

Continuing Teacher Education

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By

Shahnaz Shoro

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The Book is dedicated to

Nancy Ron Gibbs, a great source of inspiration for her students!

A Canadian Instructor, counsellor and therapist, Nancy Ron Gibbs, after her 25/26 years of longitudinal study commented that “when we are kids we have soothers like teddy bears, security blankets, nipples and then they are taken away and often replaced with various drugs, alcohol, sex and junk food”.

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FOREWORD

Shahnaz has been a mentor to me, helping me with creative projects and working to translate my book of poetry into Urdu. I am amazed at how she is totally immersed in literature and writing. In between completing her third academic book, preparing podcasts and completing poetry and short-story books, she can find time to take courses and compile this wonderful collection of English support materials for teachers.

Writing is improved through practice. Just as you don't learn to play an instrument by simply learning how to read music and studying the rules, you don't learn to write by only reviewing pieces of writing. You need to sit at the piano and put your theory into practice getting to the level of expertise that you seek. Shahnaz has put together a collection of activities to help student-teachers practise and hone their writing skills. Her political mind, passion for languages, participation in literary groups and ongoing research has made her a well-respected authority on human rights abuses in her community and abroad. In addition to her multilingual skills, her research work has been critical in helping to review established laws which are based on gender inequality and in opening a dialogue on finding solutions. It was through her research on human rights that Shahnaz was invited to present as a keynote speaker at the United Nations Association Toronto Regional Branch (UNACTO) Conference in partnership with York University and the Glendon School of Public and International Affairs in March 2019. Her presentation was the highlight of the conference inviting lively debate and pointed questions from the audience, which she handled with poise and diplomacy. I was very impressed by how she disrupted misinformation and opinion with research, which quieted the dissenters. Despite her very difficult subject matter, she can deliver information which is palatable to all without watering down the message.

Shahnaz has quite a following on social media and is often the voice of reasoned fact. She is very well-read and is immersed in writing and translating many projects from poetry to literature. Her published collection encourages educators to engage students in learning by connecting their passion to new content which is culturally responsive. It

provides teachers with additional material to add to their toolbox to engage diverse student populations to develop, demonstrate and hone a wide variety of language and literacy skills.

Dr Jasmine Jackman

Educator, poet and short story author

Immediate Past-President of UNACTO

PREFACE

Education systems all over the world have changed so much over the centuries. Conceivably the earliest formal schools were developed in Egypt's Middle Kingdom (2061-2010 BCE) and many centers of education have been made and developed since then. I divide the education system into three ages; the classical education systems (2061 BCE to 500 CE) in which ancient civilizations' learning centers such as the Indian subcontinent's Vedic, Buddhist and Patika, China, Greece, Rome and Europe can be included; the formal education in the Middle Ages (500–1500 CE) in which Europe, the Islamic world, China, India and Central and South American civilizations are encompassed, and finally the education system of the whole world after the fifteenth century, which was principally inspired by the European and especially British, and notably those of Oxford and Cambridge, education systems.

In ancient times, shepherds were considered wiser and more knowledgeable than court advisors and nature was deemed the best teacher. People used to travel from place to place and country to country to satisfy their thirst for learning and for being educated. Some old civilizations were credited as the center of knowledge. Education and training were interconnected. In the classical education structure, only a few subjects were available to learn, and learning those subjects needed very rigorous training and a considerable amount of time. For example, it used to take many years to master the logographic system (the term which best describes the nature of the Chinese writing system) or cuneiform script. So only a limited number of individuals were hired as scribes to be trained in reading and writing. The education was highly class- and gender-based. Only royal offspring and the sons of the rich and of professionals such as scribes, physicians and temple administrators were schooled. Fine arts, literature, philosophy and logic were also considered as the subjects for the elite class. The core of the education was to learn values and to differentiate between vices and virtues and know more about the world. A connection was strongly established between nature, reasoning, logic, human dignity, humanity, spirituality and patriotism. A less materialistic, refined and cultural approach towards every aspect of life was an integral part of education. Analysis was based on rational grounds and finding correct facts and figures was the core element of

learning. Teaching was a mission. However, this promoted class-culture as educated people were considered superior and privileged and were the pillars of the ruling class.

