



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute  
2000 Volume I: Women Writers in Latin America

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## **The Power of Latin Women’s Poetry**

Curriculum Unit 00.01.07  
by Yolanda U. Trapp

Dedicated to my daughters, Valeria and Patricia

### **Part I Introduction**

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In the New Haven Public Schools we are committed to high standards in all areas of the Language Arts and Multicultural Curriculum. The performance standards for Language Arts are skill based and designed to cross all the curriculum areas.

Participating in the Seminar about “Women Writers in Latin America” will give me, and also parents, students, and community, a grade-by-grade overview of expectations for New Haven students. Through the Curriculum I place special emphasis on Latin Literacy as the foundations of all school success. It will be the most meaningful effort I will ever undertake on behalf of our children.

How do I bring out the best and brightest in my students?

By bringing the best and brightest poems selected from Latin Women writers, I will take poetry to the stage, selecting poems that appeal to me and that show action, thinking of myself as an actor with a role and reading the poem the way I would read a play, with facial expressions and other body movements. Providing students with daily opportunities to practice skills in vocabulary, comprehension, writing, listening, through appropriate poetry selections, I will support student’s higher level of thinking and learning. With poems, I intend to open a world of feelings to children of elementary grades. As educators we must lead children into poetry written by these exceptional women. They share with us universal problems; traditions, family life, sexuality, relationships with peers, friendships, education, and career goals. In their writing they are giving us an intense creativity, originality, and tenacity in the face of adversity.

I believe that through selected poems of Latin Women, I will find a more holistic approach to teaching reading and Language Arts, and students will discover the connection between reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The distinctive language of poetry cannot help but enrich children’s vocabularies. Once children are familiar with poems, due to their rhyme, rhythm, reception or structure, they can make innovations from simple substitutions of a single word to the creation of an entirely new poem that uses the pattern, but little of the language, of the original.

Poetry promotes writing in dozens of ways; when children innovate on poems as described they gain confidence in writing and begin to view themselves as authors. Children not only read and respond to a rich variety of poetry, they also learn about the craft. Through frequent discussion and daily opportunities to write, students link what they learn to their own writing development as well.

Interest in the use of poetry to teach reading and writing has increased as more teachers and administrators seek to re-examine the way literacy is taught at school. I have been moving toward teaching that writing is a process, so I have oriented my reading program too. The use of strategies such as shared reading and literature response groups seem to fit in well with my writing program. I am attracted to the idea to the selection of quality poetry written by Latin Women. The move toward Literature-based reading and writing may occur in a single classroom, a single school, or in an entire school district. This is one of my objectives. Through varied experiences with poetry written by Latin Women, students are helped to see the naturally occurring patterns in text. It is through wide exposure to these patterns that the strategies and skill needed to read and write effectively are developed. These literacy strategies are made explicit through continued, varied exposure and through specific teacher-guided activities.

How can I build a community of Learners in my room while addressing my student's various learning styles and abilities?

The answer: poetry. Poetry has no grade level. All children benefit from exposure to it, but poetry is especially helpful to readers with disabilities. Poetry can be both a stimulant and an equalizer, placing children of differing learning styles and achievement levels on the same footing.

A lot of poetry can be discovered in a little time. Poems can be short, powerful, easy to read, and wonderful. They can be an integral part of reading, writing, social studies, science, and math.

## **The Power of Poetry**

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Poetry is the province of children. Through poetry's rhyme and rhythm, music and magic, imagery and inspiration, children delight in language and acquire it naturally. The affinity children have for poetry and its memorable, language-rich quality give poetry great instructional power. I will select some poems written by Latin Women and together we will discover how easy it is to put the power of poetry to work in our classroom. We are fortunate to be educating children in an age when an ever-increasing number of high-quality poetry is written by Latin Women. Selecting the poems will provide a variety of perspectives for the students, and also can help children to understand the experiences of a cultural group, values and uniqueness common to many cultures. It will allow them to see and appreciate the richness of the increasing diversity within their communities, their nation, and their world.

### *The gift of Poetry*

I have said it many times; I shall say it again and again: Poetry should flow freely in the lives of children: it should come to them as naturally as breathing, for nothing- no thing - can ring and rage throughout hearts and minds as does this genre of literature. (1)

As a classroom teacher, I quickly learned the value of poetry - how it can enhance every area of the curriculum - from mathematics to science. More important, I soon realized that poetry was an effective force

with above-average, average, and reluctant readers on every grade level. And, oh what poetry can do to bolster the self-esteem of children!

Every day is a great day for poetry – the kind of great poetry that can be found in many Latin women writers. Poets such as Gabriela Mistral – Alfonsina Storni – Juana de Ibarbourou – Delmira Agustini – Julia de Burgos – Violeta Parra – Adèlia Prado, (and other recent poets I will mention later in this unit), open up a world of feelings to children.

As educators we must lead children into poetry – ignite the spark for them to appreciate it, love it. This is one of the greatest gifts we can give to our students, whether they are pre-schoolers or young adult readers.

There is a place for poetry – every day – everywhere – all the time. For me, any day without a poem is just another day on the calendar. I hope it will be for all of us too, and for the children we nurture. I remember to start writing poems when I was in 2nd grade. Suddenly the words came fluently out. I still keep some I would like to share in this unit. (only as a curiosity of another Latin woman who likes to write on her lonely nights) The reason why I wrote poems was probably to meet my own needs and those of the situation.

## Poetry's Basic Elements

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To publish prose, writers have to use the best words to inform or enlighten their readers. Poets, however, have to use the best words in the best order to deliver readers into a higher realm of consciousness or truth. That alone is reason enough to learn poetry's basic elements. For starters, poetic techniques will shape and sharpen our diction and style, enriching our work with imagery and tone. We can edit and revise more effectively and even turn sections of prose manuscripts into publishable poems.

