

Blogging Across Borders: Multimodal, Conversational Writing for Students in Sweden and the United States



Writing Research
Across Borders 2008
Santa Barbara, California

Magnus Gustafsson,
Chalmers University
Donna Reiss,
Clemson University
Art Young,
Clemson University



Clemson, South Carolina



Göteborg, Sweden

adapted from Encarta Maps

Poem and Collage by Emily Dickinson

| | |
|--|---|
| A POOR torn heart, a tattered heart, That sat it down to rest, Nor noticed that the ebbing day Flowed silver to the west, Nor noticed night did soft descend Nor constellation burn, Intent upon the vision Of latitudes unknown. | The angels, happening that way, This dusty heart espied; Tenderly took it up from toil And carried it to God. There,—sandals for the barefoot; There,—gathered from the gales, Do the blue heavens by the hand Lead the wandering sails. |
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Emily Dickinson Archive

"The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" by T. S. Eliot

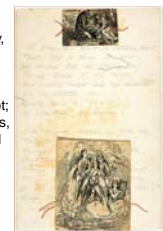


LET us go then, you and I,
When the evening is spread out against the sky
Like a patient etherised upon a table

T. S. Eliot pearcompany.com

Poem and Collage by Emily Dickinson

| | |
|--|---|
| A POOR torn heart, a tattered heart, That sat it down to rest, Nor noticed that the ebbing day Flowed silver to the west, Nor noticed night did soft descend Nor constellation burn, Intent upon the vision Of latitudes unknown. | The angels, happening that way, This dusty heart espied; Tenderly took it up from toil And carried it to God. There,—sandals for the barefoot; There,—gathered from the gales, Do the blue heavens by the hand Lead the wandering sails. |
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Magnus Gustafsson, Chalmers University, Göteborg, Sweden

"Fiction for Engineers"

MSc elective course for engineering students with only a token humanities requirement in their university education

"Content and language integrated education is based on the notion that students acquire disciplinary knowledge and academic language skills together and that it is therefore better that they are offered together throughout the curriculum."



Charles van Leeuwen



Donna Reiss, Clemson University, South Carolina

"American Literature to 1945"

General education survey course for mostly inexperienced interpreters of literature from a variety of disciplines



Art Young, Clemson University, South Carolina

"Victorian Poetry"

M.A.-level seminar for advanced students of literature modeling the interpretive practices of literary scholars

International Blog: "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"



Magnus Gustafsson, Fiction for Engineers,
Chalmers University, Göteborg, SE

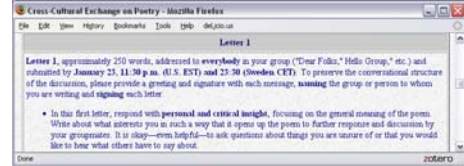


Donna Reiss, American Literature
Clemson University, South Carolina, US



Art Young, Victorian Literature,
Clemson University, South Carolina, US

We did **not** require students to develop a thesis about the poem or be argumentative or cite scholarly references.



We **did** emphasize making discoveries collaboratively as a valid approach to making meaning in a poem.

"Letters, compared to other genres, may appear humble, because they are so overtly tied to particular social relations of particular writers and readers, but that only means they reveal to us so clearly and explicitly the sociality that is part of all writing."



Charles Bazerman



Earth, Space Today

I am a Chinese with Indonesian citizenship who has been studying in Sweden for the past 2.5 years.

I do not know if we allow to talk a little personal like this in our letters so if it is not allowed, please tell me later.

(Catharina in Sweden)

My name is Malalai...from Afghanistan..... I also want to respond to Catharina in group one.

Yes, you are allowed to talk personally and indeed expressing personal feeling makes your letter more interesting and it gives your letter a variety. I wish everybody have a successful semester, full of joy and happiness.

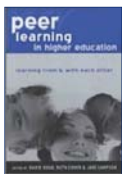
Sincerely yours, Malalai
(in South Carolina)



*"Do I dare
Disturb the universe?"*

Much of the action of the poem has to do with the tedious monotony of the social scene, which seems **dominated by superficial conversation** and where people are judged by the refinement of their clothing or their ability to amuse. This exterior action is contrasted with the conflict in the speaker of some urgent question. **The contrast between this exterior action and the interior provides the tension, or the dramatic action, of the poem....**

(Susan, Clemson)



"Learning involves willingness to be open to the ideas of others. Openness requires us to trust the other party. Trust is fostered by disclosure – disclosure begets disclosure – and preparedness to take risks."

David Boud, Ruth Cohen, and Jane Sampson



"Weblogs can facilitate a collaborative, social process of meaning making, ...a social environment where anxiety about the teacher and of school writing is reduced, while also drawing on other benefits of writing publicly."

*Charles Lowe and
Terra Williams*



*"I have heard the mermaids singing, each to each.
I do not think that they will sing to me."*

Wonderful idea, Fredick! :) "I am quite sure though, that it has quite little to do with love to some woman or person. I think it more has to do with love to writing . . ." . . . But what really caught my attention about this statement is **your comment** about the poem really being about writing itself (or more specifically the writing of poetry). Then more I think about it the more it makes sense.