Girls' and women's education was limited to learning home-chores and how to behave in particular ways. It took centuries to realise that girls' education was equally important. Even so, when the need was recognised, then again class-based education was provided. Only girls from the royal and elite classes were given the opportunity. The subject choice was very limited, and it was almost a norm that girls could study only a few subjects. Girls' education was strictly associated with socially constructed norms with the view that their 'femininity' should not be impaired. The genders were required to behave and act differently. The concept of Metro¹ is fairly new and still not appreciated in many societies, including most advanced and financially established countries.

In the third phase, in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, education became broader and more organized. Every country built a chain of schools; different curriculums were designed and education was made available to all. Those who had no access to the schools were/are from very poor countries where education was/is neither mandatory nor free. Most third-world countries had inclined towards the Cambridge or Oxford education model. The countries which remained under the direct influence of Europe or more specifically of Britain as colonies incorporated the English language into their education system and learning English became an integral part of their education. Proficiency in English became a status symbol and English-medium private schools emerged everywhere, which boosted the rise of class-culture. Education became commercial. In the latter half of the twentieth century, the whole education system was linked with materialism. The connection between education and wealth had never been as strong as it became in this capitalist era. Conceivably, by the end of the twentieth century a common question was 'if you are educated then why are you not rich?'

¹ According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary 'metro' is "a usually urban heterosexual male given to enhancing his personal appearance by fastidious grooming, beauty treatments, and fashionable clothes. A *metrosexual* ... is happy getting a pedicure and a manicure. He's hip, urban, sophisticated and, above all, stylish. However, in present time where gender identity and gender orientation are a huge subject, the term Metro is being used for a person who refuses binary boundaries. Many outlets' brands tag their clothes as Metro, which implies that the particular piece of accessories or outfit is suitable for any gender.

Over the last few decades, every subject has developed enormously and the branches of all the subjects have been divided into more specific disciplines. Various new methodologies have been introduced and incorporated into the education system. Thus, from more formal to informal, from disciplined to more freedom and a less ordered approach is considered advanced and modern. Information, gathered by paper, electronic or social media or search engines, is regarded as more important than knowledge.

Government- or agency-controlled media have been the source of ‘information’ and most people started to believe what the media say. The majority are less bothered to search for the reality and media reports are thought to be the truth. This blind trust in the media snatched away analytical skills and the quest to discover reality has been lost in the commotion of various government-owned and private channels.

Since the mid-twentieth century, societies around the globe have undergone an accelerating pace of change in economy and technology. The effects of this on the workplace, and thus on demands on the educational system to prepare students for the workforce, have been significant. Beginning in the 1980s, in many countries, educators and major employers issued a series of reports identifying key skills and implementation strategies in order to steer students and workers towards meeting the demands of the changing and increasingly digital workplace and society. Twenty-first-century skills are a series of higher-order skills, abilities and learning dispositions which have been identified as necessary for success in modern society and workplaces by educators, business leaders, academics and governmental agencies. Many of these skills are also associated with deeper learning, including analytic reasoning, complex problem-solving and teamwork, compared with traditional knowledge-based academic skills.

The Indian philosopher Osho commented that:

“No society wants you to become wise: it is against the investment of all societies. If people are wise they cannot be exploited. If they are intelligent they cannot be subjugated, they cannot be forced into a mechanical life, to live like robots. They will assert their individuality. They will have the fragrance of rebellion around them. They will like to live in freedom. Freedom comes with wisdom, intrinsically. They are inseparable, and no society wants people to be free. The communist society, the fascist society, the capitalist society, the Hindu, the Mohammedan, the Christian – no society – would like people to use their own intelligence because the

moment they start using their intelligence they become dangerous – dangerous to the establishment, dangerous to the people who are in power, dangerous to the ‘haves’; dangerous to all kinds of oppression, exploitation, suppression; dangerous to the churches, dangerous to the states, dangerous to the nations. In fact, a wise man is afire, alive, aflame. But he cannot sell his life, he cannot serve them. He would like rather die than be enslaved.”

