**UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DO PAMPA**
**CAMPUS BAGÉ**

**SHEILA MACHADO DA CRUZ**

**THE LEARNING BETWEEN THE LINES:**
**A STUDY ON WHY AND HOW TO TEACH POETRY IN ESL CLASS**

**Bagé**
**2015**

SHEILA MACHADO DA CRUZ

THE LEARNING BETWEEN THE LINES:
A STUDY ON WHY AND HOW TO TEACH POETRY IN ESL CLASS

Trabalho apresentado ao curso de graduação em Licenciatura em Letras: Português/Inglês e Respectivas Literaturas da Universidade Federal do Pampa, como requisito parcial da obtensão do título de Licenciado em Letras Português e Inglês.

Orietadora: Dra. Kátia Vieira Morais

Bagé,
2015

**SHEILA MACHADO DA CRUZ**

**THE LEARNING BETWEEN THE LINES: A STUDY ON WHY AND HOW TO TEACH POETRY IN ESL CLASS**

Trabalho apresentado ao curso de graduação em Licenciatura em Letras: Português/Inglês e Respectivas Literaturas da Universidade Federal do Pampa, como requisito parcial da obtensão do título de Licenciado em Letras Português e Inglês.

Orietadora: Dra. Kátia Vieira Morais

Data da defesa/aprovação: ___/____/_____.

Banca examinadora:

_____
Professora Doutora Kátia Vieira Morais
Orientadora
(UNIPAMPA)

_____
Professora Doutora Simone de Assumpção
(UNIPAMPA)

_____
Professor Doutor Rodrigo de Faveri
(UNIPAMPA)

"I could never have dreamt that there were such goings-on
in the world between the covers of books,
such sandstorms and ice blasts of words...
such staggering peace, such enormous laughter,
such and so many blinding bright lights...
splashing all over the pages
in a million bits and pieces
all of which were words, words, words,
and each of which were alive forever
in its own delight and glory and oddity and light."

THOMAS, Dylan; Notes on the Art of Poetry

**ABSTRACT**

This research in applied linguistics of additional language aims to demonstrate the benefits of the use of poetry in ESL classroom, in order to contribute to an education that seeks to promote personal growth. For that, a literary review is made as to conjugate theories concerning the teaching of literature and its relevance towards linguistic improvement in the second language. Here, we approximate the idea that literature is an inalienable right to every human person (CANDIDO) to the concepts behind strategies of language teaching through literature developed by Lazar (1993), Duff and Maley (1991), among others. Furthermore, we investigate language teaching through literature with the application of a teaching project regarding the reading of poetry. The results show that, as we presumed, ESL teaching has not been taking profit of literature as resource. The practice of the project proved that the teaching of poetry can be very effective in promoting motivation and reading autonomy. Therefore, in agreement with Widdowson (1988, apud HESS 1999), we encourage the use of poetry as an ESL pedagogical and educational resource.

Key words: literature, ESL teaching, reading, poetry

# RESUMO

Esta pesquisa em linguística aplicada em língua adicional tem como objetivo demonstrar os benefícios do uso de poesia em sala de aula de língua inglesa, contribuindo para um ensino que busca proporcionar o crescimento pessoal dos alunos. Para isso, faz-se um estudo bibliográfico a fim de conjugar as teorias a respeito do ensino de literatura e a relevância deste para o aprimoramento linguístico na segunda língua. Aqui, a ideia de que a literatura é um direito inalienável de todo ser humano (CANDIDO) é aproximada dos conceitos por trás das estratégias de ensino de língua através da literatura desenvolvidas por Lazar (1993), Duff e Maley (1991), entre outros. Além disso, investiga-se a aplicação do ensino de língua através da literatura por meio de um projeto de ensino de leitura de poesia. Os resultados revelam que a literatura está de fato muito desvinculada da sala de aula de inglês. Ademais, a aplicação do projeto de ensino comprovou a eficacia do ensino de poesia na motivação e promoção da autonomia leitora. Assim, de acordo com Widdowson (1988, apud HESS 1999) indica-se a inclusão do gênero poético tanto como ferramenta educacional quanto pedagógica, a fim de aprimorar o conhecimento linguístico, incentivar a autonomia leitora e fomentar o desenvolvimento pessoal.

Palavras-chave: literatura, ensino de inglês, poesia, leitura em inglês

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The present study was born from a combination of a belief and a desire. The belief concerns my own English learning trajectory throughout the years, which was a long process still in development, but which undoubtedly benefited enormously from the study of American literature and culture. As far as I can remember, the culture of English-speaking countries was a personal interest that preceded and then initiated my interest in the language itself. The result celebrates the value of one of my major learning activities: reading. I always believed that one of the biggest values of a foreign language[1] education is in the fact that it enables one the pleasure of being able to read the good native literature[2].

That belief certainly nourished the desire to bring poetry into the realms of English classrooms in a countryside town of Brazil. A country whose citizens strive to have basic human rights, and whose intellectuals are so rare they only come by in no usually more than tens per decade. One of those, the anthropologist and literary scholar Antonio Candido (2004) actually claims literature to be an inalienable right of human beings. Whereas the people of this Republic have guaranteed access to basic education, this education is each day farther deprived of Literature. The National Curriculum Parameters (2003), which is an official document that serves as guideline for all basic education schools in the country, has simply obliterated the subject of literature from its pages and thus from our classrooms.

The value of an education that contemplates literary texts is easily noticeable and has been extensively discussed by academics and freethinkers all around the world. Peruvian Nobel winner author Mario Vargas Llosa (2001), for instance, argues that a society that does not read is a society that contemplates imminent barbarism. For his turn, the poet Ezra Pound once wrote: "if a nation's literature declines, the nation atrophies and decays" (1991, p. 32). In agreement, Ray Bradbury states that in order to destroy a culture it is not necessary to burn books, but rather to just keep people from reading them. The greatness of Bradbury's saying is not on the menace herald, but on the fact that it exposes the duality of books. On one hand, they are a very powerful tool, capable of both preserving and destroying cultures. On the other hand, they are useless unless people open and read them. In the end, readers have even more

---

1    Foreign language: a language that is not the predominant language of communication in your home country.
2    Native literature: in the context of language studies what I mean by this term is 'literature originally written in the target language'.

power than authors.

