Think it Through: *Fostering Aesthetic Experiences to Raise Interest in Literature at the High School Level*

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"I don't really like to read, but if I read a novel that pleases me, I won't put it down," wrote a student during this study. Herein lies one of the most challenging tasks of the literature teacher: finding the magical book that will get students to read. Common sense tells us that it is nearly impossible to satisfy each student's reading preferences, unless we opt for moderating individual reading choices. A more viable possibility lies in using teaching methods that develop readers' sense of subjectivity and

foster aesthetic responses that constitute aesthetic reading, i.e. "the only type of reading that is truly educative" (Lebrun, 1997, p. 56).

In light of this suggestion, I set forth a pedagogical strategy to increase interest in reading by highlighting aesthetic responses of female senior high school students to *Incendies*, a French Quebec play written by Wajdi Mouawad (2003). This mixed methods study provides both qualitative and quantitative indicatives of the pedagogical implications of aesthetigrams, which are participant-generated maps that record responses to artworks (White, 2007). An example of a student's aesthetigram is provided to contribute to a fuller understanding of the study's research outcomes. This article stresses the necessity of aesthetic responses in literature education and clarifies the often obscure bridge between aesthetic experiences and reading engagement. In so doing, I demonstrate how the use of aesthetigrams helps strengthen students' interest and participation in literature classes.

White's (2007, 2011) study of aesthetic experiences in response to visual artworks has proven to help students reflect on their values and develop interest in paintings. The present research is based on White's method, and explores responses to Quebec drama. Few studies linking aesthetic education and French Quebec literature have addressed students' engagement in reading, though the issue of low engagement has been identified and partly solved by pedagogues working in the field of literature. For instance, Lebrun (1997) points to the problem of a third space in which readers evolve: "in an era of instantaneousness, books scare adolescents; even more so, the common stereotyped questions on

calibrated and manipulated texts bore them" (p. 68). Numerous literature pedagogy experts (Atwell, 1987; Lebrun, 1997; Parsons, 2001) view literature journals as a solution to counter students' low engagement in reading. Other researchers (Dias, 1992; Rogers, 1990) who use reading/thinking-aloud-protocols (RAPs) in lieu of written responses argue that their pedagogical tool is equally effective in engaging students in reading. The main difference between aesthetigrams and the tools suggested by Dias (1992) and Rogers (1990) is the ability of aesthetigrams to record immediate responses to artworks that will be mediated *later* by peers through class discussions. In other words, aesthetigrams allow students to write their responses instead of voicing and negotiating them instantly. Thus, they represent a viable solution for students who are uncomfortable speaking up in class immediately after reflecting on an excerpt. When students construct their aesthetigrams, they are also solicited to see the patterns of their encounters. This reflection process fosters holistic learning (White, 2011). The mapping procedure also brings forth the innovative concept of tracking immediate experiences and, therefore, differs from writing journals in that very sense. While response journals provide a medium for written reactions to a given text, they do not explicitly provide students with questions and categories that guide them in expressing their opinions on stylistic and emotional aspects of a text. To this end, aesthetigrams help those students who initially least connect with the text by giving them guidelines for their responses, thereby revealing the double-function of aesthetigrams as a pedagogical tool for teachers and a learning resource for students.

The strategy I developed takes into account the need for individuality and subjectivity highlighted in the aforementioned research. In contrast to those studies, aesthetigrams include a tangible aesthetic dimension, a necessary aspect of reading as stated by Lebrun (1997): "Literature education assumes aesthetic implications" (p. 69). My contribution to the field is thus a proposed manner of implementing aesthetigrams in the literature classroom, as they allow students and teachers to observe immediate responses to artworks.

Teaching French classes in Quebec high schools is a difficult task (Viau, 1998), as students generally do not attribute much value to the subject. In fifteen years, the situation has not evolved positively, especially since students' attention tends to be directed towards electronic tablets and cellphones (Lebrun, 2012). The focus on reading must prevail because it "takes on an increasingly prominent role in learning during high school, as the ability to acquire, synthesize, and evaluate information becomes a deciding factor in who will succeed academically" (Fisher & Frey, 2012, p. 588). If reading takes on such a determinant role in students' success, we should perhaps empower students in their learning through reader subjectivity. Empowerment might accentuate students' crucial role in the reading act, all the while allowing them to connect with their values. Since the links between values awareness, subjectivity and reading are vital, we should aim to answer questions that pertain to that sphere. In light of this perspective, I formulated the following research questions.

