

Poetry in the Literature in English Classroom: Creative and Practical Teaching Strategies

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- Getting students to write (instead of listening to me talk); when they write, they discover that they can.
- Making students feel good about what they've written. Criticism is for one-on-one meetings, or written feedback—in the classroom I'm all encouragement.
- Grounding students in the values I want them to associate with creative writing. The “hands” prompt, and prompts like it, make it easy to illustrate those values.

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- Poetry should feel like it comes from **a particular** person's intelligence--only this poet sees the world quite this way, and would express it this just this way.
- Poetry should be conscious that **language is its medium**: it should be interested not only in WHAT it's saying, but HOW.

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Example poems:

Bishop, Chan, Lee, O'Hara, Xi Xi, Leung; Brooks, Bishop; Plath; Williams, Yam Gong, O'Hara

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Plath, Chan; Lee, Yam Gong, O'Hara, Ip, Xi Xi (“A Tale About Seeing”); Brooks, Plath

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Students can invariably do this. Their instincts are right, because they’re readers (and humans).

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- Write adaptation poems/stories

(example: a Lingnan student adapted "The Fish" into a story about the daughter of a fish seller at the wet market and her father)

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- Volume (sound relationships, language as material, concrete objects) And this!

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Ask them:

- Who is this poem for?
- What effect do you want it to have on that audience?
- How do you want your reader to feel about your speaker?

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Ask them:

- Who is this poem for?
- What effect do you want it to have on that audience?
- How do you want your reader to feel about your speaker?
- What are the techniques you're using to do that?

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You can ask them to reflect on their own work, and to trade and “workshop” each other's.

Looking forward...

If you've got ideas for how to encourage creative writing in your classroom, let us hear them!

And if you come up with more ideas after this workshop, please stay in touch. I'd love to hear from you.

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Thank you.