

# Poetry: A Powerful Reading Intervention for Accuracy and Fluency

By,

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## ABSTRACT

Due to the increasing pressure to meet Common Core State Standards for more essential curriculum components, poetry is often an overlooked foundation of the literacy curriculum. Students today demonstrate a lack of knowledge in the genre poetry. In spite of this, poetry is an important Common Core English Language Arts standard which asks K-12 students to be fluent in and identify parts of stories, dramas, and poems when writing or speaking about a text, using terms such as chapter, scene, and stanza. This qualitative study aims to identify ways to implement poetry in the classroom on a consistent basis to promote student confidence, reading fluency, word recognition, engagement, connection, and comprehension. Third grade students were pre assessed and post assessed using reading attitude surveys, 3rd grade Dolch sight words, and DRA2 reading assessments to measure fluency and accuracy. My prediction for the study was students' reading confidence would increase allowing for growth in reading attitudes and reading fluency and accuracy.

## INTRODUCTION

This study encompasses my research that began just as Minnesota adopted the Common Core Standards for English Language Arts. Being a reflective educator, I wanted to frontload my teaching with ways to engage my third grade students in the genre of poetry as this genre had been a piece of the literacy framework I feel I had not presented well to previous students. As I began my research on student engagement in the genre of poetry, I continually found research to support using poetry as an intervention for struggling or English Language Learners. Every fall I need to assess my Tier 2 intervention classroom plan, as there are students in my classroom who have not been identified for an individualized education plan even though they may not be able to perform at grade level. One key foundational piece I value is students' reading fluency and accuracy as those are key elements for a student's comprehension success in all content areas. I continually reflect on my literacy practice, particularly when it comes to students who are dependent readers rather than independent readers. I strive to model and help them make meaning. But what has struck me most recently, is that some students are not able to make meaning because they are not able to read the text accurately or fluently independently. What can I do to assist these third grade readers? A fear sets in, as I understand these readers are in need of the basics, phonemic awareness and word decoding strategies. A fear sets in, because this is a part of the literacy framework that I do not know how to teach. Why am I, a third grade teacher, being required to do this? Phonological awareness is an early literacy strategy that takes place in kindergarten and first grade. I don't know how to teach phonics. So I started to seek out tools that could help me assist students in their word-decoding journey. My search led me to poetry. Again a real life nightmare was in front of me. In the past, I have not gravitated to

poetry, unless it was Shel Silverstein or Dr. Seuss. Poems written by those poets were enjoyable, funny, and sometimes filled with simple nonsense. I don't know how to teach the meaning of an Emily Dickinson poem or a Henry Wadsworth Longfellow poem to a group of third graders. I have a poetry genre basket in my class library, isn't that enough? Through my research I discovered that poetry can make us laugh, cry, worry, or feel afraid; it is emotional. We know it to have patterns. We know it to be sensory. We know it to be beautiful. It uses extraordinary language. It is meant to be performed. These are wonderful literacy elements that are essential to support students' literacy understanding but also allow students to have emotional connections to the text. Related to this research study, I was drawn toward the principle that patterns in poetry could help students develop their fluency and accuracy. A-ha! I have found my secret tool for struggling readers.

As a reflective practitioner, I wondered how to help students actively engage in the reading of poetry. This paper encompasses an action research inquiry that focuses on student engagement in poetry as a way to improve fluency and word recognition. These are the dilemmas I face every year when confronted with how to help struggling readers in my classroom. The essential questions I ask within this inquiry are as follows: Will purposeful teacher directed poetry breaks engage students in the genre of poetry? Will student engagement in the genre of poetry serve as a powerful reading intervention? Will student engagement increase students' confidence, accuracy and fluency for readers? What would be the best method for exposure to poetry? These were my wonderings as I began to move forward in my practice.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### **Poetry Engagement**

Research shows there are many benefits to poetry engagement for all ages, learning ability levels, and cultures. Then why does it seem that most teachers disengage from teaching poetry in their classrooms on a regular basis? Primarily, elementary classroom teachers save their "poetry unit" for April, which is recognized as Poetry Month. However, it is questionable if focusing on poetry a few times during a month or for an entire month allows students to develop a connection to poetry. The literature review provided answers to these questions.

### First Exposure to Poetry

Almost every child comes to school having had some experience with poetry. Unlike fiction or expository text, poetry as a genre has usually been a part of a child's life since birth (Perfect, 1999). Lenz, (1992) and Opie & Opie, (1884) in Perfect (1999, p. 728) state that poetry is the first genre children are exposed to through lullabies, childhood chants, songs, and first books that are shared on the lap. Early on, children develop an affinity for rhyme and rhythm that is easily memorized, as they say/sing simple verses again and again. Rhythm in the form of playground games, music, and other cultural play makes the link between oracy and literacy a natural one (Perfect, 1999, p. 729). Some children grow up immersed in poetry with nursery rhymes, folklore, chants and songs such as *Mother Goose*, *Mary Had a Little Lamb*, *Twinkle Twinkle Little Star*, and *Twas the Night before Christmas*. These written pieces use a structure of language that allows children to learn them unintentionally because of the predictability, patterns, and fun they transpose. Because nursery songs and rhymes are traditionally passed from one generation to the next through repetition and mimicking, they lend themselves to be absorbed. Songs with hand motions are especially popular, since they are the easiest to learn and remember (Budin, M. 2004). So why does a disconnect to poetry occur in our young learners?

### Disconnection from Poetry

In *Bring Back the Poetry*, Betsy Bryan Miguez (2005), Baker and Settington (2002) suggest much of the research on poetry engagement has proven that the disconnect or disengagement of poetry in the classroom stems from the teacher's negative attitude toward poetry or the lack of time available due to the pressures of preparing students for standardized testing. Perfect (1999) refers to this practice as the root of widespread dislike of poetry for students. She states, "By imposing meaning on their students, teachers have typically wrenched the poem out of the souls of the students and, hence, have effectively wrenched the soul out of the poem." (p. 732). To counteract this problem, the teacher might shed preconceived notions in relation to poetry, striking the memory of the high school teacher who criticized thinking and feelings related to understanding poetry because they weren't the same as his/hers. Instead, Teachers might open themselves up to the audience before them each and every day, and the new audience they receive every fall, allowing students the opportunity to be filled with all of the elements that poetry brings. This might help students to form their own thinking and feelings toward the written pieces. Many publishers also ignore children's poets and instead introduce children to the "classics" (Gill, S. 2007). The emphasis is on knowledge, knowing the types of poems and the names of major poets, rather than on understanding, enjoyment, or participation (Gill, S. 2007).

### Reconnecting Children to Poetry

So the question begins. How do we reconnect our children to poetry? The guiding principle is that poetry is meant to be read aloud (Vardell, S. Wong, J. 2012). Researchers, Elster & Hanauer (2002) and Sloan (2000) in the article, Poetry in third grade: Getting started

(Sekeres, D. & Gregg, M. 2007), state that poetry is a genre that, if included at all in the elementary school curriculum, is typically read for aesthetic reasons, not for instructional purposes. Teachers do not often lead students to learn how the elements of poetry contribute to the experience of reading a poem or use poetry's unique properties as part of reading instruction. It is suggested that the teacher have a plethora of poems, bringing poetry into the classroom on a daily basis multiple times throughout the day with "Poetry Breaks" (Vardell, S. & Wong, J. 2012). According to Vardell and Wong (2012), poetry breaks consist of short periods of time, spontaneously dispersed throughout the day where the teacher would read a poem or poems aloud to the class. Having an extensive poetry collection, that includes personal favorites, will assist in these daily "Poetry Breaks". When students are in classrooms that support the daily inclusion of poetry they respond more positively to a wider variety of poetry, showing that the teacher's attitude and practice makes a tremendous difference (McClure, A. 1985). Teachers who read aloud poetry that they personally connect to, and with great enthusiasm, will likely lend themselves to becoming student favorites. In turn, teachers' selections often become students' selections (Galda, L., Sipe, L., Liang, L., Cullinan, B. 2014, 2010). Strickland (1997) cites poet Ralph Fletcher (1993) who says, "marinate" students in poetry. This serves to whet student appetites and get them engaged with and curious about the poetry. Perry, T. (2006, p. 110) agrees with Fletcher (2002) "Poetry flows from the heart; words are primary, form is secondary." Other ways of ensuring exposure occurs is by using poetry in every area of the curriculum, and using poetry in every activity available throughout the school day. After hearing a poem multiple times, teacher Maryann Manning does just this by allowing her students to recite poems as they transition through various activities of the day, such as lining up and walking through the halls (Miguez, 2005). Students need to feel comfortable using the books the

teacher has gathered. The teacher needs to talk about the books and display the covers of the books to attract readers.

Teachers might begin with their favorite poets and read selected poems aloud. The more children hear, read, say, and experience the poem, the more they internalize the sounds, words, and meanings of the poem and begin to notice the mechanics and artistry of poetry (Vardell, S. Wong, J. 2012). Charlotte Huck recommends reading poems twice, not only to allow a child time to revel in the language but also to create an opportunity for the child and poem to connect (Singer, M. 2010, p.30). Jane Yolen suggests read the poem aloud, teacher first, next a single child, then the whole class, finally back to the teacher alone. "Heard that often, the poem will have wormed its way into the child's ear" (Singer, M. 2010, p. 31).

### **Benefits of Consistent Exposure to Poetry**

Poetry is a piece of the literacy puzzle. By exposing students to poetry on a consistent basis, the benefit for learners is that poetry reinforces word sounds, rhymes, patterns, and pronunciation. It introduces new vocabulary and figurative language. Poetry is rich in imagery and stimulates the imagination. Poetry can provide sensory language; sense of touching, feeling, smelling, and seeing. It offers an emotional connection. Poetry provides practice for oral language development, listening, oral fluency, and a bridge to understanding the written word. Poetry has pedagogical uses across the curriculum. It can heighten awareness of the use of mechanical conventions. It is accessible to a wide range of reading abilities and learning skill levels. Poetry has a long shelf life that can be revisited at any time (Vardell, S. & Wong, J. 2012). Reading rate, or speed, is a significant factor in classroom teachers' perceptions of their students' proficiency or lack of proficiency in reading. A slow and labored reading rate may be a

reason teachers see fit to recommend certain students for supplementary reading services such as Title 1 (Raskinski, T. 2000, p. 146). The simple fact that slow reading requires readers to invest considerably greater amounts of time in the reading task than classmates who are reading at a rate appropriate for their grade level should be a major concern for all teachers (Raskinski, T. 2000, p. 147). Less fluent readers are less likely to read in class or out of school (Raskinski, T. 2000, p. 146). A benefit of poetry is the text is short so students who read at a slow, labored rate will be able to practice the text repeatedly in short time frames.

