



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1991 Volume IV: Recent American Poetry: Expanding the Canon

Poetry for the Elementary Classroom

Curriculum Unit 91.04.06
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Imagine an excited class: hands waving and voices pleading, “Please let me go next!” What are these children responding to? They want to participate in oral recitation. This is not being forced upon them, they want to respond. Everyone is on the edge of their chair demanding a chance to recite poetry! This can happen! This has happened! This unit presents approaches that have successfully nurtured enthusiasm and interest in poetry.

The unit is the product of a variety of teaching experiences. The lessons that are presented illustrate strategies that have been applied in and derived from the following teaching situations; the traditional self-contained classroom, team teaching circumstances and the ‘guest teacher’ status of an itinerant teacher. The unit focuses upon the second, third and fourth grade student. The youngster at these levels is in the process of mastering the skills demanded to become a good reader. Some lessons take into consideration early educational methods that stress an oral emphasis. Another lesson suggests methods of incorporating poetry into different curricular areas. The presentations for lessons one, two and three are designed to last forty-five minutes to an hour and would ideally be done once a week. Each lesson suggests additional exercises that could be used between sessions. A second section allows for the development of an interdisciplinary approach to other curricular areas. It contains references to texts and poems that reflect themes that relate to science, transportation, communication and physical education. It is hoped that some of the ideas and approaches can find a home in new surroundings.

Many poems are referred to in this unit. These are available in a packet at the Yale-New Haven Teachers’ Institute office. These poems have held the attention of many students; they are not proposed to be the only ones to use. It is of primary importance that the poems you share with your youngsters be those you enjoy. It is your interests and personality that will allow you to bring enthusiasm and excitement to your lessons. If you have not availed yourself of the library’s poetry section or recall poetry to be the study of meter and veiled meanings look again! Anthologies are a good place to start. There are both general and specific anthologies, the former offering a wealth of different subjects and the latter relating to a particular theme. Become acquainted with the modern poets; Jack Prelutsky, Shel Silverstein, Eve Merriam, David McCord, Nikki Giovanni and Eloise Greenfield, whose poetry mirrors in so many ways our many-faceted society. Let the students become familiar with the voices of poets who have been read by generations of children and still say something to us today. These revered poets include Langston Hughes, Robert Frost, Carl Sandburg and Li Po. If you are to leave your children with the wonderful gift of an appreciation of poetry, you must allow yourself to get caught up in its magic.

The first section of this unit presents three carefully sequenced lessons. These lessons take into consideration early educational methods that stressed an emphasis on oral presentations. The uses of alliteration and memorization were extremely important to this type of presentation. If we recall the first book from which the children of the colonists learned their letters and to spell, the horn book, we find a text of one page from which the children read aloud. It contained lists of simple syllables and the Lord's prayer. The children's eyes would pass across the material and it would be repeated. Then, with the book at their side, they would recite their lesson without looking. This process would be continued until the material was memorized. The first true text was the *New England Primer* published in 1753. (Glubok, 142) Rhyme and repetition played an important role in this text. In it were found little rhymes for each of the letters of the alphabet. The rhyme aided the memorization. The three lessons have as their main goal creating an immediate enjoyment and interest in poetry. They present short, easily remembered poems and tongue twisters to tantalize and challenge the oral abilities of the early readers. The students are encouraged to memorize a poem or tongue twister in each lesson. Tongue twisters also have themes, and while they are fun to attempt to recite, there are questions directed to understanding what is stated in the selection. Poems are also included whose interpretations are more demanding. The strategy requires sharing your enthusiasm, inspiring an excitement and creating an atmosphere that will allow for individual development using poetry that both you and the students enjoy.

How do you "turn on the dark"? (Silverstein, *Light* 139) This intriguing question tests the student's understanding of both the poem and the animal world. Of course, you turn on the dark by turning off the light. The urgent request for the dark is from a frightened baby bat. It turns out to be a sensible request since bats are nocturnal animals. Shel Silverstein turns a phrase and the students' interpretations become more involved than anyone would have expected. Time should be allowed to explore any avenue of interest that arises.

Understanding the poems in this fashion is one of the goals of the first lesson; The others are:

The student will memorize a poem.

The student will individually recite poetry.

The students will recite poetry together chorally.

The students will improve their pronunciation skills.

The students will recognize the rhyming words from a selection. The line, "turn on the dark" is one of four that compose Shel Silverstein's poem "Batty." This is the first poem introduced in lesson one. Although there are just four lines to this poem it is handed out on a sheet of paper by itself. An individual sheet for each poem keeps the class focused on one poem at a time. Each poem is also enlarged to aid in its reading. Usually an individual or table of students may begin to read this poem from the handout. Grouping aids the more hesitant reader. In addition students may be more confident after hearing their peers repeat the poem. In fact hearing a classmate recite seems to reinforce the process of learning the poem for many students.

