

Original Research Article

PWPQRPQ and ImageReel: Engaging Students into Activities Converging Poetry and Cinematography

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ABSTRACT

A challenge to Filipino educators is the constant adaptation to teaching and learning styles as millennial learners become more exposed to and adept with handy electronic devices, multimedia technology and digital applications but less engaging in their school subjects especially a reading and literature class. This paper discusses simple and innovative activities which enhance the teaching and learning of basic literary concepts, like poetry, through the aid of cinematography. These are "Play, Watch, Pause, Question, Resume, Pause, Question" (PWPQRPQ) and ImageReel. This paper centers on the Poetry Class of the researcher during the first semester of 2015-2016 using modified guidelines and rubrics of photo-based learning and filmmaking techniques/strategies of Katherine Kuta, Sarah Kavanagh, Katherine Schulten and Dave Bonta. In the process of these two activities, the learners were able to not only appreciate literature and film but also develop skills in deciphering, questioning, assessing and short filmmaking. Moreover, such shared activities transformed the class into an interdisciplinary and multilayered teaching and learning environment for both educator and learners. In creating this teaching and learning space, literary educators significantly address the common reading issue of learners being passive readers but active screen viewers. These activities result to learners becoming active readers, critical thinkers, constructive interpreters, creative narrators, and sensitive individuals. Future researchers, whose interest lie on the teaching of literature and film through technology can study on other aspects of the learning performances of students, such as their attitude, interest, engagement, and creativity. They also can study the effectiveness of the teaching strategies used by teachers whose materials are similarly digital-driven using quasi or experimental designs.

Introduction

There are many teaching challenges Philippine educators face as the system shifts to the K-12 curriculum of basic and secondary education levels and the General Education Curriculum (GEC) of higher education. One of the challenges is innovative instructions which demands ASEAN teaching and learning quality toward global competitiveness. The educational system necessitates the inevitability of adapting to multimedia technological advancement, global communication, and the integral learning styles of millennial students.

In the case of a literature class where students are expected to read literary texts, poetry becomes the least engaging lesson because of misconceptions that it is difficult, tiring to teach, and hard to understand (Simmons, 2014). This is in contrast to the logical development based on Bloom's taxonomy of which the knowledge level needs to be fully established in order to improve

through other levels (Munzenmaier & Rubin, 2013). This mastery of basic knowledge is also highly patronized by Greek philosophers especially Quintillian. He posits the learning of basic concepts of poetry and rhetoric as pre-requisite to analyzing other genres (Habib, 2011). By basic concepts, he means basic figures of speech and fundamental literary devices scoped by poetry to prepare learners for argumentation and discourse.

But how can the study of poetry be even possible if learners refuse to read? Perhaps the answer is flexibility in lesson planning and facilitating. Weimer (2010) suggests that teachers create a course that will surely discourage passive reading. For Coffman (2010) it is to encourage learners to explore different field sources like audio, video, textbooks, and interviews which can supplement the literary text. On a similar note as Hatch (2011), Spencer (2015) recommends assigning less traditional projects for learners to give room for creative juices with the aid of technology.

Teaching of Literature through Innovative Methods and Multimedia: A Review

Although mass production and affordability of mobile devices such as smartphones, tablets, laptops and netbooks preoccupy and distract most high school and college students from significant concerns, this exposure nevertheless motivates learners, eases academic tasks, and allows the exploration of digital features that eventually aid clarification and interpretation of reading literary texts. The three-dimensionality of these technologies has become an avenue for innovative learning assistance (Hatch, 2011).

Citing Bauman and Castells, Jewitt (2008) claims how the 21st century global village has transformed people to audio, visual and space orientation, making transaction faster and easier (Luchini-Colbry, 2013). This definitely applies to the academic space where the internet and mobile devices help learners and educators alike.

The Use of Film

Even though the aid of technology is slowly gaining favor from educators, film advocates have earlier understood the nature of cinematic craft from literature. Both poetry and film have similar orientation (Corrigan, 1999) particularly with the notion of imagery by American literary movement Imagist founder, Ezra L. Pound. *Imagery* involves the poetic composition of that vivid psychological illustration a persona sees, feels, tastes, hears, touches, does, goes, speaks and remembers which a reader can vicariously experience (Abrams, 1999). Pound's poetic claim on poetry as a concrete sensorial poetic language notches a level of comprehending imagery with filmmaking, therefore exploring the fusion of the basic elements of the poetic art and the reel art (Corrigan, 1999).

