors would welcome modular lesson plans, pre-selected material, and even a resource identifying which particular grammatical or discourse forms can be effectively taught using particular poems (see Boldireff & Bober, 2021; Gönen, 2018; Khatib, 2011; Liao, 2018).

Poetry in ESL: Now, With Confidence

The results of recent research into poetry's potential benefits to adult language learners is encouraging. Of the 200-odd studies since the 2000s into the instructional benefits of poetry to ESL learners, the vast majority show a range of positive outcomes for adult learners engaging with poetry in the ESL or EFL classroom (Boldireff & Bober, 2021). Several quantitative, survey- or interview-based studies, show statistically significant gains for learners in conventionally recognized language competencies (Gazu & Mncwango, 2020; Iida, 2012; Kim & Kim, 2020). Additional studies demonstrate increased student confidence and motivation after completing courses of poetry study (Aladini & Farahbod, 2020; Cahnmann-Taylor & Hwang, 2019; Dobkowska & Kuckleman, 2020; Hanauer 2012; Hanauer & Liao, 2016; Henry & Thorsen, 2019; Khatib, 2011; Yacoub, 2020). Additionally, poetry is demonstrably adaptable to multi-level classrooms (Holmes & Moulton, 2001), especially when practitioners structure lessons with modeling and patterning that can be readily imitated and adapted by students (Holmes & Moulton, 2001; Iida, 2010, 2012; Ivanova, 2018).

Traditional Competencies and Academic Skills

Most ESL teaching practitioners prefer to see evidence of benefit to traditional language competencies or academic skills, whether for curricular reasons or limitations of time.

Fortunately, the benefits of instructional encounters with poetry to students are clear in several recent qualitative studies (e.g., Ferez Mora, Coyle & Lopez, 2020; Fomeche, 2014; Gazu & Mncwango, 2020; Iida, 2012; Khatib, 2011; Tsang, Paran & Lau, 2020), which found improvements in traditional learning competencies such as reading, writing, vocabulary, and critical thinking (see Boldireff & Bober, 2021).

For example, in their methodologically sound interviews of 34 ESL university students in South Africa, Gazu and Mncwango (2020) reported that language learners found poetry to be “an effective tool for improving their interaction through classroom conversations, which in turn led to improvements in their critical thinking” (p. 16297). Tsang, Paran and Lau (2020), a notable large-scale survey of over 1100 EFL secondary students in Hong Kong, found poetry instruction had a statistically significant impact on learning, particularly on reading and vocabulary skills (p. 14).

Improvements in vocabulary were also found in Fomeche (2014). A mixed methods study of 45 ESL students enrolled at a U.S. community college, Fomeche (2014) compared vocabulary development among two student groups. One group received conventional instruction, while instruction for the second group included poetry. The student poetry group enjoyed a statistically significant 8% greater gain in post-test scores for vocabulary knowledge over the conventionally-instructed students’ post-test scores, which, fortunately for the poetry group, enabled them to exceed the minimum college passing grade (Fomeche, 2014; p. 88-90).

Khatib (2011), a comparison study among 200 university-level EFL students in Iran, found that among those students who were encouraged to relate their personal experiences, emotions, and ideas to the poetry-reading assignments, a significant number reported greater enjoyment of the material, were more motivated to study for their final exam, and also performed better on that exam over those students who received traditional, direct lecture (Khatib, 2011; p. 167-168).

Ferez Mora, Coyle and Lopez (2020), a high-quality, large-scale interview-based survey of 270 EFL teachers in training at a university in Spain, found that the majority (65%) of the trainees identified poetry's pedagogical value as largely linguistic, supporting development of reading, writing, speaking, and listening. When asked about specific language competencies, teacher trainees specifically identified grammar (63%), vocabulary (86%) and pronunciation (75%) as areas where poetry offers an especially strong benefit to second language learners (Ferez Mora, Coyle & Lopez, 2020).

Potential academic benefits to poetry-writing can also be found in Iida (2012), a mixed methods study of tertiary-level students in Japan who studied poetry and wrote in haiku form for six weeks. Iida's (2012) notably well-designed and -documented research study reports a strong correlation between student vocabulary growth and critical thinking following instruction with a poetry unit. Iida (2012) also found a statistically significant literacy transfer effect (p. 73). Comparing academic essays written before and after the six-week haiku unit, Iida (2012) found that students wrote more, and more directly (i.e., with fewer conjunctions and negations), in the post-test essays than in the pre-test essays (Iida, 2012; p. 72-74). Follow-up interviews confirmed that students found it easier to express their thoughts in the post-test essay after having spent six

weeks writing haiku (Iida, 2012; p. 74). In their post-essays, students reflected on and wrote about their personal experiences to support their arguments with specific, personal examples, citing their haiku-writing experience as beneficial in allowing them to engage with greater depth in the essay topic (Iida, 2012; p. 74). Students also reported being more able to form their thoughts succinctly, saying that they used fewer words to express the same thought with more precision (Iida, 2012; p. 75). One student remarked that their pre-essay was “simply a juxtaposition of my opinions”, with no argument, whereas the post-essay was improved by containing actual supportive argumentation for a main point (Iida, 2012; p. 75).

Enjoyment, Confidence and Motivation

Improvements in student academic skills, however, are not the only standard by which researchers have measured the benefits that using poetry in the classroom can bring to students. Personal engagement, self-discovery, and enjoyment have been reported as benefits of classroom poetry study in Ferez et al (2020), Hanauer (2010, 2012), Hanauer and Liao (2016), Iida (2010, 2012), and Liao (2016). Additionally, studies by Ashton-Hay (2019), Dobkowska and Kuckleman (2020), and Gönen (2018) reported significantly increased student confidence in language usage, and general enjoyment in the course material, with students expressing positive feelings about their linguistic experiences. Practitioners such as Aladini and Farahbod (2020), Holmes and Moulton (2001), Ivanova (2018), Khatib (2011), Park (2011), Preston (1982), Yacoub (2020) all report increased student confidence, motivation, and personal fulfillment following student completion of their secondary and college-level EFL and ESL classes.

Although poetry can be technically demanding, requiring firm control and understanding of many linguistic elements (especially grammar), poetry writing for second-language students can be taught with significantly reduced emphasis on “correctness” of vocabulary and grammar. Indeed, departures from linguistic conformity, including surprising collocations, unexpected syntax, and unusual word choice can all be virtues in poetry, supporting what Widdowson (2020) terms the use of language as “a communicative resource” that is influenced by learners’ “own experience of language” (p. 39). Widdowson (2020) suggests that language instructors re-consider the position that language learning is purely a transactionally-driven “acquisition of competence in another and different language” (p. 42). Widdowson (2020) challenges instructors to consider that language learning also entails a process of developing an individual’s general “lingual capability” so that the individual might achieve a “satisfactory communicative outcome”—where what is “satisfactory” is determined by the learner’s own assessment of their experience of getting their meaning across with whatever language they have at their disposal (p. 41-42).

In their studies, researchers such as Hanauer (2010, 2012), Hanauer and Liao (2016), Iida (2010, 2012), and Liao (2016) not only assess accuracy in a language learner’s linguistic production, but also whether a language learner approaches individuality or creativity of expression, or has a personally meaningful experience in the course of language learning (Hanauer, 2014; p. 11-12). In a small interview-based qualitative study of 19 second-language graduate and undergraduate students from seven countries at a U.S. university, Hanauer and Liao (2016) found that students had improved positive feelings about writing after a course focusing on creative writing and poetry. Students felt they were developing a “personal voice” that

allowed them to develop “self-understanding”, involved “personal memories”, and gave them “a sense of authorship” (Hanauer & Liao, 2016; p. 223). The authors’ findings with respect to personal voice confirm findings from similar qualitative studies by Hanauer (2010) and Iida (2010). All three studies found that the emphasis on personal engagement and self-discovery in a creative-writing class that included poetry increased their sense of confidence and their positive attitude towards writing in general (Hanauer & Liao, 2016; p. 224). Hanauer (2012) remarks that at the end of his courses, all of which involve some poetry writing, students thanked him for the opportunity to “say what they, in many cases, have not been able to say before, even in their first language” (p. 6).

Similarly, Ferez et al (2020) also found that teacher trainees’ motivation was readily sustainable when they were able to engage with the relatable, non-trivial material many poems offer, such as universal topics. One trainee mused, “Poetry enables you to imagine beautiful situations that make you feel better, especially if you are feeling down or have problems” (Ferez et al, 2020). Multiple trainees mentioned that knowing a real person wrote the poem one is reading makes the experience of reading a poem seem more “real”, and therefore more engaging than the “silly”, artificial constructs in textbooks (Ferez et al, 2020). Tsang, Paran and Lau’s (2020) findings were not as supportive of the confidence-building quality of reading poetry, as the study’s undergraduate learners experienced greater gains in confidence after reading prose than they did reading poetry. However, studies by Ashton-Hay (2019) of 80 undergraduate EFL students in Turkey, by Dobkowska and Kuckleman (2020) of 70 EFL students at a Japanese university, and by Gönen (2018) of 21 EFL student teachers at a state university in Turkey, all found that using poetry in the classroom resulted in statistically significant improvements in

learner confidence. Students in all three studies also experienced great enjoyment and overall positive feelings about writing, reading, and speaking. It is worth noting, however, that Ashton-Hay (2019), Dobkowska and Kuckleman (2020), and Gönen (2018) all integrated reading and writing of poetry with group projects, presentations, or student-published books serving as tangible personal and collective achievements for learners. The undergraduate EFL students in Tsang, Paran and Lau (2020) received direct instruction in reading poetry, only.

Importance of Modeling, Forms and Patterns

The teaching benefits of offering models, forms, or patterns for student imitation is well-trod territory in education, as it provides clear guidance to students and limits the task at hand to a manageable scale and scope. Nor have the benefits of constrained practice been lost on instructor-practitioners of poetry. One of the most popular instructional handbooks in poetry writing, Steve Kowitz's *In the Palm of Your Hand* (2003, 2017), is popular precisely for its highly teachable, model-based exercises, all of which encourage use of relatable or personal content. The paradox of using models, patterns, and other formal constraints in poetry is that it might seem it would have the effect of quashing learner creativity, yet in fact poetry models often have an entirely opposite result, allowing developing writers to build confidence and enjoy success while they creatively experiment within reassuring bounds.

The use of models, forms, and patterns in ESL poetry contexts has also been shown to encourage student creativity and build learner confidence (see Al-Karaki, 2018; Arshavskaya, 2015; Choi & Wong, 2018; Holmes & Moulton, 2001; Iida, 2012; and Ivanova, 2018). In the ESL context, Al-Karaki (2018) and Arshavskaya (2015) confirm in their observation- and

interview-based studies of EFL college-level model-based teaching methodologies that the use of model texts before writing exercises increases student confidence as well as fluency. Similarly, Choi and Wong (2018) report that teacher modeling of simple narrative forms was received with enthusiasm by secondary students in Korea, who had found the usual, high-accomplishment models “too far from” them and therefore too difficult to apply when working on their own assignments.

In their book of poetry writing exercises for ESL students, *Writing Simple Patterns: Pattern Poetry for Language Acquisition*, practitioners Holmes and Moulton (2001) report that over the years, they discovered that the simpler poetic forms, such as haiku and cinquain, which feature strong constraints, were met with equally strong student engagement and focus, as the strict form freed students to write exploratively and originally (see p. 1). Holmes and Moulton (2001) echo Iida (2012) in observing that pattern poems have proven to be effective tools not only for practice with grammatical structures, but “also turned out to be useful vehicles for a host of other purposes: vocabulary, spelling pronunciation, speaking, listening, reading, language awareness, critical thinking, literary appreciation, and, obviously, writing” (p. 1-2).

Another example of effective poetry modeling can be found in Ivanova (2018). A practitioner, Ivanova (2018) reports on her introduction of an identity-based “Where I’m From” poetry writing project in her university ESL writing program, involving 60 students from all over the world. The project was developed in coordination with the author’s university ESL writing program to integrate international students more effectively into their U.S. undergraduate milieu. Using model peer texts and a peer-feedback process, students developed specific, concrete, multisensory images of memories of their selves and lives back home in creating their “Where

I'm From" poems. According to Ivanova (2018), the students' poems were highly personalized and non-clichéd. The author reports that students' confidence, engagement, and "sense of belonging" increased after completion of the course. Although Ivanova's (2018) informal report indicates that her focus was on increasing student integration and reducing their experience of acculturation stress, her conclusions suggest a strongly positive effect on the motivational outcomes for her students. Ivanova's (2018) "Where I'm From" report offers a promising model for combining the benefits of personalization and concrete, sensory imagery while increasing student confidence and motivation as second language learners.

