

AMPLIFYING ELS' VOICES: CREATIVE STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING POETRY

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Project Notes

This project took place while the author was an English Language Fellow in Turkey (2019–2020 Fellow, 2020–2021 Virtual Fellow). The author developed a 4-week Poetry Unit for her 15-week Book and Conversation Club in the Spring Semester of 2021. This language course was designed for university-level English language learners in Turkey. The strategies contained in this poster were implemented during this English program.

As you explore this poster, ask yourself the questions at the bottom of each block.

BACKGROUND

What is poetry?

- body of my feelings
- giving words a new meaning
- painting with words
- expression of feeling

Teachers' Attitudes

- Too **complex** to teach (Štulajterová, 2010)
- Too **difficult** for ELs to grasp (Khatib, 2011)
- The genre that sparks the most **apprehension** (Lockward, 1994)

Possible Benefits

- Opportunity to **empower** ELs (Zhao, 2014)
- Chance to **explore** L2 identity (Atsushi, 2016)
- **Personalize** class content (Hanauer, 2012)

How do you define poetry?

DOS AND DON'TS



- **be sensitive** to students' feelings about their own writing*
- encourage a **personal relationship** with the poem*
- **allow time** for multiple readings*
- provide opportunities for students to **write their own poems***
- support students with finding **authors who speak to them**
- find ways to make poetry **come alive**

*Lockward, 1994



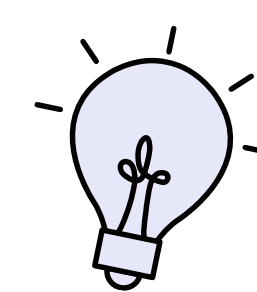
- spend too much time **explaining** a poem*
- gives **tests** on poetry*
- overly concern yourself with **specific techniques***
- force students to **memorize** poems
- worry about **grammar** or if something "**makes sense**"
- **underestimate** your students' abilities

*Lockward, 1994

Which of the above tips are the most interesting or surprising?

STRATEGIES

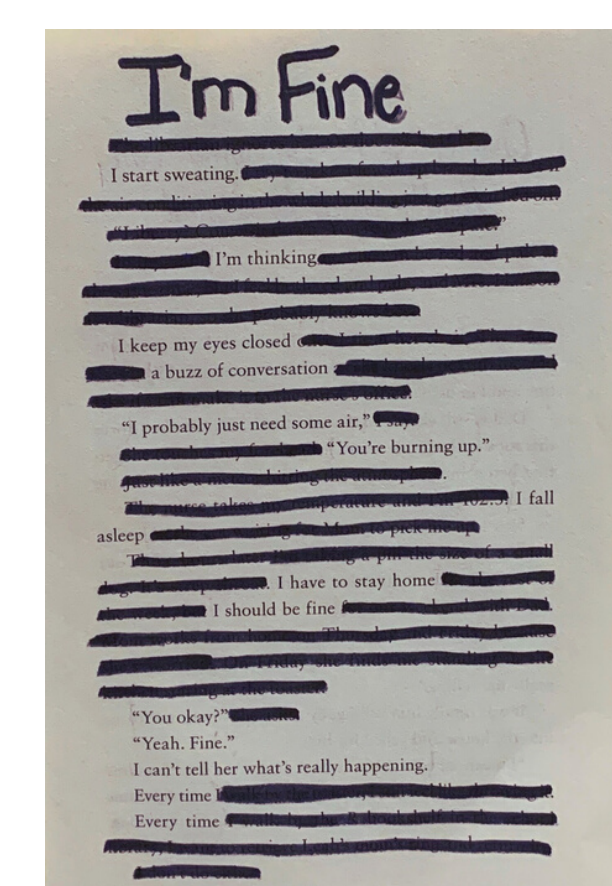
- Ask **wh-** questions
 - What is poetry to you?
 - What are the ingredients for a strong poem?
 - How does this poem make you feel?
 - When you read this poem, what images do you see?
 - In one word, what do you think this poem represents?
- Give examples written by age-appropriate authors
 - What's the first line?
 - What words are repeated?
 - What's the pattern?
- Bring students to a poetry event near you!
 - Poetry Showcases
 - Open Mic Nights
 - Poetry Slams



What strategies can you think of?

THREE TECHNIQUES

1 Blackout Poem



(Haley in Armstrong, 2020)

2 Sense Poem

Fear
Smells like the skin of burnt marshmallows,
smells like burning hair
Tastes like chalk and Robitussin and vinegar,
Sounds like thunder one-thousand-BOOM away,
Feels like numbed cold fingers,
Feels like pressure inside my lungs,
Feels like my body's not my body,
make my body disappear,
Fear

(Nemeter08, 2014)