There is but very little difference between the two media. "Poetry starts with word[s] and arrives at the visual image while film with the visual image and arrives at the verbal expression" (Bonta, 2009). Citing Maria Jose F. Martinez, both literature and film share words, narration and space elements (Alqadi, 2015). Film as a montage is likened to poetry with its spatial, juxtaposing, and fragmented pictorial dynamism. Its appeal is the mirroring of mental illustration to imagistic (re)creation process (Leibowich, 2007).

Although textual reading transforms active readers while film viewing creates passive learners (Cruz, 1997), the fusion of poetry and film should not be taken against each other but rather have these venues compromise better learning (Luchini-Colbry 2013; Spencer, 2010; Hatch 2011). Understanding literary text turned into film becomes more meaningful and inspiring due to its multilayered dimensions (Bo, 2008). In fact, film has the capacity to surpass literary techniques by visual and auditory appeals, which can also help supplement and clarify vague concepts (Hatch, 2011). Although some studies prove that the viewing exposure alone does not make students actively read and critically think (Alqadi, 2015), there are learning activities that can enhance the study of literature with the aid of cinematography.

The Use of Photographs

Outlined from Kuta (2008) is a class activity entitled "**Predicting and Making Inferences with Photos/Pictures**". The objective of this activity is for learners to enhance their observation and critical thinking skills by examining the details of images from photos or pictures. First, each student is tasked to bring out an old colored magazine or newspaper, scissors, glue, and a pen. He/she should cut and paste a photo from the scanned material unto an activity sheet, but the original caption of the picture should be surrendered to the teacher. Second, learners are paired and tasked to exchange sheets and peruse the details of and size up the photo. Third, each learner is instructed to formulate and write a caption for the photo below the picture. It could be a sentence or two but the formulation should match the details of the photo. In this juncture, writing skills is developed. Fourth, the pair is tasked to return the sheets to their partner and analyze the formulation given by the other and discuss their formulations with each other. Fifth, the teacher then gives the original caption of each photo to the pair and instructs them to contrast their formulations from the original statements. At this point students begin to improve their conversation and

observation skills regarding the importance of reading between details and understanding visuals. As for the evaluation of this activity, the learners are tasked to answer questions regarding what they learned from the activity and how captions of photos are significantly formulated by magazines and newspapers.

On the same thread, Kavanagh and Schulten (2010) share an article entitled **“Picture This! Building Photo-Based Writing Skills”** which discusses a lesson that designs the enhancement of learners’ skimming, writing, vocabulary and news literacy skills based on photos. It is a small group work with a common picture as the center material. Other requirements are a large sheet of paper, glue, computers with Internet access, pens, loose paper, and blackboard.

As a warm up exercise identified by the authors as “text on text” activity, they advise the variation of photos for every group. The original captions should not be included in the distribution. Prior to disseminating the photos, the teacher should mount on the board “four response choices” for each group to write and follow as models. The groups are tasked to paste their assigned pictures on the center of their large sheets of paper. In three to five minutes, the group will formulate (4) four commentaries based on the photo: a personal connection, a question that first pops up on mind, a detailed observation and a guess of the possible original caption. They should be guided by the models on the board. After every five minutes, each sheet will be passed to the next group and within every five minutes formulate four commentaries that could either respond to the previous statements. This goes about until the sheets return to the original groups. At this phase, the students will be asked to discuss and share their reflections about the threads of commentaries and how they understood the photos within the group and then the class. Later, they are instructed to explain the famous line: A picture paints a thousand words, of which a representative must deliver. After hearing their explanations, the teacher will read the captions and make the groups guess which photo owns the caption.

For the lesson proper, the group learners are tasked to do almost the same routine but the photos will be located from the New York Times Learning Network Blog archives news articles limited by the instructors. With the chosen picture for each group, the members formulate four commentaries, jotting them down on the loose paper and later will be instructed to read through the article and assess if their commentaries match the information of the article. Right after they will be tasked to answer and discuss within the group the six Wh and H questions prepared by the instructor which were based on the photo. From this lesson other activities can be drawn out to teach skills in storytelling, creative writing, vocabulary building, basic news literacy and point of view.