These days, in the name of education, people are kept ignorant. They learn what the authorities want them to learn. They do not learn what the authorities want them not to learn. They think that they are being wise by memorizing material which will eventually make them foolish. This is even more dangerous in that not only societies, but parents, by being trapped in the system, are also investing in making their own children ignorant and pushing them into a mechanical life to act as robots and to be subjugated by the ruling powers rather than challenging them. They lose their individual critical thinking through this perverted education system and compromise their freedom. In the name of rules, regulation and civilization, modern education is reducing people to creatures who live simply to meet their bodily needs and waste their lives and mental and spiritual faculties in search of food, shelter, sex and drugs. Consequently, they unknowingly become strong supporters of the powers which are controlling the economy of the world by exploiting the vast majority of people who remain oppressed. Commercial educational institutes therefore every year produce thousands of degree-holding zombies and not wise people who have fire in them to challenge Zeus and bring fire to mankind. By getting hold of a piece of paper, they submit their souls to the Lucifer of today.

Philosophy, logic, Eastern wisdom and political science seem to be bygone subjects as those who study them cannot see the use made of these subjects in the corporate market. Education in the true sense, knowledge and wisdom have thus been made useless things in today’s world. All the degree-holders have is a set of skills to enable them to fit into the world-market in order to give their lives to it and get money back in return.

In real life, therefore, education systems across the world are preparing students and producing them as tools to be fitted and fixed in the machinery of the workplace and workforce. These preparations are designed to teach students the hard skills which are related to economic, technological and service-based industries. As a result of this technological education, people at the age of 20 to 25 or even younger are

becoming the CEOs of companies and earning a lot more than people with a Master's or a PhD degree or with any other time- and money-consuming degree. This market-oriented education and market-educated labor force is an ideal combination for today's capitalist world as it keeps people focused solely on money and physical luxuries. The fast-paced market economy cannot afford people with critical-thinking intellects and reasoning. So many PhDs are jobless across the world but school leavers are being hired as the market is more related to technical jobs where intellect and reasoning are not required.

It is essential to understand the market trends, sources and trades which lead to financial stability, and at the same time ignore the fine arts, and the other innate abilities of learners are something which is not appreciated. Children have so much to offer and they have every right to be free to discover their potential. There should be a fine blend of arts, commerce and science in education. Teaching or making all students follow one curriculum means that every single individual is molded and folded into one pack. This 'one shoe fits all' approach is not going to work for long: it is inherently self-destructive. One curriculum for all kills creativity and destroys individuality. One shoe cannot fit all.

The current aptitude tests introduced in many educational institutions need more research and refinement in order for them to discover each individual's talents and skills. Human skills and traits need to be discovered and developed to their fullest and not just be merely molded as a means to earn money. For many educational researchers, the traditional or conventional education system has lost its logical and analytical approach, reasoning and critical thinking. It appreciates average minds and punishes unique minds. It is more like indoctrination. Questions and topics which clash with the predominant ideologies are frowned on, if not actually forbidden. When inquisitive minds argue and share thoughts which differ from the accepted beliefs, they are categorized as 'bad apples' and the process makes sure that the bad apples are rotten and disposable. It is very difficult for a second-class mind to recognize, far less appreciate and nurture, a first-class mind. Thus, the education system which has long been commercialized and has been made a source of generating income is losing its real power and immediacy.

There is already a flood of information in this third decade of the twenty-first century. Google has become the greatest teacher because it is where all the terms, words, subjects and lectures on every topic are just one click

away. Paperless academies have already been introduced. How long can the traditional education system, regular classroom-culture and conventional education methods prevail is a question which might not seem new or bizarre to readers. This is a unique time, especially after the impositions brought by the Covid-19 pandemic, when all sorts of subjects can be learned online at your own space, time and ease. And if only 'knowing' about them is your only purpose, then these are available online for free, but if you want to have a certificate, a diploma or a degree to prove your knowledge, then you need to pay for a 'rubber stamp' from a school, college or university which is certainly not free. In many cases, degree holders are now less educated than non-degree holders.

Google, Chatbot and advancement of AI in this sphere is another flawless, error free, kind and untiring teacher, tutor and mentor which can confidentially do your work for you and not only answer all your queries, but also be a step ahead – it can write personalized texts for you such as essays, short stories, poems, assignments, dissertations and theses. What happens next is another question.

