

Teaching Poetry Appreciation in Higher Education: A Systematic Review of Innovative Approaches

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Abstract: Poetry appreciation learning in college shows a shift from textual analysis to a more integrative and student-centered approach. This study uses the Systematic Literature Review method of 18 articles indexed by Scopus and SINTA (2021–2025) using the framework of Cabrera & Cabrera (2023). The results of the synthesis identified four innovative approaches, namely HOTS-based learning, character education through *poetic inquiry*, digital technology integration, and contextual and multisensory approaches. These four approaches have been proven to improve students' critical thinking skills, reflective capacity, empathy, creativity, and aesthetic sensitivity. The main contribution of this study is the formulation of *the Integrative Model of Poetry Appreciation* (MIAP), a new conceptual model that combines cognitive, affective, technological, and aesthetic experience dimensions as the basis for the development of a more holistic poetry pedagogy. These findings confirm the importance of TPACK competencies and integrative learning designs that are able to facilitate a balanced cognitive, emotional, and multisensory learning experience.

Keywords: Character Education through Poetic Inquiry, Digital and EdTech Integration, HOTS-Based Poetry Learning

A. Introduction

Poetry is one form of literary work with aesthetic, reflective, and emotional power in building human sensitivity (Carvalho et al., 2021; Young, 2023). In the context of poetry learning education, not only learning how to express feelings through aesthetic diction, but also poetry learning can involve inner reflection, fostering the value of empathy and character (Guttesen, 2025; Illingworth & Jack, 2024a). In the context of higher education, learning to appreciate poetry plays an important role in fostering students' critical thinking skills, aesthetic empathy, and social awareness (Dillon, 2022; Singh Thakur, 2021). Several previous studies have shown that the appreciation of poetry not only trains language skills but also serves as a space for character formation, self-expression, and moral reflection (Nuryani et al., 2023; Rahayu et al., 2023). Thus, it can be said that teaching poetry in higher education is a strategic means in developing higher-order thinking skills (HOTS), creativity, and human values of

students Setyorini et al., 2024)

On the contrary, Blake & Snapper (2022) through his research, it is revealed that for more than four decades, the learning of poetry has been a professional problem that is difficult to teach, especially in the UK. They highlighted several main problems, such as the lack of competence in teaching poetry, poetry being considered foreign and difficult to interpret, and the selection of poems in the curriculum being irrelevant. Meanwhile, Hidayat et al. (2022b) He also added that poetry appreciation learning in various universities still tends to be conventional, focused on lecturers, and limited to textual analysis. This kind of learning process is not enough to encourage students' intellectual and reflective engagement. In addition, there has not been much research that has thoroughly examined how creative methods can be used to combine aspects of critical thinking, moral reflection, and the use of digital technology in learning poetry appreciation (Azam et al., 2024; Uddin & Bailey, 2024)

In recent years, there has been a paradigm shift in literature teaching towards more integrative, reflective, and digital learning. Various recent studies have developed an HOTS-based learning model (Monika et al., 2023), character and moral education, and the integration of (Guttesen, 2025; Nuryani et al., 2023) *EdTech* in poetry learning (Uddin & Bailey, 2024) and as well as digital-based poetry appreciation teaching materials (Wedasuwari et al., 2024). These approaches indicate a novelty in the teaching of poetry appreciation that no longer only emphasizes the understanding of the meaning of the text, but also the transformation of students' values and reflective awareness (Dillon, 2022). Although many innovations have been made, there has not been any research that thoroughly incorporates the results of various approaches to find the patterns, effectiveness, and prospects of learning poetry appreciation in college. Therefore, this research has *novelty* because it specifically integrates empirical and conceptual research results that are relevant to the practice of poetry appreciation learning at the university level. Thus, this study provides a comprehensive understanding of various innovative approaches that have proven effective in teaching and appreciating poetry to students.

This research is expected to contribute to strengthening the conceptual foundation of literary learning, especially poetry, which is based on critical, reflective, and moral thinking. In addition, the results of this research are expected to be a reference for literature teachers in designing and developing a poetry appreciation learning model that is in accordance with the needs and character of current students, namely creative, integrative, collaborative, and focused on meaningful learning.

Based on the description above, the question of this research is "What innovative approaches are used in learning poetry appreciation in higher education, and how effective are they in improving students' critical, reflective, and character thinking skills?"