Today, the practice of using literary texts in ESL classes constantly encounters harsh (and most times unfounded) criticism or, in cases, it is simply not even regarded as an option. Although it is possible to find some frail attempts, to find a good ESL textbook that contains literary texts is nearly impossible. Nonetheless, during a period between the late 1980s and early 1990s, a number of scholars have supported the idea. Books such as *"Literature and language teaching: a guide for teachers and trainers"* by Lazar, *"Literature"* by Duff and Maley or *"Teaching Literature"* by Showalter function as guides for those who intend to use literature as a tool to teach English. These books present a variety of strategies and methods to be used with literature in the ESL classroom.

Thus, firstly this project carefully analyzes theoretical background that concentrates on the teaching of language through literature. Secondly, I intend to discuss the assumptions of this belief into the ESL universe. Thirdly, I focus on the teaching of poetry and the advantages of this genre over other literary sources. Then, I present a teaching project of my own authorship concerning samples of modern American poetry. This project is applied to two groups of high-intermediate/advanced students of English enrolled in two different 2015/2 classes of English at Universidade Federal do Pampa. Finally, in the last sections I discuss, as thoroughly as I can, if and to which extent does my practice favor any linguistic or emotional improvements for the participants

## 2. RESEARCH DESCRIPTION

### 2.1. Theme

The reading of poetry in ESL classroom and the teaching of English.

### 2.2. General objectives

1. Critically rethink how and why use literary texts in ESL classrooms;

2. Investigate how is poetry a good choice for ESL teaching.

## 2.3. Specific objectives

1. Verify how teaching poetry through collaborative close reading can inspire reading autonomy.

## 3. LITERARY REVIEW

First of all, I need to reinforce some aspects raised in the introduction of this work. Literature is understood here as a means for humanization, as Candido (2004) argues, which is obviously an element of vital importance to any human society at any time in History. Even though this humanization has its most valuable effects on our life in community, it is nothing but a work on (and many times of) the individual. As the English literary critic Harold Bloom says "we should read to strengthen the self" (2000, p. 89). This strengthening has many components, amongst whose the most objective have been mentioned and studied by neurologists; so much so that it has become common sense that reading provides us with great developments in memory capacity, verbal expression, and concentration skills.

In this literature review I present brief definitions of what literature is and what poetry is, furthermore I discuss how literature is usually regarded in ESL classes and what ideas might support its use. Later, in the final section of this review I propose an explanation on why poetry is a great material for ESL classes.

## 3.1 What is literature?

It is traditionally agreed that literature comes in three forms: Poetry, Prose, and Drama.

It is commonly described as any kind of writing 'with imaginative qualities'. However, sometimes, as Eagleton (2003) explains it is defined merely by the use of language in 'peculiar ways'. Even though it can be very informative, I believe another defining feature of Literature is that its purpose is never merely to inform, but rather to communicate. This communication might have many objectives, such as to educate, to remind, to inspire, to provoke some kind of reaction be it emotional or intellectual (or both at the same time).

In this sense, considering that communication is built when two bodies develop or address something in common, we might expect that the source, the ignition can be either the body who says those things (the text) or the body who reads it (the reader). As Eagleton (2003) puts it: "*literature* may be at least as much a question of what people do to writing as of what writing does to them" (p. 6). Thus, literature is not always a triumph of the genius of a writer or a poet, but many times, it can be born out of our capacity, as readers, for amusement or rather from an interpretation that cannot be random and can therefore reoccur in different bodies, in different periods and in different cultures.

Parkinson and Thomas (2000) argue that literature is commonly considered as any kind of writing that performs certain social or cultural functions: "in the West it has traditionally been expected to be both pleasurable and thought-provoking, to fulfill both aesthetic and moral functions" (p. 24). In consonance, poet Ezra Pound (1991) tells us that writers have a "definite social function exactly proportioned to their ability as writers" (p. 43). Thus, once writers have a social function to perform, it is easy to agree that readers are meant to complete this function by reading and spreading the work of writers.

**3.2 What is poetry?**

According to the Mexican poet and essayist Octavio Paz (1982) "poetry is nothing else but time, it is perpetually creative rhythm" (p. 31, translation mine[3]). For Paz, many things can be poetic (*landscape, people and facts*), but those things are poetic in a moment and then it is gone, there is one perfect container for poetry, which is the poem. The poem is not just a literary form but rather a place where men meets poetry. The author also notes that poetry is

---

3   "a poesia não é nada senão tempo, ritmo perpetuamente criador" (PAZ, 1982, p. 31).

part of the human experience, once there can be no poetry without society and no society without poetry (p. 310). They are complementary, "sometimes the two terms [poetry and society] aspire to break apart. They cannot"[4] (PAZ, 1982, p. 310, translation mine).

The very first poem that I will be using in my project, *Introduction to Poetry* by Billy Collins, talks about the ways we can read poems, study them and experiment with them as if they were lab mice. The speaker contrasts this with the usual expectations his students have, but also most amateur readers of poetry; they expect poetry to spill out some form of confession. It is a common misconception that all poems should be confessional. This misconception probably derives from the fact that poetry frequently addresses many of our most fragile concerns. Better yet, in the words of Emily Warn:

> Poetry binds solitudes. It enacts a central human paradox: we exist as singular selves, yet can only know them through our relations. A poem creates a presence that is so physically, emotionally, and intellectually charged that we encounter ourselves in our response to it. The encounter, which occurs in language, preserves and enlarges our solitude and points out our connections (WARN, 2006)

T. S. Eliot, in his essay *The social function of poetry* calls our attention to the fact that it is easy enough to think in a second language, but anytime we express a feeling in a language different than our mother tongue, this feeling will also be different. According to Eliot (1991) a well-learned second language gives us a supplementary personality. Thus, he says that one of the main reasons why we should not learn a second language is because many of us have no real intention of becoming a different person.

