

Introductory Module: Grade 8 Poetry – Express Yourself!

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Express Yourself! - Designed for Significant Learning

Our group designed an online poetry appreciation course, Express Yourself! using Eliademy and edX Edge. This course is intended for 30 Grade 8 students completing English Language Arts in the Strathcona Public School District in an urban centre located in Western Ontario. This Poetry module would be one of four that make up the complete Language Arts course. Students will be enrolled for 7 weeks and are expected to dedicate three to five hours per week to complete the course requirements.

Rationale for Online Delivery

A survey that targeted over 5400 students across Canada, in grades 4 through 11, found that 99% of students accessed the Internet outside of school, on their own time (MediaSmarts, 2014). It is thus evident that today's school age student is connected to media, their friends, and various personal interests in an online environment. This establishes an encouraging framework for teachers delivering their courses in an online context, as it suggests that students have many basic skills that they can apply, and that can be developed for learning in an online environment.

According to Anderson (2008), online teaching neither advantages nor disadvantages learning in comparison to campus-based learning. However, he argues that "the Net provides expanded opportunities for learners to plunge ever deeper into knowledge resources, providing a near limitless means for them to grow their knowledge and find their own way around the knowledge of the discipline, benefitting from its expression in thousands of formats and contexts" (p. 48). Like Anderson, we embrace the enabling role of technology in an online course in helping learners make connections with ideas, facts, people and communities. Our

rationale for an online mode of delivery is in keeping with the initiatives that the Ontario School Boards are undertaking to expand how, when and where learning takes place.

Learner-centred An online mode of delivery empowers students and engages them in taking responsibility for self-directed and self-paced learning as they can take advantage of “anytime, anywhere” learning that is neither restricted to the walls of the school building nor confined to the school day. An online mode also provides learning opportunities for students in schools where low enrolment numbers would normally limit the resources and course options available.

Knowledge-centred Poetry is a challenging subject to teach as it may seem intimidating or irrelevant to young students. Thus we leverage the students’ inclination to use technology to help them better identify with poetry and find their own voice. Our online course integrates activities with open educational resources and mobile apps to challenge, engage and motivate them intrinsically and extrinsically (Ciampa, 2013). This ensures that our students develop multi-literacy skills and proficiency with digital technologies to be active, successful participants in the 21st century global society.

Assessment-centred An online mode of delivery also allows us to utilize assessment tools such as student evaluation of their peers’ work in virtual groups and the development of e-portfolios to foster reflective and critical thinking and creativity.

Community-centred Interaction is a defining and critical component of the educational process (Anderson, 2008). The flexibility of virtual communities encourages more active participation. The weekly discussion forums in our course and the integration of collaborative tools and social media extend learning beyond the constraints of traditional formal education,

providing opportunities to promote appropriate student-student and student-teacher interactions and responsible digital citizenship.

Instructor Resources

As Raffo et al. (2015) argues, being strategic about our balance of the various facets of online teaching will improve our teaching efficiency and effectiveness. We considered our time and knowledge resources and the balancing issues associated with four key online teaching facets: course design, delivery of the course content, assessments/feedback, and professional development.

As a group we designed one course, which we built out on two different platforms in order to identify the different affordances and constraints of each. We explored Eliademy and edX Edge as both platforms are WYSIWYG-friendly and could easily be created and administered by novice online educators with little technical understanding of learning management systems. However, this does not imply that either platform is simplistic or entirely intuitive. The page structure hierarchies, the use of communication and collaborative tools, and the integration of third party apps became the foci of the project as we developed the course. Constraints were identified along the way, and most of these were resolved by further explorations within the platforms and via the help documentation. We found workarounds for other limitations (detailed below). This speaks to the complexity available within each LMS. So much so that we found it difficult to be as proficient within each new LMS as we would have liked.

In designing our course, we did not reinvent the wheel but referred to exemplary design models for developing our course, such as McTighe & Wiggins (2004) Backward Design model

and Fink's (2003) self-directed guide to designing courses for significant learning. We looked at open educational resources and adapted them to suit our students' needs. Many educational organizations like the National Council of Teachers of English, ReadWriteThink.org and Edutopia have excellent activities and rubrics. Sites like TedEd, the National Film Board of Canada and YouTube have videos that are good learning tools. As well, we did not include print and paid resources, opting for open resources and free apps for equity in access.