### **Readers in Need of an Intervention**

#### **Struggling (Dependent) Readers**

Poetry is a genre especially suited for the struggling or unmotivated reader (Perfect, K. 1999, p. 728). Everyone can be considered a struggling reader at some point. I became a struggling reader when reading a furniture assembly guide. However I did not receive literacy support or service through my k-12 education. I am considered an independent reader who struggles with some text, but rather than struggle with the text, I have strategies that allow me to make meaning of the complex text. Where a struggling reader's strategies will look different. They may stop or the appeal ("I don't get it") or they just keep turning pages until they get to the end, even if nothing is making sense (Beers, K. 2001, p. 4). Struggling readers are those readers who read slowly and disfluently, who barely comprehend at a literal level much less an inferential level, and need the skills necessary to become proficient, fluent, independent readers. They struggle with decoding, word attack strategies, automaticity, and fluency skills. Struggling readers often lack the social confidence needed to enter the reading community. They lack the stance versatility to move between efferent reading (reading to carry away meaning) and

aesthetic reading (reading to live through the experience). They lack emotional confidence to believe they can read challenging texts (Beers, K. 2001, p. 5). Reading automaticity refers to a reader's ability to recognize words without conscious decoding. It means readers recognize words as whole units, and they recognize the words quickly and accurately. When readers sound out words it slows a reader, disrupts fluency, and interrupts meaning. Students don't develop automaticity via decoding but rather through repeated exposure to a word they can decode (Beers, K. 2003). According to Samuels, Shermer, and Reinking (1992) readers who struggle with word recognition may need to see a word as many as forty times. Consequently, these readers must have repeated and regular opportunities to read stories at their independent reading level (Beers, K. 2003). Automaticity, rapid and accurate word recognition, leads to fluency. Fluency, the ability to read smoothly and easily at a good pace with good phrasing and expression, develops over time as students' word recognition skills improve (Beers, K. 2003). Poetry allows a struggling reader to see and read text repeatedly empowering automaticity, rapid and accurate word recognition, and fluency.

### **English Language Learners**

Our school cultural population has changed dramatically since early 1980's. We are a diverse population. More than 7.5 million school-aged children in the U.S. come from homes where a language other than English is spoken (Hadaway, N., Vardell, S., & Young, T. 2001, p. 796). Most English Language Learners' settings center around more basic communication or survival skills, while the more academically oriented language lessons focus on reading and writing-literate language (Hadaway, N., Vardell, S., & Young, T. 2001, p. 797). English Language Learners need to be placed in classrooms where they will have frequent opportunities to exist for quality input from and interaction with native speakers, they can collaborate in paired

or small groups, and be encouraged to function as problem solvers rather than information receivers ((Hadaway, N., Vardell, S., & Young, T. 2001, p. 798). English Language Learners display the same characteristics of the aforementioned struggling reader. They may be disfluent, unable to comprehend text, and lack confidence. Especially for English Language Learners, the strong oral quality of poetry is a powerful pedagogical plus. Poetry is meant to be read aloud. The poem's meaning is more clearly communicated when both read and heard (Hadaway, N., Vardell, S., & Young, T. 2001, p. 799). Hearing poetry helps English Language Learners acquire more correct word pronunciations and incorporates listening vocabulary to aid their overall comprehension. In addition, the rhyme or rhythm of poetry can help English Language Learners begin to get a sense of sound of English words and phrases using artful yet natural language (Hadaway, N., Vardell, S., & Young, T. 2001, p. 799). The patterns that poetry embodies allows for English Language Learners to develop word recognition, fluency, and ultimately confidence.

### **Why Poetry?**

Poetry is more than a collection of "classics" that have defined meanings. Teachers can show students that poetry is something people do to capture thoughts, feelings, and experiences (Gill, S. 2007). Poetry has been used in classrooms to allow children to experience the sheer delight that comes from reading rhythmical and rhyming words aloud (Rasinski, T., Rupley, W. Nichols, W. 2008, pp. 259). The pros for poetry interventions for struggling and English Language Learning readers' poetry far outweigh the cons. Poems are relatively short and can be mastered in a brief period of time. Poems are fun to read, often bringing smiles to children's faces. They typically contain rhythm and rhyme, allowing for predictable patterns, which adds

to the ease of learning or mastery. This rhythm and rhyme typically are produced from rimes, word families or phonograms. A rime is simply the part of a syllable that begins with the sounded vowel and contains any consonants that follow the vowel. Using rimes, word families is a productive way of teaching phonics (Rasinski, T. & Zimmerman, B., 2013, p.16). For example, the /at/ in *hat* and *cat* is a rime or word family (Rasinski, T., Rupley, W., & Nichols, W., 2008, p. 257). Readers can perceive a rime in one word they decode can then apply that knowledge to other words with the identical spelling patterns. According to researchers Adams (1990), Cunningham (2005), Ehri (2005), Gaskins, Ehri, Cress, O'Hara, & Donnelly (1996/1997), Gunning (1995), Snow, Burns, & Griffin (1998), teaching beginning readers word families, facilitates use of these spelling patterns in other words students might encounter in their reading.

Many adults can still recite a poem, rhyme, or song that was learned when he or she were a child, demonstrating that the rimes, rhythm, and patterns allow for mastery and retention. Poetry can be found in all areas of the curriculum fostering personal connections to the text. As mentioned earlier, poems are meant to be performed for an audience so the rehearsal of poems is an authentic form of repeated readings (Rasinski, T. & Zimmerman, B., 2013, pp. 15-16). Poetry easily finds a home in all areas of the curriculum, enhances thinking skills, and promotes personal connections to content area subjects (Perfect, K. 1999). The structure and patterns of poetry lend themselves to being a successful tool to use for students who need reading reinforcement.

### **Poetry Enhanced by Automatic Repeated Readings, a Reading Strategy**

Since oral performance is a natural outcome or goal of repeated readings, poetry is a natural text choice (Rasinski, T., Rupley, W., & Nichols, W, 2008, p. 258). However according to Moyer (1982), repeated reading may seem like a punishment or boring for readers.

Researchers such as Homan, Klesius, & Hilte (1993), Moyer (1982), and Rasinski (2000) believe poetry was a natural choice to practice repeated reading due to its short text, fun subject matter.

Lori Wilfong (2008), an elementary literacy coach in a small Midwest town, developed a practice of implementing repeated reading of poetry, by initiating The Poetry Academy. The Poetry Academy was built from the researchers' work of using the strategy of repeated readings of short text in conjunction with fluency development (Rasinski, Padak, Linek, & Sturtevant, 1994). Mastery of a short poem would cause students to feel confident and successful early in the program (Wilfong, L. 2008, p. 5). The Poetry Academy components consisted of modeling, assisted reading, listening while reading, and repeated reading. This program was run by trained volunteers who would meet with identified students once a week for five to ten minutes per meeting. As a literacy specialist, Wilfong, would select two poems for each meeting, one text being slightly more difficult to accommodate all readers in the program. Upon meeting with a student, the volunteer would introduce a new poem, which had been selected by the literacy specialist, and modeled reading the poem aloud while the student listened to the reading. Then the volunteer and student would chorally read or the volunteer would assist the reader. Once that choral reading of the text was complete the student read the poem independently, using the repeated reading strategy, while the volunteer assisted the reader by offering praise and assurance. The two would then discuss the poem's structure such as patterns and rhyming words and any connections that were made to the text. The volunteer would ask the student to take the poem home to read to family members, as many times as possible. At their next meeting the

student would read the poem aloud to the volunteer to demonstrate if mastery had occurred. The volunteers kept observational notes. Wilfong would observe and meet with the volunteers, students, classroom teachers, and families to acquire more data regarding the students' progress in the program. Repeated reading of poetry to model and practice reading fluency is a good choice for teaching fluency because of its rich and playful language. Poetry naturally encourages students to want to read and have fun while reading (Faver, S., 2008, p.351).

### **Poetry Extensions to Build Student Engagement**

Once a teacher has the foundation in place and has chosen poetic pieces, is reading aloud those pieces intermittently throughout the day, he or she can begin to build on the students' exposure and connections by offering poetry extensions to build student engagement. If students find a poem they connect to, a teacher might allow them to write the poem on a piece of paper, fold the paper up and place it in a library book and return it to the library. This strategy would allow other students to find the poem, take the poem, or replace the poem with a new poem. Students could make poetry trading cards to use with one another. Students could write down their favorite poem and place it in a large, glass bowl. Fridays would become *Fishbowl Fridays* with the teacher drawing out a few poems to be read aloud to the class (Singer, M. 2010).

Other activities could be created as well to extend connections with poetry. For example, a teacher could choose to focus on a poetry unit or center, within maybe a short time frame of possibly one to two weeks, with added activities in addition to the daily poetry connections already taking place. Miguez, B. (2005) suggests possible thematic topics for centers could include: *Around the World Poetry* that would incorporate a globe or map and poems from around

the world. *The Sports Page Poetry* would include students finding and reading poems about their favorite sports while relaxing on tumbling mats. *Read and Rock Poetry* would allow students to sit in rocking chairs and read classic poetry. *Weather Poetry* would use a decorated outdoor/weather motif bed sheet as a backdrop or floor mat where students would again find and read poems about weather. *Pop into Popular Poetry* would allow students to read the infamous poems of Shel Silverstein and Jack Prelusky. Poetry centers may even have some videos of interviews with poets. *Form an Opinion Poetry* would allow students to compare the poems of Judith Viorst and Brod Bagert. *What's Your Type Poetry* would allow students to read and compare different poem styles such as limericks, haikus, and concrete. *Laugh Out Loud Poetry* is encourages students to find a poem that makes them chuckle or laugh (Miguez, B. 2005). Readers Theater, which is a way for students to perform poetry, could be a culminating activity for the end of the unit or centers where the students could perform a few of their favorite poems from the unit. Using poetry centers in the classroom would allow for all students to benefit. The struggling readers would continue to use the practice of repeated readings and oral performance and at grade level readers and above could use the creative and powerful language components of poetry to enhance their reading and writing.

## METHODOLOGY

### **Participants**

Eight Third grade students, three girls and five boys, participated in this study. Of the eight students, two were English Language Learners, one African-American, and the other five Caucasian. The students identified for this study were of varied ability levels, however through school-wide assessments, such as AIMSweb, Academic Improvement Measurement System based on the web which measures oral fluency and STAR Reading Enterprise assessment, six

students were identified as not meeting grade level and three were identified as partially meeting grade level reading performance. Four students received Title 1 reading support and two students received Minnesota Reading Corps reading support. Two of the students in the focus group did not receive any additional reading support or intervention.

