

## ERNEST HEMINGWAY'S JOURNALISTIC STYLE INFLUENCES ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

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What else can be written about Ernest Hemingway that has not already been mentioned? His life as a writer, a son, a father, a brother, a friend, a husband and a man, has been told, retold, analyzed as well as scrutinized by scholars, writers and fans alike. His heavy drinking, passion for bullfighting, fishing, hunting, boxing, endless love affairs and failed marriages are all legendary. His suicide was more tragic and anticlimactic than any of his fictional protagonists that were loosely based on him. Yet, even though this American literary icon, affectionately known as *Papa* by his friends, passed away over fifty years ago, the infatuation with Ernest Hemingway remains almost as great as when he was alive.

Papa's homes, old jaunts and watering holes have become nothing short of shrines. For example, the writer's former residence in Key West, Finca Vigia in San Francisco de Paula, Cuba and Ketchum, Idaho are museums, where thousands visit each year as well as his birth home in Oak Park, Illinois. Then there are the business establishments that generate a profit while paying homage to Hemingway like *Tryp Gran Via Hotel* in Madrid (the entire second floor is named Ernest Hemingway Bar-Cafeteria) and *El Botin Restaurant*. In the United States *Sloppy Joe's* in Key West has a Hemingway look-alike contest every summer and Harry's Bar in Venice and Paris have a perennial link to the writer. Of course in Havana, Cuba there is *El Floridita* where a life size bronze statue is permanently placed along the end of the bar, and *La Bodequita del Medio* (where some critics believe Ernest went there only once, remains a stopping spot for fans) as well as Hotel Ambos Mundos, which has turned room 511 where Hemingway began *For Whom the Bell Tolls* into a small place of pilgrimage to the author.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century there continues to be a fascination with the Hemingway legacy. In 2012 HBO featured a drama about Hemingway's tumultuous relationship with his third wife, journalist Martha Gellhorn. The following year John Mulholland, wrote and directed a documentary *Cooper and Hemingway: The True Gen* about the writer and his 20 year friendship with actor Gary Cooper. Furthermore, actor and filmmaker Andy Garcia is making a movie about Ernest Hemingway and his friend Gregorio Fuentes, who inspired the character in *Old Man and the Sea*. The adaptation's expected release will be some time in 2015.

Undoubtedly, *Papa* will always be connected to the literary world. There is the *Letters of Ernest Hemingway*, published by Cambridge University Press where General Editor Sandra Spanier, wrote, "It's almost impossible to overestimate the public interest in Hemingway." Then there is University of Pennsylvania English Professor Paul Hendrickson who wrote in 2012 *Hemingway's Boat: Everything He Loved in Life, and Lost*. Several years early, writer Dan Simmons, wrote a fictional book, *The Crook Factory* about Ernest Hemingway's clandestine involvement in Cuba to gather intelligence and uncover Nazi agents living on the island during World War II.

As filmmakers and literary writers are celebrating and capitalizing on the Nobel Laureate of Literature's persona, the music industry has also jumped on Papa's bandwagon. And, country singer-songwriter Guy Clark created a song *Hemingway's Whiskey* and Kenny Chesney in 2010 performed his own rendition of Clark's dedication to *Papa* and titled his album *Hemingway's Whiskey*. Even an underground hip-hop artist Vinnie Paz (along with R.A the Rugged Man) writes in *Razor Gloves* a verse "...I'm going out like Ernest Hemingway and his sister And his brother and his father", making reference to the family's suicide history.

While the arts and humanities remember, and in some ways celebrate this literary giant in American literature, why not have an apparel company also cash-in on his notoriety. Using the Hemingway name, and for those interested, items may be purchased that range from liquor labeled *Papa's Pilar Rum*, to the style of sunglasses the fishing enthusiast used, complete with his emblazoned initials or if the customer chooses, "Marlin H" crest on the temples. And since Ernest Hemingway continues to be in demand today, than why not create an app that makes him relevant in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Hence, in 2014 brothers Adam and Ben Long created the Hemingway app, so now everyone can pretend to write like *Papa*.

In short, this very complex man and his wide range of interests and hobbies are what make him significant in popular culture. Nevertheless, besides his estate and individual entrepreneurs profiting from his name, how can we and posterity continue to learn from his writing in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. One way we can learn about him, is through *The Hemingway Review*, created in 1980 by *The Hemingway Society*. The scholarly journal is published twice a year and is dedicated to the renowned author. Unfortunately, much of the focus is still on his image that ironically he created, and overshadows much of the research involved in many of the journal's articles.

The core of Ernest Hemingway is not that his inner circle included famous Hollywood actors such as Gary Cooper, Marlene Dietrich, and Ava Gardner or even fraternized with James Joyce, F. Scott Fitzgerald and Ezra Pound. The essence of this Pulitzer Prize winner is his prose writing style that was influenced by his days as a journalist. Ultimately, what new research regarding Hemingway's literature can we learn from that is not already on book shelves or available through e-editions?