We kept the class size no larger than 30 students as we were aware that online teaching can be very time consuming because it requires a great deal of interaction with students to be effective. We considered our student population for the course. Some students may require more monitoring and attention. For assessments, we utilized self-assessment rubrics and peer assessments that give good feedback while maximizing efficiency.

Design Structure Phase 1: Strong Primary Components

Course Design and Development: Backward Design

The straightforward presentation of our choice of online platforms belies the effort and thought that went into choosing edX Edge and Eliademy. In determining how to build this course, we started with Fink's (2003) Primary Components, including situational factors, Learning Goals, feedback and assessment, teaching/learning activities and overall integration of the previous four components. This helped us to build the structure of the unit, as well as to visualize our student demographics and the context in which the students would be learning. As well, integrating McTighe & Wiggins (2004) Backward Design model, we started at the end of the learning process by analysing the situational factors and identifying the desired learning results, then worked back toward the beginning and made the following key decisions:

Situational Contexts

Student Characteristics A survey by MediaSmarts (2014) indicates that cell phones and smartphones are considered primary devices for students to go online. Half (52%) of the grade 7 students surveyed, state that they have their own cell phone and the numbers increase sharply as the students get older (MediaSmarts, 2014). We expect that our students will be accessing the online, cloud-based learning platforms from a variety of desktop computers and mobile devices and that students are familiar with basic web browsing functions on their technology of choice. Eliademy is mobile-friendly. It is fully optimized for tablets, and works well with most mobile phones too. edX has a mobile app, but it is not integrated for use with courses from edX edge. Thus, edX edge courses are only visible within a browser. Given the possible volume of elements on a page, it does not seem optimized for small screen use. For inclusiveness, students will have options and will not be disadvantaged whether they use web-based or mobile resources for coursework.

As we assume that this would be a student's first foray into online learning, we embedded a range of textual and multimedia tips and tutorials to scaffold their learning and help them become successful online learners. We ensured that the course structure is clearly laid out in the menus. Though menus in both Eliademy and edX Edge are easily created, Eliademy is more restrictive than edX Edge in its subpage hierarchy structure. Subpage menus cannot be created and thus the menu on the left hand side can be text-heavy, whereas edX Edge's menus can hide the subpage menu options. For visual clarity, we have amended the situation by placing two dashes in front of submenu page names (e.g. "-- Introductory Activities") under the parent page "Introductory Module". We felt that the absence of the sub-

menu feature in Eliademy can actually be considered an advantage because it keeps the navigation flat and course information in sub-menus can sometimes be missed by young students who are new to navigating online courses.

We also made use of the productivity suite Google Apps for Education, a free service for schools, to serve a variety of purposes within the LMS. As Google is a very familiar platform for students and they will be able to inherently know and understand much of its functionality. Eliademy offers full Google integration, as evidenced by the fact that you can embed Google Calendar and Forms, and upload Google Docs from Google Drive. Users can even sign up for Eliademy using their Google Plus account, along with other social media logins. This integration is important because Google Apps for Education has grown from 8 million users in 2010 to over 40 million users as of February 2015 (Alhadeff, 2015.) The user base includes students, faculty, and staff using Google Apps for Education.

Learning Goals

Literacy development lies at the heart of the Ontario Grade 1-8 language curriculum as language development is central to students' intellectual, social and emotional growth (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006). The language curriculum is based on the principles that successful language learners understand that language learning is a necessary life-enhancing, reflective process; communicate effectively and with confidence; make meaningful connections from texts; and use language effectively to interact with individuals and communities (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006, p. 4). Additionally, students are expected to demonstrate an understanding of a variety of media texts.