Teaching literature is still mandatory in most teaching curriculums. Literature teaches values, virtues and humanity. In a broad sense, every piece of writing is literature, including folklore, riddles and idioms, but more narrowly literature consists of works written in an art form, such as fiction, drama, and poetry and prose. One of the main purposes of literature is called entertainment. Its imaginative, secular and far-reaching approach teaches you how to think out of the box. Although the electronic world is providing a variety of entertainment which has never been observed or even imagined before, the craze for and readership of literature is still admired in civilized countries, especially in Europe and Asia. In Canada, where education became a contentious issue after the Confederation in 1867, especially regarding the status of French schools outside Quebec, every school offers a wide range of literature. The most wonderful thing is that a teacher is authorized to select what literature to teach.

Special Education provides academic as well as social accommodation for differently abled students to address their individual differences, disabilities and special needs. This involves creating an Individual

Education Plan² (IEP) and a systematically monitored arrangement of teaching procedures, adapted equipment and materials, and accessible settings. Well-trained teachers look after such learners in the classroom and outside the class in order to help them to learn and grow and to utilize the support specially given to them with confidence. When I applied to teach in Ontario, Canada, I was given a license to teach a few subjects on the condition of completing some Additional Basic Qualification (ABQ) courses. Local and international teachers who are given teaching licenses are usually expected to complete these courses. Various universities offer them. I completed two additional qualification or additional basic qualification, commonly known as AQ/ABQ courses; an English Course for the Senior Division at Ontario faculty of education and Special Education, Part One.

The English Course for the Senior Division is comprised of six modules. Also, Special Education, Part One contains six modules. In these intense but compact courses, various literary assignments were given with a deadline. Each component of every module had clear instructions setting out the expectations, and a trainer was available to explain if the instructions appeared vague or were not fully understood by the trainees. We posted our written assignments to a Discussion Thread and responding to one or two other posts was mandatory. A few assignments were followed by the instruction, ‘Respond to at least one other submission by sharing two key takeaways’ or ‘Respond with a question or share feedback with two of your colleagues’ or ‘Post to the Discussion. Read and respond to at least two other posts sharing any impressions you have of the poets or poems shared’.

The instruction about the task Instructional Activity Review, was: ‘Post your review of the activity to the discussion. Interact with at least two candidates, giving feedback on how you might use or adapt their described activity’. As participants, we not only learned from the instructor and the reading material but also from each other’s tasks and assignments. In this regard, a clear piece of instruction was ‘Once everyone has participated, download the information to your Journal for future reference’.

² What should an IEP include? According to the Ministry of Education’s standards, an IEP must include specific educational expectations for the pupil, an outline of the special education program and services to be received by the pupil, and a statement of the methods by which the pupil’s progress will be reviewed.

The general discussion thread is not included in this book because of the issue of privacy as all the trainees made their own comments on different topics. I really enjoyed writing all these tasks as it gave me an opportunity to come to know the perspectives of other people. These tasks and assignments earned me an A+ result. After completing the courses at two well-reputed Canadian universities, I obtained permission from the course teachers to compile the assignments into a book to help other teachers. This is that book.

The first task for the trainees on each course was to write an introduction about themselves and a plan for achieving excellence, and that was visible to all. Every participant was allowed to comment on others' introductory notes. Through this activity, each one of us came to know about the others and their academic, cultural and teaching background. This module also contained a curriculum document, a course syllabus/ewc4u, an exploration of language instruction, a shared-lesson learning activity and a lesson plan template. From that point onwards, for the other modules, we were asked to watch a number of short videos, read sublime literary works and write critical appreciations and notes about them. To me, it was a great experience as, over time, I had opportunities to read and talk about literature with the real hope of teaching and cultivating a love for reading literature in students. In this book, the details of each module are given before the assignments of the module. After each one, I have added a few rubrics which it is hoped will be helpful to future teachers.

