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## HAIKU AND FREE-STYLED WRITING STYLES FOR SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNERS

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### ABSTRACT:

University teaching strategies that promote effective learning at a level that goes beyond lectures or rote learning may have a profound effect on heightening a student's ability to learn through a connected series of skills-building tasks. The measure of academic learning is based on learning outcomes from well-developed coursework that can provide specific knowledge and skills that the students are expected to acquire during the semester. There are many sources that may be included to establish a basis for learning outcomes, especially in teaching through content-based coursework to develop writing skills. The most important aspect of learner outcome stems from the instructor's ability to engage the student to actively apply their natural skills to analyze, appraise, choose, compare, contrast, distinguish,

question, reflect, sketch, dramatize, and vocalize their thoughts to others. This is to write within a safe harbor of acceptance by trained second language instructors.

This paper focuses on developing ways to cultivate a student's ability to act from their own thoughts in reflection of their place in this world, and to make connections between the general social themes presented in class to find and define their relationships within society and the environment. To illustrate this point, the development for a second language student is to express individual thoughts into concrete forms that can be represented in poetic expressions found in haiku and free-styled expressions. In this manner, we will be able to evaluate the specific dimensions of student learning outcomes. The key in implementing specific task-based learning outcomes is to communicate the expectations for the coursework with models as well as fluid feedback to bring the students up to the expected level of learning objectives. Most importantly, the allowance of a student's creative insights on their connection with the natural world around them can instill the development of self-learning skills in order to make independent assessments of their own creative works. In doing so, this may eventually evolve into a higher level of critical thinking patterns that can elicit student discussions in other coursework while allowing each student to maintain his or her unique communication styles in their poetic expressions.

**KEY WORDS:** English as a Second Language, Haiku writing, Free-styled poetic verses, Learning Outcomes, Syllabification

### **INTRODUCTION:**

Whether we live in a developed or undeveloped country, the use of the Internet, smartphones, Facebook, Twitter, and other forms of social media have created an array of opportunities for us to communicate with each other via audio, print, media, images, video, and other visual and audio formats. These technological innovations have accelerated and expanded our world for connectivity that was not there some twenty years ago. In this way, our modern world has opened up with a sense of immediacy between people

around the world. Even with this ease of communicative trends that is constantly changing with newer innovations, there is still that constancy in our lives that links us to the traditions of well-known poets and writers of long ago. We can open the pages of these writings, and still read these words as if that particular "moment" in time has been memorialized forever in the feelings that were expressed about our interests, passions, struggles, fears, and friendships. The words of any writer or poet can evoke our feelings and emotions about our interaction with the environment as well as our people-to-people relations with each other as this can stand the test of time.

### GLOBAL RELAVANCY THROUGH POETIC EXPRESSIONS

For this particular focus of this paper, the relevancy of teaching and writing Haiku as a genre for learning English as a second language will be discussed from various American viewpoints, and to address the importance of establishing learning outcomes as part of student evaluation on their writing proficiency in a second language. In addition, the contemporary research done on second language acquisition would be discussed in terms of practical applications for syllabification to breakdown language into smaller units of sounds so that the two-fold effect of language learning takes place. As listening and speaking levels are combined to induce a heightened enhancement in reading comprehension, the ultimate goal for second language learners is to write from an individualized point of view or in motivating self-study modules that can be shared in either group or individual class project.

### CONTEMPORARY HAIKU GOES GLOBAL

Today, technology allows information to flow freely across cyberspace, this also applies to haiku poems from Japan and how this traditional poetic form is fast-becoming a writer's tool for expression throughout the world. Since the 1980s, the exchange of haiku poems have been translated into English and has recently reached countries such as Germany, Holland, France, Romania, and Italy. Interestingly enough, the reverse flow of haiku verses in other languages have produced and stimulated the growth of the popularity of Haiku as a

recognizable genre among our global communities-at-large through many Internet-based sites. In the 1990s, some of the top Japanese haiku poets formed the Haiku International Association, thus issuing their first multi-lingual journal that is simply called, "HI," and remarkably, these literary works come from twenty-eight countries around the world. This profound outreach is not limited to haiku enthusiasts, but has provided changes in curriculums that support a multi-lingual platform as well.

From worldwide interest in the haiku genre, it is depicted in the following: 5-7-5 syllabic verse form. The Japanese had, indeed, influenced the stylistic popularity of haiku verses. Most noteworthy, the Japanese organizations such as Japan Air Lines in 1964 have sponsored contests in foreign languages for many years, thus promoting and encouraging people from other countries to try their hand at haiku writing. The older haiku associations can be traced back to Basho's hometown of Ueno located in the ancient province of Iga in Japan. Recently, other haiku associations in Japan have opened its doors for the inclusion of the English-language division.