When asked to answer if poetry really has a social function, the poet and professor Major Jackson (2006) says that reading poetry is a ritual which creates empathy and 'widens our humanity'. However, poetry only does so because of how it is composed, or yet because of the purpose of its very existence. Pound (1991) tells us "good writers are those who keep language efficient" (p. 32) and Eliot (1991) believes that "the duty of the poet is only indirectly to the people: his direct duty is to his language, first to preserve, and second to extend and improve" (p. 4). Therefore, as we can see many believe that writers perform an important social function, that idea is closely related to the ones expressed in the introduction of this work, the right to literature (CANDIDO) and the social impending doom caused by lack of reading.

---

4    "As vezes os dois termos aspiram a se separar. Não podem" (PAZ, 1982, p. 310).

## 3.3. How the use of literature in ESL is usually regarded?

Formal study of foreign languages are a rather recent thing in our History. We own much to our ancestors' concerns with the survival of ancient culture from Greek and most notably Latin civilizations. According to Richards and Rogers (2001), the instruction on other modern languages initially happened in the exact same way Latin and Greek were studied. That was the traditional Grammar-Translation Method, which was the very only formal manner of instruction into a different language for a long time and even today it is still applied by many language teachers around the world.

The Grammar-Translation Method works through explicit grammar explanation followed by practice with translation of generally renowned texts. Thus, we may say it is a method that praises text and the ability of reading above any other form and skills in which language is manifested. Whereas some methods that followed were clearly deriving from the Grammar-Translation tradition and accordingly valued the reading ability, other developments in language teaching tried to focus on speaking and listening skills. These new methods undeniably served to great advancements in language teaching and learning throughout the last century. However, while benefiting from a certain detachment from grammar rules and an appreciation of communication abilities, these structural approaches discredited literature as tool for understanding that literature had no communicative function (LLACH).

In addition, these modern approaches indirectly generated a terrible myth around reading activities. Unfortunately, it is wide the number of teachers and students of English that consider reading as a passive and boring activity. Adler and Doren (1972) explain this phenomenon:

> No one doubts that writing and speaking are active undertakings, in which the writer or speaker is clearly doing something. Many people seem to think, however, that reading and listening are entirely passive. They think of reading and listening as *receiving* communication from someone who is actively *giving* it. So far they are right, but then they make the error of supposing that receiving communication is like receiving a blow, or a legacy, or a judgement from the court. (ADLER; DOREN, 1972, p. 14)

The authors go on to say that in fact all reading is active and "reading is better or worse according as it is more or less active. And one reader is better than another in proportion as he is capable of a greater range of activity in reading" (p. 14). Thus, with this work, I pursue to diminish this stigma around reading; through my teaching project, I also intend to demonstrate to the participants how close reading is an active and fruitful exercise.

## 3.4. Why should literature be used in ESL classroom

A primal reason why we should use literature in ESL classroom is that literature is composed of a vastness of distinguishing qualities. Traditional ESL text sources tend to be more informative than speculative, which is a big loss in my point of view. Maley and Duff (1990) point out three kinds of reasons for using literary text in class: linguistic, methodological, and motivational. The first is justified by the authors with the fact that "literary texts offer genuine samples of a very wide range of styles, registers, and text-types at many levels of difficulty" (p. 6). As for the second kind, they explain that since literature is *in its very essence open to multiple interpretation* then the gap between one student's interpretation and the other is likely to provide genuine interaction. The last kind is supported by the idea that literature is motivational because it is unlike "many other forms of language teaching inputs, which frequently trivialize experience in the service of pedagogy" (p. 6).

On this same subject matter, Parkinson and Reid Thomas (2000) say that it is possible for a student of English to read E. E. Cummings (a poet extremely successful with lexical shenanigans and general 'mistreatment' of grammar) without ruining their own grammar. They also state "literature, despite or even because of its strange language, can sometimes be preferable to apparently more suitable text types." (p. 46). Indeed, it is not hard to imagine that once a student does 'the work' of interpreting a text, with the teacher's help or not, the pleasure and the proud they are likely to feel is definitely a great motivator factor. That is also a consequence of what many other scholars characterize as the 'value of using authentic material', it is largely recognized that this sort of material, when well used, helps improve the learner's self-esteem.

Moreover, because literature is *inherently human* (SAGE, 1987), then the use of

literary texts is a wonderful tool to make students engage personally in class while still make them think, and perhaps this thinking process has many benefits to offer them. As McRae declares:

> the primary function of ideational or representational materials is to expand these circumscribed contexts and give as wide a frame of linguistic reference as possible to the basic utterance and the word it employs. The result is that, at whatever level the student studies English… and for whatever purpose …he or she has to think about the content of what is being said, heard, read or written, and consequently is more aware of the many forces at play in the producing and receiving of any communicative act. The more it is developed, the more this awareness leads to an awareness of language as such; all of which is, I will argue, a fundamental part of the cognitive processes involved in the growth of linguistic fluency. (MCRAE, apud GOTTSCHALK, 2003, p. 7)

This process of thinking in the target language is substantially worthy, especially because when it happens the first and the second language learning processes are approximated (DA SILVA, 2001).

Still concerning the motivational powers of literature in ESL education Brown (2000), in a chapter called *Teaching Reading,* argues that "culture plays an active role in motivating and rewarding people for literacy" (p. 301). Meanwhile, Harry Hess (1999) in his thesis *Poetry as an intercultural peace bridge for ESL* highlights Rigg and Allen (1989 apud HESS, 1999), who for their turn defend that "literacy is part of language development. Writing, speaking, listening, and reading all nourish one another; we don't wait for mastery of one before encouraging development of the other three" (p. 38). Additionally, while learning reading strategies students will gain reading autonomy, which according to the theory is a powerful motivator (Bamford and Day, 1998 apud BROWN, 2000).

## 3.5 The case for poetry

A number of reasons draw me to believe that poetry makes an excellent material for ESL classes. Firstly, it is a condensed and yet rich form of language. Therefore, because of its generally short extension on the pages, it is a material easy to hand out and, most importantly, students are not discouraged by the first impression. Nonetheless, the smallness in size has no saying to its content, for good poetry is infinite. For that reason, Lazar (1993) says that

because literary texts have multiple layers of meaning, especially poems, they demand that the reader/learner make inferences, consequently that will improve their interpretation skills. The way towards a better whole understanding of a poem requires us to go from the denotative meaning of each word to their possible connotative meanings. That is a simple work and it provides considerable opportunities for vocabulary attainment, as well as practice on that general interpretation/inference making ability.