For a storytelling activity, the teacher must choose and print a picture prompt from the **Learning Blog** and mount it. The board will be tabled into four parts indicating the literary elements on focus namely: characters, setting, conflict and conclusion. Instruct the class to brainstorm ideas regarding the details involved in picture. The teacher then writes their key ideas on the columns they choose to point out. Once the columns are full, the instructor asks the students to choose one idea from each column and from there on start composing a short story. The length of the stories may vary for every learner, but the four details must be incorporated in each composition.

Understanding photojournalism can come in handy with a creative writing activity. Kavanagh and Schulten (2010) encourage the use of photos of captured events with great social relevance. In this activity each student must choose one among the choices of pictures and work on scrutinizing the details of the image. In the next stage, each learner must imagine probable answers for pre-writing questions the teacher has formulated based on the photo. A question can go like these: *“What happened just before this photograph was taken? How do the people in this photograph feel about each other?”* Questions can be modified to suit the purpose of making a story out of the probabilities of events that followed before and possibilities after the captured scene of the photo.

Another interesting activity that enhances logical, critical and investigative thinking is that of Ferlazzo (2012) named **“Image Detective”**. Like a law enforcer, learners get chances to ask challenging questions based on the clues or details of the photo until they come up with a sound assessment of the captured scenario. The questions can be in oral or written form, but surely the questions range from basic to more complex queries until a conclusion is finalized.

Filmmaking: Videopoetry

In terms of filmmaking, filmmaker and blogger Dave Bonta (2012) advocates the power of composing poems and making short films out of them. He also strongly believes that photos can inspire writing. In his website, movingpoems.com, he showcases non-mainstream filmmakers to upload their short films and poetry discussion. He even categorizes the types of poetry those videos belong to. Such types are performance poetry, animation, author-made videopoems, concrete and visual poetry and kinestasis. His website centers on a genre he calls **“Videopoetry”**. It is a film which emphasizes on a read and heard poem with

visual and instrumental accompaniments. Usually the poems are original compositions of contemporary poets all over the world. Bonta started composing poems based on still pictures with ekphrastic characteristics, like that of John Keats's "Ode on a Grecian Urn" which vividly illustrates a mental-visual detail of ancient Greece's culture, history and arts immortal powers to influence the evolution of humankind.

In making a videopoetry, like what he personally does, Bonta captures footage, and downloads public-domain films and shoot scenarios which do not necessarily match any poem yet, but he knows that these saved videos and pictures will come useful for future use either for an established poem or a personal composition. In his (2012) paper entitled, *Videopoetry: What is it, Who makes it and Why?*, he shows how he worked on the poem, Riches (Riqueza) by Nobel Laureate, Gabriela Mistral. This 104-second-video shows a woman, (whose face cannot be seen), spinning wool under soft yellow lighting. Simultaneously the poem is read in Spanish by a woman's voiceover as the English subtitle syncs with the reading and instrumental Celtic music. Bonta clearly emphasizes the concept of such advent, (unlike a movie, or music video which is highly commercialized, entertaining, expensive and fashion oriented,) to be poem-centered. The voiceover, music and image are secondary in nature but nevertheless relevant in the production.

Modified Ways of Teaching Literature: PWPQRPQ and ImageReel

"Play, Watch, Pause, Question, Resume, Pause, Question" (PWPQRPQ)

In connection to the abovementioned activities and suggestions, the author had modified the lessons creating pre-activities before engaging her Poetry Class students produce videos based on two established poems, "Did I not Say to You" by Mawlana Rumi and "No More Clichés" by Octavio Paz. In her other introductory literature classes, she was also able to introduce the pre-lesson activities.

Sometime in the first semester of 2015-2016, the researcher started giving background lessons on the basic elements of poetry, tips on poetry reading, and showed advocacy films of Spoken Word poetry performance videos of Gary Turk, Kamal Saleh, Sarah Kay and Phil Kaye. But all these were still not enough to make her students read a poem even if the films were highly appreciated. So, she came up with a pre-activity she called **"Play, Watch, Pause, Question, Resume, Pause, Question" (PWPQRPQ)**.

