



## **Tell Me About Your Country: Native Culture and EFL/ESL**

Patrick T. Dougherty

The University of Hyogo

### *Abstract*

The author has begun a series of student projects that allow students to use their own Japanese heritage and history as a tool for language learning. Through presentations, role-playing, and projects, students focus on studying, relaying, and utilizing the Japanese culture to provide a basis for language comprehension. An added benefit to this format for language instruction is that it allows students to learn about themselves, their culture, and ethnic heritage. The author provides a pamphlet of activities geared at encouraging students to explore their own culture. The thrust of the presentation was that the cultural heritage of the language learner provides a rich source of inspiration and material to assist student-centered instruction. Though using examples from Japanese students, the concepts presented are universal in application.

### **Introduction**

The researcher, in the course of his career in Japan has had the opportunity to conduct pre-student exchange programs with Japanese high school and university students. The programs usually focused on the lifestyles and situations that students might encounter in the countries that they would visit, i.e., Australia and the United States.

After students returned from abroad, the researcher set about determining the efficacy of his curriculum by informally asking for student feedback. The basic questions were, "Did the pre-exchange program prepare you for your exchange?" and, "Do you have any suggestions for improvement for the pre-exchange program?"

Students responded that they were ready to ask questions about Australia and the United States, and understood much of what was going on around them culturally, but they were not prepared to answer some basic questions about Japan and traditional Japanese culture and customs. They either (1) did not know much about their own heritage, or (2) if they had some ambient knowledge of Japanese culture they did not have the adequate English vocabulary to answer specific questions.

To address these deficiencies, the researcher devised a program of sixteen activities to give students an opportunity to learn about their own culture and heritage and practice explaining this culture and heritage in English. These activities were gathered into a pamphlet given the

title, *Tell Me About Your Country*.

### **Rational**

The idea of using students' native culture in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) or English as a second language (ESL) classroom is not new. The topic has been researched and the benefits identified. One of the primary reasons the use of native culture is beneficial in the EFL/ESL classroom comes from schema theory research. Studies have shown that students' comprehension and retention of target language material is improved when familiar cultural contexts are used in the classroom (Post and Rathet, 1996).

If a goal of learning a language is improved cultural understanding, than the question may be asked, why should this not extend to a cultural understanding of one's native culture and heritage? As Rebecca Chism (2005) stated, the "goal in a language classroom is intercultural understanding, not only the understanding of another culture but of one's own culture as well (p. 2)." Chism's study of the inclusion of Chinese culture in English language classrooms in Taiwan pointed out that the vast majority of textbooks being utilized in the local classrooms were focused on American or world culture and cultural constructs. This resulted in a situation where Taiwanese students were comfortable and able to discuss American and world culture but had not learned the vocabulary or enough background to dialogue on their own culture (Chism, 2005, p. 2). The same situation applies to Japan, and, realistically, can apply to students from a variety of cultural and heritage backgrounds (Dougherty and Dougherty, 2006).

### **Pamphlet Materials**

The pamphlet, *Tell Me About Your Country*, contains fifteen exercises and one conversation board game (see Fig. 1 for the table of contents). All of these exercises have been used successfully at the junior high, high school, university, and adult continuing education levels. Each exercise may be completed individually, in pairs, or in small groups. Further, each exercise lends itself to a variety of methods of use. Each may be completed as a paper and pencil activity, an opening activity for a presentation, a research program leading to a dialogue, a role-playing opportunity, etc. In each case, the author placed a premium on flexibility of usage, realizing that the materials must meet the needs of teachers and students from a variety of backgrounds and with a variety of resources available. This is especially true since the author has presented this pamphlet for use in Laos and Bangladesh as well as Japan. In those countries, access to computers, copy machines, and other technology is often limited, especially on educational levels below university (Rahman, 2006 and US Library of Congress,

2007). For this reason, most of the exercises can easily be duplicated on a chalkboard or done verbally.

Additionally, many of the assignments have multiple tasks. These tasks might include researching, discussion, writing, drawing, presentation, and role-playing. This is to recognize the differing strengths of students as well as to provide the instructor with a wide variety of approaches for each exercise.