PART ONE

MODULE ONE

INTRODUCTION TO SENIOR ENGLISH

Introduction

Hello, Course Candidates,

I feel privileged to present to you a little information about my academic career. After completing my MA in English language and literature I started my career as a lecturer and students' advisor at a highly reputed college in Karachi, Pakistan. In addition to teaching English and Urdu languages and literature to undergrad and postgrad students, my work included syllabus design, providing tutorial and remedial assistance to students, marking tests, assignments, and examinations to evaluate students' progress, and offering support and counseling to the students. In 2006, I went to the UK, where I not only obtained an MA in English Language Teaching from the University of Nottingham (UK) but also a teacher-training with London Teacher Training College with distinction to obtain Level 4 Certificate in Teaching English. I did rewrite and compile the essays that I wrote for MA English Language Teaching and compiled them in a book, under the title of *Teaching and Learning English in Non-English Speaking Countries* published by Cambridge Scholars Publishers (UK). Upon my return from the UK, I joined the same college and was promoted to the post of Assistant Professor until I became the participant of the Charles Wales Scholarship 2013 for obtaining my doctoral studies at the University of York, UK. During this doctoral research phase, I made Canada my home and since then I have been teaching with various online agencies. Last year, I began working with Peel District Board as supervisor and longing for teaching again.

Achieving Excellence

I have worked with Middle Eastern, South-East Asian, British, African, American and North American students and colleagues. This diverse experience has taught me the worth of equality, equity, diversity, inclusion and kindness and how to work productively with students whose minds are

full of novel ideas. My teaching philosophy is therefore very much aligned with the four goals of Achieving Excellence, Ensuring Equity, Promoting Well-Being and Enhancing Public Confidence, introduced in the Ministry of Education's 'Achieving Excellence' statements. I regard it as 'A Charter of Students' Rights and the Duties of Education Providers'.

Deciphering the thought-provoking contributions made by Ontario's brilliant and visionary students speaks volumes and can lead social researchers to write detailed theses discussing what is being missed in the conventional education system by failing to consider the perspective of students.

To create a mentally, physically and spiritually healthy environment, I agree whole-heartedly with the Ministry that Achieving Excellence builds on 'closing gaps in students' achievement', which could be achieved by providing students with a safe, supportive and stress-free atmosphere, tailoring learning programs for every student, and encouraging them to ask questions without fear. To achieve that goal, it is crucial that people with different racial and social differences and sexual orientation must not be discriminated against.

Curriculum Document

The following were the instructions for completing the task:

'Read through The Ontario Curriculum Grades 11 and 12: English. Review the First Nations, Métis and Inuit Studies English courses (NBE3C, NBE3U, and NBE3E) starting on pp. 143, 117 and 167 of the Grades 9 to 12 First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Studies Ontario Curriculum (2019).

After reading through each of the Senior English courses, select two related courses on which to perform an in-depth comparison. For example, you might choose to compare the curriculum for ENG 4U (Grade 12 University) and ENG 4C (Grade 12 College), ENG 3U (Grade 11 University) with ENG 4U (Grade 12 University) or ENG 3U (Grade 11 University) with NBE3U (Grade 11 University Native Studies English).

Using a tool such as Word's SmartArt, create a Venn diagram in your Journal to track significant differences and similarities you notice between the courses you have chosen. As you read the curriculum documents,

ask yourself what is *not* required or suggested in each program of study. If you believe these missing ideas are important to teaching English, note in your Journal a place in the curriculum where these topics, skills, or competencies could be integrated. Note any metaphors used in this curriculum document (often evident by looking at the choice of verbs and nouns). What do the metaphors tell you about the curriculum developers' beliefs about English? Do they match your own ideas?

In written, audio, or visual format, post a notable finding from your comparison. Include with your post a question you still have about the curriculum. Submit to the Discussion.

Review candidates' posts and try to answer at least one question that has been raised by another candidate.

After going through the Ontario Curriculum Grades 11 and 12 English and the First Nations, Métis and Inuit Studies English courses, I selected ENG 4U (Grade 12 University) and ENG 4C (Grade 12 College) to perform a comparison, for the reason that I intended to teach Senior Level English.

Overall, both ENG 4U and ENG 4C have balanced curriculums and contain a great deal of informational, literary and media texts. In addition, the prerequisites for the courses, specific expectations, topics, teaching instructions, methods and techniques are almost the same. Along with the language conventions, the curriculums discuss strategies and skills as well as the range of optional courses to suit students' skills and interests in order to empower them to better customize their high-school education. The core of both curriculums is to enable students to acquire expertise not only in the four major language-learning components of reading, writing, speaking and listening, but also to enable them to think critically and analytically, express themselves effectively with confidence and have a wide worldview.