Before answering this question, it is important to understand how this research evolved and led to the impetus behind this hypothesis. For several years I noticed a pattern with many of the undergraduate students who struggled and/or dropped my class at Baruch College, City University of New York. From the fall 2012 to the spring 2014 semesters, those who met this criteria were usually English Language Learners enrolled in my 2850 Comparative Literature II course. They were consistently struggling to meet academic literacy standards such as reading various literary works. These struggles extended to their writing requirements as well as speaking/listening skills. Each semester the course assigns a wide selection of genres and writers from the 18<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> century. Many of these works include translated versions of Voltaire, Machado de Assis, Mustafa Effendi, and Gabriel Garcia Marquez, as well as English and American writers such as John Keats, William Blake and Herman Melville.

The study started with examining the cultural and educational backgrounds of ELL students enrolled in the 2850 Comparative Literature II classes over four semesters. A total of 62 students (both ELL and native English speakers) enrolled in the CMP 2850, class from the fall of 2012 to the spring of 2014. Invariably and depending on their level of proficiency in English, some of the ELL students either dropped the class admitting that they were struggling to understand the assigned readings or others settled for a C+ or less in the class. In some cases students were failing or barely passing exams and quizzes, demonstrating poor writing standards to short answer responses or essay questions; and there was reluctance to express orally their understanding to the class about many of the readings on the syllabus.

Researcher Mary Jane Curry, suggests, “Although colleges typically classify ELLs according to English proficiency levels, other aspects of students' backgrounds affect their comfort and experiences in the college environment. Students with previous experience in higher education will likely have what Bourdieu (1998) calls academic cultural capital, that is, the knowledge and habits of the socially valued practices of higher education. These students may quickly feel comfortable navigating the academic environment, proficiently completing homework assignments, asking questions, participating in discussions, and producing academic texts (Brammer, 2002). Students without such cultural capital often have difficulty understanding and meeting course expectations.”

The challenge for many ELL college students who are “without cultural capital” is their effort to meet the expectations and requirements for courses like literature. While this is also a growing problem for native English speaking-students, there is a noticeable difference with foreign born students seeking a bachelor’s degree. Incoming freshman are expected to be proficient in several elements of academic literacy this includes: reading, writing, listening, speaking, critical thinking, and use of technology. The competencies should be taught from primary to secondary school, so all college students are prepared to meet these prerequisites in their undergraduate courses.

Ideally students should be meeting standards at the secondary level but realistically there has been a growing problem the past three to four decades in the United States that indicates many are entering college and university whether native or non-native, and are not meeting academic literacy standards. This problem is compounded by students who are “without cultural capital” and who never attended or graduated from post secondary school. From my perspective, and depending on the circumstances, there are two distinct categories of cultural capital. First there are the students whose families decided to emigrate from their native country to the US while they were in their adolescent stage. In some cases many graduated high school in their country and went directly to an American college without any higher educational experience in their homeland.

Other ELL college students who were part of this research arrived having graduated high school in their country several years before entering the US. This group is older more mature and appears to have a different mindset in understanding the world. Research indicates because they are older these students may have a harder time adjusting to the linguistic demands needed

to be successful in all aspects of academic literacy, even if they know some English. The adolescent immigrant group will have a slight advantage in mastering the necessary skills in academic literacy compared to the older group since they may have graduated high school from their native country and went directly to college in the US with some training in English.

Regardless of the age group or circumstance however, ELL college students “without cultural capital” are more likely to be required to enroll in remedial classes before being allowed to take credits toward their majors. One main pattern that is supported by research is, many ELL college students are eager to learn the language and are motivated to improve their social status but they lack the financial support to get tutors or other private programs that will assist them in obtaining a level of proficiency. Many remain in remedial classes longer than native English student-speakers who are also required to take remedial classes if necessary.

For ELL students entering US colleges and university seeking degrees with limited English skills, there are still cultural implications that may delay their success in academic literacy. For instance, Baruch College has a partnership with Southwestern University of Finance and Economics located in Chengdu, China. More and more US colleges are creating globalized programs to attract foreign born students especially those with a strong aptitude in math and science. Students attending Chengdu University are part of the *Two Plus Two Program*, meaning students in China study for about two years and then travel abroad, and in this case, live in New York City and attend Baruch College for another two years to fulfill the rest of their course requirements. Some students in the program admitted having limited English reading, writing and communication skills. These students have cultural capital but as Jennifer Alford suggest in her paper *Learning language and critical literacy: Adolescent ESL students* “many mainstream ESL students come from cultures of learning where the authority of the text is unquestionable.” At the US collegiate level student input is encouraged, and used to assess part of a student’s academic literacy standards.

### **Student Survey & Written Response to Reading/Writing**

The data collected for this research included: personal observations, surveys, student and faculty interviews, course syllabi, and student writing samples in response to literature. Students participated and completed a survey and a writing diagnostic as a form of assessment (see appendix 1A for an example of the CMP 2850 Student Survey) in order for the instructor to prepare mini-lessons and get a better understanding of each student as a reader and writer. The survey’s portion asks students to circle a category of how often they read. The category includes three choices---*I read often, I read sometimes, I try to avoid reading* and the student chooses the one that best describes him/her as a reader.

It also asked students if they circled *often* they were required to write and explain the type of genres they enjoy reading, and if they wrote *I read sometimes* or *I try to avoid reading* explain why as well. Out of the 62 (see appendix 2A for student data) students who participated in the survey, 44 were born in another country outside the United States. The remaining 18 students were born in the USA--- where ten circled *I read often* while six circled *I read*

*sometimes* and two circled *I try to avoid reading*. This probably indicates that since the majority of students in the group were native American/English speakers, they did not have a complete aversion to read the assigned works.

