Poetry and Art: A Case Study of Saudi Students

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Abstract

This study is anchored in pedagogy through Art: the artistic expression that helps Saudi students analyse and interpret English poetry from another perspective. Saudi students are given the chance to use the strategy of visualisation to create paintings from poetry and enhance their experience in the reading and analysis of English poetry. This strategy is especially important since some Saudi students are not as proficient in written English as others. Thus, I question what it might look like to strategically implement a pedagogy which allows for particular illustrative works of Art through visualisation in the poetry classroom. Students are asked to draw what they visualise after reading a poem; it opens their eyes to realising we all have different mental images since each student has his/her own particular schemata. This also cements the notion of no right or wrong answers in the reading and analysis of poetry. Hence, I study a possible link between multimodal pedagogy focusing on image-language entwinement for Saudi students within an English poetry classroom.

Keywords

Poetry, painting, pedagogy, non-native students of English, visualisation, individual interpretation

Through a teaching methodology anchored in pedagogy through Art, this class practice explores how Saudi students engage in the use of the strategy of visualisation to enhance their experience in the reading and analysis of English poetry. This paper summarises most of the methods applied when facilitating this pedagogy in a poetry class at King Saud University, Saudi Arabia from 2018 to 2019. It also examines how interpreting a poem using visual representation encourages students to think critically about the poem's meaning. This strategy is especially important since some Saudi students are not as proficient in written English as others; thus, they may find it difficult to understand literature, particularly poetic language. Furthermore, the traditional approaches to reading and interpretation of poetry do not often use visual modes of content area as teaching tools. Thus, I question what it might look like to strategically implement

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a pedagogy which allows for particular illustrative works of Art through visualisation in the poetry classroom, exploring the "strong bond between poetry and visual arts" (Verdonk 234). In addition, it attempts to make alternative forms of expression and a teaching framework accessible for students when interpreting English poetry. They are able to construct meaningful connections by integrating personal schemata, language, writing, reading and creativity. They are given the "opportunities to acquire knowledge and skills to respond creatively to their experience of society and culture" (Clarke and Hulbert 38). Finally, the study aims to show the connection between visual art and literature within the context of a poetry class to create original artwork, and this allows the students to showcase their "inventive endeavours, and to experiment with interdisciplinary modes of working" across the borderline between poetry and painting (Sui 3).

Literature Review

Arabic and English have enough differences that present problems for the Saudi students in reading and writing poetry in the English language. Some of the characteristics of the Arabic language are its indirect, symbolic, implicit and non-linear nature, with high dependency on context, due to its Semitic nature. Bateson explains in her insights and perspectives on Arabic literacy that since Arabic is a Semitic language, its grammar is dissimilar to that of English. The different characteristics of the Arabic and English languages often cause confusion for Saudi students and create difficulties in the critical reading of poetry in English leading to students' scepticism and fear.

The significance of such differences has been noted by some Arab scholars and educators on the problems of teaching English language and literature at Arab Universities (Obeidat; Zughoul; Asfour) as they recognised and pointed out the social, cultural and religious differences inherent in studying a non-native text and suggested various ways of improving the reading and interpretation of different literary texts in the English language. Moody argues for new pedagogic techniques for literature. He explains

> that both those who teach literature, and those who teach subjects, have a steady view of the potential of literature in the total curriculum, which is neither exaggerated nor undermined. Particularly important is to ensure that teachers understand how to present literature (which may involve more than conventional teaching) so that its potential can be fully realised. (18)

Moody further emphasises his point by recalling Alex Rodger, whom he believes provides an ideal suggestion for literary studies. Rodger argues that the job of teachers of literature is not to give students "pre-digested meanings" to read and accept as concrete critical opinions of these works; rather they should be "reasonably skilled and sensitive readers, able to feel and judge for themselves, with fidelity to the textual facts, in response to any work of literature they may

choose to read" (89). As the argument suggests, new and improved teaching techniques should be incorporated in the teaching of poetry in English.

Many theoretical frameworks have been applied to create new approaches to reading poetry. Smita Mujumdar, a teacher of English literature in India recognises the racial, cultural and linguistic difficulties that face non-native students, and suggests that traditional one-sided lecturing should be replaced with new teaching skills that allow learners to feel the experience of the writer. Methods of teaching should be modified to concentrate on skill-based and self-learning techniques by using audio and video aids and participation in seminars. Mujumdar believes this will "remove the cultural and linguistic barriers and make the learning more fruitful" (213). Mujumdar's study is significant in its focus on modifying teaching techniques to concentrate on skill-based and self-learning techniques and overcome cultural and linguistic barriers.

