



Poetic Writing: Personal Experience

LEVEL 1i 1ii 1iii **2** 3 4 5

When My Grandad Died

THE LEARNING CONTEXT

This class was encouraged to explore a memorable or frightening experience through writing. The teacher began this approach to personal experience writing by sharing some of her own draft writing, written during a previous class session.

During the next week the students talked about their own memorable or frightening experiences, sharing their stories in pairs and in small groups.

The teacher modelled questioning strategies to encourage the students to develop their ideas. They then questioned each other while sharing their experiences.

The students were then asked to focus on just one aspect of an experience and share it before writing their draft. They were asked to pay special attention to the sequence of their writing.

The teacher modelled revision, using her own draft writing. After buddy and teacher conferencing the students revised and proofread independently. They decided which suggestions from their buddy or the teacher to incorporate, and then published their work.

Teacher-student conversations

During the draft writing the teacher held the following conversation with Emilee:

Teacher: When is it usually time to go?
 Emilee: When you're old and you get sick.
 Teacher: I agree. But do you think you've made that clear in your writing?
 Emilee: I'm not sure. I'll ask my buddy.

After the draft was completed, the teacher asked the following questions:

Teacher: I can't see the place where this happened [pointing to "I was banging on the ground"].
 Emilee: Well, adults know what to do but I didn't.
 Teacher: So how did you feel?
 Emilee: Sad and mad.

INTEGRATING READING AND WRITING

Many opportunities will arise during close or personal reading for students to explore topics of personal significance. Strong personal voice, ideas expressed with detail, a variety of sentence structures, and effective language choices can be identified and discussed during guided and shared reading, or after reading to students.

Many of the stories in the *School Journal* are about personal experiences of children and adults, expressed with a strong personal voice.

WHERE TO NEXT?

To move Emilee towards the next learning step, the teacher might help her to focus on:

Structure

- encouraging her to shape ideas for effect, giving a stronger sense of scene-setting.

Sentences

- developing confidence with complex sentence structures.

Vocabulary

- using a wider range of interest words, verbs, and adjectives.

Language features

- encouraging use of language features for impact, e.g., similes, sound devices.

Spelling

- extending knowledge of common spelling patterns.

Modelled and shared writing sessions with clear explanations could be key teaching strategies. The student could also be given specific feedback during conferencing times. Word-study sessions can help develop spelling knowledge.

CURRICULUM LINKS

English in the New Zealand Curriculum

Level 1: Writing Functions

Poetic Writing: Students should write on a variety of topics, shaping ideas in a number of genres, such as letters, poems, and narratives, and making choices in language and form.

Levels 1 and 2: Reading and Writing Processes

Exploring Language: Students should be able to explore choices made by writers, and identify and use the common conventions of writing and organisation of text that affect understanding.

Thinking Critically: Students should be able to identify and express meanings in written texts, drawing on personal background, knowledge, and experience.

English in the New Zealand Curriculum, pages 35-36

REFERENCE

Ministry of Education (1994). *English in the New Zealand Curriculum*. Wellington: Learning Media



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WHAT THE WORK SHOWS: Emilee shares an experience that is very significant to her. Her feelings and reflections are simply but very sincerely expressed.

Student's first draft

Deeper features

Voice

Demonstrates personal voice.

Shares personal thoughts and feelings with audience.

Ideas

Develops ideas that are personally significant, with some supporting comment.

Structure

Sequences ideas logically in time order.

Uses some phrases that indicate the passage of time.

Sentences

Uses simple and compound sentences.

Attempts to vary sentence beginnings.

When my Grandad died I falt emty and lost and I thort he was to young to die because it' s usually time to go when youre old. I was five then when I was at the funeral I was baying [banging] on the ground and crying at the same time, I was so sad and mad. When that was over I wanted to forget it but I couldn' t. Mum kept saying remember all the good time' s but I coundn' t. All I cound think of was the funeral. Then when I got older I started to think that things happen like that. I hope no one else will die again.

Surface features

Grammar

Uses most grammatical conventions correctly.

Spelling

Spells many content and high-frequency words correctly.

Approximations show some knowledge of common spelling patterns.

Punctuation

Uses capital letters, full stops, and commas. Uses apostrophes for contractions.



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When My Grandad Died

Student's final draft

When my ~~to~~ Grandad ^{died} died. I felt empty
 and lost and I thort he was to ^{young} ~~young~~
 to ^{die} ~~die~~ ^{usually} because its ^{usually} ~~usually~~ time to go. ^{which year old}
 I was five then when I was at the
^{funeral} ~~funeral~~ I was ^{laying} ~~laying~~ on the ground and
 crying at the same time. ^{I was so sad and mad} When that was over
 I ~~was~~ wanted to ~~fro~~ forget it but I ^{couldn't} ~~couldn't~~
~~my~~ Mum ^{kept} ~~kept~~ saying ^{remember} ~~reber~~ all the good
 times but I ~~couldn't~~. All I could think of
 was the ^{funeral} ~~funeral~~ then when I got older I ~~sta~~
 started to think ~~that~~ that things happen
 like that. I hope no one ^{ever} ~~ever~~ ~~will~~
^{die} ~~die~~ again.