Specifically, English has become something of an international haiku language, and this form of poetry has blossomed significantly in the United States and Canada. In fact, there are haiku language magazines published in Croatia, Romania, and Japan that present each issue fully in both the native language and English. Here in modern Japan, the haiku form for foreign nationals who are working here have taken an interest in composing haiku, and this popularity continues to rise. The development of the delicate points of poetic expressions of haiku have taken on adventurous, more open versions of the ancient form called free-styled haiku, and a new internationalism of haiku writing have come forth while still keeping the original spirit of haiku intact. Here is one example for review:

A snail on the stones  
Advances with care,  
Autumn draws to an end

This particular haiku example was originally written in Arabic language by Abdelhadi Barchale of Casablanca, Morocco, and was translated into English.

In evaluating this poem, we are reminded to begin our understanding about how deeply human beings from all places in this world can identify with the environment in which they live in, and the creatures that are part of our environment. Moreover, it is the true nature of haiku expressions that allows the person to know the sensations and events which moves the person in ways that can be defined as evocative feelings expressed sparingly, but with carefully chosen wordings to produce and invite the reader to a particular moment of time that transcends beyond culture, and to the immediacy of that particular act or actions in relation to nature.

### WRITING FROM YOUR OWN PERSONAL EXPERIENCES

The Japanese as well as those of Japanese generational descent living outside of Japan have practiced haiku as part of their own identity search which may include the trials to their ethnicity that have caused them to be separated from their original homeland. One Japanese-American haiku scholar, translator and writer, Kenneth Yasuda (June 23, 1914 – January 26, 2002) is a prime example of the dualism, that being, racially Japanese and having been raised in an English-speaking culture in America. He was able to nurture both sides of his genetic and cultural heritage in his haiku.

Generally speaking, a younger Yasuda had experienced internment for Japanese-Americans at Tule Lake War Relocation Center during WWII. Four years of his life was on hold, and this had interrupted his college years at the University of Washington. Afterwards in 1945, a determined Yasuda was allowed to return back to his studies in poetry at the University of Washington, and later, he came to Japan to study for his Doctorate degree in Japanese literature from Tokyo University. Yasuda's love for poetry never wavered during difficult times during and after the war.

Upon reflecting, studying and understanding both cultures, Yasuda later writes about his feelings in adapting and re-discovering his ancient cultural roots in the landscape and language of his homeland, Japan. Yasuda's book, "A Pepper-Pod," contains translations of Japanese haiku and original haiku in English as follows:



**The Rain**

Tenderly again  
On the peony I hear  
Whispers of the rain.

**Irises**

Irises in bloom,  
Soon the white one too will fade  
Into the gathering gloom.

**The Mississippi River**

Under the low grey  
Winter skies water pushes  
Water on its way

While the haiku form may seem brief and have some limitations in what this form may express to us as readers, the important aspect is the reliving of a given moment that allows us to recall and treasure our own experiences in life, no matter how trivial it may seem to others. On an universal plane, these particular haiku experiences of Yasuda's may bring about our associations with the scent of flowers that produces a sense of calmness or the sound of water that refreshes our spirits, and/or the spiritual home for wayward adventure-seekers who can conjure the comforts of home from their childhood memories.

**HAIKU: A DEEP EMOTIONAL WELL OF THOUGHTS**

Haiku as a poetic genre transcends beyond national boundaries, and this particular form of artistic expression has also been a democratizing force, even in the days of Basho. People of all levels of society have written in forms that closely resemble the haiku form. The sharing of haiku with one another across societies, cultures and languages depicting objects, animals, flora and fauna which may include day-to-day events that provide meaning to each of

us on some profound level. In the process of writing haiku, the lines of communication are not only the threadbare references of natural observations, but rich with the tapestry of woven images that evoke our most universal feelings and emotions. Moreover, haiku reading and writing can lead to a deeper understanding and appreciation of our life force, and in particular, we can connect with our earthly bonds to nature.

