

# [Remembrance] The thirty-minute doors: Sue Dymoke's research on poetry writing pedagogy and its impact on Japan (in English)

Yuka NAKAI

(Department of Early Childhood and Elementary Education)

Keywords: teaching poetry writing, UK, comparative language teaching, remembrance, Sue Dymoke

Because this paper aims to reach both Japanese and English readers, a Japanese version of the same content has been published simultaneously.

## 1. Introduction



Fig.1 Dr Sue Dymoke

Sue Dymoke (hereafter referred to as Sue), a leader in international poetry-writing research, loved poetry. She graduated from the University of Nottingham, received a postgraduate certificate of education (PGCE) with distinction and completed her PhD at the University of Nottingham in 2000. After teaching in secondary schools, she was a Reader in Education at the University of Leicester, becoming an Associate Professor at Nottingham

Trent University in 2019, during which time she battled illness and constantly tried to fill herself 'with creative thinking and reading' (September 2016, from an email from Sue).

On 13 June 2023, Sue passed away. It was a month after I embarked on a new collaborative research project with her in April of the same year, and a month after we had agreed to meet again in November. Thanks to Sue's strong support, my research in the ten years since completing my PhD on the teaching of poetry writing in the UK has been full of new stimuli and challenges.

This paper documents the impact of Sue's research and practice on teaching poetry writing in Japan and the 10-year journey with her.

## 2. 30-minute door: the beginning

"I can meet you for half an hour". I remember this message in the first email I received from Sue in February 2013: It was a few days after I submitted my doctoral thesis, 'Theory and Practice of Teaching Poetry Writing in the UK', to Hiroshima University and passed the final defence. At the time, the only people who had read my doctoral thesis about the UK were Japanese researchers. This was a reply to an email I sent suddenly, hoping to have it evaluated by researchers in the UK. She added in her email that she was pleased that there

were other researchers in distant Japan who were also interested in teaching poetry. Two weeks later, a '30-minute interview' was conducted at the University of Leicester. It was also the starting point for my own research over the next decade to date and an opportunity for Japanese school education to encounter Sue Dymoke's practice of teaching writing poetry.

### 3. Encountered as 'UK research'

#### 1) Poetry writing in an assessment-driven curriculum

I first encountered Sue Dymoke's research and practice in 2008 in a survey through *English in Education*, a British academic English language teaching journal. As a first-year master's student at the time, I was just beginning to conduct research of a sort and needed to ascertain what kind of research on teaching poetry writing had developed in the UK. Returning from 2008, the most recent issue at the time, to 1963, the first issue, I explored 'how teaching poetry writing was conceived in the changing educational context of the UK and how it has been positioned within English language teaching in the UK to date' (Nakai, 2012, p.144).

Her paper (Dymoke, 2001), was among the 55 papers I referenced in Nakai (2012). I first researched and discussed Dymoke (2001) in 2008 and, after several revisions, published it in my 2012 paper. I note Dymoke's (2001) place in it as follows:

Since the introduction of the NC<sup>1)</sup> in 1989, Dymoke (2001) has attempted to position poetry-writing teaching in response to the historical situations. In other words, she argued about seeking a place for writing poetry in the new curriculum. The introduction of GCSEs<sup>2)</sup> and the establishment of a new NC required assessment to follow a system corresponding to such an education system. Areas without

established methods of assessment would inevitably be subsumed as a garnish in the trend towards providing teaching in other areas where assessment is required, and the absence of teaching poetry writing, as seen in the 1990s, signifies such a backdrop. While there were substantial assessments of prose in the area of 'writing' in NC at the time, there was no clear assessment of poetry writing. From this perspective, Dymoke (2001) attempted to construct an assessment method for teaching poetry that is consistent with the NC system. (Nakai, 2012, p.148; Notes added.)

I discussed Dymoke's (2001) research, which challenged the place of poetry writing in the UK's robust examination system. Sue's research interests were predicated on her own background in poetry, having been exposed to it from an early age. Moreover, her awareness of the place of poetry writing in the curriculum has always focused on the paucity of research on learning poetry-writing and the perilous place of poetry writing in the curriculum. She continued to work with her poetry-writing teaching research colleague, Dr. Anthony Wilson, in a developmental modelling study of poetry writing. They noted that the social context of learning to write poetry was missing from all educational literature (Dymoke & Wilson, 2020). She determined to situate poetry and poetry-writing in the learning and lives of students and the society in which they lived. Dymoke's (2001) discussion of the problematic nature of 'poetry writing in the curriculum' and her attempt to transform it was part of that mission.