Another non-native experience is presented by Mohammad Khatib who suggests the necessity of a new approach to teaching English poetry to non-native learners of English because poetry teaching is now dominated by the "extrinsic" properties of the text itself. Teachers often bombard students with biographical, historical, aesthetic and philosophical information. In contrast, the focus of Khatib's approach is on reading the text, which he facilitates using multiple skills such as "vocabulary expansion, reconstruction, reduction, replacement, matching, reading loud by instructor, silent and oral reading by students, writing poetry and many other techniques" (165). These various approaches to the reading of the poem give students a chance to react based on their personal emotions and feelings. Khatib believes that this self-development and exploration is far better for the student than waiting to be given the teachers' own interpretation of the poem because "much of the pleasure of poetry lies in the creative reading" (168).

Wisam's work concerning the attempts of non-native speakers of English to study English poetry is highly relevant to this study because students may share similar obstacles of language and culture. Wisam gives the example of using hermeneutics and deconstruction to teach English poetry to non-native students in an English Department in Jordan. This teaching method focuses on giving the reader a method which allows him to work independently in order to enhance his literary appreciation skills and improve his linguistic competence. Wisam believes that the traditional factual historical approach confines students to absorbing historical information without emphasising the poem itself, and thus leads the students to becoming "mere containers of data" (33). Although he is not against teaching the historical context of a poem, he thinks that the handling of a poem should emphasise individual responses. This could be done using different pedagogic techniques such as drawing up the ideas, colouring or imagining the images in the poem or miming or debating its content. An important point in Wisam's approach is that it requires more input from the students than the

teacher, whose primary role is delegated to monitoring and inspiring the students, who thus become more involved participants and can express their "reactions, feelings, imagination, sense of right and wrong, moral values and judgments even their gender and political attitude" (34). The various innovative teaching techniques work in different specific classroom situations; in each instance the researcher and educator have specific goals that his approach sought to fulfil. These approaches emphasise the idea of individual response in the poetry classroom and support the concept of tailored teaching methods which recognise the role of culturally-specific problems in non-native reading and interpretation of poetry in English. For the purpose of this research I will therefore apply culturally-relevant pedagogy as a framework for turning poetry into painting.

"Culturally-relevant teaching" is a term used by Gloria Ladson-Billings. It refers to teachers creating a bridge between students' home and school lives in order to integrate the students' culture with the syllabus while continuing to meet the expectations of the curricular requirements of the district and the state. There are many other terms used to denote this type of pedagogy including "culturally responsive," "culturally respective," "culture-sensitive," "culturally rooted," "culturally relevant," "culturally appropriate" and "culturally congruent" (Campbell; Gay; Ladson-Billings). Culturally-relevant teaching uses the background, knowledge and experience of the students to formulate teachers' lessons or teaching methods. Gloria Ladson-Billings first introduced this teaching approach as a way of making teachers aware of the reality that many of their students would come to their classrooms with different cultural, ethnic, linguistic, racial and social class backgrounds. One important example found in American classrooms is when African American and other minority children face difficulties in America's public schools because of cultural reasons. The need for this form of education is based on a sense of care and responsibility from the educators themselves. Gay identifies the power of caring as one of the most important components of culturally relevant pedagogy:

> The cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning more relevant to and effective…. It teaches to and through strengths of these students. It is culturally validating and affirming. (29)

The study provides insight into the individual nature of difficulties with different cultural, ethnic, linguistic, racial and social class backgrounds, and students' and teachers' experience in the context of pedagogy. Gay defines social and cultural significance to highlight their role in the understanding of the text. He explains that a social perspective acknowledges that a "reader's social role and perceptions of the social context" may shape the literary transaction, while a cultural perspective recognises that the "reader's cultural role, attitudes, contexts" may

also shape transactions with the text (8). Equally important is a textual perspective which brings to the fore the "reader's knowledge of conventions" (8), that is, the reader's "knowledge of narrative conventions, literary elements, genre conventions and other aspects of text" (61). This study recognises perspectives that shape the pedagogical transaction for improving the reader's role involving a capacity for self-directed development. Eisenhart's view of cultural pedagogy is that culture can empower people, but it can also hold them back because there are real "social, economic, and power differences that separate people and their experiences," and each individual's "perception of the world can be constrained by culture and the enduring social structures that culture mediates" (215). Eisenhart's point is relevant for this study because it shows that it is essential for researchers and educators to understand and work with culture and its needs if they are to improve teaching circumstances. Many researchers have developed and supported theories of culture-centred pedagogy which believe that "since how one thinks, writes and speaks reflects culture and affects performance, aligning instruction to the cultural," concepts of different students "can improve student achievement" (Gay xv-xvi).