Fundamentally, the haiku poems reflect on the "here and now" or what we call the "transitioning moment". Haiku poets can recall how we felt when seeing something that moves us in a way that reflects something from our deepest well of our philosophical proclivities or transcendental spiritualism. Essentially, it is the writing style that fully focuses on the awareness of one's surrounding in elegant simplicity. This type of writing is not just the simple back-and-forth dialogue between actors saying a line that communicates a message within a movie script. Haiku helps us get out of our loops of worries, and to be in touch with ourselves in a way that is centering. In sum, haiku poetry is written from our own experiences at that very moment in time, and not just simply based on our knowledge of things or our belief in a specific faith or an idea that revolves around innovation. Fundamentally, the haiku poem is securely revolving around our presence at a given moment of time as it may slip away into another that may reveal something else. Thus, it is the seconds of time that count here in the writing of haiku, and it can be only be done with focused clarity of our feelings in tune with our surroundings. This is what makes haiku a widely accepted writing form in international literary circles today.

### **BUILDING THE BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE FOR ESL/EFL WRITING COURSES**

The first order of developing an ESL/EFL curriculum stems from the understanding of current attitudes and practices in the teaching of writing as wider ranges of research are formed through various educational networks. In this case, it is best to review the historical basis so that we can compare different teaching methodologies. Prior to the mid-1960s in the United States,



teaching writing to native speakers of the language at the high school and college-levels focused on responding to literary texts. The standard instruction in teaching composition was fairly standardized in this way: (1) instructing the students in principles of rhetoric and organization which were presented as the "rules" for writing; (2) providing the students with a textbook containing literary content for classroom discussion, analysis and interpretation; (3) requiring writing assignments that is outlined beforehand to practice the organization of paragraphs; (4) commenting and offering constructive criticism prior to each assignment through a feedback process. This particular approach has been referred to as a "traditional paradigm" (Hairston 1982). Additionally, the evaluation process of completed student works was often referred to as a "product approach."

In the 1960s, teaching ESL writing in North America was based on controlled composition models which were primarily based on the approach supported by Fries in the 1940's. Most noteworthy was the American grammarian and lexicographer Charles Fries who gained prominence in his audio-lingual methodologies. Fries' research brought attention to pattern practices and had great influence in teaching ESL around the world. He drew on his descriptive work entitled, *The Structure of English* (1952) on recorded telephone conversations, and through this innovative approach, Fries emphasized 'signals of structural meaning' that could be isolated and described from the stream of speech rather than the ideas expressed in writing. Thus, Fries' conviction was that English should be described and learned through speech rather than writing. This had established an integrated methodology for generations to come. These ideas were also reflected in this latter works, *The Foundations of English* (1961).

#### OUR SPEECH PATTERNS FORM MEANINGFUL LANGUAGE SKILLS

What are the walkways down the path in building communicative competencies within the circle of second language learners? Most language teachers have multiple techniques in addressing the fluency issues among

students learning a second language. Although, there are cases where the accent of a given word gives way to the correctness of its pronunciation, most contemporary instructors would indicate that an "accent" does not deter from the learning process at all. In fact, excessive error correction is often seen as unnecessary and at times, counterproductive. Essentially, the important thing is that the learner is able to understand the learning material and to be able to be understood when communicating his or her opinions and thoughts out loud in group-related discussions (Larson-Freeman 2000)

One of the most impressive developments of negotiating a word in a given language is the first hand experience of saying the words one has created on paper. In the 1970's, Krashen's *acquisition-learning hypothesis* within his 'monitor model' was the idealized manner and approach for teaching second language learners. In this time of language teaching for second language learners, the transition from audio-lingual to communicative language teaching (CLT) and Content-based Instruction (CBI) were implemented in the United States school systems in various states. Krashen indicated that the learners are able to acquire language abilities through mere exposure to the sampling of language usages. Thus, there was an assumption that all human beings have a natural tendency toward learning languages built into our brain functionalities.

The functionality of language centered on left-right brain research is altogether important as well as how language is acquired in human beings, but for the purposes of this paper; the cognitive process will not be discussed beyond the recognition that this does play a role in language learning. On a general note though, it is quite advisable for second language instructors to become more aware of the natural way language is learned from the cognitive processing perspective to supplement, rather than to deter from the rigors of teaching second language learners.

On the other hand, Krashen also emphasized that students learn through conscious attention to form and rule memorization as part of the learning process. This is the grappling of a two-sided coin in which language instructors must toss up in the air to decide on how to implement such learning

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## LANGUAGE

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in a given class. What is important to note is to set-up realistic goals as an instructor in teaching second language acquisition. By having a focused outcome for students, Morley (1999) had outlined four important pronunciation instructional goals: (1) functional intelligibility, (2) functional communicability, (3) increased self-confidence, and (4) speech monitoring abilities. Basically, each outlined goals has been cited for the purposes of having students to speak with accents that are not distracting, and simultaneously not sublimating the student's first language mastery. This is important to maintain the student's self-esteem and to not impose cultural imperatives, but to encourage individualized learning curves within the structure of the coursework.