### **Setting**

This study took place at Burnside Elementary School in Red Wing, Minnesota within my third grade classroom. Red Wing is a city located about sixty miles south of the Twin Cities metropolitan area. Burnside Elementary is a grade level school servicing grades 2-4. There are seven, second grade classrooms, nine third grade classrooms, and nine fourth grade classrooms with an approximate student population of six hundred students. The study was implemented during Read-to-Self time in the classroom literacy block.

### **Materials**

Pre-Study permission slips were sent home with students to allow them to be active members of the action research regarding student engagement in poetry to help readers build their fluency, accuracy, and confidence.

Pre and post reading attitude surveys, pre and post assessments of the third grade Dolch sight words, and pre and post DRA2 assessments were used to measure attitude and literacy growth. A poetry folder, with the same poems, was created for each student who participated in the study. The poems used were selected from Dr. Maria P. Walther, *The Promise of Poetry for Struggling Readers* (2011) and assorted poems from *Teaching Struggling Reader with Poetry* by Dr. Maria P. Walther and Carol J. Fuhler (2010).

### **Procedure**

Nine pre-study permission slips were sent home with students to allow them to be active members of the action research regarding student engagement to poetry. Permission slips did not have a timely return, and one student did not bring a signed permission slip back so he was not able to be part of the study. It was decided that the research study would move forward with the eight identified students. All students participating in the study completed the Garfield Reading Attitude Survey to assess their beginning feelings in relation to academic reading and recreational reading. I then met with students one on one to pre-assess their accuracy of the Dolch third grade sight words. Once that pre-assessment was complete, I administered a DRA2 assessment, using only the accuracy and fluency component to gain pre-assessment data. Once all students were assessed, we began meeting together during our Read-to-Self block. I created poetry folders for each student by photocopying poems from Dr. Maria P. Walther, *The Promise of Poetry for Struggling Readers* and other poems by various authors from the source *Teaching Struggling Readers with Poetry* by Dr Maria P. Walther and Carol J. Fuhler. My planned schedule was to meet with students three days a week during their Read-to-Self time. Students brought their poetry folders to group each time we met.

I met with the students in smaller groups, typically two to three students per meeting, rather than the entire eight students meeting at once. I would introduce a new poem or two, depending on the difficulty of the text. I read the poem aloud, modeling the rhythm and intonation. I then opened up the poem for discussion asking students if they made any connections to the text, did they identify any patterns, were there any rhyming words. I may even ask if they thought the poem had a theme or meaning. Once finished, I invited the students to chorally read the poem aloud with me. Often times we used our hands or feet to guide us with the poem's rhythm. Then students were encouraged to read the poem aloud to their group

partner, each having a turn. Lastly, the students identified one of the two poems, if applicable, they would like to read as "homework". When the poem was identified, they placed a Post-It note on the page as a tab. They took the folder home and read the poem aloud to an adult or as many adults as they wanted. Each time they read it to an adult, a tally mark was written on the Post-It note and the adult signed their initials on the Post-It note. At our next meeting, the student would perform the "homework" poem for me (teacher/researcher) to determine if mastery had occurred. If so, we moved forward to a new poem and the entire process was repeated.

Upon completion of the four weeks, students were reassessed using the same tools of the Garfield Reading Attitude Survey, third grade Dolch sight words, and the DRA2 fluency and accuracy reading assessment to get a post-assessment measurement.

## FINDINGS AND RESULTS

### Results

The results of the reading attitude survey, Third grade Dolch sight words, and DRA2 fluency and accuracy will be displayed in figures. Pre-assessment data was collected during the last week of September, 2013. Post-Assessment data was collected the first week of November, 2013, allowing for four weeks of the poetry intervention to occur.

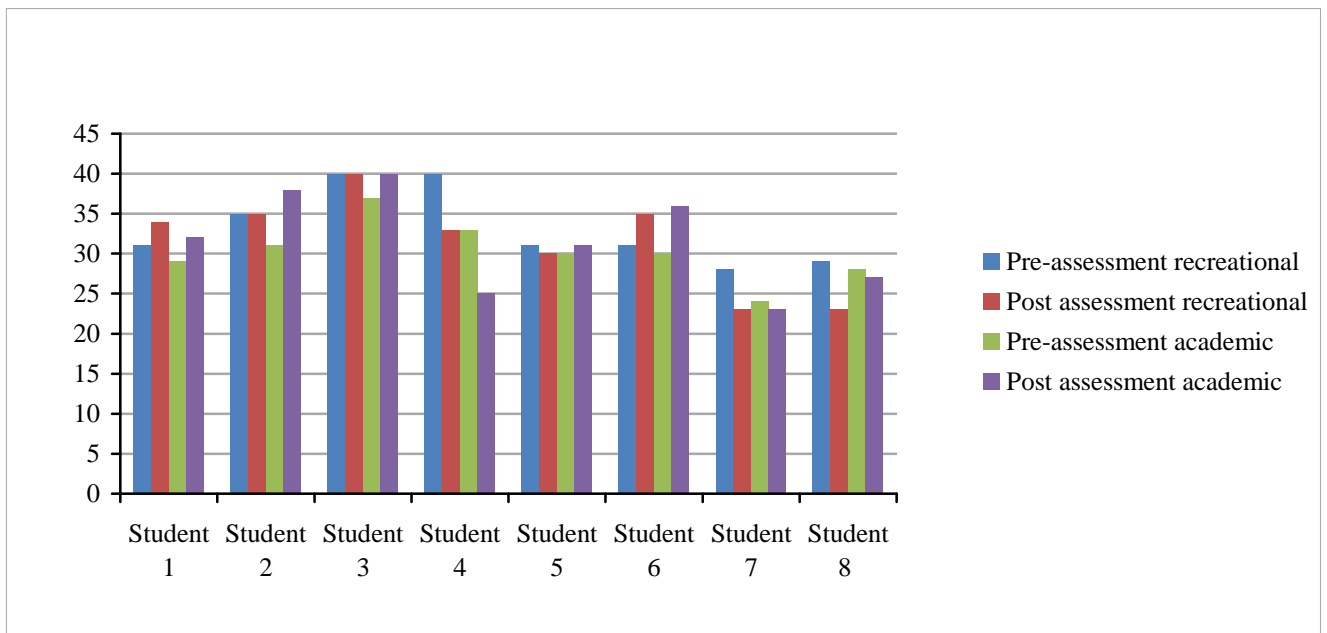
### Data

Figure 1: Reading Attitude Survey

Student	Recreational Reading Attitude		Academic Reading Attitude	
	Pre Assessment	Post Assessment	Pre Assessment	Post Assessment

Student 1	31	34	29	32
Student 2	35	35	31	38
Student 3	40	40	37	40
Student 4	40	33	33	25
Student 5	31	30	30	31
Student 6	31	35	30	36
Student 7	28	23	24	23
Student 8	29	23	28	27

Figure 1.2: Reading Attitude Survey

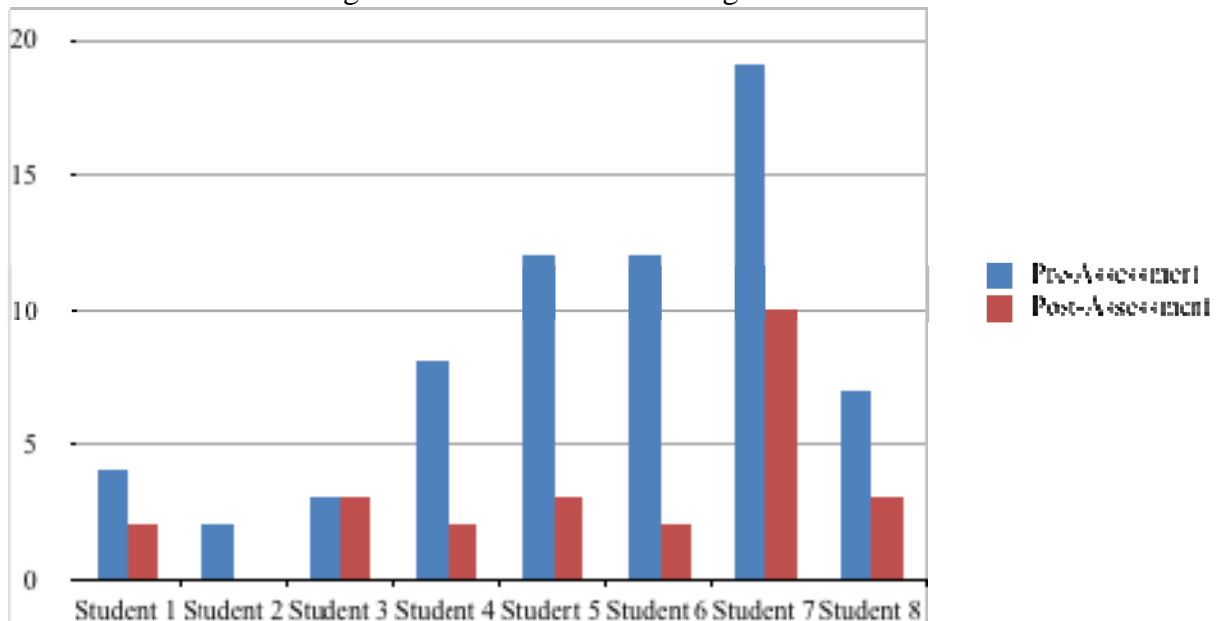


This table shows the pre-assessment and post assessment data of the students' reading attitude surveys for recreational reading attitude and academic reading attitude. Generally speaking half of the students scored higher or the same on the post assessment in recreational reading attitude and half of the students went down in recreational reading attitude. A more positive outcome is displayed in academic reading attitude as over half of the students made gains in their academic reading attitude, however three students declined in their academic reading attitudes leaving an overall academic attitude growth of 62.5%.

Figure 2: 3rd Grade Dolch Sight Words Errors

Student	Pre Assessment Errors	Post Assessment Errors
Student 1	4	2
Student 2	2	0
Student 3	3	3
Student 4	8	2
Student 5	12	3
Student 6	12	2
Student 7	19	10
Student 8	7	3

Figure 2.1: 3rd Grade Dolch Sight Words Errors



This table shows the pre-assessment and post assessment data of the students' word recognition in reading the 3rd grade Dolch sight words. All students decreased their sight word errors according to the post assessment. Most students increased their word recognition by over 50% growth.

