

# Literacy Link

Fall 2008

## From the Editors' Desktops



As instructors deeply invested in the First Year Writing program here at SVSU, we find our students at this time in the semester working very hard. They are in the process of writing and revising their final papers; completing research projects; reading and rereading course texts, assignments sheets, and rubrics. Of course, as instructors, we're working very hard as well: grading essays, conferencing with students, reading online discussion forums and facilitating classroom conversations, and helping students make their best writing practices the norm rather than the exception. And, of course, we're administering the course evaluations, but at the same time, we're doing our own evaluations: considering what's been working in our classes and what hasn't, reshaping our courses for the next semester in light of this semester's experience. We do all of this because one of our goals as English 111 instructors is to reconsider whether what we've been doing is truly preparing students for the next series of courses in their careers—a question that most of our students don't consider, but we instructors ask ourselves all the time.

In this issue, we find ourselves thinking about our teaching practices: how we view the work we do, and the ways in which we retool and reshape our classroom practice based on our shifting understanding of our disciplines and our students' needs. Thus, we find Kerry Segel reflecting on the concept of literacies, new guidelines offered by the National

Council of Teachers of English, and how one particular program at SVSU, the Certificate in TESOL program, works to connect individuals from different cultures. In a similar vein, SVSU creative writing major Matthew Falk shares a project he's undertaken based on his tutoring work with international students in the Writing Center.

Although she stays a little closer to home, Jill Wetmore talks about the ways distance affects our commuter students and ruminates on other ways in which we build bridges on SVSU's main campus,



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specifically through hybrid courses. Lastly, Holly Bird rounds out the issue by discussing a technological tool she uses to assist her students' ability to read images and texts, and to analyze audiences.

As always, we hope our contributors prompt you to think more deeply about

your own literacy initiatives and inspire you to share your ideas with us.

Christopher Giroux

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Co-Editors of Literacy Link

## A Creative Writing Approach to Inter-cultural Communication in the Writing Center



Matthew Falk  
Creative Writing Senior

As a mentor in SVSU's Writing Center, I have many opportunities to interact with, observe, and learn from a variety of student writers from diverse backgrounds. It is not only a pleasure to share ideas and experiences with these writers, but also a challenge to find new and creative ways of relating to them. A case in point is that of international students, many of whom visit the Center every day for assistance with their writing. Although, in a general sense, international student writers present many of the same concerns as Americans, they also face unique obstacles. In particular, as you might expect, they grapple with the often capricious and counterintuitive nature of the English language. Questions of basic grammar and mechanics often must be addressed in tutorial sessions, creating a dilemma for Writing Center mentors, who have been carefully trained not to engage in proofreading and editing of

student papers. Frustration on the part of both parties sometimes results, as the expectations of writers and mentors clash. To facilitate a better understanding of how various types of writers, including international students, approached writing and the experience of a Writing Center tutorial, I decided to gather data from Writing Center clients and mentors, and then use that data to create poetic models of several representative characters. Poetry, in my view, can bridge barriers between people, promoting empathy and understanding, in visceral ways that no other discourse can match.

To gather the data that I would need to build my models, I prepared a survey, which I distributed in the Writing Center during the spring and summer semesters of 2007. The survey addressed the issue of code shifting, or the process of switching between levels of discourse—e.g., between one's normal use of spoken language and the more rarefied linguistic performance called for in formal academic writing. In my experience, one of the distinguishing traits of sophisticated writers is the ease with which they negotiate such shifts, and I was curious about what factors enabled certain students to master the skill and others to struggle with it. The survey results tended to support my working hypothesis that students who enjoyed

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reading and exposed themselves to a large amount of good writing in different genres tended to be the most “advanced” writers.