Morley also stresses that an instructor should provide student ways in which to utilize the functional language skill that can be understandable through correct word choice. Specifically, the instructor can act to guide the learner's ability to say things by viewing targeted language material or through repeated echo-like exchanges with students as a means to help isolate and correct speech when necessary. What is essential with Morley's goal-centered instructions is the consistent feedback from the instructor that allows the students to embed specific sounds in given words within a sentence to employ pauses, pitch movement, and stress on applicable syllables within a compound word. In this way, Morley suggests that communicative goals in English can be deemed to be functional and purposeful by reaching for the higher level of exchange between second language learners and the instructor.

Despite the challenges of teaching second language learners, Krashen does indicate that the motivation factor of a learner is the necessary exchange between learners and teacher-relationships in any classroom setting. By incorporating both speaking and listening skills that enhance our understanding of the relationship of words expressing in standardized language forms whether it is a poem, an essay to the rigorous application of a research paper with references is the ideal goal for students.

From Krashen's two-edged model for second language learners, it is vital to know some general basics of phonetics: the sounds of speech. The study of

speech sounds describes how we pronounce words and the parts of the words we call morphemes, as a unit of sound. By definition, a morpheme is the smallest unit of linguistic meaning or function in a given language, i.e., the word, "sheepdogs" contains three morphemes, "sheep," "dog" and the functional morpheme for the plural "s." The breaking down of vocabulary words into morphemes can help second language learners where the pronunciation breaks are applied, especially during oral reading assignments.

Although there needs to be more research done on the effectiveness of pronunciation among second language learners to date, the inclusion of suprasegmentals such as the rhythm, stress, and intonation of speech sounds were emphasized as well for the means of effective communication in English (Celce-Murcia and Goodwin 1996). Another study by Tracey (1998, 2003) suggests that learners in receipt of pronunciation lessons emphasizing stress and rhythm were judged to be easier to understand in comparison with learners who only received instruction on individual sounds. Even though, the learning outcomes produced a level of accuracy in the pronunciation of words, this did not seem to increase the listener's perception of the intelligibility of their speech to others. Findings such as these studies support the current emphasis on *suprasegmentals* rather than general pronunciation as done in audio-lingual classes.

### SYLLABIFICATION IS THE LINK TO ENHANCING PRONUNCIATION SKILLS

While there is a paucity of literature that provides a systematic approach in teaching second language learners to master the pronunciation puzzle to be effective communicators, there are various websites that provide some level of phonics and hands-on workshops that can provide instructors with enough information to get started on the teaching the rudiments of how words are broken down for students. In view of the latest findings on this area of speech skills based on pronunciation, stress, rhythm and intonation, the basic starting point for all students is to develop an "ear" for the second language while helping to isolate sounds in English with their own native language.



On a general note, the practical aspects of teaching points for pronunciation based on various Internet sources are suggested as follows:

1. First teach students to look for prefixes and suffixes that they can recognize. Then only apply syllabification to the base or the root word.  
**Example A:** Words like "sports/car" and "house/boat" can be divided off immediately by sheer recognition of two unrelated nouns linked together to produce another word all on its own.  
**Example B:** Divide off prefixes such as "un/happy" "pre-paid," or "re/write." Also, divide off suffixes in words like "farm/er" and "hap/pi/ness."
2. The Vowel-Consonant (V/C)/Consonant-Vowel (C/V) pattern appears often in lexicon of word usages.  
**Example A:** VC/CV consists of the following: BAS/KET.  
V/CV can be divided in the word in this way: "FU/TURE."
3. Teach students to recognize the r-controlled and vowel team syllables.  
**Example A:** large, en/ter, mar/ket
4. Teach students to recognize the closed syllable type that also includes dividing between the two middle consonants in the word, "mitten."  
**Example A:** rid/den, mit/ten
5. Teach students about the open "o" syllable type.  
**Example A:** go, lo/cate, jel/lo
6. Teach students about the vowel team such 'ee' or 'ai' or 'ou'. These vowel sounds are called "diphthong."  
**Example A:** green, con/tain, out/side
7. Teach students about vowel-silent 'e' syllable type.  
**Example A:** home, con/cave
8. Teach students about the consonant 'le' syllable type with the silent'  
**Example A:** bot/tle, ta/ble, a/ble
9. Teach students about the exceptions known as "digraphs." For one, you should never divide digraphs such as the following: "th", "sh", "ph", "ch" and "wh."
10. Teach students that the division of words is important in learning new

words. It can make a high difference in how the word is pronounced.

