VISUAL ART AS A TOOL TO LEARN ABOUT LITERATURE

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ABSTRACT

Purpose - Art forms such as music and drama are among some recognised tools used by educators. This has sparked interest in how art can be used in education, making it a fertile field for educational research. However, there is a missing connection in how drawing can be used as a tool for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students to learn about literature.

Methodology - This paper will incorporate an Arts-Based Research (ABR) method to determine how visual art, particularly drawing, can be used as a tool to advance EFL students' understanding of a selected literary text, Edgar Allan Poe's "The Tell-Tale Heart" (2015) This qualitative study, viewed through the lens of Richard Mayer's Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning (CTML), involved 10 EFL participants and revealed strategies for integrating drawing that

are absent in traditional approaches. Additionally, Hameed's (2022) elements of art, Yenawine's (2014) Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS), and Showalter's (2003) concepts of literature learning will be included to ground the framework of the intervention.

Findings - This study can be regarded as a method to liberate traditional teaching practices into contemporary approaches, serving as a tool to merge cultural knowledge while improving confidence, higher-order thinking skills, and expression. It also allows educators to be flexible and provoke more reflection and participation. The data discusses three main strategies in exploring how integrating drawing can help EFL students learn about literature: mining to trigger thoughts, engaging with the senses, and giving permission to wonder. Visual art allows individuals to create their responses by exploring new ideas and representing emotions, confirming plans, and comprehending the deeper level of literary texts.

Significance – The study will offer insight and work as an alternate strategy for educators and learners alike to utilise visual art as a tool in teaching and learning literature. The findings will also ease the alarming condition where literature teaching and learning are stereotyped as daunting.

Keywords: Arts-based method, EFL learners, learning literature, visual art integration, literature learning tools.

INTRODUCTION

For years, people in all societies and cultures have witnessed the importance of visuals in every aspect of humanity. Visual art has been incorporated as a learning tool across all ages and backgrounds to harness creativity, build confidence, and enhance learning. In the past 20 years, there has been a growth in the number of publications designed and conducted to understand the use of Arts-Based Methods (ABM) in learning (Dawson & Lee, 2018; O'Toole & Dunn, 2020). One noticeable significance outlined in using ABM is that both disciplines value and encourage imagination, storytelling, creativity, and meaning discovery in human experience, paving the way to create and explore alternate worlds through symbols and language. Simultaneously, incorporating enactment and reflection can support people in critically understanding our world. Such aspirations in using

visual art in literature learning allow learners to explore visual images, attitudes, and roles and embody and identify with the situations presented. Hence, integrating visual art into literature teaching and learning paves the way for learners to embody research methods to discover representations of figurative language within the text's historical contents, translating the images, blending excerpts, images, and words to organise learner's research (Van Duinen & Mawdsley Sherwood, 2019).

Sadly, Salim (2023) observed that tertiary educators find teaching and learning literature a dreadful task, as researchers reported that educators find it challenging to kindle their interest in learning literature. Salim (2023) also highlighted the challenges in crafting engaging and substantial literature lessons as educators feel "unguided." Interestingly, however, many models have been developed over years of research on the approaches and methods to teach literature. This includes the *Language Model*, which emphasizes grammar, syntactic, and lexical aspects of literary texts, and the expanded *Cultural Model*, which considers the importance of culture, values, and historical contexts of literary works. Methods of teaching literature include traditional approaches where educators lead most of the learning sessions, the reader-response approach, stylistic approaches, and even memorisation techniques (Showalter, 2003). Nonetheless, a recent study by Benfares (2023) explained that literature students today still face two major obstacles in learning literature: firstly, the embarrassment of admitting they lack the strategy to read and understand the text, and secondly, students do not have the time to read texts. With such literature developed over years of research to equip educators with the skills required to teach and help students learn literature, the investigators would like to argue that perhaps educators should tap into what is already available and accessible as well as discover, integrate, and incorporate tools and methods to equip learners with the skills to learn about literature.

Within the scope of literature, Dunn and Jones (2022) reported that using active experiences engages literature students allowing them the freedom to freely explore literary characters, sparking sheer joy, and awakening their love for literature. Interestingly, from such practices in the literature learning classroom, it is clear that none of these experiences involved deep analysis of literary devices in the text, comprehension exercises, or decontextualised language activities. Dunn and Jones (2022) observed that memories surfaced in these

experiences between instructors and learners, revealing instructors' passion and artistry, developing empathy for key characters, and challenging learners' interest in embodying learning. Dunn and Jones (2022) also highlighted how employing embodied, improvised, and collaborative activities using arts for literature learning created opportunities for learners to explore complex languages and build vocabulary. Additionally, Ingraham and Nuttall (2016) investigated how integrating visual art increased the aura of arts integration in a classroom setting. Notably, such practices increased students' motivation and confidence. Teachers, educators, parents, and students alike were reported to feel valued (Ingraham & Nuttall, 2016), fostering a sense of openness and respect among them. Therefore, by putting literature into action, learners take responsibility for creating highly collaborative modes of expression through language and their creations, bringing time, narrative, and language to life through artistic means of expression and learning.