B. Methods

The *Systematic Literature Review* (SLR) approach in this study is to identify and synthesize various innovative approaches to learning poetry appreciation in higher education. The analysis framework uses *the Systems Literature Review* (Cabrera & Cabrera, 2023), which comprises four stages: *coverage, analysis, synthesis, and grounding*. To make the SLR process more precise and transparent, the technical steps of searching, filtering, data extraction, and thematic coding are described in detail below.

Search Strategy

The literature search was conducted in November 2025 through two main databases, Scopus and SINTA. The selection of this database was based on the fact that both provide international and national coverage. The search was conducted on titles, abstracts, and keywords using a combination of *the following* search strings (“*poetry appreciation*” OR “*poetry teaching*”) AND (“*higher education*”) AND (“*innovation*” OR “*pedagogical approach*” OR “*learning model*”). The limiting criteria are carried out, such as the year of publication: 2021–2025, Language: English or Indonesian, and type of publication: peer-reviewed journal article. In the initial search, 84 articles were found.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria are used to ensure consistent article selection.

Inclusion Criteria

1. Peer-reviewed *journal article*.
2. Empirical studies or conceptual studies that discuss innovations in poetry appreciation learning.
3. Focusing on the context of higher education.
4. Published in the period 2021–2025.
5. Review the approach, method, or design of poetry learning.

Exclusion Criteria

1. Research at the elementary, junior high, and high school levels.
2. Conference proceedings, book chapters, and research reports.
3. Articles that discuss poetry without pedagogical relevance.
4. Articles that are not available in full-text format or do not meet academic quality standards.

Article Screening Process

Article selection is carried out through two stages of systematic screening:

a) Title Abstract Screening

Of the initial 84 articles, 46 were eliminated because they were not relevant to learning poetry appreciation or were not in the context of higher education.

b) Full-text screening

A total of 38 articles were read in full. At this stage, 20 articles were issued because they did not discuss poetry learning and did not mention learning innovations.

A total of 18 articles met all the criteria and were further analyzed. The entire search and screening process is documented in a spreadsheet to ensure traceability.

Data Extraction

Articles that meet the criteria are then manually recapped in an analysis matrix (table) that contains the identity of the article (author, year), research title, learning method, and design used, implementation context, and theoretical and practical contributions.

Thematic Coding and Synthesis

The analysis is carried out through *open coding* of the key findings in each article. The initial codes are then combined through *axial coding* and grouped into a broader theme. The continuous comparison process between articles resulted in four dominant themes, namely HOTS-Based Approaches, Character Education & Poetic Inquiry, Digital and EdTech Integration, and Multisensory and Contextual Approaches.

The synthesis stage is used to map the relationships between approaches, research trends, and gaps that have not been addressed by the literature.

Cabrera's Analytical Framework

The *Systems Literature Review* framework of Cabrera & Cabrera (2023) It is used as an analytical framework to organize, understand, and connect findings systemically. This framework is done as a conceptual approach that guides the flow of reasoning and is not used as a literature search procedure.

a) Coverage

This stage is used to map all relevant information from the 18 articles that passed the selection, such as pedagogical approaches, research methods, implementation context, and student competencies.

b) Analysis

The article is read comparatively to find the similarities, differences, contradictions, and strengths and limitations of each learning approach.

c) Synthesis

The findings were analyzed using thematic coding techniques to formulate four innovative themes that emerged consistently from the literature.

d) Grounding

This stage connects the results of the synthesis with the need to develop a pedagogy of poetry appreciation in higher education. Grounding provides a conceptual foundation for an integrative learning model that combines cognitive (HOTS), affective moral (poetic inquiry), technology (EdTech), and multisensory experiences.

C. Results and Discussion

Based on a review of 18 articles, four main themes were found in poetry appreciation learning innovation in higher education, which can be explained as follows

Higher Order Thinking Skill-Based Approach (HOTS)

Based on the findings, the HOTS-based approach is the most widely integrated form of innovation in poetry appreciation learning in higher education. Several studies have been conducted by Setyorini et al. (2024) and Azizi et al. (2022). This approach effectively encourages students to understand literal meaning and construct reasoned and argumentative personal interpretations that are oriented towards high-level thinking skills by integrating analysis, synthesis, and evaluation activities of poetry texts through the development of teaching materials and e-modules. Meanwhile, it was found that the use of Azam et al. (2024) *Annotation tasks* and analytical discussions on poetry played a significant role in strengthening students' critical thinking skills. The same is emphasized by Singh Thakur (2021), the fact that HOTS-based poetry teaching can connect aesthetics with logical reasoning.

