POETRY COMPOSITION AND REVISION:  
AN EXPERT NOVICE STUDY

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Abstract

Expertise in poetry reading and writing have been examined in previous studies using think-aloud protocol analysis of expert and novice participants. These studies have revealed important information about the way in which expert readers understand poetry and the way in which expert writers compose and revise expository pieces of writing. However, there are no previous studies that examine how expert and novices compare in terms of poetry composition. The current study confronts this gap by analysing the how expert and novice poets engage in a task of poetry revision and composition. Analysis of think-aloud protocols indicates that expert poets think more about processes of recursive revision and strategies for creative engagement, than do novice poets. In addition, issues of syntax and semantics drive the revision process for experts, whereas novices are concerned with issues of whether the poem conforms to expectations of poetic form and poetic textual devices.
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Introduction

Study Overview
The task of a poet “to give expressive form to specific and authentic states of being human” (Saunders, 2006) can result in texts of surprising novelty and beauty. Many readers of poetry value the genre because of this unique expression, as it convenes with potent language, striking images or the allusions of metaphor. However, to be a competent and appreciative reader of poetry one has to interpret formal textual devices such as figurative language and to be aware of the need to employ conventions of understanding poetic text that are complex and require experience and practice (Peskin, in press). The reader of poetry must anticipate the need to apply polyvalent interpretations (Schmidt, 1989) to the text, such as resisting automatic or literal meanings, and to search for connections between symbols and content. While, as Eva-Wood describes, “poets beckon their readers to enter a verbal labyrinth, to journey and explore, to excavate meaning” (Eva-Wood, 2004, p. 182) this task is formidable and studies of poetic literacy expertise have found that even students who have been exposed to instruction in poetry at the university level can still resist engaging with the complexity of these texts (Earthman, 1992).

Yet, along with the research that examines and differentiates the complex skills needed to appreciate and understand poetry, comes the evidence that it is possible to delineate the process of poetic literacy into components that can be applied to educational programs. Genre recognition, genre-related expectations, interpretation of textual devices, and using conventions of understanding poetic text, have been shown to improve with training (Hanauer, 2001; Carminati, Stabler, Roberts & Fischer, 2006)) and with years of poetic instruction (Peskin, in press). Affective
prompting has also been shown to increase interest in poetry and correlate with the identification of more poetic devices than students not so prompted to think about their affective reaction to a poetic text (Eva-Wood, 2004). Explicit instruction of symbolic interpretation has been shown to lead to higher levels of symbolic interpretation and enjoyment of given poems (Peskin, Allen, & Wells-Jopling, in press).

Returning to the opening line describing the task of the poet, however, a question remains untouched by these investigations. What is the poet doing to give unique expressive form “to specific and authentic states of being human”? Is this question a companion to: “what must the reader of poetry do”? If that were the case, then poetic composition might be based on a combination of developing an understanding of the genre, an understanding of how to employ textual devices such as repetition, alliteration, and rhythm, and an understanding of how to construct symbolic and metaphoric layers of meaning. This possibility does not appear to be supported by evidence of poetic process provided by poets when asked to describe their writing practice. Bill Bissett, an established Canadian poet, describes his writing as “a series of paths, a series of entanglements and a series of disclosures and a series of freedoms, of ‘letting go-isms’....” (personal communication, 2009). A description of associative, uncontrolled compositional freedom, and a sense of mystery or magic, is repeated often by poets discussing their craft. For instance, Lorna Crozier writes that “at the heart of poetry is something very primitive and close to magic.” (Bowling, 2004, p. 152). Dennis Lee describes how he senses “the world as a polyrhythmic process – a dance of simultaneous energies. And the poem has to mime that process – not by describing it, but by re-enacting its sprawl and twiddle and ache...” (Bowling, 2004, p. 124)
Earl Birney comments that he starts a poem “out of a yen to set down a momentary insight, a temporary ‘truth’ relating somehow to (him). But what turns out is always different.... ranging beyond the ‘reality’ that triggered it, and rumbling into a sort of dance with words” (Birney 1977, p.9)

These descriptions of the poetic process indicate that poetry may be as mysterious and confounding to write as some believe it is to read. Yet, the studies on expertise through the use of think-aloud protocol analysis, have penetrated the complex task of what it means to read, understand and appreciate poetry. It is with this in mind, that the current study undertakes an investigation into the immediate cognitive processes that accompany poetry composition, by analysing think-aloud protocols of expert and novice poets engaged in a task of composition.

Expertise has been defined as the nature of skill possessed by an individual who has reached a high level of performance within a particular domain, and has engaged in deliberate practice and motivated engagement within this area for at least ten years (Ericsson, 2002; Ericsson and Smith, 1991). Deliberate practice is considered to be “the intentional repeated execution...of skills directly relevant to improving the performance in question” (Weisberg, 2006, p.761). The comparison of experts to novices within specific domains, as they think aloud about their performance, can yield useful information about the distinctive ways in which less and more skilled individuals perform (Ericsson and Smith, 1991). The study of expertise has been undertaken in areas as diverse as chess, sports, and teaching practices in different subject areas (Ericsson and Smith, 1991; Bruer, 1993). Think-aloud data collection consists of recording participants as they discuss their performance, in an immediate and uncensored way. The transcriptions of these monologues are then analysed for reoccurring themes, ideas or strategies. This analysis can generate information
about the differences between various expert and novice groups, such as differences in understanding, storing, recalling and manipulating knowledge (Brer, 1993; Reitman Olson and Biolsi, 1991).

A review of the research in the area of poetry composition indicates that a study comparing the cognitive processes of expert and novice poets would represent an entry point into a completely unexplored area. Previous investigations of poetry composition have been limited to summaries of interviews of poets (Tobin, 2004; Bowling, 2002; Wilson, 1954) or are found in treatises by poets aimed at explaining their craft ( Saunders, 2006; Stafford, 1970; Hughes, 1967; Heany, 1995; Ioannou, 2000; 2008). Previous cognitive studies of composition that employ theories to inform empirical models are limited to the exploration of expository, as opposed to creative, writing tasks and revisions of previously composed work (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987; Bereiter, Burtis & Scardamalia, 1998; Scardamalia & Bereiter, 1986; Flower & Hayes, 1981; 1985; 1986; Hayes, Flower, Shriver, Stratam & Carey, 1987; Hayes & Flower, 1987).

Both the retrospective and introspective accounts of poets explaining their writing process, in addition to the cognitive investigations of expository writing, reveal compelling facets of the role of writing within human experience, and how humans experience the writing process. However, there appears to be no previous attempt to provide empirical evidence of how poetry is written. An emphasis on how refers to the need for a valid and reliable method of examining the thought processes of poets as they write, and is not restricted to a reflection or discussion of their craft. An emphasis on poetry refers to the need for theories about how poetry, as distinct from other forms of writing, is composed. The present study proposes to confront the absence of a theoretically based empirical investigation into poetry composition. The first step of this process
will be to review research in areas that may provide relevant theoretical constructs about both poetry and composition processes. These areas include those mentioned above, such as expertise in expository writing and revision, as well as collections of interviews with poets. Other areas will also be explored, such as creativity research and studies of poetic literacy, to investigate the components of novelty and poetic textual devices thought to be what makes poetry a unique form of writing.

**Literature Review**

**Cognitive theories of composition and revision**

Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) have examined the way in which skilled and unskilled writers approach and complete different writing tasks, using think-aloud methods of data collection. The results of these studies have led the authors to develop a theory of writing composition based on a distinction between two kinds of knowledge processing. The *knowledge-telling model* describes a pattern of thinking that occurs within the minds of novice and unskilled writers. According to this model, unskilled writers respond to a writing task by examining their memories for information that might relate to the topic, evaluating the appropriateness of this information, writing a first draft, and then revising this draft based on criteria of clarity. In contrast, the *knowledge-transforming model*, which is based on the thought processes of skilled writers, reveals that experienced writers engage in knowledge development and transformation through their writing. While both the skilled and unskilled writers examine their memories or stores of information for content appropriate to the writing task, the flow of this content is bi-directional for the skilled writers. Thus, writing is generated from ideas, but ideas are then further generated from reading and reflecting upon one’s own written words. Thus, in a *knowledge-transforming model*
different pieces of information interface with the goals and requirements of the writing task, to transform the writer’s understanding into new knowledge and discovery about the topic.

Perl (1980), in an examination of the responses of 20 skilled writers asked to talk aloud about a writing exercise, notes that there is a continual “recursive” process that occurs. This process includes reading, writing, asking, assessing, and observing whether the words put down are telling the “right story”. She noted the presence of three different kinds of “backward” movements: those of reading and listening to the words chosen, those which related to reconsiderations of the topic, and those of a more “waiting” nature, in which the writer seems to pause and evaluate whether there is any further resonance or connection that could be brought forth.

This process of revision differs from the process of novice writers. Editing, for experts, involves more than cosmetic considerations, or changes based on clarity of expression. Rather, it encompasses changes in actual beliefs and ideas, and it is through the revisions that the content of the piece may itself come to be understood by the writer. As Perl summarizes, in the voice of a writer: “once we have worked at shaping, through language, what is there inchoately, we can look at what we have written to see if it adequately captures what we intended. Often at this moment discovery occurs...we see in our writing a further structuring of the sense we began with and we recognize that in those words we have discovered something new about ourselves and our topic” (Perl, 1980, p.104).