At the same time, the 44 ELL students were from various countries such as Pakistan, China, Israel, Nigeria, Honduras, and the former Soviet Republics just to mention a few. Many of these students showed the typical signs that ELL students struggle with in a literature class. Cathryn Crosby, indicates, “Most literature on developmental immigrant students (DIS) states that based on their schooling experiences, they enter university with very little understanding of the nature of academic literacies in this context and a fluctuating identity of themselves in relationship to academic literacies.” Out of the 44 students, 21 circled *I try to avoid reading*, 18 circled *I read sometimes*, and 5 circled *I read often*. Of the 5 students who described themselves as reading often, four are born in Guyana where English is the official language and the other was born in India where many students have strong backgrounds in English as well as it is one of the primary languages spoken.

The 38 students who chose *I avoid reading* or *I read sometimes* had very little training in English or experience in higher education from their native country. In fact, one student who circled *I read sometimes*, wrote, “Language problems is the most difficult for me. I really enjoy reading when I was in my country and read in my mother language. I can sit on the couch and read all day long...Actually when I come to America, what I read become increasingly less because I even couldn't find books in my familiar language.” Another student who circled *I try to avoid reading* explained, “It's not that I don't like reading it's, just, that I have not yet found the joy of reading something yet.”

The overall research indicates that the majority of ELL college students enrolled in literature courses feel disengaged with most assigned readings. They are apprehensive in attending class because there is a constant struggle that appears infinite. Many of these students grow increasingly frustrated and drop the course or hopelessly sit in class and settle for a mediocre grade. They are not meeting academic literacy standards but this is also true for native-English student-speakers. In fact ELL students and native English student speakers wrote and/or verbally expressed their confusion in taking a literature class and remarked, “I would not have taken this course if it were not required” or “why should I have to register for this class if I am a finance or accounting major.” The data revealed that ELL students and some native-English speaking students had poor comprehension and critical thinking skills as well as lacked a rudimentary understanding of argumentative essay writing and communication skills.

### **Interviews of Students & Professors**

The data collected, concluded that what separates ELL students from native English speaking-students who are also lacking in academic literacy, is the aversion and humiliation that many ELL students have experienced while attending literature classes at the secondary or undergraduate level. This reinforces the concept of student disengagement with literature classes. One undergraduate ELL student in an interview for this research, admitted that he

dropped the same literature class a few semesters before because his previous instructor humiliated him by saying when he would try to participate and express his understanding of a reading, “I don’t understand when you talk.” Feeling insignificant and embarrassed by the instructor’s comment he dropped the class. Another undergraduate ELL student expressed her “anxiety” when attending her literature class because she “feared the instructor would call on her and she did not feel confident in her verbal language skills”, she eventually dropped the class and “felt relieved.”

ELL students in general do not feel accepted or part of the class environment resulting in no intrinsic motivation for these students as the course progresses, especially in a literature course with other students who meet or exceed academic literacy standards. Intrinsic motivation is vital for achieving academic literacy. This psychological theory entails three components, competence, in that the student believes he/she can do it, relatedness, student can relate in this case to the text, and autonomy student has the ability to do it on a level of independence.

Rebecca Oxford and Jill Shearin in their paper *Language Learning Motivation: Expanding the Theoretical Framework* deduced from their study, “that motivation directly influences how often students use L2 (language the student is acquiring to learn) learning strategies, how much students interact with native speakers, how much input they receive in the language being learned (the target language) how well they do on curriculum-related achievement tests, how high their general proficiency level becomes, and how long they preserve and maintain L2 skills after language study is over.”

On the other hand, many English/Literature instructors are not trained in ESL/ELL instruction. From the perspective of several professors interviewed for this study, all agreed that the issues pertaining to this problem should occur before ELL students are permitted to enroll in their classes instead of considering the idea of teacher training. They agreed that many students, both native and non-native, fall short in academic literacy standards.

Many of their ELL students appear reticent when asked to share thoughts and other instructors expressed their concern with *CUNY’s English Reading/Writing Proficiency Exam* since many of the ELL students as well as native English student-speakers, wrote in incoherent sentences with several rudimentary mistakes. In the case of one professor teaching a writing class in a private university, he opined, “I see many ELL students who passed the reading/written proficiency exam but are struggling with the requirements of the class... in some cases I see them drowning in understanding the writing process.”

Another professor of English Literature declared, “The reading and writing issues that many of these students demonstrate, whether ELL or native English speaking-students, should not be addressed at the Senior Colleges or private institutions. Over the years we have lowered our standards to the point that anyone can attend a City, State or Private University because we have given in to special interest groups who are really dumbing down our college and university programs.” One of the reasons nonetheless, why this study is relevant to examining ELL college

students and improving their academic literacy in a literature course is because of the *Common Core Standards* that are being pushed by educators from PreK to 12<sup>th</sup> grades.

### **Connection to Common Core Standards**

The *Common Core Standards* launched in 2009, is an educational strategy aimed to address the needs of students from Pre-k to twelfth grade who are behind in standards, and prepare many of these students to be “college ready.” After years of public education failing to educate properly many students, that was revealed in a government report in 1983 titled *A Nation At-Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform*, years passed before a unified set of educational standards was agreed on by most states. According to the Common Core State Initiative website, “State school chiefs and governors recognized the value of consistent, real-world learning goals and launched this effort to ensure all students, regardless of where they live, are graduating high school prepared for college, career, and life.”