What Eagleton (2003) says about literature is even truer about poetry: "[it] transforms and intensifies ordinary language, deviates systematically from everyday speech" (p. 2). That is what Pound (1991) meant when he said that a good writer is one that keeps language efficient, accurate and clear. Many would argue that divergence from every day speech is precisely a reason to keep literature away from ESL classroom. But in fact, this deviance in syntax or lexicon provides unique opportunity for genuine practice of the norms of the target language (KATHIB, REZAEI AND DERAHKSHAN, 2011) and are more likely to add to the students general proficiency (PARKINSON AND REID THOMAS, 2000). Parkinson and Reid Thomas also state that because native speakers and good non-native learners tend to plan utterances in multi-word units; while poets subvert the expectations combining words in unusual words (p. 65), then the students subjected to a class with poetry will be compelled to think the language.

Furthermore, the linguistic analysis of a piece of work encourages subjective reactions, and both instances should be complementary (PARKINSON AND REID THOMAS, 2000). As categorized by Cluysenaar (1976 apud PARKINSON AND REID THOMAS, 2000) "the work of verbal art thus has a structure that is neither objective nor subjective, but intersubjective" (p. 76). This means that every time we interpret a text we act on ourselves as we act on the text, and in return the text acts on us. Hence, when teachers use literature as a tool they are favoring this intersubjectivity; and thus creating perfect ground for personal response, which is of major importance when dealing both with literature and learning.

Showalter (2003) in a chapter called *Teaching Poetry* brings the poet and professor Billy Collins to the discussion; the latter claims that reading a poem in fact replicates the activities of thinking and learning. According to Collins (apud SHOWALTER, 2003, p.VER) when we read a poem, it requires that we let go of some of our fixed notions and make room for new perspectives. For the poet, this is exactly the same path taken by the learning

processes. Moreover, Sage (1987) paraphrasing Charlesworth tells us that most learning is metaphorical, thus poetry is especially helpful an educational tool. We can also relate that to what Widdowson (1988 apud HESS 1999) says about how "poetry can be seen as serving both a pedagogical and educational purpose in teaching" (p. 47).

Meanwhile, professor Candido (1996) advises us that in order to understand a poem one must decompose it and compose it again. The first step towards a fully interpretation of a poem is the commentary. The commentary is very general, it requires a research on the author, period and influences; it describes the poem according to the form, meter and rhyme scheme. Then, we go into the analysis, where we look for patterns (semantic, morphological, syntactic), we study the figures of speech, and most importantly the metaphors. At this point, it is fundamental that we connect the dots and see how the little things contribute to the general meaning of the poem. Candido warns us that this is a continuous movement between the specifics and general, the micro and macro. In that ultimate phase of the interpretation, we engage into constant paraphrases of the text. Thus, we can see how this is a valuable exercise for ESL learners, since it blends cognition into a personal, intersubjective, rewarding reading experience.

Poetry also offers valuable awareness of the oral qualities of language and genuine oral practice. Lazar (1993) dedicates a chapter of her book to poetry, and in one section she demonstrates an activity that aims to prove how helpful poetry is in terms of developing oral skills. Showalter (2003) presents recitation as technique that teacher can use, and which puts the language classroom in dialogue with music classroom, once "the reader of a poem is not an actor but a musical instrument" (p. 70). Because of its musical qualities poetry is memorable, and that can only improve learning achievements.

## 4. METHODOLOGY

The following project is applied to two groups of high-intermediate English students of two slightly different language courses at Unipampa, campus Bagé. The project is composed

of five lessons of one hour to one hour and a half each. On the first class, the participants fill in a questionnaire (attachment 1) concerning their relation with reading in the target language. Then, a week after the end of the lessons, another questionnaire (attachment 2) to inquire on their opinions, on if and how did my project help them with the reading of poetry.

The selection of poems (part 4.3 of this methodology), as well as my approach to teaching them in class, draws great inspiration from an online course called ModPo (Modern and Contemporary American Poetry) taught by professor Al Filreis from the University of Pennsylvania. ModPo is a ten week course, where Al Filreis and his students make close readings of representative poems of different movements in American Modern and Contemporary Poetry.

When I watched the very beginning of the course back in 2013, the first videos presented the poetry of Emily Dickinson, I knew something was changing for me, because for the first time in my life I saw people doing something with poetry that was very simple, and which achieved a wonderful and complex result. I saw the plurality of individuals reading as group and stating their own minds about the texts; and the amazing craft of the teacher, asking the right questions, respecting and taking advantage of their individuality, as well as putting together the inferences, the interpretations and the remarks of his students. After that revelation, I decided to extend a little of that knowledge to my classmates, mainly because poetry is so distant from our daily lives – even us being academics of languages.

This methodology is divided into four parts, the first describes the groups; the second part explains about the questionnaires; the third presents the teaching project; and finally the last part, which comments on another tool of this research that is the reflexive journal.

## 4.1. The groups

Both groups are composed of students enrolled at courses of the area of Languages at Unipampa campus Bagé. Group A pioneers a new course called Additional Languages, which aims to form teachers of both English and Spanish. Group B belongs to an extinguished curriculum that forms teachers of Portuguese, English and Literature. Even though, the

groups' description is presented separately, both will receive the same classes and the same questionnaires. Likewise, the questionnaires will be analyzed together as a whole.

Group A has classes during daytime; they are 11 students, who are in the sixth semester. In their curriculum, there are six literature disciplines in total and only two of them are in English, when it comes to the English language they have completed a total of 435 hours of disciplines. Group B also counts with 11 students, who have their classes in the evening; in their curriculum, there are a total of six literature disciplines in Portuguese and, in the final year, they have two semesters of literature in English. They are in the 8th semester and they have concluded a total of 525 hours of English disciplines.

