GOING DOWN TO THE LATE 1980'S: THE COMBINED USE OF THE 5 QUESTIONS AND CONCEPT MAPS TO APPROACH POEMS

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Abstract. This paper aims at pointing out Novak and Gowin's project at Cornell Graduate School, in the mid 1970's, on the use of knowledge construction and organization tools known as Concept Mapping combined to the Five Questions. These teaching and learning techniques were implemented to improve their own students 's views on educating so as to motivate those grad students to incorporate such tools in their future, or actual, classroom practice. As one of those students, this author followed Novak and Gowin's steps in her classes in Brazil by applying both the early combination of the 5 Questions+ Concept Maps and Concept Mapping in itself. This text displays three instances of such joint use: two with the author's college students from the perspective of a participant observer and actor, in the context of Literature classes; the third one displays an instance of this author's knowledge construction process based on her experience as Novak and Gowin's student. The examples are records of classroom practice events in this privileged milieu for critical thinking, knowledge construction, and human empowerment for both teacher and learners. This paper emphasizes the relevance of these tools within the meaningful learning theoretical framework (Ausubel, 2000; Novak and Gowin, 1984) to grant teacher and learners a higher degree of freedom to act upon their own management of knowledge comprised in Literature classes. It also stresses the value of concept maps+ the 5 Questions as instruments that facilitate negotiating and sharing meanings to achieve learning how to learn.

1 Introduction

This paper, which derives from the author's personal experience as grad student and college teacher, reports examples of college students' processes of knowledge construction as a group work related to the combined use of the 5 Qs and concept maps with literary texts. Examples of such application are displayed in three short poems chosen precisely for their size and fast reading. These instances of use with poems might meet one's need or want to see how these two tools can work together.

Initially, before the launching of user-friendly computers, the Internet, and CmapTools (Cañas et al, 2004) students were analogical using typewriters, hand-written texts and assignments, as well as producing hand-drawn concept maps. Such poems appear here in recent copies using CmapTools of the original hand-drawn maps. The 5 Questions and Concept Maps integrate cooperative class activities that facilitate students' actions towards the sharing of meanings to be grasped and the going back and forth to the draft of their work with the tools so as enable students to modify their expression of thoughts over time, as they could go deeper into feelings and ideas represented in the poems. They worked at their own pace as a group to think more about the poems and to improve the ways they had structured knowledge about the poems with almost the same ease they might have today with all accessible technology. *Almost* because with today's availability of copy and paste and other possibilities, this going continuous retake to one's knowledge production can be done with less effort, which seems to make a difference in a universe marked by fast mass production.

Concept mapping, since those classes at Cornell up the author's last days of teaching Literature to college students, was applied to promote students' autonomy to learn as well as to refine their skills in working as a group. It seems relevant to add that these three decades of concept map use in combination, or not, with the Five Questions in language and literature college teaching have been motivated by Professor Novak's classes at Cornell (Moreira, 1977, 1988) as one of his graduate students involved in the concept map project and by Gowin's ideas of knowledge structuring (1970; 1981). At the time Prof. Novak was testing it with students in the Ithaca (New York) school area district, Prof. Gowin was introducing the use of the 5 Questions as an instrument to unveil knowledge embedded in texts, objects, and events. Prof. Gowin, right after this author had shown him her work with the 5Qs in the poem "Getting Old"[1], by the Brazilian author Mario Quintana, became so much motivated that asked her to apply concept maps and the 5Questions to some of his own poems[2]. He wanted to check whether, or not, concept maps and the 5Qs would work with literary texts, as he had already gathered enough evidence of their value as knowledge unpacking and structuring tools in scientific texts and research projects. When she handed him the concept maps and the answers to the 5Qs applied to his poems, the results took him by surprise, "I now realize some ideas and feelings in these poems I have not been aware of so far!" he exclaimed. He asked her to show them to Prof. Novak. From then on Literature teaching and learning became a locus of application of these two tools. Inasmuch as in the mid-1970's, it was standard procedure, while unveiling a literary text, to use the 5Qs first to get more awareness of its concepts (related to feelings, thoughts, and events) and, as a natural follow up, to organize the chunks of knowledge revealed through the 5Qs, to have students draw concepts maps as a kind of

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[1] Translation of Marli Merker Moreira as a result of a presentation in the discipline Seminar on Translation, Cornell University, 1976.
[2] Such work with Gowin's poems could not be presented here since it concerns an unpublished manuscript.

a pictorial road guide to what they had already constructed about a given text. Results of application of both tools have never been considered as apt to render the final product since learning is an ongoing process: constructed knowledge can be modified as new readings, peer interactions, meaning negotiations occur. The same pattern is followed in the examples presented here and they represent instances of an event that happened at a given time, therefore, they do not intend to be the end result for the 5Qs and/or the concept map. Classroom practice should emphasize education as a continuous process for human empowerment geared at changing the meaning of experience.