My primary purpose with the project, however, was not simply to chart the relationship between writers’ reading habits and their facility with academic prose but, as I stated above, to find ways of helping Writing Center mentors work more effectively with international student writers. Certainly, the majority of such writers are extremely adept at communicating in their native languages, and their understanding of what constitutes good writing is highly developed. For them, the challenge of code switching is significantly more complicated than for the average native user of English, because they must not only shift between conversational and academic levels of discourse but must do so while simultaneously translating their thoughts into a language that, in many cases, is quite different in structure from their own. In recognition of this, the survey included a series of questions about the respondents’ experiences with the Writing Center: why they visited, how they rated their own abilities as writers, what they hoped to accomplish in their tutorial sessions, and so on.

After the surveys were completed, my next step was to take the responses and transcribe them. Because I had designed the survey with open-ended questions that encouraged lengthy answers, I had accumulated a large sample of students’ voices. These voices were what I hoped to capture and preserve when I turned the survey respondents’ own words into poems. The method of composition was inspired by Terry Wooten, the poet-bard based in Petoskey, Michigan, known for his work with what he has called “stolen voices”; Wooten’s work is exemplified by his book *Lifelines: A World War II Story of Survival and Love* (Stone Circle Press, 2004), a linked series of poems compiled from hours of tape-recorded interviews with Jack and Leda Miller, a former POW and his wife. In a presentation given to my

English 204 class at SVSU in Fall 2006, Wooten described his process of turning other people’s words into poetry. The rules were simple, yet strict: the poet was not allowed to add anything of his or her own to the source material but was completely free to rearrange, edit, and shape the material as much as he or she saw fit. Armed with Wooten’s principles, I was able to take the words of my survey respondents and shape them into poems, such as the following:

Poetry can bridge barriers between people, promoting empathy and understanding, in visceral ways that no other discourse can match.

#### Changing My Language

It has been just two month  
from I start to learn English  
writing.  
But I feel promoted much.  
I want to think myself over  
average.  
I usually write the way I think,  
so sometimes it becomes opposite  
sequence  
with American’s way.  
I can write more freely  
than I speak, because speaking  
needs  
more spontaneous thinking than  
writing.  
So speaking is more hard for me.  
Changing my language is  
challenging and frustrated.

I need Writing Center for help  
with grammar as second language,  
with follow what the instructor  
wants,  
with transition.  
They are just terrific,  
but when a tutor tells me  
he doesn’t proofread,  
of course I need help with  
proofread.  
English is not my native tongue!

I did not grow up with reading,  
but I read about Buddhist articles.  
(Yes, I am a Buddhist  
and like talking about Buddhism.  
Nam myoho renge kyo.)

And I like to read  
a politician's autobiography.  
It's not because I like them  
but because they are really good  
at speaking and writing.  
I can learn American  
diplomacy, history, politics,  
people's thought through their  
books.  
The more I read, the more I can  
learn  
the words and the way  
of writing more naturally.  
I love to learn  
and expand my thinking.  
I do not enjoy homework  
but enjoy to write e-mails.  
And I watch love stories on TV.  
I like it so much.  
I can learn English through the  
dramas.

I'm not afraid  
of writing as before,  
but I'm not confident.  
It takes me long time to write  
if I want to do it right.  
But I think I can  
be promoted more  
if I keep on writing continuously.

The speaker of "Changing My Language" is a conflation of two different survey respondents, both international students from East Asia, and, in that way, the text is representative of the project. A very small number of the poems consisted

solely of the words of a single writer; most were assembled from multiple sources. In all cases, the anonymity of the survey participants was preserved. Additionally, as with all the poems in the series, this piece is completely free of my own words, being constructed entirely out of stolen voices.

Intrigued with what I was discovering—the musicality of their language, their desire to better themselves, their understandable frustration—in Fall 2007 I then enlisted my fellow mentors to perform some of the finished poems at a Michigan Writing Centers Association conference in Muskegon. The audience's response was quite positive; several people stated that they recognized the characters portrayed from their own Writing Centers. I then followed up the readings by having the conference attendees break into small groups and re-enact the project on a small scale: they asked each other questions and then turned each other's answers into original poems of their own.