The HOTS-based approach is generally successfully applied because it encourages students to interact with the poem text through high-level questions, critical arguments, and the investigation of contextual meaning. But the outcome depends on how complex the instructional design is. According to some studies, the implementation of HOTS requires a strong conceptual framework and a clear critical thinking assessment rubric, not just analysis as done by Setyorini et al. (2024) which develops e-modules with expert validation and measurable field effectiveness tests

In addition, critical thinking skills built through a HOTS-based approach will be more effective when combined with reflective learning that helps students understand the aspects of morality and humanity contained in literary works (poetry). In her study Dillon (2022) It was revealed that learning poetry reflexively helps students develop a global critical consciousness, which means that they can understand humanitarian issues more broadly through poetry texts. This approach shifts the learning paradigm from just transferring knowledge to the stage of meaning construction. Therefore, the process of appreciating poetry that touches the social consciousness of students as prospective teachers of literature in the 21st century can be achieved through a

combination of a HOTS-based approach and deep reflection.

Character Education and Poetic Inquiry Approach

The poetic *inquiry* approach and character education are a learning innovation that places poetry as a medium for the development of moral values, self-awareness, and empathy. Study Nuryani et al. (2023) and Rahayu et al. (2023) develop character-based teaching material models that emphasize the values of honesty, empathy, and responsibility through the reading and creation of poetry. On the other hand, Guttesen (2025), through his study in Iceland, it shows that *poetic inquiry* can be a means of *virtue literacy*, which is the process of understanding moral values through the exploration of poetic language and self-expression. He emphasized that the activity of writing and reading poetry reflectively can be a form of *moral self-cultivation* that can develop students' ethical awareness.

This method is also in line with the idea. Fitzpatrick & Fitzpatrick (2021) state that poetry learning can serve as a moral meeting point between the individual and the text, which can mean that students gain an understanding of the complexity of human emotions and morals through the text of poetry. Illingworth & Grimwood (2024) emphasized that poetry is used as a reflection of identity and emotional well-being in academic environments. Several studies affirm that character-based approaches have proven to be effective because they increase students' social awareness, personal responsibility, and empathy. However, most current research still focuses on descriptive outcomes, and no evaluation model can measure character changes over time. Therefore, further research needs to integrate a blended approach and a more comprehensive affective evaluation framework so that the impact of poetry learning on character formation can be measured empirically and sustainably

Digital and Educational Technology (EdTech) Approach

Some studies highlight the use of digital technology as an innovation in poetry learning in higher education. Uddin & Bailey (2024) shows that the integration of *Educational Technology* through online platforms can increase collaboration, active participation, and reflective interaction between students. This study emphasizes the importance of lecturers' TPACK (Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge) competencies to optimize the use of technology in poetry learning.

In line with that, Wedasuwari et al. (2024) developed digital-based teaching materials that can improve communication and collaboration skills, and Setyorini et al. (2024) developed HOTS-based interactive e-modules that not only facilitate access to materials, but also facilitate online critical thinking and literary reflection exercises. The integration of visual, audio, and video media has also been proven to increase the appeal and enrich the aesthetic experience of students in learning poetry (Khalsiah et

al., 2025). Some of the results of the study show that a digital-based approach can expand the space of poetry appreciation from the classroom to the learning space that uses various media such as text, images, sound, and video. However, its success relies heavily on a clear and targeted evaluation framework and students' digital literacy abilities. Learning outcomes tend to be low if technology is only used as an additional tool without a clear learning framework (Uddin & Bailey, 2024).

Contextual, Creative, and Multimodal Approaches

In addition to the digital approach, there are also context-based and multisensory-based innovations in learning poetry appreciation. Study by Khalsiah et al. (2025) implementing *nature-based learning* in poetry writing and appreciation to foster ecological awareness and empathy for the environment. During his study, students are invited to observe natural phenomena and express them in the form of poetic works, which have been proven to increase creativity as well as critical thinking. Meanwhile, in his study, Widodo (2023a) highlights the importance of speech analysis and the application of rhetorical techniques in the composition of poetry and speech texts. This enables students to produce writing that demonstrates linguistic and emotive skills. However, the challenge lies in choosing the right diction and maintaining linguistic unity. This study emphasizes the importance of innovative strategies in overcoming these obstacles and encourages the development of further creative expression. Hidayat et al. (2022a) adding that learning poetry that is linked to students' real experiences is more effective in increasing their relevance and emotional engagement.