Jäntti (2019) studied teachers' beliefs, attitudes, and practices toward integrating visual arts in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) setting. The study reported that Finnish teachers had positive attitudes towards arts-integrated curricula despite it being relatively new to them. They believe that EFL, as a natural language of science, can efficiently merge cultural knowledge while increasing students' confidence and self-expression (Jäntti, 2019). However, the study also highlighted teachers' nervousness about practising visual arts integration in their classrooms, often feeling "non-artistic" (Jäntti, 2019). Supporting this view, Fagan (2015), who explored arts integration, suggested educators emphasise the effectiveness of using arts in teaching and learning to enhance student engagement and learning experiences.

Nevertheless, the study points out a loophole where integrating arts or using ABM requires extensive time and planning, and may not impact standardized test scores. Educators recognise the importance of arts in teaching and learning, yet the study indicated that few teachers integrate visual arts due to a lack of training in this area (Fagan, 2015). In contrast, as suggested by Leavy (2022), integrating visual art does not require educators and researchers to be experts in arts; rather, it allows for fluidity, flexibility, openness, reflection, provocation, and participation, fostering multiple meanings and promoting dialogue. It is essential to note, as Eisner (2002) argued, that art should not solely focus on academic achievement and scrutinized scores. Therefore, the

aim of this paper is not to debate whether visual art can be used purely for academic achievement. Two research objectives guided this study:

1. To examine the strategies of integrating visual art, particularly drawing, to aid EFL literature students in interpreting the selected literary text.
2. To explore the effectiveness of visual art, particularly drawing, in enhancing EFL literature students' ability to interpret the selected literary text.

Thus, the present study aims to explore the strategies educators can use to integrate visual art, specifically drawing, into their teaching practices. Simultaneously, its seeks to understand how EFL students can benefit from such an approach to learning about literature. The investigators hope that this study on integrating visual art into an EFL English Literature class will enable educators to implement these strategies in their professional teaching practices.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Visual art involves the use of symbols, formats, representations, and images to express thoughts, feelings, and ideas. In education, constructing images, spatial organisation, and drawing symbols are integral practices. However, the integration of visual art into teaching and learning aims not to emphasize the quality of artwork produced, but rather to enhance the educational process. Its application extends beyond accompanying lectures or serving solely as teaching aids. The flexibility of integrating visual art has spurred numerous studies, including those by Jäntti (2019), Van Duinen and Mawdsley Sherwood (2019), and Zhang (2022), among others. These studies have explored how visual art can be effectively integrated into education, highlighting its success in increasing motivation, promoting higher-order thinking skills, reducing affective filters and anxiety, and fostering anticipation. However, studies such as those by Baker (2016) and Jäntti (2019) have also noted that this flexibility has left educators feeling inadequate and uncertain about integrating visual art due to a lack of training, reinforcement, and comprehensive planning for its educational integration. Therefore, there is a critical need for attention in this area. Integrating visual art enables learners to use visuals to convey ideas from text and express them through images (Akimova, 2020). Thus, learners translate texts into images,

enabling them to analyse and interpret literary texts in a tangible form. According to Van Duinen and Mawdsley Sherwood (2019), this process involves identifying patterns in texts and posing questions, leading learners to naturally create mental representations that are then articulated through symbols. Moreover, engaging in creating visual artwork involves analysing visual art in terms of form, subject matter, and materials (Van Duinen & Mawdsley Sherwood, 2019). Using visual art to learn about literature thus emphasises using symbols and different formats to highlight significant points during the learning process. Telfer-Radzat and Brouillette (2021) asserts that this method is exploratory, utilising colours, space, diagrams, design, and patterns to construct meaning from the learning experience.

From this perspective, Mayer (2020) argues that learning results not only from words but also from the combination of words and pictures. Words may be presented in spoken or written form, while pictures can take the form of graphical imagery. According toMayer's Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning (CTML), the focus is on establishing meaningful connections between words and pictures. Meanwhile, learning encourages learners to form " coherent mental representations from the presented material" (Sorden, 2012). That learners should actively engage with the material to construct new knowledge. Mayer (2020) discusses three theoretical assumptions within CTML: the dual channel assumption, the limited capacity assumption, and the active processing assumption. The dual-channel assumption suggests that learners can utilise both verbal and visual channels in their working memory simultaneously to process information, thereby enhancing learning. The limited capacity assumption posits that the amount of information a learner can process in one channel at a time is limited. In contrast, the active processing assumption asserts that learners learn effectively when they engage in cognitive processes to construct coherent mental representations. This involves identifying relevant information, organising it into cognitive structures, and integrating it with prior knowledge (Mayer, 2020).

