

# A Poem in the Process: Haiku as an Alternative to Brainstorming

**John Esposito**

*Kogei Women's Junior College*

Studies of contrastive rhetoric now address not only product and process concerns, but also the complex rhetorical traditions which inform writing practice. By contrasting the rhetorical traditions of Japanese and English, it is possible to establish a point of convergence which can inform the teaching of writing to Japanese EFL students. This paper suggests that during the pre-writing stage of paragraph composition, haiku can be used as a complement to or substitute for brainstorming. A sample lesson is offered exploring some of the practical applications of this approach.

対照修辞学の研究は、書き上がりの産物と書く過程だけでなく、書き手の実践に影響を与える複雑な修辞学の伝統も対象とするようになった。日本語と英語の修辞学の伝統を対照することで、その類似性が発見できれば、外国語として英語を学ぶ日本の学生に英語で書くことを教えるために役にたつ。この論文は、パラグラフ・ライティングにおいて、書く前の段階で、俳句を使うことによって、文化的に適切な方法でブレインストーミングができることを示す。このアプローチの実践的応用を探究するために、授業のサンプルが紹介される。

*We make out of the quarrel with others, rhetoric,  
but of the quarrel with ourselves, poetry.*

*W.B. Yeats*

Over the past thirty years, theoretical approaches to second language writing instruction have centered primarily upon the issues of product and process (Raimes, 1991; Silva, 1990). This debate can essentially be construed as one of emphasis between the *what*, or the patterns, forms, and organization of texts, and the *how*, or the ways, uses, and functions of writing. At the center of this discussion has been contrastive rhetoric studies. Based on the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis that language influences thought, contrastive rhetoric studies began with Kaplan's seminal work concerning L2 student essays and the degree of

negative transfer from a writer's L1 to L2. His main argument was that a student's native language influences second language acquisition, especially with respect to writing (1966). Kaplan's hypothesis, and, by extension, his definition of rhetoric, has been criticized as being too simplistic, reductionistic and ethnocentric (Liebman, 1992; Severino, 1993), yet, due to its intuitive appeal, it has influenced many second language teachers and researchers. Kaplan (Grabe & Kaplan, 1989; Kaplan, 1987), while subsequently qualifying his initial theory as being overstated, insisted on the importance of teaching rhetorical forms, suggesting that they constitute a significant factor influencing L2 writers.

Overemphasis on linguistic accuracy and patterns led to a paradigm shift in second language writing research and pedagogy. The resulting process approach placed the writer's composing competence, as opposed to linguistic competence, at the center of attention (for an overview, see Krapels, 1990). Writing came to be seen as "a complex, recursive and creative process" (Silva, 1990, p.15), whereby the writer focuses on discovering meaning through the communicative purpose of a text. Students should therefore be provided with "ample time to write and re-write, to learn that several drafts may be needed before intention and expression become one" (Zamel, 1982, p. 205). Proponents of a process approach also emphasize the fluid nature of a text, alternating between a pre-writing stage (concerned with brainstorming ideas, focusing and planning structures), a composing stage (where content, development and organization are addressed), and a post-writing or refining stage (characterized by drafting, editing and revising).

In recent years both content and audience awareness have also become important issues in second language writing instruction. In part this is a reaction to the primacy given the writer's cognitive needs in process methodologies. One major criticism of the process approach is that it neglects the sociocultural context in which writing takes place. Writers need to address the culture-specific forms and content acceptable and/or understandable to the reader. These necessities assume, of course, a preoccupation with form, or product. Horowitz (1986) states that writing without structure accomplishes little and that students should not be left to their own devices. An emphasis on form also has heuristic value as it motivates students to generate, invent and search for information (Coe, 1987; D'Angelo, 1980).

In spite of the apparent cyclical nature of L2 writing theory, characterized by adherence to rather narrow conceptualizations and prescriptions, there appears to be a growing awareness that the variables of text, writer, context and reader are not discrete, but are interrelated and should

be addressed as such (Raimes, 1991; Silva, 1990). An eclectic approach to writing instruction, then, would include both product and process concerns, particularly rhetorical factors related to coherence and the cultural expectations of reader and writer (Connor, 1996; Grabe & Kaplan, 1989; Purves, 1988).

