

Poetry in the Classroom: Words, Fun & Music

Prof María Teresa Manteo

mmanteo@supportlearning.com.ar

“Poetry is human language reduced to its essential rhythm.”
Stéphane Mallarmé

Cultivating poetry in the classroom allows us to build a place where learners (teachers included!) can refine our awareness of words, and the worlds they evoke. It is a ticket to undiscovered lands, and to our innate capacity to image, and develop the fabric of thought and emotion.

♥ *Poetry is musical.*

Its tuneful quality taps into our natural affinity with music, and its beneficial effect on our brain and body. Through the beats of poetry we become attuned to the rhythm and flow of the poem, regardless of how much we understand.

♥ *Poetry is generous with words.*

Words, words, words...They ignite our imagination, they feed our appetite to explore. Words invite other words to come, and in this passage we make neural connections; our cognition is spurred and emotions take shape. Poetry invites us to talk... to feed our “linguaging beings”. (1)

♥ *Poetry is elusive.*

It provides the spring mattress for us to fly, without telling us where. Its undefined nature allows us to see, hear and feel what our beings ask for.

♥ *Poetry is personal.*

What appeals to one person may not appeal to another. Accompany your kids throughout the journey of discovering what makes them tick, by offering a wide range of subjects, styles and patterns.

♥ *Poetry generates creative energy through humour.*

Humour is an essential part of the creative process. We naturally delight in word play and nonsense. Here’s a good one:

There was once a man with a beard,
Who said, “It is just as I feared”
Two larks and a wren
Three owls and a hen
Have all made a nest in my beard.

Limerick by Edward Lear

(1) Term used by Chilean biologist & philosopher Humberto Maturana in his “Biology of Love”.

♥ *Poetry supports students' sense of self-worth*

Imagery in poetry sparks our capacity to generate images that are unique, and as distinctive as our thumbprints. We need to create room in our classroom agendas for our students to see in their mind's eye, hear in their mind's ear and feel with their own bodies.

● **Activities to play with poetry**

- Encourage kids to collect words from poems, books, conversations and films. Ask them to hunt for them and gather them on coloured strips of paper.
- Have in your classroom a chart of colours and their names. Children can give colours to their words (red anger a yellow smile)
- Make objects speak. The kids search drawers and cabinets at home for small objects and then they label the objects with nouns or verbs written on index cards. Suddenly objects will gain life and speak!
- Find unusual containers for words (bowls, jars, boxes...)
- Collect nouns and verbs especially on differently coloured strips. Then kids pair a noun with a verb.

EXTENSION!
POETRY WORKSHOP FOR TEACHERS

**Young Children
Middle & Upper School Students
Programme**

**Having Fun with Poetry
Playing with Words
Creative Energy**

**Read, Perform, Write!
Draw, Discover, Dream!**

**Critical Thinking
Poetry Across the Curriculum
The Elements of Poetry**

**ONSITE
SCHOOL
TRAINING**

**POEMS
FOR
ALL AGES**

**YEARLY
POETRY
PROJECTS**

Biodata

María Teresa Manteo holds a degree as an *English Teacher for Primary and Secondary School* from the *Lenguas Vivas Teachers' Training College*, where she also completed a post-graduate course in English Literature. She has obtained a Further *Professional Studies Certificate in Education Management* from the *University of Bristol UK* as well as a *Practitioner's Certificate in Neurolinguistic Programming Applied to Education*.

She has taught Literature at IGCSE and International Baccalaureate levels and lectured for various publishers of English reading materials. As [Support Learning Educational Consultancy](#) Director, she trains teachers in affective methods in the teaching of reading and writing. She also runs SL educational programme [Touch the Author Workshops for Children and Adolescents](#) as well as their new arts project in Spanish [Arte y Lectura](#).

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