**For example:** #1 CAB-IN versus #2 CA-BIN. The first example is divided after the "B", and this makes the "A" have a short sound.

**Note:** "CAB-IN" is correct.

### TASK-BASED FOCUS FOR SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHERS

One of the primary tasks for any second language instructor is to ensure that the students understand what is being said in the classroom, and to help them understand new tasks or concepts for evaluation purposes. The use of syllabification is a bridging tool for students to become more familiar with new words on their own accord from Krashen's "comprehensive" input so that learning can take place just above the student's current abilities. Based on Krashen's groundbreaking research in the 1970s, he had pioneered and established a foundation for instructors in the following ways: (1) embedding the language within a meaningful context, (2) modifying the language presented to the students for easier comprehension (3) judiciously using paraphrasing and repetition techniques, and (4) involving the student in multi-model learning activities such as the tasks found in syllabification exercises.

Moreover, other research by Glass (2000) points out that the role of the learner is in negotiating, managing and even creating conversational or language patterns that can lead to a student's repertoire of comprehensible input. As students are the receivers of language output by the instructor, continuous feedback is necessary. The instructor is the one who can actively gauge a student's level of input through tangible goal-setting exercises that are elevated to challenge the students' current level of proficiency.

In this way, it is the "stretching" of the student's minds to develop their learning in a guided, well-connected lesson plan that puts that student just slightly ahead of the language he or she is producing when first entering the class. The type of student-teacher collaboration is what sustains the learning curve to new heights and cycle of exchange by which education fosters and propels the type of learner who can help to advance our world in promoting more positive global interactions and international communicative exchanges.



Further, the accessibility of our technological advances have allowed us to explore and to improve what we have built up so far through dedicated research in the field of second language acquisition on a global basis.

### **OTHER CONSIDERATIONS FOR WRITING COURSES**

The combination of learning culture and writing within the working framework of English as a Second Language acquisition is a powerful complement to learning. This can only enhance the students' proficient skills in a two-folded unit of learning. Simply put, the purpose specifically refers to the ideals of becoming proficient in a given language through the activities of developing writing skills that can be formulated from a personal exploration through task-based outcomes of haiku writing or in utilizing free-styled writing genres for the enhancement of learning literary English skills as well as other poetic forms and patterns of language usage.

### **INTEGRATING HAIKU AND FREE-STYLED WRITING TECHNIQUES IN CLASS**

Regardless of the type of writing tasks the instructor might favor for their students, a good place to start is to begin in exploring the pre-writing stage. This is the stage where students are allowed to freely explore different words and the relation between words and the images or feelings that could be expressed in haiku poetry. In fact, there is no one standard way to start the composition process since this is an individualized as one's fingerprints. The instructor's responsibility lies in exposing students to the variety of strategies for getting the flow of writing to manifest from the student's own motivations and intentions in class. The goal of every course should be that student writers learn to become informed and independent readers of their own texts, and to develop the skills necessary to create, revise, and reshape their words on paper. This is to meet the standards articulated by the instructor to "stretch" to a level beyond the student's current standing. In this way, the techniques for syllabification in English combined with the current standards for haiku writing may instill motivated learning through quiet self-reflection for the

journey within to understand our life experiences is something to be desired for second language learners.

### UNDERSTANDING THE BEAUTY OF CLASSICAL HAIKU POETIC WRITINGS

Since the original haiku foundation that had started long ago by Basho Matsuo (1644-1694) with the seventeen-syllable in three lines of five, seven and five syllables, the counting of syllables in American schools have lead to the concepts that stem from syllabification techniques as discussed prior in this paper. In contrast, the haiku that is written in Japanese is quite different from English, in that, the Japanese poets do not count syllables at all. Rather, the counting of **onji** is done and this represents the "sound" symbols and is referred to the Japanese phonetic characters used in writing phonetic script. The early ancients that had cultivated the Japanese language in the poetry written in the book, "**Manyoshu**", and the **onji** is represented as a very short sound. In comparison, the phonetics are much simpler than in English or even the Germanic languages. (Higginson and Harter 1985)

Nowadays though, the Japanese language has changed significantly, and incorporates the double-long vowel sounds, diphthongs, and a final consonant. In some words, it may take two or three **onji** to write what we would consider one syllable in English. For example, how many syllables are in the word, **Manyoshu**? Most of us would say that it contains three syllables, but in Japanese, the actual count is six **onji** characters.

Other examples such as these three **onji** words in Japanese, "**aoi**", "**atsui**" and "**toi**" are pronounced much faster than even the clipped version of English words, "potato" and "tomato" in a three-syllable pronunciation round by native speakers of the Japanese and English languages. Granted these variations do exist, but the nature of how words are pronounced in English may provide the students something concrete to grasp in separating the differences between how words are said in English and Japanese.