The Concrete Image in ESL Poetry

As shown above, poetry offers numerous advantages in the context of second-language education, especially with a motivation-challenged student population. However, the primary advantage of poetry for the purposes of developing L2 vision for supporting student motivation is that poetry specializes in the compelling arrangement of concrete, sensory imagery. This thesis will rely on a very simplified understanding of Pound's (1918) sense of "image". No one asks ESL learners to strive for the highest art (or really any art at all)—the important element for second-language learners in Pound's definition is his emphasis on the value of using the *concrete*, or "natural" image (Pound, 1918).

Early 20th century American modernist Pound (1918) developed the influential school of poetics known as "Imagism". The premise of Imagism was "Direct treatment of the 'thing'" (Pound, 1918). In its most essential, Imagism upholds the use of concrete images, which are based in real, tangible things in the world, rather than ideas or abstract concepts. Pound urged

poets to focus on creating concrete images of real things by using sensory details (tactile, visual, kinesthetic, olfactory, gustatory, auditory), warning that abstraction “dulls the image” (Pound, 2018). The main sense of “image” used in this thesis will be based on Pound’s description. For our purposes here, a detail is “sensory” if you can touch it, feel it, see it, hear it, or smell it in real life. A sensory detail is generally built with the content-bearing parts of speech, including nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs, that refer to and represent real, tangible things in the world. As will be shown below, as with any other poetry, some ESL-appropriate concrete images might be composed by way of surprising associations and juxtapositions of sensory-based vocabulary, including associations that might be bizarre or unlikely in real life. That is all part of the fun.

The remaining discussion of imagery in L2 poems will be based entirely on exemplification. It can take time for adults to accustom themselves to writing in the language of sensory detail, and the tone should be one of encouragement in using concrete imagery for the purposes of developing L2 vision. The focus on concrete imagery is not meant to be a hard restriction. Language learners who, by virtue of temperament or quirks of vocabulary development, love writing with abstract nouns and verbs are not “doing it wrong”! The purpose here of discussing sensory imagery is simply to demonstrate and elucidate the kind of language that most reliably produces the effect of creating a “picture in the mind”.²

² Despite the visual metaphor, it is important to bear in mind that “imagery” is not at all limited to visual experience. The condition known as “aphantasia” is when a person does not generate visual images nor have the phenomenal experience of forming visual images. And yet, the person will be perfectly capable of getting around in the world and making plans for the future. The condition can exist from birth or be caused by some precipitating event, and is associated with changes in brain function observable via MRI (Zeman, et al, 2010).

Concrete imagery can be put to use in even the simplest, least complex of poem forms, the acrostic. Here is a sample of imagery-rich writing by a freshman-level ESL college student from Korea (Schroeder, 2010):

Mole
In her

Room.
It is
Myself.

—Mi-rim Han

This student’s humorous, maybe humorously self-deprecating, poem (Schroeder, 2010; p. 28) uses just two content words, both of which are concrete nouns: “Mole” and “Room”. All other words in the poem are function words. The poem takes one concrete noun from the natural world, “Mole”, and places it “in” an unexpected and human location, “her //Room”, and then identifies that “mole” as “Myself” (Schroeder, 2010; p. 28). By assembling a few concrete words in a grammatically precise manner, the author associates herself with some commonly understood qualities of moles (e.g., solitary creatures who spend most of their time digging underground in the dark). The student’s careful use of language produces an unusually vivid image of a young woman hunkered alone in her dark room, perhaps at night, perhaps busy with schoolwork.

Acrostics can be used to introduce brainstorming and dictionary use, can build vocabulary, and can be used as an ice-breaker or introductory exercise (Schroeder, 2010). The word or words selected for the acrostic frame can be the name of the author, or really any other word one pleases. Entirely flexible with respect to grammar, acrostic poems can be composed of

single words, phrases, sentence fragments, or complete sentences. This flexibility makes the acrostic a good stand-alone icebreaker, or an exercise that can be related to any existing content. Additional directions or restrictions can increase the linguistic effort required of the author.

Another form famously associated with image-building, haiku, is similarly adaptable to multiple skill levels. The example below is drawn from ESL student poems published in Holmes and Moulton (2001). Here is a simple example of a haiku written collaboratively by three teenage ESL students (Holmes & Moulton, 2001; p. 106):

The small hummingbird
Dips his long beak into pink
Trumpets to drink deep.

—Daisy Camarena
Marisol Cisneros
Rocio Mora

Although not Imagist in a Poundian sense, the poem above demonstrates how concrete, sensory-based language in a poem can be sequenced and connected to form a single coherent, vivid image. The reader is readily able to form the image by following the logically sequenced phrases, especially because the poem is organized using paradigmatic Subject-Verb-Object ordering of English sentences. One can discern the sentence-level logic that simultaneously structures the poem and creates the image by imagining some questions the poet might be answering:

What do I see? “The small hummingbird.”

What does it do? It “Dips his long beak into pink/ Trumpets.”

Why is it doing that? In order “to drink deep.”

The poets’ responses to these implicit questions are phrasally organized according to the standard formula for release of information in an English sentence:

Subject (hummingbird) - Verb (dips) – Object (trumpets)

—including a few appropriate determiners and modifiers, plus a bonus subordinating conjunction, all in the expected locations. The image is built progressively as the grammar falls into place, piece-by-piece, in S-V-O order. The standard English language sentence logic underlying—and driving—the line-by-line construction of the image makes it easy for an English-speaking reader to form a complete mental image.

In teaching either poem above, the instructor would have provided model examples demonstrating what counts as concrete, sensory-based language. Students might also have brainstormed a word bank for their own or everyone’s use. For a shared haiku word bank, words might have been divided into concrete nouns (e.g., hummingbird, beak, trumpet), sensory verbs (eg, dip, drink), and adjectives (e.g., small, long, pink). Haiku can be used to teach syllabification, spelling, imagery, and conciseness of expression. And, as demonstrated, haiku can be used to solidify and extend the writer’s understanding of sentence structure (declarative, in this case, but haiku need not be limited only to that).

Here is another example of a collaborative poem (Holmes & Moulton, 2001; p. 142) written by Intermediate ESL students using strong sensory imagery. This list poem is written as a riddle:

My skin is wrinkled and yellow like a weak, old lady.
 My shape is round like a withered ball.
 My flesh is jellied like the human being's heart.
 My taste is sour and sweet like a broken romance.
 My name is passion fruit.

—Marta Oliveira
 Susana Gonzalez

Although the poem includes the abstraction “a broken romance”, most of the descriptors used are concrete. Although abstract language can delight, especially when used unpredictably, notice how the most vivid descriptions use concrete language: the “wrinkled and yellow” skin, and the “jellied” flesh (Holmes & Moulton, 2001; p. 142). The abstract language does provide a contrasting relatable and intellectual pleasure for the reader (many of us have been glad to see the end of a “sweet and sour” relationship). However, the concrete visual, tactile, and gustatory imagery is what actually allows the reader to form a vivid picture in the mind. As Pound puts it, an image that is built out of concrete, sensory language “strikes upon the imaginative eye of the reader” (Pound, 1918). Or their tastebuds.

Preston (1982) reports using selections from “The Song of Songs” as an imagery-rich frame for teaching simile poems to EFL students in a teacher-training program in Thailand. The frame is a bit literary, and the erotic content makes the material a questionable choice for some or even most student populations. However, the material is remarkably imagery-rich. Here are two

famous complex images from “The Song of Songs”, in contemporary English translation (Bloch & Bloch, 1993):

Your breasts are two fawns,
Twins of a gazelle,
Grazing in a field of lilies.

and, here translated as a sentence fragment,

Your black hair
Like a flock of goats
Spilling down Mount Gilead.

Remarkable in its sensual imagery that seems to constantly move and develop, “The Song of Songs” could perhaps be used in a contemporary college setting for more advanced students with fairly robust vocabularies. One student, in work sampled by Preston (1982; p. 142), embraces the hyperbole and playfulness on display in the original, as well as the intensity of image, to unique and delightful result:

Your nose is like a volcano
that breathes ashes and lava out.
Your teeth are like a piece of wood
that is cut by a blunt saw.
When you smile, my heart shakes
and shakes like thunder.

—unnamed student author

The unexpected (and quite funny) notion of the beloved having a nose like a volcano is nonetheless plausible, albeit in a somewhat dragon-like way. The image of the teeth as originally one thing, a single “piece of wood” that has been sawn in half, is entirely original and strange, in

a manner all at once pleasing, off-putting, and intriguing. And many of us have experienced the whole-body tingle, startle, and animal-instinct fear when a thunderstorm comes closer.

Although Choi and Wong's (2018) study counsels against using literary text as models, "The Song of Songs" is so excessive and remarkable in its language that, perhaps rather than be intimidated by it, students might be freed to use humor and wild, improbable comparisons in their own poems modeled after it. A classroom with existing high mutual trust and rapport might have a wonderful time using "The Song of Songs" as a model, provided additional student samples were also provided.

Any of these image-based poem frames can be used to also teach sentence structure, prepositions, determiners, possessive pronouns, and simile or metaphor. Depending on the complexity of the frame, poetry writing can increase analytical thinking (both at the level of logical connections between modifiers and head, as well as sentence- and discourse-level) and linguistic awareness (at the level of phrase, sentence, and larger "frames"), as well as increased awareness of the self in relation to the world, one's own self, or others. All of these examples show how a well-prepared and well-framed poem prompt can enable second language learners at all levels to put concrete, sensory detail to use in linguistically motivated ways, creating vivid, even striking or moving, images.

As the above examples of student poems demonstrate, it is well within the reach of second-language learners of just about any level to write poems using concrete, sensory images. Chapter 3 of this thesis will show, how, specifically, students can practice writing using concrete imagery, eventually moving towards writing in a manner that will support development of their L2 vision of themselves as capable communicators.

Summary

Since the 2000s, there have been over 200 quantitative, survey- or interview-based studies demonstrating the benefits of poetry for second language learners. The overwhelming majority of current research into the uses of poetry in the ESL classroom suggests “cognitive benefits in the form of improved linguistic awareness, critical and creative thinking, and problem solving” (Boldireff & Bober, 2021; p. 20). Specific benefits to learners range from conventionally recognized language competencies (Gazu & Mncwango, 2020; Iida, 2012; Kim & Kim, 2020), to adaptability to multi-level classrooms (Holmes & Moulton, 2001), to modeling and patterning that is readily imitated and adapted by students (Holmes & Moulton, 2001; Iida, 2010, 2012; Ivanova, 2018), to increased confidence and motivation (Aladini & Farahbod, 2020; Cahnmann-Taylor & Hwang, 2019; Dobkowska & Kuckleman, 2020; Hanauer 2012; Hanauer & Liao, 2016; Henry & Thorsen, 2019; Khatib, 2011; Yacoub, 2020). Current research also indicates that using poetry in the classroom can improve “L2 learner motivation, cultural and intercultural awareness, agency, and voice”, as well as the ability to articulate emotions (Boldireff & Bober, 2021; p. 20). The best empirical evidence we have today suggests that there is no theoretical basis, and only a very limited perceptual one, for hesitating to introduce poetry to the adult ESL classroom (Boldireff & Bober, 2021; p. 22). As Boldireff and Bober (2021) put it, difficulties with introducing poetry to the adult ESL classroom have shifted to “a logistical issue, including administrative, curricular, textual, and pedagogical concerns” (p. 22).

Poetry reading and writing can be readily integrated into an existing curriculum that targets development of core linguistic skills. Furthermore, by joining the facility of poetry in

enabling second language learners to create vivid, sensory images with an understanding of the dynamics of second language learner motivation developed in Dörnyei's (2005, 2009, 2015) L2 Motivational Self-System, this thesis will operationalize its findings into a user-friendly manual of poetry reading and writing lessons, with the aim of becoming an indispensable part of second language instructors' toolkits, enabling them to better facilitate the development of adult learners' specific, unique visions of their future selves as capable communicators in English.