Concurrent with the shifting emphases of L2 writing research, contrastive rhetoric has evolved to consider not only the surface features and patterns of texts, but also the complex contextual dynamics underlying the writing process (Severino, 1993). Matalene (1985) defines this context as the relationship between culture, language and rhetoric. A corollary to this is the notion that cultural predispositions extend beyond the text to influence all areas of discourse (Leki, 1991; Strevens, 1987). Kaplan, for one, suggests that even logic is "a cultural artifact rather than an inherent capacity of the mind" (1990, p.10). Insofar as reasoning (i.e., the perceived relationships between phenomena) is culturally determined, it is limited to a writer's language. As a result, what may appear illogical to readers in one culture, is perfectly understandable to the readers of another (see Leki, 1992). Time also appears to be a cultural convention, which manifests itself in the arrangement of texts (Kaplan, 1990). Likewise, attitudes toward knowledge, including the approaches, strategies and aims of learning are closely tied to cultural norms and values (Ballard & Clanchy, 1991; Purves & Hawisher, 1990). These differences manifest themselves at the rhetorical level and often constitute barriers to communication (Strevens, 1987).

In orienting their readers to a topic, for instance, Scarcella found that second language learners' introduction strategies differed significantly in both quantity and quality from those of native English writers (1984). These behaviors seem to be reflective of particular education systems, where students "do indeed learn to become members of a rhetorical community" (Purves & Hawisher, 1990, p. 191). Through direct examination, contrastive rhetoric can be used to explicate culturally-informed aspects of writing such as implicitness and explicitness, clarity and coherence, unity, content, and other pragmatic concerns (Martin, 1991). According to Leki, contrastive rhetoric studies ultimately "concern themselves with the social construction of knowledge within discourse communities" (1991, p.135). In order to simplify their tasks, students first need to know what salient elements serve as the building blocks of this construction. Thus, there has been a strong call to make the learner aware of rhetorical differences through metalinguistic instruction (Carrell, 1987; Carson, 1992; Hinds, 1987; Hinkel, 1994; Jenkins & Hinds, 1987; Kaplan, 1990; Leki, 1992; Purves & Hawisher, 1990; Scarcella, 1984; Strevens, 1987).

It is my purpose here to show how this might be done with Japanese students of English. Although the field of contrastive rhetoric has focused primarily on negative transfer, there has been some support for use of the learner's L1 as an important resource (Cumming, 1989; Hinkel, 1994; Lay, 1982; Raimes, 1991). For example, Friedlander (1990) found that use of the L1 can assist students during the planning process as it facilitates information retrieval (see Carson, Carrell, Silberstein, Kroll & Kuehn, 1990). With this in mind, I would like to contrast what Liebman-Kleine refers to as "the rich views of rhetoric" (1986, p.8), which necessarily include the cultural traditions informing the whole writing process. First, I will try to indicate how the cultural and rhetorical traditions of Japanese and English influence present day usage. After highlighting two predominant and interrelated features of these disparate languages, I will suggest a point of convergence where they appear to complement each other. Finally, I will demonstrate, in the form of a lesson plan, how these insights might be exploited by both second/foreign language teachers and students of English.

## A Contrastive Analysis of Japanese and English Rhetoric

### *Japanese Rhetoric*

Two salient features of Japanese texts are indirectness and, consequently, the reader's responsibility to construct meaning. Historically, this might be traced to the Heian Era (794-1185), when waka (short 31-syllable poems) were exchanged by members of the nobility to communicate their love for each other (Tsuji-mura, 1987). Waka, which are still composed as tanka today, are characterized by their indirect and allusive wording. One vivid example of this is the way in which Heian poets referred to colors. The Japanese language originally had only four words to denote different colors. As a result, writers chose natural objects to evoke the myriad images of color they had in mind (Ooka, 1991). The Japanese propensity to be indirect might also be attributed to political factors such as the emphasis put on restraint during feudal times, and the need to conform, at least, outwardly, to the dictates of totalitarian regimes (Tsuji-mura, 1987).