The call for culturally appropriate pedagogies has found supportive echoes in relation to the import of Western or European educational theories, practices and knowledge in other parts of the world. The present study draws on such research since it focuses on the particular issue of teaching poetry in English to Saudi students. A culturally appropriate pedagogy is defined by Singh as a form of education that "melds instruction to better fit the expectations and cultural patterns of the group being served" (14). He also explains that the general concept of this pedagogy is seen by many scholars as a "group's language, culture and its worldview built into the routines, curriculum and structure of the school" (14). Further, the idea that the teaching of poetry and theory should be linked is best expressed by Zettelmann and Rubik: "an approach to poetry grounded in theory does not foreclose discussion but opens up new and exciting vistas" (8). These vistas are important since they connect new techniques for teaching and reading of poetry with theoretical underpinnings introduced by researchers and educators.

Christensen states that it is necessary to acknowledge students' lives, culture and language in the classroom and to provide them with techniques so that they can act on their own reading of poetry. In the field of poetry and pedagogy, many researchers have argued for the centrality of an appropriate pedagogy as a means of improving teaching methods, although others refuse to change (51). In terms of the analysis of poetry, many have openly accepted the emergence of new theories about the differences in cultural knowledge. This is explained by John Lye, who states that meaning requires competency in reading because meaning is connected to culture. This point is significant for this study which emphasises the role of reading in the teaching techniques. He also explains that different

conventions and ways of reading and writing create a basis for understanding, because meaning requires a negotiation between cultural meanings across time, culture, gender and class. The findings here reveal Lye's general point that "meaning" is a phenomenon derived from the traditions of reading and thinking and from understanding the world in which the reader is educated and socialised. The previous studies and commentaries have encouraged me to develop an appropriate pedagogy for the poetry classroom, one that can be used in a continuous search for a deeper understanding of the nature of turning poetry into painting.

Integrating poetry and art, specifically painting, in the classroom has been a long-standing convention both in the East and in the West. Marshall proposes that

> a visual mode of expression can also be employed effectively when approaching poetry. Poems and paintings lend themselves quite naturally to comparative study, for the artist in both cases 'sees' the world; observation of detail and the enjoyment of the meaning of detail are inherent characteristics of the process of poet and artist alike. (46)

Furthermore, painting is a familiar mode of expression that allows students to freely react and display their emotion upon reading poetry.

There has been an increasing focus and interest on more "creative" teaching methods in the classroom for decades, particularly in the English language classroom. This artistic practice employs the written words of poetry alongside paintings in the classroom and "can enhance the learning and reflective experiences of students and lessen fear" (Kleppe 91). Many teachers and scholars have reported this "poetry fear-factor phenomenon, and including visual cues such as paintings is one of several possible methods for approaching the challenge" (Kleppe 90). The congruence between the visual and verbal arts encouraged me as a lecturer to introduce to my students points of contact between poetic imagery and pictorial expression for themselves through "artful thinking" (Moorman 50), to heighten their own artistic sensibilities and broaden their own cultural and intercultural vision. Students enjoy as they learn. In addition, the concept of the convertibility of poetry into painting recognises individual responses in the poetry classroom.

The aim of the new teaching method presented in this study is to stimulate students to read and analyse poems and to encourage their responses based on strategically implementing a pedagogy which allows for particular illustrative works of art through visualisation in the poetry classroom. Students are asked to draw what they visualise after reading a poem; it opens their eyes to the idea that everyone has different mental images since each student has his/her own particular schemata and world experience. The main focus of attention in this approach is the text itself and how the student visualises it, not commentary or

extensive background knowledge of the poet and his period. My contribution will attempt to address a gap in the literature by dealing with an area which is rarely studied and has not been given enough attention in Saudi universities. There is a need for research and new pedagogy regarding Saudi and other Arab students who face difficulties in reading and interpreting poetic texts in English due to differences in thought, ideology and language. The teaching method I have formulated responds to a particular problem within a specific context. This research attempts to describe a pedagogy I have come to identify as "culturally appropriate" (Ladson-Billings) and to argue for its centrality to the improvement of Saudi students' learning of poetry. Turning poetry into painting for improving the analysis of poetic texts in English for educational purposes in Saudi Arabia is a new approach worthy of investigation.