CHAPTER III THE PROJECT AND ITS DEVELOPMENT

Description of the Project

“The Motivational Writing Project” is an e-book of sequenced poetry warmups, writing prompts, and frames that are designed to build and support motivation for High Beginning to Advanced adult learners of English. The activities first introduce language learners to the practice of observing and writing about their present, using concrete, sensory imagery, before moving on to write about their past and future. The e-book can be added piecemeal to support existing writing curricula at California Community Colleges and adult schools, or adopted as a standalone sequence. The project provides instructors a means to engage in direct, motivational intervention with learners, using academically sound material.

Because the e-book is intended to be usable by instructors with no or little experience with poetry, the e-book opens with some considerations of how instructors might want to use the materials. The next section offers information about basic poetry terms used in the warmups and prompts. Then the e-book moves into the core sequence of “The Motivational Writing Project”, which is composed of three parts: 1. Where I Am, 2. Where I’m From, and 3. Where I’m Going.

The warmup and writing activities in the core sequence begin with the easiest, most basic activities, which are set in the present moment: “Where I Am.” Then writers progress into increasingly sophisticated and personal visualizations involving the present and past (“Where I’m From”—which, incidentally, includes some of my favorite writing prompts), culminating in the more challenging frames for developing future-oriented personal vision (“Where I’m Going”). Suggestions for reading are included throughout, linked in Resources. Each part of the

sequence also includes a frame or prompt that specifically, concretely addresses some aspect of how English affects the learner's life. Additionally, each part includes a frame or prompt that directly enables the learner to form a vivid vision of themselves as speakers of English. The sections can be adapted to all levels, and include suggested variations and extensions. When relevant, sections include suggestions for materials. There is a final, bonus section with prompts for writing group poems, which require little preparation, are very fun, and should not be missed!

After the main sequence one can find the Resources section, which includes supplementary materials organized according to the core sequence, and sorted by approximate language and reading level. Most of the linked poems are brief, all contain concrete, sensory imagery, and all are in some way related to the theme of visualizing the present, past, and future. I have considered the reality that many adult English language learners today require lower-lexile reading materials of shorter length, but still need materials that address adult subject matter. Additional supplementary materials include links to Web pages with audio and video of poets reading their work. Finally, I have included a section, Further Reading, which lists books intended both for teachers of English language learners, as well as craft books written for beginning writers of poetry and their teachers.

“The Motivational Writing Project” e-book can be viewed using a Web browser, or downloaded for viewing in PDF format. The e-book was developed in Google Slides, current to the January 2021 update. The e-book has been optimized for Safari v.15.1, and is also compatible with Google Chrome 95.0, Firefox 94.01, and other browsers of choice.

Development of the Project

There is a growing literature on the development and implementation of supplemental material for supporting second language learner motivation, often based on proven visualization and journaling interventions for athletes, doctors, and musicians; studies include those by Dörnyei and Vlaeva (2021), Safdari (2019), Sato (2020), and Sato and Lara (2019). A review of these studies reveals that developing and teaching these specialized interventions can require significant extra planning and effort by instructors. Moreover, the interventions require a good deal of extra training and work outside the classroom on the part of learners. While the techniques are based on proven research, Dörnyei and Vlaeva (2021) note that the burdensome nature of these interventions involves a notable downside on practicality of use. Dörnyei and Vlaeva's (2021) report of increased student stress from the extra workload struck me as a significant downside.

As I reviewed the intervention material, I noticed that aspects of the methods for generating visualizations of the concrete, sensory imagery necessary for the interventions were very similar to what practicing poets do whenever they sit down to write. Really, the interventions are just a way to enable learners to envision their future selves as English speakers using concrete, sensory imagery. And yet, the development of concrete, sensory imagery has been part of literature since people began singing poems to one another! Today, many writers of poetry regard their quickest path to the reader's imagination as running through the senses. Every major poetry craft book for beginners that I am familiar with, be it Steve Kowit's well-loved *In the Palm of Your Hand*, Mary Oliver's popular *A Poetry Handbook*, or Stephen Dobyns' excellent *Best Words, Best Order*, all discuss the importance of learning to write vividly about

sensory experience. The more a writer can activate the senses in their own writing, the more actively the reader's imagination will be engaged in the resulting poem. For poets, use of detail, specificity, and concreteness are known methods for creating a vivid picture in the mind.

While reading the literature on the visualization techniques for use in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), I began to consider the number of well-known, straightforward, and minimally time-consuming methods for aiding beginning and intermediate writers in generating concrete, sensory imagery. It seemed these warmups and prompts would translate well to a TESOL context. For instance, descriptive writing exercises are often preceded by simple, fun warmups and prompts intended to draw writers more fully into their senses. The same is true of poetry writing. While teachers of expository writing can use these same techniques, the benefit of using poetry over expository writing for classroom motivational purposes is that poetry deals in small, digestible quantities of reading and writing. Learners can read poetry relatively quickly, and even write it quickly. It's important for learners to have rewarding experiences with a language, and poems are near-instant-gratification vehicles. Poetry *petits fours* are a natural fit for the instructor who wishes to support students in their writing, especially with an added element of motivational support in a time-pressured TESOL classroom.

While poetry reading and writing can be very fun when approached with a lighter, non-literary hand, non-poets do not always realize how technical poetry writing can be, with its extreme attention to structure, syntax and vocabulary. Practicing poets are acutely attuned to how slight changes in syntax and vocabulary can generate significant changes in meaning. So for those instructors who wish to go more deeply into noun and verb phrases; prepositional phrases; adjectives and adverbs; complex sentences; the importance of commas, semi-colons and dashes;

let alone introducing questions of register, tone, and audience, there is surely a poem for it. In this respect, poetry has its academic uses. However, I am aware that the instructors who would be most interested in pursuing those more technical elements are probably already more comfortable and familiar with poetry. Moreover, the academic elements of poetry are not the focus of this project, although there is plenty of research demonstrating the benefits of using poetry to support the development of academic language skills. Accordingly, I did not emphasize the academic aspects of these activities—but the elements are there if one is moved to discover and use them.

As for questions of structure—they arise for every writer. But just as teachers of expository writing use frames for introducing types of paragraphs as well as the five-part essay, it is also easy to introduce simple poetry frames for beginning writers of poetry. These frames greatly reduce the effort required in researching, adapting, or inventing wholesale a new poetic form. Moreover, use of a frame frees the writer to focus on getting all that wonderful concrete, sensory imagery onto the page, without the additional cognitive load of creating a structure (although writers are always free to change or abandon the provided frames). As the writer advances, the frames can become more complex, and the prompts less directive, until they fall away altogether.

A further, somewhat related area of particular interest to me also came up as I was researching motivation and language learning. I had observed that the teaching of writing in community college and college contexts tends to emphasize instrumental and transactional uses—you write something a certain way in order to get something done, to finish a particular task, or to achieve a particular goal. Your product should check the boxes—quite literally, as

your instructor will give you a writing checklist! This is all well and good. And yet, academic text-production is just one narrow aspect of how people experience a language.

Individual TESOL instructors regard their primary task a bit differently from one another, depending on who they are teaching at any given time, and in what context. But I believe it's fair to say that underlying all those different encounters and contexts, TESOL instructors introduce people to the living world of a language—its rules and formalities, its common uses, as well as its divergent forms. At one time, it was common for linguists and literary theorists to regard modes of discourse such as dialect, slang, graffiti, and poetry as sort of the red-headed stepchildren of a language. One of my favorite descriptions of poetry was supposedly uttered by Russian linguist and literary theorist Roman Jakobson, who declared it to be “organized violence committed on ordinary speech”^[1]. I suppose the characterization will appall some and inspire others. Jakobson is assuming here, though, that there are *standard* uses of a language, and *non-standard* uses. The usually explicit directive in TESOL, especially at the community colleges, is that teachers teach the *standard*. However, there are known issues identifying what counts as *standard*. Does the term refer to received *correctness* of use, and if so, according to whom? Your textbook? Your school friends? A government? Your family? A dictionary advisory committee? A particular academic department? TikTok or YouTube? Or does *standard* describe *frequency* of use, the *number* of speakers using a language? The definitional trouble seems endless.

While it is important for learners to develop their linguistic skills for surviving everyday life, as well as for use in academic and business contexts, it is my hope that introducing some textual variety to language learners will open up some sense of the language's larger capacities

for self-expression and creativity; or, as Widdowson (2020) puts it, for the capacity of language in its non-instrumental uses to release the “individual anarchy lurking just below the surface of the social order”. Again, to the general purpose of teaching a language to those who want to use it—yes, as instructors, we are tasked with teaching skills that can lead to linguistic competence. But I enthusiastically agree with Widdowson (2020) in his suggestion that instructors consider their task, at least in part, to help develop a learner’s “lingual capacity”, by considering not only various external standards of assessment, but also by consulting the individual’s own sense of whether their experience within the target language is one of capability in achieving a communicative outcome satisfactory to them. I hope “The Motivational Writing Project” is one small contribution towards that end.

^[1] This purported remark by Jakobson seems to have first appeared in Terry Eagleton’s popular text, *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (1983), I have yet to see the source text with my own eyes—therefore, sadly, I must treat the attribution as potentially apocryphal.

CHAPTER IV CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

The body of research into motivation in second language acquisition, including Dörnyei (2005, 2009, 2015), Dörnyei and Kubanyiova (2014), Dörnyei and Ryan (2015), and Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011), offers compelling evidence that adult language learners who can vividly envision themselves as future capable communicators in English are more likely to sustain their motivation to progress in language learning despite expected (and unexpected) challenges. As shown by numerous studies, including Al-Shehri (2009), Dörnyei and Chan (2013), Dörnyei and Ryan (2015), Kim and Kim, (2011, 2014), and Yang and Kim (2011), learners who develop and habitually strengthen a specific, concrete vision of their future, linguistically capable selves, termed by Dörnyei and Kubanyiova (2014) their “L2 Vision”, create the necessary motivational connection between their personal goals and their actual efforts to achieve those goals. These learners demonstrate more actual effort and energy in pursuing language-learning activities, resulting in stronger performance on assessments and continued enrollment in, and completion of, language-learning courses of study (Rajab, A., Roohbakhsh Far, H. & Etemadzadeh, A., 2012; & Al-Hoorie, A., 2018).

Despite the positive effects of imagery training on learners’ visualization skills and their subsequent improved motivation to pursue language-learning (e.g. Chan, 2014; Fukada, Fukuda, Falout, & Murphey, 2011; Mackay, 2014; Magid, 2014; Magid & Chan, 2014; Sampson, 2012), the vision-building interventions that have been developed so far by researchers to support learners, including Dörnyei and Vlaeva (2021), Safdari (2019), Sato (2020), and Sato and Lara

(2019), are burdensome for both instructors and students in terms of the time and effort required to satisfy the interventions' requirements.

A solution to overly-taxing motivational interventions for adult language learners can be found in an area of discourse somewhat neglected by the field of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL): poetry. As shown in Fomeche (2014), Iida (2012a), Liao (2018), and Liao and Roy (2018) many TESOL instructors view the prospect of teaching poetry with unease or outright fear. However, as shown in Gönen (2018) and Khatib (2011), TESOL instructors' unfavorable views of poetry may be mainly due to negative personal experiences caused by a particular approach to literary analysis common in college and university settings. Perhaps TESOL instructors who dislike poetry experienced their teachers' efforts in a manner akin to Billy Collins' lament about his students:

[...] all they want to do
is tie the poem to a chair with rope
and torture a confession out of it.

They begin beating it with a hose
to find out what it really means.

(from "Introduction to Poetry", from *The Apple That Astonished Paris*, 1988.)

This is not a model to which one must adhere when teaching poetry in TESOL.

My thesis field project, "The Motivational Writing Project", is an e-book for instructors of ESL at adult schools and community colleges, especially TESOL instructors with minimal or no background in poetry. The e-book includes a sequence of poetry writing warmups, frames, and prompts for High-Beginning to Advanced adult language learners to write about their

present, past, and future using concrete, sensory language. These sequenced exercises gradually build adult language learners' facility in writing using concrete, sensory imagery, culminating in the creation of a vivid, motivating vision of their future selves as capable communicators in English. The poetry writing exercises are designed to be consistent with current research findings in language learning and motivation, as well as with community college ESL writing standards.