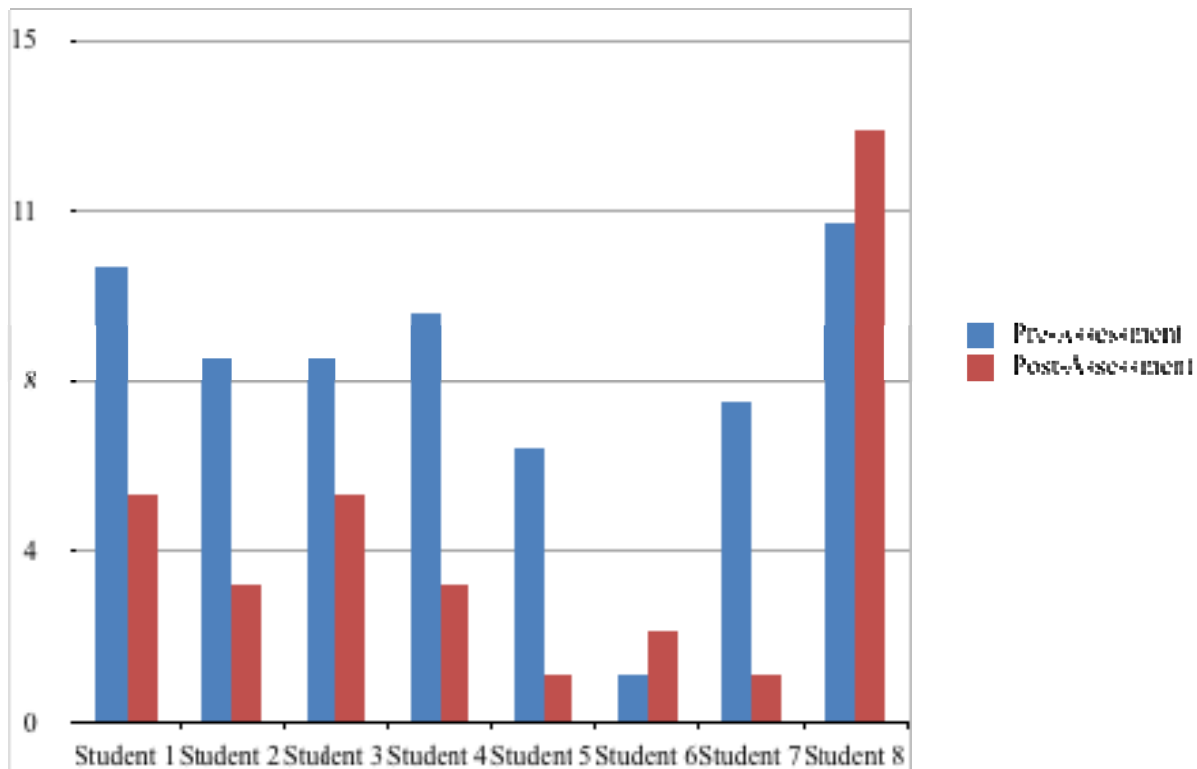
Figure 3: DRA2 Fluency and Accuracy

Pre Assessment Data					Post Assessment Data					
Student	DRA2 Level	Fluency	Ability Level	Accuracy (errors)	%	DRA2 Level	Fluency	Ability Level	Accuracy (errors)	%
Student 1	28	1:47	independent	10	93%-	28	1:34	independent	5	97%
Student 2	24	2:16	independent	8	95%	24	1:57	independent	3	98%
Student 3	24	2:11	independent	8	95%	24	1:35	independent	5	97%
Student 4	20	2:00	independent	9	94%	20	1:30	advanced	3	98%
Student 5	20	4:03	intervention	6	96%	20	1:58	independent	1	99%
Student 6	20	2:46	intervention	1	99%	20	2:14	independent	2	99%
Student 7	10	5:24		7	95%	10	2:56		0	100%
Student 8	20	3:05	intervention	11	93%-	20	2:33	instructional	13	93%-

Figure 3.1: DRA-2 Fluency

This table shows the pre-assessment and post assessment data of the students' reading fluency. All of the students' fluency times decreased showing that they became more fluent after the four week intervention period.

Figure 3.2: DRA-2 Accuracy Errors



This table shows the pre-assessment and post assessment data of the students' word recognition in the DRA2 leveled assessments. Six of the eight students decreased in the number of errors. This data is reflective in the fluency data as well as students reading with less errors, will decrease their fluency time as well.

### Analysis

This study confirmed my prediction that the majority of the students would increase in their reading fluency and word recognition. Therefore, I do believe that poetry is a powerful reading intervention for struggling readers or English Language Learners. Because I was purposeful to meet with the readers two to three times a week, it was easy to schedule into my guided reading groups. The more I met with students using poetry engagement, the easier it became for me to expose my intervention group to poetry. However, it also spilled over to the rest of my class because they were curious about the poems we were reading and enjoying

together. As I modeled reading the poems to the students in the poetry groups, I saw them connect to the poetry characteristics by identifying patterns through tapping of hands, feet, and even nodding their heads. This happened both when I or they read the poem. Because of my modeling of the poetry text, I found the more I introduced poems to students the more comfortable they became with the genre. Many of the students chose to often write some form of poetry in their writing notebooks. Upon the completion of this study, I found myself being more cognizant about bringing poetry into the classroom not only through the poetry folders, but also as poetry breaks. In addition, I was integrating poetry using figurative language lessons on alliteration, similes, metaphors, onomatopoeia, and personification. I noticed the students really engaged with some of these concepts, especially the personification and similes. Since bringing poetry into my entire classroom, I have watched my students engage with the genre of poetry, observing more poetry books selected as part of their book baskets.

### **Limitations**

Unfortunately, there were many limitations that occurred during my study. First, poetry was not the only reading genre being used in the classroom during the study. Therefore, the other reading engagement could have affected the outcome of this study. The returning of signed permission slips was not timely. Permission slips were sent home during the third week of September. No one was returning them so I needed to send them home again. By the end of September, I had received permission slips from those who were able to participate in the study. Our classroom schedule had many changes made to it due to outside circumstances. October was a big month with a lot of extra events planned to our school calendar. Our classroom schedule needed to be adjusted due to scheduling of activities such as a Homecoming Pep Fest, two all day class field trips, assemblies for fire safety and anti-bullying, two no school days due to the

Education Minnesota professional day, and an early release day for teacher collaboration. Due to the large periods of time creating an inconsistent classroom schedule I am led to believe the effectiveness of poetry interventions may have diminished. A final limitation that may have affected my data would be some students did not practice their poem at home as expected. Perhaps if I offered an incentive for reading the poem at home the students would have practiced the poem more frequently.

### **Conclusion**

I have strongly attached my teaching to this study, using poetry as a positive intervention for students' ability to strengthen their fluency and word recognition. What I have learned from this study was small group and one on one teacher directed poetry engagement and repeated reading is a powerful intervention in the reading classroom. I have shared this intervention with other third grade teachers in my PLC, or professional learning community, meetings. I have shared my research and data collection pieces with them. My colleagues have been intrigued with this study and now seek to implement using poetry as an intervention for their own struggling readers and English Language Learners as well. I now know how imperative it is to incorporate poetry on a regular basis in my classroom. My goal will be to find key foundational poetry pieces I love to share with my students and also include the poetry activities. By doing so, I believe that students would see the text to be authentic because of the emotion and connections, happiness, sadness, and laughter that I would convey through the poem. Due to the confidence I have seen on the participant students' faces, I am sure that their reading confidence has become stronger as well. I also plan to work closely with the two students whose reading attitude surveys showed a decline in their reading attitude to try to identify how to assist them in

their reading attitudes and confidence. I believe the repeated language, patterns, rhymes, and predictable text allowed my below grade level readers but especially my English Language Learners strengthen reading strategies for them to anticipate the text so they were able to read with smiles and engagement. Using poetry as an intervention served as a confidence builder for them.

### **Future Practice**

As a result of this study, I want to continue the use of poetry breaks in my entire classroom, not just for an intervention group. I hope to implement the activities that support poetry engagement as stated in the research, such as Fishbowl Fridays where students write down a poem they enjoy and put the poem in the fishbowl. On Fridays the teacher would pull a given number of poems out of the fishbowl to read aloud to the class. The other eight activities listed as centers in the literature review, would assist in continuing student engagement. These could be implemented and carried out for two to three week periods and then used to introduce a new center activity for consistency. Due to this research, I believe I will be able to continue using poetry as an intervention in the classroom and grow other ways of extending poetry with my students. An extension I would like to make to this future practice may be to introduce a poetry journal to allow students to record their thinking, connections, and record their own poetry writing.

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Appendix A

**Burnside Elementary School**  
**5001 Learning Lane**  
**Red Wing, MN 55066**  
Phone 651.385.4700

[www.redwing.k12.mn.us](http://www.redwing.k12.mn.us)



September 16, 2013

Dear families,

I am currently enrolled in my Graduate Program at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls where I am working toward my Master's Degree in reading and Reading Specialist K-12 license. My graduate course work requires me to implement and complete an action research project. Because the action research is involving humans under the age of 18, parental consent is needed.

I will be using the genre of poetry to help readers build their fluency, accuracy, and confidence.

My plan for implementation is assess students' accuracy and fluency levels then incorporate specific poetry readings for a period of time to see if their accuracy and fluency increase. All students in class will have the experience of reading poetry, but data will only be collected on those participating in the study.

Any written information collected through this action research will include pseudonyms for all students when applicable.

I appreciate your willingness to allow your child the opportunity to participate in this action research project with me.

If you have any questions or concerns, please call me at 651.385.4700x2943.

Please complete the permission form below and have your child bring it to school as soon as possible.

Gratefully,

Kimberly Thompson  
3rd grade teacher  
Burnside Elementary  
[kathompson@rwps.org](mailto:kathompson@rwps.org)

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\_\_\_\_\_ I give permission for my child, \_\_\_\_\_, to participate in the  
Poetry Genre Action Research Project, UWRF, fall 2013.

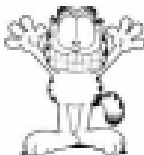



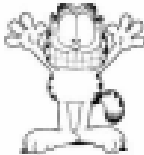



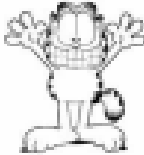







\_\_\_\_\_ I do not give permission for my child, \_\_\_\_\_, to participate in the Poetry Genre Action Research Project, UWRP, fall 2013.