Moving forward, Mayer (2020) also highlighted the following instructional principles in CTML that are relevant to this study:
- Coherence Principle: Learners experience improved learning when additional materials are excluded.
- Redundancy Principle: Learners learn better when information is presented through both graphics and narration rather than separating graphics, narration, and printed text.

- Spatial Contiguity Principle: Learning is enhanced when corresponding words and pictures are placed close to each other.
- Temporal Contiguity Principle: Learning is improved when words and pictures are presented simultaneously rather than sequentially.
- Pre-training Principle: Learners benefit from pre-training on the names and characteristics of key components before engaging with multimedia messages.
- Modality Principle: Learning is enhanced when learner engages with graphics and narration rather than with graphics and printed text.
- Multimedia Principle: Learners learn better from combined words and pictures than from words alone.
- Personalisation Principle: A conversational style aids learning more effectively than a formal style.

In the context of CTML (conceptual framework illustrated in Figure 1), the principles underlying this study is conceptualised. The first principle is based on Hameed's (2022) elements of visual art, which constitute the fundamental composition of artworks and are guided by techniques known as principles. According to Hameed (2022), these elements include line, shape or form, space, value, colour, and texture. The principles of art encompass emphasis, balance, unity/harmony, contrast, movement/rhythm, pattern/repetition, and scale/proportion. To navigate the integration of visual art, Yenawine's (2014) Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) will be utilised. VTS was originally developed by Yenawine (2014) based on Arnheim's (1974) guide to facilitate and validate learners' discovery processes when integrating visual art. Yenawine (2014) suggests aiding learners by granting them "permission to wonder," encouraging them to discuss their observations, provide evidence for their ideas, consider others' viewpoints, and explore various interpretations that arise. Yenawine (2014) summarises VTS into the following elements:
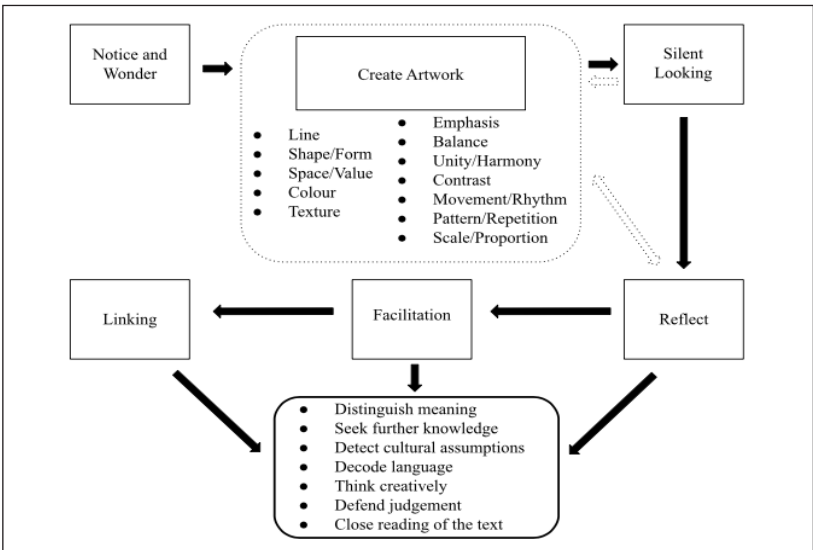
- *The Group:* Participants who engage in a shared experience.
- *The Subject*: Artworks that embody both familiarity and ambiguity.
- *Silent Looking:* Observing artworks silently.
- *Good Questions*: Formulating effective questions to stimulate participants' exploration of unfamiliar objects.

- *Facilitation:* Responding and facilitating participants' questions.
- *Paraphrasing*: Acknowledging responses.
- *Linking*: Connecting all individual responses to form the main idea.
- *Closing:* Grounding and summarising free-range questions and valuing the artwork.

By drawing on Yenawine's (2014) elements, The investigators adapted Yenawine's (2014) VTS framework by integrating elements of the arts. The adapted approach incorporates the following key concepts: 'notice and wonder,' creating artwork, silent observation, reflecting, facilitation, and linking (or connecting ideas). To validate the effectiveness of this adapted VTS, the study draws on Showalter's (2003) literature on teaching and learning concepts. Specifically, it applies Showalter's (2003) teaching literature criteria which emphasises that EFL students should develop skills in interpreting meaning, seeking deeper understanding, and recognising cultural perspectives. Additionally, it involves analysing language use, fostering creative thinking, defending interpretations and engaging in close textual analysis. These elements together underpin and inform the entire literary teaching and learning process.