The main difference between the two curriculums is the subject-workload. ENG 4U has more units within the timeframe of 110 hours whereas ENG 4C has fewer units to cover within the same time-limit. ENG 4U has units of Criticism and Poetry which are not the part of ENG 4C. This indicates that the ENG 4U syllabus focuses more on the intellectual growth of students. Bearing in mind the views of different teaching methodologies and linguistics observations, I noticed that in ENG 4C there is more focus on linguistics than on literature. Stanford University researchers have

found that literary reading, in particular, gives the brain a workout in multiple complex cognitive functions. A number of research papers support the view that at this stage of learning, students prefer reading interesting fiction and poems which help them to retain their interest in the course and also help their intellectual growth. Alongside the literature penned by Canadian, American and European writers, I strongly believe that the curriculums should have some African and Asian poetry and pieces of prose/fiction to help students to understand more broadly the diversity of thought and cultures across the world.

In the academic world, using metaphors is regarded as a method for trying to 'practicalise' the curriculum and give it a life-like sense. It is a great way to help students to learn how to stimulate thinking. The following are some of the explored metaphors in the texts:

- built on a solid 'foundation' of knowledge;
- the teacher 'coaches' students;
- they 'encompass' the types of understanding;
- students who are 'building' skills;
- media texts are 'constructed'.

These metaphors tell me about the strong confidence of the curriculum developers' solid foundation of knowledge of the conventions of standard English and the compulsory courses of the English curriculum, organized in four key areas of learning: oral communication, reading and literature studies, writing, and media studies. The metaphors talk of the confidence in the design of the curriculum, hope for the success of students and the abilities of educationists and teachers.

Several questions occur:

- Why are there levels for English?
- Every student is different and learns in a different way. Is there any focus on forming a strategy to address this?
- Why are students not given a choice/option to write and present a piece of literature, such as short stories, drama or poetry? Are writers, dramatists, poets and novelists not needed for a balanced society?
- Is there any update on Anti-Black racism and Curriculum Violence?

Course Syllabus/EWC4U

The Writer's Craft, Grade 12, University Preparation Course follows a smooth and logical sequence. The outline has a plausible development of the course and a clear idea of what the course is all about, what resources are available and what are the expectations from students.

Star: Along with the course description, goal, expectations and outcome, the relevant information, for example the titles of the course, the allocated time frame, the assessment tasks and curriculum expectations are all systematically described in the text.

Star: The course is not designed solely to meet the requirements of examination but to enhance some of the main academic study skills of students who have to tackle the process of organizing and retaining information and taking in new information.

The visible signs of success of a course syllabus are whether there is an element of clarity and whether students can acquire a reasonably comprehensible understanding of the course. The structure of the course leads students to sharpen their skills and strengthen their abilities to read and recognize a variety of written material and develop critical thinking through assisted and independent learning and analysing models of creative and effective writing. By the practice of reading, writing, editing, revising and rewriting, they will identify the qualities of good content.

By applying their knowledge of the form, style, craft and convention of various forms of text, they will develop skills which will help them to create excellent fictional, non-fictional or media texts. By the end of this course, the overall expectations are that students, with the help of all available resources including electronic stimuli, will learn to become effective readers, writers and conversationalists and they should be able to demonstrate great understanding of a variety of fictional, non-fictional, informational and literary texts' conventions and writing techniques. They should learn how to cite sources and how to carry on research on particular topics, read between the lines and comprehend the metaphorical meaning of texts and discover their own writing potential.

Wish: The course 'How to engage reluctant readers/students'. Of all the literary forms, drama is considered the most engaging form for the reader in classes, especially if it is staged in the classroom and students play the

roles of the characters in it. How should this activity be assessed and marked for writing accuracy?

