



Poetic Writing: Personal Experience

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

The Big Wave

THE LEARNING CONTEXT

The teacher shared a personal experience of a scary moment and then asked the students to recall a situation in which they had felt scared. They sat in a circle and were invited to share their personal experience with the person on their left. Some volunteered to share their story with the whole group.

The teacher then asked them which language features would be useful to bring their story alive for the reader. The class identified:

- setting the mood
- hooking the reader in
- using similes
- describing feelings and body positions using present tense.

These became the success criteria for their writing.

They wrote for approximately 20 minutes and then shared some of their writing. The teacher selected one piece and, with the student's permission, displayed it as a model and discussion piece. This was reworked by the class, who discussed it against the success criteria.

The students then went on to rework their own pieces.

Teacher-student conversations

After the teacher had given specific written feedback on Rosemary's first draft, they discussed her work:

Teacher: Can you explain to me what your body was actually doing at this point [the beginning]?

Rosemary: I was kicking my feet.

Teacher: It might be a good idea to explain that to your reader, so we get a really accurate image of you.

Rosemary: I could put something about that in.

Teacher: Why do you think you cried at this point? How were you feeling?

Rosemary: I was scared, but it was really the salty water stinging my eyes that made me cry.

Teacher: These details are really helping build up that picture.

Rosemary reworked her piece independently and added more detail.

INTEGRATING READING AND WRITING

During close and shared reading sessions students can be encouraged to identify language features and literary devices that might enhance their own writing.

These feature and devices might include:

- ways of shaping and sequencing ideas
- a variety of sentence forms and beginnings
- specific nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs
- language features such as metaphors and personification.

Teachers could direct students to specific stories and extracts that are good models of effective descriptive writing, for example, from the *School Journal* or the *Journal of Young People's Writing*, and extracts from novels.

WHERE TO NEXT?

To move Rosemary towards the next learning step, the teacher might encourage her to focus on:

Structure

- organising ideas into paragraphs.

Language features

- using metaphors, similes, and dialogue if appropriate.

Vocabulary

- becoming discerning in choice of vocabulary, e.g., is "humungus" the best word?

This could be achieved through:

- modelling writing to specific points
- regular individual conferencing to develop specific areas in her own writing
- a close reading programme that identifies and explores writing features.

This could include texts published by other students.



Poetic Writing: Personal Experience

LEVEL 1i 1ii 1iii 2 3 4 5

The Big Wave

CURRICULUM LINKS

English in the New Zealand Curriculum

Level 1: Writing Functions

Poetic Writing: Students should write on a variety of topics, beginning to shape ideas.

Levels 1 and 2: Reading and Writing Processes

Exploring Language: Students should explore choices made by writers, and identify and use the common conventions of writing and organisation of text which 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

Te Whāriki

Pages 76–79

Strand 4, Communication

All of goals 2 and 3, and the associated learning outcomes for knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

REFERENCES

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

Ministry of Education (1996). *Te Whāriki: He Whāriki Mātauranga mō ngā Mokopuna o Aotearoa/Early Childhood Curriculum*. Wellington: Learning Media.



Poetic Writing: Personal Experience

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

The Big Wave

WHAT THE WORK SHOWS: Rosemary depicts a moment that was enormously important to her. She establishes and maintains the mood of this experience vividly, writing a series of short and almost staccato sentences, in the present tense, that build up a sense of urgency. She controls the flow well, from the initial rhetorical question to the satisfying ending.

Student's second draft

Deeper features

Voice

Personal voice apparent.

Ideas

Develops ideas that are personally significant, adding detail and comment.

Structure

Sequences ideas logically; beginning to shape ideas for effect.

Sentences

Uses a variety of structures; varies beginnings and length.

Vocabulary

Uses a range of verbs and specific nouns. Uses adverbs and occasional adjectives.

Language features

Appeals to the senses – "feel sick", "cough", "splutter", "bleeding", "sting".

The Big Wave

When will I make it back to the surface, I hope I won't die. I wish we past that humungis wave. Floating upside down makes me feel sick. I kick my feet and wriggle around. Somebody picks me up by my feet then they turn me the right way up and hold me around my waist. I cough and splutter letting out the salt water that went into my mouth (when I was upside down). Then I open my eyes. It is my mum that is holding me she is holding the kiyak too. I notice that the top of her nose is bleeding and her sunglasses are gone. Mum can't touch the bottom of the beach but she is kicking harder and harder. Another wave comes in. It is up to my neck, the water sprays into my eyes and they sting so badly that I cry. We finally reach the shore, I take off my life jacket and mum takes hers off to. Then I run to Dad. He gives me a big cuddle. I sit down on the warm sand with my legs lying out in front of me and my hands on my knees. I feel safe and relieved that I survived.

Surface features

Grammar

Uses most grammatical conventions correctly; consistent use of present tense, first person.

Spelling

High-frequency words correct; good understanding of all basic sounds and patterns in written English.

Punctuation

Punctuates independently: capitals, full stops, commas, and question marks.



Poetic Writing: Personal Experience

LEVEL 1i 1ii 1iii 2 3 4 5

The Big Wave

Student's second draft

THE BIG WAVE

When will I make it back to the surface I hope I won't die.

I wish we past that humungis wave, floating upside down makes me feel sick. I kick my feet and wriggle around. Somebody picks me up by my feet then they turn me the right way up and they hold me ~~hold me~~ around my waist. I cough and ^{splutter,} spit ~~out~~ the salt water that went into my mouth (while I was upside down) that is holding me she is holding

(continued over)



Poetic Writing: Personal Experience

LEVEL 1i 1ii 1iii 2 3 4 5

The Big Wave

Student's second draft

^{my}the RiyaR too. I notice that
the top of her nose is bleeding
and her sunglasses are gone.
Mum can't touch the bottom
of the beach but she is kicking
harder and harder. Another
wave comes in. It is up to my
neck, the water sprays into my eyes
and they sting so badly that
~~it makes me~~ cry. We finally reach
the shore, ^I take off my life jacket
and ~~my dad~~ mum takes hers off to.
^{then I run} He gives me a big cuddle.
to Dad
Then I sit down on the warm sand with
my legs lying out in front of me
and my hands on my knees. I feel
safe and relieved (that) I survived.