Figure 1

Visual Art (Drawing) Integration Framework

METHODOLOGY

This qualitative study adopts an Arts-Based Research (ABR) methodology. To explore the application of ABR in this context, the investigators focus specifically on one visual art practice: drawing. According to Leavy (2022, p. 207), various visual art forms rely on visual images and practices that tap into the ability of art to "provoke, evoke and express nonverbal and preverbal knowledge." When the arts are integrated into teaching and learning, a learner's classroom experience becomes highly context-specific. This individualistic nature makes the impact of art difficult to quantify. The investigators argue that a tertiary student's classroom experience with the arts is unique and difficult to categorise. Nevertheless, through local investigations, the researchers gathered data and gained insights into how visual art, particularly drawing, can assist EFL learners.

A total of 10 student participants were selected via convenience sampling, which may limit the generalisability of results. However, given the ABR nature of this study, the investigators designed a sampling method based on Wang et al.'s (2017) framework. Wang et al. (2017) asserts that ABR is employed to "satisfy artist-researchers' desire for an in-depth understanding as well as a need for surprise, and potentially "unsettle" things, raising awareness of significant social, educational and political issues whilst offering opportunities to embark on further inquiry and actions" (p. 11). Acting as practitioner-researchers, as advocated by Mertler (2019), the investigators took on roles where they observed and participated in the research process, aiming to gain first-hand insights into participants' patterns and behaviours (Mertler, 2019). Initally, following Mertler's (2019) suggestions, observations were conducted discreetly from a distance, with minimal interaction with the participants. Progressing to the observer-as-participant stage, investigators briefly engaged with participants to assist and answer questions, then transitioned to the participant-as-observer phase, actively interacting with the participants while continuing to observe and take notes (Mertler, 2019). Finally, in the full participant phase, investigators immerse themselves in the "community" as active participants and researchers (Mertler, 2019).

The data were gathered through participant observations, open-ended interviews, field notes, and visual analysis of student artworks. In pursuit

of this study's objectives, the investigators meticulously documented incidents through observation notes, and student artworks were systematically captured for documentation purposes. It is important to note that, in line with the research's methodology, the quality of the artwork was not considered in the evaluation process. According to Merriam (2009, p.176), data can be descriptively categorised into themes, categories, theoretical models. Therefore, the data collected will undergo analysis in three phases: category construction/coding, category naming, and theoretical refinement (Merriam, 2009). In the first phase, instructional moments and strategies deemed pertinent to achieving objectives were identified and grouped as axial codes (Merriam, 2009). These codes were then organised into categories that reflect the investigators' observations from the data (Merriam, 2009, p. 184). In the final phase, data were chronologically organised and discussed from specific descriptions to abstract levels, aiming to describe the observed phenomenon. According to Merriam (2009, p. 188), this process involves theorising based on the data, which aids in developing theories explaining aspects of practice and inferring future activities. Throughout the intervention, conversations among the participants were recorded to assess intervention effectiveness, and a focused group interview at the end of the intervention confirmed observed events.

To ensure trustworthiness, member checking was conducted where an external investigator not involved in the project conducted a thorough review of the research report, providing feedback on its strengths and weaknesses (Merriam, 2009). Given the involvement of student participants, official consent forms were distributed to obtain permission for data collection, recording, and use, while ensuring the protection of personal information.

FINDINGS

The focus of this section is to highlight the findings of this research. A lesson plan was implemented based on the framework displayed below:

Table 1

Participant Visual Art Intervention Lesson Plan

TEXT	'The Tell-Tale Heart' by Edgar Allan Poe.
LEARNING OUTCOMES	1. Demonstrate an understanding of the literary text. 2. Apply knowledge of the selected literary theory to text interpretation. 3. Demonstrate skills in the analysis of literary works. 4. Discuss and defend judgement and interpretation of text before peers.
SKILLS ASSESSED	1. Cognitive skills. 2. Affective skills.
LITERARY ANALYSIS APPROACH	Psychoanalysis Approach.
TOOLS	Literary text, pen, markers, drawing paper.

STEPS	DURATION	INTERVENTION
Lecture	60 minutes	Introduction to Sigmund Freud's *Psychoanalysis* theory.
Introduction to text	15 minutes	Reading of the text.
Create artwork	20 minutes	Provide instructions to participants: • Identify the character's ID, Ego, and Superego. • Explain how participants can incorporate elements and principles of visual art.
Silent looking	5 minutes	Participants were guided to display their artworks in front of their peers and looked silently at the artworks.
Reflect	5 minutes	Participants were given time to reflect on the artworks of their peers and make additional amendments to their artwork if needed.
Facilitation	10 minutes	Incorporating Yenawine (2014) VTS: • What is going on in these pictures? • What makes you say that? • What more can you find?
Linking	5 minutes	The investigators summarised participants' discussions.
Interview	30 minutes	Participants were interviewed.