On first impression and appearance to the haiku novelist, the poetic style seems rather simplistic in its three-lined, seventeen syllables, but it is also

good to note that even the traditional Japanese haiku differs greatly from western-styled haiku. How difficult can this be? For one, the **kireji** or "cutting word" is often inserted within the three lines as a stylized form of creating a pause or clause for the reader to take-in a breath of subtleties in expressed haiku. The **kireji** usually divides the stanza into two rhythmical parts, one of twelve **onji** and the other of five. In Japanese haiku, the **kireji** lends a particular emotional flavor to the five-or twelve **onji** phrase found in the last line. Along with the **kigo** or "seasonal word", the **kireji** is carried over from the start of the verse of a renga, the original form of haiku to the contemporary versions of haiku composed today.

Another reference about Japanese haiku is how the writer often leaves room for additional thought that is added in the next verse in the form of a contemplated moment of transitions. There may be a tendency toward grammatical incompleteness that can be carried over in traditional haiku forms, and the speech may almost seem rather like a telegraphic speech. The purpose of this stylized version of haiku compositions is that the haiku poets can focus on creating image-making words by omitting the grammar points found in everyday conversational Japanese.

To illustrate, here are two traditional haiku as translated from Japanese to English. Note: The punctuation marks reveal the locations of the **kireji** from the original haiku poems.

#### BASHO'S HAIKU

Furuike ya	old pond . . .
Kawazu tobikomu	a frog leaps in
Mizu no oto	water's sound.

#### BUSAN'S HAIKU

Fuji hitotsu	Fuji alone
uzumi nokoshite	remains unburied
wakaba kana	the young leaves!

# STEPS IN WRITING HAIKU

The haiku in Japan and the rest of the world are almost two different genres. Although this may seem like a daunting task in teaching haiku, it should be noted that the haiku in languages other than Japanese have various common aspects. In comparison, the haiku written in Japanese contain a set of parameters that is not possible in other languages. On a positive note, there is room for haiku in other languages to explore and stretch the parameters to include expressions unique in a particular language.

Regardless of the differences between haiku written for Japanese listeners and haiku written in other languages, the dual advantage of teaching Japanese culture in English can provide second language learners a better understanding of the importance of seasonal words. Moreover, the writer of haiku in other languages can include those pauses in traditional haiku that transition into a revelation or insight on various universal themes relating to natural occurrences in our surroundings.

What is the best way to start writing haiku? In the coursework, the instructor should encourage their students to focus on something that interests them in connection with the natural world. This form of concentration requires an exploration of one's feelings and emotions such universal themes and feelings expressed in love, surprise, sadness, melancholy, contemplation that encompasses human emotion. The challenge is to express one's thoughts in three lines, and seventeen syllables. The brevity of the sentences and the choice of words are what makes writing haiku difficult, yet at the same time, the experience in connecting with the sensory or an awakening of thoughts that can be released and expressed in that "moment" of keen and quiet observations of nature is a beautiful expression. Since Japanese haiku recognizes the start of seasonal references within its country, a haiku written in another country can make references to its seasonal words. If you can imagine utilizing the haiku form in reference to the Australian hot weather in January, then this is quite different from the seasons in Japan altogether.

Recently, there have been significant changes in how haiku has broadened its scope to include other ways to express nature. Specifically, in 2000, one of

the largest haiku groups in Japan, the Shiki Salon of Matsuyama University issued a manifesto decreeing that non-Japanese haiku were not required to contain a "**kigo**" or a seasonal word. Nowadays, the leniency for haiku to be written without "**kigo**" was a big step forward in allowing a less restricted way of writing. Although, it is considered less traditional than what Basho would have imagined, the proverbial frog that plopped into the pond has made a larger splash among the international global literary communities.

### COUNTING SYLLABLES: A GUIDE TO HAIKU WRITING

While the simple counting of syllables can be one way to create a decent haiku poem, there is a huge difference between English syllables and Japanese sound units. Written in the English alphabet, sound units can be as short as one letter (**a, i, u, e, o, n**), but the Japanese language consists of two letters: a consonant and a vowel (i.e., **ka, ki, ku, ke, ko**). The sound unit "**n**" is considered to its unique sound unit in Japanese, but in English, "**n**" sound may be blended when pronounced. Thus, the Japanese word, "**tanka**" would be considered to be two syllables while it would have three sound units in Japanese (pronounced, **ta-n-ka**). Understanding these differences when teaching haiku to second language learners is advisable so that syllabification in English can be negotiated as new information, especially with Japanese university students.