Conformity, however, is not solely a consequence of sociopolitical exigencies, but is also a product of Confucianism. Ballard and Clanchy (1991) argue that due to the Confucian dictum that knowledge and truth are fixed and simply passed on from teachers to students, there is a strong aversion to argue or critically analyze with the intent to reach clear-cut conclusions

(see also Hinds, 1982). For a Japanese student, there is thus "a willingness to tolerate ambiguity, even contradictions, to allow them to sit easily in tension within the same piece of writing" (Ballard & Clanchy, 1991, p.33). This seems to echo Hinds (1987), who notes the Japanese disinclination to explain or clarify when writing. In addition, because of the Buddhist and Confucian stress on maintaining harmony, "language is understood as a medium for expressing social cohesion, and not primarily as a medium for individual expression" (Carson, 1992, p.42).

Another factor influencing Japanese rhetoric is the nature of the Japanese writing system. Although writing classes are generally dispensed with by the end of junior high school, a substantial amount of time is expended on learning grammar and kanji (Chinese characters). In fact, Japanese students are compelled to learn four distinct written codes (five, counting Arabic numerals): 1850 kanji, which are the most formidable—ranging in complexity from 1-23 strokes that are written in a specified order—with most also having multiple readings (as many as nine depending on context); two phonetic syllabaries (hiragana and katakana) consisting of 46 basic symbols each; and the Roman alphabet. One result is that much time is spent on drill and memorization learning this intricate system. To compound this, Japanese words are not separated at the sentence level, thus compelling the reader to intuit the beginning and ends of words. This lack of clarity extends to the essay level as well, where transitions are usually not marked or attenuated (Hinds, 1987). One can plainly see how the language itself helps to foster ambiguity (see Clancy, 1986), thus placing cognitive demands upon the reader to recover meaning from a text.

Japanese writers expect that their readers' minds will work in similar ways to their own (Hinds, 1990). As Kaplan (1988) makes clear, when one is addressing culturally diverse groups of unknown readers, "the probability of shared universes of knowledge diminishes in direct proportion to the size of audience" (p.284). The potential audience for any text composed in Japanese is limited for the most part to the people living in Japan, the only country in the world where Japanese is used as a primary language. It comes as no surprise, then, that Japanese texts tend to be reader-responsible (Hinds, 1987). One by-product of a reader-responsible rhetoric is the value Japanese seem to place on expressive writing, that is, writing done about and for the self, at the expense of writing done with communicative intentions (e.g., persuasive or expository prose). As a consequence, Japanese readers expect that they will have to evaluate a writer's propositions on any given topic (Hinds, 1990). Indeed, it appears that Japanese writers are not very concerned with

audience at all. They consider the beauty, or aesthetic aspect, of a text and engaging the reader's emotions to be good qualities of writing (Dennet, cited in Leki, 1992). Furthermore, writing is not thought of as a process of discovery, but comes only after thinking. Liebman (1992) found very little attention given to revising, most of which was limited to making sentence-level corrections (cf. Hinds, 1987). This lack of a heuristic aspect to writing is problematic as it precludes the whole argument concerning process as a recursive, dynamic search for meaning.

In Japan students learn to write through very little or no direct instruction (Mok, 1993). At the rhetorical level, writing is taught mainly by following formulas and through reading. When writing a business letter, for instance, Japanese depend to a great extent on choosing set expressions from style manuals (Jenkins & Hinds, 1987). Reading instruction includes encouraging the habit of reading between the lines while analyzing syntactic relationships (Carson, 1992). Essentially, learning to read and write in Japanese is learning individual words—words which are not generally used to convey ideas but for social functions. This word-boundedness also appears to carry over to the learning of English, where Yamada (1993) asserts that writing is limited to the sentence level as discourse and rhetorical organization are ignored (see Kobayashi, 1984).