2   The Combination of the 5Qs + Concept Maps

According to Gowin, "*the key event in any learning theory should be a teacher teaching meaningful materials to a student who grasps their meanings*" (Gowin, 1981, p. 28) hence, to help a learner share and negotiate such meanings, he proposed a technique, or heuristic, (Gowin, 1970) to facilitate the unveiling of knowledge embedded, more specifically, in research papers, scientific texts in journals and books. By knowledge, he refers to as "*the results or products of inquiry since he is concerned with what others have produced through research and inquiry*" (p.86). He called it the 5 Questions that is "*a method of analysis*" and *such questions and answers can be asked and answered in any order* but all *of them must be used because together they establish coherence in the structure of knowledge* (p. 88). Its purpose is to clarify general and abstract concepts so as to change and construct new meanings from *old* concepts that can be linked to novel ones by thinking and feeling about a text in its context and inserted in the learners' milieu. Knowledge built through deliberate thinking processes about concepts and their relations should be unpacked and structured (Schwabb, 1962) with the support of the 5 Questions. With this heuristic applied to texts, students can "*experience the facility that comes with knowledge in this form, and they experience the fundamental base for subsequent learning*" (p. 88).

Gowin (1970) devised this tool to help teachers and learners unveil and understand knowledge structures in a given domain leading to new linkages in the students' cognitive structure in addition to possible future applications to other texts and life experiences. The original Five Questions related to scientific and technical texts were (Gowin, 1981, p.88): A) What is/are the telling question/s? B) What are the key-concepts? C) What is/are the method/s of inquiry? D) What is/are the knowledge claim/s? E) What is/are the value claim/s?

The telling question(s) is /are asked to organize one's thoughts about a text. It helps readers get focused to go about a piece of written/oral/pictorial text. Any text asks and/or provokes at least one question, if it does not there a problem with such text. Gowin (1981) states "*Telling questions tell on the phenomena of interest. They open events up for further search*" (p.90). The key concepts are linked to the telling question since "*a concept is a sign or symbol that refers to regularities in events*" (p. 92) and facts and help define the "*conceptual structure in a field of study*" (p.92). The method of inquiry "*is a way of trying to answer the telling questions. [...] It is knowledge on how to proceed, to get things done*" (p.98). A concept, according to Novak (1986) "*is a perceived regularity in events or objects designated by a label*" (p.3). Knowledge claims are the answers to the telling question/s and it is/they are *the product of inquiry*" that "*includes a question, concept, methods, and techniques as constituents of the process that produces the knowledge claim*" (p.101). Value claims "*assert the worth of something*" (p.105) connected to the construction of knowledge derived from a text.

In its application to literary texts, the initial set of questions underwent minor changes to fit literary texts. They are: A) What is/are the telling question (s); B) What are the key concepts? ; C) What method does the writer/poet/author use to represent his/her ideas and beliefs[3]? D) What is/are the knowledge claims? E) What are the value claims of such piece of literary writing? In addition, the first step, before going into the questions, is to establish the phenomenon/phenomena of interest—linked to the telling question—handled in a given literary text, such as in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, it could be *revenge*. This acts as a focal point—theme—that assists readers in getting into their prior knowledge base, meanings associated to the topic, situations, vocabulary, language patterns, and oral/written stories.

The Five Questions together with concept maps allow for structuring and constructing knowledge issued from a text. These questions and answers, as well as their relationships with previous knowledge and experiences, can be organized to build up knowledge—a human construct (Gowin, 1981)—whose structure implies the negotiating and sharing of feelings and thoughts released in willful actions to attain knowledge. It is considered a technique geared at making sense of instructional, technical, informative, imagistic, and/or literary materials. Learners, as

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[3] This third question was modified from the original one ("What is the method of inquiry?") for, according to Gowin , it would offer unnecessary difficulties to learners in handling knowledge construction related to literary studies. It then, since 1977, in the particular case of this author, included elements of language use, elements of style, figurative language, text form selected.

well as teachers, can grasp the underlying meanings that make up for the wholeness of a text. Such heuristic focuses on finding answers to the major questions embedded in a literary text so that when its reader answers those queries assisted by what he/she already knows and/or his/her previous experiences and beliefs, he/she can uncover the questions the text proposes and answer them accordingly. Thus, he/she unveils knowledge, organize it, and expand meanings comprised in a given text to other future instances and to his/her reading history, and life experiences.