Research Objective 1: Strategies for Integrating Visual Arts

After categorising the data in each domain during the integration process, the investigators identified three key strategies that proved effective in incorporating visual art, particularly drawing, into a literature classroom. These strategies emerged consistently throughout the integration period. They are as follows:

1. "Mine" to trigger thoughts.
2. Engaging with the senses.
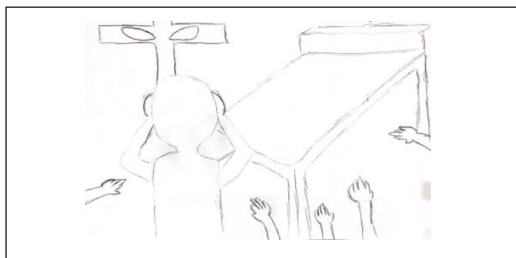3. Giving permission to wonder.

Strategy 1: "Mine" To Trigger Thoughts

Initially, participants were instructed simply to "draw how they feel about the short story." Observing their responses, the investigators noted initial confusion and silence among the participants. One participant voiced, "How can I draw how I feel?" Despite these initial challenges, the investigators recognised this shared experience as potentially valuable. The investigators continued probing deeper into participants' emotions, thoughts, and feelings. During subsequent interviews, participants expressed understanding of the task but struggled with its execution. Despite seeming like a negative outcome, the investigators believed that this shared experience could yield significant insights. They encouraged further exploration but posing additional questions such as the following:

1. How do you feel after reading the text?
2. If you were to use a shape to represent your current feelings, what would it be?
3. How would you visually represent the main unnamed narrator from the short story?

Figure 2

Participant Sample 1 Indicating the Result of the Intervention

Participants began to actively engage with the investigators during the study. As illustrated in Figure 2, one participant expressed feeling a profound sense of horror and terror after reading the text, perceiving the narrator as a madman. As shown in the figure, this participant in particular was able to probe into his thoughts about what the character was thinking at that period of time. Recognising that feelings and emotions are abstract and intangible, the participants chose to represent these emotions and what the character was undergoing at that time using organic shapes. Through the intervention, it was noticed that there was a significant change whereby the participants were able to explore more deeper insight into their thought process as compared to just simply reading the text itself. By tapping into their inner thought process, the participants were observed to be able to perceive a different perspective of the character in the selected literary work.

Strategy 2: Engaging With The Senses

Creating a meaningful artwork requires artists to utilise basic art elements that define the subject of their painting. These elements include balance, shape, space, light, movement, form, expression, and dynamics (Arnheim, 1974). In this study, the investigators guided the participants to incorporate these principles and art elements, aiming to facilitate the creation of artwork that resonates with emotions and embodied experiences (Leavy, 2022). After participants were encouraged to "mine" their thoughts, they were tasked with translating these thoughts onto paper—which is basically challenging. This process involves conveying abstract thoughts, emotions, and ideas which are inherently subjective in nature.

Figure 3

Participant Sample 2 Indicating the Result of the Intervention

In Figure 3, it is evident that colour interacts with form, space, and light to create effects, mood, and emotions, adding dynamic tension to the artwork's composition (Arnheim, 1974). The participants' artworks represented what Yenawine (2014) describes as "evidential reasoning," where their creations serves as visual evidence to support their ideas. Through the thoughtful integration of colour, light, form, balance, and shape, participants successfully conveyed their intended expressions. The investigators allowed the participants an additional 30 minutes to create their artworks, providing ample space for individual expression. Notably, participants actively engaged in discussions with their peers about Poe's main character. Conversations often centred around themes of self-absorption and the character's compulsive urge to commit murder.

Student A: I think the main character is simply agitated by the eye.
Student B: But I don't get it. Why the eye? What is so agitating about
*   it?*
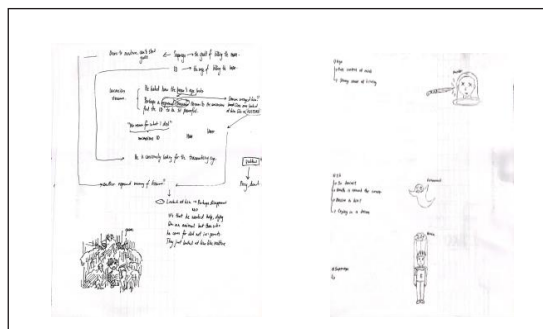*Student C: He is consciously looking for the traumatising eye.*
Student B: So does this mean someone agitated him? Someone
*   preyed on him? That is why?*
Student A: Is it another representation of his memory?