In my research on *the English in Education*, I divided the history of poetry teaching in the UK into a period of prosperity for poetry writing (the 1970s and 1980s), a period of stagnation for poetry writing (1990s), and a period of revival for poetry writing (2000s) (Nakai, 2012, p.147).

Among these, Dymoke (2001) is located between periods II and III, that is, at the turning point of the crisis in teaching poetry-writing theory. Since the introduction of GCSEs in 1985 and NCs in 1988, the UK has become an 'examining nation' and poetry creation, which is not included in examinations, has been clearly disadvantaged compared to prose. In Dymoke (2001), the passage reporting on the case of a student who wrote a poem as an answer to an exam and received a very low grade for 'inappropriate form' even included her indignation (p.33).

## 2) Drafting and Assessing

In 2012, four years later, I encountered her work again. With little over a year left in my PhD program, I set my last research question as a PhD student to assess poetry writing. I discussed Dymoke's (2003) *Drafting and Assessing Poetry* comprehensively at that time. The significance of discussing this book is that it allowed me to draw on her description of the lack of support for teachers who do not feel confident in assessing students' written poetry, I wrote:

As a starting point for a solution, Dymoke attempts to identify the process in poetry writing, particularly by emphasising the concept of 'drafting' rather than 'writing'. This can be considered a practical theory that can be used as a benchmark when trying to observe learning emerging within the writing process in teaching poetry. (Nakai, 2013, p.31)

I picked up the book in search of the word 'Assessing' because of my research topic on 'assessment'. However, Sue's 'drafting' and 'assessing' changed my own approach to teaching poetry writing. With drafting as a concept and using the theories of American composition educator Donald Graves, she makes the entire writing process - the state of notes not yet in

the form of poetry and the process of writing - a learning target. This 'drafting' seems to be a magic word that reduces the feeling of hesitation towards poetry writing. Drafting, as an entity to make that happen in the classroom, also clarifies what to leave in the notebook and what to share with students (Dymoke, 2003, p.34). The idea was to clarify the specific teaching content regarding what to communicate with students in the classroom. Dymoke (2003) introduced the 'drafts' left by poets as they wrote their poems, not just their finished poems, as a subject for analysis, and how to read their thoughts during writing as part of the teaching material. The following quote is from poet Jackie Kay, whose work Sue frequently introduced in her workshop:

It is not popular with kids in school but they have to learn that if they want to be writers then they have to rewrite, like Beckham practising his free kicks for hours before doing them for real. (Statement in interview from Dymoke, 2003, p.66)

These poets' words, as well as what I also described earlier as 'magic words', drive a certain 'mystique' from poetry and poets. Have you ever received such advice when writing poetry in Japanese schools?

While Sue developed an assessment model to explore possible entry into the assessment system in a test-driven curriculum, she emphasised the importance of situating the assessment itself in the context of students' writing rather than simply assessing their work (Dymoke, 2003; Nakai, 2013). Writing is a personal process. The internal thought processes that arise within each individual student when writing are engaged in inter-personal thought processes by assessing them in a form of 'sharing', connecting each 'draft' to the context of the classroom as a poetry-writing community. The assessment she presented played this role.

I presented the topic of ‘drafting’ and ‘assessment’ to the Japanese Teaching Society of Japan (JTSJ) in May 2012. In March 2013, I published an article introducing Sue Dymoke’s theory to Japan for the first time as “S. Dymoke’s Theory and Practice of Teaching Poetry Writing: A Focus on Draft and Assessment” in the society’s journal, *Kokugokakyouiku* (Japanese Language Teaching), the official journal of the society. One reviewer wrote the following in his review comment:

By introducing and examining Dymoke’s theory and methods, this study seeks to elucidate and develop teaching and assessment methods that teachers can implement. This is unique because few similar studies have been conducted. This can be evaluated as a significant contribution to the teaching of poetry-writing in Japan.

This comment shows how her theory and practice had the potential to bring a new life to Japanese language education research.