### GENERAL HAIKU TECHNIQUES

To open your student's imaginations and creative imagery in haiku writing, the conjuring of sensual images based on your five or six senses are essential starting points. Fundamentally, haiku depends on words that create the images that a reader can see in his or her mind's eye through the visualization process or in recalling a similar experience as described by the writer's thoughts. For the instructor, the most important aspect of teaching haiku is to explain that the words in poetry stand for ideas and emotions: wisdom, love, fear, anger, longing, knowledge, beauty. These are also known as abstractions because they are concepts or the product of our intelligence and such abstract words do



not actually name things that can be verified with one's senses, but they can be understood as part of language and culture.

While the writer of haiku may consider linking his or her words to ideas or abstract concepts as derived from an inspiration or a "moment" describing a particular scene in the countryside or a grain of sand as it may relate to time as an abstraction, the significance of the simplicity of haiku poetry maintains that the sand as sand, and nothing else. While instructing your students in writing haiku as class assignments, the poignant note is to indicate to students to write so that the reader is led down the path or journey within their own mind as he or she had traveled up that point in time. The ability to link what was borne from a student's imaginings to the reader is what makes the haiku so profoundly touching, especially to those who can appreciate its time-honored expressions.

### RULES FOR HAIKU WRITING

The following are the general rules for creating haiku, and while this is not a complete list, this can be a general guide for your students.

1. Write 5-7-5 syllables in three lines.
2. Write seventeen syllables in a vertical (flush left or centered) configuration with one word on each line.
3. Write what can be said as one breath.
4. Never have all three lines make a complete or run-one sentence.
5. Have two images that are only comparative when illuminated by the third image. **Example:** spirit retreat/cleaning first the black stove/ and washing my hands.
6. Have two images that are only associative when illuminated by the third image. **Example:** fire-white halo/ at the moment of eclipse /your face.
7. Have two images that are only in contrast when illuminated by the third image. **Example:** two things ready/ but not touching the space between/ fire.
8. Always write in the present tense of here and now.



9. Make limited use, or non-use, of personal pronouns.
10. Use personal pronouns written in the lower case. **Example** : i am a . . .
11. Eliminate all possible uses of gerunds ("**ing**" endings on verbs).
12. Study and check the articles. Do you use too many of the words, "**the**" or "**a**" or too few of them? Are they all the same in one poem or are they varied for rhythm?
13. Use common sentence syntax in both the phrase and the fragments.
14. Use three sentence fragments.
15. Study the order in which the images are presented (i.e., first the wide-angle view, the medium range, and lately the zoomed-in close-up).
16. Write about ordinary things in an ordinary way using ordinary language.
17. Study any religion or philosophy and let this echo in the background of your haiku.
18. Use only concrete images.
19. Invest in lyrical expressions for the image.
20. Attempt to have levels of meaning in the haiku. On the surface it is a set of simple images; underneath, a philosophy or lesson of life.
21. Use images that evoke simple rustic seclusion or accepted poverty called "**sabi**" in Japanese.
22. Use images that evoke classical, elegant separateness called "**shibumi**" in Japanese.
23. Use images that evoke nostalgia, romantic images of austere beauty called "**wabi**" in Japanese.
24. Use images that evoke a mysterious aloneness called "**yugen**" in Japanese.
25. Use a paradox.
26. Use puns and wordplays.
27. Write of the impossible in an ordinary way.
28. Use only lofty or uplifting images ---no war topics, blatant sex, crime scenes, or local news.
29. Tell it as it is in the real world around us.
30. Use only images from nature with no mention of humanity.

31. Mix subjects of humans and nature.

32. Designate humans as non-nature and give all these non-nature haiku another name, such as "senryu" in Japanese.

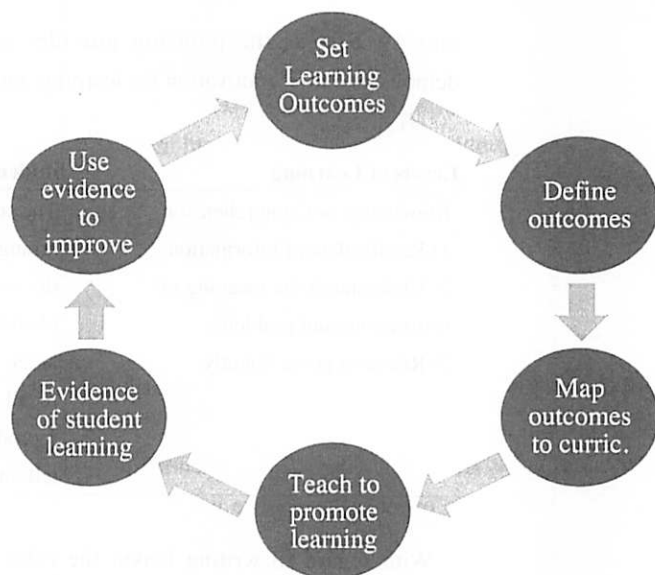
33. Refer to yourself obliquely as the poet, this old man, or with a personal pronoun in lower case.