Students attending US colleges and universities today are not prepared in most if not all elements involved with academic literacy. More importantly, as the Common Core Standards are enforced by school Superintendents and principals, teacher evaluations are partially determined by how well they are preparing students for state exams based on the Common Core Standards. It is the responsibility of primary and secondary schools to reexamine how they are going to get their students college ready.

This also means the teachers and professors, who are major cogs in the educational reform movement in the United States, are being held more accountable for showing data on how they are assessing their students and supporting those who do not demonstrate the “cultural capital.” It is not the aim however, of this researcher to discredit the *CUNY Reading/Writing Proficiency Exam*, or compare the graduation rates of immigrants with native English speaking-students at the undergraduate level, or to even argue what secondary schools need to do to prepare students to be academically literate.

The goal of this study is to offer assistance to classroom instructors teaching English/Literature courses and perhaps create an alternative way to accommodate ELL college students enrolled in Literature classes who are required to meet academic literacy standards but are struggling to meet these requirements. This study identifies specific academic patterns with ELL college students especially those who fall in the category of lacking the “cultural capital” but who have passed an English reading/writing entrance exam and demonstrated, in theory, a level of proficiency in both subjects while they continue to struggle at an intermediate or advanced level of English in college standards. Based on the research how can instructors address the needs of ELL college students without compromising the standards and requirements of the course? Moreover, how can instructors of English/literature meet the needs of ELL college students while still challenging the students in the same class who meet or exceed academic literacy standards?

## Papa & His Journalism Style

Why therefore, were Hemingway's works chosen as a possible solution to assisting ELL college students and instructors? First and foremost, Ernest Hemingway was a journalist before he became a renowned fictional writer. More importantly, newspapers are used as a genre to teach English Second Language Learners in all levels. Liubov Barkova in his paper, *Challenges and Rewards of Teaching a Newspaper Class*, explains, newspapers for some are "compelling textbooks for adult literacy development, especially for the newly arrived refugee or immigrant, and champion using newspapers in the ESL Literacy Classroom as a way of introducing the newcomers to the political, social, and business aspects of the local community." For many ESL teachers, newspapers are excellent instructional tool to teach language development and fluency to non-native English speakers because of the written style and structure followed by most journalists.

In Papa's case, he was trained to write in short sentences, using dialogue, repetition, and simple grammar. It is the journalist's writing style that allows ELL students to be more attracted and confident to the text unlike other written genres. Ernest Hemingway's journalistic style in his fictional pieces speaks to ELL college students the way other authors do not. His short stories invite ELL college students to be part of a conversation because the style is written as an introduction to a foreign language class instead of esoteric words and convoluted ideas. For students lacking more than proficient skills in American/English, Papa's journalist style may lead to a more enjoyable experience of literature rather than abhorring the overall subject.

Many critics however, believe that Hemingway's writing style is too simple and passé for a younger generation to have a connection with or even appreciate, let alone use to measure academic literacy. A writer of equal acclaim and a noted rival to Hemingway was William Faulkner, who was quoted in a *Time Magazine* article about *Papa* and commented that "He [Hemingway] has no courage...He has never been known to use a word that might cause the reader to check with a dictionary to see if it is properly used." Faulkner's statement of Hemingway's writing is precisely the point of this paper.

Linda Gajdusek in *Toward Wider Use of Literature in ESL: Why and How* indicates, "...Hemingway is an especially interesting writer to work with ESL because his deceptively simple prose style makes especially strong demands on the reader to read carefully and validate inferences." The premise of this paper is to present data from ESL/ELL undergraduate students enrolled over a period of several semesters in my CMP course; and to explain unlike other literary masters, why Hemingway resonates with non-native English undergraduate students. In addition the findings will demonstrate a general improvement that ESL/ELL college students achieved in their academic literacy skills when assigned his short stories and this is a direct result of his journalism background. This concept of Hemingway's impact and appeal to a wide range of reading levels is reinforced by the American poet and short story writer, Delmore Schwartz who wrote an interesting essay titled *The Fiction of Ernest Hemingway*. He declared "Hemingway's style is the expression of the moral code at the heart of his writing. But it is neither primitive nor proletarian as Mario Praz and Wyndham Lewis have suggested. It is



sensitive to the whole range of difference between the speech of an aristocracy, the folk, the proletariat, the primitive, and the man in the street. Its devices include eloquent reticence, intensely emotional understatement, and above all the simplified speech which an American uses to a European ignorant of English.”

He continues, “Hemingway’s style is a poetic heightening of various forms of modern colloquial speech---among them, the idiom of the hardboiled reporter, the foreign correspondent, and the sportswriter... The intense sensitivity to the way in which a European speaks broken English, echoing his own language’s idioms, may also derive from speech of the immigrants as well, perhaps, as from the special relationship of America to Europe....” This unique writing style was derived as a newspaper reporter when Ernest graduated high school and was hired for the *Kansas City Star Newspaper*. Almost as soon as he was hired as a *Star* journalist in 1917 he was given a ‘Copy Style Sheet’ that became the Holy Grail for Hemingway as a writer.