#### Table of Contents

1. Cultural Inventory
2. Culture Box
3. Travel Brochure
4. Historical/Cultural Tour
5. Menu Assignment
6. A Traditional Recipe
7. A Famous Festival or Cultural Event
8. Traditional Music
9. Traditional Costume
10. Traditional Costume II
11. Hometown Motto or Slogan
12. A Snapshot of My culture
13. The Souvenir Shop
14. The Grandparent Interview
15. The From Memory Map
16. A Conversation Game

*Figure 1. Table of Contents – Tell Me About Your Country*

Limitations of space preclude an in-depth presentation of each exercise. Instead, a short summary of each exercise will be provided.

#### **Exercises**

##### *1. Cultural Inventory*

Summary: This is a simple 10 question, single sheet exercise that asks students to identify in the space one or a few words, their culture's traditional clothing, most important holiday, a

famous historical personage, valued personality traits, exported cultural influences, art, cultural confusions, food, sport, and music. Two examples of questions taken from the assignment are, "What is the most traditional clothing in your culture?" and "What is a cultural food dish that visitors may not like very much?"

## 2. Culture Box

Summary: In this one sheet assignment, students are asked to identify eight items or things that will explain their culture, either in its ancient or modern aspects. In one form of the assignment, a student is required to create a simple box approximately 45 centimeters by 45 centimeters in size. On this box are displayed photographs, drawings, and other memorabilia that denote the native culture in some way. For example, students in Japan might have cutouts from Japanese *manga* or cartoon magazines, or origami cranes, or pictures of pop stars or traditional geisha.

Each student carefully selects eight items that he or she believes exhibit the culture. The student proceeds to give a show and tell format presentation of the eight items. Since the space is limited, ingenuity is often required in the presentation of cultural items. For example, one cannot fit a kimono into the box, and so one might put a kimono sandal or cord to represent the larger item.

This specific activity was the focus of a presentation the researcher conducted at the Monterey Institute of International Studies in May 2004. What follows is an unsolicited response by one of the presentation attendees who tried the activity at his institution with adult students:

*We did the Boxes--using hats and hard paper as boxes. Students particularly liked this activity because, in addition to natural approach to language, they told me that they felt they were discovering themselves all over again in a different language as they wrote .... I loved the comments and the realization. I was particularly touched to discover how many values and principles they brought into the activity and therefore it was not artificial in any way (Kay, 2004).*

## 3. Travel Brochure

Summary: This is a three-page assignment in which students create a travel brochure for their home country, prefecture, state, hometown, or cultural/geographically important area. They are asked to draw the national or area flag, a brochure-type picture, and a map of the country, city, or area.

Additionally they must identify what the visitor can see, can do, and can eat if he or she decides to visit the brochure's featured site or country. This done, the students must list some important information for the visitor, stating the population, the language(s), climate, holidays, and best season to visit. Finally, the students create a "visitor's testimonial" where they state that the person loved visiting the area and list his or her reasons why.

#### *4. Historical/Cultural Tour*

Summary: In this three page assignment students are asked to create a travel itinerary for a seven-day historical/cultural tour of their city, area, or country. They must state what will be seen each day, give a description of what will be seen, and state why it is important enough to include in the limited itinerary. On the second page they must create a map showing the itinerary. Finally, they must list what to pack, with a reason for each item, and three famous souvenirs that they can purchase on the trip.

#### *5. Menu Assignment*

Summary: In this four-page exercise, students are required to create a menu for a traditional restaurant that represents their culture's unique cuisine. They must give the restaurant a suitable cultural name, draw a picture for the cover of the menu, and then list appetizers (starters), main courses (entrees), desserts, and drinks. In each category they must give a description of each dish or beverage as well as list the price.

#### *6. A Traditional Recipe*

Summary: In this two page activity students are required to give a recipe for a traditional cultural food dish. This recipe also requires a picture, a statement for which meal this dish would be best served, ingredients, and a step by step procedural outline for the making and cooking of this dish. Additionally, students must list other food items that might be served with this dish (condiments, drinks, etc.) and a description of how this dish should be eaten.