Meaningful learning is also at the basis of the Five Questions and concept mapping, when those tools are used in educating events and contexts. As instructional tools for meaningful learning, they offer students and teacher "*a way to help students see the meaning of learning materials*"(Novak & Gowin, 1984, p.2). The Five Questions initially started up as a set of guiding questions whose answers could help organize knowledge about the text and, thus, facilitate comprehension of scientific research projects and articles. The 5 Q's started up with no deliberate connection to improve teaching, but to help higher education readers find their way in texts for reviewing literature while developing a better knowledge structure for their own thesis or dissertation project.

Ausubel (2000) states that meaningful learning *"involves the acquisition of new meanings form presented learning material"*(p.1) and that it *"requires both a meaningful learning set and the presentation of potentially meaningful material to the learner"*(p.1), stressing that language facilitates meaningful learning since it can increase *"the manipulability of concepts and propositions through the representational properties of words"*, so that it *"plays an integral and operative role in thinking rather than merely a communicative role"*(p.5). Meaningful learning and the use of language are active processes in a continuous movement towards human empowerment: learning how to learn grants autonomy and freedom to think, feel, and act towards one's educating processes. Literature is *language in artistic use and it is ultimately there to give pleasure. Read intelligently, it is one of the highest pleasures life has to offer"* (Sutherland, 2011, p. 1). These two heuristics are directed at providing ways to achieve a knowledgeable access to capture feelings and thoughts encapsulated in a poem or any literary text. *"The work of Literature is, largely, the reader's job. To read is to construct: investing black marks on a white surface with meaning and, as one goes, shape. [...] Works of Literature are not there, fully made—even the shortest, most imagistic works, which can be gulped down in a single eye bit"* (Idem, p. 121). These sentences stress the need of feeling and thinking to break out the secrets between the lines of a poem. Students as readers need these two tools since even experts, such as *literary critics, often describe poetry as 'heightened language', meaning that the poet strives for precision and richness in the words he or she uses"* and *"the poet may deliberately select a word whose older meaning adds a dimension to the poem"*, students and readers of poetry are required to pay *"more scrupulous attention to unusual words and phrases"* (Abcarian & Klotz, 2007).

Concept maps are viewed here as visual representations of how knowledge is hierarchically structured in a person's cognitive structure. They facilitate interactions between those involved in the educating event as they help bring out to the surface concepts and their linkages to express in pictorial representations chunks of organized knowledge extracted from materials, as well as those concepts that already belong to the student's knowledge structure (prior knowledge). A concept map *"makes evident what the student does understand"* and *"what concept maps tell us is always part of the educational activity* (Cañas & Novak, 2012, p. 47). Coon & Mitterer (2008) state that concepts are ideas that represent categories of objects and events whose meaning is personal and/or emotional so that it fits better into connotative meanings, since the denotative one can be found in a dictionary, as a definition. Concepts are idiosyncratic while definitions are public. No concept is finally learned (Novak and Gowin, 1984), and no concept map is a final construct, since learning is a continuous process (Brown, 1994). A human being is a lifelong learner: he/she learns from the environment, or context; from involvement in reading, listening, and writing; from studying and inquiring. Koeller (1981) explained concepts as mental representations persons have of features of objects and events they use when reporting on them. This means that concepts might presuppose the generation of mental images that, while sharing some common features with other persons' mental images for a given concept, can possess other characteristics that are not necessarily shared by the other members of the group. Concept maps are externalized constructs and shared artifacts (Gao et al, 2007) that can draw on the students' cognitive structure so as to visually represent their understanding of a topic, in this case, a literary text. These two tools enable users to start with what they are familiar with while offering valuable opportunities of knowledge construction through linkages of new concepts and events to what exists in the students' knowledge structure. Teachers should know how to transit in the content area they are to deal with; otherwise they might not be fit to offer students suitable guidance throughout the work with these instruments. Teachers should be aware of where they stand to facilitate students' actions towards learning. Concepts can become pregnant with such new meanings that aim at facilitating the students learning, as the person becomes a responsible actor in the ongoing process of knowledge construction.