But first, we need to understand how a poem is made.

## The Poetic Process

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Poets are moved to write the way a minstrel is moved to sing. The poetic urge emanates from a wellspring of beauty, love, and truth, or darker cousins – ruin, fear, deception. Blake heard voices. Dickinson heard hymns. Gabriela Mistral heard voices of children in her dreams. Prose writers usually heard other voices – editors' – readers, agent's, deadlines. Poets experience few of them and so may ruminate and revise to perfection.

Most poets choose topics containing metaphysical insights or hard earned truth. These are conveyed throughout a poem via themes – depicted by images and metaphors that build in intensity, foreshadowing an epiphany, or universal truth, in the ending. Moreover, poetry is the mother of drama, and, as such, also employs soliloquies – meditations on matters of substance, usually told in the introspective voice of a confidant.

Unlike other genres, poetry does not use paragraphs or chapters but lines and stanzas. A line is as long or short as the poet requires to present an image or an idea in free verse and/or adhere to a certain meter – repeating pairs of light and hard stresses – in formal work. (2)

A poetic line packs punch because it usually opens powerfully, conveying topics and theme; states one clear idea per unit; begins and ends with a strong noun, verb or adjective, and plays off lines immediately above and below it. Poems are as varied in style and form as music. No one poem can represent the range and richness of verse. Consider Mistral, where her voice as a poet is her most valued possession. Through it she sings the chromatic scale of human emotion.

“Piecitos de ni-o,  
azulosos de frío,  
quien no os ve  
ni os cubre,  
°Dios mío!”

Little child’s feet  
coldly blue.  
Who does not see you  
and does not cover you,  
My God!  
(transl. by Y. Trapp)

## **How will I introduce children to poetry written by Latin Women?**

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Leading children to poetry through choral readings, browsing, personal anthologies, and sentence poems. All these activities will help children to understand that poems are meant to be shared and enjoyed. The more they read a poem aloud, the more they will appreciate the beauty of the language, imagery, and meaning, in Spanish and English.

To familiarize students with different types of poetry. I have to always indicate the genre, whether it's a sonnet, cinquain, limerick, haiku, or other form.

I will also study two or three of the same kinds of poems and compare and contrast them, encouraging students to look for poetic devices, such as alliteration, repetition, or intentional grammatical changes.

I will read several different poems by a poet to acquaint students with a particular poet's writing style and voice.

I will be inviting responses from my students asking: "How is this poem like, or unlike other poems you have read"?, or "What does the poem tell you about the speaker?" "does the poem remind you of anyone or anything? Who or what?"

I will also set aside a poetry section in my classroom or suggest other teachers to do the same in their classrooms, decorating a space and making it inviting. Displaying my student's poems, artwork, and very important: profiles of poets and their published works. A special section dedicated to poetry will remind my students that poetry is an ongoing part of the curriculum as well as an important part of their lives.

We will enjoy poetry beyond the classroom, encouraging students and parents to read poetry from latin women together at home. After all, there is plenty to talk and wonder about. And of course, there is always more poetry to share. I have to provide materials, like copies of poems in english and spanish if they cannot find them at the local library or some particular bookstores.

Poetry reminds us that literature is a journey. The journey has a name (title), a purpose (topic), a vehicle (theme) and a destination (ending). And is also an important prose tool. It reminds us about the function of basic elements, the necessity of structure, and the universal truth in the ending.

## Teaching Poetry to Children

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The theoretical reasons for believing that teaching poetry is a particularly effective way of expanding a child's vocabulary derive from the difference in the statistical distribution of words that have been found between print and oral language. Some of these differences were studied by Hayes and Ahrens (1988), who have analyzed the distributions of words used in various contexts.

### **How will I teach poetry to children?**

Walking through the suggested Objectives in this Curriculum, as I have, will give us a window into how children can be brought, step by step, to understand the architecture of their language, and how such understanding prepares them for the most critical academic undertaking of their lives: the mastery of reading and writing. I have the sense that every child who is successfully led through them - no matter the sparseness of that child's home environment - will glide ever so more easily into mastery of the alphabetic code and the door to literacy that it wedges open.

Here is a suggested list of methods and strategies I will introduce when teaching poetry to children.

Listening Games: To sharpen children's ability to attend selectively to sounds;

Rhyming: To use rhyme to introduce the children to the sounds of words;

Words and Sentences: To develop children's awareness that language is made up of strings of words;

Awareness of Syllables: To develop the ability to analyze words into separate syllables and to synthesize words from a string of separate syllables;

Initial and Final Sounds: To show the children that words contains phonemes and to introduce them to how phonemes sound and feel when spoken in isolation.

Note: Lesson Plans will be develop in chapter IV.

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## Proposed Audience, and Time Frame for Unit

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This curriculum unit has been developed for students in grades K - to 4, and will be implemented over 4 weeks in each grade, so we will have plenty of time to read and develop several activities in English and Spanish providing foreign language instruction and multicultural experiences. I have chosen poems of the most important Latin Women poets, and also some of more recent published ones, dividing this unit in: section I. Introduction, (general aspects of poetry), II. Profile of poets and published work, III. Selected Poems Translated to English by myself, IV. Basic Goals, General Objectives and Lesson Plans, V. Vocabulary (in English and Spanish), VI. Endnotes - Resources, Bibliography, and Acknowledgements.