Student agency is an important aspect of online learning and independence in learning

can be fostered by making sure students know exactly what is expected of them. “When teachers express curriculum expectations as Learning Goals in student-friendly language, students know what they have to learn, connect the tasks they are doing with what they are learning, and are able to monitor how they are doing in light of these goals” (Learning Goals and Success Criteria, 2010, p.11). We identified five Learning Goals for students to achieve during the seven-week module. This satisfies Step 1 of Backward Design: Identifying desired results. These Learning Goals addressed the selected Grade 8 curriculum expectations (Appendix A). Success Criteria were then created to further elaborate and break down the knowledge, skills, and attitudes a student is meant to achieve for every Learning Goal. The development of Success Criteria accomplishes Step 2 of the Backward Design Model: Determination of acceptable evidence of learning. See Table 1.

Learning Goal #1. I can understand and respond to poetry.*Success criteria:*

- I can read a poem and understand that it has a surface meaning and a deeper meaning.
- I am able to compare two poems and to explain my comparison.
- I am able to explain my preferences and connections to poetry.

Learning Goal #2. I can read, or watch, slam poetry and identify effective literary tools and strategies that the poet chose to use.*Success criteria:*

- I know the difference between a simile and a metaphor.
- I understand how to spot symbolism, irony, and hyperbole in a written poem.
- I can observe the use of literary strategies by watching videos of slam poets.

Learning Goal #3. I can write and present poetry to convey an idea, a thought, or a feeling using my unique voice.

Success criteria:

- I understand symbolism, irony, hyperbole, metaphor, and simile and I can identify examples in a written poem.
- I post my poetry to the discussion forum to share my unique voice.
- I look for the best word to fit what I am trying to say.

Learning Goal #4. I can reflect on, and identify my strengths in poetry and next steps for improvement in my writing.*Success criteria:*

- I write my poems at least two days before they are due. This gives me time to think of a better word, or a better way to share my ideas.
- I find the parts in my poems that I like, and I analyze them to figure out what makes those parts effective.
- I find the part of my poem that need work and determine what could make them better.
- I use several strategies to improve my writing including rereading my work, conferencing with the instructor, conferencing with a friend, and comparing it to the works of another poet I respect.

Learning Goal #5. I can provide positive feedback and constructive criticism for the written work of my peers.*Success criteria:*

- I underline a specific part of a poem and I explain the connections I made.
- I underline a specific part of a poem and I share what I think has been done well.
- I underline a specific part of a poem and I give my opinion about what could be improved.
- I read and respond to the posts of my classmates when they share their poetry at least twice a week.

Table 1. Learning Goals and Success Criteria for Express Yourself! A Grade 8 Poetry Module

Once Learning Goals and Success Criteria have been identified, instructional activities and assessments can be planned. The final stage, Step 3, planning learning experiences and instruction, will be completed when the Content Module for our Assignment 3 is finalized.

Although details for specific instructional activities have not been finalized for the Content Module, our group has thought through activities, tools and assessments to facilitate learning.

The assignments are weighted for grading as follows. The rationale for the grading will be discussed in Assignment 3.

1. Discussion Posts & Discussion Forum Participation (40%)
2. Written poetry assignments (30%)
3. Poetry Slam Poem and Participation (20%)
4. Poetry Slam Reflective Self-Assessment (10%)

Design Structure Phase 2: Building the Course

Fink (2003) identifies six kinds of significant learning which extend beyond “understand and remember” kinds of learning. These six types of significant learning are “*interactive*, and [...] each kind of learning can stimulate other kinds of learning” (Fink, 2003, p. 9). Specifically, these include 1) metacognitive learning, 2) an awareness of foundational knowledge, 3) the application of learning, 4) the ability to integrate one’s knowledge to the self, to others and to society, and an awareness of the 5) caring and 6) human dimensions of learning (p. 9). We found that in order to provide opportunities for significant learning in all six domains, we needed to appropriate the affordances of various third-party applications, and additional plugins that the LMSs made available when planning instructional activities and assessments. The six tables below provide a full description of the design elements that were used in Eliademy and edX edge and the ways in which they support the integration of Fink’s six types of significant learning.