#### 4. Trial and error: from 'imported' to 'joint'

##### 1) 2013 to 2017

Simultaneously the ‘30-minute meeting’ that I referred to at the beginning of this study, which was the beginning of this decade of our joint research, came to fruition. At the time, Hiroshima University received a grant to support the formation of a centre of excellence for graduate studies, which enabled me to meet my ‘research subject’, Sue, in person and receive her comments on my research. It was both a reassuring and shocking experience when Sue told me that ‘your insights are not wrong’. As the above peer review comment indicates, at the time, I believed in my research’s novelty and originality, and it was true that it had been evaluated as I believed in Japan. However, it was not new to Sue, that is, to the UK researchers. This was also a moment when I suddenly realised how narrow my perspective was.

However, Sue welcomed the small Japanese study and the sudden visit and envisaged a future together in teaching poetry-writing research linking

Table 1 Steps taken to organise the workshop 2021

Year/month	Progress
March 2013	30-minute discussion at the University of Leicester
April 2014	Attempts to visit UK schools for 'empirical research' failed
June 2014	Reunion at NATE (National Association of Teaching English) @ Bristol
July 2014	Started considering applying for a research grant to the DAIWA Foundation
February 2015	Visit University of Leicester and observe classes
June 2015	DAIWA Foundation rejection
July 2015	Apply for support for young researchers at Hiroshima University
September 2015	Hiroshima University Research Support for Young Researchers not accepted (commented that the application misunderstood the nature of 'international research')
October 2015	Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (Research for Young Scientists B) application
April 2016	Visit Nottingham, visit Bromley House Library and meet with partner author David Belbin. Confirmed a workshop in Japan in April 2017.
May 2016	Workshop postponed due to Sue's health condition
July 2017	Attend to Sue and Anthony Wilson's research workshop on 'Poetry Creative Development' at Shared English @ New Castle
September 2017	Resume planning for the workshop
December 2017	'Workshop and seminar for poetry and creative writing' at Hiroshima University

Japan and the UK. It was also at this time that she proposed that we work together on an experiential research exchange using workshops. However, it was not until December 2017, when we held a week-long “Poetry & Creative Writing Workshop Seminar: Collaborative research on 21st Century Poetry Pedagogy” at Hiroshima University, that this became a reality. This was approximately five years after meeting Sue in 2013.

Looking back, I feel frustrated by my inability to conduct research and use English. However, I believe that it is important to record the progress made towards new methods of comparative language education in Japan. Therefore, I examine the exchanges leading up to the 2017 workshop (Table 1).

We organised a workshop after many attempts and accumulated several failures. Although it took approximately five years, the realisation of the “experience-based research exchange” was attributed to Sue's depth of understanding, her warm interest in Japan and her strong love for poetry.

## 2) Poetry and creative writing workshop & seminar

We recorded details of the Poetry and Creative Writing Workshop Seminar held over three days, from 12-14 December 2017, in Nakai and Dymoke (2019). At this seminar, Japan first encountered the concept of ‘creative risk taking’.

Drawing on Captain James T. Kirk's line from the science fiction film *Star Trek*, ‘to seek out strange new worlds... new life and new civilisations, to boldly go where no (one) has gone before’, Sue introduced creative risk-taking, explaining that ‘Poetry can give young writers place and space to take risks with language and ideas’. Nakai and Dymoke (2019), Nakai (2020), and Dymoke and Nakai (2021) continued to explore the concept,

drawing on Giddens' (1999) etymology of ‘risk’, ‘sailing uncharted waters’ (p. 21), which indicates defined as ‘overcoming uncertainty about whether favourable or unfavourable events will occur, or even whether something will occur, to create something new’ (Nakai & Dymoke, 2019). This concept can also be considered consistent with, the aforementioned ‘drafting’.

The three-day workshop seminar was followed by opportunities for Sue and her partner, author David Belbin to strongly connect with Hiroshima, including trips to Fukuyama Junior and Senior High Attached School at Hiroshima University, the Atomic Bomb Museum, and Miyajima Island. At Fukuyama Junior and Senior High School, they read

### What they left behind

A lunchbox

A watch

An artificial eye

An anonymous vase

A personal seal

A national flag

A train pass

A bank book

A child's dress

A wooden sandal

A belt buckle

A pair of trousers

Her uniform

His tricycle

Her daughter's hair

Noburu Sunada's canteen

Futoshi Tanimoto's mess kit

His mess kit cover

Sentaro Akinobu's binoculars  
for viewing cherry blossoms  
on Hijiyama Hill

Sue Dymoke (from the collection: *What They Left Behind*, Shoestring Press, 2018).