PWPQRPQ requires a non-mainstream video that is socially significant. The researcher chose the music video, "From Where You Are" by the alternative band Lifehouse. Before starting the film viewing the students were given copies of the song lyrics and were asked to read the lines silently while they simultaneously listen to the song. The students were then tasked to watch the music video of the song. At this stage, the researcher oriented the class that some parts of the video will be paused and they would be required to ask any questions regarding the partial footages they had just seen. This routine continued almost until the end of the video and throughout this phase, the researcher did not answer their query.

These sections of the pre-activity reflected what Kuta, Kavanagh, and Schulten suggested as activities that develop the skills on inferring and predicting events based on still pictures. The students during the viewing deciphered the visual images they saw while the lyrics they read earlier were simultaneous heard. They were able to orally formulate questions of the scenes by finding clues from the paused images. These were some of their questions:

1. Where are the cars going?
2. Why is the sky gloomy?
3. Why are these panoramic shots?
4. Who are these kids and where are they going?
5. Why are they so happy?
6. Why are the cars in one straight line?
7. How are these passengers in different cars related to one other?
8. What is with the sudden flashes of light?
9. Why are the fields they pass barren?
10. Why did they pass out suddenly from one scene to the next?

As the video nearly turned into an end, the questions started to become more complex although there were repetitive questions like where the kids would go and why it was so gloomy. At this point of the activity, the learners were able to critically think. They began to notice very specific details of the close up and extreme close up shots. These details were usually emotional and atmospheric details. There was a point that they noticed and asked regarding the shot of the radio frequency in red light buttons decreasing in number as the music also synced a similar beating of the heart after the heard line "I feel the beating of your heart".

It was at the end of the video that all their questions were answered by a caption stating that the video is dedicated to all the parents of the teenagers who lost their lives from car accidents. There were those learners who were able to conclude correctly and there were those who refused to conclude until they saw the dedication. This latter part of the pre-activity is similar to Image Detective of Ferlazzo.

ImageReel

Consequently, the researcher gave another activity. This time it dealt with comparing and contrasting short clips made by the TV series, Vampire Diaries, on the poem "A Poison Tree" by William Blake and compared it with other public-domain versions. The researcher advised the students to examine the chosen image for the literary text.

This is the part of the lesson where Bonta's theory comes in to assess and prove how the marriage of poetry and film came together to successfully deliver an understanding of appreciating and learning poetry.

So far from the film viewing of advocacy videos to the reading and listening of a song, to the PWPQRPQ phase, and then to another set of films viewing on a classical poem, the researcher deemed that the time was right to introduce her modified videopoetry, entitled *ImageReel* for the poems "Did I not Say to You" by Mawlana Rumi and "No More Clichés" by Octavio Paz.

ImageReel requires a qualitative rubric to guide learners of the expected execution and limitations for the short films. According to Jennifer L. Romack (2010) designing tasks beyond the classroom creates a learning-centered environment and a rubric is highly valuable to facilitate the growth and creativity of learners. This modified activity of the researcher can work for individual learners or a group of three members. The important materials for this activity are the poem, a video application, knowledge on video application, a video camera or a smartphone camera, the rubric, a flash disk or cd and a laptop. The learners are given ample time usually two weeks to work on the activity from planning to producing the film.

For a scrutiny of the activity, *ImageReel*, a copy of the guidelines, mechanics and rubric is provided in the succeeding pages of this paper.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In this interdisciplinary digital advancement of millennial learners, the overlapping influences of literature and film have evolved into a learning experience of creation and assessment. As literature inspires film, so does film inspire the learner to create symbols and images of literary texts. The exposure to short filmmaking resulted in learners' ability to decipher, interpret, and assess literature better and create film images and sound relevant to meanings of poems. At present, there is a plethora of innovative materials and strategies that teachers of various subjects can exploit and tailor-fit for classroom use. With the aid of technology, teachers already have wide opportunities to inject creativity into their teaching methods and instructional materials. This is even more possible in the teaching of literature, whose pillars are built upon creativity, that aims to develop learners' critical thinking skills and appreciation for various genres of literature. Finally, with teaching being developmental, the author's proposed modified methods are definitely not the only ones that literature teachers can use. They may also develop their own innovative ways of teaching literature that they deem fit and effective for their respective students. As the famous adage goes, "different folks, different strokes".