3 Inventory Poem

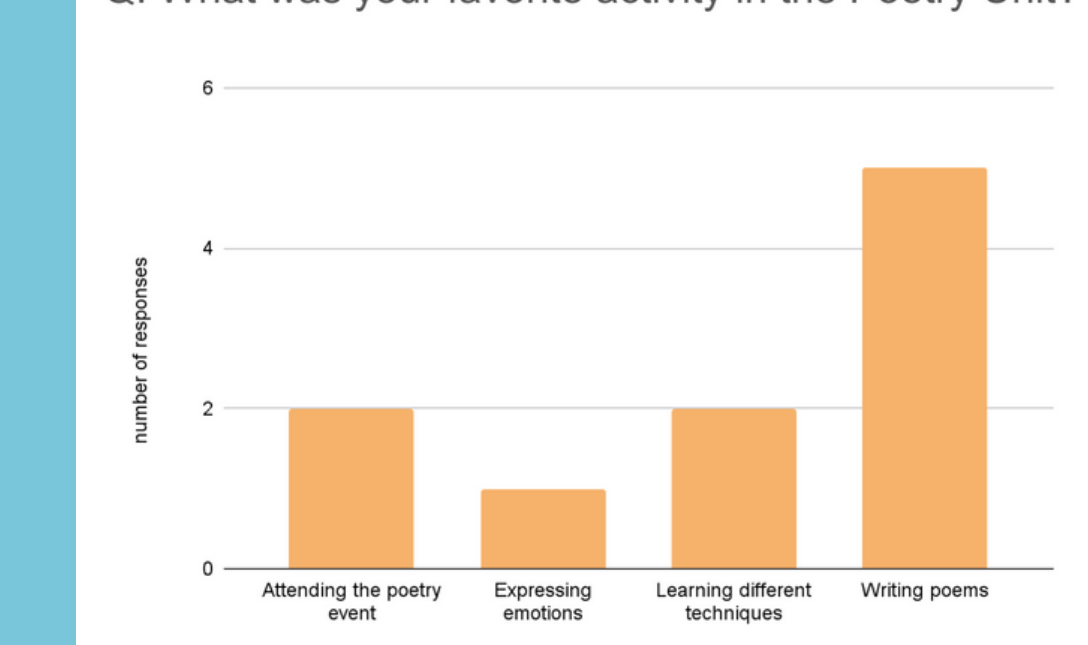
Quarantine
I didn't know I'd miss waiting at traffic lights, waiting for a burst of colour, a static of sound. I didn't know I'd miss noise, crowds, the breath of rain as it hits parched tarmac, being Near enough to hear people's breath. I didn't realise I was only exactly alone when I was walking home from school, or to the shops. I didn't realise it was the in-between times that held me together.

(Griet in Brouwer, 2020)

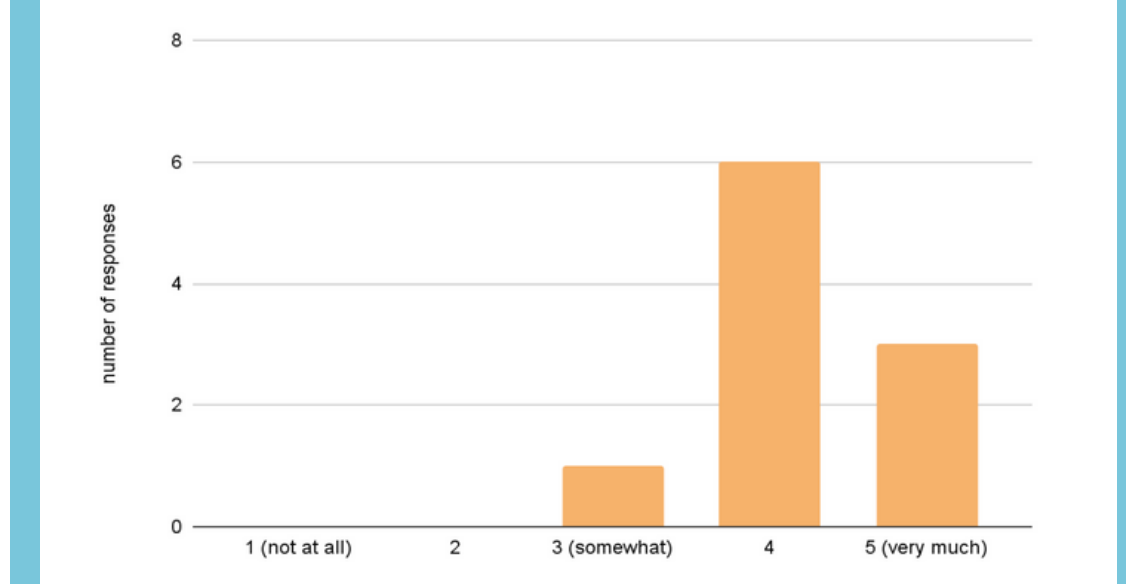
How would you teach each type of poem?

PROJECT FEEDBACK

Q: What was your favorite activity in the Poetry Unit?



Q: On a scale of 1-5, how much do you think poetry allows you to express yourself in English?



- *Actually, I hesitated at first. Oh, poetry is so away to me. I think I couldn't do it. But I tried and it was enjoyable.*
- *I thought it would be boring but right now I think it was one of the best unit that I've ever had!*
- *I was really distanced against poetry except for one or two poems. But now I think that poetry contains treasures inside.*
- *I don't like so much poetry but it was different experience for me. I look at poetry more positively now.*

What questions would you ask your students?