3 The Use of these Two Tools in the late 1980's within the Meaningful Learning Framework

The two examples of college students' collective representation of their processes of knowledge construction related to Literature were expressed with the combined use of these two tools of knowledge construction and organization. Students worked with the 5Qs and drew their individual, small group and classroom group concept maps by hand since personal computers were a thing of the future and the use of CmapTools was even further on in time. A group of grad students of Computer Science at Cornell University, in the mid 1980's, before the launching of Microsoft Windows™, devised a program to draw a concept map using an IBM™ floppy disk especially developed for Prof. Novak's students in a discipline on Ausubel's Meaningful Learning Theory. It was very far from the idea of a user-friendly technological tool: drawing a rudimentary concept map required sitting at the computer desk for hours to get a poor representation of one's knowledge on a given topic. The goal here was to familiarize students with computers that would, in the near future, play an important role in the daily life of teaching, learning, business, entertainment, work, and daily activities.

Concept mapping and the Five Questions were applied to promote students' autonomy to learn as well as to improve skills of interactive group work through negotiation and sharing of meanings since these mediating activities could promote meaningful learning for they facilitate and explicit linkages between what the learners already know and the novel concepts they are to grasp. Such heuristics can make easier the externalization of knowledge in representations—linguistic and pictorial—of the learners' cognitive structure. The examples show learners' actions when involved in feeling + thinking and sharing meanings about poems while using the target language (English as a Foreign Language) in their interactions. As a side effect, there was an increase in EFL interaction—a major obstacle in foreign language classes since students either monitor themselves constantly, or end up using their native language when dealing with their own feelings for fear of making mistakes (Krashen, 1985). As the author had already carried out experiments (Moreira, 1988, 1994) with the 5 Q's and concept maps, she decided to use examples of students, in the 1980's, working together cooperatively (Johnson & Johnson, 1998) to construct knowledge with these instruments to share their feelings+thoughts while structuring and constructing knowledge about the poems "Miracles" (Walt Whitman), and "In a Station of the Metro (Ezra Pound). They showed concept linkages they had established in each poem as they unveiled knowledge from the layer of meanings between the words and lines of the poems. In addition, the author included the poem that helped create room for Literature in the use of such knowledge structuring tools, that is, "Getting old", by Mario Quintana. In this example, Prof. Gowin contributed by inquiring about the author's answer to 'What does it mean to get old?' to which the author emphasized the sadness of loneliness in an almost empty house visited by ghosts. He reviewed my answers and added his thoughts and feelings. Thus, such example comes from the author with Gowin's added suggestions.

These tools combined can offer roads to travel through texts by revealing knowledge based on them as they empower teachers and students to think + feel + act upon what they read taking actions towards learning how to learn (Novak & Gowin, 1984). These tools encourage teaching and learning (in which students play the major role) because they promote an encouraging classroom atmosphere for interactions in which the teacher acts as a guide. Unpacking knowledge from literary texts involve brainstorming, discussion, and explanations that spontaneously derive from the involvement of students + teacher with the 5Qs and concept maps. The steps for approaching the poems and applying the tools included: students discussing their findings and doubts; brainstorming on the key-concepts and the focal questions proposed by the texts; negotiating meanings; organizing knowledge derived from the poems and linking it to what students already knew; discussing the answers to the questions and the concepts' hierarchy; completing the 5Qs; production of a concept map. The examples here do not display the group explanation of the concept maps as it occurred orally so that no record could be recovered.

Students, after handing in their work, stated that the large group discussion, which attempted at explaining the map, engendered the development of new linkages, deletion or addition of concepts, and/or changes in the hierarchical structure of their map. These features agree with the thoughts of Ausubel (1978, 2000) and Novak & Gowin (1984): learning is a continuous process. The outcome of this constant evolution is that not only novel knowledge can change—with new meanings attached to it and/or old meanings being disclaimed as not sufficiently relevant—but the existing prior knowledge can become more inclusive, and with a larger scope of meaningfulness.