1. “Learning-How-To-Learn” Goals (Metacognitive goals)

<i>Description of significant learning:</i>	<i>Relevant applications and the Rationale for their use:</i>
<p>According to the University of Waterloo’s School for Teaching Excellence, self-directed learning is composed of four key stages to independent learning – being ready to learn, setting Learning Goals, engaging in the learning process, and evaluating learning.</p>	<p>The communication of Learning Goals is critical, and in developing our course on Eliademy, attention was closely paid to addressing each of these points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goals for the unit of study • Structure and sequence of activities • A timeline for completion of activities • Details about resource materials for each goal • Details about grade weighting and procedures • Feedback and evaluation from the instructor as each goal is completed • A plan for regular conferences with the instructor and other unit policies, such as work turned in late <p>The course is set up so that students have clear access to an Overview (Learning Goals) and Introductory Activities (classmate introductions and an intake survey) to guide their learning at the onset.</p> <p>The intake survey created in Google Forms and embedded within the course works to engage the students</p>

	<p>and help them to understand what type of learner they are when it comes to Poetry. This is important in order to understand their needs as self-directed learning students. For example, it asks the question “What are my needs re: instructional methods?”</p> <p>Finally, in order to evaluate student learning, the student must be afforded every opportunity to reflect on what they are learning and if they comprehend what they are learning. This is done through the various communication methods in the course (email, discussion forums, Google Hangouts video chats and feedback and comments in Google Docs).</p>
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Table 1. “Learning-How-To-Learn” Goals (Metacognitive goals)

2. Foundational Knowledge Goals	
<p><i>Description of significant learning:</i></p> <p>What key information (e.g. facts, terms, formulae, concepts, principles, relationships, etc.) is /are important for students to understand and remember in the</p>	<p><i>Relevant applications and the Rationale for their use:</i></p> <p>In this section, as we address a student’s capability to know and understand the knowledge, skills, and attitudes presented within Express Yourself!, it becomes apparent that again, the Learning Goals will facilitate a student’s ability to know exactly the requirements in terms of the basic knowledge and understandings</p>

<p>future?</p> <p>What key ideas (or perspectives) are important for students to understand in this course?</p>	<p>they are to take away from this course. This will be achieved using the following tools:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. A repository of relevant and instructionally appropriate learning resources, including:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Textual content written at the appropriate reading level using text features that ensure user success• Embedded and zoomable images and infographics• PDF files that act as style guides and poetry frameworks for scaffolding draft writing• Lists of required and optional readings; linked as appropriate <p>All of these items have been built in both the Eliademy and edX edge platforms. Further, in an effort to provide both examples and non-examples, we will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Depth and breadth of exposure to embedded videos of poets in performance,• Depth and breadth of exposure to both link and embedded poems <p>This too is accomplished easily. Of note, is the approach to transcription between the two platforms. When a video is embedded in edX edge it looks for a timed transcript to run in a hideable frame to the right of the viewing screen. If no script is</p>
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	found, a prompt is given to upload an original script. This feature improves accessibility and usability for students. This feature is not available in Eliademy.
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Table 2. Foundational Knowledge Goals

3. Application Goals	
<p><i>Description of significant learning:</i></p> <p>Education Canada Magazine states that in order to effectively engage students in their learning, effective questioning techniques should be used. Open-ended questions foster critical thinking, in which students analyze and evaluate. These types of questions also spark creative thinking, in which students imagine and create and think “outside of the box.” What important skills do students need to gain? Do students need to learn how to manage complex projects?</p>	<p><i>Relevant applications and the Rationale for their use:</i></p> <p>The assessment methods and tools chosen, along with Discussion forum prompts, will include these questioning techniques, as open-ended questions are important and overall more effective in the study of poetry. Students will write and submit poetry as assignments and use peer reviewing/editing in both Discussion posts and in the Google Doc they will share with peers and the instructor. Also, students will be expected to be able to apply critical thinking skills when comparing and contrasting two poems in the “Think Poetry” activity.</p> <p>The summative assessment reflects an opportunity for students to apply all of the skills they have acquired throughout the course into a Virtual Poetry Slam using</p>

	<p>the Google Hangouts on Air tool, where the students will be asked to create a link to view their Slam and post it either in the Discussion forums or on the class Twitter page. It will measure the student's ability to be creative and teach them how to manage a project as it is a group work activity. Finally, it will determine if the student demonstrated retention of knowledge and participation in discussions and revisions of written work, asked questions for clarification, and generally allowed him/herself to express that unique voice for an audience to hear.</p>
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Table 3. Application Goals