In this first poem students can easily find the "light" and "fright" rhyme. They should place emphasis on what the baby bat "screamed." Going around the class you can find who can say the lines with most feeling. This sentence is also a quotation. The study of direct quotations and the use of quotation marks is a language arts skill introduced at the third and fourth grade levels. Carry over to the general curriculum may be initiated from the introduction of materials in this manner.

The second of the six poems in this lesson is now handed out. As the tongue twister, "You've no need to light

a night light” (Potter, *Tongue* 14) is passed there will be a murmur among the children. Tongue twisters require attention to pronunciation skills and the class will begin immediately to tackle the task. After their initial reading of the poem to themselves there are several questions which will refocus their attention. It is a good idea to check any selection to see if all the vocabulary is understood. Some children may not be familiar with the word slight and some have not been sure what a night light is. After the vocabulary check ask:

What words rhyme with light?

How many times is the word light used?

Does the word light have the same meaning each time it is used?

When is light used as a noun? A verb? an adjective?

When the poem states, “a night light’s light’s a slight light” What is the function of the apostrophe in each of the given cases?

The final two questions refer to skills that the third and fourth grade students should be able to answer. The above questions all stress language arts skills. Another question with a different focus is, Why on this night is there no need for a night light? The only answer given is that it is a “light night.” So, What would make a “light night”? Students have inferred that the moon is out or that there is a street light outside their window. Such a question allows for divergent thinking.

The students have become more and more familiar with the tongue twister as the discussion has progressed. Random selection of groups to read two of the eight lines as quickly and fluently as possible keeps everyone following the poem closely. The mastery of the selection will show improvement and then it is time to select individual students to read four lines or the entire eight. Everyone should be included.

The next offering is “Bubble Gum” by Nina Payne. (Prelutsky, *Random* 106) This four-stanza poem presents an interesting story. The first stanza suggests that a bubble has popped and covered the face of the speaker. In the second stanza the speaker feels a stone in his sock and gets gum on his feet. Then a brother is asked to simultaneously blow a bubble in the third stanza. The result “now our ears are sticking to our hair,” expressed in the final stanza proves to make this a favorite poem. There are questions that can be asked that demand a literal response as well as those that demand a conclusion.

Why is he in “trouble”?

How did the gum get between his “toes”?

Who else was invited to blow bubbles?

Is the cleaning up going to be easy?

Reading the poem is easier than reading a tongue twister. The class may note that this poem has a rhyme scheme. At this point the introduction of letters to designate the sounds at the ends of the lines may begin. The pattern for this poem is; AAB, CCB, DDE, FFE. Almost everyone will be able to read at least two stanzas without the initial group recitation. Again the random selection of the students to read keeps everyone following along. The rhyme they find while reading can be compared to the rhyme in the first two selections. The students might discuss if they think one selection is easier to master than the others. As the discussion of

this poem comes to an end ask, What did the baby bat do? Why? Generally this will spotlight the students who have already memorized the Silverstein poem. Others will quickly shuffle their sheets to find the poem sheet and read their response.

Now while they strive to recall “Batty” the students find in front of them a short tongue twister. It is about a “blue bug” and a “black bear” that “bleeds blood” after it is bitten. The short selection can be practiced and the next poem started or the alliteration can be studied. Alliteration is the repetition of the initial sound, which is in most cases a consonant. It is a common device in most tongue twisters. The class might be asked to quickly practice alliteration using their name: Daring David, Terrific Tyrone, Lovely Latoya, or Dainty Danielle.

Alliteration is present in the next poem, “A Fly and Flea in a Flue.” (Potter, *Tongue 7*) It is evident in this case it is the “f” sound that is repeated. The vocabulary words flue and flew should be checked to be sure they are understood. The question becomes what is the difference between flue and flew, and flee and flea? These are homophones: words spelled differently that have the same sound. The use of fly, the insect and fly, to be airborne, is an example of a homonym. Ask, What is a homonym? How does it differ from a homophone? Have the class identify the following: blue/blew, stamp/stamp, reign/ rain and stump/stump. This lesson is easily extended at another time. Lists can be generated, parent’s help requested as part of the homework assignment and stories or poems written to show that the different meanings are understood. This is part of the third and fourth grade curriculum.

Do you smell? Ask five or six students. The reply is usually “No!” accompanied by giggles and a laugh or two. Of course you smell, you smell with your nose! This is one way to introduce the next and last poem in lesson one “My Nose” by Dorothy Aldis. (Prelutsky, *Random 217*) To introduce the poem this way used the homonyms smell and smell. In the poem what is the problem with this nose? It doesn’t smell. That question can lead to these:

What is wrong with the person in this poem?

What does it mean when it states, “It doesn’t breathe”?

Why is the person discouraged?

How do you feel when you’re sick?

What should you do when you’re sick?

Who can say this poem and make it sound as if they have a cold?

What is the rhyme scheme?

This poem is easy to read. It has an easy rhyme scheme. After a once around the room it is time to have each child read a part from the poem that he has enjoyed the most. This concludes lesson one.