Poetry is a natural, small-scale medium for developing a compelling personal vision through the use of concrete, sensory imagery. As shown by Fomeche (2014) Gazu and Mncwango (2020), Iida (2012) and Khatib (2011), poetry can readily support the development of traditional linguistic competencies. Additionally, studies by Aladini and Farahbod (2020), Cahnmann-Taylor and Hwang (2019), Dobkowska and Kuckleman (2020), Hanauer (2012), Hanauer and Liao (2016), Henry and Thorsen (2019), and Yacoub (2020) have found that adult learners who read and write poetry in the ESL classroom enjoy increased confidence and motivation. Practitioners Holmes and Moulton (2001) have reported that implementation is eased by poetry's adaptability to multi-level classrooms. Both Holmes and Moulton (2001) and Ivanova (2018) have additionally found that poetry models and frames are readily imitated and adapted by learners, which Iida (2010, 2012) has confirmed. As confirmed in Boldireff and Bober's (2021) comprehensive review of research into the uses of poetry in TESOL contexts, poetry can bring distinct benefits to the adult ESL classroom.

My thesis shows that poetry writing should be regarded as a valuable instructional resource in adult ESL education. It can be an effective medium for language learners to build facility in developing concrete, sensory imagery (tactile, visual, kinesthetic, olfactory, and auditory), including creating a motivating vision of their future, linguistically capable selves.

Because poetry can directly support and build learner motivation, it also offers advantages over specialized motivational training programs that require extra training and stand outside the regular curriculum of the adult ESL classroom.

“The Motivational Writing Project” is a sequence of poetry warmups, frames, and prompts implementing the insights of Dörnyei (2005, 2009, 2015), Dörnyei and Kubanyiova (2014), Dörnyei and Ryan (2015), and Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) into how best to support and develop learners’ personal vision of themselves as capable communicators in English. The purpose and intended innovation of this thesis is to show that the sensory modalities (tactile, visual, kinesthetic, olfactory, auditory) necessary for adult language learners to build and sustain a vivid, motivating vision of themselves as capable communicators can be developed through classroom poetry writing exercises. The exercises are designed to be consistent with current research findings in language learning and motivation, while also encouraging personal engagement and creativity in a manner that extends existing curriculum. These materials will enable TESOL instructors, even those with minimal or no background in poetry, to support adult language learners in a fun, engaging way, while providing adult language learners with the necessary tools to sustain the motivation required to continue their educational and linguistic progress.

Recommendations

Dynamic Models of the Self in Theories of Adult Language Learning

“The self” is an abstract notion that may or may not point to a single entity, let alone an actual one. If the self is a fiction, it is nonetheless a useful one. Any discussion of the formation of beliefs, intentions, and motives, any assignment of responsibility for action, eventually refers

to the self as the locus of these states of mind and personal qualities. Current models of motivation in language learning, including Dörnyei's 2005 and 2009 theories of the L2 Motivational Self System, increasingly reference an understanding of the self known as dynamic systems theory (Dörnyei, 2009, 2015, 2019; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, 2021). Dynamic systems theory recognizes that just as the social world is dynamic and ever-changing, so, too, are individuals (Dörnyei, 2019, p.56). Individual learning and development frequently exhibits non-linear qualities, reflecting individual differences in how people respond to their environment (Dörnyei, 2019, p.56). As Dörnyei describes it, motivation, cognition, and affect are all “dynamic subsystems...that have continuous and complex interaction with each other and which cannot exist in isolation from one another” (Dörnyei, 2019, p. 52.). As a result, it is probably inaccurate to regard a language learner as fundamentally “motivated” or not; i.e., in all ways and at all times (Dörnyei, 2019, p. 51). Rather, it is more accurate to recognize that motivation, like other attributes, will vary according to external situations and contexts; and, its expression will depend on the individual's shifting response to those situations and contexts. This ever-changing, dynamic quality of the interaction between self and world results in sometimes surprising and unpredictable outcomes (Dörnyei, 2019, p. 51).

Future models of self and motivation in adult language learning will likely need to evolve to better reflect the shifting nature of motivation that we all see and experience in daily life. For the larger question still remains, *When*, or *under what circumstances*, does a person *persist* in following-through their intention to learn another language, *despite* and *through* the days or weeks, or even months, when they feel reduced ability or willingness to put in the necessary effort? What qualities of self, or habits of behavior, do those individuals share? What internal

elements or supporting structures enable these people to push through periods of low motivation, and continue their language learning efforts?

Since about 2017, Dörnyei has been adjusting his model of the L2 Motivational Self System to create a model of the self that is more dynamic, and therefore more representative of “motivational phenomena observed in real-life situations” (Dörnyei, 2019, p. 51). Were Dörnyei to further adapt his L2 Self System model to the dynamic systems approach, it would provide “a more accurate analysis of personal development” (Dörnyei, 2019, p.51-56), and therefore a firmer theoretical foundation on which to examine the vicissitudes of motivation in adult language learning. That very dynamism, however, makes real-life situations harder to study in a controlled way, increasing the difficulty of designing a study that can produce valid, replicable results (Dörnyei, 2019, p.51-56).

The challenge is not a small one: Dörnyei cautions that so far, his own study results applying dynamic principles to the L2 Motivational Self System model have been “mixed” (Dörnyei, 2019; 56), in part due to difficulties of adapting reliable study methodologies to accommodate the assumptions of the complex dynamic systems approach (MacIntyre, Dörnyei, & Henry, 2015; MacIntyre, MacKay, Ross, & Abel, 2017). There have been more recent, promising, studies conceptualizing future self-guides as dynamic elements (Henry, 2015, 2017; MacIntyre, Dörnyei, & Henry, 2015; Teimouri, 2017; You and Chan, 2015). However, most of the empirical support for the validity of the L2 Motivational Self System is based on the older, cognitive model of 2005 and 2009. Accordingly, for my thesis argument, I rely on Dörnyei’s older, 2005 and 2009 model with the more robust empirical data supporting it, despite recognizing the likely greater accuracy of the dynamic model of L2 motivation and learning.

However, data supporting the dynamic model of motivation in second language learning may yet emerge in the near future, making the dynamic model the preferred basis for future studies.

Subjective vs objective achievement measures

The overwhelming majority of past and current studies into vision, motivation, and second-language learning seems to support Dörnyei and Ryan's (2015) claim that "learners with a vivid and detailed ideal self-image that has a substantial L2 component are more likely to be motivated to take action in pursuing language studies than their peers without such a self-image" (p. 96-97). However, in the course of reviewing the literature, it became clear that most research into adult motivation and vision in language learning relies on self-reported (i.e., subjective) outcome measures, as opposed to objective achievement measures (see Hiver & Al-Hoorie, 2019; Vlaeva & Dörnyei, 2021). It would be a benefit to practitioners and also curriculum developers in the field of adult language learning and motivation to see more studies base their findings on objective achievement measures.

Replicability of Language-learning Studies

More concerningly, there are few studies in motivation and language learning that are designed to directly reproduce and test the findings of previous studies, even influential ones. As Hiver and Al-Hoorie (2019) politely describe the situation, the field of second-language learning and motivation has "not yet fostered a replication culture", (p. 69). Consequently, my thesis is constrained to the claim that the body of *available* research evidence suggests that adults who develop their ability to use concrete sensory language in constructing a vision of themselves as

future capable communicators show greater motivation in language learning. Were there further studies replicating—or failing to replicate—the hundreds of available prior research findings, I would be able to state my conclusion in more certain terms. My review of the literature strongly supports the recommendation of Hiver and Al-Hoorie (2019), that it would be a welcome thing to see many more replication studies in motivation and second-language learning. More confidence in these findings would only further enable practitioners to make informed decisions about what classroom practices are most conducive to supporting adult language learning and motivation.

Future Directions for Development of The Motivational Writing Project

As for my own work, for future development of “The Motivational Writing Project” I intend to create a version in E-Pub, which is the standard text format used by publishers. In that version, I would like to extend “The Motivational Writing Project” to include personal essay prompts and frames, making the Project even more useful to college writing centers and programs. I would also like to include more resources specific to supporting Generation 1.5 learners. These learners often have strong auditory and verbal skills and excellent visual literacy skills, and are comfortable using new technologies. However, Generation 1.5 learners may have experienced interrupted literacy, and can benefit from targeted methods of writing instruction that use their strengths to support those skills needing development, especially reading and writing. So for future versions of this project, I would include additional prompts, resources, and information for Generation 1.5 writers. Finally, I would include information about authors who write books, especially creative works, in a language that is not their native one. These authors

are also known as “exophonic” writers. I believe this kind of resource can be of significant personal and motivational benefit to Generation 1.5 writers, or to any writer who is an English language learner.

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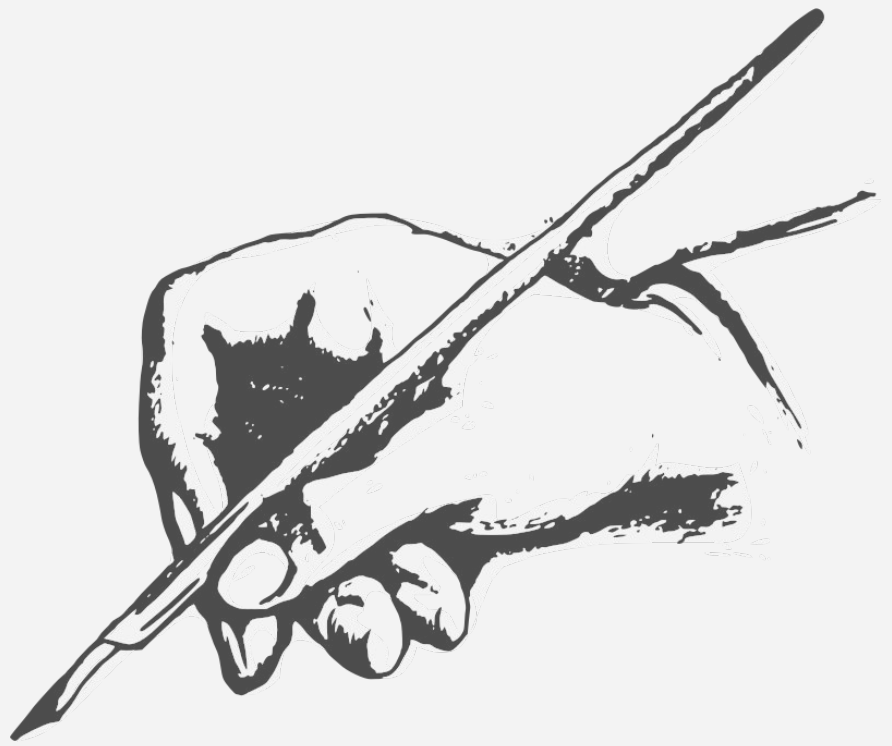
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APPENDIX

The Motivational Writing Project



The Motivational Writing Project

Using poetry in the classroom
to support motivation
for adult English language learners

Lenore M. Myers

About the author

Lenore M. Myers has an MFA in Poetry from The Warren Wilson Program for Writers, and an MA in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages from University of San Francisco. Her award-winning poems and essays have appeared in *The Southern Review*, *The Collagist*, *The Massachusetts Review*, and elsewhere.

Originally from Oakland, California, she now now lives with her young son and peripatetic partner in Napa, California.



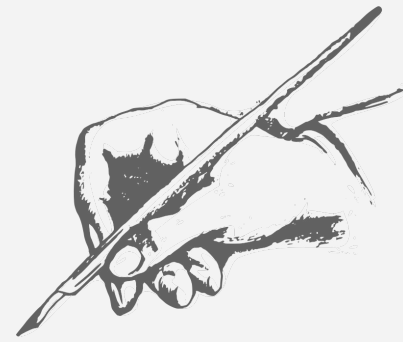


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1. Purpose of This Guide



Welcome to the Motivational Writing Project!

This field guide is intended for teachers who want to use poetry in the classroom to support and build motivation for adult English language learners. The material in this guide:

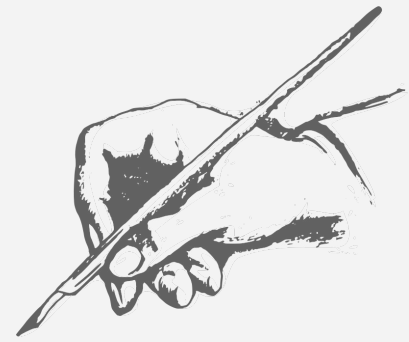
- ❖ requires no expertise in poetry
- ❖ is congruent with standard curricula in many California adult ESL writing and reading classes at both adult schools and community colleges
- ❖ includes prompts, writing frames, tips and [Resources](#) to suit you and your students' needs

The Connection Between Motivation and Visualization

The material in this guide directly supports and builds motivation in adult language learners by developing learners' facility with using concrete, sensory imagery in poetry writing. By using concrete, sensory imagery while writing about their present, past, and future, writers are at the same time envisioning themselves as capable speakers of the target language.