Observing this highly productive activity convinced me that the project could easily be adapted for a variety of educational contexts beyond the Writing Center. The activity is appropriate for many types of students, not just Writing Center mentors and international student writers, and its benefits are at least twofold. First, the survey process allows participants to get to know each other and establish rapport.

### Call for Papers

The editors of Literacy Link invite members of the campus community to submit articles for review and possible inclusion in the Winter 2009 issue.

Articles may address a variety of literacy practices including such topics as strategies, activities, and research; critical thinking; writing across the curriculum; or book reviews. The editors are especially interested in how literacy is defined by different disciplines, how professors use literacy in their various classes, what professors expect of student writing, what professors encounter in student writing, and how students respond to literacy expectations.

Articles for Literacy Link should run 500 to 1,500 words in length. Authors should follow either MLA or APA format.

Submit articles to

SVSU Department of English  
Literacy Link  
7400 Bay Road  
Brown 355  
University Center, MI 48710-0001

Submission deadline for the Winter 2009 issue is February 2, 2009.

Second, making poetry out of others' words promotes creativity while significantly reducing the pressure felt by many inexperienced writers to have something brilliant to say. If education and literacy initiatives should broaden students' horizons and awaken their empathy for

people with unfamiliar worldviews, then this activity certainly furthers those ends. It has the potential to be a useful addition to many educators' toolboxes.

(Editors' Note: To see more poems in Matthew's project, turn to page 12.)

## Defining Literacy for the 21st Century: The Need for Pluralism

Kerry Segel  
Professor of English

Definitions do matter. We can have fruitful dialog only if we have some common understanding of what is meant by or subsumed under a topic. With Literacy Link, the topic seems clear enough: literacy. But just what is "literacy"? By one commonly understood definition, literacy is the "ability to read and write" ("Literacy," 1988, p. 789). Given that students need to demonstrate the ability to read and write to be admitted to SVSU, by this definition literacy should be of peripheral concern to the university community. If the implication is that literacy refers to reading and writing improvement, we now have a definition so broad and vague as to be vacuous. We can all improve our reading and writing—so what else is new?

What I want to argue is that literacy is a fundamental aspect of university education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, provided that the university community accepts an expansive, pluralistic view of literacy. Over the past decade, such views of literacy have emerged (NCREL, 2003; Virtual Information Inquiry, n.d.; NCTE, 2008). It is the definition published by the National Council of Teachers of English, "The NCTE Definition of 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Literacies" (NCTE, 2008), which I will discuss in this article. Here is the definition, adopted by the NCTE Executive Committee on February 15 of this year, in full:

Literacy has always been a collec-

tion of cultural and communicative practices shared among members of particular groups. As society and technology change, so does literacy. Because technology has increased the intensity and complexity of literate environments, the twenty-first century demands that a literate person possess a wide range of abilities and competencies, many literacies. These literacies—from reading online newspapers to participating in virtual classrooms—are multiple, dynamic, and malleable. As in the past, they are inextricably linked with particular histories, life possibilities and social trajectories of individuals and groups. Twenty-first century readers and writers need to

- Develop proficiency with the tools of technology
- Build relationships with others to pose and solve problems collaboratively and cross-culturally
- Design and share information for global communities to meet a variety of purposes
- Manage, analyze and synthesize multiple streams of simultaneous information
- Create, critique, analyze, and evaluate multi-media texts
- Attend to the ethical responsibilities required by these complex environments.



First, though, I need to dispel some misunderstandings regarding literacy. Literacy is not the opposite of speaking (orality); in fact, literacy is based on the spoken word. Literacy is not necessarily a product of formal education; scripts have been invented by individuals and groups without formal education (Nunan, 2007, p. 116; Scribner & Cole, 1981). Nor can literacy be simply “cracking the code” of a particular script. For example, as of last month, I could decipher most of the symbols in the Korean phonetic alphabet, understand a few words, and even write out (perhaps “draw” would be a better word) some of these symbols so that they are legible to a fluent reader of Korean, but no one should consider me literate in Korean.

Literate individuals work in global communities to “solve problems collaboratively and cross-culturally.”