## 4.2 The questionnaires

Both questionnaires are in Portuguese and are composed mostly of multiple-choice questions. Both must be answered anonymously. Each of them fits within a page and is meant to be answered in no more than 20 minutes. The first questionnaire (attachment 1) investigates the students' background, meaning: how much they read in English; if they read literary texts and with what frequency; whether in their experience as students their teachers worked with literary texts or not; and finally, how much in the context of learning do they value reading activities in general. The second questionnaire (attachment 2) allows me to estimate in which extent does my practice favor any changes in the participant's general understanding of reading activities with literary texts. I am also interested to know if they, as future teachers of English, would be willing to engage in the use of poetry as a pedagogical source.

## 4.3 The teaching project

The selection of poems follows a few principles. They are all short poems, which fit within a page or less. They are from well-acclaimed poets, who are representative of their historical and artistic moment, but who set aside from the mere tradition and, claiming their own voices, established themselves as influence to the following generations. Neither poem

presents excessive difficulty; some have a more complex vocabulary, but in fact, the search for the meaning of words actually makes it a lot easier to reach for abstraction.

Even though it is a valuable strategy, I decided not to concentrate on poetic movements and styles of American Modernism, instead I favored to work with each poem by itself without much discussion on what it could mean in terms of historicity. I could have worked with one poet alone, but it could happen that some students might dislike that, find it too tedious and be disappointed. Thus, I tried to vary poets and themes. I begin with poems that are very meta-poetic, that is to say poems that aim to speak about poetry, in order to call their attention to the process of writing/reading. I intend to start off with cognition since most of them are not readers of poetry and might find it nearly impossible to place themselves in the poetic mode. In the fourth class, the poems selected are less centered on meta-commentary (even though one of the poems does contain metalanguage) and more focused on themes more obviously related to feelings, and therefore popularly associated with literature/poetry. With these last classes I aim to address more common expectations about poetry, in order to maybe provide a satisfying experience to those who already read a little poetry or have general ideas about it.

*Title:* the learning between the lines

*Number of classes:* 5

*Total of hours:* 6 – 9 hours

*Objectives:* 1. Create a teaching project regarding modern American poetry; 2. Provide a teaching project which paves the ground for reading autonomy;

*The sequence:*

*Lesson 1: how to read poetry*

In this first lesson, the teacher provides brief definitions to important poetic terms such as imagery, speaker, and tone. Then, we read "Introduction to poetry" by Billy Collins; we find the speaker, the tone, and the imagery, then discuss how that poem helps us read other poems.

I selected this poem specifically because it is already in itself a good 'introduction to poetry' as the title says. It presents a very simple vocabulary and easily identifiable tone (professorial) and speaker (a teacher); it is composed of clear imagery and it teaches the important lessons that poetry is not always confessional and that it is more important to

experiment with a poem than to simply extract meaning from it.

*Lesson 2: a bit of Dickinson*

We read poem number 466 - "I dwell in Possibility" and 126 - "The brain is wider than the Sky" to see how Emily Dickinson understands the world of poetry as well as her own 'composition'; meaning: the brain as her main tool of practice as well as her key to understand what is her role as poet.

These poems are the most difficult ones in the sequence, so in this class I apply the strategy of collaborative close reading, which I learned from the ModPo course. Each couple of students has to search one or two terms on the dictionary (there are 11 words to be searched so it depends on how many people are there in class). After they search, we begin reading; we stop at every given word to listen for the definition and to infer on what that could mean on the poem.

*Lesson 3: how and why do you poet?*

We read Frank O'Hara's "Why I am not a painter" and reflect on the important relations between the Visual Arts and poetry.

O'Hara's poetry is easy to identify with, mainly because of his informal approach to writing, what he called "I do this, I do that" mode. His poems are very alive in the pages, mostly because of the use of the present and present continuous tense, but also due to insertion of dialogues, and other elements of prose or everyday discourse. I selected "Why I am not a painter" for it contains many examples of his aesthetics, while it also provides a peek at his creative process. It might be interesting for the students to see a poem that even though it looks spontaneous in itself, it discusses the complexities and ironies of artistic creation.

*Lesson 4: E. E. Cummings*

I chose to work with E. E. Cummings because he has many 'particularities' that students might find attractive. However, to select the poems was a little difficult since many of his poems are *very* confusing. I selected "since feeling is first" because of all E. E. Cummings, this is one of his most 'readable' poems, also because it brings up a subject that everyone agrees that poetry talks about, which is love. Although it verses on a subject so common, it does so in a unique manner. There is interesting imagery in the poem and smart metalanguage wordplay. Furthermore, the poem also touches the subject of death, which I wanted to approach before my final class. Then, we read "Buffalo Bill's defunct", it is a concrete poem,

and that characteristics the participants might recognize easily since the concrete movement was very strong in Brazilian poetry. In addition, the poem talks about death in a relatable and not very gloomy manner.

*Lesson 5: Emily Dickinson's closing statement*

We discuss about death through the poem of number 596 - "I heard a Fly buzz – when I died –". It is one of Dickinson's most famous poems and it contains one of her most interesting characteristics, the speaker that talks from the grave. Even though the vocabulary is a little difficult and the sentences not very clear, the close reading must encounter greater output exactly due to those difficulties.

By the end of each class, they were invited to answer one or two questions, sometimes about the poem, sometimes about the collaborative close reading strategy. These questions are a pedagogical strategy to have the less talkative or shyer students to have a moment where they can participate or show that they do think about the subjects raised by the poem or by the class itself. However, because I have other resources where they express their opinions (the last questionnaire), and where I have data to show how much they participated and comprehended each class (the journal), I decide not use these answers a research tool.

## 4.4 Reflexive journal

After each class, I take notes and later expand those notes on how I felt about the class, on how the students reacted, and my practice in general. These entries are very personal and informal, but they help me clarify ideas, undo thoughtless assumptions and, more importantly, they allow me to intensify my understanding regarding the issues surrounding the teaching of poetry in English.