In consideration of all these rules for haiku-making, Basho had a motto: "learn the rules; and then forget them." But first he said, "learn the rules."

### EVALUATING LEARNING OUTCOMES

The model of cultural / language duality in teaching haiku also requires the setting of learning outcomes for students. What are learning outcomes specifically? Basically, student outcomes can be defined as specific types of knowledge that students are expected to acquire in an academic program. At the end of the program, the student is expected to demonstrate this specific knowledge upon completion of the coursework.

The next step is to establish the rubrics for which they must aspire and maintain in order to receive a certain grade in class. There are six steps that provide the links in how learning outcomes should be handled and defined for second language learners. For instructors teaching second language acquisition, it is best to visualize how a writing course could be taught to students. This usually starts by connecting a general flow of connected or series of learning rubrics that leads students to the final outcome of their learning capabilities. In this way, the students can negotiate how they will achieve their learning goals in a given framework of class-related activities throughout the semester, thus providing them with incentives and the motivation to excel in their studies.



**Flowchart 1: Process of Improving Student Learning**  
**Created by American Educator: Benjamin Bloom**

The above-mentioned flowchart offers a six-step model for improving student learning through the use of curriculum mapping and rubrics. This model is essentially a process for how university students can continuously improve themselves, and the way in which an instructor can be evaluated their students. The steps are set forth as follows: (1) Setting student outcomes, (2) Defining the learning outcomes in specific terms, (3) Mapping the learning outcomes to the curriculum, (4) Teaching to promote student learning, (5) Gathering evidence of how well students have learned (known as rubrics), and (6) Utilizing the evidence to improve academic growth.

This flowchart provides the basic wheel on how each step leads to learning outcomes for students. Thus, the instructor can further decide the ways in which their students would satisfy the requirements for a given coursework. At some point, it may be best to formulate useful guide in writing statements of expectations for student learning and in doing so, the use of active verbs

may be best as the phrasing provides a clue as to how students will demonstrate their motivation for learning within a given class. (Saint-Germain 2009)

Levels of Learning	Student Learning Outcomes
Knowledge or Comprehension: 1) Recalls data or information 2) Understands the meaning of instructions and problems 3) Recites a poem fluently	The student will... arrange, classify, define, describe, discuss, duplicate, explain, express, identify, indicate, label, list, locate, memorize, name, order, recall, recognize, relate, repeat, report, reproduce, restate, review, select, state, tell, understand

With regard to writing haiku, the rules that apply may be one way to determine the learning outcomes of students learning this type of poetry, and the consideration of creating a haiku that allows the reader to feel or sense what the student is trying to convey may be a learning outcome. There may be other ways to include in developing coursework for the haiku novice, and this may be determined by how many haiku poetry is created within a given time frame. The learning of how haiku are formed by reading haiku well-known authors or winners of haiku competitions is advisable. The extent to which learning outcomes for writing haiku depends on what the instructor merits as a basis for evaluation for grading purposes.

## CONCLUSION

Producing a successful written text is a complex task that requires the simultaneous mastery of a number of language rules and applications. The best learning scenarios for an instructor is when a student's own perceptions and thoughts can be communicated to a wider audience beyond the classroom walls. Given that language use is both culturally and socially determined through our educational systems, it is nevertheless shaped by factors other than the simple act of word choice for there is a host of other matters of

consideration to inspire the creative force that resonates deep within each of us. Teaching the methods established by researchers in the field of second language acquisition offers some insight on the ways in which we can utilize various approaches in making the learning outcome more reachable for our students. Ultimately, there is no "best" method in teaching writing to students as learning styles may differ from student to student. Even so, the hope is that the individual student can find his or her voice in writing haiku, a time-honored poetic expression that has universal appeal. Perhaps, Basho's frog that leapt into that ancient pond long ago may awakened the sensitive soul-stirring expressions that can be appreciated by all others around this great-interlinking global world of ours. Thus, the simple joy is in the sharing of poetic haiku thoughts that we hold dear in our hearts and minds.

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