While the students were conversing, two participants started creating the following artworks:

Figure 4

Participant Samples 3 And 4 Indicating the Results of the Intervention

The participants in this study expressed their interpretation of the text by creating images of their personal responses to the ID, Ego, and Superego of the unnamed narrator, as depicted in Figure 4. During

interviews, they connected their artworks to the text, suggesting that the character's intense desire might stem from recurrent traumatic memories. One participant remarked, "There are some things that we cannot express really well. Maybe visual art is the way for you to express it completely. I believe art is like text in a way. With text, we read between the lines. With art, it's similar – we see between the strokes or shapes.." Feedback from the study highlighted the effectiveness of integrating visual art, with participants explaining how it helped them to grasp abstract concepts that they found difficult to articulate and evoke emotions. This systematic approach facilitated deeper understanding, categorised concepts, encouraged discussions by offering diverse viewpoints, and provided a comprehensive overview.
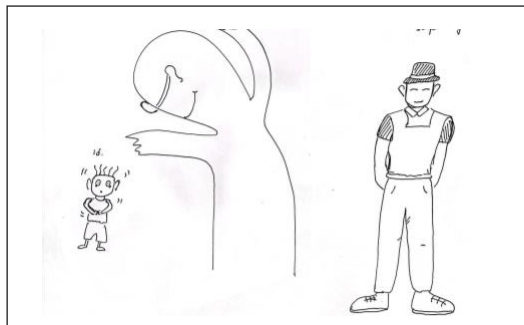
Strategy 3: Giving Permission To Wonder

Yenawine (2014) discusses the concept of giving learners the "permission to wonder," as outlined in VTS. VTS provides learners with a student-centred approach for exploring artworks, encouraging learners to observe critically, engage in discussions about their interpretations, deepen their understanding, and support their ideas with evidence. At the same time, it also fosters an environment where learners can listen and respect diverse viewpoints. In this study, educators played a crucial role in facilitating these conversations, creating a safe space for participants to explore new and diverse interpretations of artworks.

As part of the process, participants were instructed to silently observe their peers' artworks, fostering a reflective atmosphere. Figure 5, which follows, presents one of the selected artworks for silent contemplation.
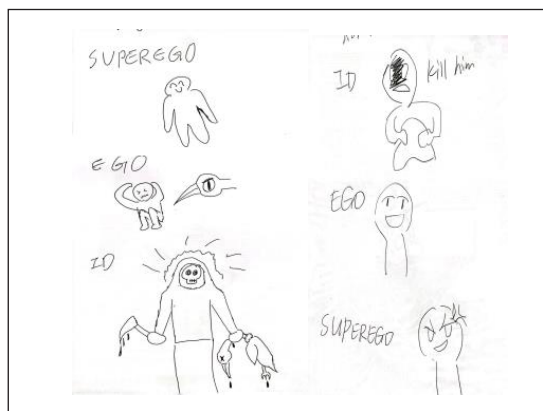
Figure 5

Participant Sample 5 Indicating the Result of the Intervention

During this phase, Yenawine (2014) emphasises the importance for educators to allow learners time to think before encouraging them to speak. Gazing at artworks prompts deep curiosity, enabling learners to engage in active thinking and derive meaning from complex situations. This visual exploration cultivates observational skills and and encourages critical inquiry into the meaning or message of the subject (Yenawine, 2014). Following their initial artwork creation, participants were given 10 minutes to reflect on their drawings. Interestingly, three participants revisited their drawings and created additional artwork. When questioned, the participants explained that they had developed new insights into the meaning of the text. Of particular interest, these participants began discussing themes of guilt and innocence using psychoanalytic theory. The conversations naturally unfolded, with participants actively discussing the main character's ego, torn between his urge to commit murder and his Superego's moral constraints.

Figure 6

Participant Sample 6 Indicating the Result of the Intervention

Subsequently, the investigators resumed engagement with the participants. In alignment with ABR, the role of the educator-researcher is not to dominate learning but rather to create a space where participants can interact with their artworks, facilitating the emergence of new knowledge (Leavy, 2022). Prompting questions were strategically employed to initiate conversations. The investigators began by acknowledging the participants' discussions about the main

character during the drawing process, prompting them to describe the character's traits. Gradually, the conversation shifted toward these traits reflected the themes of the short story. Eventually, they delved into interpreting the meaning of the text. As depicted in Figure 6, participants applied their understanding of psychoanalytic theory to their drawings. Discussions revolving around the main character's ID, Ego, and Superego reinforced the narrative theme of the unnamed narrator grappling with guilt and conscience.

Interestingly, participants demonstrated an innate ability to visually represent these "horror-like" elements and discussed their cultural significance within the text. During interviews, several participants described feeling a sense of horror and terror. One participant even mentioned experiencing "goosebumps" while interpreting the text. Conversations then turned towards the supernatural elements, and the author's mental instability as reflections of Gothic literature characteristics prevalent during that time. Participants actively discussed the defining elements of Gothic literature, prompting further research into the Gothic literature movement. They subsequently shared their findings, indicating how VTS facilitation enables learners to build on each other's ideas (Yenawine, 2014).

Research Objective 2: Effectiveness of Integrating Visual Arts

Upon analysing the data, the investigators confirmed that visual art integration effectively reinforces prior understanding through mental imagery and sensory stimulation.