#### *7. A Famous Festival or Cultural Event*

Summary: In this two-page assignment students are asked to identify a famous yearly or regularly celebrated event in their country or culture. They must draw a picture displaying the event, state when it is held, where it is held, who usually attends, and why it is held. Additionally, they must write an explanation of this event pretending that they are explaining this happening to a first-time visitor.

### *8. Traditional Music*

Summary: In this one-page exercise, the student is asked to create a poster advertisement for a music concert. The music or musician must be culturally significant. They must draw an appropriate picture for the poster as well as state the time, place, and ticket price for the event. They must identify what songs will be performed and what instruments will be used. Additionally, since the poster states that half-price tickets will be given to those who dress in traditional costume, students must state what the concertgoers must wear in order to obtain the half-price tickets.

### *9. Traditional Costume*

Summary: In this first of two assignments dealing with traditional costume, students are asked to use colored paper or cloth to decorate cut-outs of a woman, man, boy, and girl with examples of appropriate traditional dress. Along with this, the student must write brief descriptions of the costumes displayed.

### *10. Traditional Costume II*

Summary: The same basic idea as the first costume assignment, but, instead of using cloth or colored paper, the student merely draws the costume on representations of a woman, man, boy, and girl. Along with this, the student must state the name of the costume; give a written description of it, and state when it should be worn and, for the boy and girl costumes, at what age. At the end of the assignment the student is asked to state when he or she last wore a traditional outfit and for what reason.

### *11. Hometown Motto or Slogan*

Summary: In this three-page assignment, examples of hometown mottos are given, such as the motto for Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA, "The City of Brotherly Love," and Las Vegas, Nevada, USA, "The Entertainment Capital of the World." Each student is then asked to write a motto for his or her hometown. After writing the motto, her or she must then write why this motto is a good one for the town or city. Afterward, the student is asked to give some background information about his or her hometown. This information includes the town location, the population, when it was first settled, the main industry, and a description of the climate.

The next stage of the assignment involves drawing a map of the country and locating the city or town and then drawing a detailed map of the city or town. The student is then asked to identify three things that a visitor can see or do in the hometown.

The final stage of the assignment has the student reflecting on his or her favorite memory of growing up in his or her hometown. This last stage includes a segment where the student recommends the town to a visitor as a place to live and gives reasons for this recommendation.

### *12. A Snapshot of My culture*

Summary: In this one page activity, a student is required to bring in a photograph that they have taken, or a picture from a magazine or newspaper, that he or she feels showcases the culture. The student then must write a one-paragraph description of why this is so.

### *13. The Souvenir Shop*

Summary: In this four-page exercise students must "create" a souvenir shop that will highlight traditional goods from their country or culture. They must design the layout of the shop, including the front with an appropriate name and display format. Then they must design culturally appropriate costumes for the shop clerks to wear (both men and women). They must then list ten items that are must-haves in their shop; these are named, described, and priced.

Finally, students are asked to create a dialogue between a shop clerk and a customer where the shop clerk describes a few of the items and helps the customer, a first time visitor to the country or area, make some purchase decision. In one version of this activity, the clerk speaks only English and the customer has a bilingual co-traveler translate for him or her, thus making it a three-way conversation.

### *14. The Grandparent Interview*

Summary: In this exercise each student is required to interview one of his or her grandparents, or a relative, or someone that he or she knows well who is 65 years old or older. The task requires that the student translate (if necessary) and ask these questions to the interviewee: (1) *Where did you grow up?* (2) *What were your favorite past-times as a child?* (3) *What chores or household tasks did you do?* (4) *What was your early schooling like?* (5) *What is your favorite memory of your childhood?* (6) *What is your most difficult, or saddest, memory from childhood?* and (7) *What was your favorite holiday as a child? Why was it your favorite?*

The student must write three more questions for his or her interviewee. The responses are to

be recorded and translated into English.

### *15. The From Memory Map*

Summary: The one page task for the student is to draw a map of his or her home country from memory. The student must include these items in the map: ten cities, six natural landmarks or geographical features (rivers, mountains, lakes, seas, etc.), and four historically important places (sites of battles, monuments, heritage sites, etc.)