Methodology

This case study is the result of multiple research approaches to innovate and improve the teaching of poetry in English to Saudi students in the context of the traditional approach at King Saud University (KSU). The students study at an all-female campus, so this study applies only to females. Two poetry classes were selected and 20 students participated. The participants in this research were from a particular target group that was selected for the purpose of this research. This is known as purposive sampling, which mainly involves selecting a sample based on the researcher's experience or knowledge of the chosen group of students to be sampled (Lunenburg). In this study, purposive sampling allows me to study a particular population of students at King Saud University. The students are all Muslims and their first language is Arabic. They are from various social backgrounds and have a diverse knowledge of English social, cultural and religious ideologies. The students chosen for this study have taken one or more poetry classes and have experienced the traditional teaching techniques.

The Introductory Stage

To conduct the case study, the chosen pedagogy was applied over multiple meetings with the students in my poetry class. These meetings gave me the chance to introduce and explain several key and major characteristics of the Romantic and Modern periods. The poems of these two periods were chosen since they are rich in imagery and symbolism. Imagery and Symbolism are two of the most common literary devices used by authors. Also, for the purpose of this study, limiting the elements of poetry was necessary since it was an experimental case study.

Imagery refers to the use of figurative and descriptive language to create images in the readers' mind. Symbols usually generate original meaning and may begin to appear in the mind of readers or observers to create visual images. Imagery can stimulate the imagination and create vivid pictures in the reader's

mind. Many poetic works were read for their "sensuous and emotional quality, rhythmical expression and, above all, for their lifelike imagery, which was considered to be one of the common denominators between the two arts" (Bilman 5). Students were initially introduced to the concepts of *symbol* and *imagery* through simple and familiar examples, together with the historical, societal and literary characteristics of both periods and sample poetic works for this case study. The poems were randomly chosen from the course syllabus for the Romantic and Modern poetry classes.

Next, students deepened their understanding of imagery with an analysis of William Blake's poetry. William Blake is "revered for both his artistic talent and profound poetry" (Bell 2). Students, having already formulated a basic understanding of the terms, *symbol* and *imagery*, were led through an informal analysis of two poems, the "Chimney Sweeper" and the "Tyger" by William Blake. The students were also presented with paintings to demonstrate the link between poetry and paintings by tracing the main features that develop the main theme in both poetry and paintings. William Blake's poetry and art are filled with symbolism and allegory which utilise and demonstrate "his own interests and points of study; the classical figure, mythology and religion. Each of these features recur continuously throughout Blake's artistic practice and were used as tools to expose and criticise society and the world surrounding him" (Bell 2). In the "Chimney Sweeper," Blake develops his own symbols of sheep, shepherd and lamb associated with innocence, whilst a child is exposed to cruel treatment in the Industrial age. In the "Tyger," William Blake uses the imagery of fire to evoke the ferocity and potential danger of the tiger, which itself represents what is evil or dreaded. Blake begins with "Tyger Tyger, burning bright/ In the forests of the night," conjuring the image of a tiger's eyes burning in the darkness.

Then, students were taught important information relevant to Langston Hughes' use of imagery and symbols. Hughes' parents were both black yet his father was light skinned and he well understood the confusion and conflict that a person of mixed heritage experienced. The poem contains several signals which help to discover the main themes: the inner turmoil the speaker feels because of his (or her) mixed racial heritage. The anger the speaker feels because he is unable to end the suffering of the race and the state of inner turmoil caused by his present situation (Ramper 198). Students were told to individually interpret the poems since a complete analysis of "The Negro Mother" is effective for their artistic representation.

Classroom Procedure

After the introductory stage, students were asked to research and relate symbolism and imagery to the theme of the proposed poems for the pedagogic application. In the subsequent sections, the classroom procedures for the class practice will be explained. All students were asked to critically read the poems

"I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud" by William Wordsworth and "The Negro Mother" by Langston Hughes and provide their own interpretations. The students were also given the chance to choose any other poem if they could not relate to the ones chosen. The class practice was based on multiple activities. I worked with the students for one hour twice a week for two weeks on the critical analysis phase.