## 5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In order to investigate the how-to use poetry in ESL classroom and the reasons why that is a good idea or not, I triangulated this research into 1. a bibliographical study (the literary review, section 3 of this paper); 2. the application of a teaching project and its annotation in the form of a diary; and 3. the questionnaires. The complete results of the multiple choice questions of both questionnaires were calculated, and can be checked in the attachment number 4. In this section, I will be presenting only the most significant of those results, focusing on their experience as students rather than their still recent, and for some even non-existent, experience as teachers. The first questionnaire has 22 answers, and these are the most interesting outcomes:

Question 1 "in your experience as students of English, which activities were more frequently developed in class? (number each of them from 0 to 10)". The average tells us that they believe reading was slightly more practiced than other abilities. Here is the average:

Table 1 - Average frequency of activities for each ability

| Ability | Average |
|---|---|
| Reading | 7,35 |
| Writing | 6,85 |
| Speaking | 5,7 |
| Listening | 6,7 |

Source: questionnaire 1

Whereas in item 4 ("In your experience as a student of English did the teacher or professor ever worked with or required that you read any literary texts for class?"), 68,2% claim that in their experience as students of English their teachers/professors did bring literary texts to class. However, most of them pointed out that it was a rare event. Two students, though, commented on this answer saying that in the University the reading of literary texts happened often or with some frequency. It is not impossible that this response is due to a confusion between literary texts and non-literary texts (like personal essays, for instance), or yet between Anglophone literature classes at Unipampa with regular English language courses. Otherwise, other classmates would declare something similar, once most of them have virtually taken the same classes with the same professors.

We can combine these information from question 4 to some of their replies on the last

and optional written question, number 9 ("Use the back of the sheet to talk about a remarkable experience you had reading a literary text in English"). The big majority said they always encountered great difficulty reading literature in English. Nonetheless, they all admitted that their efforts were, after all, beneficial. Still, what mostly calls attention about their writing to this question is that a big amount of them reported that they were, for the first time, having a good experience reading a book in English, while taking their first steps into Anglophone Literature.

Question 5 proves that most of them regard reading activities as very important, once 91% of them marked the option "very important" and only 9% answered "more or less important". As students of language courses, it is only essential that they see the value of reading, and are accordingly prepared to foster that same acknowledgment on their own students one day. Nevertheless, a disagreement between their beliefs and their practices can be noticed with this first Questionnaire. For when it comes to their reading habits, question 6 ("How frequently do you read any kind of text in English?") encountered the following result: 18% said "rarely", 22,7% said "from 5 to 6 days per week", 27,2% marked "everyday" and 31,8% marked "only sometimes". Question 7 asked if they ever read any books in English, 5 of the 22 students reported that they never read any books in English and of the 17 who said they read at least one book in English, all of them reported the total number of books read to be below 10.

An analysis of the first questionnaire shows that indeed literature is not a part of the English learning process of the participants. Even though 68,2% said that at some point in their English classroom history the teacher or professor worked with literary texts, none of them accounted for a classroom environment where literature had any stable role. On the contrary, most students said it was a rather rare resource. In addition, questions 6 and 7 allows us to perceive the frequency they read in English. The answers, beyond any doubt, tell us that they are not in the habit of reading in the language. If we relate that information to the idea that all reading is active (ADLER AND DOREN) and offers special opportunity to practice thinking in the target language (McRae apud GOTTSCHALK, 2003, p. 7), then these students are not taking advantage of their own powers as readers.

Nonetheless, the first questionnaire also demonstrates that they do see the value of literary texts in second language instruction; some even stated that the study of a language is

very dull without literature. This response can be associated with two things; one is that they value literature as a cultural treasure, and therefore as put by Brown (2000) it has an active role in motivating, and rewarding them for their capacity and will of reading those texts. The second is that they find it motivating because of how it instigates their intersubjectivity (PARKINSON AND REID THOMAS).

Combining the aforementioned results we have students who, on one hand, see the value of reading in the second language, but on the other hand are not reading that much. I trust it is essential to nurture the habit of reading in the second language. There is so much learning to be achieved through literature. Because as Bloom (2000) advises us, "we must read to strengthen the self" (p. 89), literature offers us linguistic, moral and emotional development opportunities. In order to empower students with reading autonomy two things are necessary, one would be to teach reading strategies. Another, and probably more important, is to put them in constant contact with various literary texts and genres, because as Parkinson and Reid Thomas (2000) say, literature must promote aesthetic pleasure. My claim is that they must be guaranteed their right to literature (CANDIDO), so they might find their reading personalities and enjoy and learn and develop.

The second questionnaire was applied a week after the end of the 5 lessons. Only 20 of the 22 participants were in class and answered it. Nonetheless, the general results are doubtlessly positive. For example, look at the comparison of question number 3 (which was in the first questionnaire as well):

Table 2 - Question 3 "What do you think of reading activities in class?"

| QUESTIONNAIRE 1 (22 responses) | QUESTIONNAIRE 2 (20 responses) |
|---|---|
| **21** important | **19** important |
| **12** interesting | **11** interesting |
| **5** motivating | **6** motivating |
| **2** very educational | **4** very educational |
| **7** cool | **8** cool |
| **1** not very didactic | **0** not very didactic |
| **1** demotivating | **0** demotivating |
| **1** I can read at home, why read in class? | **0** I can read at home, why read in class? |

Source: questionnaires 1 and 2

The same percentage was kept in "important" and in "interesting" while all the other positive statements were improved, and all the negative terms were turned to zero. The best surprise is that one specific participant that marked "demotivating" in Q1, completely changed their mind and marked "important", "interesting", "very educational" and "cool". So, we can confirm how important a good experience is in transforming a negative belief into a positive one. Besides, this good experience was with poetry and it rearranged their point of view towards reading activities in general.

Moreover, question number 2 "how much did this project help you with reading of poetry in English?", 70% said it helped a lot, 20% said it helped reasonably, and only 10% said it help little. Further, through question number 6, 70% praised the methodology as what they most appreciated about the project, 55% also stated that they liked the project because they were able to read in English texts that seemed impossible. According to the answers to question 8, where they were asked to comment on certain aspects of the project, the thing that mostly singles out from their answers is precisely their compliments to the methodology of collaborative close reading. As you can see from these excerpts translated by me: "with a dictionary and good-will I can go miles"; "the methodology taught me to go beyond the first meaning a word"; and "the dynamic enabled that each one of us participated in class".