The reading texts used as models are generally selected from Japan's long and distinguished literary canon (Liebman, 1992). The one rhetorical pattern that is predominant in traditional Japanese literature, indeed, in most of Japanese culture, is the *JO-HA-KYUU*. Ueda (1967) likens this pattern to the three movements of a western sonata (Exposition–Development–Recapitulation). In fact, this pattern is the basis for traditional Japanese music, where the *JO* is characterized by a quiet tone with a slow tempo, the *HA* incorporates a lighter mood and leisurely changes, and the *KYUU* increases the rhythm as well as the impact. This *JO-HA-KYUU* pattern is so pervasive that it is also found in traditional Japanese football, the Noh drama, renga (linked verse), the Kyogen (traditional Japanese comedy), and the Tea Ceremony. The fact that Japanese students learn to write primarily by reading would lead one to assume that the *JO-HA-KYUU* pattern must be internalized to some degree. Although Hinds (1982) claims that this is not the case at the compositional level, Mok (1993) feels that this organizational pattern probably forms the basis of Japanese writing practice.

#### *English Rhetoric*

The roots of English rhetoric can be properly traced to the models of ancient Greece and Rome. The first rhetoricians, the Sophists (circa 500

B.C.), were public speakers who argued on behalf of matters of sociopolitical importance. Their milieu was the public square and other places where people naturally congregated. They sought to provide their listeners with the necessary reasoning and arguments to make informed decisions (Saunders, 1970). Consequently, it was the listener's responsibility to form opinions through critical evaluation. This ability to evaluate the truth forms the basis of the Western rhetorical tradition. Whereas the Sophists emphasized the art of persuasive speaking, Plato sought to give preeminence to the search for truth (Hare, 1982). For Plato, contemplation, not argumentation, formed the basis of this search. Aristotle (see Roberts & Bywater, 1984) later reconciled these antithetical modes of inquiry by introducing a rhetorical system based on logic. Logical argumentation in the quest for truth thus came to be a defining factor of English rhetorical practice. Rhetorical standards such as clarity, coherence and linear progression also arose out of this oral tradition that produced the paragraph. Etymologically, the word is, in fact, derived from the Greek word *paragrapbos*, which means a line in a dialogue showing a change in speakers.

The truth Aristotle had in mind was not catholic in nature but was open to debate. Whether by *ethos* (an appeal to the speaker's moral qualities), *pathos* (an appeal to the emotions of the audience), or *logos* (the logic of the subject matter), the way one argued was based upon the premise that ideas exist prior to and independent of language (Knoblauch & Brannon, 1984). This notion, in turn, also influenced form: a speech should be arranged linearly according to introduction, argument and counterargument, and summary. Consequently, the use of simple, ordinary words was, for Aristotle, the sine qua non of effective persuasion. He insisted that one must avoid ambiguity at all costs so as not to confuse or mislead the listener. Roman thinkers such as Cicero furthered this prescriptive view of rhetoric by focusing on the stylistic concerns of the speaker.

With the advent of movable type in the early 15th century, medieval and Renaissance scholars turned away from the spoken word to concentrate on writing (Lindemann, 1982). At this time there was apparently little difference between speech and its written representations; Hence, organization as an aid to coherence at the sentence level was of imminent concern. The confluence of Enlightenment thought, with its increasing faith in logical analysis and the scientific method of inquiry, and the emerging preoccupation with the written word, furthered the cause of short sentences and simple words (Bacon), expressing precisely the truth or falsity of propositions (Descartes). The length of the

average sentence in English texts, in fact, was reduced in half from approximately the 16th to the 19th century (Rodgers, 1965). The concomitant increase in number of sentences, however, placed a greater burden on the reader. Rhetoricians thus shifted their attention to the paragraph, and the need to provide readers with comprehensible chunks of information.