Lesson two becomes slightly more demanding. It starts with another easy-to-memorize poem and progresses to another tongue twister. This selection illustrates alliteration using the letter P. The tongue twister “Song of the Pop-bottlers” by Morris Bishop (Potter, *More 35*) has an interesting story line. Part of the enjoyment of understanding the poem comes after you check the various meanings the homonym pop has. Does pop mean soda, dad or to explode? A student can be asked to rewrite the line “When Pop bottles pop-bottles, Pop bottles pop!” It becomes, When dad bottles soda bottles soda bottles explode! This type of check can be done with

any line because they all contain at least one pop. Questions that can be asked about this twister are:

What is Pop's problem in the first stanza?

What two words in the second stanza tell what happens to the bottles?

What is the slop Pop must mop?

What do we try to get Pop to do in the last stanza?

The poem has a number of exclamation marks. It is important to have the reading of this selection show the required emphasis. If the emphasis is placed properly the class might start to discover the rhythm that is in this offering. One Class became so excited they managed to chorally read the poem as a three part round; in another class the children suggested that the poem be used as a jump rope rhyme.

Now to settle down Eloise Greenfield's poem "By Myself" (Greenfield, Honey 34) is passed around. This poem demands more thought on the part of the students. The poem suggests that children may shut their eyes and be anything. Ms. Greenfield chooses to be "a twin," "a dimple on a chin," "toys," "noise," "a gospel song," "a gong," "a leaf turning red," and "a loaf of brown bread." These interesting choices may or may not be selections the children would make. Can a class see merit in her choices? What would their choices be? Can they defend their choices? This conversation is suggested in the lesson plan to become one of the three possible ideas to develop as an outside activity. It could possibly lead to a creative writing exercise dealing with wishes and dreams. This may also lead to the use of the following statements: I once was . . . , I am now . . . , and I will be How many different ways can the class come up with to answer these statements. Perhaps only one statement is answered a day. To some these questions might suggest an activity based upon a time line. A time line with pictures brought in from home allows the child to become aware that he has changed, is changing and will continue to change.

Relief! Perhaps the best known example of tongue twisting alliteration, "Betty Botter bought some butter." (Potter, *Tongue* 27) It's time to return to each group attempting two lines at a time, then four, then the entire poem. Now the same is repeated with the individual challenges to this grand twister. Check to see if they realize what the problem was, ask:

What was wrong with the first batch of butter?

What was a bit of new butter going to do?

What was her decision?

What was the result of her purchase?

What does "twas mean?

This fun now comes to an end and the next poem is handed out.

Growing up we hear: you shouldn't, you mustn't, you don't that's impossible and you'll never have, yet Shel Silverstein in his poem "Listen to the Mustn'ts" (Silverstein, *Sidewalk* 27) states "Anything can be." Children can easily generate a great number of items that fit into the categories of impossibles, mustn'ts and don'ts. Compiling a list takes just a few extra minutes. When it is time to consider the list we must ask:

Why are we told these things?

Are there any which actually help us as we grow?

Is it our own effort that allows us to eventually do what we want?

Are there any items on the list that really are negative?

How do we feel when we hear . . . ?

There will probably be more conversation about the topic than time spent reading the poem. This poem is easily read and a group reading may allow more time for the discussion. The discussion can be continued at another time. In fact the lesson plan suggests to continue this lesson. The list can be left out and added to. A writing exercise might be centered on, Why I did what I was told to do.

What have you gotten away with? What are some things you have done that no one knows about? This assignment is generated from Ralph Bergengren's poem "The Worm." (Prelutsky, *Random* 127) It is up to the instructor how to use these suggestions for extensions to the Greenfield, Silverstein and Bergengren poems. It might suffice to have the questions answered in a group session, or one of these suggestions might develop into a more involved writing assignment. There may well be other interpretations and approaches that occur to you that are even more intriguing.

"The Worm" is fun to read. It is a poem comprised of six rhymed couplets. Each couplet creates its own image. One clarification that has to be made is to explain what "turning" the earth means. This is in the first couplet and after that momentary pause continue. A murmur arises after the third couplet, they refers to birds:

They like worms just as much as I
Like bread and milk and apple pie.

Children love foods, but must be reminded worms are a birds favorite food. A digression at this point may include discussion of the food groups. It is truly a wonder that worms and insects supply what the birds need while it takes four different types of foods to sustain us. Like the bird the poet thought about trying a worm. He put it on his tongue but it did not taste good so he did not eat it. The class usually agrees that this is the kind of thing a small child might very well try. In the poem the mother thinks the child ate the worm. We know it wasn't eaten; that's what is the most fun. It is from this final misunderstanding we approach the topic of; What have you done that no one knows about? Again, letting the children pick their favorite lines from the selection is a great way to end.