Link: Writer's Craft (EWC4U)

Exploration of Language Instructions

Some of the major traditional teaching methodologies have been in practice ever since the need for teaching and learning was realised. A number of philosophical teaching methodologies have been discussed, such as community language learning, suggestopaedic teaching and the silent way, and the criticisms which these theories have attracted have also been considered. These teaching techniques have been accepted enthusiastically and incorporated into the learning environment by linguists in countries and societies where educational experiments are possible and where the desire to achieve better results is not a matter of controversy.

Various types of approach have been used in teaching. During the First and Second World Wars and in the decades since, there were many experiments in the process of teaching language. Some of the major trends and methodologies have been:

- the grammar/translation approach;
- the direct method approach;
- the reading approach;
- the audio-lingual approach;
- the oral or situational approach;
- the cognitive approach;
- affective humanistic approaches;
- comprehension approaches;
- communicative approaches; and
- syllabus design approaches.

Language teaching has always been a fluctuating field in which new theories emerge regularly and attract the attention of educationists. Some of the teaching methodologies become popular as soon as they emerge but others face a reluctant reaction to being accepted. Such has been the case with humanistic approaches to language teaching which are based on an optimistic philosophy of education with a strong focus on individual and personal growth.

The key components of the pedagogy of multi-literacies include situated practice, over instruction, critical framing and transformed practice. Experiencing, conceptualizing, analysing and applying are four other equally important elements. It is said that multi-literacy is the concept of understanding information through linguistic meaning, visual meaning, audio meaning, and gestural, tactile and spatial meaning in which students need to draw on their own experiences and semiotic literacy practices to represent and communicate meaning.

The purpose of multi-literacy pedagogy is to help to create a more effective educational learning environment in the classroom. The extent to which Canadian schools have incorporated notions of multi-literacy into their curriculums and instruction seems to be an important question. It can be said that in Canada's multicultural and multilingualistic educational environment, incorporating a particular teaching method can certainly be helpful as the main feature of the pedagogy is to bring other cultural and linguistic knowledge, information and wisdom into English education to bridge the gap of education. In the Secondary English classroom (age 14-18), especially in Ontario, a great number of students are either bi- or multilingual. They speak English in school, their family language at home and one or two international languages with their neighbors and friends. I am still unsure about how this pedagogy can be implemented and what syllabus and curriculum changes will make it effective. Jim Cummin's (year?) paper published in the Canadian Education Association journal explored the pedagogical options which build on and extend the cultural and linguistic capital which students bring to school. He said that technology offers powerful tools to engage students more actively with literacy and to promote overall academic development. In this regard, the main argument of the Canadian education project entitled 'From Literacy to Multiliteracies: Designing Learning Environments for Knowledge Generation within the New Economy' is that "the absence of coherent policies within schools in relation to the increasing linguistic and cultural diversity of the student body risks compromising principles of equity to which all Canadian schools are committed".

Shared-Lesson Learning Activity

Lesson: Covering one of the modules in English (Poetry)

Name of the Teacher:

Class: Grade11 English3U

Class Size: 18

Class duration: 70 minutes
Assessment and Evaluation

Objective

The principal objective of the proposed lesson is to improve students' understanding of poetry. This compulsory course will assist students to understand:

- the precise metres and types of poetry, such as sonnets, epics, haikus, villanelles and blank verse;
- the distinctive elements of poetry, such as diction, imagery, figures of speech, symbolism, allegory, rhythm and structure;
- the importance of expressing sensitive themes, subjects and feelings in poetry;
- how to comprehend and appreciate poetic expressions and the vision of the poet;
- how to comprehend the metaphorical meaning of the verses;
- how to develop the ability to think independently;
- how to develop critical appreciation;
- how to read between the lines; and
- how poetry addresses and appeals to every individual differently.

It might be helpful to start poetry instruction by finding out what kinds of experience the students have already had with poetry. Do they know poems in their native language? Is there a particular poem from their country or heritage that they like? Would they be willing to share a translation? Who are the famous poets from their country? Have the students' written poems before? Was it in English or their native language? Did they enjoy writing poetry?

Working with poetry from different countries and languages also provides an excellent opportunity to encourage students to share their cultural heritage with the class and to take pride in an art form which is part of their identity and might have been passed down across many generations. For example, Carol McCarthy, a teacher in Queens, NY has capitalized on her students' poetic heritages by creating a unit called 'Poetry in Translation', in which students "translate the work of poets from their native country or ethnic heritage, and then write and translate their own poems" (McCarthy, Academy of American Poets website). She offered a number of ideas for guiding students in their exploration of poetry from

their own cultures, which then provides a foundation for the comparisons which they make between poems from different cultures later in the unit.