The *Star* copy style was given to each reporter and was used almost as a how to write a newspaper article in English. The very first rule was “Use short sentences. Use short paragraphs, Use vigorous English. Be positive, not negative.” This guide becomes the genesis for Hemingway’s writing style that is eventually carried over to his fictional works. It also trained him to stay away from unnecessary words and forced him to express his point in short declarative sentences as a writer. For example, in the copy sheet it states, “Eliminate superfluous words as, Funeral services will be at 2 o’clock Tuesday, not the funeral services will be held at the hour of 2 o’clock on Tuesday...In reference to specified time the word *on* is superfluous. Why write on January 16; on Tuesday? January 16 and Tuesday are enough.” Years later Hemingway himself recalled his experience as a Kansas City Star reporter and declared, in Matthew J. Bruccoli’s *Ernest Hemingway Cub Reporter: Kansas City Star Stories*, “Those were the best rules I ever learned for the business of writing. I’ve never forgotten them. No man with any talent, who feels and writes truly about the thing he is trying to say, can fail to write well if he abides by them.”

His background as a journalist was transferred over to most of his short stories and novels. Many of these literary works are used in this instructor’s CMP 2850 Great Works of Literature II course. During each semester the syllabi included an assortment of many writers including several of Hemingway’s literary works and the selection changed from semester to semester. In one semester, students were required to read written short stories from Hemingway’s *In Our Time*, while in another semester some were assigned to read *Nick Adams Stories* or selected works from *The Complete Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway: The Finca Vigia Edition*.

### **Analyses of Short Story Data**

Deborah J. Short in *Developing Academic Language in English Language Learners through Sheltered Instruction* proposes to instructors “to incorporate both language and content objectives into their lessons to promote academic literacy and use instructional interventions that can reduce the achievement gap between English language learners and native English-speaking

students. One way instructors can monitor and implement language and content objectives is by selecting genres and particular readings that will generate rich discussion in the classroom that is relevant to all students.”

What is of particular importance is how the ELL students were receptive and interested in three of Hemingway’s short stories assigned along with other literary works. Prior to these assigned readings, many expressed in their post-diagnostic assessment their difficulty in understanding Herman Melville’s *Bartleby the Scrivener* until it was discussed in class. One student who eventually dropped the class wrote, “I could not complete Melville, his words were too difficult.” Another student who dropped the class in the spring 2013 semester commented, “*Candide* made no sense to me, and I know it mean something but I not understand much.”

Whereas some of the ELL students explained they enjoyed Hemingway’s short story, *Old Man at the Bridge* that was published in *The Complete Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway: Finca Vigia Edition* because as one ELL college student explained, “I felt, it was easy enough to understand and have a discussion in class.” The fact that the student indicated “to understand and have a discussion in class” is a monumental feat for any ELL student. In the student’s post diagnostic written response, all of the assigned readings were difficult except Hemingway’s short stories.

*The Old Man at the Bridge* is a one page vignette based on an elderly man who was forced to leave his town and became displaced during the Spanish Civil War. The idea of the story was based on an experience Hemingway had in Spain while he was a foreign correspondent covering the political unrest. Ernest wanted to gather information on the advancement of the enemy side and as he walked across the bridge, he noticed waves of men, women and children walking on the opposite side of the bridge, away from the direction of their villages for fear of the enemy advancing.

The brief vignette allows students to make comparisons to several current civil wars occurring in countries today. One of the methods used to assess a student’s understanding of any assigned story from the syllabus and to facilitate discussion, is to have all students participate and take turns in small group discussions. The discussions are centered on the assigned reading, before listening to a student presentation of the assigned literary work, followed by a whole group discussion with some prompting questions by the instructor.

The small groups consist of two or three students and are called *reading clubs*. The *reading clubs* are actually created to encourage ELL students to talk in a small group setting in order to build confidence before participating in whole group discussion. Each student in the group is responsible for answering certain questions with an emphasis on theme. All students are reminded to support their opinions by using the text.

As the reading clubs begin, the instructor’s responsibility is to circulate around the room and write notes about what students are saying and how well they understand the text. While we covered *The Old Man at the Bridge*, one group had an interesting conversation. The group was a

heterogeneous group, in that it was made up of two native-English speaking-students and one ELL student. The two native English speaking-students talked about symbolism in the story and both agreed that the bridge represented life and death, especially since the event took place on Easter Sunday.

For the ELL student he did not grasp this concept until the two other students explained their reasons. This is why heterogeneous groups at all levels of education can work. In this case, they helped the non-native speaker understand the subtext of the story. The other part of my observation was the reaction of the two native speakers to what the ELL student recounted in connection to the story. Unlike the other assigned readings in the semester, the ELL student appeared more relaxed and confident in what he was about to articulate to the other students in the group.

Apparently, he connected with the old man's character in the story and began to infer the challenges that confronted the old man. Here he demonstrated a level of critical thinking that he did not express before with any other reading. The non-native speaker explained in his reading club that he is from Myanmar and was displaced as a result of the Buddhist monks' 2007 protests against the military junta government. He went on to describe that while he witnessed a demonstration he along with other innocent onlookers were rounded up and detained by the military police for two weeks. From his experience he concluded that it was time for him to leave his country and start anew.