Research Questions

Aesthetigrams have been proven to investigate students' awareness of their values and, in so doing, develop their subjectivity (White, 2011). On the other hand, countless studies (Beach, 1990; Franzak, 2006) found that readers need literary models that reflect their identities in order for them to be active readers. To be engaged, readers further need to develop their subjectivity: "subjective reading gives space to individual and collective interpretation dynamics that favour students' interest in reading" (Lacelle & Langlade, 2007, p. 63). This elaboration calls for the question: Does the implementation of aesthetigrams in literature classes help raise students' interest in French Quebec literature?

For the present study, I worked with female high school students given that the majority of studies addressing interest in reading involved male participants. Indeed, much more emphasis seems to have been put on young males' interest and performance in reading at the high school level (Brozo, 2010; Fisher & Frey, 2012; Henry, Lagos, & Berndt, 2012; Royer, 2010) than on those of girls. As such, girls are often "left behind" in this type of research, since their performance in reading has been said to be superior to that of males of the same age (Brozo, 2010; Royer, 2010). In these circumstances, adolescent females were the appropriate participants for my study.

Why Aesthetigrams?

Though aesthetigrams are a mapping procedure, they differ from concept maps in that they are not constructed to grasp a particular concept.

Novak's (2010) definition of concept maps as representations of "an integrated set of propositions that show how the meaning of that concept is related to other concepts" (p. 45) contrasts with the pedagogical aim of aesthetigrams. The latter indeed serves as a mapping process but, according to White (2011), it "visually represents a specific experience of aesthetically mediated meaning making and the discrete moments that contributed to it" (p. 6). In other words, aesthetigrams seek to meet immediate aesthetic and pedagogical goals: render students aware of their reactions, have them reflect on their experiences, and discuss these choices with their peers. Indeed, with aesthetigrams, researchers and educators are provided with concrete data with which to study students' aesthetic responses. These experiences benefit from being explored through this tangible method, as a record based on student memory alone would be unreliable, evanescent, and would dismiss an immense array of details (White, 2007, 2011; White & Tompkins, 2005).

In literature classes, some teachers will ask for student interpretations, but few realize the importance of students' first impressions. The mapping procedure and subsequent investigation of experiences permit to transcend immediate reactions at which point students begin to make sense of the work, whether consciously or inadvertently. This practice further allows teachers to recognize the pedagogical contributions of conflicts between readers' first impressions of a literary work. The discussions that arise in the literature classroom position the self as a central sociocognitive reader (Rouxel, 2007) who generates and negotiates meaning. Subjectivism is therefore at the core of this endeavour and needs

to remain a focus in the mapping of immediate personal experiences. The ability of aesthetigrams to record information pertaining to students' first impressions and understandings of a text make this mapping procedure ideal for the literature classroom.

Theoretical Framework

The links between literature education and aesthetic experiences are complex, yet useful in literature pedagogy. Many studies (Karolides, 1992; Probst, 1981, 2004; Tice, 2008) highlighting responses as mandatory criteria for learning literature were inspired by Rosenblatt's (1978) transactional theory of reading. Evidence suggests that the groundwork for this theory was laid years before. Drawing heavily on Dewey (1934/2005), Rosenblatt (1938/1968) discussed the gap between teachers' interpretations of literary texts and students' responses in *Literature as exploration*. She explained that perceptions of a text differed drastically: "There is an unabridged gulf between anything that the student might feel about the book, and what the teacher, from the point of view of accepted critical attitudes and his adult sense of life, thinks the pupil should notice" (p. 61). Rosenblatt (1938/1968) thought that this lacuna resulted in a lack of interest, which was most likely due to the categorization of literature as an entity detached from the self: "This often leads the student to consider literature something academic, remote from his own present concerns and needs" (pp. 61-62). Rosenblatt's work opened the way for approaches to literature that incorporate students' aesthetics responses as part of meaning-making strategies. In light of this perspective, I further argue that

integrating aesthetic education into standard curriculum might be an effective way to invigorate students' interest in literature and help them connect meaningfully with narratives.