Lesson three's major thrust is to read with feeling and emphasis. Now the students are asked to pay closer attention to quotations and punctuation. The first short poem "Anteater" by Shel Silverstein (Silverstein, *Light* 115) depends primarily on the homonym ant/aunt. It should be read emphasizing the quotation and stressing the words before the exclamation mark. Likewise the second short poem "I Saw a Little Girl I Hate" by Arnold Spilka (Prelutsky, *Random* 212) should be read with feeling. The lesson plan suggests questions about the text of each of these poems. It checks to see if the children know about anteaters and if they are able to detect the apparent contradiction of the little girl's actions in the Spilka poem.

Generally when we deal with feelings it is found that threats, put-downs and name calling cause much of the bad feeling and anger in our classrooms. "Mean Song" by Eve Merriam (Hopkins, *Potatoe* 69) uses nonsense words to poke fun at this type of interaction between students. "Ribble and Grodes" are wished upon you, and if you don't stay away "you'll get one flack snack in the bave." The reading of this poem ideally involves group interaction. One group, or table, or row stands and directs its reading of a stanza to another group. Smiles usually sneak out even though they have been instructed to keep the tone harsh. The issue to question is, Does what you say to one another really make any more sense than the nonsense in the poem?

Another tongue twister follows. The theme again is one you hear in class, What did you say about me? Do I have the information straight or did you say something else? It seems far-fetched but no doubt there have been classroom conflicts that will readily come to mind that actually may be similar to the argument in the twister.

The longest poem to be presented ends lesson three. "The Creature in the Classroom" by Jack Prelutsky (Prelutsky, *Random* 212) pulls the students away from the introspection demanded in the previous three selections and allows for an escape to fantasy. The only clarification that has to be made is to explain exactly what an arabesque is. It is a ballet position in which we find one leg and one arm extended backward while the other arm is extended forward. This is a position the creature assumes shortly before swallowing the teacher! The three, eight line stanzas allow for a wonderful amount of detail. We discover what the creature eats. We envision the teacher getting more and more upset and in our reading place emphasis on her statements. Now the class is ready to do an illustration of the creature. They might pick a line or two to write above their drawings. They may use bubbles and have the creature and teacher talking. This extension needn't be done during the poetry period, it may become an art assignment for another period.

The description of the presentations of the lessons have been in detail. The lesson plans are more concise. I hope I have pointed out some of the many different areas that can be included in a lesson presentation.

The following section of this paper presents a second approach for the use of poetry in the classroom. The objective of this section is to list texts and individual poems that can be used in conjunction with other curricular areas. There are no lesson plans for this section. This segment of the unit suggests some ideas for teaching on a more general level. However, it does present extensions of each theme in several directions. There is no set, or suggested time frame for when these materials should be introduced. It is for the teacher to determine how and when during the year to relate poetry to a curricular area. The poetry may be read to the class and discussed, become the focal point for a creative writing assignment, be incorporated into a notebook and become part of a class collection or used to encourage physical fitness. There are an endless number of possibilities. The more poetry read, the greater the number of associations with curricular areas. The rather extensive bibliography for both students and teachers is comprised of older texts that were found in individual New Haven school libraries as well as those on the shelves in the local public libraries.

Transportation and communication are curricular areas around which units are often developed in the elementary school. Such a unit seldom includes poetry. There are unifying themes that can be developed. Transportation and communication involve machines, cars, trains, planes, telephones and televisions. Associated with machines are noises clickety-clack, roar, hiss, whistle, ring, click, blabber and many more. Jill Bennett is the editor of a text called *Noisy Poems*. In the text are poems that use alliteration and sound words. You hear the sound of the train in on poem and the slap of the waves and sails in an other. In class it is great fun to start lists of sound words. With these lists the children can write their own stories and poetry. Students might write about being astronauts or pilots after having read *Poetry for Space Enthusiasts*, by

Leland Jacobs. The collection contains some poems about space, airplanes, rocket ships and satellites that compete for the children's attention with witches, magic carpets and the man in the moon. An individual poem that continues the theme of this unit is "Eletelephony" by Laura Richards. This is a poem of syllable substitution that challenges you to say it right by saying it wrong. The rhyme of the first four lines, "elephant," "telephant," "elephone," and "telephone" suggest the tone of this enjoyable poem. (Prelutsky, Random 192)

If it seems strange to parallel physical education and poetry pause a moment and give it a second thought. The idea developed as an extension of a poetry lesson. A third grade class mastered the tongue twister "Song of the Pop-bottlers" by Morris Bishop (Potter, *More* 35) and so emphasized the rhythm a jump rope was found and brought out so members of the class could jump. Shortly after with the discovery of Eloise Greenfield's poem *Rope Rhyme* (Greenfield, *Honey* 15) the idea of joining the activity of rope jumping and the teaching of rhyme and poetry grew. "Rope Rhyme" gives a verbal description of jumping rope in a framework of rhythm that allows for that activity. When you add this type of rhyme and rhythm to your curriculum there is a great opportunity for reinforcement. The students on the playground at recess or after lunch will use the new rhymes and learn them quickly. Tried and true favorites may be included too. *Jump the Rope Jingles* by Emma Worstell was located in a school library, while Joanna Cole's text *Anna Banana: 101 Jump Rope Rhymes* was available in a recent Scholastic elementary book order. An extension would be to encourage the students to write down their rhymes.