## Appendix B

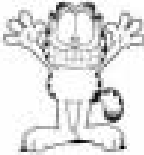



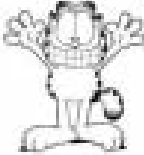



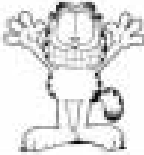







## Elementary Reading Attitude Survey

School \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_ Name \_\_\_\_\_

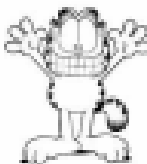



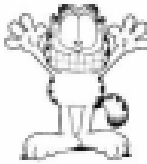



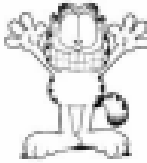



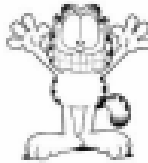


Please circle the picture that describes how you feel when you read a book.

1.	How do you feel when you read a book on a rainy Saturday?				
2.	How do you feel when you read a book in school during free time?				
3.	How do you feel about reading for fun at home?				
4.	How do you feel about getting a book for a present?				

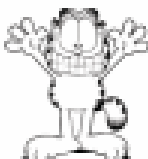















Please circle the picture that describes how you feel when you read a book.

5.	How do you feel about spending free time reading a book?				
6.	How do you feel about starting a new book?				
7.	How do you feel about reading during summer vacation?				
8.	How do you feel about reading instead of playing?				

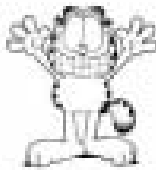



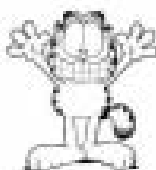


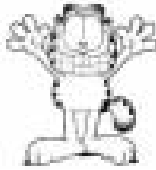



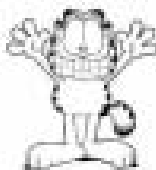


Please circle the picture that describes how you feel when you read a book.

9.	How do you feel about going to a bookstore?				
10.	How do you feel about reading different kinds of books?				
11.	How do you feel when a teacher asks you questions about what you read?				
12.	How do you feel about reading workbook pages and worksheets?				

Please circle the picture that describes how you feel when you read a book.

13.	How do you feel about reading in school?			
				
14.	How do you feel about reading your school books?			
				
15.	How do you feel about learning from a book?			
				
16.	How do you feel when it's time for reading in class?			
				

Please circle the picture that describes how you feel when you read a book.

17.	How do you feel about stories you read in reading class?				
18.	How do you feel when you read out loud in class?				
19.	How do you feel about using a dictionary?				
20.	How do you feel about taking a reading test?				

**Elementary Reading Attitude Survey Scoring Sheet**

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

Grade \_\_\_\_\_ Administration Date \_\_\_\_\_

<u>Scoring Guide</u>	
4 points	Happiest Garfield
3 points	Slightly smiling Garfield
2 points	Mildly upset Garfield
1 point	Very upset Garfield

Recreational reading

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_

Raw Score: \_\_\_\_\_

Academic reading

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_

Raw Score: \_\_\_\_\_

Full scale raw score ..... (Recreational + Academic): \_\_\_\_\_

Percentile ranks: ..... Recreational

..... Academic

..... Full scale

## Appendix C

**Dolch Third Grade Sight Vocabulary**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date Pretest: \_\_\_\_\_ % Correct: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of test: \_\_\_\_\_ % Correct: \_\_\_\_\_

about	hold	seven
better	hot	shall
bring	hurt	show
carry	if	six
clean	keep	small
cut	kind	start
done	laugh	ten
draw	light	today
drink	long	together
eight	much	try
fall	myself	warm
far	never	
full	only	
got	own	
grow	pick	

Your child identifies all circled words. Our goal is 100% by the end of March of 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade.  
 Thanks for your help in practicing at home.  
 Jill Perkins © 1998

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Color code: purple = Sept. blue = Nov. green = Jan. red = March black = May

## Appendix D

Teacher Observation Guide

*Shoe Boxes*

Level 10, Page 1

Name/Date \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher/Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Scores: Reading Engagement \_\_\_/8 Oral Reading Fluency \_\_\_/16 Comprehension \_\_\_/28  
Independent Range: 6-7 11-14 19-25Book Selection Text selected by:  teacher  student**1. READING ENGAGEMENT**

(If the student has recently answered these questions, skip this section.)

*T: Tell me about one of your favorite books.* \_\_\_\_\_*T: Do you like to read*  *alone,*  *with a buddy, or*  *with a group?**Why?* \_\_\_\_\_*T: Whom do you read with at home?* \_\_\_\_\_**2. ORAL READING FLUENCY****INTRODUCTION AND PREVIEW***T: In this story, Shoe Boxes, Mandy and her brother and sister each get a new pair of shoes. They do different things with their shoe boxes. Look at the pictures, and tell me what is happening in this story.*Note the student's use of connecting words (e.g., *and, then, but*) and vocabulary relevant to the text. You may use general prompts, such as "Now what is happening?" or "Turn the page," but do not ask specific questions. Tally the number of times you prompt.**RECORD OF ORAL READING**

Record the student's oral reading behaviors on the Record of Oral Reading below and on the following page.

*T: Shoe Boxes. Now, read to see what Mandy, her brother, and her sister do with their shoe boxes.***Page 2**

Mandy and her brother and sister got new shoes. Her brother got a pair of shoes for his soccer game. The shoes came in a red box with white stripes on it.

**Page 3**

Mandy's brother took the shoe box home. He put a caterpillar in it. The caterpillar liked his new home.

**Page 4**

Mandy's sister got new baseball shoes for her baseball game. The shoes came in a blue box with a string.

**Page 5**

Her sister took the shoe box and the string home. She put her baseball cards and the string in her shoe box.

**Page 6**

Mandy got a new pair of blue shoes for her birthday. Her shoes came in a green box with flowers on it.

**Page 7**

Mandy gave her shoe box to her baby sister. She sat on it. Oh, no!

**ORAL READING, PERCENT OF ACCURACY**

Count the number of miscues that are not self-corrected. Circle the percent of accuracy based on the number of miscues.

Word Count: 130

	EM	DEV	IND				ADV		
Number of Miscues	8	6-7	5	4	2-3	1	0		
Percent of Accuracy	94	95	96	97	98	99	100		

- If the student's score falls in a shaded area, STOP! Reassess with a lower-level text.
- If the student is reading below the grade-level benchmark, administer *DRA Word Analysis*, beginning with Task 12, at another time.

Name/Date \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher/Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Level 10, Page 5

DRA2 CONTINUUM	LEVEL 10			EARLY READER
	EMERGING	DEVELOPING	INDEPENDENT	ADVANCED
<b>Reading Engagement</b>				
Book Selection	1 Selects new texts from identified leveled sets with teacher support; uncertain about a favorite book	2 Selects new texts from identified leveled sets with moderate support; tells about favorite book in general terms	3 Selects new texts from identified leveled sets most of the time; identifies favorite book by title and tells about a particular event	4 Selects a variety of new texts that are "just right"; identifies favorite book by title and gives an overview of the book
Sustained Reading	1 Sustains independent reading for a short period of time with much encouragement	2 Sustains independent reading with moderate encouragement	3 Sustains independent reading for at least 5 minutes at a time	4 Sustains independent reading for an extended period of time
Score	2 3	4 5	6 7	8
<b>Oral Reading Fluency</b>				
Phrasing	1 Reads word-by-word	2 Reads word-by-word with some short phrases	3 Reads in short phrases most of the time	4 Reads in longer phrases at times
Monitoring/Self-Corrections	1 Self-corrects no miscues	2 Self-corrects at least 1 miscue and neglects to self-correct other miscues	3 Self-corrects 2 or more miscues or only makes 1 uncorrected miscue	4 Self-corrects miscues quickly or reads accurately
Problem-Solving Unknown Words	1 Stops at difficulty, relying on support to problem-solve unknown words; 3 or more words told by the teacher	2 At difficulty, initiates problem-solving of a few unknown words; 1 or 2 words told by the teacher	3 At difficulty, uses 1 or 2 cues to problem-solve unknown words	4 At difficulty, uses multiple cues to problem-solve unknown words
Accuracy	1 92% or less	2 93%	3 94%–97%	4 98%–100%
Score	4 5 6	7 8 9 10	11 12 13 14	15 16

Name/Date \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher/Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Scores: Reading Engagement \_\_\_/8 Oral Reading Fluency \_\_\_/16 Comprehension \_\_\_/28  
 Independent Range: 6-7 11-14 19-25

Book Selection Text selected by:  teacher  student

**1. READING ENGAGEMENT**

(If the student has recently answered these questions, skip this section.)

T: *What kinds of books do you like to read?* \_\_\_\_\_

T: *Tell me about one of your favorite books.* \_\_\_\_\_

T: *How do you choose the books you read?* \_\_\_\_\_

**2. ORAL READING FLUENCY****INTRODUCTION**

T: *In this Native American folktale, Turtle's Big Race, Turtle really likes his home in a pond. One day he finds he might have to leave his pond. Please read aloud pages 2 through 4. Show the student where to stop reading at the \*.*

**RECORD OF ORAL READING** 

Record the student's oral reading behaviors. Note the student's fluency (expression and phrasing). Be sure to time the student's reading.

**Page 2**

Turtle liked the little pond he called home.  
 It had lots of green grass around it. There  
 were little fish for him to catch and eat.

"This is a good place to live," said Turtle.

**Page 3**

During the cold days of winter, Turtle slept  
 in the mud at the bottom of the pond. He  
 dreamed of sunny spring days.

**Page 4**

In the spring, when the days were nice again,  
Turtle woke up. The pond was different. The  
water was much deeper. Some trees had  
been cut down, and there was a wood dam  
at one end.

An animal with a long, flat tail and very big  
teeth sat on top of the dam.

"Who are you?" asked Turtle.

"I am Beaver!" said the animal. "You are in my  
pond, and you must leave now!"

"No! This is my pond, too!" said Turtle.

"Then let's fight for it," said Beaver.

Time: \_\_\_\_\_ minutes:seconds

**ORAL READING WORDS PER MINUTE, PERCENT OF ACCURACY**

Use the student's oral reading time to circle the WPM range.

Word Count: 147

	INTRVN	INSTR	IND	ADV
Minutes:Seconds	2:42 or more	2:41-2:17	2:16-1:33	1:32 or less
WPM	34 or less	35-64	65-95	96 or more

Count the number of miscues that are not self-corrected. Circle the percent of accuracy based on the number of miscues.

	INTRVN	INSTR	IND				ADV	
Number of Miscues	70 or more	3	7-8	6	4-5	3	1-2	0
Percent of Accuracy	83 or less	94	95	96	97	98	99	100

- If the student's score falls in a shaded area for either WPM or Accuracy, STOP! Reassess with a lower-level text.
- If the student is reading below the grade-level benchmark, administer *DRA Word Analysis*, beginning with Task 22, at another time.