Given this study, future researchers can examine the effectivity of teaching strategies similar to "**Play, Watch, Pause, Question, Resume, Pause, Question**" (PWPQRPQ) and *ImageReel* using quasi or experimental design. Researches can also study the attitude, interest, engagement, and creative performances of learners in a literature and creative writing class.

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APPENDICES

ImageReel (Poetic Video Making)

Guidelines

(Individual Work / triad Work)

1. Compose a 2-3 minute video for the assigned poem using local color.
2. A voice over is required for the video so you may not apply subtitles.
3. The dubber needs to memorize the poem by heart and sync lines appropriately with the shots.
4. Be very creative in producing the video. Still pictures are discouraged. (Refer to search for videos which kinesthetically interpret poems.)
5. Edit the film properly. Pass it via cd and make sure it works properly. Back it up with your usb sticks in case the cd would not run.
6. Deadline for the submission of the video is on _____
7. Below are the criteria for grading the film. For more specific details, refer to the succeeding rubric.

Cinematography	10
Creativity and Originality	9
Editing	8
Pronunciation and enunciation	6
Voice Projection	6
Tone and Intonation	6
Total Score	45

Name _____

English 55 ____

Date _____

Rubric on ImageReel

CRITERIA	Performance Level (PL)			Raw Score
	Poor	Good	Great	
Cinematography (Visual and Auditory Appeal, choice of scenes and shots,)	Shots are poorly chosen, some clips are abstract and incoherent; some music types are inappropriate; some lightings are unnecessary or poorly executed; shots are not view-catching 1-4	A few shots are unnecessary; imagery is slightly loose; a few sounds/music is inappropriate; most shots are appropriate and worth viewing 5-7	Choice of shots are appropriate; imagery is very clear and symbolic; choice of instrumental music is appropriate; lightings are appropriate; film shots are coherent; shots are worth view-catching 8-10	
Creativity and Originality (maximized use of local color, concept is concrete and poetic)	Many shots/scenes are foreign; film concept is abstract / predictable 1-3	A few clips/shots are foreign; film concept is concrete and slightly innovative; a few of the imageries fail to correspond to the poem 4-6	Local scenes are maximized; film concept is poetically concrete, creative and original 7-9	

<p>Editing (neatness) Unity of shot transitions, smooth flow of transitions, clarity of voice and sound(less) effects, maximum use of time)</p>	<p>Sound/music editing is poorly executed; imagery is loose; running time is poorly utilized; poet's voice is barely audible; shot transitions are abrupt 1-3</p>	<p>A few glitches are apparent in the instrumental music, silence and sound effects; a few shots are not smoothly transitioned; a little time is wasted 4-6</p>	<p>Sound editing is clear; poet's voice is clear; sound effects are appropriate; shot transitions are smooth flowing; imagery is coherent; running time is efficiently used 7-8</p>	
<p>Pronunciation and Enunciation</p>	<p>Many words and lines have not been properly articulated and are given wrong poetic emphases 1-2</p>	<p>A few words and lines are not accurately articulated and emphasized with proper emotions 3-4</p>	<p>Words and lines are accurately articulated with proper emotions to express poetic effect 5-6</p>	
<p>Voice Projection</p>	<p>Voice is less audible; volume is either too low(soft) or too high(loud) and artificial 1-2</p>	<p>Sometimes voice is not well-modulated; sometimes volume is exaggerated; at times cannot vary intensity 3-4</p>	<p>Voice is well-modulated, clear and moderately intense; voice volume varies and is just right 5-6</p>	
<p>Tone and Intonation</p>	<p>Pacing is either too fast or too slow and speech is very flat; often pauses at unnecessary points; needs improvement 1-2</p>	<p>Pacing is sometimes flat; sometimes lines are read faster or slower than expected; occasionally pauses unnaturally or untimely 3-4</p>	<p>Pacing is not dull and monotonous; varies speed as required; lines are read carefully; pauses at right moments; spontaneously natural 5-6</p>	
<p>Total Score</p>				<p>45</p>