## Part II

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### Profile of Poets and Published Work

#### 1. Gabriela Mistral (1889 - 1957) Chile

Born Lucila Godoy in Vicuña, Chile, represented her country in many parts of the world, and is probably the best loved poet of Spanish (Latin) America. Though she herself never married, many of her poems deal with motherhood. She wrote the most sensible verses for all Latin American children. Some important works are titled "Desolación" (Desolation, 1922), "Ternura" (Tenderness, 1924), "Tala" (Harvesting, 1938), "Lagar" (Winepress), "Sonnets of Death". Due to her Lyricism in poetry, they granted her the Nobel Prize in 1954. Her poetry is famous for its musicality and emotional, almost mystical spiritualism. (3) US Poet Langston Hughes translated "Selected Poems of Gabriela Mistral" (Indiana University, 1957); the Library of Congress and John Hopkins Press published a different book by the same title in 1971. (4)

#### 2. Alfonsina Storni (1892 - 1938) Argentina

Born in Switzerland on May 1892, in Sala Caprisca, was the first unlikely event of her erratic fate. (5) Her family returned to the town of San Juan, Argentina, where business rapidly deteriorated, and her father disappeared on a mysterious hunting trip. She was forced to support her family when she was only thirteen years old, by taking a job at a hat factory. Also she performed in a play so good that they offered her a permanent position. She entered later to the Normal School at Coronda and began to teach at an elementary school after she graduated. Her first poems were published in the local newspapers. She fell in love with a married man and needed to resign her teaching job. She moved to Buenos Aires where her son was born in April 1912. Here, she started writing to the journal "Fray Mocho" who published her first short story, "De la vida" (About life). In 1917 she was able to secure a teaching position and was awarded the Yearly Prize of the National Council of Women. Her fame was growing in 1920. She wrote also many plays the students performed.

When she traveled to Europe in 1930 she was impressed by the Spanish literacy scene dominated at that time by Rafael Alberti, Luis Cernuda, Garcia Lorca and other Members of the Generation of 1927. Her new approach to writing theater is obvious, also in her last book of verse "Mundo de siete pozos" (1934) (World of seven wells), and "Mascarilla y trébol" (1938) (Mask and clover).

In 1935 Alfonsina got cancer. She no longer had the will to fight when the cancer spread, and she became

very ill. She committed suicide by drowning in the Mar del Plata on October 25, 1938.

Works by Alfonsina Storni

"De la Vida" (short story). Fray Mocho (Buenos Aires, 1, 23 (Oct. 4, 1912: n.p.

"La inquietud del rosal", Buenos Aires; La Facultad, 1916.

"El dulce da-o". Buenos Aires: Soc. Coop. Ed. Limit, 1918.

"Irremediabilmente..." Buenos Aires: Soc. Coop. Edit. Limit, 1919.

"Una golondrina" (novel) Hebe (Buenos Aires) 7 (1919): 3-26. "Reprinted in Cinco cartas y Una golondrina".

"Mundo de siete pozos". Buenos Aires: Tor, 1934.

"Teatro Infantil", Buenos Aires: Ramón J. Roggero y Cia., 1950, Contains: "Negro,...Bianco...Negro", "Pedro y Pedrito", "Jorge y su conciencia", "Un sue-o en el camino", "Los degolladores de estatuas", "El dios de los pájaros".

"Los mejores Versos, Buenos Aires: Nuestra America, 1958.

"Obra Poética completa". 2d. ed. Buenos Aires: Soc. Edit. Latino Americana, 1964.

Prizes

The Yearly Prize of The National Council of Women. (1917)

First place for the Buenos Aires Municipal Prize, and second for the National Prize for Literature (1920).

### 3. Delmira Agustini (1886-1914) Uruguay

Born in Montevideo, Uruguay in 1886, from an Uruguayan family of the upper class. (6) She was educated like other women of her time; playing the piano and writing verses. For her, to write poems was a mere adornment of her social life, but soon it became a passion, a constant dedication. In 1907 she published her first book, "El libro blanco" (The white book); later she published "Cantos de la ma-ana" (Morning songs) 1910, "Los cálices vacíos" (The empty chalices). According to the critics in her work we can find a Modernist new attitude toward the erotic, the body points first toward itself and then inward, toward the subjective world. The text turns upon itself; the code acts as a verbal boomerang. Hence, the delirium of desire that marks her writing, is born, and sexual love devours itself. (7). In "Cantos", her third and posthumous book, the poems are repeatedly structured around dualities: Heaven/Hell, Light/Shadow, Lily/Mud. The world of desire is viewed here as a abyss in which violence is identified with a "sed maldita" (cursed thirst) devouring the poetic self. (Poesías completas, ed. M. Aluar, p. 163.)

In 1913 she married and two months later she left her husband, but she kept on meeting him in a place her husband rented after their separation. On July 22nd (1913) she went to see him for the last time because he killed her and then committed suicide. She was only 27 years old and her ex-husband 28.

There is another peculiar aspect of her personal life. She was buried in five different places, and finally, in 1992 they buried her with a military and diplomatic ceremony at the National Cemetery after a request



presented by Clara Silva who wrote her biography in 1964. Her violent death was another item that has contributed to the creation of a literary personality for Delmira, and to her being read as a character in a love story with a morbid ending, more than as a poet, obscuring her value as one of the most extraordinary poets of her time.

Works by Delmira Agustini

El libro blanco, Montevideo: O.M. Bertani, 1907.

Cantos de la ma-ana, Montevideo: O.M. Bertani, 1910.

Los cálices vacíos, Montevideo: O.M. Bertani, 1913.

Obras completas de Delmira Agustini. Vol. 1: El Rosario de Eros. Vol. 2: Los astros del abismo. Montevideo: M. Garcia, 1924.

Delmira Agustini, Antología. Ed. Esther de Cáceres. Biblioteca Artigas Vol. 69. Montevideo: Minist. De Educ. y Cultura, 1986.

