Lesson Plan

Multipurpose Poetry: Introducing Science Concepts and Increasing Fluency

Adapted from a lesson by Sarah Dennis-Shaw

Poetry can be a fun and unintimidating way for ESL students to develop their oral fluency. In this lesson, students discuss what they know about poetry and then work in small groups to develop a choral reading of two poems about an assigned insect.

Objectives
Students will
- Work cooperatively in groups to create a choral reading of an assigned poem
- Use a graphic organizer to gather factual information about a particular insect
- Present choral poetry readings and research information orally to the class

Preparation
1. Copy onto chart paper the following poems from the books Insectlopedia by Douglas Florian and Joyful Noise: Poems for Two Voices by Paul Fleischman:
   - From Insectlopedia
     “The Treehoppers”
     “The Whirligig Beetles”
     “The Crickets”
     “The Mayfly”
   - From Joyful Noise
     “Fireflies”
     “Whirligig Beetles”
     “House Crickets”
     “Mayflies”
2. Before this lesson, students should have had multiple experiences with choral poetry readings. They should be familiar with different choral reading formats and comfortable working in small cooperative groups.

Step-by-Step

Session 1
1. Begin the lesson by discussing poetry with students. What do they know about poems? What kind of poems have they read before? Tell students that they are going to be reading some poems about insects.
2. Display the poem “The Treehoppers” from Insectlopedia. Read the poem aloud, and ask students to listen and follow along as you point to each word. When you finish reading the poem, tell students that you are going to read it again and invite them to join along.
3. Once the poem has been read two times, ask students to help you create a choral reading. Ask for their suggestions (e.g., students read every other line, girls read one line and boys read another, half the class reads one line and half the class reads another). Perform the choral reading.
4. Repeat steps 2 and 3 with the poem “Fireflies” from Joyful Noise. The poems in this book are written for “two voices”; that is, they are written for two people to read together. You will need to take this into consideration when planning the choral readings. Some of the lines in the poem are meant to be read simultaneously by two people or groups. You should familiarize students with the format of the poems from Joyful Noise, because they will be reading them in small groups during Session 2.

Session 2
1. Reread the poems from the previous session in a new choral format. Ask a student volunteer to follow along with a pointer as the poem is read.
2. Divide students into three cooperative groups, and assign each group an insect (i.e., whirligig beetles, crickets, and mayflies) and each student in the group a task. Suggested tasks include recorder, timekeeper, mediator (makes sure that everyone in the group has a chance to talk), and task manager (makes sure that the group stays on task). Suggested tasks include recorder, timekeeper, mediator (makes sure that everyone in the group has a chance to talk), and task manager (makes sure that the group stays on task). The assigned tasks should enable students to work more cooperatively together and to practice teamwork skills. Once students are in their designated groups, give each...
group the chart papers with their poems written on them. Each group should have two poems: one from *Insectlopedia* and one from *Joyful Noise*.

3. Have students read the two poems several times in their groups. Students should develop a choral reading for each poem. Reinforce to students that all group members must participate in the choral reading. Allow students the freedom of choosing how they want to perform the choral reading.

4. Allow students time to practice their choral readings with their small groups until they feel comfortable with the poems.

**Session 3**

1. Divide students into their small groups and have them run through their choral readings from the previous session.

2. Pass out the Research Information worksheet (see reproducible), and tell students that they are going to work individually to find information about the insects in their poems.

3. Explain how students should complete the chart, and direct them to search the following insects on eNature.com, a resource provided by the National Wildlife Federation:
   - Large whirligig beetles
   - Mayflies
   - House crickets

4. When students have completed the research information chart, have them return to their small groups to discuss and compare information. Collect the research charts.

**Session 4**

Have each small group perform the choral readings of their poems for the class, and ask each student in the group to contribute one fact about his or her insect.

**Assessments**

- Assess the development of students’ oral language skills informally through observation. Were students comfortable performing the choral readings? Did they read fluently? Did they enjoy reading the poems aloud?
- Use students’ Research Information worksheets to assess their knowledge about the insect and research skills. Verify that each section of the worksheet is filled in with accurate information.
- Evaluate students’ cooperative learning skills. Did students stay on task and complete the assignment while working in groups?

*For extensions of this lesson and more lessons and resources you can use in your classroom today, visit www.readwritethink.org.*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What does your insect look like?</th>
<th>What other interesting facts did you find about your insect?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Size</td>
<td>Food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area and range</td>
<td>Habitat</td>
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<tr>
<td>Appearance</td>
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