The instructions for this class practice were as follows:

Following the explanation on the background of the poems, students were advised to look at the structure and language of the poem and respond to the following questions to guide them, which included:

1. What do you think this poem is about?
2. What does the poet use to deliver his idea?
3. What do you imagine when you read his words?
4. Does the poem remind you of anything: can you connect it to any event in your life or to any historical event?
5. What do you picture in your mind/imagination in response to this poem?

Student's responses to the questions were used to guide them in their artistic work. It was explained to the students that each student would be creating an innovative piece of art which is a visual representation of their interpretations of the poem based on their personal response to the poem and how they perceive the imagery in it.

Once this stage was completed, students began working on their visual representations. Students were told they can choose from a variety of art materials to create their pictures of the poem. Students' artwork can represent either a part or the whole poem. There was no special focus on any particular talent since most of them were novices. The preparatory artwork session was done in groups to allow them to observe each other and sharing helpful suggestions. As students continued to work in class, it was an opportunity to observe their points of view and responses to the poetic works and their choice in using certain materials and images. This allowed the researcher "to see things that might otherwise be unconsciously missed, to discover things that participants might not freely talk about" (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 306). Students continued their artwork at home and after four weeks, the paintings were exhibited in the classroom. In addition, students wrote a paragraph explaining the meaning the poem conveyed to them and how they represented that meaning in their artwork. It aimed to discern the students' perceptions of their experience of the visual-based pedagogy and discover general problems regarding their overall experience in studying poetry.

Results and Discussion

The works completed for this case study were clearly experimental and varied in technique. As creative output, the students eventually generated poetry-inspired visual representations with brush paintings and beyond that brought out independent interpretation and talent. Some of these visual arts are shown here and are representative of the originality of thought of the whole class.

Artwork 1

Artwork 1 features a visual representation that is predominately expressive through colour and inspired by Langston Hughes' "The Negro Mother." Student 1 explained that the image of the "negro mother" in the poem controls the entire poem: "I came to the conclusion that the image of the Negro mother is 'controlling' the images because her past experiences were always the target for negative action" (January 2018). The student's art suggests that her interpretation of the poem uses mainly dark colours such as black, brown and blue because to her it "helps people discover the authority figure and focuses on the sadness and pain related to the image of the Negro mother in the poem" (January 2018). The only light colour used in this painting is white for the dove which symbolises a sense of hope for the Black race. The visual representation of this art seems to show a connection between the dominant images and dark colours in the painting to uncover the motivation of the poet.

Artwork 2

Artwork 2 exhibits a painting that is also inspired by Langston Hughes' "The Negro Mother." The inspiration for the colours of this painting was the conflict of mixed heritage and the main theme of racial discrimination between the Whites and Blacks in America. Student 2 described the image of the "negro mother" as a protective figure for her race. The student explained that: "the word *choices* in the poem suggested an image of a motherly protective persona and I was able to represent the image and role of the mother with white to show her innocence." She also explained "that the colour black identifies the black race and yellow with the white race… the yellow was the dominant colour in the painting because they were more powerful" (January 2018). This painting seems to show that the student was able to interpret the images for racial discrimination by using three primary colours: black, yellow and white. She seems to identify with the Negro mother's circumstances by focusing on the details of the lines on her face to represent sadness and pain and this helped her to interpret and develop a scene of pain and rejection for racial discrimination sparsely with only three colours.

Artwork 3

Artwork 3 also presents a painting inspired by Langston Hughes' poem "The Negro Mother." It is an expression of African art. This image of an African woman seems to be an attempt to acknowledge and impose the negro mother's strong cultural identity. The visual representation goes beyond a painting since the student uses an actual picture of an African woman and represented her personal interpretation of the image of the "negro mother" with artistic African accessories. The student explained that the "identity of a strong and proud 'negro mother' overpowers the poem and I wanted this to show in the colours of nature and the African colours and accessories" (January 2018). The student's visual interpretation reveals her ability to interact with the images of a dignified African woman:

Look at my face – dark as the night—
Yet shining like the sun with love's true light.
I am the dark girl who crossed the red sea

Her artwork reinforced and asserted her independent interpretive ideas of "The Negro Mother" by connecting them to an ethnic African identity.

Artwork 4

Artwork 4 is an abstract painting. The inspiration for this painting is "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud," a poem by William Wordsworth. This visual representation focuses mainly on the wealth of natural scenery for a person. The student explained that the poem was chosen because of the images of nature in the poem: "this scenery gave me a sense of the dark blue sky, cool breeze" and "the daffodils were small and innocent dancing with the breeze" (January 2018).