#### 4. Juana de Ibarbourou (1895-1979) Uruguay

Juana de Ibarbourou of Uruguay has been honored with the title of “Juana de America” for her excellent poetry. Love is the frequent theme of her poems. Her maiden name was Juana Fernández Morales, her mother was a native Uruguayan born in Tacuari, her father, was a native of Galicia, Spain.

Juana began her education in a religious school (8) but she was deeply influenced by her black nanny, Feliciano, who expanded the child’s knowledge with songs, stories, from her culture. From the Old World she listened to her father reading poetry of José de Espronceda, Gaspar Nu- ez de Arce, and Rosalía de Castro. All these mixed ideas formed her basic education. Juana’s writings were from her heart. She wrote both – poetry and prose. She had a healthy and strong religious home atmosphere. She married a career military man, Captain Lucas Ibarbourou on June 1914. Miguel de Unamuno, the Spanish author and philosopher, identifies the name Ibarbourou as the French- basque rendering of Ibar – buru, cabecera del valle or “county seat”/“head of valley”.

Ibarbourou began writing verses at an early age. Her first poetry was a sonnet entitled “El cordero” (The lamb). She used (as many other poets) the pseudonym “Jeannette d’Ibar”. Her first collection of poetry, Las lenguas de diamante (Diamond tongues) was published in 1919 with a prologue by the Argentinian novelist Manuel Galvez. This work was a brilliant success, for its lyrical beauty and lighthearted sincerity brightened a sorrowing world just emerging from the horrors of World War I. The single work would have been sufficient to mark her as an outstanding writer. (9). She received several important honors. At the time of her death in 1979, she was granted state honors. She was and is a source of pride to her country, and was always respected during her lifetime.

Works by Juana de Ibarbourou

Las lenguas de diamante. (Diamond tongues) Prol. José Pereira Rodríguez. Biblioteca Artigas, Vol. 42. Montevideo: 1963. Minist. De Instrucción Publica.

El cántaro fresco. (The cool water jug) 1920. Montevideo, Editorial Maximino García.

Raíz Salvaje. (Wildroot) Montevideo: Edit. Maximino García, 1922.

La rosa de los vientos. (the rose in the storm). Montevideo, Buenos Aires, Palacio del Libro, 1930.

Estampas de la Biblia. (Portraits from the Bible) Montevideo: Editorial Barreiro y Ramos, 1934.

Chico Carlo. (Chico Carlo) Montevideo, Edit. Barreiro y Ramos 1944.

Los sueños de Natasha. (Natacha's Dreams) Montevideo, Independencia, 1945.

Obras Completas. (Compilation by Dora Isella Russel, ed. 3d. edition, Madrid, Aguilar 1968.

## 5. Violeta Parra (1917-1967) Chile

Born in the south of Chile close to the city of Chillán, a region known for its poetry. Her family was already known as musicians. Her father played the violin and her mother sang. Violeta sang from a very young age and learned folk songs from elderly country people of her town and from her own family.

They all moved later to the capital, in 1930 where she began to sing with her sister Hilda. She soon became involved in a series of activities related to folklore, but she did not perform in social clubs, on the contrary, she sang in working-class areas, collecting the folklore and the innumerable cultural legacies that she would later return to the people.

In the 50s, Violeta began to have great artistic influence, singing on a radio Program where she presented a treasury of artistic activity from throughout the country. She sang folk-songs, spoke about local customs and introduced poets and singers from various regions. Her popularity increased when she traveled to the North-Center-and South of Chile, collecting and introducing a wide range of materials, including music, poetry and regional customs. She also traveled to Europe, working ceaselessly, beginning her own period as a creator, a stage that would last the rest of her life. She also exhibited her famous tapestries in the Museum of Mankind in Paris.

Despite her many successes, she felt in several depressions when her companion of many years abandoned her. She committed suicide on February 5, 1967.

Her compositions can be divided in three main categories: autobiography, love, and politics. Her poetic production is enormous but surprisingly there are no published chronologies of them, we only know the posthumously *Décimas* (Poems) and two fundamental books edited by Parra, *Poesie Populaire des Andes* (1964) and *Canciones folklóricas chilenas* (1977). In these books, one can see the methods she utilized to collect traditional songs, and the subject matter she liked to collect in the form of sayings and songs. (10) Parra's *Décimas*, covers almost forty years of Chile's turbulent political history. In the area of love poetry, the well-known compositions "Volver a los diecisiete" (To return to the 17) and "Gracias a la Vida" (Thanks to Life).

Despite the fact that Violeta Parra revolutionized Latin American music, initiated a counterculture, and introduced a new way of integrating indigenous culture and popular song, her work remains dispersed in unimportant publications. Even Parra's important paintings are only mentioned in long-lost catalogues from her exhibitions in Switzerland, France, and Chile.

Mayor Work

Décimas (1970) is Parra's autobiography in verse where she emphasizes the rural world in which she grew up. Little known by critics and the reading public, Décimas brings together a complex and varied group of poems dominated by the theme of life's experience. She also begins to assume the role of a witness to the problems of women, as is demonstrated in her compositions treating rape and marriage as a shackle. (11) At the same time, she examines the fate of women who because of their marginal existence, do not have any other opportunities besides to getting married, or the maintenance of a family, what she personally did, maintaining her four children.

One more comment: An abundance of metaphors is clearly observed in Parra's love poetry. Words are often repeated to give an essential meaning. She invokes God, the soul, and nature to calm the spirit's pain. In a different section I will try to translate some of her poems, like "Volver a los diecisiete\*" she also sang with her guitar, her precious company wherever she traveled.

\* Translation: Back to the seventeenth

## 6. Julia De Burgos (1914-1953) Puerto Rico (12)

Born into a large family, in the rural neighborhood of Santa Cruz, Carolina, Puerto Rico, Julia attended rural public schools and graduated with honors. Even when the family could not help to provide her with an education, she applied for several grants and, took her degree at the University of Puerto Rico. After that she began teaching.