Alexander Bain (1818-1903) was one such thinker. He regarded the paragraph as merely a big sentence (Rodgers, 1965). His six rules of the paragraph, which both mirror classical thinking and have influenced subsequent rhetoricians, was a prescriptive attempt at achieving coherence by avoiding ambiguity. His number one rule attests to his preoccupation with this issue: "The bearing of each sentence upon what preceded it shall be explicit and unmistakable" (Shearer, 1972, p.412). Bain's narrow prescriptions of what form a finished paragraph should take offered little insight into how a paragraph should be crafted, however. This formalistic view of knowledge eventually ran up against 20th century psychological interpretations that stressed the holistic and dynamic properties of cognition. The idea of learning through discovery, based upon Piaget's work on cognitive development, led to the belief that the focus of writing instruction should be on the process itself; thus bringing us to the source of our current strains in contrastive rhetoric.

While there continues to be much discussion over the definition of the paragraph (e.g., see Harris, 1990, for a study on the existence and/or placement of topic sentences), there is some consensus that modern English rhetoric tends to place a high value on clearly-reasoned, explicit, convincing prose. This is incumbent upon the writer to produce, to avoid miscommunication (Ballard & Clanchy, 1991; Hinds, 1987; Leki, 1992; Purves & Hawisher, 1990; Strevens, 1987). It would be unfair, however, to categorize all English or writing as exemplifying as having these values (Connor, 1996; Strevens, 1987) since rhetorical conventions are cultural as opposed to linguistic. Thus, the qualities of explicitness, clarity, and writer responsibility might best be viewed as tendencies of modern American English (Purves & Hawisher, 1990). However, the responsibility placed on the writer for avoiding miscommunication in modern English rhetoric is generally accepted.

#### A Point of Convergence

There are obviously great distinctions between the Japanese and English rhetorical traditions. The EFL writing teacher's primary concern is to make students aware of such differences while explicating such



variables as coherence and the culture-specific expectations of both reader and writer. Given that the paragraph is an essential aid to coherence (Knoblauch & Brannon, 1984) and is a necessary convention of modern English prose, paragraph writing needs to be taught. One way might be to begin with the resources the learners bring to the classroom—in this case, the Japanese rhetorical tradition.

As mentioned earlier, Japanese texts tend to be ambiguous, which, in turn, places cognitive demands upon the reader. These qualities are best exemplified in the Japanese poetic form of haiku. The haiku was originally the opening sequence of the renga (linked verse). Renga were composed by several poets in a kind of lyrical interplay. After the first poet wrote the opening 5-7-5 part, known as the hokku, the next poet would add a two line 7-7 syllable conclusion. These two parts made an intelligible, independent whole (Sato, 1983). A point worth noting is that the haiku (hokku) was originally part of a larger pattern. And even after it began to be composed independently, it retained this fragmentary nature.

Haiku, like all poetry, is concerned essentially with experience. In three short lines it presents concrete images without any explanation. The symbolism of the central image or the relationships between images is suggested or hinted at. This is accomplished through such poetic devices as internal comparison, superimposition and juxtaposition. Because it is part of the Japanese rhetorical tradition, haiku is clearly reader responsible (Henderson, 1967). Japanese texts tend to assume a high degree of shared knowledge. It is the reader's job to make the connections and fill in the missing information in order to at once make sense of the poem and share in the poet's emotional response to the scene presented.

Regarding the form of haiku, some attempts have been made to impose a logical progression between the three parts of the poem. The haiku has in fact been likened to a sonata (Horiuchi, 1993; Ueda, 1967), a modern three-act play (Horiuchi, 1993), as well as a syllogism (Blyth, 1981). Horiuchi (1993) even claims that a haiku contains three ideas (thesis–antithesis–synthesis) that proceed in a rather linear manner. Of course, there are haiku that on the surface appear to be following a logical sequence, but such haiku are certainly the exception. Haiku simply do not have an internal logic per se. The connections between the parts of a haiku are accomplished through suggestion. If anything, a haiku is dependent on the reader to make a conscious connection between the parts. Thus, the *JO-HA-KYUU* is not a pattern generally present in the haiku, yet its influence can be detected in subtle ways.