4. Integration Goals	
<p><i>Description of significant learning:</i></p> <p>What connections (similarities and interactions) should students recognize and make:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • among ideas within this course? • among the information, 	<p><i>Relevant applications and the Rationale for their use:</i></p> <p>The tools that we have chosen to address the students making connections among ideas within the course and among the material in the course and the students' own personal/social life are: the class Twitter page where students can use their own personal social media handles to post about the course, and Google Calendar tool with video call for the instructor to hold virtual office hours. Students may also use</p>

<p>ideas, and perspective in this course and those in other courses or areas?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• among material in this course and the students' own personal, social and/or work life?	<p>Google Hangouts chat while working on their assignments in class or at home in order to connect with their peers.</p> <p>Students will have the opportunity to participate in a Virtual Poetry Slam using the Google Hangouts on Air tool. This will enable students to host a broadcast live in HD on Google (or a class YouTube channel). They will be able to add their Hangout On Air recordings to the YouTube channel so that the instructor can assess. Also, students can take audience questions about their chosen poetry in advance and answer the best ones live.</p> <p>A MediaSmarts report, <i>Young Canadians in a Wired World, Phase III: Life Online</i> states: "online media are primarily used for entertainment and communicating with friends and family", and "about half of students in grades 7-11 (47%) have Twitter accounts" (p. 4). If the instructor provides the Twitter hashtag as an optional activity for students, it will be a familiar and therefore engaging platform the students can tap into in order to informally chat about the course, or tweet links to some of their poetry if they are so inclined. The fact that the use of Twitter is an optional activity is clearly stated within the Overview and Introductory Module components of the course. The Google Hangout virtual office hours offer students the opportunity to further communicate any questions and/or concerns they may have after school hours. This may help those students who need/choose to</p>
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	verbalize their thoughts, rather than type into a discussion forum or email the instructor.
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Table 4. Integration Goals

5. Caring Goals	
<p><i>Description of significant learning:</i></p> <p>What changes/values do you hope students will adopt?</p> <p>-Feelings?</p> <p>-Interests?</p> <p>-Ideas?</p>	<p><i>Relevant applications and the Rationale for their use:</i></p> <p>Of particular note in a unit about Poetry is that students typically arrive with many preconceived notions about reading, writing, and appreciating poems. To this end, it is a goal of Express Yourself! to help students learn to identify their own feelings, interests, and ideas about poems and to observe how these might change over the duration of the course. We hope to facilitate this reflection and introspection by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparing an entry survey designed to ask students about opinions regarding poetry prior to the start of the course • Assigning discussion posts asking students to reflect on specific poems, thus possibly prompting certain emotional responses • Assigning discussion posts asking students to reflect and respond to their peers in an attempt to foster positive feedback and connection • Engaging with students through email, discussion posts, and video chats to scaffold their entry into poetry and to direct them towards poems and poets of potential interest • Using personal eportfolios to chart the evolution of their poetry and their

	attitudes over time. Ideally this portfolio will support a student's final reflective assignment
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Table 5. Caring Goals

6. Human Dimensions Goals	
<p><i>Description of significant learning:</i></p> <p>What could or should students learn about themselves?</p> <p>What could or should students learn about understanding others and/or interacting with them?</p>	<p><i>Relevant applications and the Rationale for their use:</i></p> <p>Students will make use of an e-portfolio in order to reflect on their growth as a writer and reader of poetry. They will use Google Docs or Google Slides to capture ponderings, writing revisions, comments and feedback from the instructor as well as their peers from the various outlets provided for their expression throughout the online course. Reflection is a vital endeavour for writers to engage in throughout the writing process, and the fact that this online course fosters an open and honest forum where students are able to gather constructive feedback on their poetry creates a much richer experience. In constructivist learning environments, students construct their own understanding and knowledge of the world through interacting with others, experiencing things and reflecting on those experiences. Eliademy allows this type of environment to flourish by providing all of the necessary collaborative and communication tools to help students to understand and interact with others to further their knowledge and perspectives.</p>