It gave the other two students in the group new insight about this student who did not contribute much prior to this story. It even taught the two native English-speaking students about a country that they had little background information. For the ELL student Hemingway's character of the old man resonated with his own personal experience while it also motivated him to read the other two short stories. "Motivation can be a key factor in helping adolescent struggling readers be more successful in school. We have found that adolescents prefer to have opportunities to exercise choice in their learning. One option is choice of text. Students should have a wide range of diverse selections to choose from. High-interest, low-difficulty texts play a significant role in a successful adolescent ELL literacy program."

The following is an excerpt from Hemingway's vignette, *The Old Man at the Bridge*

*"Where do you come from?" I asked him.*

*"From San Carlos," he said, and smiled.*

*That was his native town and so it gave him pleasure to mention it and he smiled.*

*"I was taking care of animals," he explained.*

*"Oh," I said, not quite understanding.*

*"Yes," he said, "I stayed, you see, taking care of animals. I was the last one to leave the town of San Carlos."*

*He did not look like a shepherd nor a herdsman and I looked at his black dusty clothes and his gray dusty face and his steel rimmed spectacles and said, "What animals were they?"*

*"Various animals," he said, and shook his head. "I had to leave them."*

*I was watching the bridge and the African looking country of the Ebro Delta and wondering how long now it would be...*

*"What animals were they?" I asked.*

*"There were three animals altogether,"*

As part of his journalism training Hemingway creates simple dialogue between two strangers with very different backgrounds. The reader also notices Papa's usage of repeating common verbs and nouns like *asked*, *smiled*, *said* and *animals* as well as repeating the same personal pronouns *he* and *him*. For an ELL student at any level using common words, and simple everyday dialogue are the two primary elements for developing fluency and language acquisition. For this student the simplicity of the language made the story appealing and interesting, two essential elements to sustain any reader.

An observation made on the same day came from another ELL student from a different group who began to discuss Hemingway's *The End of Something*. The title reveals two main parts of the story, the end of a prosperous town and the end of a romantic relationship. Again this student offered little to their group when it was their turn to explain an assigned work from the syllabus prior to reading *The End of Something*. The student explained how she did not like Nick's character, especially the way he treated his girlfriend Marjorie. She went on to use the text to make her next point.

This reaction of reading aloud is quite uncommon for ELL students. Nevertheless, without hesitation she read this text in her group from *The End of Something* to support her claim that Hemingway uses foreshadowing here to hint that the relationship is doomed.

*"There's our old ruin, Nick," Marjorie said.  
Nick, rowing, looked at the white stone in the green trees.  
There it is, he said  
Can you remember when it was a mill? Marjorie asked.  
I can just remember, Nick said  
It seems more like a castle, Marjorie said  
Nick said nothing...."*

For this student she revealed that the last two lines reinforced the fact that they "did not seem close the way a boyfriend and girlfriend are." When we eventually went over the short story as a whole class discussion, she shared the point that she had made early in her group. While she demonstrated a higher level of academic literacy than before, the student continued to struggle with some of the other readings and did not have another moment like this in class.

The other assigned reading written by Hemingway is *The Gambler, the Nun & the Radio*, English Language Learners and native learners both connect with this short story because of what one of the characters says periodically in the story, "Religion is the opium of the people." Students examined this quote (not realizing Hemingway paraphrases Karl Marx) and use his idea to develop the three main characters while he reinforces the storyline. The three main characters in the story are connected to the phrase "Religion is the opium of the people." For instance, the gambler, uses gambling to escape from his flaws, the nun uses religion and how she wants to be a saint one day to escape from her inhibitions, and the other character is Mr. Frazer, a writer who is ill and constantly listens to the radio, as a form of escape.

Instructors should use the quote “Religion is the opium of the people”, and have students in small groups explain, what they think it means. Some will relate the idea to a more modern concept by replacing the word *religion* from the quote and rephrase the statement into a question by asking what our modern day opium is for the masses. In modern day, the new opium and relating it to Hemingway’s character listening to the radio, is replaced by television and now social media sites. In contemporary times, many say Facebook, Instagram and other methods of social media are the opium of the masses. The majority always discuss the reliance many of us have on social media. This generates a great deal of discussion and many of the ELL students join into the conversation and express their own involvement with social media.

Since this is a preliminary study that spans four semesters only, more time is required to determine the true impact Hemingway’s work will have on ELL college students. As a consequence more data is required to assess and measure the improvement in academic literacy in all areas of reading, writing, listening, speaking, listening, and the use of technology. Toward the end of each semester many of the ELL students demonstrated more of an ability to participate in small and whole group discussions when Hemingway’s short stories were assigned compared to the other assigned readings.

In every semester students were ask to rate the level of difficulty of Hemingway and another American writer Herman Melville before we had our class discussion. The following statistics stem from the 44 ELL students enrolled in CMP 2850 class. --- 10 ELL students said they did not have difficulty understanding Herman Melville’s *Bartelby the Scrivener*, 12 had some difficulty understanding text, and 22 explained the text was difficult to understand. (see appendices 2B) Conversely out of the same ELL group, 19 did not have difficulty understanding any of Hemingway’s works, 15 had some difficulty understanding Hemingway’s text while 10 admitted Hemingway’s stories were difficult to understand before our class discussion.