Research shows that language learners who regularly visualize themselves as future capable speakers of the target language are more likely to persist in language learning than learners who do no such envisioning. Moreover, learners who vividly see themselves as successful speakers of the target language are more successful in reaching their personal language learning goals, despite the many and inevitable obstacles.

2. How to Use This Guide



A Writer's Vocabulary

This guide seeks to develop motivation through poetry writing that uses concrete, sensory imagery. What is concrete sensory imagery? Simply put, whatever can be seen, heard, smelled, touched, or tasted. Writing that uses or appeals to the five senses generally uses concrete nouns, verbs or adjectives. But in order to create that imagery, writers need vocabulary!

Building Vocabulary

This guide assumes that students are already working on building functional, high-frequency vocabulary. Because language learners can always benefit from expanding their vocabulary, this guide includes vocabulary-building warm-ups. The warmups in this guide build vocabulary that is particularly useful for creating concrete, sensory imagery.

Translation and Bilinguality

This guide works well when translation activities and use of the native language are integrated into the warmups and exercises. Included resources are sometimes bilingual, and sometimes include commentary on bilinguality and code-switching in poetry. This guide also works well with regular use of a personalized glossary.

In general, when doing the warmups in this guide, writers should try to use English first. However, it could be productive for a writer to use their native language if they do not have the vocabulary to create an image adequate to their purposes. Indeed, many of the poems in the Resources section incorporate bilinguality, for a broad range of purposes.

If an instructor agrees that native language translation can be part of the writing process, then writers can work in pairs, sharing knowledge of translations for one another's words, and looking up translations in dictionaries (hard copy books, or whatever is available on cell phones). The whole class or instructor can assist when writers are stuck on a particular word or phrase. Once a writer has a satisfactory translation, they should write down the new vocabulary in a notebook (i.e., native-language word, plus one or more English translations). This personalized glossary is unique to each writer. Writers can gradually build their own, personalized dictionary of concrete, sensory language for their reference throughout the term.

Prompts, Not Lessons

While these writing prompts definitely can be used to complement lessons, they are not stand-alone lessons.

Poetry writing proceeds a bit differently than objective-driven language lessons. For instance, heavy correction and editing is often minimized in first-draft poetry writing. The reason for this is two-fold. First, interfering too early with the creative process can squash the willingness of a writer to take risks. Second, in poetry, what might seem like a mistake often can be a window into deeper creativity. So writers often err on the side of leaving in writing that seems not-quite, because it seems *something* should go in that particular part of the poem. Writers can always revise later, when the better word strikes.

Another difference between poetry writing and standard classroom lessons in a language learning context is that even if a prompt is useful for supporting practice or acquisition of a particular language skill, the larger goal of writing (and reading) poetry in an adult language learning context is to facilitate self-expression in a new language.

Reading For Writing

Relatedly, the reading that writers do here is *not* literary analysis—rather, writers look at poems that others have written to see what specific strategies they might use in their own writing. Very often, writers turn to read particular poems when they are stuck. They might wonder, “How did Francisco Alarcón transform those birds into words? What did he do with that word, ‘prints’? How does that word do double-duty?” Writers may then go read Alarcón’s poem with that specific question in mind, ask questions of their neighbor or instructor, then return to writing their own poem with renewed focus and a specific strategy.

Models, Patterns, and Frames

Some of the poetry writing prompts included in this guide offer very specific models and patterns for the writer to use in crafting their poems. These patterns are similar to frames used by students of non-poetry writing, such as sentence-level grammatical frames, paragraph frames, or essay frames. You may be familiar with the analogical notion of “forms” in poetry—poetic forms such as the sonnet, haiku, and cinquain enjoy a long and rich history. In both language learning and literary contexts, forms, models, and patterns are imposed structures that, paradoxically, both discipline and free the writer. In language learning, the imposition of a specific writing frame or structure often provides repeated practice with a target linguistic skill (e.g., grammar, vocabulary, critical thinking), while simultaneously allowing the writer great creative freedom.

Breaking the Frames

Yes, writers may break the frames! The provided frames are intended to be helpful constraints. Some of the frames and prompts recommend using a certain number of syllables, words, lines, or stanzas. Usually writers can change these requirements as they please. As a writer's confidence increases, the frames are of less use. You will notice that as a guide progresses, and as the level goes up, the frames fall away, or become less directive, and the writer must make more decisions.

Collaborative Writing

Most of the activities in this guide can be adapted to either an independent or group work focus. This guide also includes collaborative writing activities at the end, just for fun.

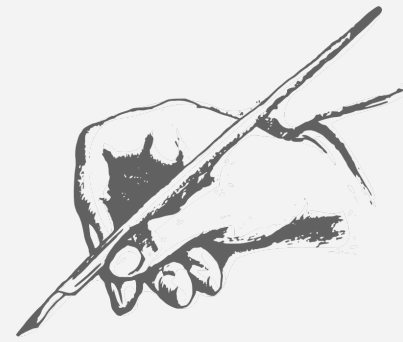
A Question of Style

Poems need not rhyme, nor use meter or specialized diction. Ordinary language will do. While practicing poets find ways of transforming ordinary speech into artful poetry, student writers who are also language learners can simply be encouraged to explore their voice in the language, and given some useful models and tools for doing so. Anything more is gravy.

The Big Picture

Writing poetry is an unpredictable, surprising process. Writers who are encouraged to experiment and explore these frames and prompts will progressively develop confidence and motivation, and begin to experience a sense of personal belonging in the language.

3. Some Poetry Terminology



Lines and Stanzas

Poems often include **lines** and **stanzas**. In poetry, a **line** is a single row of words, which may include part or all of a single phrase or sentence. A **stanza** is a section formed by one or more lines. Here is a stanza from a poem by Lorine Niedecker. How many lines are in this stanza? How many sentences? (It's not obvious to me):

What horror to awake at night
and in the dimness see the light.
 Time is white
 mosquitoes bite
I've spent my life on nothing.

The first sentence in this stanza is interrupted by the end of the line, and continues to the next line. That interruption is called a **line break**. If a sentence or phrase ends at the end of the line, the line is **end-stopped**. The second and last lines of Niedecker's poem are end-stopped. How would you describe lines 3 and 4?

Some poems use only lines and stanzas, and no punctuation. Here is "This Is Just to Say" by William Carlos Williams:

I have eaten
the plums
that were in

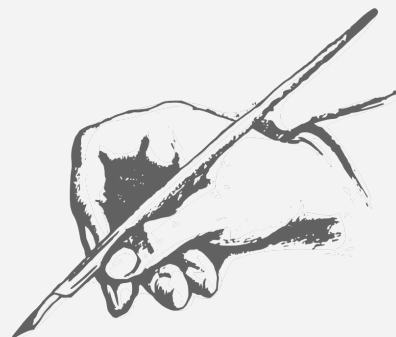
the icebox
and which
you were probably

saving
for breakfast
Forgive me

they were delicious
so sweet
and so cold

How many lines? Note the white space that separates the stanzas. How many stanzas? Does it make sense to ask how many sentences are in this poem? What happens if you punctuate the poem?

4. Time, Preparation, Sequence



Preparation

Some of the prompts, especially the collaborative ones, are best written using index cards. Otherwise, a regular pencil and paper will do. A few prompts involve describing certain objects, provided either by the instructor or by the writers themselves. Those take more preparation, but they are worth it.

Time

Collaborative prompts and early warmups might take longer, but most prompts can be tackled within 30 minutes. In general, aim to divide the time into thirds, such as 10-10-10. Writers should spend about a third of the time doing some combination of thinking, pre-writing, reading, and discussing. The next third of their time is spent writing. The final third of the time is devoted to sharing work, either in pairs, or with the whole class (N.B.: hearing someone else read your writing provides excellent editing feedback to the writer). Longer prompts have been sub-divided into smaller units.

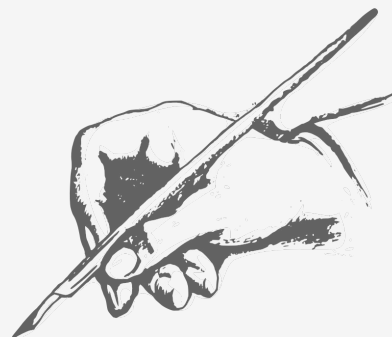
The time required for collaborative poems can look more like 20-10-10, at least the first time. Although there's little to no warmup needed, and therefore less preparation involved, the process of moving index cards around the room can take up time. Also, poems often have to be cooperatively assembled afterwards.

Sequence

For writers who need help building vocabulary for concrete, sensory imagery, it may be best to follow the Where I Am-Where I'm From-Where I'm Going sequence. It's not necessarily obvious how to write about the future using concrete sensory imagery, so it's good to have a little practice. Some frames are very simple, while some require more planning and thinking. All prompts require warmups. Instructors can use the provided warmups if they do not have one they already prefer.

It is very rewarding for a writer to create a sequence of related poems. But for writers who are strong in writing with concrete sensory imagery, it would be fine to jump around and pull out prompts to use as the instructor sees fit. Just note that while writers will of course improve in their writing as they practice, going out of sequence in this particular case means that writers would not benefit from the sense of building towards the future, which can be powerfully affirming and motivation-building.

5. The Motivational Writing Project



Warmups and Pre-Writing Activities

5-4-3-2-1 Relaxation and Pre-Writing Exercise

Grammar focus: simple present

Skills: Writing, Speaking, Listening, Reading, Dictionary Exercise

Vocabulary: concrete nouns, concrete verbs, sensory language

Level: Beginner to High Intermediate

I, PW, or WC: Individual, Pair, and Whole Class

Materials: pencil/ pen, notebook; translation dictionaries or cell phones

Time:

Warmup: Before starting this exercise, take a deep breath in through your nose, hold for three counts, then slowly exhale through pursed lips. Repeat three times.

5: What are **five** things you **SEE**.

4: What are **four** things you **TOUCH**.

3: What are **three** things you **HEAR**.

2: What are **two** things you **SMELL**.

1: What is **one** thing you **TASTE**.

Writers write down their sensory experiences (Beginners can use the [5-4-3-2-1 form](#)).

Writers then share their experiences and words with the whole class. Other writers and the instructor may assist with and expand translations. Writers or instructor write interesting words on the board.

Follow-on activity

Writers repeat the exercise away from class. They take notes, then translate and share in-class, and add more words to their “My Words” list.

In-class, writers write the five senses vocabulary on the board themselves. Beginning writers may list their words on the board; more advanced students will provide the sentence starts, and write the complete sentences themselves. Writers will edit one another’s work, with instructor guidance as needed.

5-4-3-2-1 Relaxation and Writing Exercise

Instructions: List words for each sense.

5: I SEE five things:



1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

4: I TOUCH four things:



1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

3: I HEAR three things:



1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

2: I SMELL two things:



1. _____
2. _____

1: I TASTE one thing:



1. _____

Five Senses Pre-Writing Activity

Grammar/Aspect focus: simple present

Skills: Pre-Writing, Writing, Speaking, Listening, Reading, Dictionary Exercise

Vocabulary: concrete nouns, concrete verbs, adverbs and adjectives, sensory language

Level: High Beginner to Advanced

I, PW, or WC: Individual, Pair, and Whole class work

Materials: pencil/ pen, notebook; translation dictionaries or cell phones; objects, initially teacher-provided, some food and non-food.

Time:

Warmup: What are the Five Senses?

Discuss the 5-4-3-2-1 Relaxation Exercise (re-activate vocabulary: see, touch, hear, smell, taste, with examples, and using simple present form).



Five Senses Activity

The instructor brings a number of interesting objects to class, some for every sense. Writers will work in groups—bring enough so that each group has something for each sense, and at least 1-2 unique objects.

In groups of 2-4, writers explore the objects, including smelling and tasting food. Writers write down a few descriptive words for each sense (see, smell, feel, hear, taste) activated by the object.



When time is up, each group shares 2-3 of their most interesting words (verbally, or write on-board). Since each group has some different objects, sharing should include something new for everyone.

If writing in sentences on-board, writers peer edit for grammatical form.