Table 6. Human Dimensions Goals

Communication and Collaboration

Gibbs and Simpson (2005) identify the influence of assessment on learning and the influence of feedback on learning. By establishing the conditions they suggest, learning could be improved through the potential effects of social pressure on the time and effort a student will invest into a course of student (p. 14). If a student wants to avoid the embarrassment of a poorly performed presentation, or ill-completed component of group work, they are more likely to spend more time and effort on the course work. To this end, we designed assignments which require posting to the discussion boards to propel students to dedicate an appropriate amount of time to share their thoughts and learning. Also, a teacher's "didactic role" in a learning situation may strongly scaffold the learners' own activity, and, correspondingly, the learners' independent activity may be increased when the teacher stays in the background, as a "facilitator" (Reeves, 1994). During the first week of the course, the instructor would take on a didactic role in the discussion forums and lead discussions in the "Introduce Yourself" activity, as well as in the "Social More" discussion forum about appropriate and respectful use of the discussion forums. The instructor would be a strong presence at first, but then as students practiced interacting with others and gained confidence, a facilitator role would emerge and the instructor would survey the forums in the background. By modeling expectations and practice, students will learn to become self-directed learners in an online environment.

Hacker and Niederhauser (2000) state that a central feature of online classrooms is access to a variety of telecommunications tools. Eliademy provides an internal email messaging system as one way to communicate with students. E-mail discussions may actually produce more insightful discussion of ideas than face-to-face interactions because participants have the

opportunity to frame, reflect on, and revise questions and responses before sending them (Harrington & Hathaway, 1994). However, emailing individual students can be labour-intensive, so a general discussion forum was created to curtail duplicate questions. In Eliademy, we found that forums are arranged chronologically by default and that we could not re-order them. This became a huge constraint because we had to think through the order of the forums before creating them.

Eliademy provides users with a built-in calendar as a communication tool; however, it also allows for users to embed a Google Calendar. We chose to embed a Google Calendar in order to hold virtual office hours using the “Add Video Call” function within an event in Google Calendar, as well as the option of repeating the event. Eliademy’s calendar is not capable of this function. Once the instructor shares the course calendar with students, the office hour event will generate itself into the student’s calendar, therefore allowing the student to self-advocate in terms of when they believe they need help on their own time. Further, this method also allows multiple students (up to 10 per session) to be present in a single video call. There is also a screen share option so that the student(s) can better communicate a question about student work in a visual manner. We also chose to embed a Google calendar because our students have Gmail addresses, and it works seamlessly with their Google accounts.

Incorporating Third-Party Applications

edx Edge welcomes significant HTML markup. Content can always be added to edX in either a visually-based editor, or in a raw HTML editor. For many specialized elements the Help forum guided us in the appropriate use of HTML by providing customizable code. We found this advantageous when we uploaded videos and other content because it permitted greater

functionality and personalization. However, It can also be problematic because small syntactical errors can prevent the site from working properly. Eliademy also has the option of editing in HTML mode. We can change the formatting of our text in HTML mode by pressing the “Source” button while in editing mode.

Tools for Feedback and Assessment

Eliademy offers a holistic grading scheme, which means that the system will calculate the average of all assignments to which the instructor assigned a numeric value. Students can submit assignments (or “tasks”) within Eliademy, but the instructor only has the ability to provide the student with free-form feedback in a “post-it” type feature that attaches itself to the student’s assignment, along with the numeric grade. Currently, the only values are 0-100, with no option for decimals. The grades may be exported as a .csv file. The assessment methods are therefore not as sophisticated as the many options available in edx Edge. A work-around that may be used can provide more affordances in this area, but requires some technical knowledge. If the instructor desires to annotate directly on the assignment, for example, the Google integration can be used. For our poetry course, annotating directly on a document is particularly useful when it comes to writing assignments, as it is important for students (and instructor) to see the development in the writing, and utilize the instructor’s immediate, ongoing feedback to refine the writing. Keh (1990) notes that feedback is a fundamental element of a process approach to writing and this includes peer feedback, conferences as feedback, and teachers’ comments as feedback. It is our belief that using Google apps for education in conjunction with Eliademy will enhance the feedback process between instructor and student, as well as peer to peer feedback to inform students’ writing.