The findings are reinforced by Nazriani & Masri's (2025) study, conducted by those who designed multisensory learning models to help students use their five senses when writing poems. Stimulation of the five senses, such as the visual, auditory, olfactory, tactile, and gustatory senses, is used in this method to encourage creativity and produce poetic images. The application of this model improves the imaginative and aesthetic scores of students' poems. This emphasizes that learning poetry by integrating sensory experiences can expand students' appreciation and creative expression. In addition to improving imagination skills, the multisensory approach also enriches the understanding of the meaning of poetry because students can gain experience writing poetry through various senses, not limited to reading texts cognitively. Thus, it can be said that multisensory-based poetry learning can expand the meaning of the term multimodal into a learning environment that combines various media and sensory experiences. Students learn to understand poetry not from written texts, but as aesthetic experiences that involve the body, emotions, and imagination. Despite this, its implementation still faces several challenges. The study by Nazriani & Masri (2025) found several challenges in implementing this model. According to them, the success of this model is greatly influenced by the readiness of lecturers in designing authentic and contextual sensory experiences. Limited facilities,

time, and class sizes are also often obstacles in the implementation of activities that involve various senses simultaneously. Therefore, further research is needed to develop more adaptive implementation guidelines so that these innovations can be applied more widely and sustainably in various higher education contexts.

Critical Evaluation of Poetry Learning Approaches

Cognitive Approach (HOTS) is Very Powerful but Technically Inclined

Azizi et al. (2022), Setyorini et al. (2024), and Singh Thakur (2021), demonstrate the effectiveness of HOTS, but this approach often still relies on detailed instructional designs. Without a clear critical rubric or examples of in-depth interpretation, HOTS can turn into a meaningless analytical exercise.

Affective and Multisensory Approaches Rich in Experience but Lack Structure

Several studies conducted by Nazriani & Masri (2025), Widodo (2023b) Hidayat et al. (2022) show the strong role of context, aesthetics, and multisensory, but the evaluations are not uniform. As a result, many studies only describe experiences, not measurable impacts on critical skills or character.

Edtech integration is still disconnected from the HOTS framework or character

In their study, Uddin & Bailey (2024) and Wedasuwari et al. (2024) affirmed the effectiveness of EdTech, but its integration is often instrumental, not epistemic. This means that technology increases access, but it does not always shape the way of thinking.

A New Paradigm in Learning Poetry Appreciation in Higher Education

Based on the results of the synthesis of 18 selected articles it shows that the learning of poetry appreciation in higher education is undergoing a shift towards an integrative paradigm that combines various aspects such as cognitive, affective, technological, and multisensory experiences. The four major themes, such as the HOTS-based approach, character education through *poetic inquiry*, EdTech integration, and the multimodal contextual approach, do not stand alone but are interconnected and reinforced.

The dominant HOTS approach is seen from various studies, such as Setyorini et al. (2024), Azizi et al. (2022), Azam et al. (2024), and Singh Thakur (2021), which consistently place analysis, synthesis, and evaluation as the center of students' intellectual work. However, this cross-study synthesis also shows that a successful HOTS does not just teach text analysis, but must be supported by clear evaluation tools, strategic examples, and activities that truly challenge thinking skills as demonstrated through the development of e-modules (Setyorini et al., 2024) and

annotation techniques (Azam et al., 2024). In other words, the HOTS approach is not strong enough to stand on its own without the support of a mature and reflective learning scheme.

On the other hand, the character education approach through poetry learning also strengthens affective and moral dimensions that have not been touched by a purely cognitive approach. Several studies, such as Nuryani et al. (2023) and Illingworth & Jack (2024b), show that poetry opens up space for empathy, self-awareness, and ethical reflection. However, these findings also show a general weakness that much character research focuses only on the development of teaching materials, but has not integrated the results of reflection into an explicit critical thinking framework. This means that the realm of character develops, but it is not always connected to the strengthening of critical reason.

Likewise, the integration of digital technology and EdTech will enrich the form of student involvement and open up opportunities for multimodal learning. Uddin & Bailey (2024) show how YouTube, digital dictionaries, and online media can increase understanding and participation. But effective use of EdTech demands TPACK readiness, which in some contexts has not been a major concern. The study of Wedasuwari et al. (2024) and Setyorini et al. (2024) confirms that technology is only effective when combined with a valid learning design based on student needs.