I think most of us would agree that to be literate involves some level of fluency and proficiency in reading and writing. But beyond this vague recognition of level, can we lay out some aspects of a working definition of literacy that are relevant to the educational responsibilities of a university? I believe we can, and that the NCTE definition referred to above provides an excellent framework for discussion.

The first point that I wish to emphasize refers to the use of the plural form, “literacies.” Rather than take literacy as a unitary concept, this definition recognizes that literacy is a complex set of practices that varies across societies. With the technological capabilities that have allowed a substantial portion of the world’s population to be connected to many of these societies almost instantaneously, the existence of these many literacies is no longer simply the province of linguistic polyglots or adult literacy educators, but rather a personal, professional, and social reality of all those with such access.

These technological advances also lead to a second aspect of pluralism in the NCTE definition. This is expressed as the need

to “[m]anage, analyze and synthesize multiple streams of simultaneous information [and...] [c]reate, critique, analyze, and evaluate multi-media texts” (italics mine). Not only is there a multiplicity of societal literacies, but these literacies are delivered to us several at a time in a myriad of combinations. This aspect of pluralism is unquestionably one that faces members of the university community on a daily basis. In this dimension, we can clearly see the role of efficient and critical thinking, and experience in encountering a variety of texts as a fundamental aspect of modern-day literacy.

The other aspect of the NCTE statement relevant to this discussion of pluralism is that of sharing and problem-solving across communities. Literate individuals work in global communities to “solve problems collaboratively and cross-culturally.” Literacy should be an interactive process operating across languages, cultures, and societies. The university, by its very name, must be fundamental to promoting this process.

To me, these pluralistic aspects of literacy have profound implications for a university’s educational mission. It should be a focus of the university to bring a level of awareness of the diversity and legitimacy of multiple literacies and their relevance to all aspects of a university student’s life. Throughout their university career, students must be exposed to and integrate multiple literacies into all their educational experiences. Proficiency with a single literacy is insufficient in the age of globalism.

With the instantaneous availability and multiple formats of information, critical literacy preparation must also go beyond the careful analysis of single texts to making judgments on the value of numerous texts in multiple media within severe time constraints. Given the information overload that is characteristic of a university experience, a fundamental role of the university must be to assist students in developing

heuristics for evaluating the worthiness and applicability of information as well as negotiating the relationships among various pieces of information in a multimedia or hypertext relationship.

The final aspect of pluralism may actually provide the framework in which to develop an understanding and acceptance of a pluralistic view of literacy as well as needed proficiency in processing multiple literacies. By emphasizing a cooperative cross-cultural problem-solving approach throughout the university educational experience across curricula, we provide a tangible, practical, and beneficial environment in which students can see the results of their literacy preparation while they are a part of the university community.

So what should be the responsibility of the university in educating learners to accept, understand, and benefit from this new reality? What is the role of the university in fostering the process dimension of literacy? How can the university best implement the notion of shared global responsibility? Finally, how is SVSU positioned to act in this pluralistic view of literacy? I'd like to respond to these questions by offering an example of one program that I have been intimately involved in over the past five years, the Certificate in TESOL Program.

The Certificate in TESOL Program has been designed for students who wish to teach English to those learning English as an additional language. This 21-credit program is open to students of any major and has had participation of students from every college at SVSU. Students complete courses in English language studies, cultural studies, and language teaching methodology. In addition, all students must meet a language requirement.

Students in this program need to become familiar with multiple literacies, as their students may come from many language backgrounds. To that end, the expansion of modern foreign language offerings to include Arabic, Mandarin,

and Japanese enables our students the opportunity to complete their language requirement in non-Roman literacies. The English Language Program at SVSU, which prepares international students to meet English language requirements for admission to colleges in the United States, provides an environment for our students to practice their teaching skills with students from numerous literacy groups.

Modern educational technology is also infused throughout the TESOL Certificate program. From web sites on languages and cultures to a plethora of modern technologies used in distance education, the TESOL program relies heavily on the technological support that SVSU provides. English language teaching must incorporate the multiple media typical of global education.