Extension Activity

Introduce correct forms for different kinds of present-tense attention using the senses (see/looks; touch/feels; hear/sounds; taste/tastes; see

<https://learningenglish.voanews.com/a/do-you-know-the-differences-between-look-watch-and-see/4880198.html>).

Writers write sentences using attention words in simple present tense, using the frame:

The [concrete noun] [present simple verb/correct form for sense] [concrete, sensory description].

Follow-on activity

Writers will repeat away from class. But this time, they blindfold themselves, and a family member or friend brings them one or more random, surprise objects. Writers use every available sense *except* sight to experience, and then write about, the object(s). Beginning writers list words; more advanced writers write sentences using present tense frame. Same on-board writing-editing procedure as before.

Back to [Contents](#)

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1—Where I Am

Where I Am: Five Senses Poems, 1

Grammar/Aspect focus: simple present

Skills: Writing, Speaking, Listening, Reading, Dictionary Exercise

Vocabulary: concrete nouns, concrete verbs, adverbs and adjectives, sensory language

Level: Beginner to Advanced

I, PW, or WC: Individual, Pair, and Whole class work

Materials: pencil/ pen, notebook; translation dictionaries or cell phones

Time:

Five Senses Poem

Writers should do either the 5-4-3-2-1 or Five Senses warmups. Low- and Mid-Beginners can work in pairs, but each student should still have their own copy of the poem.

Pattern

Line 1: [An emotion, thing, place, or idea] is [concrete, sensory noun or verb]

Line 2: It tastes (like) . . .

Line 3: It sounds (like) . . .

Line 4: It smells (like) . . .

Line 5: It looks (like) . . .

Line 6: I feel (like) . . .

Variation: Working in groups of three or six about an agreed-upon theme, writers choose one or two senses to write about, then arrange into one poem.

Where I Am: Five Senses Haiku

Haiku are brief, imagistic poems. Read some of the short poems on the first and second page of [Resources](#). Also read Issa.

Pattern:

Five syllables

Seven syllables

Five syllables

Variation: American Haiku

American haiku are short, imagistic poems. The lines can be of any length. Read some short poems by Lorine Neidecker, Carl Sandburg, Suzanne Buffam, Stuart Mill, Richard Wright, and Ted Kooser and Jim Harrison. Writers then write some American haiku, line frequency and length of their choosing. Each American haiku should have lots of concrete, sensory imagery!

Variation: Instructor establishes a sequence for the five senses. Using index cards (with their name on top), writers write one American haiku, topic of their own choosing, everyone writing about the same sense for a set length of time. Then writers pass their American haiku to their neighbor. Then everyone writes a response, all using the next sense in the sequence. Each collection of cards is passed to the next writer. Repeat for all five senses. Then the collaborative American haiku poems are read aloud, or posted around the room for everyone to read.



Where I Am Poems, 2

Sights and Sounds Poem

This poem is modeled after Joy Harjo’s “[Ah, ah](#)” (see [Resources](#)). Here, however, the verb comes after the noun. The language should remain largely concrete and sensory. Writers choose a one- or two-syllable sound from their prior Warmup notes, or make one up on the spot. If writers use pronouns, they should use just one “person” (1st, 2nd, or 3rd).

Pattern:

[*Sound, sound*], [noun] [present tense verb] [preposition] [more description].
[Another concrete, sensory sentence or phrase about the noun].

[Five more stanzas about different things in the same place, also in the present tense.]

[*Sound, sound*] [noun] [present tense verb] [a little more description]. [*Sound, sound.*]

Variation: Use just one noun, or use different words for the same thing.



Where I Am: Ode or Praise Poem

An ode is a poem in praise of something. Often, odes praise something that’s normally looked down on, or not noticed.

Additional Preparation

As writers go through their day or week, they note things or people they need or use, but usually don’t notice, or take for granted—a shopping cart, a paved road, a paperclip, a checkout clerk.

Variation: Choose something to write about that is not often appreciated, such as mosquitoes, or when a child kicks you while they are sleeping.

Read Francisco Alarcón’s “[Ode to My Shoes](#)” (see [Resources](#)).

Write an ode in at least five stanzas, where each stanza says something a little different about the subject of the ode. Use lots of concrete, sensory language.

Additional Reading (see [Resources](#))

Gary Soto, “[Ode to Pablo’s Tennis Shoes](#)”

William Carlos Williams, “[To A Poor Old Woman](#)”, “[This is Just To Say](#)”, or “[The Red Wheelbarrow](#)”

Pablo Neruda, “[Ode to a Large Tuna in the Market](#)”

Bert Meyers, “[The Garlic](#)”

Eileen Myles, “[Honey Bear](#)”

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Where I Am Poems, 3

Abstract-Concrete Poem

The writer chooses an object that interests them. They should explore it from every angle. What does it feel like? Does it have a smell? Can they see the object's history in its physical appearance? Does it tell a story? Finally, the writer finds something about it they didn't notice at first.

Then, the writer chooses an abstract noun, and describes it as the object.

An abstract noun cannot be touched, tasted, seen, or detected with any of the five senses. An abstract noun might be an emotion, an idea, or a color.

The examples below from poems in [Resources](#) describe an abstract noun as a concrete object (except Niedecker, who goes double-abstract!):

Breath is a verb. (Bert Meyers, "[The Garlic](#)")

A word is a honeybee. (Mechtild of Magdeburg, "[\[Of all that God has shown me...\]](#)")

A haiku is an ambulance. (Richard Brautigan, "[Haiku Ambulance](#)")

Time is white. (Lorine Niedecker, "[\[What horror to awake at night...\]](#)")

Now writers read Cristina Rossetti's "[Color](#)" (in [Resources](#)). The frame below follows her question-and-answer poem. The writer should be as specific and physical as possible. Unexpected answers are welcome! The poem should continue for at least five questions.

Pattern:

What is [abstract noun]? A [concrete noun] is [abstract noun]
[preposition or verb, continued concrete description].

What is...
[continues]

...
What is [abstract noun]?
[Exclamatory sentence]!



Additional reading (see [Resources](#))

Langston Hughes, "[Harlem](#)"

Fred Chappell, "[Coming Home](#)"

Suzanne Buffam, "[Things that are Distant but Near](#)"

Jim Harrison and Ted Kooser, some selections from their [joint haiku collection](#)

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Where I Am Poems, 4

Where I Am, in English! Poem

A language might be abstract, but the writer's experience of it is visceral. This poem frame is similar to the [Five Senses Poem](#), except that writers will describe an abstract thing—the English language—using concrete, sensory imagery. The more personal and specific the language of this poem, the better! Writers can choose to use “like”, or not.

Pattern:
English sounds [like] ...
English looks [like] ...
English tastes [like] ...
English smells [like] ...
English feels [like] ...
English is ...



Variation: Read Wang Ping's "[Immigrant Can't Write Poetry](#)", or Elisabet Velezquez's "[Professional Spanish Knocks on the Door](#)". We've all had uncomfortable or unpleasant experiences involving differences in language. Write a poem about one such experience. Leave nothing out! Describe your experience using concrete, sensory language. Writers might want to work with just a few senses.

Writers who prefer frames can use or adapt one of these patterns:

Pattern:
English sounds [like] [positive, negative, neutral]
English looks [like] [positive, negative, neutral]
English tastes [like] [negative, neutral, positive]
English smells [like] [positive, negative, neutral]
English feels [like] [positive, negative, neutral]
English is ...



Pattern (following Wang Ping's poem):
[Sentence or fragment with error you often make]
[Corrected sentence or phrase]
[Repeat 3x errors, all different]
[Present tense, concrete, sensory imagery, 2x]
[Line or two that answers: When do you most enjoy yourself when using English?]

Extension Activity:

Writers read Wallace Stevens' "[Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird](#)" (or just a few sections) (see [Resources](#)). Notice that each section is really a distinct, little poem that “sees” the blackbird in a different way.

Now, writers will write their own distinct, little poems, “[#] Ways of Looking at English”. Using concrete, sensory language, writers create anywhere from 5-15 little poems about English, then order them into a multi-part poem. Every section should include concrete, sensory language!

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2—Where I'm From

Adapted from Ivanova (2018) <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/tesj.399> and The University of Minnesota's "I Am From" Activity Guide: [https://global.umn.edu/icc/documents/I Am From Faculty Guide.pdf](https://global.umn.edu/icc/documents/I_Am_From_Faculty_Guide.pdf).

Where I'm From Pre-Writing Activity

Grammar/Aspect focus: simple past, can be mixed depending on level

Skills: Pre-writing, Descriptive Writing, Speaking, Listening, Reading, Dictionary Exercise

Vocabulary: concrete nouns, concrete verbs, adverbs and adjectives, sensory language, past tense used with present tense

Level: High Beginner to Advanced

I, PW, or WC: Individual, Pair, and Whole class work

Materials: pencil/ pen, notebook; translation dictionaries or cell phones; writer-provided objects.

Time:

Warmup: Five Senses

Re-activate vocabulary: see, touch, hear, smell, taste.

Watch Juan Delgado recite his poem, "I Am From" (no text, but can use CC):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XFtXf1bAC-E> (3:07) (Includes Puerto Rican Spanish)

Where I'm From: Five Senses Activity

Writers bring an item to class that reminds them of home—a photo, a bit of food or a recipe, a small memento, a letter. If the item is a song, writers can bring a recording on their cell phone and use earbuds to listen to it before writing. If it's just a memory, that's good too. (N.B.: Writers who bring a family photo will be well-prepared for writing the Where I'm From poem.)

Working independently, writers explore the objects. Using concrete, sensory language, they write down a few descriptive words for each type of sense (see/saw, smell/smelled, touch/touched, hear/heard, taste/tasted) activated by the object. Then students work in pairs, sharing their notes and vocabulary.

When the time is up, each pair shares 2-3 of their most interesting words and translations with the class. Since groups have different objects, the sharing will be new for everyone.



Where I'm From Poem, 1

Family Photo Poem

Writers who did the Where I'm From Warmup with a family photo may want to write this poem. Writers should read Jesús Cos Causse's "[Looking at Photos](#)". It's a poem of few words, but several striking concrete, sensory images, and a few surprising word choices.

Writers now write a family photo poem of their own. As writers look at the photo, they might consider:

(1) What are the people doing? (2) What are they wearing? (3) Are they holding anything? (4) What else is in the photo? (5) Where are these people? (6) Do you have an opinion about anything in the photo?	(7) Where are things in relation to each other? (8) What shapes and colors are in the photo? (9) What is the weather like? (10) What do you predict will happen next, soon, or eventually? (11) Do you have any strong feelings while looking at this photo?
--	--

Writers can use all or any of the following limits: 1) Include one surprising verb, one surprising noun, one surprising adjective; 2) Use present progressive at least three times; 3) Include at least two negative descriptions and at least two positive descriptions.

Writers who prefer to use frames can use or adapt the following one, based on Cos Causse's poem. As always, use plenty of concrete, sensory imagery.

Pattern:

First stanza:

[Name of family member] [description of action or appearance]
[Name of family member] [description of action or appearance]
[continue pattern]

Second stanza:

[description of self at the time, whether in the photo or not]
[description of family member not in photo]
[continue as needed]
[simile using concrete, sensory language about the family member most important to writer]

Additional Reading in [Resources](#):

Jesús Cos Causse, "[Looking at Photos](#)"

Francisco Alarcón, "[My Grandma's Songs](#)", or "[In a Neighborhood in Los Angeles](#)"

Cammy Thomas, "[French Toast](#)"

Sherman Alexie, from "[Bestiary](#)"

Gwendolyn Brooks, "[The Bean Eaters](#)"

Lucille Clifton, "[\[if mama/ could see...\]](#)", or "[\[oh antic god...\]](#)"

Eduardo Corral, "[In Colorado My Father Scoured and Stacked Dishes](#)"

Brenda Shaughnessy, "[I Have a Time Machine](#)"

Seamus Heaney, "[Digging](#)"

Louis MacNeice, "[Soap Suds](#)"



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Where I'm From Poem, 2

Memory Poem

Writers who did the Where I'm From Warmup with non-photo objects or with memories may want to write this poem. Writers should read Francisco Alarcón's "[My Grandma's Songs](#)", and Cammy Thomas' "[French Toast](#)". These are small and lovely poems about people and moments important to the writers. Both poems' titles focus the poem on one subject. In both poems, each stanza explores one particular action, image, or feeling related to the subject.