### *16. A Conversation Game*

Summary: This is the one activity that is specific to Japan and Japanese culture. The technical name for this game is *Speaking of Japan . . . A Conversation Game*. It has four pieces: a game board with fifty boxes, twenty question cards, twenty picture cards, a set of place markers, and a die (not included in the pamphlet).

The idea of the game is to move your marker from box one to box fifty and complete the questions or activities required. Participants roll the die and move their markers. They may land on a square that requests them to choose a picture card or a question card. With a picture card, he or she must identify what is shown in the picture. Each picture shows something from Japanese culture. Examples are a sumo wrestler, a *katana* (sword), a *kimono*, a bullet train, etc. Question cards ask the student to respond to questions about the culture. For example, "*What is a traditional wedding like?*" "*What do students wear to school?;*" or "*When is a person considered an adult?*" As participants move through the game, they might also land on squares that ask them to do certain tasks, like make a paper crane or show how a man should sit, or a woman sit, or sing a bit of a traditional song.

In most cases the game has taken four participants approximately forty minutes to complete. Suggestions for use that come with the game mention that students might also create their own questions and picture cards as a homework assignment. A response from one teacher who used this with her class was that this activity focused students on describing familiar things and made them aware "*of the difficulty of describing familiar things in English and [the students] learnt some vocabulary/phrases for doing so.*" (Dougherty, 2005)

## **Conclusion**

One use of learning English is to allow the student to project and explain his or her own culture to the world. The problem, on a practical level, is that most course books involve the student in learning about, discussing, and articulating the culture and history of "native"

English speaking nations. This article offered the prototype of an English course book that allows students to explore and then explain, their native cultures in English.

The benefits of using this course book, and the overarching concept of using heritage and cultural information as content for the EFL or ESL classroom is that it provides basic linguistic, academic, and emotional benefits for the student. In summation, learning English does not mean that a student needs to leave his or her native culture at the classroom door, and that a student's heritage can, and should be, a source of inspiration, stimulation, and confirmation in the EFL or ESL classroom.

### References

Chism, R. (2005). Integrating Chinese culture into the EFL classroom. *Academic Exchange Quarterly*, Dec. 22, 2005. Accessed on April 15, 2007 at

<http://www.thefreelibrary.com/Integrating+Chinese+culture+into+the+EFL+classroom-a0142636411>

Dougherty, P. & Dougherty, A. (2006). Cultural inventory. *English Teaching Professional*. p. 47.

Dougherty, P. (2005) Quia Survey: The Japanese Conversation Game.

[http://www.quia.com/servlets/quia.activities.sv.summary.SummarySV?report=Session&activity\\_id=3317729](http://www.quia.com/servlets/quia.activities.sv.summary.SummarySV?report=Session&activity_id=3317729)

Kay, A. (2004). Private correspondence, June 3, 2004.

Post, R. & Rathet, I. (1996). On their own terms: Using student native culture as content in the EFL classroom. *Forum*, 34 (3), July-September, pp 12 - 23.

Rahman, A. (2006). *The state of English education in Bangladesh*. Address to AsiaTEFL, August 26, 2006, Fukuoka, Japan.

US Library of Congress (2007) Education in Laos. <http://countrystudies.us/laos/61.htm>



## **Creative Writing and the English as a Foreign Language Classroom**

Patrick T. Dougherty

The University of Hyogo

### *Abstract*

This is a report on a case study of an experimental creative writing seminar that was offered to EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students at a university in Bangladesh by a visiting researcher. Questions being addressed are (1) do students perceive creative writing as motivational? (2) does creative writing encourage students to write in English outside of the classroom? and (3) does creative writing in English motivate EFL students to be better users of English? Additionally, a sample writing lesson and instructional materials are offered as a simple and concrete example of how creative writing may be utilized in an EFL classroom.