4. Instances of Combined use of the Five Questions and Concept Maps

The author offers three examples of records of educating events, in which the combination of these two tools was applied to poems for unveiling and organizing knowledge[4]contained in them. Students first read the poems, thought about them, expressed their feelings derived from the texts, and brainstormed on the poem. Afterwards, they went on acting out by critically thinking about possible answers to the 5 Qs, which was followed by a classroom discussion on the knowledge constructed with the use of this tool. When students complied with the thoughts and feelings proposed in their answers, as a follow up, they read once more the poem and used their answers to the 5Qs to draw a concept map to represent what they had learned about the text. While drawing it, interaction among peers and teacher (Johnson & Johnson 1998) continued so that not only the maps were modified but also their answers to the 5Qs. These examples of the 5 Questions and Concept Maps in practice (Moreira, 1988) with real students, hopefully reconstruct possibilities of their combined use as it was in the beginning of the Concept Maps saga. Examples are actual instances that start with the use of the 5Qs followed by a concept map that represented the students' cooperative answers as a group of equal partners.

Why, who makes much of a miracle?/ As to me I know of nothing else but miracles,
Whether I walk the streets of Manhattan, /Or dart my sight over the roofs of houses toward the sky,
Or wade with naked feet along the beach just in the edge of the water, /Or stand under trees in the woods,
Or talk by day with any one I love, or sleep in the bed at night with any one I love,/ Or sit at table at dinner with the rest,
Or look at strangers opposite me riding in the car, / Or watch honey-bees busy around the hive of a summer forenoon,
Or animals feeding in the fields, / Or birds, or the wonderfulness of insects in the air,
Or the wonderfulness of the sundown, or of stars shining so quiet and bright, / Or the exquisite delicate thin curve of the new moon in spring; / These with the rest, one and all, are to me miracles, /The whole referring, yet each distinct and in its place.
To me every hour of the light and dark is a miracle,/Every cubic inch of space is a miracle,/Every square yard of the surface of the earth is spread with the same,/Every foot of the interior swarms with the same./To me the sea is a continual miracle,
The fishes that swim-the rocks-the motion of the waves-the ships with men in them,/What stranger miracles are there?

4.1   Walt Whitman's "Miracles" (Whitman 1980, p. 255)

4.1.1   The Five Questions

The Five Questions start with the students establishing the phenomenon of interest: *wondering about miracles.* A. What is/are the telling questions: a) What does a miracle mean to the poet/narrator? b) Where does the poet search for miracles? c) Can the poet understand those miracles? B. What are the key concepts? I—MIRACLES –SEA STREETS—SHIPS—TREES—HOUSES—WAVES – SKY—BEACH—BIRDS—FISHES— STRANGERS. C. What is the method used? Ideas are presented through verses without rhyme. The language is quite familiar (common vocabulary), and the sentences are in direct order (SVO) Repetitions and echoes give the reader the idea of a never-ending circle. The use of the present tense is linked to the ideas of repeated actions. The characters of this poem are the narrator (I) + the environmental context. Time and place can be any time and any place. Its climax is the final question presented about the strangeness and mystery of everyday small wonders. D. What are the knowledge claims? a) Miracles to the poet are all people, animals, and the things we have around us in Nature and its wonders; b) The narrator searches for miracles in the simplest things of life; c) He admires them and can feel and find them in tiny bees, although he cannot explain them. They are visible, however, the poet cannot find the answer to his own "What stranger miracles are there?" E. What are the value claims? a) Wonderful things—miracles—can happen to those able to admire small things in Nature; b) It is in the simple ways of daily life that miracles are born; c) if we look around ourselves willing to find miracles, we will succeed.

4.1.2   A Concept Map

As the students wanted to check the chunks of knowledge they had derived from their work with the 5Qs about the poem, they drew a concept map to represent their understanding of the poem based on feelings and thoughts in addition to what they had already constructed while answering the five questions.

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[4] Examples , except for the third one (on "Getting Old"), are actual EFL classroom events in a discipline of Literature, in 1989, in a university in Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil.
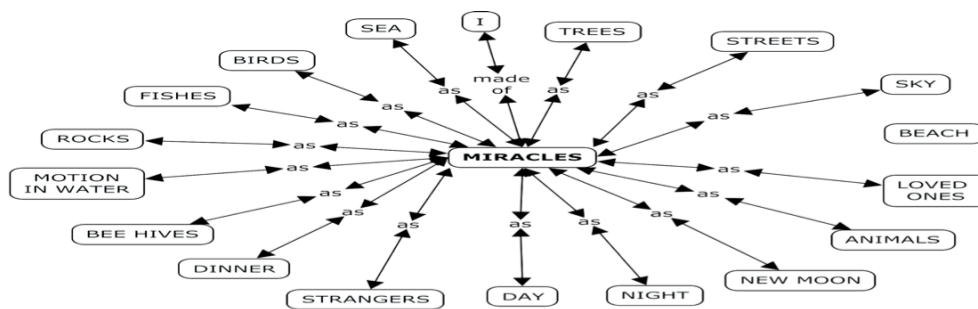
Fig 1. A concept map for Miracles (Walt Whitman) derived from the student's work with Gowin's 5Qs and based on Novak and Gowin's tenets about concept mapping (Novak & Gowin , 1984).