What resources do you need to take to the lesson? (5-7 minutes)

The lesson introduces a selected poem and the students will explore the poet and the background to the poem as well as the poem itself and a commentary/critical appreciation written about it. The handouts which will be provided to the students will therefore consist of:

- the poem;
- a brief critique written about the poem;
- a list of the unfamiliar words, expressions, phrases and idioms which the poem contains;
- an audio or video-recorded version of the poem; and
- visual, auditory and musical supporting material.

How to read a poem? (15-20 minutes)

The teacher will discuss the background of the poet through the available information about her or his personal life. The geo-political and socio-economic conditions of the era in which the poet lived or wrote about will also be discussed in order to set the stage for the poem. Explore the students' background knowledge: What is their experience with poetry – Do they know any poetry from their own countries? Have they written poetry themselves? Music and rap are forms of poetry.

- Before the teacher reads the poem aloud, it is important to identify and define words which the students do not know;
- Read the poem aloud now that the students are familiar with the vocabulary.
- Have the students tell you in their own words what each stanza means.
- Discuss the poem.

Some students are keen to repeat or read rhymes in the classroom. They should be encouraged to take part in reading voluntarily. Reading a poem from beginning to end according to a specific situation can help learners to identify words as well as the metaphorical meanings of the chunks and phrases and to use them in similar situations. For example, if the poem is about 'harsh weather', with carefully selected visual, auditory and musical supporting materials, students can be encouraged to recall some of their

own experiences of harsh weather. This kind of transfer will help them to remember those parts of the poem and to discuss it for longer and more deeply. For example, Woolard (1997) supported the value of repetition and provided examples of some poems which could be recited by students during learning activities which might lead them to empathise, to feel, to be amused and to be happy. Woolard gave examples of student-produced poems designed to inspire learners which contain frequently repeated elements which act to retain learners' interest. For a model, take the example of the student-produced systematic poem entitled 'Happiness':

happiness is when you realise a dream;
happiness is when you are alive;
happiness is when I can really be with myself;
happiness is when you are with me;
happiness is when the whole world smiles.

The rhythmic sounds, the repetition and the effects of simple and poetic thoughts can make students want to carry on repeating and recreating verses like this. The students can be working by themselves, with a partner or in groups.

What are the activities that students will be engaged in after reading the poem? (40 minutes)

'Read, Feel, Express' is the three-word instruction.

Considering the widely accepted notion in the literature that every individual learns differently and that not every individual can appreciate literature and poetry alike, the teacher should welcome critical questions and be prepared for unexpected questions, and should let students freely express their responses to the poet, the poem and its content and the extent to which they agree or disagree with the viewpoint of the poet. They will be expected to discover the themes of the poem, such as humanity, love, melancholy, freedom or brotherhood, to find obvious and hidden messages and to feel the appeal of the poem, and that process will follow a smooth and logical sequence. The discussion will lead on to:

- the creative strength and the emotional and intellectual appeal of the poem;
- the use of vocabulary;
- the poet's intended readers;
- the literary and social value of the poem;

- the imaginative power of the poet;
- the relevance of the poem to today;
- whether or not a very refined and cultural approach is needed to appreciate poetry; and
- letting students describe the same topic in their own words and in a different style.

Assessment (5 to 7 minutes, Follow-up)

Before giving students exit tickets, the teacher can ask them direct questions based on the poems discussed:

- what are two things that you learned today?
- what do you still feel a little fuzzy about?
- what topic would you like to cover next time?
- what would you like to know more about?
- can you translate this into your own language?
- what particular aspects of the poem are close to your native culture?

Whether the objective of the plan has been achieved will be assessed from the students' responses to the poem and their written critiques. A clear plan is necessary for checking whether they have achieved the intended outcome of the lesson because this is a more complex issue with poetry than with other, more straightforward literary forms. Along with the class discussion and the written assignment, follow-up activities such as homework and related assignments will be used to differentiate students' achievement levels.