In writing their own memory poems, writers can use all or any of these limits: 1) Include one surprising verb, one surprising noun, one surprising adjective; 2) Use present progressive at least three times; 3) Include at least one negative description and at least two positive descriptions.

Writers who prefer to use frames can use or adapt the following one, based on Alarcón's poem. As always, use plenty of concrete, sensory imagery.

Pattern:

[Title is the subject focus]

First stanza:

[describe the subject in past tense]

Second stanza:

[describe the subject in present progressive]

[continue pattern for at least five stanzas]

[#] stanza

[repeat subject]

[#] stanza:

[describe subject in past]

[#] stanza:

[continue description of subject in that scene in present progressive]

[same scene, continue pattern for two-three more stanzas]

Last stanza

[present tense]

Additional Reading in [Resources](#):

Jesús Cos Cause, "[Looking at Photos](#)"

Francisco Alarcón, "[My Grandma's Songs](#)", or "[In a Neighborhood in Los Angeles](#)"

Cammy Thomas, "[French Toast](#)"

Sherman Alexie, from "[Bestiary](#)"

Gwendolyn Brooks, "[The Bean Eaters](#)"

Lucille Clifton, "[\[if mama/ could see...\]](#)", or "[\[oh antic god...\]](#)"

Eduardo Corral, "[In Colorado My Father Scoured and Stacked Dishes](#)"

Brenda Shaughnessy, "[I Have a Time Machine](#)"

Seamus Heaney, "[Digging](#)"

Louis MacNeice, "[Soap Suds](#)"



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3—Where I'm Going

Where I'm Going Poems

Writing with concrete, sensory language about things that haven't happened yet can be difficult: we don't have the thing before us to pick up and turn around, to examine. So writers can use the present and the past to help them think about the future.

The warmup and first two patterns are adapted from Sophie Dawes' "The Future Is" lesson: <https://poetry.arizona.edu/education/curriculum/future>.

Warm Up

Writers review the five senses, giving examples of concrete things in terms of the senses. Then writers close their eyes, and prepare to hear two sets of writing instructions read aloud by the instructor. Writers should open their eyes after each instruction in order to write their responses, then close their eyes again while awaiting the next instruction.

Instructions Part 1 (read out loud by instructor):

Think of your day so far, from when you woke up until now.

- What smells have you smelled?
- What sounds have you heard?
- What things have you touched?
- What have you seen?
- What have you tasted?

Depending on time, the instructor can ask about all five senses or just a few.

Instructions Part 2 (read out loud by instructor):

- When you are sad, lonely, or angry, what things makes you feel better?
- What thing or activity always makes you feel happy or hopeful?



Where I'm Going Poems, 1

Now that writers have both concrete, sensory imagery as well as more abstract, future-oriented feelings and sensations, they are ready to write a poem that attaches the writer's sense of the present to their ideas about the future.

The Future Poem

Immediately after the warmup, writers create a poem about the future. As always, they should be attentive to using lots of concrete, sensory language. Writers can use or adapt the frames as needed.

Pattern:	Variation:
The future [concrete description] The future sounds [like] The future smells [like] The future tastes [like] When I touch the future ... When I look to the future ...	My future in English [concrete description] My future in English looks [like] My future in English sounds [like] The future tastes [like] When I listen, the future ... When I speak, the future ...

Additional Reading in [Resources](#):

Anna Swir, "[Beach Sandals](#)"

Marram al-Masri, "[Knocks on the door](#)"

Langston Hughes, "[I, Too](#)"

Joy Harjo, "[Invisible Fish](#)"

Ted Kooser, "[Daddy Longlegs](#)", or "[New Moon](#)"

Margarita Engle's "[Drum Dream Girl](#)"



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Where I'm Going Poems, 2

What? When? Will? Poems

Since English doesn't have a future tense, to talk about the future we use *will* or *be going to*, or use present and present progressive verbs. Here is a collection of little patterns using *will* and other future forms. All writing here should be preceded by a 5-10 minute senses warmup.

Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow Poem

Writers think of three striking sensory experiences they had yesterday, and three today. Experiences can be positive, negative, or neutral. A mix of senses and experiences is good! The "tomorrow" sense is imagined.

Pattern:

Yesterday, I [sense using past]...
Today, I [sense using present]...
Tomorrow, I will [sense using present]...
(Repeat 3x)

Pressing Questions For the Future Poem

Sometime we have questions and no answers! Writers write about a current, pressing question they have--large or small. If the question is small, end large! If the question is large, end small! Modify the frame as needed.

Pattern:

[?, ?] [Title is a question, or just a repeated Wh- word]
[X, x] [past tense]
[X, x] [present tense]
[?, ?] [Can...?; Will...?; Do...?; Should...? Wh...?]
[X, x] [past tense]
[X, x] [present tense]
[X, x] [present progressive or present tense]
[X, x] [present progressive or present tense]
[?, ?] [question using "will" or be + present progressive]

What Will Happen When...? Poem

Pattern (after "[Harlem](#)" by Langston Hughes)

What will happen when/to...?
Will it...?
Or...?
And then...?
Will it...?
Or...?
Like...?
Maybe....
Or....



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Where I'm Going Poem, 3

Future Photo Poem

Writers read Jesús Cos Causse's "[Looking at Photos](#)". Writers might want to discuss the striking concrete, sensory images, and surprising word choices.

Writers now write a family photo poem of their own. But this time, they will re-imagine an existing photo, or imagine an entirely new one. This is a photo that will be taken in the future! As if looking at a real photo, writers should ask their imaginations:

(1) Who is in the photo? (2) What are the people wearing? (3) Are they holding anything? (4) What else is in the photo? (5) Where are these people? (6) Do you have an opinion about anything in the photo?	(7) Where are things in relation to each other? (8) What shapes and colors are in the photo? (9) What is the weather like? (10) What do you predict will happen next, soon, or eventually? (11) Do you have any strong feelings while imagining this photo?
--	---

Writers can use all or any of the following limits: 1) Include one surprising verb, one surprising noun, one surprising adjective; 2) Use present progressive at least three times; 3) Include at least two negative descriptions and at least two positive descriptions.

Writers who prefer to use frames can use or adapt the following one, based on Cos Causse's poem. As always, writers should use plenty of concrete, sensory imagery.

Pattern:

First stanza:

[Name of person or thing in the photo] [description of action or appearance]

[Name of another person or thing in the photo] [description of action or appearance]

[continue pattern]

Second stanza:

[description of self at the time, whether in the photo or not]

[description of someone or something not in photo]

[continue as needed]

[simile using concrete, sensory language about the thing that is most important to the writer]



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Where I'm Going Poem, 4

The Dream Will Be Poem

This is a three-part poem that is best written over a few days. 20-30 minutes for reading and discussion, 15 minutes for each free-writing and poem-writing session.

Writers read the first eight stanzas of Margarita Engle's "[Drum Dream Girl](#)" (which, by the way, is based on a true story!). Writers might want to pay special attention to the sounds of the poem.

Writers then write freely for five minutes about something they dreamed of doing or hoped for when they were younger, but that they could never bring about despite much effort. This thing can be of small importance from a grownup point of view, even though it might have been important to the writer as a child. Writers use this material to write a poem.

Pattern

Stanza 1

When I was young, I dreamed/hoped/wished...

When I was young, I tried...

But...

The next day, writers read stanzas 9-14, then write freely for five minutes about something they dreamed of or hoped for and worked hard to make happen, and that did come about—or sort of did, but not in the way they had expected. Writers use this material to write a poem.

Pattern

Stanza 2

When I was older, I dreamed/hoped/wished...

I tried...

And...

Then, writers read the rest of the poem, and write freely for five minutes about a dream or hope they have now, and what specific things they are doing to make it happen. Writers then imagine what it *will* look like, feel like, even taste like, *when* it happens. Then writers write a poem.

Pattern

Stanza 3

Now, I dream/hope

I try...

I [sense]... [present progressive]

I [sense]... [present progressive]

I am... [present progressive]

Finally, writers put all three parts together in sequence to make the poem.



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Where I'm Going Poem, 5

Transformative Poem

We've all had uncomfortable or unpleasant experiences involving language. Writers will create a poem about one such experience with English. This poem prompt and frame is similar to Where I Am, in English, but with a twist. 20-30 minutes.

First, writers freewrite for five minutes about one particular negative experience. Leave nothing out! Then, writers read Francisco X. Alarcón's "[Words are Birds](#)". How many ways do things change in the poem? From what, to what? How does it end? Now, the writer re-write their past, negative experience, using present progressive and concrete, sensory imagery. Writers should visualize this new reality as concretely as they can, and use sensory language to make the future as real as possible.

Writers who prefer frames can use or adapt a pattern:

Pattern 1:

Stanza 1 [About a negative experience]
English [sense] [like] [negative]
[continue 5x, with any of the 1-5 senses]

Stanza 2: [Re-imagine into a positive experience]
English is . . . [present progressive]
[present progressive]
[repeat until done]

Pattern 2:

Stanza 1:
[Sentence or fragment about negative experience with English]
[Add 2-5x negative experiences, or continue describing just the one]

Stanza 2:
[Re-imagine the experience as neutral, using present progressive]
[Continue re-imagining in present]

Stanza 3:
[Re-imagine experience with English as positive]
[Continue in present progressive]
[End with a concrete, sensory image that gives you a good feeling when you read it]



Extra: Collaborative Poems

These poems are group creations. Because they involve cooperative re-ordering, they are easiest to do using index cards.

For a information about terminology, see [3. Some Poetry Terminology.](#)

Renga

Working within a theme, one writer writes the first stanza, which is three lines long and 17 syllables total. The next writer reads what was written, then adds the second stanza, which is two lines with seven syllables per line. The third stanza repeats the structure of the first, and the fourth repeats the second. As they proceed, writers read *only* the preceding stanza! The poem is done when everyone has contributed.

Variation:

Writers are assigned one of the two patterns. Working within a theme, they write without showing anyone what they've written. Writers then work together to assemble all the parts into a poem.

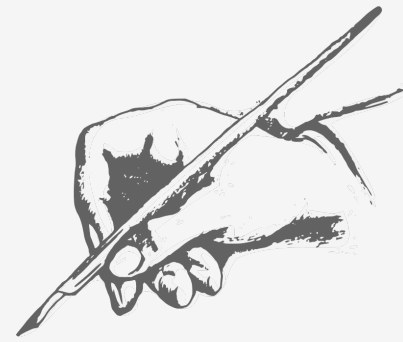
Group sonnet

Working within a theme, 14 writers each write a line that is ten words long. They then assemble the lines into a one-stanza, 14-line poem.

Variations:

Line quantity varies depending on size of class.

Writers create a 1-14 item word bank. Each line has to include one of those words. Writers may decide that certain words should be repeated in certain lines in a frequency and pattern of their choosing.



You Have Questions? I Have Answers! Poem

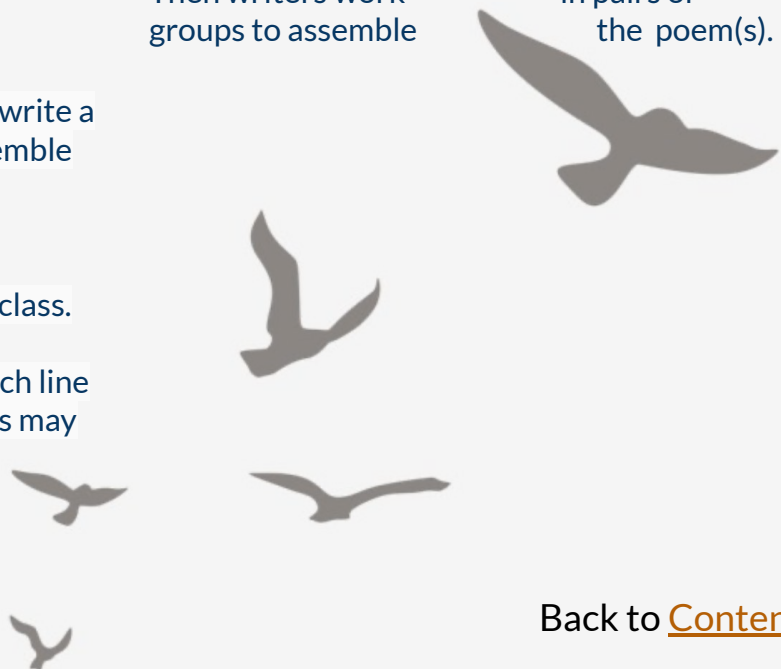
This collaboration works for two or more people. Pairs or small groups can work within chosen themes, or with a word bank.

