

Writing Poetry: Learning from Poets Grades 3-5 By Eleanor Schuster

Overview

This unit provides an introduction to different poetry formats and some basic poetry writing techniques and terminology. Students learn about different kinds of poetry and how it may be meaningful to their own lives through reading *Love that Dog* by Sharon Creech. They will choose a poem to recite or read aloud to the class. This will prepare them to learn some basic poetry terms and write their own poem with help from poetry writing Internet sites. They will complete a Poetry Slam Event WebQuest. Their original poems may be submitted to a collaborative Internet project.

From Theory to Practice

“Reading aloud to children is critically important” (Calkins, 2001). Reading the poetry story, *Love that Dog* by Sharon Creech is a way to engage students through the eyes and ears of a boy who is introduced to poetry.

Students must discover their own inner voice with a teacher’s guidance: “Just as there are times when kids need a mirror, someone to reflect back their writing to them, there are times when they need an adult who will tell them what to do next or how to do it.” (Atwell, 1998 p21) Students will learn the steps of poetry writing with guidance from poets on Internet sites.

They will have the goal and satisfaction of participating in a poetry slam, as well as the option of publishing their work in a world community database. “A sense of audience—the knowledge that someone will read what they have written—is crucial to your writers. Kids write with purpose and passion when they know that people they care about reaching will ready what they have to say.” (Atwell p. 489)

Further Reading:

Atwell, Nancie. In the Middle. 2nd ed. Portsmouth: Boynton Cook Publishers, 1998.

Calkins, Lucy. The Art of Teaching Reading. Longman, 2001.

Lucy, Calkins. "Let the Words Work Their Magic." Instructor October 2000: 25-29.

Connolly, Bill, and Michael W. Smith. "Dropping in a Mouse Reading Poetry with our Students." Clearing House May/June 2003: 235-240.

Student Objectives

Students will:

- Listen to a variety of poems by a variety of poets representing different styles.

- Use online resources to learn age appropriate terminology in poetry.
- Read a variety of poems.
- Perform a poetry reading before classmates. Teacher will decide whether the poem will be memorized or read aloud..
- Use online resources to assist in writing a poem.
- Complete a Poetry WebQuest.
- Publish a poem online.

Instructional Plan

Preparation

1. Obtain a copy of *Love that Dog* by Sharon Creech, which is about “a young student, who comes to love poetry through a personal understanding of what different famous poems mean to him, surprises himself by writing his own inspired poem.” (book description) If you can’t find a copy of this book, read a variety of short poems to the students representing a variety of poetry formats.
2. Read *Love that Dog* (86 pages) to the class before beginning unit. This may take 2-3 periods.
3. Place copies of poems from book on class bulletin board.
4. Prepare an online hotlist of Internet sites listed in this lesson plan.
5. Gather a variety of poetry books for students to find poems to enjoy and recite. For suggestions see an annotated list by The Children’s Book Council http://www.cbcbooks.org/html/showcase_mar-apr_2002.html or a bibliography on humorous poetry <http://falcon.jmu.edu/~ramseyil/poehumor.htm#c>
6. Gather a variety of poems representing different styles. Read a poem at the beginning of each session in order to expose students to a variety of poets and styles.
7. Technology: Internet access; acrobat reader; real one player; windows media player; flash player; projector and screen

Instructions and Activities

Session 1

1. Open class by reading a poem out loud.
2. Review *Love that Dog* with the class and encourage open discussion.
3. Outline goals of this unit. Explain that students will be finding poems that they like and learning how to write their own. They will have the opportunity to publish their poems online at the end of the unit.
4. Assign students to choose one poem to recite or memorize (teacher’s discretion) for a later session.
5. Allow 20-30 minutes for students to browse through poetry books.

Session 2

1. Open class by reading a poem out loud.

2. 10 minutes. Using projector and display screen, show students various forms of poetry as illustrated on “Forms of Poetry for Children.” Limit examples to 3-5 types. <http://falcon.jmu.edu/~ramseyil/poeform.htm>
3. 10 minutes. Project copies of a few *Love that Dog* poems. Compare poetry formats and techniques with the poems used in *Love that Dog* and other examples shown on “Forms of Poetry for Children” website.
4. Demonstrate use of line breaks as shown in “Letter Poem – Dear Daddy” http://www.readwritethink.org/materials/letter_poem/index.html
5. 15 minutes online activities. These activities serve to open students’ minds to possibilities of word and shape play in poetry. Students should be free to explore all or one of the activities.

Online Activities

“Line Break Explorer – Bubbles”

http://www.readwritethink.org/materials/lb_explorer/index.html

“Letter Poem”

http://www.readwritethink.org/materials/letter_poem/index.html

“Magnetic Poetry Board”

http://www.readwritethink.org/materials/word_mover/words.01.html

“*Holes* Word Mover”

http://www.readwritethink.org/materials/holes_mover/index.html

6. 5 minute closing class reflection on activities and of the poems in *Love that Dog*. How do these poems utilize line breaks and shape?