As in the NCTE definition of 21<sup>st</sup>-century literacies, underlying the teaching of English to speakers of other languages is a belief in the need to cooperate across cultures, to prepare learners for a variety of purposes in which English is appropriate, while respecting the role of other languages and their social and cultural dimensions. At SVSU, courses can be found throughout the university that have a multicultural or international emphasis. Many opportunities are made available for study abroad. For those wanting international experiences on campus, the English Language Program and the International Students Association offer a variety of ways to interact with students from other cultures. The atmosphere for programs such as the Certificate in TESOL is strongly established at SVSU.

How to implement a pluralistic view of literacy is open to endless possibilities. I have discussed just one of numerous programs at SVSU that reach across communities and value multiple literacies. My hope is that this pluralistic view of

So what should be the responsibility of the university in educating learners to accept, understand, and benefit from this new reality?

literacy forces us to think about the need for SVSU as an institution to move beyond traditional subject boundaries and monocultural thinking to a university-centered education in a global context—literacies for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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## Hybrid Courses: A Few Thoughts



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Consider the fact that many of our domestic MBA students work full time and some drive from as far away as Gladwin, Caro, Detroit, or Lansing to attend class. Most of the students have additional significant family and work responsibilities, so their time is valuable. To add to the pain, gasoline recently has reached \$3 to \$4 per gallon. From both a time and money perspective, the cost to attend class is becoming prohibitive. What can we expect students to do? Perhaps, the better question is what can we as an institution do?

The MBA program at SVSU has turned to the hybrid course model to reduce these costs. Since these classes meet approximately half of the regular contact hours, the commuting student now has to drive to class less often, which saves time and money. And if we offer hybrid courses in other SVSU programs, those degree programs have the potential to become even more attractive. Currently, approximately 2,500 students live in the

dorms at SVSU. This means that about 75% of the students still commute to campus and would find a hybrid course attractive. In the spring/summer sessions, the percentage of students living off campus moves closer to 100%. A hybrid course would encourage a student moving back home for the summer to consider taking coursework at SVSU during the spring/summer term. During fall/winter terms, the hybrid courses may encourage our commuting students to continue their studies.

Beyond student convenience is the issue of student learning. As Anne Tapp, an assistant professor of educational technology and development, says, "I truly feel that online instruction is best practice. Every student's voice is heard. The only negative comment about online instruction I have ever received was from a student who did not like the fact that he had to add comments to each of our course discussions. He stated that in a traditional face-to-face course, he could



sit back and not be expected to participate all of the time. I looked at his comment as a positive aspect to online learning." Some would even argue that a hybrid course promotes additional contact time between teacher and student.

For the instructor, hybrid courses also offer a new way to approach one's class. In the case of seasoned instructors, this is a great opportunity to reinvent one's self as well. With that in mind, I offer a few best practices based on initial experience with hybrid courses:

- Some sort of online platform such as VSpace will assist you during the times when you are not meeting with students on a face-to-face basis. This is a good place to store lecture notes, the syllabus, discussion questions, group information, and communications with the students. This will involve some "front-end" loading, but it is essential.
- Use of take-home tests and applied assignments make excellent use of the "online" portion of the class saving the face-to-face portion for difficult concepts that require more intense communication with the students.
- Your textbook company may help you with additional teaching materials. Some of the textbook publishers now have PowerPoint notes with Podcast lectures, streaming video, and other ways to supplement the course electronically.
- Training is important. The university offers online sessions that include ideas for addressing various issues when teaching online. For more information, call 964-2730 or check online at [www.svsu.edu/otl](http://www.svsu.edu/otl).

Other things to consider are the ways you handle the online part of the course. Some professors are available online in the chat room during specific times. Others encourage the students to send

e-mails with questions. (In the case of e-mails, though, you need to communicate with the students about when you are available to respond so you are not checking e-mails at 3 a.m.) Professor of Accounting Mark McCartney offers another option; he responds to students within one day and records lectures that students can stream and watch online. E-mail responses can also be posted in VSpace as a resource or an announcement because multiple students may have the same question.