The present theoretical framework stems from the notion of aesthetic education as a measure for values awareness. White (2007) remarks that "aesthetic encounters bring to initial awareness the values—personal, cultural and societal—prompted by the encounter" (p. 5). For instance, experiencing a play touches on expressing, through responses, our values as well as the artist's, as represented in the artwork. White's aesthetigrams track specific experiential moments and open the path for teachers to suggest directions for future encounters. This study ties in with numerous concepts of this response-based model including, but not limited to: constructing aesthetigrams, charting response moments in different categories, implementing this process in a research setting, and discussing the educational implications of this implementation.

Engaging Readers with *Incendies*

According to Probst (2004), "we should choose literature for its potential to interest students" (p. 67). *Incendies* was selected for its cultural relevance to the participants and for its contemporary narrative elements. Since many students were themselves immigrants to Quebec, they were likely to identify with the play, which presented characters who immigrate to Quebec from a fictional Middle Eastern country. In the play, twins Simon and Jeanne journey to find their father in a country whose political past is similar to that of Lebanon. They soon discover that their deceased mother,

Nawal, was imprisoned for the murder of an influential political leader. The twins later learn that, while in prison, Nawal was raped by her other son, Nihad, a prison guard. Nawal bore the twins as a result of the numerous rapes endured at the hand of Nihad. In scene 37 (*Letter to the Son*), Nawal writes Nihad she was one of the numerous women he sexually assaulted in prison. She expresses the tension between the love and hate she has for him, adding that he is the father of the twins, who are also his half-siblings. I chose scene 37 because of the emotional complexity (plot content), depth and richness of the narrative (thoughtful prose and metaphors), potential for interpretation ("were the twins born out of love?"), and opportunities for personal identification (ties with a country similar to Lebanon in the 1980's, parents' struggles, need to understand one's roots).

Methodology

The study took place in three classrooms of a private high school in Montreal, Quebec. A total of 71 female participants aged 16 to 17 years old were involved in the project. Students were from varying cultural backgrounds including Greek, Italian, Egyptian, Iranian, Haitian, Lebanese, Franco- and Anglo-Canadian. This heterogeneity made for rich exchanges, and enabled distinctive responses in the pre-tests, aesthetigrams and post-tests. Participants were grouped according to their respective classrooms, which were indicative of their academic specializations. There were 29 social science students in 5A, 24 science students in 5B, and 18 science students in 5C.

Incendies was used as a literary tool to which students had to respond, and drama was utilized as a read narrative as opposed to a performed act. At the time of data collection, the play was not showing in any local theatres, thus eliminating this possibility. The data collection took place over a two-week period, once a week for 105 minutes in the first week, and 50 minutes in the second week. As students had a time restriction, they were not asked to perform the play in the research setting.

The research was conducted as follows: students had one month to read the play, after which they were asked to complete a pre-test detailing open-ended and five-point Likert scale questions that pertained to their interest in reading French Quebec literature (e.g. "I would rate my interest towards French Quebec literature as: 1) very low, 2) low, 3) moderate, 4) high, 5) very high"). Other questions pertained to students' reading habits and metaknowledge of French Quebec literature (e.g. Can you name French Quebec literature novels you read in high school?"). The pre- and post-test design was meant to primarily see whether the aesthetigram activity lead to an increased interest in French Quebec literature.

In itself, the aesthetigram intervention consisted of several steps. First, I selected a student at random, and asked her to read scene 37 aloud. I then proceeded to read the same scene in an alternate tone. This procedure allowed students to identify with the version they preferred, thus giving them various possibilities to interpret, engage with, and respond to the scene. Subsequently, I asked students to fill out a form outlining their impressions, or moment-by-moment responses. These dispositions dictated how students would draw their own aesthetigram (Figure 1).

During the second session, I gave students time to complete their aesthetigram. Students were then given time to discuss both the activity and their responses during an in-class discussion. Finally, they completed the post-test, which focused on the number of categories used in the aesthetigram (e.g., "which categories did you draw in your aesthetigram?") and on students' interest in reading French Quebec literature, repeating the same question as in the pre-test (i.e. "I now rate my interest towards French Quebec literature as: 1) very low, 2) low, 3) moderate, 4) high, 5) very high"). I analyzed students' pre- and post-test quantitative responses using a paired samples T-test to examine the influence of aesthetigram-making on students' interest in French Quebec literature. I set the p value of .05 as a cut-off for statistical significance. The second section of the quantitative results includes a Wilcoxon's signed rank test to evaluate each group's pre- and post-test results in terms of their interest in French Quebec literature. The third and final section shows a table highlighting the mean of each aesthetigram category. These indications are meant to present the areas to which pedagogical attention should be given (i.e., if the means of the emotions category is low, then teachers, in this case, should address responses in that area). These quantitative details could not constitute the sole results of this study, hence the need to explain qualitatively the pedagogical and research implications of the aesthetigram.