4.2 Ezra Pound's "In a Station of the Metro" (Nadel, 2010, p. 30)

Students' reactions to the two-line poem can be summed up with the word frustration. They immediately took a stand: the impossibility of going through the 5 Q's and of drawing a concept map for the poem did not offer enough substance to come up with questions and answers or to draw a map on it. There was a student who said it was the dullest piece of poetry ever read. They read and reread it; then a brainstorm started about the use of language, context, metaphor, and grammar issues. They felt ready to start with the 5Qs.

> *The apparition of these faces in the crowd;*
> *Petals on a wet, black bough.*

4.2.1 The Five Questions

As usual, before starting to define the 5Qs, students identified the area of interest of the text: beauty in the eyes of the beholder. A. <u>What are the telling questions</u>? a) What is the apparition made of? b) Why is it called apparition'? c) Why is it 'faces in a crowd'? d) Why is there a comparison between the apparition to petals in a wet, black bough? e) Why is the word 'wet' relevant? B. <u>What are the key concepts</u>? APPARITION— FACES—CROWD –PETALS –WET, BLACK BOUGH—METRO STATION. C. <u>What is the method used for conveying meanings</u>? a) No verbs; b) 14 word in two verses; c) use of comparison—petals in a wet, black bough; d) use of a synecdoche— faces used for persons; e) use of a sequence of two words beginning with the same letter/sound b, in black and bough to provoke an impact on the reader; f) artful choice of word order plus the absence (though present in the reader's mind) of verbs produce a burst of meanings; g) the use of prepositions (in the crowd and on a wet, black bough) as tool to make up for the image the poet/narrator paints, that is, in a crowd leads to the idea of faces as integrated in the crowd, whereas on the bough such petals/flowers/faces stem from the bough. D. <u>What are the knowledge claims</u>? a) The apparition is made of the fusion of faces in a mass/crowd, but some of them are salient (petals) in the blackness of the exit of the station of the metro from whose depth they suddenly emerge; b) It is an apparition for its unexpectedness (silence and darkness); c) The crowd has salient faces that appear as petals in a dark painting as if they were strokes of individuality on a painting that breaks expectations with those individual "petals on a wet, black bough"; d) Those faces that suddenly emerge (apparition) from the darkness add some light to the context, as glistening petals; e) It might have been raining (the poem was written in Paris) and this element adds a unique glaze to the petals/faces in the crowd. The wet, black bough might be the mass of persons emerging from the exit of a Metro station, and the petals are touches of revealed individuality. E. <u>What are the value claims</u>? a) Simple scenes bring many feelings and thoughts; b) There is no need to squander words to express one's thoughts; c) Prior experiences in life, and one's history of readings are relevant to construct the 'big picture' implied in a text and in what the poet deliberately does not explicitly say.

Those answers were discussed in class causing additional thoughts about the poem. Students could not believe 14 words (no verb) could give rise to all the issues that constituted their interactions, brainstorming, and answers to the 5Qs.

4.2.2 A Concept Map

The starting point for their concept map was knowledge they had already organized with the questions. Not much was added to thoughts about the poem in the corresponding concept map (Fig.2): Students argued that they had already squeezed all knowledge comprised in the poem with the questions. Their map mostly structured, information and knowledge students had unveiled with the 5Qs. However, faces and petals were hierarchically displayed as more significant than the crowd and the narrator (the poet as the persona) appeared as the most inclusive concept, since he was the feeler, observer, and thinker in that event. It is a pictorial representation of knowledge that students, interacting and contributing as a group, derived from their answers to the 5Qs notwithstanding some relevant modifications: a) narrator appears as the most inclusive concept; b) faces and petals get more saliency than the crowd. Additions to the concept map stem from investing additional time for thinking and feeling about the poem.
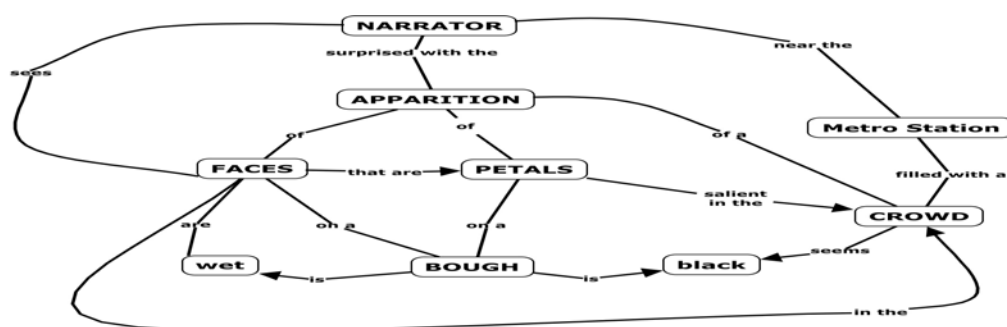