### **Introduction**

Creative writing in English is normally not considered the domain of the EFL student, but rather, as the prerogative of the native speaker. This is unfortunate for it keeps from the language student a powerful motivational force, one that can benefit him or her academically, emotionally, and linguistically. Through this case study, based on data collected at a university in Dhaka, Bangladesh, and through the use of an example lesson that was used with students at a junior high school in Dhaka (viewable in the Appendix), the researcher gives a clear example of how useful creative writing can be in fostering student interest in, confidence in, and enjoyment of, learning English.

### **The Case Study**

The questions addressed in this case study are (1) do students perceive creative writing as motivational, (2) does creative writing encourage students to write in English outside of the classroom, and (3) does creative writing in English motivate EFL students to be better users of English? As this case study deals with an experimental creative writing course taught in Bangladesh, a country off the tourist map and perhaps unfamiliar to many readers, the researcher judged it necessary to include a brief introduction to the country with pertinent geographical, social, and educational information.

### *Bangladesh*

Bangladesh is a nation of 123.1 million residing in a land area of 144,000 square kilometers bounded by India from the north, east, and west, and by Myanmar in the south, and resting on the Bay of Bengal. Its official language is Bangladeshi, or Bangla, but, as English is a

required subject for elementary through high school students, and due to the existence of many English medium schools, both K - 12 and university, English is widely understood. The urban population is 23%, the literacy rate is 45.3%, and the per capita public expenditure on education is approximately six U.S. dollars per year (Rahman, 2006).

### *Data collection*

Data for the study was generated by one Internet-based survey, two focus groups, and a student memoir. The survey was constructed by the visiting researcher using a survey program on the QUIA website (<http://www.quia.com/>). This software can be used to create a variety of activities and surveys for educational use. One benefit of this software is that once material is generated for a survey or activity and saved it can be transformed into html format and saved on the Internet. The class was taken to a computer lab to complete the survey. There was 100% participation.

The focus groups met within twenty-four hours of the last class and final test and before the formal convocation ending the program for the academic year. Focus Group 1 had five members and Focus Group 2 had six members. Hence, the focus groups comprised approximately 75% of the total class population. As with the Internet based survey, the focus groups were given questions to inform multiple research objectives and also to identify areas of improvement for future courses.

One of the students, a Master of Teaching English as a Second Language student at Presidency University, completed a memoir where she wrote about her experience in taking the creative writing class. Though originally not to be included in the process of this research, the instructor felt that this student's work, and her academic background in TESL (teaching English as a Second Language), made her remarks useful for this research task.

### *The class*

The class was unique in that it was also utilized as a training opportunity for Bangladeshi English teachers under the auspices of the Bangladesh English Language Teaching Association. The class was the site of frequent visitations by local English teachers and graduate students studying English language teaching. These visits were complimented by a series of presentations by the researcher at an English pedagogical conference held in March 2006, in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

The class met from March 2, 2006 to April 3, 2006. The class met four times per week over

the four-week period, with each class lasting two hours. There were eighteen classes and a final examination. As preliminary inquiries indicated that most of the students had not had previous creative writing course experiences, the instructor decided to make the course a survey course that would include introduction to, and production in, four main genres: biography, autobiography, and memoir; poetry; short story, and a drama section focused on creating one-act plays.

### *The students*

There were sixteen students. They ranged in age from 16 years old to approximately forty years old. Fifteen of them were attending the class for a grade and one was attending as an audit. There were four men and twelve women. Most were university students from one of three universities in Dhaka, Bangladesh, one of the students was a high school student, and several of the students were university graduates either working full or part-time jobs.

### **Findings**

#### *Question 1: Do students perceive creative writing as motivational?*

The most direct question concerning the motivational quality of creative writing came from the Internet survey. Question 17 asked students to respond either yes or no to the following: "Did you find Creative Writing to be a motivational experience for you?" The response was 100% affirmative. Question 42, which was a free response, asked "Was this class motivational for you? If so, in what areas of your life, academic or private, and in what ways?" The question elicited fifteen responses, all of which stated unequivocally, yes, the experience was motivational. Some selected responses are given here.