One writer (or more) writes down a question, without showing it to anyone else. At the same time, one writer (or more) writes down an answer. The process iterates a pre-determined number of times. Then writers work in pairs or groups to assemble the poem(s).

Variation: One question, multiple answers.

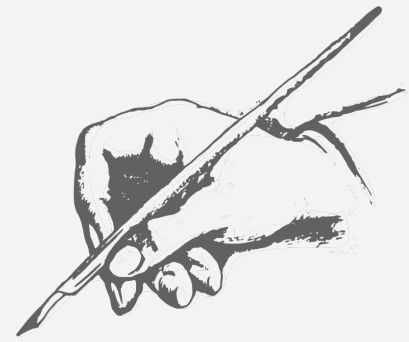
If...Would... Poem

One writer (or more) writes down an If clause beginning "If..." or "When...". At the same time, and without seeing the other clause, another writer (or writers) write a conditional main clause, using "will" or "would". The process iterates a pre-determined number of times. Then writers work in pairs or groups to assemble the poem(s).





Resources



Lesson Sequence 1: Where I Am Now

The poems in this resource section are mostly short and very short, and use concrete, sensory imagery. See also the extensive collection of haiku-style poems at <https://terebess.hu/english/usa/haiku.html>.

Poems at poems.org and poetryfoundation.org often include audio recordings on the poem page and post-poem discussion. Translated or bilingual poems are often read in English and the native language (usually Spanish). See also [Poetry Out Loud](#) and [Fishhouse Poems](#) for more audio poetry resources.

NB: Lexile is an uncertain measure with poems, especially unpunctuated ones.

Lexile 400

Campbell McGrath, "[Dawn](#)" (present, Q&A)

Fred Chappell, "[Coming Home](#)" (past)

Ron Padgett, "[Poem](#)" (present)

Richard Brautigan, "[Haiku Ambulance](#)" (past, Q&noA)

Jim Harrison and Ted Kooser, [various joint haiku](#) (present, past, fragments, collaborative)

Billy Collins, [various haiku](#) (present, past)

Henry Parland, "[My Hat](#)" (past, present, Q&A)

Marram al-Masri, "[Knocks on the door](#)" (present, Wh-?, metaphor)

William Carlos Williams, "[The Red Wheelbarrow](#)" (present)

William Carlos Williams, "[To a Poor Old Woman](#)" (present progressive, modal can, past, present)

Cristina Rossetti, "[Color](#)" (*What is—?* Q&A pattern, present, metaphor, rhyme)

Lexile 400-600

Lorine Neidecker [selected poems](#)

Issa, [selected haiku](#) (very short poems—not all use concrete imagery, but all are fun):

Issa, "[\[On a branch...\]](#)" (present progressive)

Richard Brautigan, "[San Francisco](#)" (present, past, prepositions, found poem)

Lexile 600-800

Richard Wright (yes, *the* Richard Wright!) [selected American haiku](#) (present, present progressive, fragments)

Carl Sandburg, "[Fog](#)" (present, present progressive, metaphor or personification)

Mechtild of Madgeburg, "[\[Of all that God has shown me\]](#)" (present, modal)

Richard Brautigan, "[A Boat](#)" (past, present progressive)

Francisco Alarcón, "[Ode to My Shoes](#)" (present, present progressive)

Joy Harjo, "[Ah, Ah](#)" (Ah, ah [verb] pattern, present, abstract, adjectives)

Lexile 800-1000

Gary Soto, "[Ode to Pablo's Tennis Shoes](#)" (present, past, past & present progressive, simile, metaphor)

William Carlos Williams, "[This is Just to Say](#)" (past perfect, apology, letter)

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Lexile 1000+

Izumi Shikibu, "[\[Although the wind...\]](#)" (present, contrast, "Although...")

Stuart Mill, "[In the Low Countries](#)" (present progressive, modal will)

Suzanne Buffam, "[Things that Are Distant but Near](#)" (fragments, no tense; list)

Suzanne Buffam, "[Things that Make the Heart Beat Faster](#)" (fragments, no tense; list)

Bert Meyers, "[The Garlic](#)" (present, present progressive, concrete + abstract)

Eileen Myles, "[Honey Bear](#)" (past + progressive, present progressive)

Ada Limón, "[How to Triumph Like a Girl](#)" (*I like... I like...* structure, simile, Q&noA)

Wallace Stevens, "[Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird](#)"

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Lesson Sequence 2: Where I'm From

The poems in this resource section are related to a theme of identity, ancestry, or home. Many of these poems could also be regarded as odes (an ode celebrates or praises a person, animal, thing, or place).

See [Further Reading](#) for more information on the Where I'm From Activity Guide.

George Ella Lyon, "[Where I'm From](#)"

Lyon reads "[Where I'm From](#)" (1:29)

(If too advanced, use Alarcón's "[My Grandma's Songs](#)" or "[In a Neighborhood in Los Angeles](#)")

Lexile 400-600

Lorine Neidecker [selected short poems](#)

Issa, [selected haiku](#) (very short poems—not all use concrete imagery, but all are fun):

Andrea Cohen, "[Wedding Dress](#)"

Lucille Clifton, "[\[if mama/ could see...\]](#)" (if...could modals)

Francisco X. Alarcón, "[In a Neighborhood in Los Angeles](#)" (bilingual, past, modal would)

Francisco X. Alarcón, "[My Grandma's Songs](#)" (bilingual, present progressive, modal would)

Francisco reads "[My Grandma's Songs](#)" (1:01)

Francisco X. Alarcón, "[\[I carry my roots\]](#)"

Francisco X. Alarcón, "[Ode to My Shoes](#)"

Francisco reads "[Ode to My Shoes](#)" (bilingual; Spanish first) (:47)

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Lexile 600-800

Gary Soto, "[Ode to Pablo's Tennis Shoes](#)" (present, past, present progressive):

(low-lexile words, mixes tense, simple and compound sentences):

Louis MacNeice, "[Soap Suds](#)" (present, past, lists)

Brenda Shaughnessy, "[I Have a Time Machine](#)" (present, progressive, fragments, modal can & can't, if)

Ted Kooser, "[The Sigh](#)"

Ted Kooser, "[Two](#)"

Jesús Cos Cause, "[Looking at Photos](#)" (translated, original provided, fragments, present,)

Sherman Alexie, from "[Bestiary](#)" (present, present progressive, Q&A)

Cammy Thomas, "[French Toast](#)" (past, "used to", present, progressive)

Lucille Clifton, "[Ioh antic God...](#)" (past, progressive, present, modal can)

Low Intermediate, Low Advanced

Zachary Schomburg, "[The One About the Robbers](#)" (present, past, "used to", progressive, modal would, markers)

Franz Wright, "[Auto-Lullaby](#)" (present with progressive, present with past, modal will, rhyme)

Francisco X. Alarcón, "[My Father](#)" (present; simile; bilingual; less imagery)(Spanish/English bilingual text)

Francisco X. Alarcón, "[In a Neighborhood in Los Angeles](#)" (present tense; simile; bilingual)

Philip Larkin, "[Home is so Sad](#)" (present, past)

Dunya Mikhail, "[I Was In a Hurry](#)" (past (with markers), present progressive, simile, list after conditional—N.B.: the conditional clause fragment may have been the translator's decision)

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Intermediate to Advanced

Ted Kooser, "[Look For Me](#)"

Robert Hayden, "[Those Winter Sundays](#)" (past, past with modals, past perfect)

Robert Hayden reading "[Those Winter Sundays](#)" (audio only) (1:00)

Video of Kevin Young reading Hayden's "[Those Winter Sundays](#)" (more dramatic, different cadence) (starts at :17, goes to 1:07)

Ted Kooser, "[A Room in the Past](#)" (present, past, progressive, counterfactuals, past perfect)(with audio)

Eduardo Corral, "[In Colorado My Father Scoured and Stacked Dishes](#)" (past, present, modal past; fragments; mixes Spanish and English)

Eduardo Corral reading "[In Colorado My Father Scoured and Stacked Dishes](#)" (better video, reads fast, discusses code-switching; poem starts at :32, goes to 2:48)

Eduardo reading "[In Colorado My Father Scoured and Stacked Dishes](#)" more slowly (starts at :46)

Seamus Heaney, "[Digging](#)" (present, past (with markers), modal past)

Heaney reads "[Digging](#)" (discusses manual vs intellectual labor; use CC) (poem starts at :41)

Gwendolyn Brooks, "[The Bean Eaters](#)" (present, present progressive)

Gwendolyn Brooks reads "[The Bean Eaters](#)" (at 0:40, goes to 1:28)

April Bernard, "[English as a Second Language](#)" (past, 1000+)

Advanced, college readiness

Seamus Heaney, "[Mint](#)" (high-lexile words, mixed tense):

Seamus Heaney reading "[Mint](#)" (use CC; Heaney's speech is strongly Irish)

Pablo Neruda, "[Ode to a Large Tuna in the Market](#)" (high-lexile words, complex sentences)

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Lesson 3: Where I'm Going

Beginning

Anna Swir, "[Beach Sandals](#)" (past, present, future, modal will, simile)

Marram al-Masri, "[Knocks on the door](#)" (present, Wh-?, metaphor)

Langston Hughes, "[I, Too](#)" (present, modal will)

Langston Hughes recites "[I, Too](#)" (with photo of LH then poem text on-screen) (starts at :28; goes to 1:08)

Langston Hughes, "[Harlem](#)" (Wh-?, Does it...? Or...? Maybe...? Does it...? Or...? pattern)

Intermediate

Joy Harjo, "[Invisible Fish](#)" (Present, past, future with modal will)

Ted Kooser, "[Daddy Longlegs](#)" (present, modal would)

Ted Kooser, "[New Moon](#)" (past, present, "If...may")

Elisabet Valezquez, "[Professional Spanish Knocks on the Door](#)" (past, present, 400-600, bilingual)

Francisco X. Alarcón, "[Words are Birds](#)" (present, 400-600)

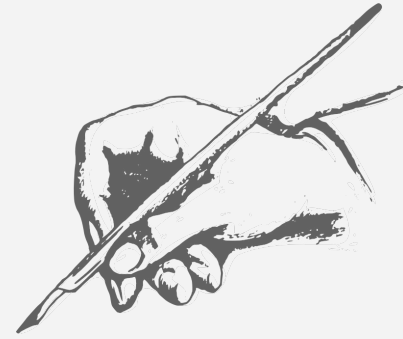
Francisco reads "[Words are Birds](#)" (1:05)

Margarita Engle, "[Drum Dream Girl](#)" (longer poem, past, present progressive)

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Further Reading



Practitioner Guides and Craft Books

Collom, Jack, and Noethe, Sheryl. *Poetry Everywhere*. T&W Books, NY. 2005.

Dobyns, Stephen. *Best Words, Best Order: Essays on Poetry*. Palgrave Macmillan, NY. 1996.

Holmes, Vicki, and Moulton, Margaret. *Writing Simple Poems: Pattern Poetry for Language Acquisition*. Cambridge University Press, NY. 2001.

Koch, Kenneth. *Wishes, Lies, and Dreams*. HarperCollins, NY. 1970.

Kooser, Ted. *The Poetry Home Repair Manual: Practical Advice for Beginning Poets*. University of Nebraska Press. 2007.

Kowitz, Steve. *In the Palm of Your Hand: A Poet's Portable Workshop*. Tilbury House Publishers. 2005.

Maley, Alan, and Duff, Alan. *The Inward Ear: Poetry in the Language Classroom*. Cambridge University Press, NY. 1989.

Montgomery, Mary Lynn, and Jetter, Mary. "I Am From" Activity Guide: A Tool to Foster Student Interaction in the Classroom. University of Minnesota. 2016.
[https://global.umn.edu/icc/documents/I Am From Faculty Guide.pdf](https://global.umn.edu/icc/documents/I%20Am%20From%20Faculty%20Guide.pdf).

Oliver, Mary. *A Poetry Handbook*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. 1994.

Poetry Anthologies for Beginning Writers

Burt, Stephanie. *The Poem is You: 60 Contemporary American Poems and How to Read Them*. Belknap. 2016.

McClatchy, J.D.. *The Vintage Book of Contemporary American Poetry*. Vintage. 2003.

Milosz, Czeslaw. *A Book of Luminous Things: An International Anthology of Poetry*. Mariner. 1998.