When developing a hybrid course, you are limited only by your imagination. We have an excellent ITS staff to assist you with this process. There are also a number of instructors at SVSU who are currently teaching using these alternative formats who would be willing to share their best practices with you. Even the fact that you need to fill out paperwork for the vice president's office before offering a hybrid course works to your advantage, as this is a good way to do advanced planning, which will, of course, improve your course's presentation.

"I truly feel that online instruction is best practice. Every student's voice is heard."

There are numerous articles available depending on the subject taught. For some basic insights into the subject, consider the following:

Carnevale, D. (1999, November 12). How to proctor from a distance. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, pp. A47-49.

Changchit, C., & Klaus, T. (2008). Classroom preferences: What factors can affect students' attitudes on different classroom settings? *International Journal of Information and Communication Technology Education*, 4, 33-44.

Mangan, K. S. (1999, January 15). Top business schools seek to ride a bull market in on-line M.B.A.s. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, pp. A27-29.

# Technological Artifact as Meaning-Making Device: Using the Yahoo! Avatar for Audience Awareness in Written Communication



Holly Bird  
Instructor of English

Ronald A. Berk, professor emeritus from The Johns Hopkins University, describes students as having “wires coming out of every part of their bodies, attached to MP3 players, iPods, iPhones, PCs, and all the other tools of the digital age” (5). This seems to describe creatures from a low-budget science fiction film more so than the students we see every day. Of course, Berk’s real message is that our students are so technologically connected that it seems to be their life force. They communicate, self-entertain, and learn via technology. This leaves instructors constantly trying to connect into one of their many technological portals. How do we find a way to wire into their minds and stimulate critical thinking, as well as find evidence of learning? One way I have found is through a technological artifact.

When I first heard the term artifact used in a pedagogical context, I did not quite grasp the concept. My mind pictured a caveman’s spear or a knight’s sword—tools created by humans to be used for specific purposes. I was not too far off track. The term did indeed refer to a human creation. In a pedagogical context, the creation could be an object, an image, a document, or a presentation. Specific possible choices include a sculpture, a hand drawing or graphic design, a brochure or poster, and a PowerPoint presentation. The purpose of an artifact in this context, however, is to use it as a “meaning-making device” (Bustle 417). In other words, just like a spear or sword is evidence of how we once hunted and battled, the pedagogical artifact is used as evidence of what our students learned from a particular lesson or activity that engages them in deeper critical thinking than the traditional quiz or test. They have to make several critical choices to construct their artifacts. In other words, they have to solve a problem.

The problem is how to create an artifact that will show what they have learned. And solving a problem, according to John Bean, is the root of critical thinking (2).



In my freshman composition class, I have the students create an artifact as part of their last major writing assignment, which is a three-part movie evaluation. Their task is to view one movie of their choice and write an evaluation of it geared towards the audience of three different magazines: *US Weekly*, *Entertainment Weekly*, and *The New Yorker*. Because they need to change the ideas and the language through which they must present the reviews to each audience (which ranges from the very simple—*US Weekly*—to the complex—*The New Yorker*), audience awareness is so crucial to the success of this assignment. Therefore, my goal is to get the students to create a visual of each audience in order to understand their wants and needs while still engaging the students in critical thinking. And I strive to do all of this through a medium that is also understandable and enjoyable—the Yahoo! Avatar. I use the Yahoo! Avatar as a technological artifact to assess what the students have learned about each audience.

Before we create the avatars, however, the students must first really analyze the magazines. We spend about three class periods studying the magazines—the structure, advertisements, and articles.

What kind of magazine is it? What's the content? Why do certain readers want to read this magazine? Does the magazine cater to a specific gender, race, or economic status? We answer and discuss these and several other questions. Once this process is completed, then they can begin to create an avatar for each magazine.