I trust that most of these good results are circumstances of my approach to reading those poems with them in class. The methodology, as well as my will to ask questions in order to help them dissect each text, but also me sometimes abandoning that and just plainly giving them my interpretation (as you can see in the journal, many times they were not inclined to talk), through all of that I think they perceived that the work is valuable. The theory might help me understand this phenomenon, I believe they were convinced that the more active the reading is, the more results they will get (in terms of both interpretation and vocabulary acquirement). Thus, it is confirmed what Adler and Doren (1972) say about how very active the reading activities are indeed; and what this research has taught me is that teachers can do them even more active using the right approaches.

During my practice in class, the students behaved irregularly, sometimes participating quite actively, especially group B – the evening course, sometimes not as much. The source for the analysis of these aspects is the reflexive journal (attachment 3). As the journal shows, the majority of students were not very engaged in the oral discussions, with a few exceptions

especially in the evening course, where two, sometimes three students were always very participative, but overall the whole group behaved more comfortably with my practice. However, in both groups there were people who asserted that the collaborative close reading favored everyone's participation in class. Since it is a concise genre, poetry can be analyzed more thoroughly, and within the time of class, something you cannot do as well with longer texts. Hence, I believe close reading works best with poetry (than with other literary genres), especially in the case of ESL students who do not read in the language that much. These ideas agrees with what Widdownson (1988 apud HESS 1999) stated concerning the double function of poetry, educational and pedagogical, in the language classroom.

Question number 7 inquired "in which aspects do you believe this project contributed in your learning of English?". They could choose more than one alternative and the percentages look very good (you can see in the table below). Alternative 1, vocabulary, shows that a lot of them believe they learned new words, and my hypothesis is that it was the collaborative close reading that enhanced their vocabulary assimilation. The option number 3 relates to cultural enrichment, deeply connected to all the theories involving language teaching through literature (LAZAR; MALEY AND DUFF; SAGE; and others). Alternatives 2 and 4 speak for the same thing that is, again, the methodology, and which their written statements in question number 8 proves it was a new approach to them (one person declared "I have never before worked like this with a text"). So, through my practice they learned that there is a very simple strategy called close reading and which they can do by themselves, consequently as Bumford and Day (1998 apud BROWN, 2000) refer to the motivational powers of literature, then those 70% of students are probably feeling more motivated to read and learn in English.

Table 3 – Question 7

| 1. | 75% | Vocabulary |
|---|---|---|
| 2. | 70% | Reading Strategy |
| 3. | 45% | I've met knew authors of English language |
| 4. | 20% | Now I feel more prepared to read challenging texts |

Source: questionnaire 2

The greatest surprise perhaps is that in both groups the lesson that worked the best was the one in which we read the poem that I consider to be most difficult one of the entire sequence, Emily Dickinson's 466, in the second lesson. When I say 'it worked the best' what I mean is that more people participated more actively in the class, they showed the biggest enthusiasm while close reading the text and a few of them actually related they felt very

satisfied with our reading (attachment 3). My theory is that it worked so well because when an ESL student in high intermediate, maybe even advanced, level reads "I dwell in Possibility", they hardly understand anything. "I ----- in Possibility" - they do not know dwell, "a fairer house than Prose", fairer is not a word they would be likely to use even though they might know 'fair'; but also, why is the poet talking about Prose? "More numerous of Windows", that is a very strange construction which they would never see unless in poems, when you teach this poem you translate it to everyday language "lots of windows", and still what are windows for anyways? In ordinary contexts we are not required to think about windows, but in a poem, especially an Emily Dickinson poem, we need to think everything!

As you can see in my journal entries (attachment 3), both groups were extremely lost after the first reading of the poem. My theory is that because in this poem the vocabulary, the structure and the metaphors are very unusual to them, then they feel they have to work to get to a very first understanding of the text. Other, easier poems, with everyday language and more clear metaphors, have no distance between the first reading the first understanding, the timing between reading and getting some meaning is zero. In Emily Dickinson, that time is the time you take searching for words in the dictionary or on the internet, reorganizing sentences, and, more importantly, revealing the metaphors. If they understand a text from the start, they feel less motivated to go on and learn from it, but if they are left devoid of any meaning, then they will more easily engage into an active reading.

The aforementioned relates closely to Adler and Doren when they say, "reading is better or worse according as it is more or less active" (p. 14). Because when the text required, the students engaged more naturally in the active reading and that generated the best results from their perspectives (questionnaire 2, question 8) and from the teacher's point of view (reflexive journal). This was one of the most interesting and exciting findings I had with my practice. The difficulty of a poem can be directly proportional to the students' involvement with active reading. Further, another relevant element of my practice is that it took on a very disregarded genre on our formation, a genre to which most participants have almost none experience and do not usually consider it for their practices with English. I sought to provide a positive experience in order to inspire them to rethink the genre, and I ended up adding to their ideas about reading in general. Still, I believe a lot more can and should be done in terms of spreading the habit of reading poetry.

# 6. CONCLUSIONS

I began this project with an ideal in mind, an ideal of sharing poetry and the wondrous experiences of reading poetry with my classmates. That ideal met a considerable amount of supporting theory, and that only motivated me more. Through my teaching project, I have sought to provide meaningful contact with poetry, a genre extremely disregarded in our formation.

While critics and writers such as Bloom, Eagleton, Candido, Pound and Eliot only naturally defend passionately the habit of reading and the teaching of literature, we know that in our society these principles are not highly considered. In the universe of ESL, even though literature has not been a popular resource or tool, it is possible to encounter relevant theory and guidelines concerning the use of literature in English instruction. My research found support in the works of Parkinson and Reid Thomas, Lazar, Duff and Maley, among others. Nonetheless, many others wrote in defense of literature in ESL education.

Nevertheless, certainly my biggest influence and inspiration came from the ModPo course by professor Al Filres. Through their videos, I learned the strategy of collaborative close reading, and I learned so much more about poetry and American Modern Poetry. Then, with my practice, I learned yet a lot more. Overall, this research has showed that it is not only viable to use poetry in ESL classrooms, but that it is a wonderful resource, it instigates the development of inference making ability (LAZAR); the active reading of literary texts promotes motivation, and the close reading enhances the opportunities of vocabulary achievement.