In the experiential dimension, multisensory approaches such as the study conducted by Nazriani & Masri (2025) and nature-based learning (Khalsiah et al., 2025), as well as cultural context-based learning (Hidayat et al., 2022), show that poetry learning involving the five senses, emotions, and aesthetic experiences can produce richer imagination and more vivid appreciation. However, this approach does not include a systematic evaluation framework, making it difficult to ascertain the impact over a long period of time.

These findings are important because they show that learning poetry appreciation in college can no longer rely on one single approach. The synthesis of the analyzed articles shows that HOTS provides a reasoning structure, but the depth of meaning actually appears when students engage in affective reflection and character deepening through poetry. The integration of digital technology expands the way students access and interpret texts, while multisensory and contextual experiences enrich aesthetic appreciation. Therefore, the main contribution of this study is not only to identify four different approaches, but to affirm the need for a new paradigm that combines cognitive, affective, technological, and aesthetic dimensions as the basis for learning to appreciate poetry that is more relevant for 21st-century students.

New Conceptual Models

Based on the synthesis of the four main themes above, this study proposes an *Integrative Model of Poetry Appreciation (MIAP)* as a new conceptual framework that

integrates four learning domains comprehensively, the first cognitive domain, which relies on the HOTS approach through analysis, synthesis, evaluation, and critical annotation. The second affective domain – ethics places poetry as a space for the development of empathy, self-reflection, and moral awareness. The three technology domains emphasize the role of EdTech as a learning mediator that provides a multimodal, collaborative, and flexible space. Fourth, the domain of aesthetic experience includes multisensory and contextual learning, which enriches students' imagination, sensory experiences, and cultural sensitivities. The four domains interact with each other and form a complete poetry appreciation competency that combines *critical thinking, cultural sensitivity, creative expression, and character awareness*, which is the foundation of learning 21st-century poetry appreciation.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

Theoretically, MIAP fills a gap in the literature that has so far only mapped innovative approaches separately without providing a framework that explains the structural relationships between them. This model emphasizes that learning to appreciate poetry must move from a fragmentary textual approach to a holistic approach that brings together critical thinking skills, affective reflection, technological mediation, and aesthetic experience simultaneously. Implications of MIAP Practically, it can provide clear guidelines for teachers in designing poetry appreciation learning. HOTS-based cognitive structures can be the basis for guiding students' reasoning processes; reflection and character become a space for deepening meaning; technology serves as a medium for active and collaborative multimodal exploration; While aesthetic experiences enrich students' understanding and imagination. Teachers also need to strengthen TPACK competencies so that the technology used is not only instrumental but also supports the development of students' critical and reflective abilities. Thus, MIAP not only becomes a new conceptual model but also a practical framework that can be adapted in various contexts of learning poetry appreciation in college.

Based on the description above, this study shows that four innovative approaches are used in learning poetry appreciation in higher education, namely the HOTS approach, *character-based poetic inquiry*, digital technology integration, and multisensory contextual learning. All four have been shown to improve critical thinking skills through text analysis and evaluation, strengthen reflection through the deepening of meaning, and foster empathy and moral awareness through aesthetic experiences and value exploration. These findings confirm that effective poetry appreciation learning does not rely only on a single strategy, but on the simultaneous integration of cognitive, affective, technological, and multisensory approaches.

D. Conclusions

A study of eighteen articles shows that poetry appreciation learning in higher education develops through four main approaches: HOTS-based learning, character

education through *poetic inquiry*, the use of digital technology, and contextual and multisensory approaches. The four complement each other and describe the transition from learning that only focuses on text analysis to more comprehensive learning. An important contribution of this research is the preparation of MIAP, which combines cognitive, affective, technological, and aesthetic experience dimensions as a basis for designing poetry learning that is more relevant to the needs of today's students. This research has several limitations. The analysis only included articles indexed in Scopus and SINTA, so there may be other studies that are out of reach. The focus on the 2021–2025 publication also makes the study oriented to the latest trends, but it could miss out on older, important research. In addition, some studies do not provide long-term impact data, so the effectiveness of some approaches cannot be thoroughly ascertained. Further research can test the MIAP framework in more depth, for example, with a long-term research design to see how multisensory and reflective learning affects students' empathy, character, and critical thinking abilities over time.

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