Expert/novice studies of the cognitive processes underlying revision and composition were conducted by Hayes et al. (1987) and Flower and Hayes (1981). These studies support the theory that the composition of both skilled and unskilled writers demonstrates, to significantly different degrees, three main principles. The first and second principle state that writing is goal-directed and
that these goals are hierarchically organized (Hayes and Flower, 1987). In analysis of think-aloud protocols it was found that writers announce goals to themselves, along with a variety of sub-goals. The third principle describes how these goals are achieved through three processes that are pursued recursively and iteratively: planning or knowledge retrieval, sentence-generating processes, and revision processes. It was found that expert writers engaged in planning or knowledge retrieval that was more dynamic and involved more complex networks whereby goals could be modified and connected in different ways, and strategies could be employed to respond to inadequate knowledge of topic or writing form. It was also found that expert writers spent a greater proportion of the writing time on revision than the novices, and that this revision was directed by concerns about the meaning of the text, rather than more surface level concerns. Expert writers were inclined to focus attention on global levels of the composition when planning a revision, as opposed to local levels, such as particular words or sentences (Hayes and Flower, 1987; Beach, 1976). Similarly, Sommers (1980) found that professional writers described their primary objective when revising as finding the form or shape of their argument; this contrasted to the word level focus of university students. Faigley and Witte (1983) found that experts were more likely to change the meaning through their revisions than novices.

In a task in which participants had to revise a given text, expert writers detected more problems with a text, than novices, in addition to being able to diagnose the problems that they did detect (Hayes et al 1985). This greater ability in both detecting and diagnosing, led Hayes et al (1985) to distinguish between rewriting, a frequent novice activity used to fix a problem without diagnosing it, and revising, an expert strategy which incorporates rewriting according to a diagnosis
of a problem with the text. These expert levels of revision were hypothesized to lead to a general greater flexibility in the writing process.

To summarize, expert expository writers differ from novices in the way they incorporate extensive and complex recursive revision into their compositions. This process involves dynamic goal-setting, and the achieving and re-setting of goals, to transform their knowledge, rather than ‘tell’ what they already know. In addition, these recursive revision processes are meaning driven, and based on the diagnosis rather than the detection of problems in their texts.

Creativity

In the current study of expert and novice poets, a question to be explored is whether expert poets are distinguishable from novice poets by the same processes of revision and knowledge-transforming that are common to expository writers. Two alternatives to this hypothesis are that poetry writing expertise is a different kind of compositional expertise than that developed by expository writers; or, the act of writing poetry is a creative pursuit that is different from one of acquiring expertise, regardless of whether poets engage in similar mastering of their compositional processes as expository writers or not.

In examining the creative process, defined as the goal directed production of novelty, Weisberg (2006) points out that it is important to address whether creativity is a construct that is affected by, or even correlated with, expertise, or whether it is a random endowment, or talent, bestowed upon some individuals and not upon others. If the latter is the case, and if a main component of poetry composition involves moments of creative inspiration and insight, a study comparing expert and novice poets would not be expected to capture a developmental process of a quantitative nature. Rather, it would reveal, as many novice poets may despair, that some
individuals are gifted and some are not. Weisberg (2006) argues, however, that expertise is in fact correlated with high levels of creativity, and that it may facilitate creativity. He supports this argument by providing examples of great historical scientists, artists and composers who reached levels of expertise (Ericsson, 2002; Ericsson and Smith, 1991) at or around the same time as they produced master level creative works. However, he cautions, expertise may not be sufficient for creative achievement. It would thus be important to investigate whether poets demonstrate expertise in writing comparable to expert expository writing, which then facilitates creative moments, or whether expertise in poetry writing is a separate kind of writing expertise altogether.

The description of poetry composition as proposed in the interviews of poets analyzed and presented by Tobin (2004), Bowling (2002) and Wilson (1954) sheds light on this question. The descriptions provided by these studies reveal expert poetry composition to involve looser, more associative versions of the knowledge-transforming model and the recursive revision processes observed in expert expository writers; in this less controlled version, poets find themselves making novel connections between language and experience. In addition, poets spend considerable effort cultivating this kind of associative or uncontrolled writing expertise, and these efforts or strategies embody for them what writing poetry is.

**Poetry writing as a version of compositional expertise**

In a study reported by Wilson (1954), the interviews of 24 American poets who had published extensively and who had established critical followings, were analyzed for common themes and processes. One of the processes Wilson noticed repeatedly was the ‘back and forth’ movement poets engaged in, moving between the requirements of expression and their store of insights and ideas. Wilson (1954) compared this movement to a chemical reaction, in which the first draft is an initial
point in a chain of discoveries. The poem then grows by associations, almost as if autonomous, each image evoking another image. Contained in this element for Wilson are the poets’ discussions of revision. There is a clear similarity here to the skilled expository writer’s revision style as described by Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987), Perl (1980) and Hayes and Flower (1987), but with an added element of looseness or lack of control infused in the process. The poets consider revision a “key creative process” (Wilson, 1954, p.170). As one poet writes, “Writing a poem is mostly revision... (and) in revision, one gets closer to, not further from, the unconscious” (Wilson, 1954, p. 170). Thus there is a process of creative revision whereby the poet arrives at a more authentic version of the poem than initially written. In the same vein, Michael Ondaatje, a Canadian poet, states (Bowling, 2002, p. 33),

“I might start a poem thinking about traffic, but it could end up being about a sparrow, and then I’ll rework it and it will turn into being about something else. For me the poem is discovered during the process of making it.”

Another of the processes the poets of Wilson’s study described was seeing connections between symbols and language, and discovering relatedness between ideas. These descriptions led Wilson to hypothesise that each poem is a kind of unique transaction (Wilson, 1954). American poet Robert Bly describes a certain “leaping” that exists in the heart of poem, which alludes to this transaction. A poet, explains Bly “makes a jump from an object or idea soaked in unconscious substance to an object or idea soaked in conscious psychic substance....Thought of in terms of language, leaping is the ability to associate fast” (Bly, 1975).

Wilson elaborates on this transactional nature by stating how a poet’s experience of a stimulus may represent “a chance symbolizing of ideas and emotions” which is then “connected
also to past experiences” (p. 168). Tobin (2004) reports that experienced poets often rely on the accretion and accumulation of insights, memories, journal fragments and past experiences to propel their writing process into a more creative domain of revision. As Susan Ioannou, a Canadian poet, explains: “my job as a poet is to find the right scraps – the colours, scents, tastes, textures, and sounds – that not simply state, but try to embody an answer” to questions that “come out of nowhere” (Ioannou, 2008, p.172). These connective or transactional processes are comparable to the interfacing between content space and rhetoric space described by Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) in which connections and discovery characterize the expert writing process. In the case of poetry writing and revision, however, there is an added dimension of something uncontrolled and free, leading to novel ‘leaps’ and the connecting of “unconscious” substance or “chance” experience to language.

Poetry composition as a strategy of creative engagement

Examples of quotes from poets are given by Wilson (1954) to illustrate a process of waiting and watching for the occasion to makes a ‘leap’ (p. 168): “keep oneself in readiness for a poem to occur”; “let us be as conscious as possible”; “I seldom search for anything, but let it come to me”.

Such states of readiness and openness are also described by contemporary poets. Michael Ondaatje states (Bowling, 2002, p. 36): “I don’t sit down with an idea or a plan. I sit down to write and see what happens.” Tobin (2004) emphasizes that the more experienced a poet is, the more skilled they report being at controlling, being conscious of, and directing their pursuit of associative, ‘leaping’ states of mind. She notes that expert poets report having relied on inspiration or spontaneous writing when they were less experienced; however, most experienced poets eventually develop conscious strategies to provide the conditions for ‘spontaneous’ discovery to
occur. Tobin marvels at the poet’s need to rely on a practical working relationship with a part of the mind which involves free, uncontrolled impulses. This need motivates the development of strategies, such as “stalking the self”, “unfocusing”, keeping journals, and deliberately incubating ideas without writing them down, to allow for flexible directions to form. In summarizing her interview of poets, Tobin states that individuals demonstrating expertise in poetry writing, describe the distinctive quality of their writing process in terms of how to gain and maintain access to loose, associative states of mind.

**Poetry Writing and Literary Expertise**

Symbolism and the use of figurative language is one of the distinctive characteristics of poetry, in addition to other textual devices, such as repetition, alliteration, binary oppositions, graphic deviations, diction, rhyme, form, structure and tone (Peskin, et al., in press; Eva-Wood, 2004). Readers of poetry must learn to recognize and interpret these textual devices, and expertise in the area of poetry reading has been shown to improve with explicit instruction (Peskin, et al., in press) and affective prompting (Eva-Wood, 2004).

In the interviews presented by Bowling (2002), Wilson (1954) and Tobin (2004) there is little evidence of how poets use or think about these textual devices. The poet, Jan Zwicky (Bowling, 2002, p. 119) makes a statement in which she reflects on the presence of metaphor in her poetry, as it pertains to the kind of connecting or leaping between experience and language discussed above:

“...it’s that metaphor thing again: when you get the connection right, when you get the constellation of a thing laid over the constellation of another thing just so, you get a release of energy...”
“Metaphor is a way of knowing. A real metaphor (as opposed to some clever bit of verbal play) discerns a homology or an isomorphism between things – it’s a form of seeing-as.”

The novel connections between experience and language made by poets, as described above, seems to lead to figurative language and the use of symbols to make these connections potent and genuine. However, there is limited evidence in the summaries of interviews of poets to shed light on how the use of figurative language, or other textual devices, is applied during the writing process.

**Research Questions**

Several questions arise from this summary of the research that lead to an analysis of think-aloud protocols from expert and novice poets.