ELL students with cultural capital versus ELL students without cultural capital had a much easier time understanding the text and writing short responses. Both groups however, did show signs of independent engagement and had less difficulty applying their academic literacy skills when assigned Hemingway’s short stories. Assigning Papa’s short stories should not be viewed as a “one size fits all” strategy. It should be viewed as a foundation for instructors to consider writers in their CMP 2850 class, with a background in journalism or an author influenced by Hemingway.

Independent engagement for many ELL students is what instructors should strive for in their assessment. Instructors of Literature must emphasize, reading is not only an independent action but can also be done in small groups. The small groups will offer support for ELL students but should be monitored by the instructor and used as an assessment tool for measuring a student’s speaking/listening skills that are part of academic achievement. ELL students with cultural capital and without, who read Hemingway’s short stories were more engaged because many had met certain proficiency requirements in reading and writing. A noticeable impact that surfaced in class for the ELL group was the affects the works had in reading this included:

decoding, increased comprehension, inferring as well as increasing their speaking and listening skills.

The other assigned works were written in a complex style that revealed ELL students taking out their translated dictionary apps, eventually they became more preoccupied with defining words instead of relying on their metacognitive ability that became more instinctive when reading Hemingway. This limited their time of engagement and was somewhat discouraging for ELL college students already struggling with the language. Their approach to understanding complex words became a road block to fluency and language acquisition. It is important for ELL students to build their vocabulary but in several cases ELL students were highlighting 15 to 25 words on one page and repeated this action in the following pages just to complete the text.

Many ELL students did meet some of the learning goals requirements such as the ability to speak with more ease and fluency, analyze characters and comment on the cultural, social, and historical contexts of a particular work. The instructor's other main objective in any literature course is to expose all students to a wide selection of genres and authors despite the difficulty that one text may have over another. At the same time, instructors should be mindful of the various language backgrounds of students enrolled in their classes when selecting writers for their course.

This is not to imply Hemingway's short stories should be taken lightly. Hemingway's journalist style evokes a level of simplicity while still demanding a great deal from the reader. Hemingway's writing style can be deceptively deceiving to readers, insomuch as his grammar and word choice is not as difficult as other prolific writers. Although his journalism style is unlike many in literature, the reader should not be misled into thinking his plot lines are easy to interpret.

His method of writing was to develop a character or plot and reveal just enough to the reader. In other words as Shahla Sorkhabi Darzikola explains in *The Iceberg Principle and the Portrait of Common People in Hemingway's Works*, "Hemingway employs iceberg method to depict definition and complexity to a character without straight stating what the person who reads should be thinking. The Iceberg Theory is a term used to define the writing approach of Hemingway." Another interesting observation about Hemingway's simple but yet complex writing was in a letter written by publisher Jonathan Cape to Ernest Hemingway, he encloses an article written by Ifran Kyrle Fletcher who writes, "To speak of technique of Hemingway may create the wrong impression that this method is an easy trick of style. His heaping of simple words on simple words produces an effect which would be monotonous if it were an acquired manner." Hemingway's concise sentences, simple dialogue and word choice are direct but his subtext can be more challenging than other prose authors.

In order to assess other elements in academic literacy, instructors may also want to assign other writers whose backgrounds are in journalism and/or have a writing style influenced by their journalism background such as Mark Twain, George Orwell, or Tom Wolfe. It is also

imperative for instructors teaching a course in translated works in literature to choose publishers who meet the equivalent adaption of a writer's work as well as meet the academy literacy standards of all undergraduate students. This understanding is essential as more and more US colleges create globalized programs to attract foreign students, instructors of literature and other humanity courses will be forced to address the needs of non-native speakers. The challenge for many instructors of literature will be to select readings that will challenge all students while creating a balanced and fair assessment in evaluating their academic literacy skills.

## APPENDIX 1

### Student CMP 2850 Survey & Writing Assessment

Print Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. **(Optional)** Place of birth (i.e. NYC.) \_\_\_\_\_ Major: \_\_\_\_\_ Minor: \_\_\_\_\_
2. **(Optional)** Did you attend college/university outside USA? How many yrs. \_\_\_\_\_ Degree (Y) or (N)

**Please circle the best answer that applies to you.**

4. How would you describe yourself as a reader? **Circle one below**

I read often

I read sometimes

I try to avoid reading

5. If you read **often**, which genres (**novels, magazines, newspaper**) please write each genre in the space provided below.

---



---

6. If you wrote *sometimes* or you try to *avoid reading*, please explain why?

---



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7. Please describe yourself as a writer. For instance, what do you think your strengths are as a writer and what are some areas you need to work on as a writer?