Fig.2 Sue Dymoke, *What They Left Behind*

poems and novels and observed poetry classes. Among other things, she took strong interest in the Ogura Hyakunin Isshu class titled 'Karuta: a frenetic poetry game' on her blog and posted about it (Dymoke, 2018a).

It is still fresh in our memories that Japanese Prime Minister Kishida invited heads of state and government to the Atomic Bomb Museum for the G7 Summit in 2023, and its news footage reminded me that Sue, David, and I visited the museum. After quietly touring the museum, Sue hugged me and said, "It must have been hard for you" as we left the museum entrance. Sue wrote a poem (Figure 2): The title of this poem, *What They Left Behind*, was published in 2018 in a poetry collection with the same title.

After leaving Hiroshima, Sue and David continued to Kobe, Kyoto, and Kanazawa. Sue's poem 'Oranges', about the 'Beni Madonna' mandarin oranges from Ehime that she tasted on the Shinkansen, and 'At Ryoanji Temple', about their time in Kyoto are also included in the collection *What They Left Behind* (Dymoke, 2018b). These poems evoke the Japanese atmosphere she felt, and the excitement in her heart overflowed into her words. After reading them, I realised that poetry can connect time and space with words. It is clear that her life was based on poetry and words.

The week I spent with Sue and David in Hiroshima was a dream that I realised. We conducted creative writing workshops during the day and immersed ourselves in poetry readings in front of the fireplace (a video showing the fireplace on the screen) in the evening. We talked a lot with fellows who love poetry, creative writing and education. In between, I spent every day of the week translating Sue and David's workshop and seminar material into Japanese and translating the poetry lesson plans at the attached school into English without sleeping. Moreover, although it

might have drained my energy, the time I spent translating was also a pleasure. I even thought that the days I spent talking about poetry, Hiroshima, and education-forgetting my fatigue-were rewards for all my research.

In organising this week, I had in mind my experience with the Arvon Foundation's weeklong residential poetry workshop in the UK, which I first visited in 2011 (Nakai, 2016). I knew from my doctoral research that Arvon significantly influenced many writers and teachers in the UK, but I did not realise at the time that Sue herself was one of them. Sue's obituary, published in *The Guardian* on 17 July 2023 stated that 'Her writing was fully ignited when she attended an Arvon Foundation writing course in 1986 with Ian McMillan as her tutor (Almond, 2023).' It was only when I read the obituary that I realised that I had attended the same Arvon course 25 years after she had attended it, following her footsteps. I felt happy to know that I had unconsciously followed her, but regretful that I had wanted to talk more with her about the Arvon experience.

Sue wrote the following in her blog about the week (Dymoke, 2018a).

Observing the game was just one highlight in a fantastic visit to Japan as a guest of the University of Hiroshima (funded by the Japanese Society for the Promotion of Science). During the visit I also led workshops on poetry writing and pedagogy, gave a poetry reading and a research keynote entitled *Finding, Writing and Researching Poetry*. I met enthusiastic Masters students, Junior High school students and teachers, teacher educators, researchers and poets who were all keen to try out new approaches, share writing in progress and talk about poetry. In talking and working with them I learned a good deal about the place of poetry in the Japanese

curriculum and about Japanese poets. The trip was filled with many great poetic experiences. I hope it will mark the beginning of new poetry research work with Dr Yuka Nakai and her colleagues.

It was a great feeling for colleagues to share the same vision. As Sue wrote, the 2017 visit was not the final 'dream realisation', but the first step towards it, the 'beginning of research'. The poetry-writing materials for Japanese teachers used in this workshop are available on her blog (Dymoke, 2018c).

### 3) First co-authored paper

We started our first joint writing project to record the impact of the workshop, the very 'first step' towards the future we were looking at together. This study was the same as that of Sue's first Japanese publication by Nakai and Dymoke (2019). This is also my first international co-authored publication, albeit in Japanese.

While writing the paper, the endless back-and-forth between English and Japanese—translating the workshop participants' questionnaire results into English, analysing them, translating the analysis into Japanese, and translating the discussion into English and Japanese—required a tremendous amount of effort. Simultaneously, I had a new and exciting experience. Our aim was to extract concepts that could be explored jointly in English and Japanese and drew the following four conclusions (Nakai & Dymoke, 2019, pp. 107-108).