She married in 1934, but would only last for 3 years. While working for a economic rehabilitation program she met some of the most respected and talented Puerto Rican poets of the period: Luis Palés Matos, Luis Lloréns Torres, and Evaristo Ribera Chevremont. She became part of the Nationalist Party and supported also the Spanish Republic. Because of her political activism, she was fired from her job. But her passion was writing, and she always found time for it. Julia also wrote several poems, trying to sell them in order to pay for her mother's treatment and operation. (the mother was diagnosed as having cancer). Despite all of her effort, the mother died in 1939 the same year she met Dr. Juan Isidro Jimenez Grullón, who inspired her to write some of her best love poetry. In December 1939, she published Canción de la verdad sencilla (Song of the unadorned truth), which received the prize of the Instituto de Literatura Puertorrique-a.

In 1943 she married Armando Marin and moved to Washington D.C., later returning to New York where she was again the object of public acclaim, but she started to become more isolated from her friends and her alcoholism began to worsen. On August 4, 1953, she was found unconscious on 105th street and Fifth Avenue in New York. She died at Harlem Hospital without identification and was buried in a grave for indigents. Her family found her later and her body was exhumed and buried in Puerto Rico, near the Rio Grande De Loíza, which she had immortalized with her poem by the same name. She is considered by many critics to be on par with her compatriot Luis Palés Matos.

Works by Julia De Burgos

Poemas exactos a mí misma (typescript. 1937. Poems exactly like me) Presumed lost.

Poema en veinte surcos. (poem in five furrowed time, 1938). San Juan, P.R.: Imprenta Venezuela, 1938.

Canción de la verdad sencilla. (Song of the unadorned truth.) San Juan, P.R.: Baldrich, 1939.

El mar y tú y otros poemas. (The ocean and you.) San Juan, P.R.: Printing and Publishing Co., 1954. Obra

Poética. Intod. José Emilio Gonzalez. San Juan, P.R.: Instituto de Cultura Puertorrique-a, 1961 and others as Anthologies written in 1986 by María Solá, "Yo misma fui mi ruta". (I was my own path). 7. María Elena Walsh (1930- ) Argentina

When still a teenager María Elena Walsh won acclaim from the Argentine cultural elite for her first book of poetry, *Oto-o Imperdonable*, 1947 (Unforgivable Autumn), she wrote very soon more poems, but increasingly disillusioned by both poetry and politics in Argentina, she left to live in Europe in 1952-56. In Paris, with poet and ethnomusicologist Leda Valladares, she formed the duo "Leda and María" and enjoyed considerable success singing traditional folklore in nightclubs and music halls, thus acquiring the musical training she would employ so magisterially later. Following the example of José Sebastián Tallón, she sought to amuse and challenge her child audience in order to encourage intellectual autonomy. Her chief sources of inspiration came from the nursery rhymes, limericks of Edward Lear, and Lewis Carroll's "Alice", the ballads and carols of Hispanic folklore, and the ingenious worldplay of French Surrealist Robert Desnos's "Chantefleurs et Chantefables, 1944. Walsh's intention was, however, to adapt, to make "spiritual" rather than literary translations of poetic play, which readers from Argentina - and, indeed, from all Spanish America - could seize immediately. Her first collection of poem for children, *Tutú Marambá*, appeared in 1960 and was inspired from an ugly demon from Brazil.

She also spent three years in the United States. On returning to Argentina she continued writing poems for children. Co-wrote and co-produced a film for children in 1971, "Juguemos en el mundo" (Let's play in the World).

She has always been an outspoken feminist, and used a variety of genres to combat "La horripilante misoginia y ni-ofobia de nuestra cultura hebreocristiana" (the horrifying misogyny and child phobia of our Judeo-Christian culture), and also to celebrate feminism as "this century's real revolution". (14) Thus, in her writing for children Walsh has systematically avoided sexual stereotypes by foregrounding instead some new-age protagonists like the Indian medicine woman in her revisionist rendering of the British invasion of Argentina in 1806, "El diablo inglés, 1974 (The English Devil), and others. In her popular poetry and songs Walsh has immortalized the army of undervalued women who are exploited in the home, in domestic service, and in underpaid teaching jobs. She set out the passive, ultraconservative image of the traditional female role in society.

In a long and multi-faceted career Walsh has reached the general public, that has responded with affection by venerating her as a familiar icon of Argentine popular culture.

### Selected Works

#### Poetry

*Oto-o Imperdonable*, Buenos Aires; privately printed, 1947; Buenos Aires: Ediciones del Bosque, 1948.

*Apenas Viaje*, Buenos Aires; *El Balcón de Madera*, 1948.

*Baladas con Angel*, Published with *Argumento del enamorado*, by Angel Bonomini, Buenos Aires, Losada, 1952.

*Casi Milagro*, Montevideo; *Cuadernos Julio Herrera y Reissig*, 1958.

*Hecho a mano*, Buenos Aires: *Fari-a*, 1965.

Los Poemas, Buenos Aires; Sudamerica, 1984.

Las canciones, Buenos Aires; Seix Barral, 1994.

Children's Literature

Tutú Marambá, Buenos Aires: "author's edition, 1960.

El Reino del Revés, Buenos Aires: Fari-a, 1963.

Bisa Vuela, Buenos Aires: Hispamerica, 1985

and many others you can find in Encyclopedia of Latin American Literature, Edit. Verity Smith. Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers. Chicago Ill. U.S.A. 1997.

## Part III

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Selection of Poetry translated by myself into English.