**Research Question One**

Based on evidence from the research that expert poetry composition may be a version of general expertise in composition, will it be observed that expert and novice poets differ in **Recursive Drafting Processes**? Think-aloud transcripts from novice and expert poets will be examined for their reference to processes of drafting, revisiting their work, moving “back and forth” through the text, and discovering new ideas through revision.

**Research Question Two**

The summaries and presentations of interviews of poets indicate that poets engage in writing strategies to encourage novel connections between experience and language. Do expert poets differ from novice poets in terms of how much they engage in such **Strategies for Creative**
Engagement? Think-aloud transcripts will be examined for their references to processes of playing with language, wandering with language, openness, free exploration, and relinquishing of control.

Research Question Three
Expert poetry readers have been distinguished from novice poetry readers by their recognition of genre-specific textual devices. If poets activate knowledge about textual devices similar to poetry readers, then these devices will appear in think-aloud protocols generated during poetry composition. An investigation into this is an important part of understanding how poets write, and how technical aspects of poetry composition work within a context of maintaining associative and uncontrolled creative frames of mind. Do expert poets differ from novice poets in terms of their awareness of such Textual Devices?

Methodology

Participants
The participants of this study consisted of ten expert poets and ten novice poets. Expert participants were defined as individuals who had been writing poetry for ten or more years, and who had one or more published book-length manuscripts. These participants were contacted by means of email server lists obtained from writing groups and a publicly accessible database of Canadian poets. A letter of information about the study was sent to possible participants and responses were followed up (see Appendix A for information letter).

The novice participants were defined as individuals with an interest in poetry writing, who identified themselves as valuing the practice of poetry composition, and who had casually written poetry, but who had not pursued writing poetry regularly or regularly attended workshops or classes in the subject. Possible novice participants were solicited by means of flyer
and poster distribution in university, library and book-club settings. Responses to these solicitations were followed up by phone call or email.

The group of novices consisted of five female participants and five male participants, while the expert group consisted of six female participants and four male participants. A letter of consent was given to participants to sign prior to beginning the task, and a survey was distributed to participants after their completion of participation, to ascertain certain details about their practice of writing poetry, their education and their interest in other writing forms (see Appendix B and C for these documents). The purpose of this survey was to determine whether the participants were similar to each other on levels of education and to provide details about their levels of writing expertise.

All expert and novice participants reported having a university degree. The expert poets reported writing poetry for an average of 40 years (ranging between 15 – 65 years), whereas the novices reported writing poetry for an average of 34 years (ranging between 11 – 49 years). The novices often reported that the duration of their practice included only sporadic or infrequent activity. While expertise is defined as being applicable to skills developed during deliberate practice for ten or more years (Ericsson, 2002; Ericsson and Smith, 1991), it is important to point out that with regard to writing poetry, many years of practice may elapse that are not “deliberate”. This is the case because poetry writing, as reported by both novices and experts, can surface in response to experiences that do not occur regularly. For instance, writing poetry can be a part of coming to terms with an emotional disturbance or inspired by the need to capture a chance encounter that was evocative or provoking in some way.
All but two novice poets reported no formal training in poetry composition. Two of the novices reported attending a workshop of a few months duration. All but one of the expert poets reported participating in many workshops or pursuing graduate studies in Creative Writing.

All but one of the novices reported non-poetic writing as part of their career or for pleasure. One reported writing short stories, one reported being engaged in “serious” letter writing, and seven novices reported writing for professional purposes (one for law, one for psychology, three for business and two for teaching). All of the expert participants reported being involved in other writing practice. Each expert, except for one, reported publishing work in two or more of the following areas: fiction, essays, articles, and drama. One expert reported only writing the occasional essay.

**Procedure**

The aim of this study was to observe and record the thoughts of poets while in the act of composing, by asking them to think aloud while writing. However, an issue of concern arose as to whether it was valid to request participants to communicate on two different planes simultaneously: the written and the spoken. While previous studies examining the composition of expository text have employed such a procedure (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987; Hayes et al, 1987), the task of generating an original, creative poetic text while explaining all the thoughts that go through one’s mind might be so unlike the normal process of poets as to be not only prohibitively difficult but invalid. Thus a task was developed that incorporated an element of revision to scaffold the creative writing process. By providing a starting point from which to access their creative process, we hoped to facilitate the act of simultaneous creative writing and oral communication.
Research described earlier by Wilson (1954), and evidence from studies of Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) and Hayes et al. (1987), have emphasized the critical role of revision and recursive processing that contributes to the building and creation of written compositions. Revision has been shown to be not just a “checking over” process of a complete composition, but an active, iterative process by which composition occurs. Thus, an activity was developed which incorporated revision and composition, to give the participants a “starting point”, and yet not stray too far from a process which would represent the participants’ valid poetry composition.

This task required both novice and expert poets to compose a piece of poetry within one week prior to meeting with the researchers. Participants were instructed to write a poem according to how they naturally would write a poem, but to only engage with the composition within the space of one “sitting”. When this initial writing episode was finished they were asked to put their poem in a sealed envelope and bring it to their meeting with the researcher one week later. This instruction was specified to ensure that the poems brought in would demonstrate a somewhat equal investment of time and energy across all participants, and to provide a basis upon which they would be asked to make revisions. We also expected, given the essential role that revision has been shown to play in expository writing, that the participants’ engagement with the poetic writing task prior to attending the session would embody mostly a jotting down of ideas, or an initial, undeveloped composition.

When participants arrived at the meeting with the researcher they were asked to take out their sealed envelope and open it; they were then given the following instructions:

*Please look over the poem that you wrote. I would like you to read through, or scan, this piece and proceed with any revision or editing that you might normally do, or that seems important. If you do not usually revise, or do not feel that there are any important changes that you would like to make, this is also an acceptable response. As you think about this task,
and proceed, I would like you to talk aloud about what you are thinking, about the process of writing that went into the piece so far, and about further revising or work that you might proceed next with. Just say everything that you are thinking or feeling. It’s as if you are ‘turning up the volume’ on any thoughts or feelings that may come over you while you are working. Take as long as you want, and tell me when you are finished.

As they began to work, a digital recorder was used to record their comments. The researcher sat some distance from the participant, and looked off to one side thereby discouraging the participant from checking or dialoguing with the researcher. If this occurred, the researcher nodded politely, but refrained from commenting. Participants were not trained, as research has indicated that is not necessary (Ericsson & Simon, 1993) as long as participants are given reminders to “think aloud” if they pause. As a pilot study suggested that the creative process of poetry composition might require some pauses, participants were given up to ten seconds to remain silent, before they were prompted to “try to think aloud”. Occasionally the participants were not sure whether they should actively engage in revisions or composition, and in response to such queries the researcher repeated part of the initial instructions to read through, or scan, this piece and proceed with any revision or editing that you might normally do, or that seems important. When the participants indicated that they were finished, and there was no more work they would like to proceed with, the digital recorder was turned off.

Coding

Segmentation of Transcripts

The initial process of coding the oral think-aloud data required that the digital files be transcribed and segmented into units for coding. Segmentation of the transcripts was undertaken by the primary researcher. This process was guided by previous approaches which defined segments as a “T-unit” or single clause plus any subordinate clause attached to it or embedded
within it (Hunt, 1977; Langer, 1986; McKeough, 2000). However, there were two cases in which segments were designated to larger units of text. One case was that of repetition or elaboration. If two or more units describing the same content in exactly the same or mostly the same way followed each other sequentially, these were recorded as one unit. This was undertaken to avoid over-representing certain data. The second instance of segmenting larger units involved descriptions of the content or meaning of a poem. If, for example, a participant engaged in a paragraph-long description of an episode in his life, or an experience or even image he had seen, that inspired the writing of the poem, or pertained to its content, this was designated as one unit – as long as it was not interrupted by comments of another nature. If there was an interruption, the continuation of the description was then counted as a new segment. In total, the transcripts of the novices produced 177 segments, and the transcripts of the experts resulted in 601 segments.

Three kinds of comments, although designated as segments, were not included in the analysis. The first of these kinds of comments was the “read aloud” segment. If the participant read aloud their poetry, in the course of writing or revising it, the actual reading was not coded. Any comments around, in between, before or after the reading aloud, were captured separately in the segmentation. The second kind of comments that were not part of the coding scheme, and yet were segmented, were comments that were not intelligible due to recording quality, mumbling or significantly ambiguous referents. The third kind of comment that was segmented but not coded encompassed off-topic information. For expert participants these might be comments about recent experiences reading their poetry at a book launch, or tangential memories that did not pertain to the current writing exercise, nor illuminate their writing practice, nor describe the content of their current poem. For novice participants, examples arose frequently about the
affective aspects of poetry writing for them, such as whether it was “cathartic” or about how they wrote when they were experiencing depression, or were particularly affected by an experience. While these comments might provide important information about why novice writers pick up their pen to write poetry occasionally, it was not within the scope of this study to examine.

After these three kinds of comments were excluded from the analysis, a total of 109 of all novice segments and 464 expert segments remained to designate to one of the four coding categories.

**Coding Categories**

After transcribing protocols as described above, a categorization plan that combined both inductive and deductive approaches was established. Three coding categories were determined at the outset of data analysis to provide information about the three research questions outlined previously, and this comprised the deductive analysis. A process of open coding (Eva Wood, 2004; Strauss, 1987) was undertaken to determine, inductively, if patterns or information emerged in the transcripts that were not captured by the research questions. A fourth research question was added in this manner.