Fig 2. A concept map for Ezra Pound's poem "In a Station of the Metro".

4.3   Mario Quintana's "Getting Old" (Quintana, 1949): the author's use of the combined tools as a grad student

> *Before, the roads all went.*
> *Now, the roads all return.*
> *Home is cozy, books are few.*
> *And by myself I prepare tea for the ghosts.*

This poem constitutes Gowin, Novak, and this author's first experience with the application of the 5Qs and concept maps to a literary text, in 1976. It all started with "Getting Old", which the author translated from Portuguese into English as a task in the discipline Seminar on Translation (Comparative Literature). It is approached here, for the first time this author applied 5Qs and concept map to a literary text, in 1976. However, in this 1988's version, it includes Prof. Gowin's thoughts and feelings related to the poem such as a) getting old is part of having a longer life; b) is being able to indulge his ghosts and show them he welcomes their company; c) it is a treat to be well enough not to need anyone to help him prepare tea for ghosts (remembrances of what roads brought him back); d) his home is inviting because he has uncluttered it of inessential things: home is the place for his favorite stuff; e) books are few on his own choice. His observations have modified the meaning of the author's experience on the getting old topic mostly by helping her to see that one could be content and satisfied with life, even in one's late 70's. The original version (1976) looked at the poem with different conceptual goggles concerning the process of aging and being old: she felt just the sad tone of Quintana's poem, with which Gowin did not agree. Thinking and feeling more deeply about it, she agreed with his arguments, hence this new way of looking at the same issue.

4.3.1 The Five Questions

The phenomenon of interest is aging and its issues. A. <u>What are the telling questions</u>?: a) How does the persona/narrator feel about getting old? b) Why did the roads all go, before? c) Why, now, the roads all come back? d) What do roads stand for? e) What makes the home cozy? f) Why are the books few? g) Why is it relevant to prepare tea for the ghosts h) Who are the ghosts? B. <u>What are the key concepts</u>? NARRATOR—AGING—ROADS—GOING—COME BACK—HOME –CHOICES—COZYNESS—BOOKS—CAPABILITY—TEA—GHOSTS. C. <u>What devices (method) does the author use to construct meaning?</u> a) Short poem with four verses with a 1st person narrator; b) comparison/opposition (before and now/ to go/to return); c) four sentences in common language with five verbs; d) the first sentence (verse) is in the simple past tense to create a contrast with the present tense (now); e) the contrast between past and present saves the use of more words and/or sentences: BEFORE: many books; cluttered house, road calls with plans and adventures/ NOW: no need/time to take heed

of road calls; much to remember of what roads got him back; happiness to live in a cozy home; life has enabled him to pamper his ghosts, instead of fearing them; capability and satisfaction to prepare the tea for the ghosts. D. What are the knowledge claims? a) The persona/narrator seems to feel at ease with getting old because he can face roads he does not want to take, or he might not even care whether they go or come back and, besides, he can pamper the ghosts that come to visit him; b) The roads perhaps continue to go somewhere but he does not care for the new horizons they used to grant him in the past (before) and might beckon to him for he is satisfied with what such roads have already brought him (now); c) Roads come back, in the narrator's view, because now he is free not to take them and to benefit from the mileage he has gathered along that time before; d) Roads stand for the paths life offers individuals at all life stages; e) Home is his favorite place in which he has chosen to be without any clutter (things he does not need/want); f) He has just kept his favorite books; g) This down to basic ceremony of tea preparation is meaningful because it is he who prepares it; f) The ghosts are good, or not so good (though important in his life) memories that caress and haunt him but that nevertheless deserve pampering. E. What are the value claims? a) Road calls can be accepted or denied as getting old makes one more aware of dangers and lies roads might bring someone; b) Getting old is getting rid of accumulated things not needed anymore; c) It is part of this journey to get wise enough to cherish one's ghosts and to pamper them by taking a nice cup of tea with them.

