**USING POETRY IN THE ENGLISH CLASSROOM AS A MEANS OF DEVELOPING STUDENTS’ CREATIVE SKILLS**

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In the words of the philosopher Elliot Samuel Paul, “Creativity pervades human life. It is the mark of individuality. The vehicle of self-expression. The engine of progress in every human endeavor”. Therefore, nowadays employers search for their applicants’ developed creative skills.

Creative skills, or self-expression skills, let you expand on what there already is. They can be defined as the ability of producing something that is both original and worthwhile.

There are a lot of techniques for developing students’ creative skills, but among them the majority of researches single out using poetry in the English classroom.

Students might already enjoy reading and listening to poetry in their mother tongue and perhaps in English too. Poems are often rich in cultural references, and they present a wide range of learning opportunities. Moreover, poetry provides a wonderful experience for students to explore their feelings, interact with the world and enjoy some amazing poems.

When developing students’ creative skills, the English teacher doesn't need to be a literature expert as for this purpose one learns English through poetry, not the poetry itself.

Most of the tried and tested activities used regularly by language teachers can be adapted easily to bring poetry into the classroom. Therefore, all the stages of a regular lesson-planning should be followed.

Before doing any productive work, students are given plenty of pre-reading speaking activities so that they are adequately prepared. The latter might involve a quiz, a questionnaire, sentence stems to be completed, statements to be ranked and discussed.

As a way in to a poem, the teacher might play some background music to create the atmosphere, show some pictures to introduce the topic, and then get students to think about their personal knowledge or experience which relates to the topic.

They then talk about the poem, first with a partner and then in small groups, perhaps coming together as a class at the end to share ideas. Students might predict endings to verses, the whole poem, or events occurring after the end of the poem. Role plays work well, interviewing a partner, or even dramatizing the poem and making a video. Students could compare poems on related topics, with different groups working on different poems and then regrouping to pool their ideas.

Concerning post-reading activities, a poem can spark off some wonderful creative writing. Students can add more lines or stanzas individually or in pairs or groups. They can write a letter to a character in the poem, write about what happened before the beginning or after the ending of the poem and so on.

Students could use the poem as a starting point and model for some parallel writing (each group might contribute a verse to a collective poem).

Making up their own original poems according to the suggested rhythm or structure like similes, limericks or haikus can be both motivating and beneficial for developing students’ creative skills. While students generate material for their poems, they focus less on what to express and more on how best to convey the language. These engaging activities also open them up to new ways of composition.

Genre transfer presents a lot of opportunities for writing practice: letters, diary entries, radio plays, newspaper articles, agony aunt columns all based on the original text from a poem.

Poems can be involving, motivating and memorable, and they can supplement and enrich any lesson.

Using poetry in the English classroom develops students’ creative skills, improves their ability to express ideas coherently in a foreign language; raises their motivation, stimulates development of the main language skills; positively influences the process of studying the language.

**References**

1. Janeczko P.B. How to write poetry / Paul Bryan Janeczko. - New York: Scholastic, 1999.