The Yahoo! Avatar, specifically, is a computer-generated representation of a human being, similar to the virtual characters in the popular computer game *The Sims*. It was created as a way for Yahoo! e-mail and instant messenger users to display a picture of themselves in a way other than a personal photo. The Yahoo! Avatar feature allows users to create a customized image from a wide selection of physical features, including skin tone; eye, nose and mouth structure; and hair color and style. Once these basic features are chosen, a user can then accessorize the avatar with clothing, jewelry, bags, and even pets. Finally, a user can choose in what setting to place the avatar, from the farm to the nightclub. There are, literally, hundreds of clothing, accessory, and background options for the user to choose from to create his/her own customized avatar. The final image is like a virtual painting that represents the user.

Even though the students are creating a virtual image, it is still a human image, so I ask them not to think of their avatars as what these readers look like in reality. Instead, I ask them to create a "persona" or "mood" of the readers as a whole. For example, almost all students create a Paris Hilton-looking avatar for the *US Weekly* magazine, but certainly not all readers of *US Weekly* really look like Paris Hilton. However, they may be in a Paris Hilton-ish mood when desiring to read *US Weekly*. This synthesizes what Lisa Ede and Andrea Lunsford termed "audience addressed" and "audience invoked": "The actual or intended readers" are analyzed when the students study the magazines to determine the readers' "needs," "biases," and "wishes" (190); however, when the students create the avatars, they are

"invoking an audience" by conjuring up the needs, biases, and wishes of the readers to create a visual persona (190). Therefore, the students are aware that their visual representations are primarily based on each audience's needs, biases, and wishes—and not purely physical characteristics.

The last component of this artifact creation process is to have students write a maximum one-page self-reflection about why they chose particular features for their avatars. In this written explanation, the students are required to connect their creative choices to what they learned about each audience when they analyzed the magazines. This again forces students into critical thinking because they "are required to formulate and justify their ideas in writing" (qtd. in Bean 4).

In the end, the artifact and the self-reflection help the students make appropriate rhetorical choices when writing their movie reviews to each audience. They may not write reviews ready for the pages of glossy print, but I can see when I read their reviews that they are aware of the differences between each audience. This is especially apparent in the language choices they make from the simple, fun tone of *US Weekly* to the sophisticated tone of *The New Yorker*. Also, when I conference with individual students during the writing process, they tell me what aspects of the film they want to discuss in each review based on what they have learned about each audience's wishes. And they have fun. Students are continually engaged in this activity because they can be creative and work through a medium they understand.

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The following are two more poems in Matthew Falk's "Stolen Voices" project. Although they do not come from ESL students, the poems continue to shed light on our students' attitudes about reading and writing. (For a full description of this project, see the article on page 2.)

#### Disgraphia

I have disgraphia. It is a disability where I have trouble putting my thoughts on paper. I can read and understand everything.

I read lots of history, crime dramas, newspapers, and product reviews. But I can't spell and I don't have a large vocabulary and I have a lot of trouble writing. I get confusing. My sentence structure doesn't flow. It is like giving directions to a place that you don't know how to get there.

In my head words sound right, but I have to have someone edit me to make my paper make sense and get it to say what I want. Becoming a teacher, I think I will constantly be criticized for my writing. But everything nowadays is AIM and email and blogs anyway so maybe no one will care.

#### All the Stupid Rules

I was a biology major but I was doing better in my English classes so I switched to creative writing.

I was always told that reading is very important to becoming a better writer. I don't really think there is that much correlation. Reading a lot might get your ideas going but it won't write a paper for you.

When I'm not working, I mostly watch TV, play video games, talk, drink, sleep, listen to music. I never read and I always write well and always get A's.

I just come to the Writing Center for help with all the stupid rules about MLA, APA, and not using conjunctions.

I'm around a lot of people that use slang so when I have to concentrate on grammar and punctuation and everything I have a panic attack worrying about am I using the correct tense.

If I can be free to just write what I feel then I'm fine but otherwise I get writer's block.