Transcripts were reviewed extensively by two researchers, and the categories chosen were developed as the result of an iterative process aimed at consolidating a reliable method of coding. After several training and reviewing sessions were conducted between the primary and secondary researcher, reliability at a 75% level of agreement was established on 25% of the transcripts (two experts and three novices). Due to the complexity of the data, this level of reliability was regarded as satisfactory. The primary researcher proceeded to code the entire sample again to obtain results. For an overview of the categories, their definitions and relevant
examples, see Appendix D. For detailed descriptions and coding decisions for overlapping and ambiguous segments, see appendix E.

**Results**

Because of distributional problems, nonparametric tests were used for the analyses of the research questions. This analysis compared the overall magnitude of segments between novices and experts found in each category. A second comparison was also conducted between groups in which the number of segments in each category was transformed into a percentage of the total segments contributed by a group. Comparing both the percentages and quantities in each category provided information about the magnitude of each group’s process, as well as how their overall process was divided between each category. While the number of segments in a particular area demonstrated how often a group engaged in a particular process, it was only by comparing this as a percentage of the total segments in that group, that it was shown how much of the group’s processing was occurring in a particular area.

A Mann Whitney test was used to compare the number of overall think-aloud segments contributed by the expert and novice participants. Experts contributed significantly more think-aloud segments than novices ($U=10.5, Z=65.5, p<.003$). After segments that were not codable were removed, experts still contributed significantly more think-aloud segments than novices ($U=13, Z=68, p<.005$). Experts and novices did not differ significantly in the overall percentage of segments that were code-able ($U=39.5, Z=-.795, p>.436$). Thus, the segments contributed by the novices did not provide less code-able segments proportionately, than the segments contributed by the experts (see Table 1). Overall, experts spoke more, explored their writing more, engaged more and generally demonstrated a greater writing/cognitive stamina for the task.
Category One: Recursive Drafting Processes

With regard to the question of whether expert and novice poets differ in qualities of revising and composition investigated by expository writing studies (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987; Hayes et al, 1987) a category titled Recursive Drafting Processes was explored. This category was defined as: Statements that indicate the writer is engaged in a process that involves changing directions, being prepared to change direction, considering options, being aware of the process of options, the temporal nature of writing, “back and forth” movements through the text, and drafting. Examples of this category were:

“then I will just put it away for a month or so and read it again”
“one thought opens up doors and I just made choices”
“... so I never expect to be finished my poem in a revision like this but just keep stirring the soup until things come to the surface”

There were 129 expert think-aloud segments in this category, and 13 novice segments. All of the participants but two novices contributed these segments. A Mann Whitney test was used to compare the number of segments in this category in the expert and novice groups. Experts made significantly more comments in this category than novices ($U=3.5, Z=-3.6 p<.000$). When compared to the overall number of think-aloud segments that each group contributed to the analysis, experts also made a significantly larger percentage of comments in this category than novices ($U=10, Z=-3.0, p<.003$). This indicated that novice poets not only make less Category One comments than expert poets, but that such comments occupy a smaller percentage of their overall comments (see Table 2). Thus, it appears that expert poets engage in significantly more of the
recursive, drafting processes that are common to expert expository writers, than novice poets. The fact that all of the participants except one contributed segments to this group also indicates that it is a relevant process for almost all participants.

While both experts and novices made comments in Category One, interesting information can be derived from qualitatively examining these segments. Novices seemed to make comments that were more tentative and less developed than experts, whereas, an energetic, highly-articulated process of revision was expressed within the expert segments. For example, one expert noted that “this what I often do – write all kinds of notes to myself to fix the first draft and come back a day or two later and answer my own questions”.

Expert poets seemed more aware of their revision strategies and knew that they could try different options if they got stuck, demonstrating the flexibility of expert expository writers (Hayes et al., 1987). For example, one expert stated: “I find that once I type them up and see them... in a computer form or whatever and then print them out ... I can detach from them in a way .... but that’s a different stage, so it’s just whether I reach that stage or not, um, but I think that that might help”.

Comments from the expert participants indicated that they were intrigued by their process of revision and that it led them to new directions, similar to the knowledge-transforming processes of Bereiter and Scardamalia’s expert expository writers (1987). For example, one expert stated: “...because normally I don’t really have two endings quite this extreme so this is kind of curious for me to kind of seeing how the poem could go in two different directions”.

While the novices did demonstrate an awareness of drafting and recursive revision, their Category One comments seemed to reflect a less involved process of revision. The following
comment illustrates the awareness that revision is an option, and that a poem can go through several stages to completion, but it also illustrates the feeling that revision is not necessary: “if I’m revising uh, a poem, it’s because after I’ve written it and I come back to it later on, I look at it and I think, no, that just doesn’t look right.

The novice segments seemed to reflect a limited ability to diagnose, as opposed to merely recognize, a problem with the text. This is a similar skill differentiation to that of novice expository writers (Hayes, et al 1987). Perhaps as a result of the difficulty of diagnosing these problems, novice comments were characterized by a certain ambiguity:

“so there are many other angles that one can come at this”

“I am thinking right now, I think really it would need to be...if I could decide to revise it, it would need a tremendous amount of revision”.

**Category Two: Strategies for Creative Engagement**

To investigate the question of whether we could detect strategies pursued to encourage associative, uncontrolled, creative processes, a category titled Strategies for Creative Engagement was developed. This category was defined to capture those segments of the transcripts that exhibited the paradoxical nature of poets to work at controlling and maintaining a space for uncontrolled, associative thought processes (Tobin, 2004), a space distinguished by its wandering, unusual play with words and ideas. This category was described as follows: Statements that indicate the writer is engaged in a process that involves play, spontaneity, uninhibited wandering, associative thinking and that the origins of poetry can be moments of play, associative thinking, sparks, or “inspiration”. Examples of segments categorized in this area were:

“then it becomes a sort of riff on that”
“the initial version it, is, is absolutely subconscious to me anyway”

“uh, not thinking too much”

“I’ll let things bubble up and play around.”

There were 76 expert think-aloud segments in this category and 8 novice segments. These segments were derived from nine of the experts and three of the novices. Thus, the process represented by this category appeared to be more relevant to expert participants than novices, in the sense that many novices did not demonstrate awareness of this process at all. A Mann Whitney test indicated that significantly more think aloud segments were contributed in this category by experts than novices ($U=7.5$, $Z=-3.33$, $p<.000$) and that a significantly higher percentage of the experts overall comments were found in this category than those of the novices ($U=24.5$, $Z=-1.99$, $p<.005$) (See Table 3). It is interesting to note that in comparing the novice group to the expert group, in terms of their percentages of segments devoted to the first two groups, there is less of a divide between the two groups in the area of Strategies for Creative Engagement, than in Recursive Drafting Processes.

An examination of the expert and novice comments that qualified under Category Two, revealed, similar to the examination of the Category One comments, that novices seem to demonstrate less developed, more ambiguous references to their processes. Experts, on the other hand, demonstrate that they have developed a familiarity with their creative process, and, as Tobin (2004) argues, are conscious and conscientious about how they engage with it. Consider the following examples of expert segments demonstrating this awareness:

“(T)hat just got my little antenna going so I wrote that down and wrote a little blurb”
“(A)s generally um, a lot of my poems will come from little things that spark off something and I get a little energy surge”.

“(T)ake up the notebook and do writing about...I dunno, how I feel that afternoon or you know what I ate for lunch or something, then a poem might come in .... to the writing in my journal, and I sometimes feel it shifting into a poem”.

Along with this familiarity and ‘working’ relationship with their creative impulses or uncontrolled starting points, is their comfort ‘working with’ language that propels the associative process into poetry composition:

“I just start playing around with it and shaping it and so on.”

“I really take off on (the language)... ”

The eight segments that novices contributed to this category indicated that some novices were aware that poetry is a form of writing that invites spontaneity. Comments such as “…like, those words just...came” and, “so then it just kind of...flowed out from there” indicated this.

However, a telling novice segment that fell into Category Two also was indicative of the impression novice poets may have that poetry revision is limited to these spontaneous processes:

“and I don’t make a project of revising it, it’s just when I read something and another thought suddenly comes to me - that’s when it gets revised”.

Category Three: Textual Devices

Establishing a coding scheme to capture our interest in the expert and novice poet’s awareness and use of textual devices was complex. Our initial scheme reflected the kind of textual distinctions captured in the reading poetry coding schemes of Peskin et al. (in press) and
Eva-Wood (2004). After an initial distribution of relevant segments into these distinctions, however, it was found that this scheme failed to capture the differential nature exhibited in these segments with regard to whether the poets were actively revising their text, passively commenting on possible revisions or just observing their text. Thus, after segments were distinguished as belonging to Category Three in terms of including content about textual devices, they were given a second coding into categories of Active Revision, Passive Revision and Observation. “Active Revision” referred to segments which indicated that the poet was currently making a change to the text. “Passive Revision” referred to a segment in which the poet was indicating that they were thinking about making a possible change or were considering possible changes to the text. An “Observation” referred to a segment in which the poet was observing some textual quality of their writing.