- ( i ) Become more aware of one's own language.
- ( ii ) Verbalise ideas through ideation exercises
- ( iii ) Increase Ownership and independence
- ( iv ) Take creative risks by exercising freedom under conditions

This study successfully proposes the importance of developing creative learning of poetry with

these perspectives at its core. Unlike European languages, Japanese differs from English in its roots and writing and phonological systems. It was a time when I was becoming convinced that if we could find common pillars between these two languages, we would be able to develop poetry writing learning that could be realised in any country if there was 'translation'.

### 4) The National Poetry Day's Night

As exchanges between the public and private sectors continued, the next opportunity came when I moved to a new position at the University of Shimane and became a member of the JTSJ's Research Section Committee for three years. In 2019, JTSJ approved our plan to collaborate in a poetry creation workshop as an open lecture organised by JTSJ. The workshop took place at the Sapporo Conference, scheduled for May 2021.

At the time, I was re-visiting Leicester and Nottingham in search of the whereabouts of 'creative risk-taking' among the four perspectives mentioned earlier, attending Sue's workshops, observing poetry lessons in secondary schools and interviewing our research collaborator, Kayleigh Miller. Thus, I sought a breakthrough in establishing my next research project.

I was invited to Sue and David's home in October 2019, when I visited Leicester and Nottingham to discuss the upcoming second workshop. I also experienced a firsthand national poetry event. I first learned about National Poetry Day through an *English in Education* survey I conducted in 2008. In Sue's 'Editorial' for a special poetry education issue in Issue 3 in 2007, she saw a bright future for this poetry-oriented trend. People cherished National Poetry Day more than I had imagined; classes celebrated and incorporated poetry into their teaching. Moreover, the city was full of poems.

Another treasured time was the night in

Nottingham, when I spent the entire day immersed in poetry, laughter, and talking with Sue and David, surrounded by poetry, their love for poetry and the many flowers and trees in the garden that Sue loved so much. Sue's poem 'Perseids' (Dymoke, 2019, p.61) from the poetry collection *SPACED OUT*, which she showed to me in the drawing room at that time, was a beautiful and concrete poem that reminded me of the night sky during a meteor shower. We actually see the Perseid meteor shower in mid-summer, July, and August, but on that night, in deep autumn, as I drifted off to sleep, the stars in Sue's poem was playing on the back of my eyelids.

It was the last night that I met Sue face-to-face and heard her voice in person.

### 5) Joint Online Workshop

A few months after visiting Nottingham, the COVID-19 pandemic had spread worldwide by the end of 2019. In Japan, people were not allowed to leave their prefecture, let alone the country. In the UK, the lockdown made it difficult for people to leave their homes.

The JTSJ Shimane conference, scheduled for May 2020, had also been postponed with no clear future in sight, and the world had completely changed. The joint workshop planned for Sapporo was discontinued.

However, the wisdom and curiosity of the members of the Research Section Committee of JTSJ at the time led us to explore the possibility of holding an online research conference. Although it was impossible to invite Sue to Sapporo, the online workshop "Tinkering with words, playing with words: how to stimulate drafting, sharing and assessing poetry writing?" using the Zoom Meeting and YouTube Live Streaming software.

That was in May 2021. Here, we present the details from Dymoke and Nakai (2022). When planned before the pandemic, the workshop was

intended only for school staff and conference participants in the Hokkaido area, with an expected audience of approximately 20 people. However, by hosting the workshop online, our second workshop reached more than 700 people from four countries - Switzerland, Singapore, the UK, and Japan - including YouTube Live Streaming and archived viewers.

The ideas we offered in the workshops included: 'free writing', a warm-up in which participants continued to write words that came to mind from a single word ('journey'), 'mapping techniques', in which participants discussed their memories of a journey to a place for the first time using pictures and text, the 'speaking objects', which gave voice to objects placed in various solitudes, 'found poetry', in which participants selected words from existing texts and rearranged them to reconstruct a poem and "sharing" which is a poem assessment activity conducted among the participants. One of the main features common to all these ideas is the creation of a word bank: activities in which that participants squeeze out of their own heads in time, activities that flood words as they talk about memories, activities that give objects a story and generate words and existing texts. Writers (whether children or adults) who are not used to writing poetry will surely be confused, stop and think when handed a blank paper and being told, 'Now write a poem', 'Now write a poem about your journey'. They must consider the words they are going to use and the choice and placement of those words. In other words, the participants were asked what to write about and how to write it simultaneously. However, free writing and mapping techniques allow them to increase their own stock of 'words to use' using memories, associations and recollections without having to worry about placement and selection. The workshop participants enjoyed talking about their past memories and hoarding the words that

overflowed from them one after another. They certainly enjoyed the activities themselves and kept their brains warm.