A goal of science is to promote the understanding and use of scientific method to problem solve. Scientific method, in great part, is dependent upon observation and data collection. Poetry, too, is dependent upon observation and the special individual expression of that observation. In more and more elementary classrooms water has become part of the science curriculum. Experiments are done that explore the shapes of large and small drops, how to change the surface tension, and water's capillary action. Teachers have bubble blowing days. Special attention is given to the bubble's spherical shape and the pressure that gives it that shape. It is explained that individual drops, like prisms, refract light and cause rainbows in the sky or at the end of a hose. Valerie Worth in "Hose" and Carl Sandburg in "Bubbles" (dePaola, 20 & 21) offer a counter point to the factual descriptions. They share with us their unique observations of rainbows. Can the children share their feelings and observations with us? The poem "The Bubble" (Jacobs, 49) mentions the spherical shape and delicate nature of the bubble. The poem suggests that the bubble might wish to soar like the birds or wander the sky with the clouds. If you were a bubble where would you roam? Where would you eventually POP? This creative writing lesson develops naturally. Bubbles pop and become drops and drops comprise rain. There are many poems about rain and getting wet. Listed below are some that may serve as a further extension of a water lesson. At this level the water cycle and weather are also topics to which may poems might apply.

"All Wet" by Tony Johnston. (dePaola, 27)

"Open Hydrant" by Marci Ridlon. (dePaola, 75)

"Rain Poem" by Elizabeth Coatsworth. (deRegniers, 29)

"Rain" by Myra Cohn Livingston. (deRegniers, 29)

"April Rain Song" by Langston Hughes. (deRegniers, 20)

The final topic develops a plan of study that relates handwriting and poetry. This is a rewarding long term project for third and fourth graders. The project requires that each child have a notebook. The seventy page

spiral notebook or the marble composition note books available in catalogs work very well. The pages of the notebooks may be numbered and the first two or three left to become a table of contents. A daily poem recorded in the notebook gives the students constant exposure to poetry and the teacher a record of the individual's progress with this fine motor skill. Indeed this can develop into a class exercise to see if everyone can memorize Monday's selection by Friday. Various types of rewards for various degrees of accomplishment can be given. Popcorn is a great reward! Two hands full for those that memorize the poem and one for those who don't. The selection of the poems to be copied is easily accomplished if reference to an anthology is made. The anthology offers a wide range of poetry dealing with many subject areas. For example *The Arbuthnot Anthology* has the following headings in the table of contents: People, Animals, Travel, Humor, Magic and Make Believe, Wind and Water, Days and Seasons and finally Wisdom and Beauty. When the notebook is filled with poems from these areas there is usually a wonderful record of the students handwriting improvement. Papers need not be collected and filled, for it is all in one package ready to share with principal and parent.

This section of the unit serves as a spring board for those of you who wish to us it. It allows for the introduction of related materials whose emphasis is just a bit different. It is up to you to incorporate any or all the ideas into your curriculum.

Lesson 1

OBJECTIVES

The students will memorize a poem.

The students will individually recite poetry.

The students will recite poetry together chorally.

The students will read a poem and determine what it is about.

The students will improve their pronunciation skills.

The students will recognize the rhyming words from a selection.

MATERIALS

Each poem should be copied on a separate sheet of paper. The poems for lesson one are:

“Batty” by Shel Silverstein (Silverstein, *Light* 139)

“You’ve no need to light a nightlight,” (Potter, *Tongue* 14)

“Bubble Gum” by Nina Payne (Prelutsky, *Random* 106)

“A big blue bug bit a big black bear” (Emrich 181)

“A fly and a flea in a flue” (Potter, *Tongue* 7)

“My Nose” by Dorothy Aldis, (Prelutsky, *Random* 217)

PROCEDURE

This is a whole class unit. The poems are to be given out one at a time. In a twenty-five student class there should be established groups of four or five students. This grouping may be done by using the rows or tables existing in the class. They may be told to read quietly while the rest of the class get their poems. There should follow a list of questions based on the poem. Now it is the first poem that the students will attempt to memorize, it is important to discuss the poem to reinforce it for them. Questions for “batty” might include;

What kind of an animal is a bat?

What do you know about bats?

Why would a bat, especially a baby, be afraid of the light?

How do you “turn on the dark”?

What are the words that rhyme?

Questions for “nightlight” might include;

What is a night light?

Why wouldn’t you need one at night?

What does slight mean?

When it says “night light’s light’s a “ explain the use of the apostrophes?

Questions for “Bubble Gum”;

Why is the person in trouble?

How did the gum get between his toes?

Who did he ask to join him in bubble blowing?

What happened?

Questions for “blue bug”;

What happened?