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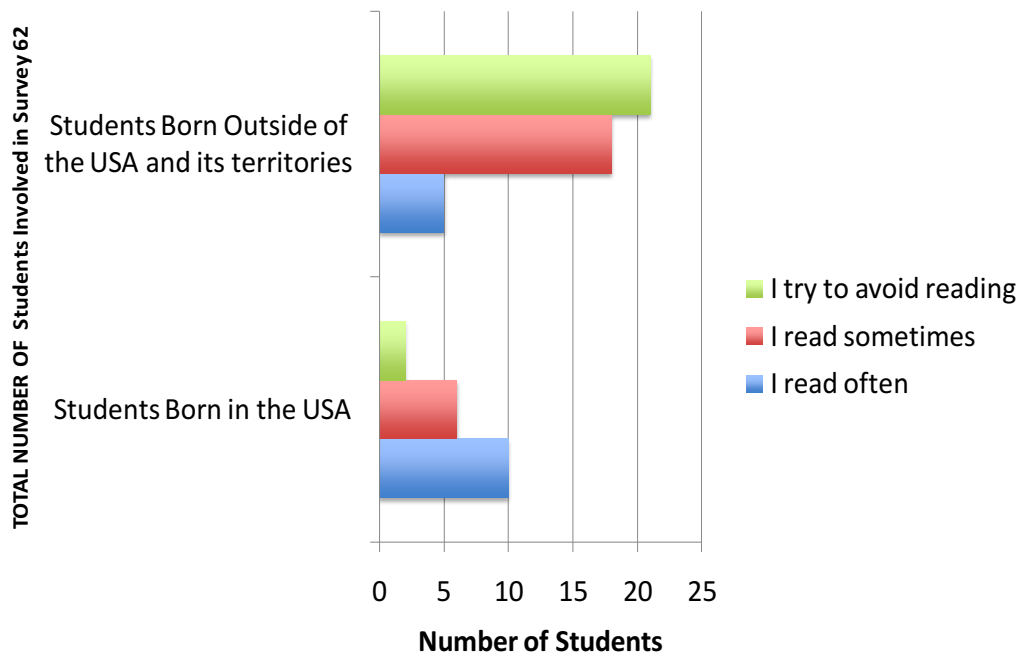
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8. On the other side of this paper please -Write about what are your expectations for this course. Why did you enroll for it? (Was it because it fulfilled a requirement? (If that's the reason, how do you feel about its being

required?) Was it because it spoke to an interest or related to your career goals?) What effect do you think this course will have on you (for instance, by adding to your store of knowledge, asking you to think in new ways, exercising your ability to comprehend and communicate, encouraging you to interact with your instructor, a communication consultant, other students and/or people outside your class?) Also, have you read anything that had an impact on you? Explain the text. If you have not had this experience explain what type of text would reach you and why? (You may want to bring other courses in to use as points of comparison.) It is important to develop your answers to these questions enough to make your overall response an adequate sample of your writing-one that will be compared with an essay you write later on in the term. **(Again you may use the back to write your response)**

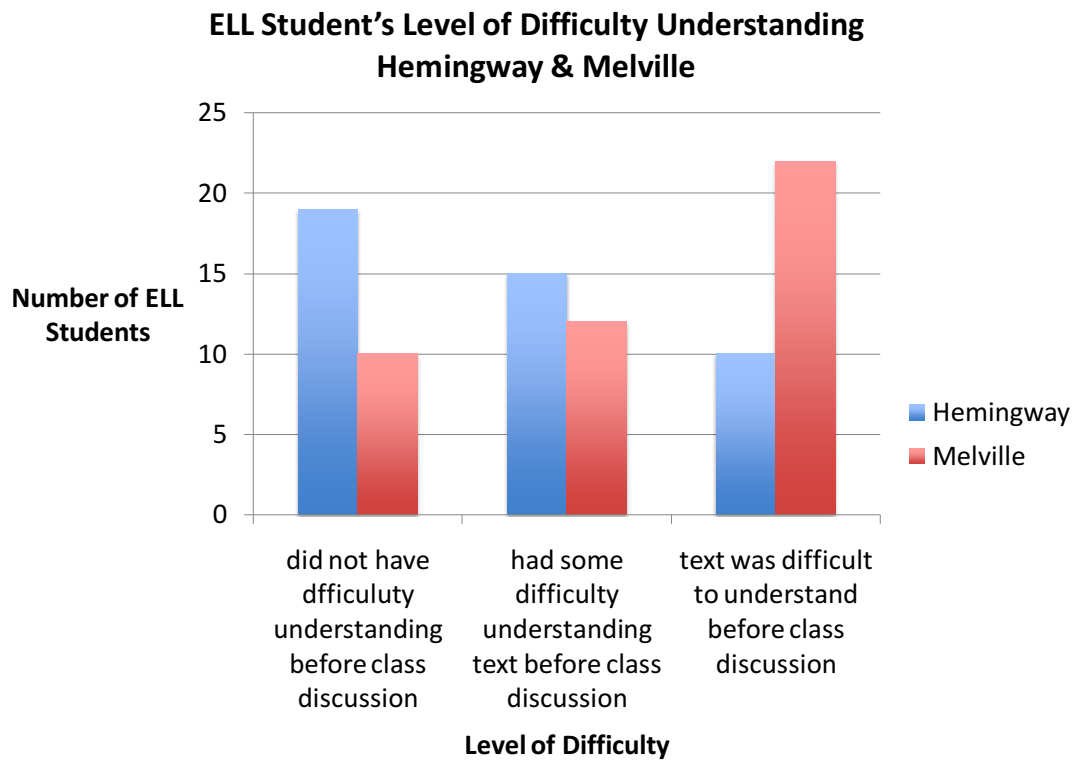
APPENDIX 2A

**Reading Habits of English Language Learners & Native English Speaking- Students**





APPENDIX 2B



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