What if the **mermaids** who won't sing are actually the muses of his poetry? What if what he really is worried about is that the "muse of poetry" might leave him and he will be unable to write great poetry? What if this is a love song to the "muse," more like a plea to the "muse" to come and visit him? . . . **I'll have to think on it more** to get a better idea of how Prufrock's (Eliot's?) fear of losing his skill or talent or gift of writing great poetry. (Amanda, Clemson)

*"Shall I say, I have gone at dusk through narrow streets
And watched the smoke that rises from the pipes
Of lonely men in shirt-sleeves, leaning out of windows?..."*

Hello group! Thanks for your feedback.... :))

I am glad that **Matt found my thoughts**, on the "In the room women come and go talking of **Michelangelo**" verse, rather good. I'm been thinking a lot about that verse. I think that the use of **mermaids** and the fact that they will never sing to him, also might suggest that he feels very separate from society. He can't get that magical love and freedom, which mermaids have. The idea that he is not "one with" society does seem to exist within the poem. **For another example he only "watches" the lonely men smoking, indicating that he is not even a part of that group. He feels like he doesn't belong anywhere.**

I hope you all will have a great week!
Best regards, Ana-Marija (Chalmers)

*"In a minute there is time
For decisions and revisions which a minute will reverse."*



I've always admired the painting by **Salvador Dali: The Persistence of Memory**. I think it is representative of The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock by the melting away of time. **The entire poem reflects on time in some form. The word is seen 11 times in lines 23-48. Also, in the song Time by Hootie and the Blowfish the question is asked: "Time, why you punish me? Like a wave bashing into the shore, you wash away my dreams."** The song personifies time and its overwhelming presence. Time, in a sense, controls everything and we must learn to make the best of what little we have. **Prufrock does not understand this—he is unable to take a stand and do something about his situation.** (Marigrace, Clemson)

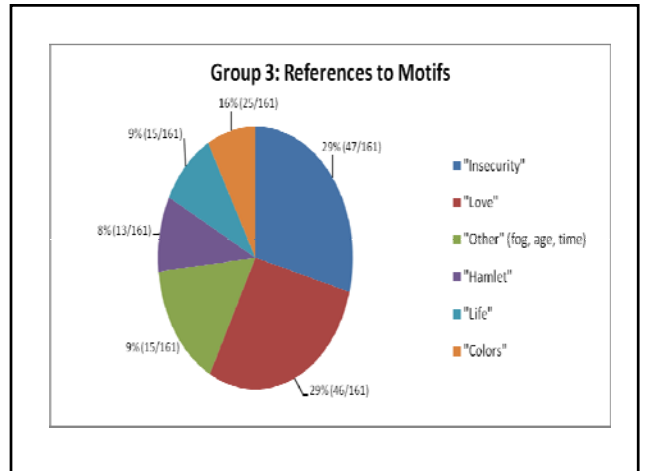
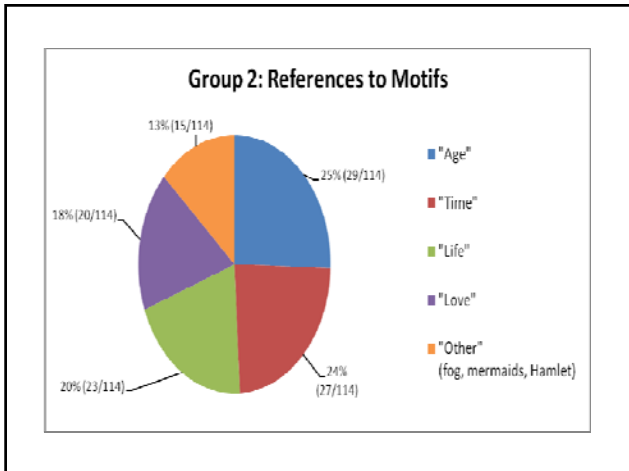
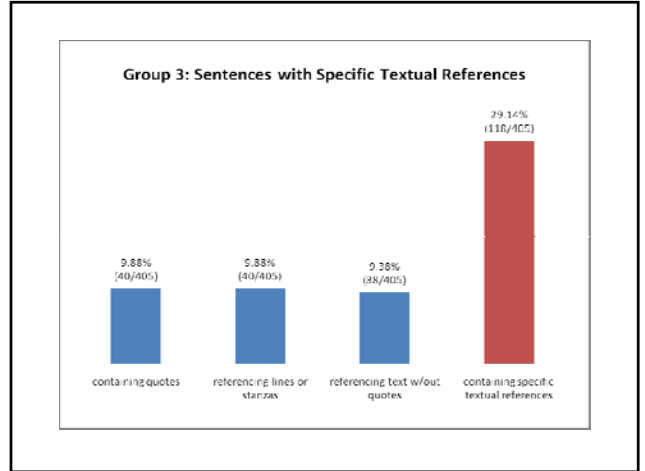
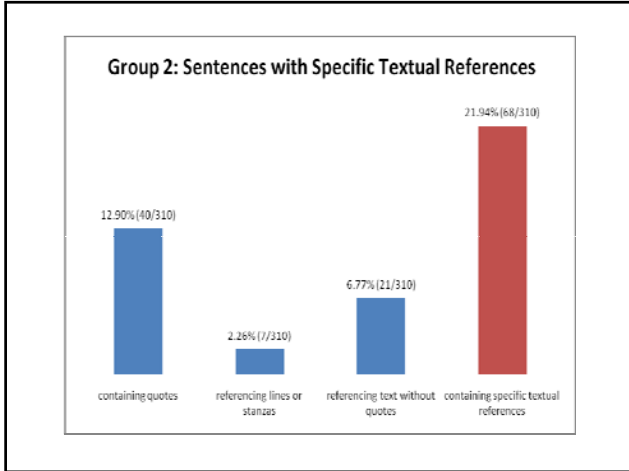