Thus, the coding scheme Textual Processes was delineated as follows: A First-Pass coding incorporated five textual quality sub-categories: sound/rhythm, alliteration/rhyme, figurative language, form/structure, syntax/grammar and language/semantics. See Appendix D for detailed descriptions of these categories. A few further examples of these sub-categories were:

“sort of like getting the sound as tight as possible”

“it rhymes with flight”

“I sometimes like using science as a metaphor”

“I think I want a stanza break”

“I’m just trimming adjectives”

“I don’t think this word fits”
Second-Pass Coding examined the same segments that were coded in the first pass, but they were then divided into categories of Active and Passive Revision, and Observation. Examples of Active Revision demonstrated current changing of the text, such as: *I am going to write in brackets “sun colour”*. Segments coded as Passive Revisions demonstrated a consideration of possible change: *I was thinking about that word “coffined”, so now I’m wondering if I might work that in*. An Observation was coded if the segment demonstrated an observation of a textual quality: *I am overusing the word “French.”*

An analysis of the total Category Three segments contributed by the novice and expert groups using the Mann Whitney test revealed a number of results. It was found experts and novices did not differ significantly on the number of think-aloud segments that they contributed to this group (*U*=32, *Z*=−1.37, *p* >.18) (see Table 4). Thus, experts did not make significantly more comments about Textual Devices than novices. This indicated that while novices seemed much less aware of the Category One and Two processes that underlie poetry composition, they were as focused as the experts on the textual qualities of their product. This was interesting, as it demonstrated that novice poets may be as well-equipped readers of poetry as experts on the dimension of recognition of textual devices discussed by Peskin et al. (in press) and Eva Wood (2004), without being comparable to expert poets in terms of processes underlying poetry composition. We then examined whether the percentage of comments in each sub-category, compared to the total for each group in Category Three, was significantly different.
First pass coding.

*Sound/rhythm*

In the area of *sound/rhythm*, experts made 24 comments and novices made 8. These were distributed between six experts and four novices. Experts did not make a significantly different percentage of overall Category Three comments than novices ($U=38.5$, $Z=-.561$, $p>.600$) (See Table 4 for all First Passing Coding). Expert comments in this sub-category seemed to differ from novices, however, in terms of (a) specificity, and (b) technicality. The following two examples are representative of this difference:

(a) Expert: “Another possibility with that line is that I could cut one of my ‘I’ statements because too many of those tends to slow a poem down”

Novice: “trying to get some rhythm to it when I wrote it the revision that I would uh...do here”

(b) Expert: “…the language clusters of assonances and dissonances”

Novice: “would uh, primarily be about um, I guess just the flow of the thing”.

*Rhyme/alliteration*

In the area of *rhyme/alliteration*, experts made six comments and novices made seven, and these totals were based on six experts and four novices. Experts were not found to make a significantly different percentage of this overall Category Three comments than novices in this sub-category ($U=41.5$, $Z=-.302$, $p>.770$). However, this sub-category was the focus of more comments by the novices than the experts. It may be that for novices what makes poetry distinctive is the presence of rhyme, as indicated by these two novice segments:
“I went back over it probably for about an hour and a half, trying to get it to rhyme properly”

“what I’m worried about, I still worry about, is that it doesn’t rhyme”

For experts the use of rhyme was considered as a way in which the poem might reflect its content, whereas the novice comment below indicates that, for her, it was the need for rhyme that shaped the content:

Expert: “Sometimes I use rhyme, but not that often. Probably not in this kind of poem which is a serious piece... I use rhyme when it is not so serious”

Novice: “so when I say “I, I embrace the, uh, this love adventure” and then suddenly I’ve got a future, it’s just because it rhymes”

**Figurative language**

In the area of figurative language one expert made two comments and two novices made three comments in total. This sub-category was thus not as relevant to the participants of this study as other sub-categories. The experts did not make a significantly different percentage of overall Category Three comments than novices in this sub-category ($U=41, Z=-.514, p>.770$). The use of figurative or symbolic language in poetry has been noted to be a particularly difficult area for young students to interpret and understand (Peskin, 1998). In a study of an intervention which involved teaching symbolic structures, and then observing whether this instruction affected the comprehension and enjoyment of a poem presented to student participants, it was found that both of these elements of engagement improved (Peskin et al., in press). However, it does not appear that the same kind of knowledge that readers of poetry have about these devices concerns expert poets
as they write and revise. It might be hypothesized that the associative way in which poets connect pieces of newly discovered insights and previous experience, employs symbols and other figurative modes of expressing this transformation. Thus figurative language arrives as a by-product of a highly associative, creative process of knowledge transformation or recursive revision. This reflects the quote presented earlier by the poet Jan Zwicky that “Metaphor is a way of knowing.... a form of seeing-as”, rather than a textual device consciously manipulated.

*Form and structure*

In the area of *form and structure*, five experts made a total of 18 comments, and five novices made a total of 11 comments. Experts did not make a significantly different percentage of overall Category Three comments than novices in this sub-category ($U=39, Z=-.518, p>.660$). The aspect of poetry composition that involves setting out lines in a form that has the appearance of a poem seemed to be an area novices felt relatively comfortable discussing and reviewing. For example:

Novice: “*like as I was thinking it out, sort of 3 separate phrases*”

Novice: “*...I think the only editorial thing I might, may or may not do... is maybe move this up to one, sort of, one longer line*”

Novice: “*I like the, the structure of this poem...um, appeals to me*”

*Grammar/syntax*

In the area of *grammar or syntax*, four experts made a total of 20 comments, and one novice made a total of three comments. Experts were not found to make a significantly different percentage of overall Category Three comments than novices in this sub-category ($U=31.5, Z=-1.42, p>.270$). While this result is not significant, it does seem to reflect the high percentage of Active
Revisions that the experts made, because much of this activity involved small changes in the use of articles, commas, or other syntactical aspects of the language they used. As a result of the novices’ limited tendency to actually put pen to paper and make changes during the task, this area was less of a focus for novice comments. In fact, the novice percentage of comments in this sub-category may be an overrated representation of novice ability, as only one novice participant contributed all of three novice segments to this section. This may, in fact, have been a reflection of his reported occasional occupation as an editor for friends and colleagues. The following segments are illustrative of the difference between novice and expert in terms of decisiveness in this category:

**Expert:** “cutting one of those adjectives”

**Expert:** “I’m scratching out a “the”, just putting a word here, as I rewrite it”

**Expert:** “There’s a lot of As in there”

**Expert:** “I should just take ‘to’ out”

**Expert:** “take the ‘its’ out”

**Novice:** “maybe a comma, or maybe not, um, I’m not sure if I’m going to put a comma after the ‘obstacles’.”

**Novice:** “again this is one of those, just, uh, grammatical thing, I didn’t know whether I wanted the apostrophe before the um, after the r or after the s in waters, it’s a very small point”

**Language/semantics**

In the area of language/semantics seven experts made a total of 46 comments, and five novices made a total of nine comments. Experts were not found to make a significantly different
percentage of overall Category Three comments than novices in this sub-category \((U=30, Z=-1.257, p>.240)\) Although not significantly different, this area comprised, for the experts, the largest percentage (39\%) of comments in Category Three. The novices, on the other hand, devoted the same proportion of segments to this sub-category, as they did to each of the sub-categories of sound/rhythm and rhyme/alliteration. This focus seems to be the result of a more flexible, active, self-questioning style of composition and revision. Consider the following expert segments in this sub-category as illustrative of the hands-on processing of the expert poet:

Expert: “Then something else starts to happen here, I start to be very, very descriptive and I really get into it.”

Expert: “so the way I thought was it doesn’t, I don’t want to say ‘glowing’”

Expert: “So there are different themes that are running through this. And that is what I’m working on.”

Expert: “Okay as I read it, I am not sure about “Street corners” or what to do there, so I’ll put a little star”

The novice poets seemed to struggle to specify what changes they would make in this area, and were limited to whether they felt they could engage themselves actively:

Novice: “a lot of the language could be changed”

Novice: “ideas could be expressed a little bit more differently, a little differently and maybe even a little more fully”

Novice: “I want to pause there, so I might have done dot dot dot, or parenthesis pause, I might add that - do you want me to add it now”? 
Second pass coding.

Six experts contributed the 41 comments in the area of Active Revision, and three novices made a total of three comments. Thus novices, as a group, did not participate in this process in the same numbers as the experts. Experts were found to make a significantly larger percentage of Category Three comments in the area of Active Revisions than novices \( (U=23, Z=-1.943, p<.05) \). Four experts made 13 comments and four novices made nine comments in the area of Passive Revision. This was not found to be a significant difference in terms of percentages of total segments made in each group \( (U=39, Z=-.546, p>.660) \). Nine experts made a total of 50 Observations, and eight novices made a total of 30 Observations. This was also not found to represent a significantly different percentage of overall comments between the two groups \( (U=38.5, Z=-.552, p>.600) \). Thus, while experts and novices focused a similar number of total segments on discussion of Textual Devices, a significantly larger proportion of the experts’ Category Three comments involved actively changing the text (see Table 5).

Category four: Content vs. Meaningfulness

In a review of the segments it was found that both expert and novice participants engaged in examination of their content, in terms of what it meant and in terms of whether their depiction of this content in their poem was effective or meaningful. Research on writing composition indicates that expert writers consider the meaning of their text more than novices when they revise (Hayes et al, 1987). Thus it was decided to develop a fourth category to capture how expert and novices compared in their discussion of the meaning and meaningfulness of their texts.

Content

Category Four, Content vs. Meaningfulness, was divided into two sub-categories. The first was aimed at identifying comments about the subject matter (content) that the poet was writing
about, or thinking about, or drawing on to provide material for the writing. An example of such a segment was: “When I lived in New York in 1967 I used to go out on the streets in Manhattan and go out and shoot the area that I lived in, and I often thought of those days, but I have never written about them” (see Appendix D for a comprehensive definition and further examples).