Within their map, participants placed their responses in the categories I had previously devised (emotions, stylistic analysis, interpretation, and personal meaning). The organizational categories function as clusters for

charting data for further analysis (White, 2007). This procedure allowed for analysis consistency. I analyzed the 71 completed pre-tests and post-tests and verified whether the activity lead to an accrued interest in French Quebec literature. I share an example of an aesthetigram as well as qualitative data in the next section.

Aesthetigram Sample and Qualitative Data

The following results depict a 5A social sciences student's experience. In her pre-test, Lynn[1] noted that her interest in French Quebec literature was 'weak', mainly because reading is a passive activity. She wrote: "I read sometimes but not often, because I prefer activities that make me move." Nevertheless, she indicated that she enjoyed reading French Quebec novels, plays, and short stories within the context of French classes. As such, Lynn might categorize her interest in French Quebec literature as 'weak', but she is not necessarily reluctant to read such literature in her French classes.

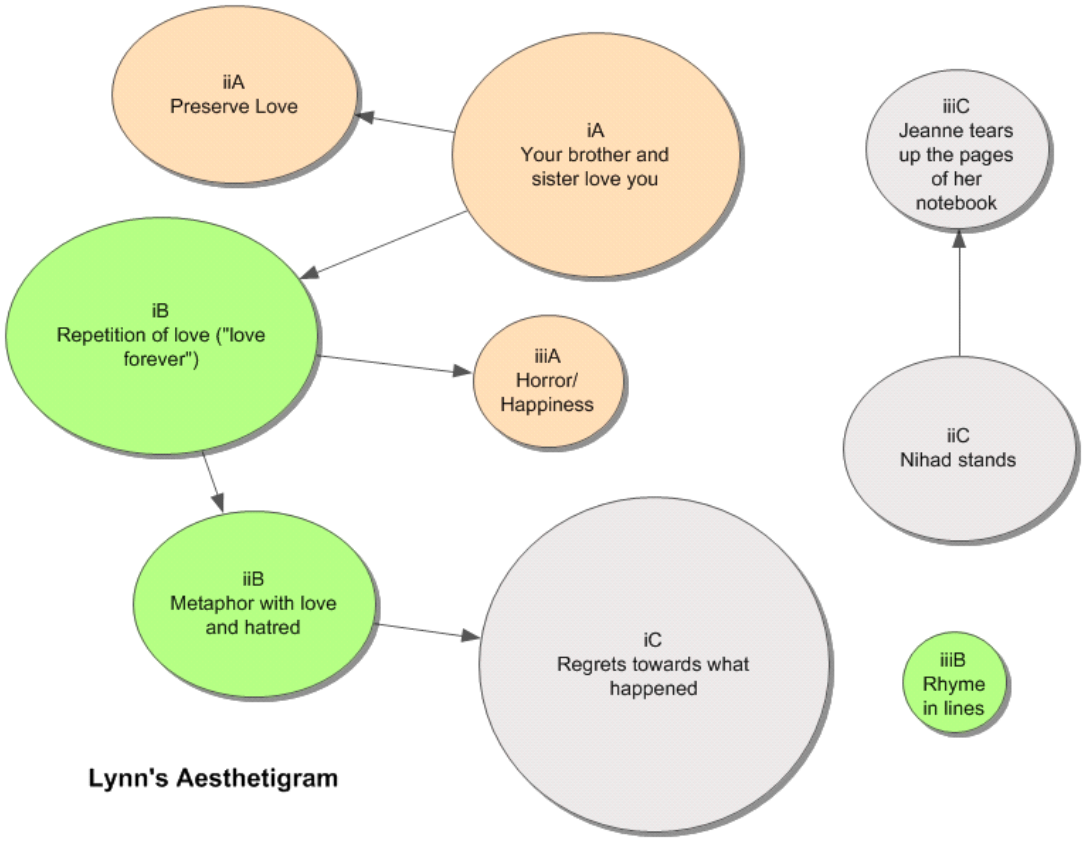
In her aesthetigram (Figure 1), Lynn illustrated three elements in three of the four categories. Each element is represented by roman numerals (i-iii), and the categories are defined as follows: (A) emotions, (B) stylistic analysis, (C) interpretation, and (D) personal meaning. The circles' different sizes represent the importance of each element, as determined by the student. The colours illustrate the distribution of the different

[1] This pseudonym was attributed to the student for confidentiality purposes.

categories. Her observations show that she provided three elements in the first three categories, and dismissed the fourth one (personal meaning).