Gabriela Mistral (Chile)

Canción de las mazorcasn (15)

Las mazorcas de maíz  
a ni-itos se parecen;  
cuatro meses en los tallos,  
bien prendidas que se mecen.

Tienen un vellito de oro,  
como de recién nacido,  
y unas hojas duras, duras,  
que sus tallos han vestido.

como ni-*os* escondidos,  
con sus dos mil dientes de oro,  
ríen, ríen, sin sentido...

Las mazorcas de maíz  
a ni-*itos* se parecen;  
en las celdas maternas,  
bien prendidas que se mecen.

The song of the corn ears

The corn ears  
resemble children;  
four months on the sprout  
grasped, they rock.

They have a golden fleece  
like a new born baby  
and strong, hard leaves  
the sprouts have dressed

And under the scabbard  
like hidden children,  
with their two thousand golden teeth

they laugh, laugh, without meaning...

The corn ears  
look like children;  
in their motherly cells,  
grasped, they rock. @Text:Alfonsina Storni Argentina 1892-1938

Yo en el fondo del mar. (16)

En el fondo del mar,  
hay una casa  
de cristal.  
A una avenida  
de madréporas  
da.  
Un gran pez de oro,  
a las cinco,  
me viene a saludar.  
Me trae  
un rojo ramo  
de flores de coral  
Duermo en una cama  
un poco más azul  
que el mar.  
Un pulpo  
me hace gui-os  
a través del cristal  
En el bosque verde  
que me circunda,  
din don ... din dan -  
se balancean y caután  
las sirenas  
de nácer verdemar.  
Y sobre mi cabeza,  
arden en el crepúsculo,

las erizadas puntas del mar.

## I in the Deep Sea

In the deep sea  
there is  
a crystal house.  
To a coral  
avenue  
it goes.  
A huge golden fish  
at five o'clock  
comes to say hello!



It brings me  
a red bouquet  
of coral flowers.  
I sleep in a bed  
a little bit more blue  
than the ocean.  
An octopus  
winks at me  
through the crystal.  
In the green wood  
that surrounds me  
“Don - Din, - Don - Din”  
dance and sing  
the sirens  
of blue-green nacar.  
And over my head  
burning in the sunset,  
the prickly bristles of the ocean.

Alfonsina Storni (Argentina) 1892 - 1938

Iremos a la monta-a (17)

A la monta-a,  
Nos vamos ya,  
A la monta-a,  
Para jugar.  
°Qué lindo el aire!  
°Qué lindo el sol!  
°Azul el cielo,  
°se siente a Dios!  
A la monta-a,  
Formemos ronda  
Ronda de ni-os,  
Ronda redonda.

We are going to the mountain

To the mountain  
we are going now,  
to the mountain,  
to play  
What beautiful air!  
What beautiful sun!  
Blue is the sky,  
we can sense God!  
To the mountain,  
Let's make a circle,  
circle of children,  
round round circle.

Delmira Agustini Uruguay (1886 - 1913)

La Sed (18)

Tengo sed, sed ardiente! - dije a la maga, y ella  
Me ofreció de sus néctares. - Eso no, me empalaga! -  
Luego, una rara fruta, con sus dedos de maga,  
Exprimió en una copa clara como una estrella;

Y un brillo de rubíes hubo en la copa bella.  
Yo probé. - Es dulce, dulce. Hay días que me halaga  
Tanta miel, pero hoy me repugna, me estraga! -  
Vi pasar por los ojos del hada una centella.  
Y por un verde valle perfumado y brillante,  
Llevóme hasta una clara corriente de diamante.  
- Bebe! - dijo. Yo ardía, mi pecho era una fragua.  
Bebí, bebí, bebí la linfa cristalina...  
°Oh frescura! °Oh pureza! °Oh sensación divina!  
- Gracias, maga, y bendita la limpidez del agua!

The Thirst

I am thirsty, ardently thirsty - I said to the wizard, and she  
Offered me her nectar. - No; not that, it becomes distasteful to me! -  
Then, a rare fruit, with her magical fingers,  
She squeezed in a crystal glass like a star;

And a splendor of rubies filled the crystal glass,  
I tasted. – It's sweet, sweet. Somedays I like  
Honey so much, but today it repulses me! –  
I saw a sparkle in the wizard eyes.  
And through a green valley glittery and fragrant,  
She took me to a clear diamond course of water.  
- Drink! – she said. I was burning, my chest was a forge.  
I drunk, drunk, drunk, the clear lymph...  
Oh freshness, oh purity, oh divine sensation!  
- Thank you, wizard, and bless the clearness of the water!

Juana de Ibarbourou Uruguay (1895-1979)

A la Rueda Rueda (19)

A la rueda rueda  
que cayó del cielo  
al agua del río  
un lindo lucero.

A la rueda rueda  
que la princesita  
para sus cabellos  
quiere la estrellita.

A la rueda rueda  
que se enoja el rey  
y ordena a los pajes

que no se la den.

A la rueda rueda  
que llega el galán  
y a la princesita  
se la ofrecerá

A la rueda rueda  
que se casarán  
y el rey y la reina  
a la boda irán.

Wheel Wheel

Wheel wheel  
from the sky fell down  
in the river's water  
a beautiful star.

Wheel wheel  
the little princess wants  
for her long hair  
the tiny star  
Wheel wheel  
the king gets mad  
and ordered the pages  
not to please her

Wheel, wheel  
the lover arrives  
and to the little princess  
he will offer the star

Wheel wheel  
they are getting married  
and the king and queen  
to the wedding are going.

Juana de Ibarbourou Uruguay

La Loba, La Loba (20)

La loba, la loba  
le compró al lobito  
un calzón de seda  
y un gorro bonito.  
la loba, la loba  
se fue de paseo  
con su traje rico  
y su hijo feo.

