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FOCUS: POETRY, TOUGH TO TEACH OR A TREAT FOR STUDENTS?

LAJM

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ABOUT THIS ISSUE

This issue reverberates with poetry. Poetry is tucked inside many articles, poetry books are lauded, poetry reading and writing are promoted in the classroom. Our theme is "Poetry: Tough to Teach or a Treat for Students," and we wondered what the choice would be, but the contributors to this issue all feel poetry has a definite place in the classroom.

Barb Rebbeck leads off by sharing how titles of award-winning poems can inform students about the importance of concrete images in their own poetry writing. Dan Holt seconds that idea by showing how he moved students from writing vague poems to writing original poems based on the truth.

Sounds of poetry being read in the elementary class is one way Sheila Fitzgerald suggests helping students love poetry. Sandra Imdieke writes about books of poetry that elementary teachers could use to widen the range of reading experiences in their classrooms.

Miriam Bat-Ami explains how she moves her college students to an understanding of the power and delight of poetry by focusing on works that do not rhyme. The sounds of poetry are an avenue William Palmer uses with his college students to show them the impact of intonation on meaning.

Gloria Nixon-John shares an exercise she uses in her high school classes to involve students in the images of their own lives.

Using a literature anthology that contains poetry often intimidates secondary school teachers. Diana Mitchell shows a variety of ways poetry can be approached in the literature class.

Terry Blackhawk focuses on students who are already committed to their own writing. She looks at how these students do multiple revisions to make the poem say what they want it to say.

Although the alternative high school is not usually seen as a place where poetry flourishes, Joyce Benvenuto shows how it is possible to involve very reluctant students in the reading and writing of poetry.

In the high school class, Judith Michaels shares another approach to engage students in poetry writing—she has her students write poems for specific elementary aged children.

Rebecca Sanchez ends our themed poetry section by reminding us of the importance of trust in getting our students to write.

This issue closes with articles by our three regular columnists. Jennifer Ochoa, whose first column appeared in the last issue, describes the ups and downs of her first year as a high school English teacher. Mark Shaheen, English and drama teacher, whose column will focus on ways to bring literature to life the English classroom, shows how he involves students in poetry through performance.

Peter Butts, middle school media specialist, focuses on exciting, new poetry collections for the secondary classroom. Peter's column will review books each issue.

Fred Barton

Mary Dekker

Diana Mitchell