How quickly can you say this poem?

Questions for, “A fly and a flea”;

What are the meanings of fly and flea in this poem.

Which is the homonym, which the homophone?

What is a flue?

What is a flaw?

Questions for “My Nose”;

Do you smell? Of course you do with your nose!

In the poem what is wrong with the nose?

Are you 'discouraged' when your not feeling well?

At the conclusion of this lesson the children will have recited individually as well as in their groups. Most will be able to recall "Batty" with looking. An interesting exercise is to let each child read or recite from memory his/her favorite poem. Most will now be able to read the tongue twisters. The pages maybe the start of a poetry notebook.

Lesson 2

OBJECTIVES

The students will memorize a poem.

The students will individually recite poetry.

The students will recite poetry together chorally.

The students will do an independent language arts exercise that elaborates on one of three of the poems in this lesson.

The students will be introduced to the term alliteration and be able to find examples in the readings.

MATERIALS

Each poem should be copied on a separate sheet of paper. The poems for this lesson are:

"I Love You," (Prelutsky, *Random* 102)

"Song of the Pop-Bottlers" by Morris Bishop (Potter, *More Tongue* 35)

"By Myself" by Eloise Greenfield (Greenfield, 24)

"Betty Botter bought some butter," (Potter, *Tongue* 27)

"Listen to the Mustn'ts" By Shel Silverstein (Silverstein, *Sidewalk* 27)

"The Worm" by Ralph Bergengren (Prelutsky, *Random* 127)

PROCEDURE

This is a whole class unit. The poems are to be given out one at a time. In a twenty-five student class there should be established groups of four or five student. They may be told to read quietly while the rest of the class gets their poems. Questions should be asked about the poems.

Questions for “I Love You”;

What is happening in this poem?

What are the feelings of the characters likely to be after one listens to the other?

Questions for “Song of the Pop-Bottlers”;

How many meanings can we think of for pop?

What is Pop’s problem in the first stanza?

What happens to the dropped bottles?

Then what must Pop do?

What does the last stanza try to get Pop to do?

Questions for “By Myself”;

What happens when the writer is by herself?

Can you picture yourself as the things that Eloise Greenfield say she is? How?

What are some things you ‘might care to be’?

Do things really change when you open your eyes?

Questions for “Betty Botter..”;

What is the problem that is stated in the first two lines?

What is the conclusion she comes to in the lines three and four?

What was her solution to the problem?

What happened as a result of her choice?

What are other things she could have done?

Can you make a list of the words that are examples of alliteration?

Questions for “Listen to the Mustn’ts”;

What are some things your parents tell you, you mustn’t do?

What are some of the don’ts?

What are the shouldn’ts?

What are the impossibles, the won’ts and never haves?

Why do you think they say these things to you?

Can listening to your parents result in your being able to do anything?

Or is it that you are stopped from doing the things you want?

Questions for “The Worm”;

What does it mean to turn the earth?

What do the birds come and do?

Is it fair to say that the birds like the worms that much?

Now what did the person in the poem do when young?

What does the mother think happened?

What is the rhyme in this poem?

Compare it to “Listen to the Mustn’ts”, what is the difference?

At the conclusion of this lesson the children will again have accomplished a majority of the objectives. The final objective would be to do one of the following exercises. The poem “By Myself” suggests that children may shut their eyes and be any thing. What are some of your class’s choices? This may also lead to the use of the following statements: I once was . . . , I now am, and I will be The poem “Listen to the Mustn’ts” can lead to a consideration of the things parents tell their children they can not do. Lists could be made and discussions developed around the outcomes of listening to the different advice. Finally “The Worm” is fun, the question to pose is; What have you done that your parents don’t know about or don’t understand? Stories may be written or shared orally with the group. They may even be illustrated.

Lesson 3

OBJECTIVES

The students will memorize a poem and read it with emphasis!

The student will recognize and imitate in their reading the feelings expressed in the selected poems.

The students will recite poetry together chorally with feeling. The students will illustrate the Creature from the poem “The Creature in the classroom”, using material from the poem for detail.

The students will review the poetry and find rhyme patterns, any alliteration as well as any homophones and homonyms.

MATERIALS

Each poem should be copied on a separate sheet of paper. There should also be paper set aside for the

illustrating of the final poem in this presentation. The poems for this lesson are:

“Anteater” by Shel Silverstein (Silverstein, *Light* 115)

“I Saw a Little Girl I Hate” by Arnold Spilka (Prelutsky, *Random* 103)

“Mean Song” by Eve Merriam (Hopkins, *Potato* 69)

“Say, did you say, or did you not say say” (Potter, *Tongue* 13)

“The Creature in the Classroom” by Jack Prelutsky (Prelutsky, *Random* 212)

PROCEDURE

This is a whole class unit. The poems are to be given out one at a time. In a twenty-five student class there should be established groups of four or five students. Questions should be asked about the poems.

Questions for “Anteater”;

What is an anteater?

How does it eat ants?