Name/Date \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher/Grade \_\_\_\_\_ Level 20, Page 5

DRA2 CONTINUUM	LEVEL 20			TRANSITIONAL READER
	INTERVENTION	INSTRUCTIONAL	INDEPENDENT	ADVANCED
<b>Reading Engagement</b>				
<b>Book Selection</b>	1 Selects texts from identified leveled sets with teacher support; uncertain about a favorite book	2 Selects texts from identified leveled sets with moderate support; talks about favorite book in general terms	3 Selects texts from identified leveled sets most of the time; identifies favorite book by title and talks about a particular event	4 Selects a variety of "just right" texts; identifies favorite book by title and gives an overview of the book
<b>Sustained Reading</b>	1 Sustains independent reading for a short period of time with much encouragement	2 Sustains independent reading with moderate encouragement	3 Sustains independent reading for at least 15 minutes at a time	4 Sustains independent reading for an extended period of time
<b>Score</b>	2 3	4 5	6 7	8
<b>Oral Reading Fluency</b>				
<b>Expression</b>	1 Little expression; monotone	2 Some expression that conveys meaning	3 Expression reflects mood, pace, and tone at times	4 Expression reflects mood, pace, and tone most of the time
<b>Pacing</b>	1 Reads mostly word-by-word	2 Reads in short phrases most of the time; inappropriate pauses	3 Reads in longer phrases at times; reads most punctuation	4 Reads in longer, meaningful phrases most of the time; reads all punctuation
<b>Rate</b>	1 54 WPM or less	2 55-64 WPM	3 65-95 WPM	4 96 WPM or more
<b>Accuracy</b>	1 93% or less	2 94%	3 95%-98%	4 99%-100%
<b>Score</b>	4 5 6	7 8 9 10	11 12 13 14	15 16

Name/Date \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher/Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Scores: Reading Engagement \_\_\_/8 Oral Reading Fluency \_\_\_/16 Comprehension \_\_\_/28  
Independent Range: 6-7 11-14 19-25Book Selection Text selected by:  teacher  student**1. READING ENGAGEMENT**

(If the student has recently answered these questions, skip this section.)

T: *What kinds of books do you like to read?* \_\_\_\_\_T: *Tell me about one of your favorite books.* \_\_\_\_\_T: *How do you choose the books you read?* \_\_\_\_\_**2. ORAL READING FLUENCY****INTRODUCTION**T: *In this folktale, *Thin as a Stick*, Lizard is a very fat fellow. Lizard changes after he meets Prairie Dog. Please read aloud pages 2 through 4. Show the student where to stop reading at the \*.***RECORD OF ORAL READING**

Record the student's oral reading behaviors. Note the student's fluency (expression and phrasing). Be sure to time the student's reading.

**Page 2**

A long time ago, Lizard was a very fat fellow. Each day he would sit in the sun and sleep. When he was hungry, he would tip his head and zap ants with his long tongue. He didn't even move to get his food. He would just wait until the ants walked by.

**Page 3**

One day, Lizard slowly climbed up on a large rock. He slept most of the day in the warm sun. Under the ground, Prairie Dog was making a tunnel. By lunch time he was hot and tired. As Prairie Dog came up through the ground, he bumped his head on Lizard's rock.

"Ouch!" he cried, popping out of the ground. "Who put this rock here?"

"Not me," said Lizard, as he laid down once again on top of his rock. "Maybe you should watch where you're going."

**Page 4**

Prairie Dog was in a bad mood. "Oh, yeah?" he shouted. "Well, maybe you should watch where you're going!" With that, Prairie Dog gave the rock a great big shove.

Time: \_\_\_\_\_ minutes:seconds

**ORAL READING WORDS PER MINUTE, PERCENT OF ACCURACY**

Use the student's oral reading time to circle the WPM range.

Word Count: 170

	INTRVN	INSTR	IND	ADV
Minutes:Seconds	2:52 or more	2:51-2	2:26-1:42	1:41 or less
WPM	37 or less	60-69	70-100	101 or more

Count the number of miscues that are not self-corrected. Circle the percent of accuracy based on the number of miscues.

	INTRVN	INSTR	IND				ADV	
Number of Miscues	12 or more	10-11	8-9	6-7	5	3-4	1-2	0
Percent of Accuracy	93 or less	94	95	96	97	98	99	100



Name/Date \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher/Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Level 24, Page 6

DRA2 CONTINUUM		LEVEL 24		TRANSITIONAL READER	
	INTERVENTION	INSTRUCTIONAL	INDEPENDENT	ADVANCED	
<b>Reading Engagement</b>					
<b>Book Selection</b>	1 Selects texts from identified leveled sets with teacher support; uncertain about a favorite book	2 Selects texts from identified leveled sets with moderate support; tells about favorite book in general terms	3 Selects texts from identified leveled sets most of the time; identifies favorite book by title and tells about a particular event	4 Selects a variety of "just right" texts; identifies favorite book by title and gives an overview of the book	
<b>Sustained Reading</b>	1 Sustains independent reading for a short period of time with much encouragement	2 Sustains independent reading with moderate encouragement	3 Sustains independent reading for at least 15 minutes at a time	4 Sustains independent reading for an extended period of time	
<b>Score</b>	2 3	4 5	6 7	8	
<b>Oral Reading Fluency</b>					
<b>Expression</b>	1 Little expression; monotone	2 Some expression that conveys meaning	3 Expression reflects mood, pace, and tension at times	4 Expression reflects mood, pace, and tension most of the time	
<b>Phrasing</b>	1 Reads mostly word-by-word	2 Reads in short phrases most of the time; inappropriate pauses	3 Reads in longer phrases at times; reads most punctuation	4 Reads in longer, meaningful phrases most of the time; reads all punctuation	
<b>Rate</b>	1 59 WPM or less	2 60-69 WPM	3 70-100 WPM	4 101 WPM or more	
<b>Accuracy</b>	1 93% or less	2 94%	3 95%-98%	4 99%-100%	
<b>Score</b>	4 5 6	7 8 9 10	11 12 13 14	15 16	
<b>Comprehension</b>					

Name/Date \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher/Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Scores: Reading Engagement \_\_\_/8    Oral Reading Fluency \_\_\_/16    Comprehension \_\_\_/28  
 Independent Range: 6-7    11-14    19-25

Book Selection    Text selected by:     teacher     student

**1. READING ENGAGEMENT**

Ask the student to bring his or her reading record to the conference. If the Student Reading Survey was not completed prior to the assessment conference, read aloud the questions on the survey and record the student's responses.

**2. ORAL READING FLUENCY****INTRODUCTION**

*T:* This book is called *Animals Can Help*. It is about animals that help people in different ways. Please read aloud pages 2 through 6. Show the student where to stop reading at the \*.

**RECORD OF ORAL READING** 

Record the student's oral reading behaviors. Note the student's fluency (expression and phrasing). Be sure to time the student's reading.

**Page 2****Animal Helpers**

Animals that are a part of the family are called pets.

Some people have pets like dogs, cats, birds, or rabbits. Other people have animals that are more than just pets.

**Page 3**

These animals are trained to help people. Some help people feel better. Some help people move and get stronger. Others help people who cannot see, hear, or move.

**Page 4****Animals in Hospitals**

People go to hospitals when they are sick. People may feel sad when they stay in a hospital for a long time. A trained dog can help.

**Page 5**

It is strange to see a dog in a hospital. The dog makes sick people smile. People talk to the dog and pet it. They laugh when the dog does funny tricks.

**Page 6**

**Animals in Nursing Homes**

Animals are trained to visit people in nursing homes. They help people feel more at home.

Time: \_\_\_\_\_ minutes:seconds

**ORAL READING WORDS PER MINUTE, PERCENT OF ACCURACY**

Use the student's oral reading time to circle the WPM range.

Word Count: 143

	INTRVN	INSTR	IND	ADV
Minutes:Seconds	2:11 or more	2:33-1:56	1:55-1:22	1:21 or less
WPM	64 or less	65-74	75-105	106 or more

Count the number of miscues that are not self-corrected. Circle the percent of accuracy based on the number of miscues.

	INTRVN	INSTR	IND				ADV	
Number of Miscues	10 or more	8-9	7	6	4-5	3	1-2	0
Percent of Accuracy	65 or less	64	95	96	97	98	99	100

- If the student's score falls in a shaded area for either WPM or Accuracy, STOP! Reassess with a lower-level text.
- If the student is reading below the grade-level benchmark, administer *DRA Word Analysis*, beginning with Task 28, at another time.

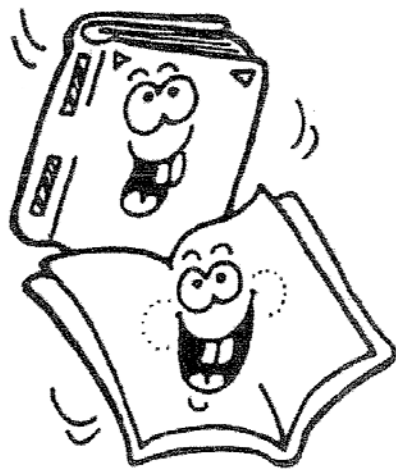
Name/Date \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher/Grade \_\_\_\_\_

DRA2 CONTINUUM		LEVEL 28			EXTENDING READER	
	INTERVENTION	INSTRUCTIONAL	INDEPENDENT	ADVANCED		
<b>Reading Engagement</b>						
Wide Reading	1 Titles below grade level; limited reading experiences and book knowledge	2 Titles slightly below grade level; rather limited reading experiences	3 Titles within 2 genres or multiple books within a genre; generally on-grade-level texts	4 Titles across 3 or more genres; many on- and above-grade-level texts		
Self-Assessment/ Goal Setting	1 No strengths and/or goals	2 General strength(s) and goal(s) related to the reading process	3 2 specific strengths and 2 specific goals related to the reading process	4 3 specific strengths and 3 specific goals that reflect a higher level of thinking		
Score	2 3	4 5	6 7	8		
<b>Oral Reading Fluency</b>						
Expression	1 Little expression; monotone	2 Some expression that conveys meaning	3 Expression emphasizing key phrases and words at times	4 Expression emphasizing key phrases and words most of the time		
Pacing	1 Mostly word-by-word	2 Short phrases most of the time; inappropriate pauses	3 Longer phrases most of the time; fewest punctuation	4 Consistently longer, meaningful phrases; reads all punctuation		
Rate	1 64 WPM or less	2 65–74 WPM	3 75–105 WPM	4 105 WPM or more		
Accuracy	1 93% or less	2 94%	3 95%–98%	4 99%–100%		
Score	4 5 6	7 8 9 10	11 12 13 14	15 16		

Appendix E

# The Promise of Poetry for Struggling Readers



Presented by:  
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## Poetry + Powerful Reading Instruction = Success

"Who Needs Poetry" by Carole Boston Weatherford (*Teaching Struggling Readers With Poetry*, p. 8)

**Powerful reading instruction is comprised of the following components:**

- Frequent read-aloud experiences
- Engaging conversations
- Playful phonemic awareness activities
- Explicit phonics instruction
- Robust vocabulary teaching
- Thoughtful comprehension lessons
- Meaningful fluency development activities
- Multilevel, flexible, small group instruction
- Ample time to read independently
- Effective writing instruction
- Integrated content area studies

### Why Use Poetry to Teach Struggling Readers?

- Poetry Is Short!
- Poetry Plays With Language
- Poetry Is Comprised of Well-Chosen Words
- Poetry Incorporates Rhythm and Rhyme
- Poetry Contains Rich Vocabulary
- Poetry Boosts Comprehension
- Poetry Creates Interest in a Topic
- Poetry Sparks Enthusiasm for Writing

Source: Walther, M. P., & Fuhler, C. J. (2010). *Teaching struggling readers with poetry: Engaging poems with mini-lessons that target and teach phonics, sight words, fluency, & more—laying the foundation for reading success.* Scholastic.