This mapping exercise indicates that the personal meaning category was either not important to the student, or that she could not identify with any element of that scene. The arrows represent the links the student outlined between the elements and categories. These relationships demonstrate Lynn's understanding and exploration of the scene, and can help her teacher understand where the discussion can be oriented. For example, Lynn drew an arrow between iA ("your brother and sister love you") and iB ("repetition of love – love forever"). This illustration shows the discovery of a relationship between elements of different categories (i.e., (A) emotions and (B) stylistic analysis), which can help the student achieve a holistic understanding of the scene, and inform the teacher on the importance of discussing these connections in class. Lynn's aesthetigram also illustrates links between elements of the same category iA ("your brother and sister love you") and iiA ("preserve love"). This can further spark a discussion on the relevance of exploring a large spectrum of examples within a given category. For example, the elements in the emotions category can serve as examples to show other students how emotions are understood and represented in the scene. These teacher-student and student-student exchanges can contribute to a multi-faceted understanding of the scene, and foster interest in reading as student responses are *valued and discussed* rather than *ignored and tossed away*.

Figure 1. Lynn's Aesthetigram in response to scene 37 of *Incendies*



A discussion can also emerge from isolated elements found in the aesthetigram. For instance, Lynn categorized the third element of the stylistic analysis (iiB, "Rhyme in lines") as an isolated aspect of the scene.

This setting can be addressed in class by discussing with students whether the element can be linked to others in the remaining categories. These rich talks can lead to identify relationships and even gaps in responses, thus encouraging students to explore different angles of the narrative and deepen their understanding of the text.

In her post-test, Lynn indicated that her attitude towards French Quebec literature changed in a positive way following the aesthetigram activity. She noted that she discovered a new analytical method to understand the scene, and that she felt more motivated to read in her French class than prior to the activity. Lynn felt more motivated to know more about French Quebec plays, categorizing her interest in French Quebec literature as "moderate." This shows an increased interest of one level in comparison with the pre-test. Lynn expressed that the aesthetigram activity helped her "highlight the things that touched [her] most as well as the most important elements." She emphasized she could use aesthetigrams again in her French or even English literature classes, and concluded: "I will certainly use aesthetigrams when preparing for school exams." These answers suggest the benefits of aesthetigrams to her learning in multiple settings (French and English classes) and point to their potential use in preparation for future examinations.

Quantitative Results

Paired-samples T Test Results:

Interest in French Quebec Literature

Three paired-samples t tests (one per class) were used to see if the aesthetigram activity led to an increase of students' interest in French Quebec literature. The null hypothesis was: "aesthetigram making does not raise interest in French Quebec literature." In contrast, the alternative hypothesis was: "aesthetigram making raises interest in French Quebec

literature." I categorized the data according to a five-point Likert scale: very low interest = 1, low interest = 2, moderate interest = 3, high interest = 4, very high interest = 5. Quantitative data was analyzed with SPSS version 20.0.

5A Students

The results indicated that the mean interest in French Quebec literature in the post-test (M=2.1250, SD=1.15392) was significantly greater than in the pre-test (M=2.8333, SD=.91683) conditions; t(24)=-4.041, p=.001. The 95% confidence interval for the mean difference between the two ratings was -.107 to -.345. Since the value of t is -4.041 at $p < .001$, the mean difference (-0.708) is statistically different, i.e. the probability that these results were obtained by chance alone is .001. According to the significance of .001, which is less than .05, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis is considered and implies that aesthetigram making raised interest in French Quebec literature for this particular group of students. This result presents notable differences, or increase, between pre- and post-tests.