If you did have one could it eat a person?

What do we sometimes do when we say ant and aunt?

If we pronounce them the same way what do we call them?

Questions for “I Saw a Little Girl I Hate”;

What happens in this poem?

Which one of the things the little girl does is the worst?

Is what happened fair?

Questions for “Mean Song”;

Why does the author use the words podes, grodes, snickles and Ribble?

What kinds of feelings are expressed in this poem?

Did you ever tell anyone to “Keep out of sight”?

What does that warning mean?

What will happen if you see that other person?

Who can say this poem showing the feeling the reader must have?

Questions for “Say, did you say, or did you not say”;

Would you call this a tongue twister?

What exactly is going on in this poem?

Have you ever heard anything like this before?

What could the relationship be between the two people?

Express the Question being asked in the poem in a less complicated fashion.

Does this selection have a rhyme scheme?

Questions for “The Creature in the Classroom”;

What words rhyme in the first stanza of the poem?

What is the rhyme scheme for the complete poem?

What parts of the poem would you emphasize?

While the class reads the story part of the poem, would someone read what is inside the quotation marks?

What is an arabesque?

Is this a male or female creature?

Can you illustrate one of the stanzas of this poem?

What kinds of things are you going to put into your picture?

How is the teacher’s voice apt to change as the end comes closer?

As we read this poem together add the emphasis you think necessary.

If time allows the class may now illustrate the poem. This activity may also be done as an art or cartoon lesson. Each stanza would be illustrated if the cartoon format was assigned. They might pick a line or two to write above their drawings. They may use bubbles and have the creature and teacher talking! It is always interesting to note the children who put in the most detail, draw the best creature and have the best dialogue. This exercise makes a great bulletin board theme.

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Armour, Richard. *A Dozen Dinosaurs* . New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1967.

A great find, it is in some school libraries. Twelve poems about dinosaurs, the best is Pachycephalosaurus!

Baurer, Caroline, ed. *Snowy Day: Stories and Poems* . New York: J. B. Lippincott, 1986.

The selections allow for a wonderful visualization of the winter season.

Bennett, Jill, ed. *Noisy Poems* . New York: Oxford University Press, 1987.

A lot of alliteration and use of word representing sounds.

Bennett, Jill, ed. *Spooky Poems* . Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1989.

All types of creatures allow the children to really use their imagination.

Brown, Helen A. and Harry J. Heltman. *Let's Read Together Poems: An Anthology of Verse Selected and Arranged for Choral Reading in The Fifth Grade* . New York: Row, Peterson and Company, 1950.

One of the few texts that stress choral reading, old but good.

Cameron, Polly. *"I Can't" Said the Ant* . New York: Scholastic Book Services, 1961.

Wonderful rhyme, let this text help develop a positive self concept.

Carle, Eric, ed. *Animals Animals*. New York: Scholastic Inc. 1989.

A good choice of animal poems, wonderful illustrations.

Cole, Joanna. *Anna Banana; 101 Jump Rope Rhymes* . New York: Marrow Junior Books, 1989.

Join reading and physical education, use this text to help develop an interdisciplinary approach.

Cole, William. *Poem Stew* . New York: J. B. Lippincott, 1981. Contains many fun food poems for the class to digest.

dePaola, Tomie, ed. *Tomie dePaolo's Book of Poems*. New York: G. P. Putman's Sons, 1988.

A good selection of modern and classical poems.

deRegniers, Beatrice Schenk, et al. *Sing a Song of Popcorn* . New York: Scholastic Inc. 1988.

Another good up to date fun collection of poems.

Glubok Shirley. *Home and Child Life in Colonial Days* . New York: Macmillan, 1969.

It covers most all areas of the colonial child's life.

Greenfield, Eloise. *Honey, I Love*. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1972.

No New Haven elementary classroom should be without this text. It talks to our children presenting concerns and situations they are familiar with in poetic terms.

Greenfield, Eloise. *Nathaniel Talking* . New York: Black Butterfly Childrens Books, 1988.

Another must book for your room. It has much the same emphasis as the above book.

Greenfield, Eloise. *Under the Sunday Tree* . U.S.A.: Harper Collins Publishers, 1988.

The poems describe the life in the Bahamas.

Holdridge, Barbara, ed. *I'm Nobody! Who Are You?: Poems of Emily Dickinson for Young People*. Owings Mills, Maryland: Stemmer Publishers Inc., 1978.

A good introduction to Emily Dickinson for young people.

Hopkins, Lee Bennett, ed. *By Myself* . New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1980. Leads to the idea of daydreams and imagination.

Hopkins, Lee Bennett, ed. *Moments: Poems About the Seasons* . New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc. 1980.

An excellent collection of fifty poems that can be used in many different ways.

Hopkins, Lee Bennett and Misha Arenstein. *Time to Shout: Poems for You* . New York: Scholastic Inc., 1973.

Very usable in the classroom, includes the topics our earth, short thoughts and a time to laugh.