4.3.2 A Concept Map

The drawing of a concept map offered the natural sequence for thinking about the poem and the answers to the 5Qs. This concept map is almost thirty years old though it mirrors much about the process of knowledge construction in this poem. The author adds that her first map presented to Gowin, in 1976, displayed a stern stand about aging, hence her map expressed a melancholic view about aging, which was linked to a state of inflicted LONELINESS, filled with ghosts that were there to haunt the narrator and, at the same time, required him to, though all by himself, prepare them some tea. That representation, in those days, had been influenced by the author's feelings and thoughts about the grandfather she had left to pursue her Master's degree at Cornell. It was a sad representation of one's aging in loneliness. The answers to the 5Qs were coherent with a strong linkage between getting old and being lonely and left out to oneself. The relevance of including this instance of the use of the combination 5Qs and Concept Maps resides on the possibilities of use both concept maps and the 5Qs have in other fields of knowledge, such as the arts.

Fig 3. A concept map drawn by the author in 1988, applying to it Prof. Gowin's thoughts about the poem.

5. Summing it up: Remarks for an Ongoing Process

This work with such combination of tools—the Five Questions and Concepts maps—stresses the idea that learning situations should help students not only to unveil and construct meanings comprised in a poem but mostly to reflect upon their own experience so as to build newer and deeper meanings based on what they already have in their cognitive structure. Students, thus, learn how to learn using such tools to grasp meanings on how and why their new knowledge is linked to their experience in the world while critically thinking about knowledge embedded in poems. Critical thinking conducted by such tools might provide a way of becoming autonomous. These heuristics can help students build up self-confidence on their ability to handle new materials and anchoring newly constructed knowledge to what they already know. The use of the combination of these two educating

instruments in EFL classrooms produce welcomed side-effects on teaching and learning, such as more communication in English; motivation to read a text and talk about it; a congenial learning atmosphere with students more involved in the desire to communicating than in issuing a correct form of communication. It means, less fear of making mistakes by lowering of the level of the affective filter that controls the level of such fear (Krashen, 1995) since students want to perform in English in a participative and cooperative classroom. The response we got from most of the students was enthusiastic, and they presented much interest in using these tools with their students in elementary and high school. These heuristics, or techniques, offer means of facilitating student and teacher's autonomy through thinking and interacting about Literature in the EFL classroom. Students who underwent the process of organizing and constructing their knowledge with such tools wrote a whole group comment, "*In the beginning it was very hard because we were not used to asking and answering questions about what we had read in a text, as well as to explicit the unpacked knowledge we had 'discovered' in a poem*". They also added, "*We had to think about what we knew and felt before being able to understand the verses*". Students complemented it by stating, "*Answering close-ended questions about a text is a lot easier. We don't have to reflect much upon them. With the Five Questions and concept mapping, we consider everything connected to the text. We plan to apply these instruments to other disciplines as well.*"

The use of the 5Qs and concept maps facilitates the learner to take responsibility for his/her learning in a learner-centered environment. Concept maps and the 5Qs serve as reliable instruments for teacher and student, since they allow students to know the areas in which they should invest more effort to improve their understanding of a literary text, whereas teachers learn through their students' maps and answers so as to better guide students to construct, structure, and represent their knowledge. Such combination of heuristics might help improve students' confidence in their skills and knowledge, which can lead them to yield more relevant and comprehensive answers and to draw maps that more clearly represent knowledge they have unveiled from literary texts. A concept map derived from answers to the 5Qs might be a reliable indicator of the level of reading comprehension students have about a text or combination of texts. These examples from the 1980's derive from moments frozen in time as records of classroom events: participants today might add more meanings to their answers, which would produce concept maps with an improved hierarchical knowledge organization, added linkages, and new propositions. The author still agrees with what students have uncovered in their readings of "Miracles" and "In a Station of the Metro." However, she would reconsider her answers to the 5Qs and would draw a different concept map for "Getting old" in the view of Novak and Gowin's ideas about learning as a continuous process of critical thinking. It has been tough to present her 1988 record of a past educating event because of a constant openness to new learning opportunities. The world changes and, as it does, more processes of knowledge construction occur and one has added life experiences, different world views, a modified set of beliefs, a larger base of prior knowledge, and an increasingly broader scope of one's history of readings.

6. References

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