5B Students

In 5B, the quantitative results also revealed that the mean interest in French Quebec literature in the post-test (M=2.8333, SD=.61835) was significantly greater than in the pre-test (M=2.3889, SD=.69780) conditions; t(18)=-3.688, p=.002. As for the 95% confidence interval for the mean difference between the two ratings, it stood at -.698 to -.190. As the value of t is -3.688 at $p < .002$, the mean difference (-0.444) is also statistically

different, thereby demonstrating that the probability these results were solely obtained by chance is .002. The significance of .002, which is less than .05, illustrates that the null hypothesis is rejected. As such, the alternative hypothesis is considered, which implies that the aesthetigram activity did in fact raise interest in French Quebec literature. These statistics suggests a strong level of difference, or increase, between pre- and post-tests, as did those of the 5A students.

5C Students

The statistics derived from 5C students' written responses in the pre- and post-tests revealed, as in the two other classes, that the mean interest in French Quebec literature in the post-test (M=3.1034, SD=.97632) was significantly greater than in the pre-test (M=2.5517, SD=1.05513) conditions; t(29)=-4.332, p=.000172. For this group, the 95% confidence interval for the mean difference between the two ratings was -.812 to -.290. As the value of t is -4.332 at $p < .000172$, the mean difference (-0.55172) is statistically different. The probability that these results were obtained by chance alone indeed stands at a mere .000172. The significance of .000172, which is significantly less than .05, shows that the null hypothesis is rejected. The alternative hypothesis should therefore be considered, and can thus signify that aesthetigram making raised interest in French Quebec literature in this group. Similarly to the 5A and 5B classes, the data point to a strong level of difference, or increase, after the aesthetigram activity.

Quantitative Results: Interest in French Quebec Literature

The results featured in Table 1, which has been adapted from Wilcoxon's signed-rank test, demonstrate students' responses regarding their interest in French Quebec literature. As noted in the post-tests, the percentage of students whose interest remained the same comes to 46.48%. Half (50.71%) the students showed an increased interest of one (40.85%) to two units (9.86%). An increased interest of one unit can imply a difference from low to moderate, whereas an increase of two units can signify an increased interest from low to high. In this study, the decreased interest is considered insignificant, as it represents 2.82% of the total number of students. Given that half of the students demonstrated an increased level of interest, and approximately 46% of students demonstrated an unchanging level of interest, the aesthetigram activity was successful in terms of the research's fixed objective of raising interest in French Quebec literature.

Table 1
Students' Interest in French Quebec Literature, after the Aesthetigram Activity

	5A (N=24)	5B (N=18)	5C (N=29)	Number of Students	Total %
Constant Interest	10	10	13	33	46.48
Increased +1 unit	8	8	13	29	40.85
Increased +2 units	5	0	2	7	9.86
Decreased -1 unit	1	0	1	2	2.82
Decreased -2 units	0	0	0	0	0

Quantitative Results:

Number of Aesthetigram Elements per Category

To classify the data, I used a table to represent the different means of each category. As the number of elements per category (Table 2) indicates tendencies in responses, it is important to showcase the quantitative data derived from the aesthetigram activity. These statistics provide the educator with concrete indications of the directions in which she should guide class discussions.

Table 2
Mean Number of Asthetigram Elements Charted in Each Category by Group

	Group Means		
	5A (N=24)	5B (N=18)	5C (N=29)
Emotions	2.38	2.39	2.45
Stylistic Analysis	2.33	2.44	2.10
Interpretation	1.96	1.66	1.69
Personal Meaning	0.88	0.28	1.00

In each class, results show that students charted fewer elements in the personal meaning section. This indicates directions educators can take for the study of a text. In this particular case, they might address ways in which this category was understood, and then suggest alternative solutions. They could first ask the class: "How did you understand the personal meaning category?" After listening to and mediating students' responses, educators might address their own interpretation for the least

popular category. Being aware of such matters certainly contributes to adopting appropriate methods for addressing these categories, pinpointing gaps in comprehension, developing further interest in reading.

Limitations

Educators seldom have the time to calculate detailed statistics for each group of students. Indeed, preparing a pre- and post-test, then analyzing the emerging data is time consuming and prone to research rather than pedagogy. Educators can, however, use their judgement to identify weak points in students' understanding of the literary text, exploiting aesthetigrams' pedagogical qualities rather than their statistical properties. We have to make the distinction on when best to use aesthetigrams for research or pedagogy.