It was found that eight experts contributed 49 comments to this sub-category, and six novices contributed 12 comments. Using the Mann-Whitney test it was found that experts and novices did not differ significantly in the percentage of overall comments that they contributed to this the sub-category of content (U=40, Z=-.766, p > .480) (see Table 6).

The largest percentage of novice comments were, in fact, divided between this sub-category and the category of Textual Devices, indicating that novices were concerned, primarily, with textual qualities of their poem, and with the content that led to its composition, or that was being expressed. The novice segments of this sub-category were often lengthy, as they elaborated on one aspect of experience that led them to write their poem:

Novice: “the thing about 20 years of confusion sea, he was trying to, Father Quinn was a marinal, they sent him to some small old town in, in, in uh, Tai, Taiwan, he was there for 20 years when I met, well, he was there for 15 years when I met him in 1970. So, you know, he was trying to, he was, actually the marinals weren’t trying to convert people, they’re mainly social work, which was a hard job”

Many of the novice comments in this sub-category ‘followed’ a reading of various lines of their poem, and thus formed a kind of ‘translation’:
Novice: “Um, ‘exceptions rule’. ‘Exceptions’ really means here that we would get from point A to point B if it weren’t for things that were thrown in our way.”

Novice: “then when it says ‘sense your presence through your angel guidance’ - because it’s, I always have the, like whenever I do something it’s almost like there’s an urge? To do? So it just a gut feeling”

The engagement of novices in presenting comments in this sub-category seemed to be part of their perception that poetry, even that which they themselves compose, is somewhat mysterious and difficult to understand. It may require translation, and explanation, as it transforms its content with textual devices that are not common to expository or ‘straight-forward’ text. It is interesting that it is the combination of the categories of content and textual devices, that the novice poets use to define their poetic process with, and that they do this to a greater extent than with other processes, such as those captured by Categories One and Two.

**Meaningfulness**

The second sub-category of Category Four was defined to capture segments that reflected the participants’ consideration of whether their writing made sense, was effective, evocative, meaningful, or possessed accuracy. Included in this sub-category were comments about how the participant was attempting to use the form or structure of the poem to express the content.

Examples of such segments were:

Expert: “Probably I don’t need ‘if I am’ there, probably just starting with ‘dogged’ is more interesting because.... I want it to suggest the state of actually being a dog and the persistence that ‘dogged’ implies.”
Expert: “now I know ‘wonderful’, you gotta be careful, you start saying, ‘no, no, you don’t use like that in the poem’, it has to evoke ‘wonderful’, you don’t say ‘wonderful’”

Expert: “it is not a great ending, it’s sort of flat. But that is sort of the point of the poem.”

A total of 94 comments from eight experts and a total of 14 comments from 4 novices created the data in this sub-category. A Mann Whitney test revealed that there was no significant difference between the percentage of overall expert or novice segments in this sub-category ($U=35$, $Z=-1.171$, $p>.280$) (See Table 6). However, it was found that experts made a greater percentage of overall comments than novices in the sub-category of meaning compared to the sub-category of content, and this ratio approached significance ($U=7$, $Z=-1.539$, $p<.124$). This reflected the experts’ greater focus on the sub-category of meaning, than on the sub-category of content, when compared to the novices. For experts, almost twice as many segments were dedicated to discussing how the composition was meaningful, whereas for the novices more than twice as many segments were dedicated to what the composition meant than to how meaningful the writing was.

An examination of how the expert comments were distributed over the four categories of this study indicates that the proportion of focus experts demonstrated in this sub-category was quite high, at a similar level to that of Categories One and Three. The distribution of novice comments over the four categories indicates that this was not as high a level of priority for the novices as it was for the experts, as higher proportions of novice comments were found in Category Three and the first sub-category of Category Four.
The expert comments in this subcategory were characterized by the same detail and specificity that distinguished expert segments in Categories One and Two. In addition, there was an interesting element of audience-awareness that played out in the comments of experts. Consider the following illustrative expert segments:

Expert: “Okay – so someone who is going to pick up this book is going to read this poem and understand that I am leaning against a shop window, I’m facing the sun, I close my eyes, and see this amazing sun colour with my eyes closed.”

Expert: “The next line ‘rainbow scale’ is going to be pretty obscure to readers. I don’t mind obscurity sometimes, but I think they need that thread to follow”

Even though there were some novice segments in this sub-category, the following novice segments illustrated the somewhat limited quality of the novices’ examination of how their text was meaningful. In the first example, the participant is tentatively considering whether what he wrote is humorous. In the second segment the novice is commenting on the meaning of the visual quality of his text as it tapers near the end, and his choice to not use a capital. As he does so he adds a ‘translation’.

Novice: “that was sort of uh, sort of the point because it’s kind of uh, supposed to be a little uh, not uh, not uh, it’s not ‘hee haw funny’, at least a little humorous”
Novice: “at the end of the poem I tried to uh, do you see the lines? At the bottom, they get smaller and smaller. I was trying to make that like, like we have ourselves - in no capital on the ‘we’, - it’s the only line in the poem that has no capitalization in the first letter, okay, that was to give you an idea of the smallness of uh, you know, a man, ourselves, and how we think are wonderful”

Summary of Results

The results of the above analysis of segments can be summarized in terms of the two comparisons mentioned initially: (1) a comparison of magnitude between groups, (2) a comparison between groups of the percentage of total segments devoted to particular categories.

The experts produced longer think-aloud protocols than novices, and overall contributed more than three times the amount of segments to the analysis. Their involvement in the task demonstrated more stamina for writing, revising and playing with their writing and language to develop and maintain a creative process during the task.

In a comparison of the percentages of overall group segments between groups in each category, we can see that experts engaged in more discussion of the processes underlying their composition, than did novices, such as demonstrated by Categories One and Two. Interestingly, novices seemed slightly more aware of the need for Strategies for Creative Engagement, than the need for processes of Recursive Drafting. Both novices and experts devoted a similar percentage of their discussion to the textual devices of their poem. Within the category of Textual Devices, experts and novices distributed their focus to slightly different areas of the category, with experts expressing the most comments in the area of language and semantics, and novices in the area of
form or structure. The sub-category of rhyme/alliteration received more attention from the novices than the experts, and the sub-category of grammar/syntax received much more attention from the experts than the novices. Both experts and novices devoted a large proportion of their comments to discussing Meaning, but novices focused this discussion on what their content was, whereas experts focused this discussion on how their text created meaning.

It was observed that the expert poets did not make as many comments in the area of Strategies for Creative Engagement as they did in Category One, Three and Four. It appears that while devoting attention and time to managing creative engagement is an important, unique and necessary part of writing poetry, it is does not occupy the greatest part of the expert poet’s attention when writing. Another reason for the smaller proportion of expert comments in this area, and one that seems likely, is that articulating these associative, spontaneous processes while writing, is more difficult than describing processes of editing, recognition of textual devices, or what the content and meaning of the piece is. Saunders (2006) has explained the task of the poet to “respect the integrity of the unknowable without being impelled to remain wordless” (p.504) and to express the reality of the “empty, vibrating space(s) at the centre of things” (p.507). Expressing experience that usually evades articulation likely renders the process of this expression, itself, difficult to identify and describe. This may particularly be the case in the act of writing and navigating through creativity, as opposed to reflecting about it afterwards or in an interview.

Discussion

“...Poetry arrived
in search of me. I don’t know, I don’t know where
it came from, from winter or a river
For many readers of poetry, and, as the above quote suggests, even the poets themselves, the composition and understanding of poetry involves something mysterious. The possibility that reading and writing poetry is a competency limited to certain gifted individuals seems plausible. However, studies in poetic literacy have shown that the skills needed to understand and appreciate poetry, such as the abilities to engage genre recognition and genre-related expectations, to form interpretation of textual devices and to use conventions of understanding poetic text, improve with training (Hanauer, 2001; Carminati, Stabler, Roberts & Fischer, 2006) and years of poetic instruction (Peskin, 1998). Using methods of expert novice comparison and think-aloud data analysis, researchers have conducted an informative exploration into the area of how to enjoy and understand the reading of poetry, there is no previous research investigating how to enjoy and develop competency in the writing of poetry.

The current study has addressed this absence by initiating an exploration into poetry writing expertise – a type of expertise that has so far only been tangentially approached by the three areas of poetic literacy expertise, expository writing expertise, and reflections of poets on their craft. Research questions were developed from a review of these three areas, and evidence from the think-aloud protocols of expert and novice poets engaged in a task of composition and revision was analysed to provide answers to these questions.

Recursive Drafting Processes

It was found that expert poets engaged in more Recursive Drafting processes than novice poets. This result indicates that poetry writers are similar to expository writers in their use of extensive revision to propel their composition forward and to develop their ideas more fully. It is

I don’t know how or when....” (Pablo Neruda, 1973; Goldsmith, 1996 p xi)
interesting to note that all but two of the novice participants in this study reported writing in a professional capacity as part of their careers: two as teachers, four in business, one in terms of writing psychology reports and one in his capacity as a law student. However, the expertise these participants may possess in expository writing did not seem to significantly transfer into greater involvement in recursive revision while writing poetry. One of the novice participants remarked, during a short de-briefing episode, that what the researcher was telling her about the question of recursive revising in poetry writing expertise, was very familiar to her in her normal writing. However, it hadn’t really occurred to her to engage in those processes while writing the poem for this study. Thus, novice poets may not be cued to using these processes when writing poetry, because they are not aware that they need to. Perhaps they believe writing poetry is a completely different process than expository writing, one that is as novel and creative as the product suggests, and does not require similar drafting procedures to expository writing.