Note: You may use an easel and chart paper if you don’t have a projector and screen.. Write samples of poems on paper and display on easel or walls. Students may take turns throughout day to conduct “Line Break Explorer” activity if computers are limited.

Session 3

1. Open class by reading a poem out loud.
2. Students continue to browse through poetry books if they have not chosen a poem to recite. Note: Memorization or Read Aloud is teacher’s discretion, but more time must be factored in for memorization either as homework or in class.
3. Pair students to practice reciting poetry with help of a performance rubric:

“In the Poet’s Shoes – Performing Poetry and Building Meaning”

http://www.readwritethink.org/lesson_images/lesson78/poetrubric.html

“Performance Critique.”

http://www.readwritethink.org/lesson_images/lesson22/performcrit.pdf

4. Students recite poems as time allows.

Session 4

1. Open class by reading a poem out loud.
2. Students finish reciting poems.
3. Students self evaluate using performance rubrics.
4. Class discussion on performance rubric.

Session 5

1. Open class by reading a poem out loud.
2. Online poetry workshops. Students choose one or more authors to learn from.
Writing with Writers
<http://teacher.scholastic.com/writewit/poetry/index.htm>
3. Students begin writing poems.

Session 6

1. Open class by reading a poem out loud.
2. Divide class into groups of approximately four students. Explain that the class will have an in-class “Poetry Slam.” They are to determine the rules, but they must explore the WebQuest before planning this event.

“Battle Poetry Slam WebQuest”

<http://www.kn.pacbell.com/wired/fil/pages/webbattlesu.html>

3. Class discussion on event planning.
4. Students may continue writing poems.

Session 7 – optional

Students continue writing poetry and planning Slam event.

Session 8

Poetry Slam!

Extension Activity: Consider filming this event. Students can edit and manipulate images in a digital studio class.

Extensions

1. Students submit their poems to online communities.

“The Poet’s Corner”

<http://teachit.acreekps.vic.edu.au/poetry/poem.htm>

“The World Through Children’s Eyes”

<http://www.worldbychildren.cjb.net/>

Project Description: The main goal of this project is to collect poems and pictures of children from around the world so that they can share their thoughts and dreams about everything they see around them. Our dream is

to choose the best poem and best picture that we receive from children from many countries in the world and to produce a book with the same name - "The World through Children's Eyes"!

2. Students create a video of poetry slam.
3. Students create a book of their original poetry.
4. Obtain large magnetic board and word magnets to display in classroom during unit.

Student Assessment/Reflections

1. Class reflection on different poetry styles as closure for Session 2.
2. Students will assess partner's practice performance in Session 3 using rubrics:

"In the Poet's Shoes – Performing Poetry and Building Meaning."

http://www.readwritethink.org/lesson_images/lesson78/poetrubric.html

"Performance Critique."

http://www.readwritethink.org/lesson_images/lesson22/performcrit.pdf

3. Students will self evaluate their own poetry performances in Session 4 using online rubrics.
4. Class assessment of peer's poetry in Poetry Slam.
5. Authentic assessment in through online poetry projects (extension activity).

Further Web Resources

The Poetry Place: A Hotlist on Poetry

<http://www.kn.pacbell.com/wired/fil/pages/listpoetrymr14.html>

Thinking About Poetry – A Self Evaluation

http://www.readwritethink.org/lesson_images/lesson78/thinkpoetry.pdf

Standards

isteNETS Technology Foundation Standards for Students

Technology Productivity Tools

- Students use technology tools to enhance learning, increase productivity, and promote creativity.
- Students use productivity tools to collaborate in constructing technology-enhanced models, prepare publications, and produce other creative works.

Technology Communication Tools

- Students use a variety of media and formats to communicate information and ideas effectively to multiple audiences.

- Students use telecommunications to collaborate, publish, and interact with peers, experts, and other audiences.

IRA-NCTA Standards

- Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).
- Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes
- Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).

New York State Learning Standards

Standard 2: Language for Literary Response and Expression

Students will read and listen to oral, written, and electronically produced texts and performances from American and world literature; relate texts and performances to their own lives; and develop an understanding of the diverse social, historical, and cultural dimensions the texts and performances represent. As speakers and writers, students will use oral and written language that follows the accepted conventions of the English language for self-expression and artistic creation.

Performance Indicators:

- Read a variety of literature of different genres: picture books; poems; articles and stories from children's magazines; fables, myths and legends; songs; plays and media productions; and works of fiction and nonfiction intended for young readers
- Use inference and deduction to understand the text
- Explain the meaning of literary works with some attention to meanings beyond the literal level
- Create their own stories, poems, and songs using the elements of the literature they have read and appropriate vocabulary

Created 2004 by Eleanor Schuster, Librarian
The Elisabeth Morrow School
eschuster@elisabethmorrow.org

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