Although there appears to be some merit in drawing analogies between the surface features of an English paragraph and the three parts of a haiku, it is suggested that the haiku is best exploited as an aid to the pre-writing process.

### Haiku Writing as a Brainstorming Technique

One common device used to generate ideas in the pre-writing stage of paragraph composition is brainstorming. When writers brainstorm, they put down all the words or ideas that come to mind about a specific topic. The purpose of this unstructured probing according to Lefkowitz "is to help free your thoughts, break down mental blocks, and open your mind to other possible ways of looking at things" (1987, p.1). The ultimate goal of brainstorming is to flush out one's latent memory of all the items connected to a particular word or concept.

A haiku also seeks to codify in language one's unfettered thoughts. Ueda feels that the composing of haiku must be done in an instant "with no impure thought intervening in the process" (1967, p.159). Whereas brainstorming evolves from spontaneous connections between words, a haiku involves the poet's immediate response to the images or reality before one. Matsuo Basho (1644-1694), who is considered one of the greatest haiku poets, spoke of spontaneously expressing one's instantaneous perceptions. He also urged his students to speak their mind without wandering thoughts (Higginson, 1985). Therefore, a haiku is similar to brainstorming as they both emphasize writing without conscious intellectualization, without imposing one's subjective interpretation on the process.

A haiku is nonetheless an intellectual construction which depends upon descriptive accuracy as well as a heightened imagination. Masaoka Shiki (1867-1902), another master of haiku, felt strongly that words should reflect the image before one in order to create what he called "a sketch of life" (Beichman, 1986, p. 54). This sketch should be composed in the moment between perception and thought; in other words, before the brain becomes fully engaged. Shiki also taught his students to compose as many drafts as possible on a given subject when writing haiku. This seems to echo the writing teacher's admonition to write down everything that comes to mind. Another feature of haiku that appears to lend itself well to the pre-writing process is its universality, or ability to take in all the things of the natural world as subjects. Another feature of haiku that appears to lend itself well to the pre-writing process is its universality, or ability to take in all the things of the natural world as subjects.

### *A Sample Lesson*

The following lesson was designed for Japanese first year university EFL students. It can be completed in two 90-minute class periods; the first day is devoted to writing the poem and the second day to converting the poem into a paragraph. The lesson can be adapted for other levels. In any event, encouragement will be needed, particularly on the first day as students tend to doubt their ability to compose anything significant.

#### *Day One*

1. Have students brainstorm words to describe each season. Since season words are an integral part of haiku, this is a good time to talk about the important role of nature in the poem. Brainstorming can be done by writing the seasons on the board one at a time and asking the students to write down the first word that comes to mind. A list should then be made either on the board or in the students' notebooks (see Higginson, 1985, for a list of about 600 season words and phrases in both Japanese and English).
2. Put the students into small groups. Then show them a photograph or print of a natural scene using pictures culled from magazines or old calendars, or ask the students to bring in their own pictures. Also, this could be a nice opportunity for an outdoor excursion. In any case, ask the students to once again write down words that describe the picture and their feelings associated with the scene.
3. Provide the students with an example of a haiku in order to explain its form (three lines), and content (description of a scene from nature using concrete language). Depending upon the students' level, the teacher might want to introduce more difficult aspects of the poem such as juxtaposition (the internal comparison of images), ellipsis (suggestion through understatement), or *kireji* (the cutting word or caesura). A good poem to use as a model would be Basho's famous haiku about the frog. Japanese know the poem by heart, and its surface features (depending upon the translation) compare favorably with the linear progression of most paragraphs. Also, there is an abundance of translations in English from which to choose (see Sato, 1983).
4. Ask the students to write the first and second lines of a haiku using their word lists from Parts 1 and 2. Urge the students to use clear,

simple language. Students can either work alone or in groups. I have found it beneficial to have students work in pairs for this part.

5. Have the students look at the picture or observe the scene again, considering the following two questions: (1) How does the picture/scene make you feel? (2) What does the picture/scene make you think about? The students need to have an emotional response to the scene because without one there really isn't a poem. This response should be conveyed, however subtly, to the reader. Then ask the students to write the third line of the poem by themselves.
6. At this point the students might want to share what they have written with others. As the class will most likely be working with the same photos or from similar physical stimuli, the students tend to be interested in what others have written. Nevertheless, this should be voluntary.