I incorporate these ideas into the classes I conduct for prospective teacher students at Shimane Prefectural University every year, where I work. A student from the 2023 course wrote the following comment about the writing workshop. It is a bit long, but I quote here with her permission.

I had to write poems in Japanese language classes in elementary and junior high schools, but I really disliked them. I was always in pain when I was suddenly given a theme, asked to write a poem within a given time limit, and then had to present it or post it on a class bulletin board. However, this class is completely different. We began with a warm-up and wrote various poems. I enjoyed the feeling that I could not stop writing as more content came to mind. I realised that the idea of trying several exercises because one never knows which one will work for a person, and of trial and error because there is no guarantee that one method will work for everyone, is very important for a teacher. I thought that it was important in life, as a human being not to be stuck in one concept. Additionally, what I remember best from this class were Nakai-sensei's words, "It's okay to leave the draft as it is". These words doubled my motivation for writing poetry.

'Nakai-sensei's words' as written here by the student are, of course, from my own mouth, but are in fact unmistakably 'Sue Dymoke's words'. Her practice and the many words she leaves behind will therefore reduce resistance to poetry among students who want to become schoolteachers in Japan, and this experience will surely be shared with their children in the future. However, this may be a lengthy process. Moreover, we do not

know the number of years it will take. However, we can look forward to a future in which teachers and students in many Japanese classrooms will spend their days looking forward to poetry-writing lessons.

## 6) New Research Project: digital space development

The 2021 online collaborative workshop provided me with an opportunity to start a new research project with Sue. This is the development of Found Poetry web application.

*Found Poetry* involves taking words from an existing text and writing poems with them. Like collages of words, original texts from a wide range of genres, such as junk mail, web news, advertisements, recipes and letters, can be used to create new poems by freely selecting and integrating words (Dymoke, 2016; Nakai & Dymoke, 2019; Dymoke & Nakai, 2022). Its main feature is that writers 'find' (i.e., reconstruct) poems by picking up words from those texts and rearranging and slightly reshaping them, paying attention to the sound, form and meaning of the words, rather than 'making' poems on a blank paper.

Sue first introduced this concept in Japan at a workshop in Hiroshima, Japan, in 2017. We printed and handed out a magazine article (Gerlis, 2017), introducing the art exhibition published on the *FT Weekend*. The participants selected words by drawing lines directly on the copy with a marker or pen. However, it is difficult to deliver the original text online and have it in hand to prepare it immediately on the spot. Therefore, we excluded this idea from the 2021 workshop, which was held online.

However, we also shared the common recognition that the original text was highly effective as a 'word bank' and that it was an ideal entry point for

poetry writing, reducing writers' resistance, and increasing their confidence in writing. Sue has also long pointed out the compatibility of found poetry with ICT (Dymoke, 2003, 2016). These ideas led us to conclude that if Found Poetry could be used in a digital environment, it would expand the possibilities of writing poetry in schools today.

I took this idea as an indication and developed a web application (<https://www.foundpoetry.net>) in cooperation with blueOmega, an IT company in Matsue where the University of Shimane is located. The pilot version (FPW 1.2) was first released at our online workshop in 2021 and has been continuously improved to the current version (FPW. 3.1) (Table 2).

We aimed to establish this web application as a 'portal' (Gee, 2004) for a digital poetry writing space linking Japan and the UK. Accordingly, we conducted a workshop and have continued to improve the system. While collaborating on a paper on the development process, we launched a new

research project, 'Developing a digital space for poetry writing to support sustainable peer learning' (JSPS Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research (C)) in April 2023.

We have submitted the co-authored paper to several journals. However, it has always been rejected and rewritten. My narrow vision due to insufficient knowledge of references and poor English language skills has also slowed us down. In the face of failure, we continued to make further improvements with the support of Professor Clare Wood of the Nottingham Trent University, a psychologist studying digital education.

In parallel, the world has loosened restrictions on behaviour to combat COVID-19, and domestic travel has increased. With new funding and a new research plan, we agreed to meet again in Nottingham in November 2023. This is a spring of hope for a new future.