*It was a motivational experience at its best. It prompted me to be creative, let my pen have all the power. Academic-wise, I know I'll be a lot more confident with the way I write.*

*Of course it is motivational and I hope it will bring out hidden writer out of me one day.*

*This class is motivational for me in my academic life because it will help me to do well in my result and as well as in my private life because now I am confident enough I can write something creative.*

*Yes it was motivational for me. It motivated me to get more serious about my*

*writing. Because before I just had the urge to write but now I have the tools for the job. So hopefully I can produce some thing that is worth at least one read.*

*Yes, as it helped me to take writing up again, which I had stopped after leaving school.*

When addressed in the focus groups, the student response was to affirm that the class was motivational. The simplest statement was, "Definitely," and this was met with a choral response of "yes."

*Question 2: Does creative writing encourage students to write in English beyond the classroom?*

Question 4 of the Internet survey asked, "Are you going to continue writing creatively?" To this all sixteen respondents stated, "yes." Question 6 inquired as to how often this creative writing would take place. Eight students (50%) said monthly, five students (31.25%) said weekly, and three students (18.75%) said daily.

When, in Question 7, students were asked if they would share their creative writing with the public, all sixteen of the students responded, implying that all of them would share their work somehow, somewhere. In the same question students were given a choice of outlets to share their creative writing, and they were told that they could select more than one outlet. This is the break down of the responses: two respondents selected public readings (12.50%), six identified newspaper submissions (37.50%), twelve said they would submit to writer's magazines or journals (75%), six said that they would publish their own work (37.50%), and three (18.75%) stated, "other."

A free response question from the survey gave students an opportunity to expand on these choices. Question 32 asked, "If you decide to share your creative work with others, how would you do so?" Fourteen of the students responded. The responses ranged from showing the work to friends and family to publishing a book. Five of the respondents mentioned showing the work first to family and friends with the implication that positive responses would encourage them to take the work to a wider audience through publication, "In magazines or newspapers." One student stated that he or she would join a club for young creative writers and would try to get work published in magazines or journals. Another student had this interesting comment: "*I would like to share my creative works with children that are studying in school. I would encourage them and let them know how important it is.*"

*Question 3: Does creative writing in English motivate EFL students to be better users of English?*

Question 43 in the Internet survey asked students to respond affirmatively or negatively to this inquiry: "Does creative writing motivate someone to become a better "user" of English?" Fifteen out of the sixteen students responded in the affirmative (approximately 94%). The responses were significant to this study. One respondent stated, *"It does motivate someone to become a better user of English, because creative writing shows you the infinite ways in which the language can be manipulated and used to express what you feel like, and that certainly should motivate a person to become a better user of the language."* Another student responded, *"Yes, definitely . . . a better user [of English] as now I have the guidelines inserted into me I can use English in a much more organized way to express myself or my work."* And one last comment from the Internet survey, *"Yes, as they (the students) gain more confidence in their ability to manipulate words to express emotions, confidence inevitably leads to greater skill."*

This topic was also raised in the focus groups. One student replied, *"You have to know how to organize and use the language. Creative writing gives us guidelines. So definitely, I am using English words better. I have learned how to organize my thoughts and put them together to express myself."*

Question 16 of the survey asked students whether they would recommend the Creative Writing course to other students. All sixteen of the students responded, yes, they would (100%). When asked in Question 18 whether Creative Writing should be part of a normal university education, the results were the same. All sixteen students affirmed that, yes, they felt it should be included in a regular university course of studies (100%). From Question 37, which asked whether creative writing benefits those outside the English major, we learn that, thirteen of the fourteen students who chose to respond felt that creative writing would benefit those outside of the English major (approximately 93%). One response was quite detailed in reasoning:

*Most definitely. I think it benefits those outside the English major very much because English majors are already familiar with writing and expressing ideas but non-English majors are not and they need writing skills as much as anyone else, too. Non-English majors also need to be made to think about the more passionate side of life that deals with areas other than numbers and money. It's*

*important for every student to take creative writing courses and explore their creative potential. It's a feel good course, too. I feel creative writing courses make one feel good about oneself.*

When it came specifically to the issue of writing improvement, Question 8 of the Internet survey asked the students to respond to the following: "Has Creative Writing helped to improve your English language writing? Yes or No." There were sixteen respondents, all of them answered in the affirmative to the question (100.00%).