### *Day Two*

The paragraph to be written here is expository or descriptive.

1. Present the students with a model of a paragraph based upon a haiku. You might want to compose your own paragraph from the haiku you used in Part 3 on Day One. or use an example written by a student. (See the appendix for some examples from my classes).
2. Discuss some of the differences between Japanese and English rhetoric, particularly how these differences pertain to the haiku they have written and the paragraph they are about to write. This discussion should be limited to how these differences help shape the two forms. It should be emphasized that the paragraph will be their explanation of the poem. This would also be a good time to review sentence development and paragraph organization.
3. Order is more important in the paragraph than the haiku, so the teacher might want to help students with this transition. The teacher could also show how haiku writing is similar to other pre-writing techniques, such as outlining or list-making.
4. Subsequent drafting and peer editing should provide students with enough opportunities to polish their work.
5. Once again, sharing is a natural way of bringing closure. Poetry in particular is made to be spoken, but class or department publications are also fun. Likewise, student-generated collages or haiku contests can elicit a lot of creativity.

### Conclusion

Like all poetry, haiku is essentially ambiguous and suggests more than it states. What is suggested then becomes the basic idea for the paragraph. When turning a haiku into a paragraph, the writer clears away ambiguity through explanation. Thus, the paragraph becomes the writer's interpretation of the reality of the poem. This process involves the use of pre-writing and revising strategies as two vital components of good writing practice. Another plus for haiku is that their brevity forces a deeper, more disciplined approach to language (Higginson, 1985). Brevity requires the poet to leave out unnecessary grammatical words and connectives. These are often the parts of speech which give Japanese learners of English the most difficulty. Moreover, the sentence fragments or phrases that make up the poem will later be used in the paragraph. Finally, the success of writing a poem in a foreign language will undoubtedly have a positive effect on students' confidence (see Hirose & Sasaki, 1994).

The idea that poetry can be the basis of rhetorical instruction is not something new. In the West such a pedagogical approach can properly be dated to the first century AD, when the Roman rhetorician Quintilian spoke of the utility of turning poetry into prose. In those days literary language was seen as the foundation of good communication. This strong connection between poetry and rhetoric continued through the Renaissance, when poetic analysis informed writing pedagogy. In the first colleges of colonial America, students learned to write by reading Latin and Greek, a good percentage of which was poetry. Even in the earlier part of this century, literary texts were used as material for analysis in order to teach writing. Hence, the introduction of haiku to the process of paragraph writing might very well be seen as a cross-cultural variation of this tradition.

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*John Esposito* has taught EFL in Japan for six years. He is currently a doctoral student at the University of Colorado at Boulder.

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**Appendix: Haiku and Explanatory Paragraphs Written by the Author's Japanese EFL Students**

*A beautiful sandy beach  
A little turtle under an evening glow  
Moves alone to a new world*

It is the sight of a beautiful sandy beach which I have never seen before. A little turtle who came into existence just now tries to walk to an unknown world (ocean) under an evening glow. From now on, I think that I will try to come to the unknown and new world with my hope by myself.

(T. E.)

*In the winter woods  
Many trees are standing silent  
My heart feels loneliness*

I was walking in the winter woods. The cold wind was blowing. And it was snowing. The winter woods are very silent. No noise. I noticed that many animals are hibernating. And I noticed that there are only many trees. Many trees are standing silent. The silence made me think of loneliness.

(T. M.)

*The clouds in the clear sky  
Float in the wind  
Unsettled like people's minds*

When I was walking cold outside, on the spur of the moment I looked at the sky. It was so clear, blue, and beautiful. There are many white clouds. The clouds made me think of my memories, promises with somebody a long time ago because we all share this sky. And I noticed that the state of clouds is not everlasting. The clouds made me think of people's unsettled minds.

(M. Y.)