Effectiveness 1: Confirming Prior Understanding Through Mental Imagery
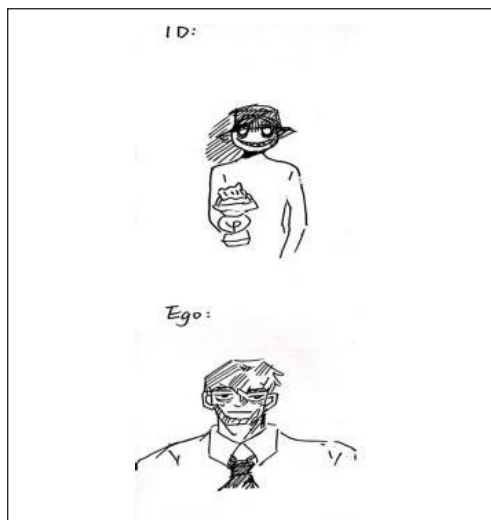
One interesting finding that emerged from this study was the participants' ability to create mental images and symbols. Initially, participants reported understanding the text, and the integration process further validated their comprehension. As one participant remarked:

> *Student P: Yeah, it actually transforms the text into images in our heads so that we can better comprehend the content.*

This interview excerpt underscores how participants already had mental images formed when initially reading the text, indicating prior knowledge with its themes. Engaging in the drawing process allowed them to solidify these mental images, enhancing their understanding through visual representation. This intentional drawing process became a form of visual expression of what the participants could not initially articulate using words. Through the use of different symbols and shapes, the participants were able to narrate their understanding and interpretation of the text more vividly.

Figure 7

Participant Sample 7 Indicating the Result of the Intervention

In Figure 7, a participant vividly depicted the ID and Ego of the main character using visual art elements, portraying the hidden character in a darker and more sinister light compared to his Ego. Reflecting on this representation, a participant shared during an interview:

> *Student M: I think by drawing, we can understand that visualising art and writing art are closely linked.*

Effectiveness 2: Triggering The Senses

Participants were observed deeply engaging with literary texts through visual integration. One participant remarked that visual art

allowed her to tangibly express the meaning of the text, reinforcing her understanding:

> Student M: *Drawing symbols on paper and composing them to relate to the story or poem helps me understand the text better.*

Participants elaborated on how visual art enabled them to translate mental images formed while reading into tangible representations, facilitating deeper engagement with the text. Another participant added:

> Student U: *The most exciting part for me is the drawing process. When you draw, you can fully immerse yourself in the story. Viewing characters on paper may seem abstract and detached, but drawing allows for a deeper connection.*

Participants noted how the integration process enabled them to connect more intimately with the story. For instance, one participant initially struggled to understand the text through reading alone. However, through drawing, he could immerse himself better in the narrative and eventually gained a deeper understanding of the text. By tangibly exploring their senses, the drawing process allowed the participants to compose the text through a noticeable form that enabled them to visually observe and articulate their interpretation of the text. This process here enabled a deeper connection with the text whereby the participants now does not feel that the character is an abstract subject rather, one that can be felt and sensed.

DISCUSSION

Based on the findings, it is evident that integrating visual art in literature learning yields significant benefits. According to Telfer-Radzat and Brouillette (2021) visual arts integration connects images with imagination, enabling individuals to visualise actions and imprint these images as lasting ideas. The data collected highlighted that the lack of "good" or "clear" instructions can reveal profound insights into the implications of visual art in the classroom. Observing participants' responses, investigators noted that participants already

had the ability to express their understanding of the text through drawing; the challenge lay in mining, discovering, and extracting these insights. Van Duinen and Mawdsley Sherwood (2019) proposed that teaching literature through visual art involves annotating text patterns and questioning identified patterns, prompting learners to visualise figurative language. Subsequently, learners analyse artworks to shift perspectives and explore how forms, subject matter, and material contribute to the meaning of the text.

Telfer-Radzat and Brouillette (2021) argued for exploring uncertainties in visual arts education, emphasising that integrating visual art initiates a meaning-making process that encourages learners to construct narratives supported by artwork. This process influences learners' attitudes and behaviours towards the subject, stimulating connections between sensory perceptions and language centres in the brain. According to Mayer (2020) and supported by investigators, meaningful connections between words and images foster learning by enabling learners to create comprehensible mental representations from presented material. Therefore, the role of the learner is to engage with the material activity to arrive at knowledge creation. Based on the temporal contiguity principle, learners' learning is enhanced when corresponding words and images are presented simultaneously. Engaging in the art creation process, which involves elements of art, allows learners to utilise their cognitive skills to represent their thoughts visually. This approach facilitates the transfer of textual ideas into visual expressions (Akimova, 2020). Analysing literary text through visual art intensively explores its posture, interpretation, craft, and form. Both literature and visual art benefit from formal analysis and aesthetic appreciation, enhancing learners' understanding and engagement with complex literary concepts.