Debugging

After developing the Introductory Module, we identified potential issues that might arise. We enrolled as students to periodically check out what the course looked like from the learner's perspective. Eliademy automatically sends out email notifications for course updates as well as a daily summary of updates. Learners are alerted to new content once they are signed in to the course. These were all working as they should be. We also responded to the student survey on Google Form to make sure that it was working well.

Evaluating the Success of Our Course

The last key fundamental of our design process is evaluation and then looking at ways to improve on our course and teaching (Fink, 2005; Bates, 2014). As it is important to provide evidence that our course design has been successful, we will use Bates' set of questions (Appendix B) during the course session and after the teaching is done to evaluate factors that contributed to or inhibited learning. Because of the affordances of Eliademy, we can find a traceable digital trail of evidence that shows student participation rates. We can do a qualitative analysis of the discussion posts, student e-portfolios and self-assessments in relation to their initial survey responses in the introductory week. However, this could be time-consuming, so we intend to take up Bates' (2014) recommendation of using small focus groups that cover the full range of achievement through synchronous sessions on Google Hangouts. This would be effective in getting reliable feedback to make the course design more effective.

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Appendix A

Ontario Grade 8 Language Curriculum Standards Addressed

Form

2.1 write complex texts of a variety of lengths (a free verse or narrative poem, or a limerick)

Making Inferences/Interpreting Texts

1.5 develop and explain interpretations of increasingly complex or difficult texts using stated and implied ideas from the texts to support their interpretations

Voice

2.2 establish a distinctive voice in their writing appropriate to the subject and audience, (e.g., use emotive language to persuade the audience to share their feelings, and explain the effect they think it will have on the audience)

Elements of Style

2.4 identify a range of elements of style - including symbolism, irony, analogy, metaphor, and other rhetorical devices - and explain how they help communicate meaning and enhance the effectiveness of texts

Preparing for Revision

2.6 identify elements in their writing that need improvement, selectively using feedback from the teacher and peers, with a focus on depth of content and appropriateness of tone

Revision

2.7 make revisions to improve the content, clarity, and interest of their written work, using a variety of strategies (eg., use idioms, figurative language, and rhetorical devices such as analogy to achieve particular effects)

Producing Drafts

2.8 produce revised draft pieces of writing to meet identified criteria based on the expectations

Publishing

3.7 use a wide range of appropriate elements of effective presentation in the finished product, including print, script, different fonts, graphics, and layout (e.g., use an imaginative text layout, drawings, and a table of contents in a class poetry anthology for the school library)

Producing Finished Works

3.8 produce pieces of published work to meet identified criteria based on the expectations (e.g., adequacy of information and ideas, logic and effectiveness of organization, effective use of form and stylistic elements, appropriate use of conventions, effective presentation) Online

Poetry Slam

Metacognition

4.1 identify a variety of strategies they used before, during, and after writing, explain which ones were most helpful, and suggest future steps they can take to improve as writers (e.g., use

an online three-column reflection journal to monitor the writing process: What I learned/How I learned it/How I can use it)

Appendix B

Evaluating the Success of Course Design (Bates, 2014, 11.11.3)

- Were the learning outcomes or goals clear to students?
- What learning outcomes did most students struggle with?
- Was the teaching material clear and well structured?
- Were the teaching materials and tools students needed easily accessible and available 24 x 7?
- What topics generated good discussion and what didn't?
- Did students draw appropriately on the course materials in their discussion forums or assignments?
- Did students find their own appropriate sources and use them well in discussions, assignments and other student activities?
- Which student activities worked well, and which badly? Why?
- What of the supplied learning materials did students make most and least use of?
- Did the assignments adequately assess the knowledge and skills the course was aiming to teach?
- Were the students overloaded with work?
- Was it too much work for me as an instructor?

- If so, what could I do to better manage my workload (or the students') without losing quality?
- How satisfied were the students with the course?
- How satisfied am I with the course?