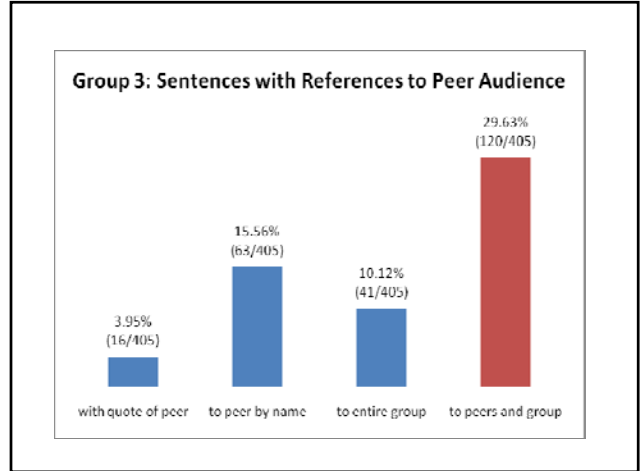
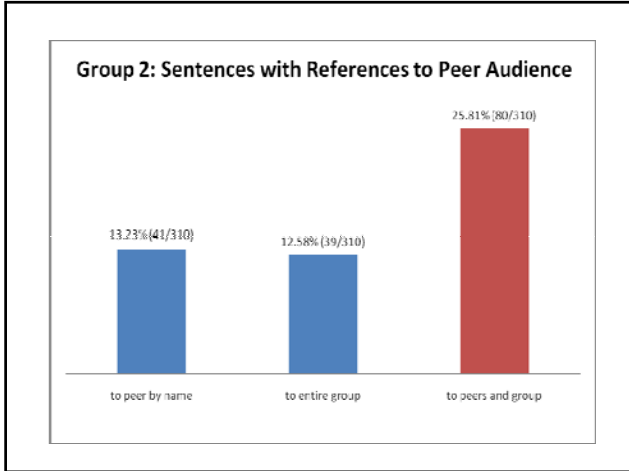
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1. Online discussion groups allow for students to read and respond to each other as well to the assigned readings and topics. Open groups allow students to read and learn from what other groups have been discussing.

Group 1
BethanyGrace A., Laura A., David C., Theo H., Katherine K., Catharina P., StefanieLynn P., Carl-Johan S., Dontae T.

Please follow the letter-writing process described above in the first comment under Guide for Cross-Cultural Collaboration-Spring 2006: "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock." When you are ready to submit your letters, click on the **comments** link below. A new window will open. Read comments already published, and add yours.
... posted by D. Davis, Classroom 11 at 11:18 AM | 30 comments

Group 2
Kristen A., Erica B., Ola B., Julia J., Susan L., Abigail M., Justine P., Oscar W., Elizabeth W., and Pavlina T.

Group 3
Marigrace B., Anders H., Tanja K., Kristina H., Erin M., Nadrah S., Jennifer S., Jacob S., Alexandra W.

2. An epistolary protocol encourages students to respond to people as well as to the texts, thus personalizing electronic communication, fostering a participatory community of learners, encouraging thoughtful writing to diverse, authentic audiences, and expanding the interpretive possibilities for analyzing literary works.

Thursday, 26 January, 2006

pavlina said...
Hello everyone!

It has been very interesting to read other views of the poem because it seems like most of us concentrated on different parts in the poem and of course interpreted things differently. The only thing that everyone agrees to is that he is an old and very insecure person.

As I read your comments and reread the poem I could relate to your impressions. I also feel that for each time I read the poem, new questions pops up as well as new conclusions and new ways of seeing things.

3. The Internet offers students access not only to each other's compositions but also to a wealth of scholarly and popular resources as well as multimodal options like audio, video, and visual images they can share to support and expand their verbal texts.



*"Streets that follow like a tedious argument
Of insidious intent"*

Dear Colleagues,

We thank you for your attention, and we welcome your comments and questions.

Sincerely,

Magnus, Donna, and Art



<http://crossculturalcollab06spring.blogspot.com>

<http://wordsworth2.net/projects/crossculturalcollabs>

*"And time yet for a hundred indecisions,
And for a hundred visions and revisions,
Before the taking of a toast and tea."*