## Look! Look!

by Jack Prelutsky



Look! Look!

A book!

A book for me,  
a book all filled

with poetry,

a book that I

can read

and read.

A book!

Exactly

what I need.

Look! Look!

A book

to open wide,

and marvel

at the words inside,

to sit

and savor

quietly.

Look! Look!

A book!

A book for me.

Source: Prelutsky, J. (2008). *My dog may be a genius*. (J. Stevenson, Illus.)

## Why Use Poetry to Teach Struggling Readers?

### A Sampling of Teaching Ideas for "Look! Look!" by Jack Prelutsky

#### Create a Poetry Binder

Enlarge a copy of "Look! Look!" and chorally read and reread for enjoyment. This poem would be an ideal opening poem for students' "Poetry Binders."

Once you've read "Look! Look!" for enjoyment, revisit the poem with students to highlight one or more of the following literacy skills:

**Phonics:** /-ook/ word family

**Fluency:** Using punctuation to make meaning

**Vocabulary:** Vivid verbs—marvel, savor

**Writing Conventions:** Exclamation mark

#### How Shall We Read Our Poems Today?

1. Teacher Read Aloud
  2. Fill-in-the-Blanks
  3. Tag-Team Reading
  4. Choral Reading
  5. Turn Up the Volume or Turn Down the Volume
  6. Speed It Up! or Slow It Down!
  7. Clap the Beat
  8. Readers Theater
  9. As a Round
  10. Sing to a Favorite Tune like "Twinkle, Twinkle"
- Adapted from "10 Ways to Read a Poem" by Mary Bigler, Judson Literacy Conference 2010

### Poetry Is Short!

#### A Sampling of Teaching Ideas for "Good Books, Good Times!" by Lee Bennett Hopkins

##### Celebrate Books!

Share this poem at the beginning of the year to spark a conversation about students' favorite books. Return to "Good Books, Good Times!" again at the end of the year to ask students to make a class list of treasured tales.

##### Picture Book Pairings—Books That Feature Reluctant Readers

*Miss Brooks Loves Books! (and I don't)* (Bottner, 2010)

*Miss Malarkey Leaves No Reader Behind* (Finchler & O'Malley, 2006)

*Read All About It!* (Bush & Bush, 2008)

##### Books to the Ceiling

Books to the ceiling, books to the sky.

My piles of books are a mile high.

How I love them!

How I need them!

I'll have a long beard by the time I read them.

-Arnold Lobel

Source: Hopkins, L. B. (Ed.). (1990). *Good books, good times*. (H. Stevenson, Illus.). New York: HarperCollins. (p. 29)

## Good Books, Good Times!

Good books.

Good times.

Good stories.

Good rhymes.

Good beginnings.

Good ends.

Good people.

Good friends.

Good fiction.

Good facts.

Good adventures.

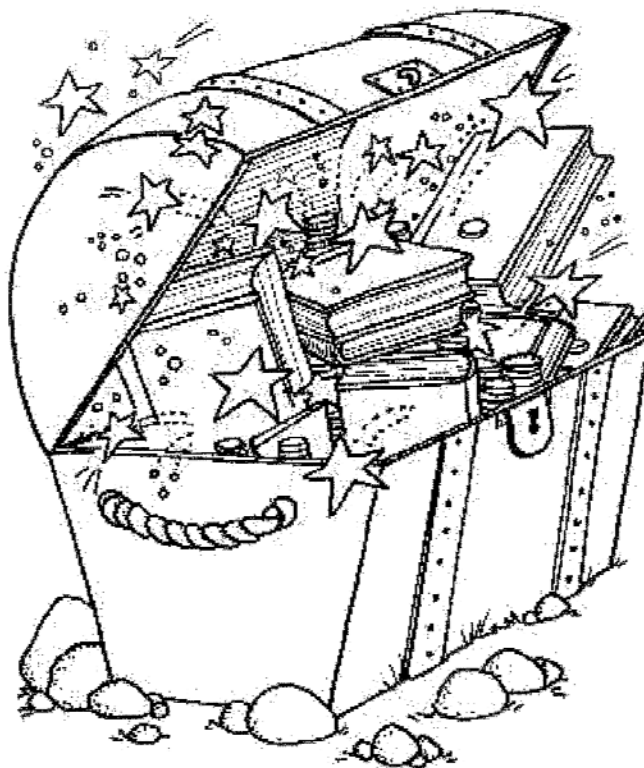
Good acts.

Good stories.

Good rhymes.

*Good books*

*Good times.*



*Lee Bennett Hopkins*

Source: Hopkins, L. B. (Ed.). (1990). *Good books, good times.* (II. Stevenson, illus.). New York: HarperCollins. (p. 17)

## Slow Sloth's Slow Song

I ..... am ..... a ..... sloth .....  
a ..... sloth ..... am ..... I .....  
I ..... live ..... in ..... trees .....  
But ..... I ..... can't ..... fly .....  
I ..... do ..... not ..... run .....  
I ..... am ..... so ..... slow .....  
But ..... I ..... am ..... where .....  
I ..... want ..... to ..... go.

..... Jack Prelutsky



Source: Prelutsky, J. (1990). *Something Big Has Been Here*. (J. Stevenson, Ilus.). New York: Greenwillow. (p. 65)

**Twaddletalk Tuck**  
**by Jack Prelutsky**



I'm Twaddletalk Tuck and I talk and I talk  
and I talk when I run and I talk when I walk  
and I talk when I hop and I talk when I creep  
and I talk when I wake and I talk when I sleep  
and I talk when it's wet and I talk when it's dry  
and I talk when I laugh and I talk when I cry  
and I talk when I jump and I talk when I land  
and I talk when I sit and I talk when I stand  
and I talk and I talk into anyone's ear  
and I talk and I talk when there's nobody near  
and I talk when I'm hoarse and my voice is a squawk  
for I'm Twaddletalk Tuck and I talk and I talk.

Source: Prelutsky, J. (1990). *Something Big Has Been Here*. (J. Stevenson, Illus.). New York: Greenwillow. (p. 64)

### Poetry Is Perfect for Fluency Practice

To introduce the concept of fluency, read aloud two poems from Jack Prelutsky's book *Something Big Has Been Here* (1990). Begin by reading the poem "Slow Sloth's Slow Song" found on page 65 aloud and then invite your students to join in. Follow this slow poem with "Twaddletalk Tuck" (p. 64) that simply begs to be read quickly. Discuss the difference between the two readings and how Prelutsky's use of punctuation marks helps the reader to understand how to read each poem. If you have multiple copies of the poem, invite students to read the poems with a partner. After reading "Slow Sloth's Slow Song," young learners might be interested in discovering more about sloths. If so, read aloud the nonfiction title *Let's Look at Sloths* (Piehl, 2011). As a follow-up to this lesson, read either *Hip and Hop Don't Stop* (Czekaj, 2010) or *Wolf!* (Bloom, 1999) where the wolf learns to read with style!

Source: Walther, M. P., & Phillips, K. A. (May, 2012). *Month by Month Reading Instruction*. New York: Scholastic.

### Poetry Plays With Language

*Lemonade and Other Poems Squeezed from a Single Word* (Raczka, 2011)

*Won Ton: A Cat Tale Told in Haiku* (Wardlaw, 2011)

### A Sampling of Teaching Ideas for "Brother" by Mary Ann Hoberman

**Fluency Fun with Tongue Twisting Poems**—Challenge students to reread this tongue-twisting poem faster and faster.

#### Picture Book Pairing

*Once Upon a Baby Brother* (Sullivan, 2010)

## Brother

I had a little brother  
And I brought him to my mother  
And I said I want another  
Little brother for a change.

But she said don't be a bother  
So I took him to my father  
And I said this little bother  
Of a brother's very strange.

But he said one little brother  
Is exactly like another  
And every little brother  
Misbehaves a bit, he said.

So I took my little bother  
From my mother and my father  
And I put the little bother  
Of a brother back to bed.

*Mary Ann Hoberman*



Source: Paschen, E. (2005). *Poetry speaks to children*. Naperville, IL: Sourcebooks. (p. 95)  
For teaching ideas see p. 41 of *Teaching Struggling Readers With Poetry* (Walther & Fuhler, 2010)

## Poetry Is Comprised of Well-Chosen Words

### A Sampling of Teaching Ideas for "Cinderella's Double Life" by Marilyn Singer

**Readers Theater**—Divide the class or guided reading group into half. Make a copy of one side of the poem for each group member. Provide time for students to practice and polish their performance. If they enjoy this poem, students can perform others from the book *Mirror Mirror* (Singer, 2010).

**A Poetry Challenge**—Challenge students to write a poem by following Marilyn's Singer's lead and using the same words forward and backwards.

#### Picture Book Pairing

Enjoy other versions of the tale of Cinderella. One of my favorite versions is *CinderEdna* (Jackson, 1998).

## Poetry Incorporates Rhythm and Rhyme

### A Sampling of Teaching Ideas for "My Sister is a Sissy" by Jack Prelutsky

#### Meaning Vocabulary—Synonyms

In this poem, Prelutsky uses the synonyms *afraid*, *terrified*, and *scared* to describe the way the sister feels. Build on these words by creating a word web of all the different ways writers can say *scared*. Post the web in your room for future reference.