To support her interpretation of the images of nature, she used four primary colours: blue, yellow, red and green: "The colours were chosen to show the various parts of nature: earth, water, sun and fire… all the parts are vital for creating a rich landscape in which I find myself… recharge through it." She also explained that the tiny multi-coloured area in the middle is a reflection of her inner self taken from nature and a reminder of herself "being a small part of something bigger" (January 2018).

Artwork 5

Artwork 5 is inspired by "Sonnet 18" which is one of the best known of the 154 sonnets written by William Shakespeare. In the sonnet, the speaker compares his "beloved" to a summer's day but realises his beloved surpasses the beauty of nature:

> But thy eternal summer shall not fade
> Nor lose possession of that fair thou owest;
> Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
> When in eternal lines to time thou growest:
> So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
> So long lives this, and this gives life to thee

The student interpreted the images of nature with its vibrant colours and beauty in a separate painting of yellow flowers on the outer box. Yet, she presented a darker side of nature inside the box placing a large coffin in the middle. Thus, the

student used multiple images to reflect the various responses artistically. She explained: "This allowed me to identify with the beautiful images of nature with its vibrant colours and flowers. Yet, it also led me to understand that beneath all this beauty is the sad note of mortality. Thus, I chose to present a coffin to draw attention to the importance of art because through art and poetry the beauty of nature lives on" (January 2018). The student's artwork seems to reflect a multitude of indefinite emotional interpretations of the poem, which are freely expressed in her visual representation.

Artwork 6

Artwork 6 is inspired by Alfred Tennyson's poem, "Eagle." The student explained that she chose this poem because it presented a reaction to the Romantic era. The Romantics focused on simplicity and nature, but the Victorian thought is detached from the Romantic values and focuses on realism. The student focused on the main image of the eagle which she believed "represents the Victorian individualism" (January 2019). She also explained that her choice for this painting is abstract art because "abstract usually symbolises freedom because abstract has no rules" (January 2019).

The student created this painting with the colours of the land and sky and the brown shades, inspired by the mountain, eagle feathers and crags in the poem. The green shades were inspired by land and its greenery and represents strength since the Victorians derived their strength from nature. She also connected the shade of red in her painting with the sun which symbolises Victorian men or women. Although they are alone, they are powerful on their own. The red in the painting seems to overpower the entire painting. Further, the student described

the sky as azure and the blue shades representing responsibility and peace which characterised the Victorians.

Conclusion
The class practice at King Saud University addressed the need for a culturally appropriate pedagogy for Saudi students to develop their position from that of traditional passive learners to more independent critical thinkers. The study also showed that students are capable of interpreting poetry through a creative medium; inspired by the poetic words, they recreate verbal images into visual images in unique artworks.

The visual arts with a focus on details of features, such as colour, form and line, ensured attention to perception and engagement of the "visual brain," which, in turn, resonates with remembered experience and linguistic representation. The link between word and image is easier to draw visually through colours, lines and forms and enables understanding of metaphors, indicating our endless ability to map interactions, experiences and cognitive operations across concepts to form images (Heath 123). The interpretation of the poem is visually represented in the art of the perceived images, and the output is different from one student to another.

These findings also illustrate the importance of the explicit use of innovative analytical tools to facilitate the students' understanding of a poetic text, especially when the teaching methodology is embedded within a framework that reduces stress and provides students with the ability to work in a more relaxed and creative atmosphere. In this class practice, the findings show the possibilities for the students who have gained and developed an awareness of how to use imagery and symbolism in fostering their greater ability to adopt an open-minded approach to an artistic creation for their own reading purposes. This critical understanding is described by Harman as one that provides students with an understanding of how to play with texture in texts in the same way that a painter plays with colour and paint texture on a canvas. Through poetry, students are able to synthesise their verbal and visual self-expressions to create their own artistic identities and voices.

Another major implication of this class practice is that it offers students the opportunity to experience a pedagogy that could be compatible with their identities. This finding is in line with findings of Singh who explains that culturally appropriate pedagogy "melds instruction to better fit the expectations and cultural patterns of the group being served" (14). The students were able to adjust easily to a new teaching pedagogy and interact with its novel strategies. This implies that acknowledging students' needs and providing interdisciplinary techniques may develop their skills and imagination for their reading and analysis of poetry and other forms of literature. It can also create a supportive pedagogy

that recognises and incorporates artistic teaching which facilitates new ventures and addresses the needs of a wider job market.

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