**5. 30-minute door: the closing**

Table2 The history of the web app

Date	Version	Update contents
9 April 2021	FPW.Dev	Prototype completed
13 April 2021		Domain acquisition
10 May 2021	FPW1.0	Server transition completed and pilot version completed
20 May 2021	FPW1.1	"About Found poetry" page update
26 May 2021	FPW1.2	Added the function to delete text
29 May 2021		Pilot version released
15 June 2021	FPW2.0	System rebuilt, URL change
13 July 2021	FPW2.1	Fixed version released (blank line, indent adjustment)
2 September 2021	FPW2.2	Fixed text highlight colour
6 September 2021	FPW2.3	Fixed text positioning (left justified instead of centred)
26 November 2021	FPW2.4	Fixed account registration procedure
7 January 2022	FPW 3.0	Smartphone- and tablet-compatible version released Added comment function
1 July 2023	FPW 3.1	Added CSV registration function, fixed version released

'I should be okay to talk with you for 30 mins'. I received an email on 4 May 2023. Ten years have passed since I first received Sue's email. The text in the email was identical to that received. We agreed to discuss our future research plans on Zoom, but Sue did not feel well and suggested shortening the time. After reading the email, I suggested that we cancel the meeting and decide on the bare minimum by email only, to which she agreed. I still think it was the right decision, of course, but it meant cancelling the 'last half hour' of time with her.

After we had agreed on a specific date to meet in November and the hotel for my stay via email, Sue's next email contained her last words to me. "That sounds like a good plan! Looking forward to seeing you again already". I closed the email application thinking that I would reply once I had packed my flight tickets. I regret this fact.

A little over a month later, on 13 June 2023, I finished my class at the university and looked down on my smartphone to find a text message from David titled 'Sue'. It said that Sue came home after her end-of-life treatment, that they had a civil partnership in the beautiful sunshine, and that she had lost consciousness.

It was unexpected. My eyes went blank during the shock. I realised that I had been reading his email and having dropped all my class materials and pens on the floor, so I picked them up and quickly returned them to my office. I opened my computer and began typing replies via email. Holding my hands shaken and wiping away the tears that were flowing, I wrote and erased sentences.

I loved working with her on poetry. I was sure that we would still be able to work together in the future. I hoped to still learn a lot from her and to share a lot of regret that we did not meet online in May, and that I have not been able to respond

to her emails about how much she was looking forward to our reunion. I wrote it in broken English and pressed it to send it. David received my email half an hour after Sue died. "I would have read it to her", he wrote in the email.

## 6. Conclusion

As previously mentioned, it took approximately five years to realise a joint research project, which was first initiated in 2013. The slow progress of the plan since then is attributable to my poor English language skills and a lack of understanding of the international research arena. However, Sue has always been very caring and kind to me who spoke little English and muddled through our conversations with a narrow perspective. Her sense of mission and boundless love for poetry education and research as well as her strong curiosity about everything in the world made this collaboration possible. I feel that these things were naturally transmitted to all the people with whom she came into contact.

Nakai and Dymoke (2019), the report of our 2017 workshop/seminar, was described as an attempt to "go beyond mere international comparisons and the import of cutting-edge teaching methods from abroad to clinical research that develops new teaching methods and practices based on international exchanges" (Katsuta, 2022, p. 107). It took more than six years from the initial idea to the publication of the paper. However, it is safe to conclude that those six years were filled with the suffering and joys of shifting from 'imported research' to 'collaborative research'. David told me in his email that Sue's lucid words were: *I'm so happy I ended my life with a poem. I'm happy.*

Her life was rich in poetry and creativity. As mentioned earlier, she shared with me in her email that she continued to try to fill herself up

with creative thinking and reading as she battled her illness in 2016. Her poetry-writing pedagogy research and practice represented the heart that celebrated and rejoiced in the life of working with poetry. It has continued to influence many countries, starting with the UK, as it has naturally been passed on to teachers and students. It is permissible to state that Japan is one such county.

My mission as a researcher and teacher educator is to uphold the spirit I received from Sue. In both positions, I am still in the process of taking my first steps and honestly, I am not confident about how far I have been able to fully pass on Sue's spirit over the past ten years. However, I hope that I can use the time I have left to continue drawing the world that Sue hoped for and envisioned and challenge myself to a new world.