Though this study shows promising results for aesthetigram use in the literature classroom, the results would be difficult to generalize because of the nature of aesthetic responses, which are individually constructed and specific to each participant's values and perceptive capabilities (White, 2007). This study is therefore partly of an illustrative nature, which means that it is "descriptive in character and intended to add realism and in-depth examples to other information about a program or policy" (Anderson & Arsenault, 1998, p. 155). The "program or policy" is the use of aesthetigrams, and the examples are provided with the analysis of the aesthetic experiences through the charting of responses in the aesthetigrams. Students' written responses within aesthetigrams were

extremely helpful and writing is not merely the transcribing of some reality (Richardson, 2000). Rather, writing—of all the texts, notes, presentations, and possibilities—is also a process of discovery of the subject and of the self. Despite the individual nature of student responses, the trends noted in the post-test are generalizable, as a significant number of participants were involved and as the multicultural setting is not exclusive to the Montreal private high school in which this study was conducted.

It seems reasonable to suggest that measuring aesthetic responses to a single literary work cannot directly lead to increased interest in French Quebec literature as a whole. However, the aesthetigram construction in response to a French Quebec play, as demonstrated in the post-tests, showed that students were more likely to read a French Quebec book. In other words, if students are encouraged to write their responses, share them in a classroom setting, and reflect on their values, they will be more likely to develop interest in French Quebec literature, or any literature chosen by the educator. This newfound interest might partly be due to the educator's effort of fostering students' openness and self-awareness. This investigation of self is important, as students' responses demonstrate individuality and are shaped by differences in their knowledge, beliefs, and purposes (Beach, Appleman, Hynds, & Wilhelm, 2011). By acknowledging and discussing these individualities, teachers can empower students and cultivate their agency.

Conclusion and Future Research

Due to its themes and foci, *Incendies* forced students out of their comfort zone all the while instilling a desire to expand their knowledge and understanding of their peers' opinions. This practice leads to the exploration of students' thoughts through subsequent in-class discussions, which allows for meaning-making constructions and the opportunity to open students' minds on the opinions discussed during the activity.

Though aesthetigram making is a procedure that has hardly been used in the field of aesthetic education with literature, this study has nonetheless given results that show potential for fostering interest in literature through values awareness. As a pedagogical tool, the mapping exercise encourages students to practice writing through the discovery of subject and self, allowing them to explore areas that would otherwise be difficult to access in their literature class. As a research tool, the aesthetigram activity allows for an understanding of students' aesthetic, emotional and intellectual responses to literature. The investigation into students' responses is fundamental for literature pedagogy, as it will likely lead students to discover themselves and literature which, in turn, might foster learning. This study's qualitative and quantitative results also show that aesthetigrams are conducive to learning in literature classroom settings.

Even though the results provide valuable insights in ways to use aesthetigrams in the literature classroom, this study did not examine how aesthetigrams might have created new competencies in literature

appreciation and production. In line with this observation, future research might address the possibility of aesthetigram-making as a first step that leads to an eventual text production. The latter could be considered both as response to a literary work and as evaluation. To address the two-week time limitation of this study, I add that future research could assess the long-term effects of aesthetigram-making on students' performance in literature classes. In particular, these studies could analyze whether aesthetigram activities lead to improved grades in students' reading comprehension tests.

Future research could include, for instance, the implementation of aesthetigrams in different literature classes with other literary genres. In an English language arts class, it might be of interest to observe students' responses to a short story by the recent Canadian Nobel Prize winner Alice Munro. *Dear Life* (2012), one of her most recent successes, could be amenable to the aesthetigram pedagogy as it provides the reader with a wide array of poignant themes—love, devotion, betrayals, and escape. When exploring these themes, students would be able to *live through* vivid prose, chart their reactions, and negotiate them with their teacher and peers. From there, they would embrace the discovery of literature in its purest and most authentic forms. This is one example of potential artworks to explore. For further agency on the students' part, teachers should ideally be open to accepting book suggestions, as these tend to bolster students' identity development, engagement with literature, and disposition to develop vicarious experiences (Alsup, 2010). Further, the credibility of such experiences can be tested intersubjectively through

students sharing with peers. If we take into account the Husserlian concept that "one defines the self in relation to the world" (White, 2013, p. 110), then we can consider one's perceptions of the world and of literature, in relation to others' and to the text itself. By discussing these themes in the literature classroom, teachers might be one step closer to finding viable solutions to engage students in the texts they give them to read. If "readers can change through vicarious experience; they can grow, develop, ask new questions, think new thoughts, and even feel new emotions," (Alsup, 2010, p. 5) then researchers and educators should strive to make these experiences accessible to students in the literature classroom.

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