La loba, La loba  
vendrá por aquí,  
si esta ni-a mía  
no quiere dormir.

Mother Wolf, mother wolf

Mother Wolf, mother wolf  
bought for her little wolf  
a silky underwear  
and a nice cap

Mother Wolf, mother wolf  
went for a walk  
with her rich clothes

and her ugly child.

Mother Wolf, mother wolf  
will be around  
if this little girl of mine  
does not fall asleep.

@Text:Violeta Parra Chile Volver a los diecisiete (21)

Volver a los diecisiete,  
después de vivir un siglo,  
es como descifrar signos,  
sin ser sabio competente,  
volver a ser de repente  
tan frágil como un segundo,  
volver a sentir profundo,  
como un niño frente a Dios,  
eso es lo que siento yo  
en este instante fecundo.

se va enredando enredando  
como en el muro la hiedra  
y va brotando, brotando



como el mosquito en la piedra,  
como el mosquito en la piedra  
ay sí, sí, sí.

Back to seventeen

Back to seventeen  
after living a hundred years  
seems like deciphering signs  
without being a wisely competent one,  
to be again and suddenly  
so fragile as a second  
to feel profoundly again  
like a child facing God  
that's the way I feel  
in this fruitful moment.

It's going to entangle, entangle  
like the ivy on the wall  
and it's going to sprout, sprout,  
like the moss on the stone  
like the moss on the stone  
oh yes, oh yes, oh yes!

María Elena Walsh Argentina

Canción del Pescador (22)

Pez de platino,  
fino, fino,  
ven a dormir en mi gorro marino

Perla del día,  
fría, fría  
ven a caer en mi bota vacía.

Feo cangrejo,  
viejo, viejo,  
ven a mirarte el perfil en mi espejo

Flaca sirena,  
buena, buena,  
ven a encantar mi palacio de arena.

Se-ora foca,  
loca, loca,  
ven a tocar el tambor en la roca.

Picara ola,  
sola, sola,  
ven a jugar con tu traje de cola.

Un delfín  
que toque el violín,  
voy a pescar en mi red marinera,  
y me espera para bailar,  
loca de risa la espuma del mar.

#### Song of the Fisherman

Silver fish,  
fine, fine,  
come to sleep in my navy bonnet.

Pearl of the day,  
cold, cold,  
come and fell in my empty boot.

Ugly crab  
old, old,  
come and look your profile in my mirror.

Thinny siren  
fair, fair,  
come to enchant my sand castle

Lady sea calf,  
crazy, crazy,  
come to play the drum on the rock.

Malicious wave  
alone, alone,  
come and play with your party gown.

A dolphin  
who plays the violin,  
I will catch in my navy net,  
and waiting to dance with me  
laughing madly the sparkling sea.

@1H:Presenting Poetry My professor and Seminar Leader asked me to write about how would I present poetry to the children. In other words, how would I teach poems. Poetry is meant to be read aloud - and there are many ways I could choose to reach the subject. Here are some tips for performing the poems I selected for the unit.

First I would read the poem to myself a time or two before reading it to the group, and plan oral reading techniques that would reinforce the meaning and beauty of the poem. When reading I would be expressive, but wouldn't exaggerate unnecessarily. I also would let the meaning guide my pauses. It is not necessary to stop at the end of each line. The meaning would also guide my pacing and rhythm. Some lines are meant to

be read quickly, others need to be read slowly; or require their own special pace and beat. Sometimes I will need to whisper or change my voice and take on the role of the characters in the poem. Dramatic interpretation involves children physically and emotionally. I would look for actions that can be easily represented. Gestures reinforce the feelings (23) and finally, "listening activities...are especially effective with shy children because they allow silent participation". (Presenting Poetry by Alma Flor Ada, *Dias y Dias De Poesía*, Anthology. Hampton-Brown Books for bilingual education. Copyright 1991 Carmel, California. USA.

## Part IV

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### **Basic Goals, General Objectives, and Lesson Plans**

My primary goal for this unit is to foster the development of readers and writers; students who are not only competent readers and writers, but who view reading and writing as an integral part of their lives.

To leave my readers feeling as if they have experienced a journey with the Latin Women authors as guide.

To make my introduction in poetry explode with insight and interest, articulating topic and theme as concisely as possible.

To scrutinize every phrase or passage of a poem, and revise as a poet might by focusing on tone as much as content.

To sharpen metaphor's passages to develop comprehension skills, vocabulary and creativity.

To employ poetry in Language Arts for lifelong learning, work, and enjoyment.

My Objectives will be as follows:

Poetry written by Latin Women will predominate in the reading and writing program throughout the kinder to 4th grade level.

Reading, writing and oral language in English and Spanish will be closely linked.

Students will read and write and respond to a wide variety of literacy forms and genres written by Latin women writers.

Poetry will be integrated with content areas across the entire curriculum.

Students will be helped to use their experiences with poetry to learn the strategies and skills required to become competent readers, writers, and thinkers.

Students will understand and appreciate texts from many literacy periods of Latin Women writers and cultures.

## Start-Up Process in Lesson Plans

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### Introduction

Research has shown that children learn best and remember what they have learned if they are actively involved in the learning process. When we present them with topics that have meaning to them and with ideas they can use in their everyday world, they learn the natural way, driven by curiosity and the impulse to grow. Then, the children are ready to explore, discover, hypothesize and learn - and to see the connections between what they have learned and what they want to know.

This unit may serve as a brief introduction to the rich field of poetry written by Latin Women. Reading, recitation and writing poetry is an aid in developing language skills, like good pronunciation. It is suggested that the poems be read aloud, and many are short enough for easy memorization. Learning of vocabulary and grammatical constructions facilitated by the literal English translations on facing pages. Students of Spanish and English will find here a rich selection of the finest poems written by Latin Women, specially chosen for its quality and enduring popularity.