#### Picture Book Pairing

*Scaredy Squirrel* Books by Melanie Watt

Source: *Teaching Struggling Readers With Poetry* (Walther & Fuhler, 2010) p. 41

## Poetry Contains Rich Vocabulary

### A Sampling of Teaching Ideas for "I Am the Book" by Tom Robert Shields

#### Three Read Aloud Words

Source: *Teaching Struggling Readers With Poetry* (Walther & Fuhler, 2010) p. 26

## *Cinderella's Double Life*

*Isn't life unfair?*

*Stuck in a corner,*

*while they're waiting for a chance*

*with the prince,*

*dancing waltz after waltz*

*at the ball,*

*I'll be shining*

*these shoes*

*till the clock strikes midnight.*

*Till the clock strikes midnight,*

*these shoes!*

*I'll be shining*

*at the ball,*

*dancing waltz after waltz*

*with the prince*

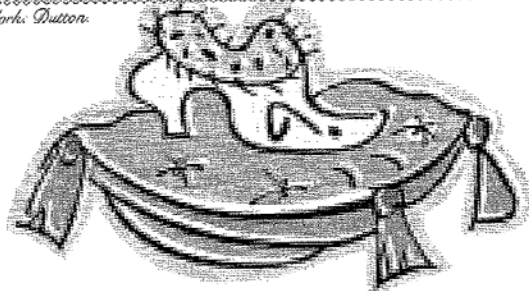
*while they're waiting for a*

*chance,*

*stuck in a corner.*

*Isn't life unfair?*

Source: Singer, M. (2010). *Mirror mirror*. (J. Masse, Illus.). New York: Dutton.



### **My Sister Is a Sissy**

My sister is a sissy,  
she's afraid of dogs and cats,  
a toad can give her tantrums,  
and she's terrified of rats,  
she screams at things with stingers,  
things that buzz, and things that crawl,  
just the shadow of a spider  
sends my sister up the wall.

A lizard makes her shiver,  
and a turtle makes her squirm,  
she positively cringes  
at the prospect of a worm,  
she's afraid of things with feathers,  
she's afraid of things with fur,  
she's scared of almost everything—  
how come I'm scared of her?

*Jack Prelutsky*



Source: Prelutsky, J. (1984). *The new kid on the block*. (J. Stevenson, illus.). New York: Greenwillow. (p. 138).

## I Am The Book

I'll be your friend,  
stay by your side,  
contradict you,  
make you laugh or teary-eyed  
On a sun-summer morning.

I'll spark you,  
help you sleep,  
bring dreams  
you'll forever keep  
On a dappled-autumn afternoon.

I'll warm you,  
keep you kindled,  
dazzle you  
till storms have dwindled  
On a snow-flaked winter evening.

I'll plant in you  
a spring-seedling  
with bursting life  
while you are reading.

I am the book  
You are needing.

Tom Robert Shields



Source: Hopkins, L. B. (Ed.). (2004). *Wonderful words: Poems about reading, writing, speaking, and listening*. (K. Barbour, illus.). New York: Simon & Schuster. (p. 18)

### Poetry Boosts Comprehension

Can You Infer What This Poem Is About?

<p>Hungry monster, you grumble, wheeze, never seem full. You stop everywhere to graze and go off again in search of more for your keepers to shove between your greedy jaws. Do you digest when you rest?</p>	<p><b>Clues</b></p>	<p><b>My Schema</b></p>
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"Garbage Truck" by Marci Ridlon  
Source: Hopkins, L. B. (1987). *Click, rumble, roar: Poems about machines*. (A. H. Audette, Illus.). New York: HarperCollins.

#### Other Poems for Inferring

"Cat Kisses" by Bobbi Katz\*\*  
Source: Yolen, J. & Peters, A. F. (2007). *Here's a little poem: A very first book of poetry*. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick. (p. 32)

"Crayons: A Rainbow Poem" by Jane Yolen\*\*  
Source: Paschen, E. (Ed.). (2005). *Poetry speaks to children*. Naperville, IL: Sourcebooks, Inc. (p. 23)

"Groundhog" by Maria Fleming\*\*  
Source: Hopkins, L. B. (2005). *Days to celebrate: A full year of poetry, people, holidays, history, fascinating facts, and more*. (S. Alcorn, Illus.). New York: Greenwillow. (p. 19)

"Classroom Globe" by Rebecca Kai Dotlich  
Source: Hopkins, L. B. (1996). *School supplies: A book of poems*. (R. Flower, Illus.). New York: Aladdin. (p. 18)

\*\*These poems appear on reproducible pages in *Teaching Struggling Readers With Poetry* (Walther & Fuhler, 2010)

### Poetry Creates Interest in a Topic

<p>Me x 2 by Jane Medina</p> <p>I read times two. I write times two. I think, I dream, I cry times two.</p> <p>I laugh times two. I'm right times two. I sing, I ask, I try times two.</p> <p>I do twice as much As most people do, 'Cause most speak one But I speak two!</p>	<p>Yo x 2</p> <p>Leo por dos. Escribo por dos. Pienso y sueño Y lloro por dos.</p> <p>Yo río por dos Grito por dos Canto, pregunto Intendo por dos.</p> <p>Hago mucho más Que hacen todos ellos, Porque yo hablo dos: Lo doble que aquéllos.</p>
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Source: Hopkins, L. B. (2010). *Amazing faces*. (C. Soentpiet, Illus.). New York: Lee & Low.

## Shout! by Brod Bagert

Shout it! Shout it! POETRY!  
Fun for you and fun for me.

Clap your hands! Stomp your feet!  
Feel the rhythm! Feel the beat!

Chunky words all chopped in chips!  
Silky sounds upon your lips.

Tell a story—happy, sad;  
Silly, sorry; good or bad.

Leap a leap, hop a hop.  
See the ocean in one drop.

Shout it! Shout it! POETRY!  
Fun for you and fun for me.

Bagert, B. (2007). *Shout! Little Poems that Roar*. (S. Yoshikawa, Illus.). New York: Dial.



## Poetry Sparks Enthusiasm for Writing

### Notice Poetic Devices

#### Alliteration

Mentor Texts:

*A My Name is Alice* (Bayer, 1984)

"Batty" found in *Laugh-eteria* (Florian, 1999)

*Four Famished Foxes and Fosdyke* (Edwards, 1995)

#### Onomatopoeia

Mentor Texts:

*Poems Go Clang* (Glori, 1997) \*Out of print

*Clang! Clang! Beep! Beep! Listen to the City* (Burleigh, 2009) Picture book written with rhyming couplets

"Clatter" by Joyce Armor found in *Teaching Struggling Readers With Poetry* (p. 133)

#### Rhythm—Repetition of Words, Phrases, or Lines

Mentor Text:

*I Love Our Earth* (Martin & Sampson, 2006)

#### Shape—Concrete Poems

Mentor Text:

*Come to My Party and Other Shape Poems* (Roemer, 2004)

Find a list of concrete poetry anthologies in *Literature Is Back!* (p. 221)

#### Rhyme

#### Sensory Images

Find a list poems with sensory images in *Month-by-Month Trait-Based Writing Instruction* (pp. 139-140)

#### Comparison

#### Creative Conventions

"Coprolite" found in *Can You Dig It? and Other Poems* (Weinstock, 2010)

*Once I Ate a Pie* (MacLachlan & MacLachlan Charest, 2006)

Find a list of poems with creative conventions in *Month-by-Month Trait-Based Writing Instruction* (pp. 140-141)

### A Few Poetry Resources

- Kids' Poems* (Routman, 2000) (1<sup>st</sup> Grade, 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade, 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Grade)
- Literature Is Back!* (Fuhler & Walther, 2007)
- Month-by-Month Trait-Based Writing Instruction* (Walther & Phillips, 2009)
- Pizza, Pigs, and Poetry: How to Write a Poem* (Prelutsky, 2008)
- Read a Rhyme, Write a Rhyme* (Prelutsky, 2005)
- Teaching Struggling Readers With Poetry* (Walther & Fuhler, 2010)
- Wishes, Lies, and Dreams: Teaching Children to Write Poetry* (Koch, 2000)

### A Few of Maria's Favorite Poetry Books and Picture Books

- Bagert, B. (2007). *Shout! Little poems that roar*. (S. Yoshikawa, Illus.). New York: Dial.
- Bottner, B. (2010). *Miss Brooks loves books! (and I don't)*. (M. Emberley, Illus.). New York: Knopf.
- Bush, L., & Bush, J. (2008). *Read all about it!* (D. Brunkus, Illus.). New York: HarperCollins.
- Czekaj, J. (2010). *Hip and Hop don't stop*. New York: Disney/Hyperion.
- Finchler, J., & O'Malley, K. (2006). *Miss Malarkey leaves no reader behind*. (K. O'Malley, Illus.). New York: Walker & Co.
- Franco, B. (2009). *Messing around on the monkey bars and other school poems for two voices*. (J. Hartland, Illus.). Somerville, MA: Candlewick.
- Hopkins, L. B. (Ed.). (1990). *Good books, good times*. (H. Stevenson, Illus.). New York: HarperCollins.
- Hopkins, L. B. (Ed.). (2004). *Wonderful words: Poems about reading, writing, speaking, and listening*. (K. Barbour, Illus.). New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Katz, B. (2009). *More pocket poems*. (D. Zemke, Illus.). New York: Dutton.

- Prelutsky, J. (2008). *My dog may be a genius*. (J. Stevenson, Illus.). New York: Greenwillow.
- Raczka, B. (2011). *Lemonade and other poems squeezed from a single word*. (N. Doniger, Illus.)  
New York: Roaring Brook.
- Rosenthal, A. K. (2009). *Duck! Rabbit!* (T. Lichtenheld, Illus.). San Francisco, CA: Chronicle.
- Singer, M. (2010). *Mirror mirror*. (J. Masse, Illus.). New York: Dutton.
- Sullivan, S. (2010). *Once upon a baby brother*. (T. Tusa, Illus.). New York: Farrar Straus Giroux.
- Wardlaw, L. (2011). *Won Ton: A cat tale told in Haiku*. (E. Yelchin, Illus.). New York: Holt.
- Weinstock, R. (2010). *Can you dig it? And Other Poems*. New York: Disney-Hyperion.

Appendix F

**Plan B: Poetry group**

1. Teacher reads poem.
2. Teacher discusses new poem.
  - meaning
  - connections
  - rhyming words
  - patterns
3. Choral reading of poem.
4. Partner reading of poem.
5. Homework: read poem to an adult at home.
  - tally how many times poem was read
  - adult initial post it note after reading

---

**New day (repeat)**

Students perform mastery of one poem from last meeting.

- oral
- perform
- connection/drawing