**Strategies for Creative Engagement**

The protocols of expert and novice poets were analysed for evidence of the use of strategies for creative engagement. It was found that expert poets demonstrated a larger number of comments in this area, and a significantly larger percentage of their overall comments were devoted to this area than those of novices. Thus, the expert poets were more aware of the need to use strategies to create novel connections between experience and language, such as playing with words and allowing spontaneity.

A fascinating comparison can be made between this process and the process of *reader elaboration* examined by Eva-Woods (2004) in her analysis of the think and feel aloud protocols of readers of poetry. In order to capture the kind of insights and understanding her participants were
demonstrating when asked to think and feel aloud about their reading of a poetic text, she developed a category defined as “elaborative comments”, in which the readers were observed to make expansive movements from the text to thoughts about the poet’s feelings, associations suggested by the poet’s words, visualizations and reflections on their own feelings (Eva-Wood, 2004). When instructed not only to think aloud about a poetic text, but to be aware that reading poetry “isn’t simply a fact-finding mission, but an experience with language that involves feelings and associations” (p.184), participants demonstrated a deeper understanding of the poems read. These elaborations or expansive movements may be what expert poets encode into the poetic form, when they make spontaneous, playful connections between words and experiences, and when they work to allow themselves the space and freedom to make these connections. It is in this way that the poetry writing process overlaps with the reading process, and the poet, similar to Oately and Dijikic’s (2008) writer of imaginative prose, is “invoking the imagistic and emotional processes” to run the “simulation dream” that is the experience of the poem’s content. This is in contrast to the possibility that what poets and poetry readers primarily share is an expertise in being able to identify and understand genre specific textual devices and conventions – which has not been supported by the current study.

Textual Devices

An examination of the differences between novice and expert poets in the category of Textual Devices, indicated that expert poets and novice poets are comparable in the percentage of overall comments devoted to this area. But this examination also indicated that novices focused more on textual devices that were explicit in the poetic product, such as rhyme and line breaks, whereas experts focused their attention on more generic aspects of the writing process that are
involved in revision, such as grammar/syntax and language/semantics. In addition, novices were observed to make significantly fewer active revisions than experts, preferring to make observations or suggest possible, tentative changes that were not as specific or meaning-driven as those of the experts. This pattern confirmed the distinction between experts and novices made in the areas of Recursive Drafting Processes and Strategies of Creative Engagement. The novice poets participated as readers possessing a moderate level of poetic literacy expertise. They were able to observe and distinguish genre-specific textual devices, but they were not able to activate these observations into a process of flexible, creative revision and composition.

**Meaning**

A category titled Meaning was distinguished as an important area of examination based on an inductive process of reviewing the protocols for recurring patterns and themes. This category was divided into two sub-categories: content, and meaningfulness of text. It was found that expert poets made almost twice as many comments about whether their text was meaningful than about the content, and novices made more than twice as many comments about their content, than about the effectiveness of their text. Novice poets seem to be at an initial stage of the poetry writing process, where they are thinking about their content, but, without significant understanding of strategies that can be used to engage their creativity, are not aware of the play and associative processes needed to transform this content into poetic form.

**Conclusion**

The results of this study can be used to propose a model of poetry writing expertise. Expert poets employ the extensive recursive revision and knowledge-transforming processes of expert expository writers, while visiting and revisiting strategies aimed at allowing them to make unusual,
and unexpectedly meaningful connections between language and experience. Canadian poet Susan Iaonnou (2000) calls this the “magical clockwork”: a combination of carefully applied editing with the workings of a freely darting imagination. In revising poetry, she states: “magic and clockwork at last intersect. Working in alternation, they cut, recreate, cut, reshape, then cut and rearrange, again and again, until the last draft has been fully polished, and the poem is ready to serve” (p.141).

Importantly, both the creative strategies and the process of extensive revision that expert poets engage in, are the areas of poetry composition of which novice poets are least aware.

Expert poets, on the other hand, are aware of these strategies most of all, and, while processes of revision and questions of effectiveness common to expository writers seem to occupy most of their thoughts while revising their poetry, the creative strategies are what they identify and elaborate on, when asked to reflect on how they write. These creative strategies are what bring the poetry into being, and books written by poets, workshops created by poets, and interviews transcribed from the words of poets, are all filled with images lyrically striving to share this magic:

“It’s impossible to teach anyone to write a poem. But we can set up circumstances in which poems are likely to happen. ..Playing with words, we can get to the place where poems come from”

(Goldsmith, 1996, p. xiii)

**Limitations**

A concern exists about using think-aloud data analysis as the exclusive method of deriving the results of a study. Emig (1971) in her review of the various sources of information available on writing composition, criticizes the use of information provided by writers as unsystematic and
idiosyncratic. Her survey leads her to conclude that writers are often far too affective in their reports, discussing how they feel about writing, rather than how they write. She also offers the following distressing quote from poet John Ciardi, on being asked to discuss the process of writing a poem (p. 122):

“You’re asking for lies. It’s inevitable. I’ve been asked to do this over and over again, and lies come out.

Let me put it this way. The least a poem can be is an act of skill. An act of skill is one in which you have to do more things at one time than you have time to think about. Riding a bike is an act of skill. If you stop to think of what you’re doing at each of the balances, you’d fall off the bike. Then someone would come along and ask you to rationalize what you thought you were doing. You pick out a theme and you’re hung with trying to be consistent with the theme you’ve chosen. You have to doubt every explanation.”

Despite this assertion, the use of think-aloud protocols to capture the immediate and uncensored nature of thought processes has been shown to elucidate differences between novices and experts (Bruer, 1993). Conducted in a systematic way, with valid and reliable coding, this method seems to overcome the barriers Ciardi describes, and provides a window into the mind working behind the ‘skillful act’. However, in further studies, methods such as those used by Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) to corroborate evidence from think-aloud protocols would be helpful. Such methods included examining the actual pieces of writing produced (in our case, the poems) and comparing these to drafts and to the protocols of the writers.
References


Schmidt, 1989 (reference from Joan’s most recent paper)


Tobin, J. *Creativity and the poetic mind.* New York: Peter Lang, 2004


Appendix A

Novice Letter of information:

Dear Participant

Thank you for expressing interest in our research. We would like to know about what the process of writing poetry is like for you – an individual who enjoys writing poetry and yet has not pursued this activity professionally. While research has been conducted in areas of how prose and expository writing occur, and this has informed current educators, it is a bit more mysterious how poetry comes to be written. By interviewing and discussing the process of writing with novice poets such as yourself, and comparing this to the process of writing for more experienced writers, it is hoped that more light can be shed on this creative activity.

This study will involve an initial phone call and a follow up meeting. During the initial phone contact, I will discuss with you the purpose of the study and invite any questions you might have. In preparation for the actual meeting, which will take place two weeks after our initial phone call, you will be asked to write a poem. The meeting will take place one week from the initial phone call, at a place of mutual convenience, either at your residence or at our office at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 252 Bloor Street West. At the beginning of this meeting we will request that you sign a consent form allowing us to audio record the session. You will be asked to talk about the process of writing the poem that you have brought and participate in a short writing exercise. Our research focus is not on the actual pieces of writing, but rather on the process behind the writing. At the conclusion of the meeting you will be asked to fill out a short questionnaire about your writing background. The meeting will not exceed two hours.

There are no foreseeable risks to your participation in this study. There are, however, benefits to researchers in education and, in the end, to educators and students. The data resulting from this study will be retained for five years and then destroyed. The researcher will publish and/or present the results from the study at conferences once it is completed. However, in any presentation of the research no individual participant’s name will be communicated via any means whatsoever.

Please retain this information letter, but sign and return the following consent form. You may withdraw your permission at any time and without providing a reason. If at any time during our meeting you would like to stop and no longer be part of the study, you may stop without giving any reasons, and
you will still receive compensation. You may contact the Ethics Review Office, 416-946-3273 or ethics.review@utoronto.ca for your rights as a participant.

Your assistance with this project will be very much appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Joan Peskin
Centre for applied Cognitive Science
Department of Human Development and Applied Psychology
OISE/University of Toronto
252 Bloor Street West
Toronto, ON
M5S 1V6
Expert Letter of Information:

Dear Participant

Thank you for expressing an interest in our research about how poetry is written. I would like to know about what the process of writing poetry is like for you - a poet who has published his/her work. While research has been conducted in areas of how prose and expository writing occur, and this has informed current educators, it is a bit more mysterious how poetry comes to be written. By interviewing and discussing the process of writing with experienced poets such as yourself, and comparing this to the process of writing for novice writers, it is hoped that more light can be shed on this creative activity, and that this can, in time, filter down to the education of young people and students of poetry.

During our initial phone call, I will discuss with you the purpose of the study and invite any questions you might have. In preparation for the actual meeting you will be asked to compose a new poem in the upcoming week. The meeting will take place one week from the initial phone call, at a place of mutual convenience, either at your residence or at our office at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 252 Bloor Street West. At this time we will request that you sign a consent form allowing us to audio record the session. You will be asked to talk about the process of writing the poem you have written, as well as participate in a short writing exercise. Our research focus is not on the actual pieces of writing, but rather on the process behind the writing. At the conclusion of the meeting you will be asked to fill out a short questionnaire about your writing background. The meeting will not exceed two hours.

There are no foreseeable risks to your participation in this study. There are, however, benefits to researchers in education and, in the end, to educators and students. Poets who participated in the Pilot Study, and who have given us permission to use their names, such as Alan Breismaster, Karen Shenfeld and Elana Woolf, have informed me that they have found their participation to be worthwhile, and that reading the results of the pilot research was valuable to their own understanding of poetry composition.