The standard movement presents us with enormous challenges. We all know that if standards are to succeed in raising student achievement, there will have to be a massive change in the way we teach. What teachers do will have to be different and much more powerful. We will have to find ways of getting deeply into the specifics of how to help students master subject matter. The Lesson Plans I am developing are merely suggestions because everything has to be based on what goes on in particular schools, and no two schools are alike. I am designing my own version and it is for everybody. To improve is my expectation. My Lesson Plans will be described in an easy meaningful way using Poetry as the principle theme. For that purpose I designed a Multiage Inclusion-Program.

- \* Multiage Classroom Strategies
- Project Areas/Learning Centers
- Classroom Physical Arrangement
- Classroom Atmosphere/Discipline
- Strategies: Individual, Continuous Progress
- Literature - based/whole language
- Hands-on Content Areas
- Responding to Learning
- Peer Tutoring
- Self Evaluation
- Peer Evaluation

## Lesson Plan 1

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(For all grades)

Centers, Centers, Everywhere....

Objective:

We need centers that engage learners and provide the space, resources, and means for students to practice what they are learning in order to move them on toward independence. The Centers I am describing are samples for places where children can read and write the poems chosen for the unit.

@Text:Reading Center Reader's Place: All learners need a place to cozy up with a book, in this case the poem we decided to learn and to read about the author's life. The place could be an old bathtub or a loft, a bean bag chair or the back seat from an old car; or just a piece of old shag rug; adding some boxes of shelves with bought, borrowed, or classroom-made books. Procedure:

Cluster students in groups of four or five and give each cluster two poems. Their task is to decide which poem they'd like to read together and how to present it to the class. Students choose the parts they want in the choral readings so everyone is comfortable. If part of the poem is too difficult to be read alone, a student might read with a partner or choose to read the repeating phrase.

For the next few days, students search for poems, read them aloud, and copy down their favorites. We attach adhesive notes to the finished copies and hang them around the room. Students shop for copies they want to include in their personal anthologies by writing their names on the notes. Teachers, too sign up, for we are also discovering new poets for our own anthologies.

Assessments:

Assessments are maintained in individual reading, and writing portfolios. The theme usually culminates in a student-designed project for display to parents and other classes.

## Lesson Plan 2

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3rd and 4th Grade

Reading Workshop

Theme for the week: Latin Women writers.

Procedure:

Whole group (gathered at circle)

Reads together the poem or poems chosen from Latin Women writers.

Discusses meaning, graphophonic or mechanical skills using the poem.

Interest Groups: (4 or 5)

Break into mostly self-selected interest groups focused on book choice from the theme.

Groups somewhat similar skill based due to reading level of books.

Book choices (poetry and authors) available cover ability levels from emergent to fluent

Read together as a group or read individually

Discuss poem according to guide set up by teacher, based on learning objective.

Reread to partner, listen to partner, respond

Record in reading journal

Work in book response project to share with rest of class approximately once a week

Project may include art work, puppets, drama, or written report

Teacher meets with each small group while others work independently

Teacher listen to readers, discusses work, also discusses phonics, spelling, objectives for week as one of several reading/writing strategies.

Assessment

Observation - Children are observed in whole group, small group, and individual setting. Anecdotal records are kept for each child. Teachers now have documentation of how students naturally approach learning tasks.

## **Lesson Plan 3**

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For the inclusive primary classroom

Writing Center

Theme: Making Poetry

Aim: Can we write a poem?

Performance Objectives - Students will be able to :

Identify a poem as a form of writing in verse that expresses imaginative thought, (poem from Alfonsina Storni)

write five lines in sequence

write a cinquain

Curriculum Unit 00.01.07



Performance Objective for the Special Child:

create a word family from a word in a poem (from Alfonsina Storni)

write a poem using the word family, as simple as the needs of the child

Materials Needed:

Making Poetry Activity Sheet

crayons

poetry books, for example, Poetry Power ESL by Katherine Maitland - Jeanne Pi-a, Modern Curriculum Press, Inc. Cleveland, Ohio, 1993, Dias y Dias De Poesía, by Alma Flor Ada, Hampton Brown Books, for bilingual education, Carmel, California, 1991.

Motivation:

Tell children they will be writing their own poetry today.

Development:

Tell the children to think about some of their favorite things as you read the poem chosen.

Read a book about a child's favorite things, related to the poem of Alfonsina Storni: "We are going to the mountain." "Vamos a la Monta-a".

Discuss the poem that you read. Define a poem with the class as a form of writing in verse that expresses imaginative thought.

Tell children they will be writing a special five-line poem called cinquain today.

Discuss and write the form of the cinquain. Read the directions aloud from the Making Poetry Activity Sheet. Have children write their own cinquains.

Individual Project for the Special Child:

Help the special child choose a word to build a word family with, for example, mountain. Next, have the special child build a word family. Then have the special child write a poem using the words in the word family (according to her level).

Assessment

Let children write down five pairs of rhyming words, for example, sky and pie.

Check the child's difficulties, and learning rate.

## Conclusion:

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Reading and writing are the most complex or human function. The goal of having every child able to read and write with competence and confidence has become a national priority. As we travel through this curriculum using poetry of Latin Women, we are able to see its extraordinary power that will induce students into the magic of reading. Reading poetry is a complex understanding that requires a lot from the reader, but, like good art, its demands are more than matched by what it gives in return. It has cascading consequences for the mind. Everyone without serious intellectual impairment can learn a poem. Hopefully this unit may accomplish the ability of learning these poems over the ages, across time and history and culture, helping the spirit to stay alive though the body be imprisoned.

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Y.U.T

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