A great deal more detail came in the free response section of the Internet survey. Question 29 asked: "Which activities in the class were the most important in respect to improving your writing skills?" A wide range of answers came back that reinforced the initial responses. Here is a cogent example, "*The constant writing of different genres of writing - short stories, biographies and autobiographies. There were some small activities, like learning to deconstruct a story, peer editing, that in a great way helped me to express clearly and so to write effectively.*"

When the issue of writing was broached in the focus groups, one student made the comment that he had never been asked to write anything in English before, that this was a new experience for him. Another student pointed out the benefit of some of the instructor's intellectual and organizational tools for writing. As that student explained,

*This was really helpful for me. I was always lost, I couldn't organize my time, and I really needed the help of your organizational aspects. Mind mapping, spider graphs, and pre-writing activities. These all helped me. They help me with my English and with everything.*

Another student responded simply, "*It helps one's writing.*" Still another student added, "*When you write you are putting yourself out there. You improve your English because you have to understand the conventions of a short story, poetry.*" To finish, it would be helpful to hear from the student who wrote a memoir about her experience in the class. It offers her insight on how the class encouraged her to write (Jahan, 2006, p. 1).

*The most alarming moment arrive in our class when Dr. Pat said that we had to write down at least forty lines of poetry. Almost all of us except one or two had never taken this task before. So we were shocked and my reaction was, "Okay, I*

*am done with the course and this will definitely be my last class!" But quite surprisingly I attended the next class because the way our teacher encouraged us and explained in the class about writing poetry, the task became easier for us. And my excitement reached a peak when I sat down and my pen started moving on the paper and thus my first poem came to life.*

## **Conclusion**

One goal of the researchers was to show that creative writing is a valuable instructional tool in the ESL or EFL classroom. As explained in the introduction, creative writing is usually considered the domain of the native speaker and not of the EFL or ESL student. In her account of her experience in the class, the memoir writer made this clear (Jahan, page 1): *"In our country there is not enough opportunity to do such a course that we had done with Dr. Dougherty. So it was quite unusual event for the students who had successfully completed the course."* The researcher believes that creative writing has many positive benefits for the EFL or ESL student. This case study focused on creative writing as a motivational resource in the language classroom. The research data gave clear answers.

There were three research questions asked (1) do students perceive creative writing as motivational, (2) does creative writing encourage students to write in English outside of the classroom, and (3) does creative writing in English motivate EFL students to be better users of English? Each question may be answered in the affirmative, supported by the data from the Internet survey, focus groups, and our student memoir writer. Additionally, one of the goals of the researcher as an instructor of the creative writing course was to have students submit work to a class chapbook. Thirteen of the sixteen students did so, some submitting several pieces for inclusion.

The memoir writer felt that the class made a positive impact on the general confidence of the students. It would be appropriate to end this monograph with her words, *"During this adventure what I got from the classes will remain as an asset for the rest of my life. Not only me but also many of my classmates could hardly imagine that we could write down any literary pieces."*

## **References**

Dougherty, P. (2006). Presidency University Writing Course Survey. Quia website: <http://www.quia.com/sv/80336.html>



2. *A few psychological questions to answer:*

a. What animal would you like to be? \_\_\_\_\_

Give me three descriptive words to explain how this animal moves:

\_\_\_\_\_

b. If you could be a color, what color would you be? \_\_\_\_\_

Now give me three words to describe this color:

\_\_\_\_\_

c. If you could be a toy, what toy would you want to be? \_\_\_\_\_

Give me one word to describe why: \_\_\_\_\_

3. *Now, give this paper to a partner. Have the partner answer these four characterization questions ABOUT YOU:*

(1) How would a child of 3 years old describe him or her?

(2) How would a deaf person describe him or her?

(3) How would a blind person describe him or her?

(4) How would an animal (a dog or a cat) describe him or her?

4. *Now the greatest of all challenges. Hand this to another person. It is that person's lucky task to write a paragraph description of the owner of this paper. He or she should try to include as much of the information on the previous page as possible.*

---

---

---

---

---