The data resulting from this study will be retained for five years and then destroyed. The researcher will publish the results in an academic journal and/or present the results from the study at conferences once it is completed. However, in any publication or presentation of the research no individual participant’s name will be communicated via any means whatsoever, unless the participant would prefer to be named. Thus the confidentiality of the participants’ identities is completely up to the preference of each participant.

Please retain this information letter, but sign and return the consent form below. You may withdraw your permission at any time, and without providing a reason. If at any time during our meeting you would like to stop and no longer be part of the study, you may stop without giving any reasons, and you will still receive compensation. You may contact the Ethics Review Office, 416-946-3273 or ethics.review@utoronto.ca for your rights as a participant.
Yours sincerely,

Dr. Joan Peskin
Centre for applied Cognitive Science
Department of Human Development and Applied Psychology
OISE/University of Toronto
252 Bloor Street West
Toronto, ON
M5S 1V6
Appendix B

OISE/University of Toronto
252 Bloor Street West
Toronto, ON
M5S 1V6

Participant Consent

Name: ____________________________________________

Telephone: ________________________________________

Email Address: _______________________________________

I have read the information letter pertaining to the study on poetry composition, and I am willing to participate in this project, as proposed by Professor Joan Peskin and Baila Ellenbogen of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto. I agree that a transcript of my session will be used in the study, and that excerpts of my spoken words and written poetry (of no longer than three lines) may appear in academic publications or be part of a conference presentation. If this is the case, I understand that I will be contacted, and given the choice as to whether I would like my name to be accredited to these excerpts, or wish to remain anonymous.

Signature: ________________________________________

Date: ____________________________________________
Appendix C

Questionnaire

Please answer the following questions. As this questionnaire is intended for both experienced poets, and novice writers, some questions may not apply to you. If you feel this is the case, please indicate so with a N/A response.

Name: ___________________________________________

Email:___________________________________________

Phone:_______________________________

Education (please describe):
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________

How many years have you been writing poetry? Did you write as a child?
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________

2. Do you engage in other forms of composition, such as fiction, essays, journaling, etc?
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
3. Have you ever taken a workshop in poetry writing, or had formal education in writing composition?

________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________

4. Is there anything else you would like us to know about your thoughts on writing poetry?

________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________
## Appendix D

### Definition of Coding Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Definition and Guidelines for Scoring</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recursive, Drafting Processes</td>
<td>Statements that indicate the writer is engaged in a process that involves changing directions, being prepared to change direction, considering options, being aware of the process of options, the temporal nature of writing, “back and forth” movements through the text, and drafting.</td>
<td>- when you write something and most of it is garbage but the two or one or two lines or an image or some thought is worth saving so you clip it and keep it in a file (E)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Now I’m looking at 2 directions I could go so(E)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- So what I would do now is type in the changes I am totally good about, and keep this rough paper next to my computer (E)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategies for Creative Engagement</td>
<td>Statements that indicate the writer is engaged in a process that involves play, spontaneity, uninhibited wandering, associative thinking and that the origins of poetry can be moments of play, associative thinking, sparks, or “inspiration”. Comments about “following the words”, or not being in control, or being free are included. Comments that express a passive or relaxed quality of not being in control</td>
<td>- I didn’t know where to start, so I just began free associating (E)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Unless it’s that sound, okay, sometimes I have the word, and it’s the wrong word, and if I rhyme it through the alphabet I get the word I want. So sound, bound,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
and of letting go are included. In this category are both comments of a meta-
nature, reflecting on these processes and also comments which indicate that the poet
is, during the activity, engaging in these processes

<p>| Textual Devices | Sound, Rhythm, Music | • then it becomes a sort of riff on that (E) |
|                 |                     | • the initial version it, is, is absolutely subconscious to me anyway; uh, not thinking too much (E) |
|                 |                     | • I’ll let things bubble up and play around (E) |
|                 | Alliteration, Rhyme | • Yeah, the sound is coming through there, I like, I like the sound coming through. I’m getting enough sort of assonance (E) |
|                 | Figurative Language, Allusion, Metaphor | • it’s a nice rhyme... (kind of like Christmas and miss or kiss....anyway, oh (E) |
|                 |                     | • so I want to start off with |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Allegory</th>
<th>the um, the, the natural way in which rivers move, in which the water in rivers moves, and um, and liken that to the way our lives move, our lives flow (N)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Form, structure (line breaks, stanza breaks, changing order of lines)</td>
<td>• So four lines with line breaks – I like the way it flows (E)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar, syntax(reference to parts of speech, e.g. articles, adjectives, nouns, verbs)</td>
<td>• But there are some “the”s and “a”s and in the second line (read) I probably don’t need the second “a” so I am getting rid of that (E)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>language, semantics</td>
<td>• Ever is better than even. “From inside out. Ever.”(E)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• I think I’ll take the “more” out.(E)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Okay as I read it, I am not sure about “Street corners” or what to do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Meaning</strong></td>
<td>The first sub-category “content” was created to identify comments about the subject matter that the writer was writing about, or thinking about, or drawing on to provide material for the writing. Explanations of what the writer was interested in about the subject or explanations of the subject about which they were writing were included. Translations of the written product (sometimes line by line) that provided explanations of what the writing meant – but not referring to a larger element of whether it was meaningful by referring to readers or qualities of the text</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Active Revision** | a comment indicating immediate change to the text | • *I am going to write in brackets “sun colour”* (E). |

| **Passive Revision** | a comment indicating consideration of a change in the text, or naming possible changes that could be done to the text | • *I was thinking about that word “coffined”, so now I’m wondering if I might work that in* (E) |

| **Observations** | observations of a textual quality of the text | • *am I overusing the word “French”* (E) |

|  | there, so I’ll put a little star...(E) |  |
The second sub-category was aimed at capturing segments that included comments about whether the writing made sense, was effective, was evocative, meaningful, possessed accuracy, informed about the truth and about how the writer was trying to address these issues. Self questioning about these areas was included here. Expressions indicating the poet “got it” or was trying to figure his or her own meaning; what was meant by the words now being worked with; whether the reader will “get it”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Now I know “wonderful, you gotta be careful, you start saying, no, no, you don’t use like that in a poem, you have to evoke “wonderful”, you don’t say “wonderful” When I close my eyes, sun and vein mix into a blood orange, glowing inside each retina” but I want to make it clear that I am seeing the sun through closed eyes (E)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Now I know “wonderful”, you gotta be careful, you start saying, no no, you don’t use like that in the poem, it has to evoke” wonderful”, you don’t say “wonderful” (E)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix E

Ambiguous or Difficult Coding Decisions: Rules of Precedence

In order to avoid segments qualifying as more than one category, rules of precedence were established and applied consistently.

Category One:

If a specific reference to the process of waiting, marking an element, putting in brackets, coming back to something later, or revisiting was made in reference to a particular textual element, it was counted as an instance of Category One and not Category Three. However, instances of “change” or “changing direction” as they described a particular revision – such as “I think I will take out the ‘a’” were not included in Category One but in Category Three. Category Three essentially contained all comments about revision, unless these comments involved general references to drafting or time. Revision-type comments that would be included in Category One would have to be very general (e.g.): “I tend to look over my poems like I am now, and shave off all the extra articles” or include a reference to time or drafting (e.g.): “I am going to take this “a” out for the time being, and put it over in the margin to think about later”

Category Two

Any specific reference made to playing or messing around was designated as a Category Two segment. This was the case even if he segment included a specific reference to a textual element, e.g.: “I like to play around with my adjectives”. Category Two also took precedence over Category One; if a segment indicated drafting, but also messing around, it was placed under
Category Two, e.g.: “sometimes I play around with different versions of the ending and then, if I wait a while, a new ending pops up that I had no idea about”

**Category Four**

When comments about textual qualities were layered with comments about whether the poem was meaningful or effective these comments were placed into Category 4b. For example: “I am not sure whether the form of this piece really communicates the idea of X that I was trying to get across”. Two comments that went into 4a rather than 4b were translations and explanations. Translations were, for example: “This line means....and the next line means....” Explanations were statements about why the poem was important to the writer (the participant), without any reference to whether it is meaningful to the reader, or written in such a way to bring about a meaningful experience for the reader. Wherever possible, segments were designated to separate the subtly connected comments about meaning and meaningfulness so that these aspects could be represented in the coding separately.
Table 1

Means and Standard Deviations of Total Segments Spoken and Total Segments Used

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Experts</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Novices</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Segments Spoken</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>46.4</td>
<td>34.25</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>10.07</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Segments Used</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>60.1</td>
<td>39.77</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>7.24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2

Means and Standard Deviations of Category One Segments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Experts</th>
<th>Novices</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
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<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Category One Segments</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Table 3

Means and Standard Deviations of Category Two Segments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Experts</th>
<th></th>
<th>Novices</th>
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<tbody>
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<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>N</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Category Two Segments</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>10</td>
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</table>
Table Four

Means and Standard Deviations of Category Three First Pass Coding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Experts</th>
<th></th>
<th>Novices</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Category Three Segments</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Sound/Rhythm Segments</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Rhyme/Alliteration Segments</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>.6</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Figurative Language Segments</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>.2</td>
<td>.6</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Form/Structure Segments</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Grammar/Syntax Segments</td>
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Table Five

Means and Standard Deviations of Category Three Second Pass Coding

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<th>Novices</th>
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<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
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<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
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### Table Six

**Means and Standard Deviations of Category Four**

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