### Notes:

- 1) The National Curriculum is a set of subjects and standards used by primary and secondary schools in the UK.
- 2) The General Certificate of Secondary Education is an academic qualification in various subjects in the UK.

This study was supported by JSPS KAKENHI (23K02398).

### References

- Almond, D. (2023, July 17). *Sue Dymoke Obituary*. The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2023/jul/17/sue-dymoke-obituary>
- Dymoke, S. (2001). Taking poetry off its pedestal: The place of poetry - writing in an assessment-driven curriculum. *English in Education*, 35(3), 32-41.
- Dymoke, S. (2003). *Drafting and assessing poetry*. SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Dymoke, S. (2016). Integrating Poetry-focused Digital Technology within a Literacy Teacher Education Course. In Kosnik, C., White, S., Beck, C., Marshall, B., Goodwin, A.L., & Murray, J.,(eds.) *Building Bridges*, The Netherlands: Sense Publications, 59-75.
- Dymoke, S. (2018a). *Karuta: a drenetic poetry game*. Sue Dymoke Poetry. <https://suedymokepoetry.com/2018/01/14/karuta-a-frenetic-poetry-game/>
- Dymoke, S. (2018b). *What They Left Behind*. Shoestring Press.
- Dymoke, S. (2018c). *Poetry writing resources for Japanese Teachers*. Sue Dymoke Poetry. <https://suedymokepoetry.com/poetry-writing-resources-for-japanese-teachers/>
- Dymoke, S. (2019). Perseus, In Brian, .M & Carter, J. (2019) *SPACED OUT*, Bloomsbury.
- Dymoke, S. & Nakai, Y. (2022), Tinkering with words, playing with language: how do you stimulate the drafting, the sharing, the assessment of poetry?, *Zenkoku Daigaku Kokugokyouiku Gakkai Kokai kouza booklet 14 Shi wo kaku kotowa oshierareru noka [Japanese Teaching Society of Japan Open booklet: Can poetry writing be taught?]*, 45-59.
- Dymoke, S. & Wilson, A. (2020). Towards a Model of Poetry Writing Development as a Socially Contextualised Process, *Journal of Writing Research*, 9(2), 127-150.
- Gee, J. (2004). *Situated language and learning: A critique of traditional schooling*. London: Routledge.
- Gerlis, M. (2017). The ghost in the art world machine. *FTWeekend*, 9.
- Giddens, A. (1999). *Runaway World*. London: Profile Books.
- Katsuta, H. (2022). The Implementation of the Science of Reading Instruction for the Japanese Language Classroom, *The Science of Reading*, 63(2), 101-110.
- Nakai, Y. (2012). The Transition of Teaching

Writing Poetry in the UK : Examination of the English in Education, *Bulletin of the Graduate School of Education, Hiroshima University. Part. II, Arts and science education. 61*, 143-152.

Nakai, Y. (2013). S. Dymoke's Theory and Practice of Teaching Poetry Writing : A Focus on Draft and Assessment, *Kokugokakyouiku [Japanese Language Education]*, 73, 31-38.

Nakai, Y. (2016). Developing the Learning Through Workshop-Styled Teaching Poetry Writing : A Focus on the Effort of the Arvon Foundation, *Hiroshima journal of school education*, 22, 65-77.

Nakai, Y. (2019). Shi wo sousaku suru toiu koto [What means to write poetry], In Shirasaka, Y. and Katsuki, M. (ed). *Kodomo no ronri de tsukuru kokugo no jugyo [Japanese language classes created by child's logic: writing]*, Tokyo: Meijitoshosha.

Nakai, Y. (2022). Kokugoka ni okeru shisousaku shido no kanousei toha [The possibility of poetry writing in Japanese language education], *Kouikukagaku kokugo kyouiku [Educational science Japanese Language Education]*, Meiji toshosha.

Nakai, Y. and Dymoke, S. (2019). Collaborative research between UK and Japan on poetry writing pedagogy in the global age: Trialling poetry writing workshop techniques. *The Science of Reading*. 2019, 61(2), 97-109.

## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank *Editage* ([www.editage.jp](http://www.editage.jp)) for English language editing.

I am also deeply grateful to Dr. David Belbin for allowing me to publish this paper and proofreading it. His message, 'You sum up Sue's philosophy of poetry education very well.', is most encouraging for future research.