During the data collection phase, participants were asked to select shapes representing their emotions and thoughts, revealing a natural inclination to use shapes as symbolic representations. This observation align with Arnheim (1974, p. 47), who posited that the perception of shape is influenced by an individual's visual experiences, shaped by the boundaries and visual forces encountered. In addition, Arnheim (1974) further explained that the object's shape includes lines, masses, volumes, and structural skeletons, which participants in this study used to encapsulate their mental experiences. Emphasising balance and shape, participants effectively transferred their thoughts into visual

representations, thereby framing their experiences. Additionally, Arnheim (1974) noted that light interacts with form and space to create visual effects that evoke meaning, mood, and emotions. Manipulating light through different hues and saturations allows artists to imbue artworks with diverse emotional and atmospheric qualities, reinforcing the idea that learners can utilise both verbal and visual channels in working memory concurrently to enhance learning (CTML). Schraw and Richmond (2022, p. 82) argued that learners are able to conceptualise and present their thoughts and ideas through graphics, employing metaphorical thought(s), mental model(s), visualisations to convey messages symbolically. This process allows the participants to construct their learning environments independently, fostering active participation and reflection without constant educator intervention. They were able to enhance their participation and reflection on the text. Hence, this confirms the active processing assumption that learners learn when they are engaged in cognitive processing to form coherent mental representations of their learning experiences by highlighting relevant information, organising them into cognitive structures, and integrating them with prior knowledge (Mayer, 2020).

An interesting observation was participants' high engagement and critical conversations about their understanding and emotional responses to the text. Participants even conducted self-research to deepen their understanding and exchange new knowledge (Benfares, 2023; Telfer-Radzat & Brouillette, 2021). This engagement heightened motivation and engagement, including among quieter participants, during unstructured art periods, facilitating open discussions about their artworks and enhancing learning opportunities. Moerman (2020) supports incorporating reflective talks in visual arts integration to enhance learners' abilities in creating, expressing, and communicating thoughts and experiences, thereby enriching arts-based practices in education.

During interviews, participants expressed mixed responses when asked about the phase at which visual arts integration facilitated their understanding about literature. Although many acknowledged its positive impact on understanding abstract concepts, some participants hesitated when considering whether visual arts integration truly scaffolded their learning. This phenomenon intrigued the investigators, prompting further investigation. This uncertainty may align with findings from Rosario Regan's (2018) study, which suggests that arts

integration enhances academic achievement by promoting creativity and higher-order thinking skills, rather than solely focusing on improving test scores. Visual arts in education, therefore, aims not to assess performance but to enhance understanding and learning experiences among students. Van Duinen and Mawdsley Sherwood (2019) argues that learning about literature through visual arts requires extensive brainstorming, research, and practice to reinforce comprehension of cultural, historical, and social aspects of literary works. According to Mayer's CTML, learners' processing channels have limited capacity, requiring further research and knowledge acquisition to interpret texts alongside visual arts integration. Addressing concerns, Zhang (2022) contends that visual arts integration cultivates social-emotional skills, communication strategies, and cultural awareness during educational activities. Hence, it becomes imperative to recognise learners' responses and experiences when using visual arts as a tool in exploring literature. Facilitators play a crucial role in guiding learners to seek further knowledge during integrations, encouraging artistic comparisons, generalising thoughts and fostering in-depth analysis of literary works.

CONCLUSION

Visual art has served as a versatile tool for the investigators to explore strategies for integrating arts into an EFL literature classroom. Showalter (2003) emphasises the necessity for educators to adopt flexible approaches in teaching literature, given the evolving demands of student engagement. This study identifies effective strategies for integrating visual art into the teaching and learning of literature, fostering EFL learners' research skills and facilitating critical discussions on literary themes in Poe's works. Integrating visual art in EFL contexts engages with learners' aesthetically, providing a platform for personal connections and interpretations of texts. This approach supports Becker's (2020) assertion that visual art integration serves as an alternate approach where learners construct and demonstrate understanding through artistic expression, enhancing interdisciplinary connections and promoting social and academic outcomes. Moreover, visual art integration fosters a more inclusive learning environment, surpassing conventional academic-focused methods to narrow academic performance gaps. This method shifts learning from text-based assessment towards meaningful dialogues between learners and educators, enriching sustained learning experiences.

However, challenges remain regarding the perceived time-intensiveness and educator preparation required for visual art integration in EFL classrooms. Baker (2016) notes educators' apprehensions due to insufficient training and support, leading to reluctance and, in turn, abandonment of the practice. Jäntti's (2019) study further highlights educators' inadequacy with incorporating visual art into lessons, underscoring the need for enhanced training and resources to leverage visual art effectively in their teaching practices. Looking forward, exploring methods such as incorporating drawing in literature studies (Baker, 2016) could offer flexibility and practicality in visual art integration. Future research could focus on quantitative studies to validate the impact of visual art integration on learning outcomes in EFL classrooms.

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