Jacobs, Leland B. *Poetry for Space Enthusiasts* . Champaign, Illinois: Garraed Publishing Co. 1971.

With this text you can use an interdisciplinary science/ poetry/ transportation approach.

Lathem, Edward, ed. *A Swinger of Birches: Poems of Robert Frost for Young People* . Owings Mills, Maryland: Stemmer House, 1982.

An excellent introduction to Robert Frost.

Morrison, Bill. *Squeeze a Sneeze* . Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1977.

This is a fun with word associations and rhymes.

Potter Charles Francis. *More Tongue Tangles and a Rigmarole*. New York: The World Publishing Company, 1964.

This is one of my most used texts, children truly enjoy working their way toward mastery of tongue twisters.

Potter, Charles Francis. *Tongue Tangles* . New York: The World Publishing Company, 1962.

This is the better of the two texts.

Prelutsky, Jack. *My Parents Think I'm Sleeping* . New York: Greenwillow Books, 1985.

The book presents an interesting situation that children can relate with and elaborate on.

Prelutsky, Jack. *Nightmares: Poems to Trouble Your Sleep*. New York: Greenwillow Books, 1976.

Fantasy that many children will be able to enjoy.

Prelutsky, Jack, ed. *Poems of a Nonny Mouse* . New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1987.

Seventy silly poems.

Prelutsky, Jack, ed. *The Random House Book of Poetry for Children*. New York: Random House, 1983.

This is an excellent selection with something for everyone.

Silverstein, Shel. *A Light In The Attic* . New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1981.

The two Silverstein texts are the two that my students have enjoyed the most, the subjects interest the children.

Silverstein, Shel. *Where The Sidewalk Ends* . New York: Harper and Row, 1974.

Simply the best.

Sneve, Virginia Driving Bear. *Dancing Teepees: Poems of American Indian Youth*. New York: Holiday House, 1989.

An interesting glimpse of another culture.

Steele, Mary Q. *Anna's Garden Songs* . New York: Greenwillow Books, 1989. Ms. Steele shares with us an appreciation of the things that grow.

Wallace, Daisy, ed. *Witch Poems* . New York: Holiday House, 1976.

Lots of fun especially at Halloween.

Watson, Clyde. *Father Fox's Pennyrhymes*. New York: Scholastic Inc. 1971. This is a story in rhyme, can the class do this?

Wilber, Richard. *Opposites*. New York: Harcourt Brace, Jovanovich, 1973.

Many humorous verses with a special way of turning a phrase.

Withers, Carl, ed. *Favorite Rhymes From; A Rocket In My Pocket* . New York: Scholastic Book Services 1948.

Good text to have in class, many easily read poems.

Worstell, Emma Vctor. *Jump The Rope Jingles*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1961.

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Yolen, Jane. *Best Witches; Poems for Halloween* . New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1989.

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Arbuthnot, May Hill, et al. *The Arbuthnot Anthology of Children's Literature* . Dallas Texas: Scott Foresman and Company, 1976. This volume contains an excellent selection of poetry.

Blishen, Edward, ed. *Oxford Book of Poetry for Children*. New York: Franklin Watts Inc. 1963.

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Cole, William, ed. *The Birds and the Beasts Were There; Animal Poems*. New York: The World Publishing Co. 1963.

This is a collection of three hundred animal poems.

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Actually everything in the title is contained in the text, this book is a lot of fun.

Griggs, Tamar, ed. *There's a Sound in the Sea; A Child's-Eye View of the Whale* . San Francisco: Scrimshaw Press, 1975.

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Heuvel, Cor Van Den, ed. *The Haiku Anthology: Haiku and Senryu in English* . New York: Simon and Schuster Inc. 1986. This book collects nearly seven hundred haiku and senryu.

Joseph, Stephen M., ed. *The Me Nobody Knows: Children's Voices From the Ghetto*. New York: Avon Books, 1969.

The feelings of city children are studied in this book.

Koch, Kenneth. *Rose Where Did You Get That Red?: Teaching Great Poetry to Children*. New York: Random House, 1973.

A great guide, this book becomes quickly worn.

Koch, Kenneth and Kate Farrell, ed. *Talking to the Sun: An Illustrated Anthology of Poems for Young People* . New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1985.

The text joins the treasures of the Metropolitan Museum of Art with a unique selection of poetry.

Larrick, Nancy, ed. *Room For Me and a Mountain Lion: Poetry of Open Space* . New York: M. Evans and Company, Inc. 1974.

Topics in the text include the mountainside, woods, dunes, and open fields.

Nash, Ogden, ed. *The Moon Is Shining Bright As Da y*. New York: J. B. Lippincott Co. 1953.

Truly good-humored verse.

Read, Herbert, ed. *This Way Delight: A Book of Poetry for the Young* . New York: Pantheon Books Inc. 1956.

The poetry tries to stay within the range of experiences of the young reader.

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An extremely rich anthology that contains favorite poems of the past and present.

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