The analysis of the first questionnaire demonstrated that indeed literature is not part of ESL instruction yet. It also showed that, even though the participants see how valuable literature is for language development, they are not actual readers of literary texts in the language. This outcome is highly worrying, specially because the participants of this research are future teachers of English. However, the answers to the second questionnaire leave a good

impression in terms of what those future teachers thought about our work with the poetic genre, and about their own assumptions towards the genre as an ESL tool.

If I ever have the opportunity to work with a teaching project like this again, I would make sure to prevent some assumptions that these participants had. Some of them were left with an impression that poetry can only be used with advanced levels, which is probably a consequence of my choices. Once I decided to focus more on their English learning, instead of on their formation as teachers. In fact, poetry can be used with any level, even with children, one just needs to make a careful, attentive selection of poems and activities.

Furthermore, this research seeks to inspire not only the use of poetry in ESL classes, but also other researches in this area of applied linguistics. Other approaches to this same subject could be focused on specifics, like for instance how poetry can be a better choice than prose for vocabulary achievement. Or yet, a study on the benefits of poetry to develop oral skills. Another possibility, is to work with different English levels. Certainly, a lot can be done in this area, and this study is just another evidence of that.

# REFERENCES

ADLER, Mortimer J.; DOREN, Charles Van. **How to Read a Book: The Classic Guide to Intelligent Reading**. New York, NY. Touchstone, 1972.

CANDIDO, Antonio. **O Direito à Literatura**. In: Vários escritos. Rio de Janeiro: Ouro sobre azul, 2011.

_____. **O Estudo Analítico do Poema**. São Paulo, SP. Humanitas Publicações, 1996.

BLOOM, Harold. **How to Read And Why**. New York, NY. Touchstone, 2000.

BROWN, H. Douglas. **Teaching by principles**. Harlow, UK. Longman, 2000.

DA SILVA, Ronivaldo Braz. **Using Literary Texts in The ESL Classroom**. R. Cio Humanas, Vol. l, no. 2, p.171-l78; July, 2001.

EAGLETON, Terry. **Literary Theory: An Introduction**. Minneapolis, MN. The University of Minnesota Press, 2003.

ELIOT, T. S. **A Função Social da Poesia.** In: De Poesia e Poetas. São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1991. (p. 25-37)

GOTTSCHALK, Marion. **The Role of Literature in Brazilian High School Contexts.** Florianópolis, SC. Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, 2003. Available at: <https://repositorio.ufsc.br/xmlui/handle/123456789/84547>. Last access: Nov. 19, 2015.

HESS, Harry. **Poetry As An Intercultural Peace Bridge For Teaching ESL**. Edmonton, AL. University of Alberta, 1999.

KATHIB, Mohammad; REZAEI, Saeed; DERAHKSHAN, Ali. **Literature in EFL/ESL Classroom**. English Language Teaching, Vol 4, no. 1, p. 201-208; March, 2011.

LAZAR, Gillian. **Literature and Language Teaching**. Cambridge University Press, 1993.


LLOSA, Mario Vargas. **Why Literature?**. New Republic. May, 2001. Available at: <http://www.newrepublic.com/article/books-and-arts/78238/mario-vargas-llosa-literature>. Last access in: June, 21, 2015.


MALEY, Alan; DUFF, Alan. **Literature**. Oxford University Press, 1990.


Ministério da Educação. **PARÂMETROS CURRICULARES NACIONAIS**; Ensino Fundamental e Médio. Brasília: Governo Federal, Ministério da Educação. Internet, página: www.mec.gov.br, abril de 2003


PARKINSON, Brian; REID THOMAS, Helen. **Teaching Literature in a Second Language**. Edinburgh. Edinburgh University Press, 2000.


PAZ, Octavio. **O Arco e a Lira**. Rio de Janeiro, RJ. Editora Nova Fronteira, 1982.


POUND, Ezra. **ABC of Reading**. London, UK. Faber and Faber, 1991.


RICHARDS, Jack C.; ROGERS, Theodore S. **Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching**. New York, NY. Cambridge University Press, 2001.


SAGE, Howard. **Incorporating Literature in Language Instruction**. Englewood Cliffs, NJ. Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1987.


SHOWALTER, Elaine. **Teaching Literature**. Oxford, UK. Wiley-Blackwell, 2003.


WARN, Emily; JACKSON, Major. Does Poetry Have a Social Function?. **Poetry**. January, 2007. Avaialable at: <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/article/178919>. Last access in: June, 21, 2015.

**ATTACHMENTS**

**ATTACHMENT 1 –** Questionnaire 1

**1.** (atribua um número de 0 a 10) **Na sua experiência como aprendiz de inglês que tipo de habilidade foi mais desenvolvida em sala de aula?**
( ) writing ( ) listening ( ) reading ( ) speaking

**2.** (atribua um número de 0 a 10) **Na sua experiência lecionando você costuma priorizar atividades de:**
( ) writing ( ) listening ( ) reading ( ) speaking

**3.** (você pode marcar mais de uma opção) **O que você acha de atividades de leitura em aula de inglês?**
( ) importante ( ) chato ( ) desnecessário ( ) interessante
( ) desinteressante ( ) eu posso ler em casa, pra que ler na aula? ( ) legal
( ) muito educativo ( ) pouco didático ( ) motivante ( ) desmotivante

( ) _____

**4. Na sua experiência como aluno de inglês alguma vez o professor trouxe para a aula ou pediu que a turma lesse textos literários (literatura)?**
( ) Não.
( ) Sim. Com que frequência? _____.

**5. O quanto você acha importante a leitura de textos literários para a aprendizagem de inglês?**
( ) não vejo nenhuma relação direta entre a leitura de textos literários e o desenvolvimento na língua inglesa.
( ) um pouco importante.
( ) mais ou menos importante.
( ) muito importante.

**6. Você costuma ler em inglês? (qualquer tipo de texto – na internet, na faculdade, etc)**
( ) Sim, todos os dias. ( ) Sim, de 5 a 6 dias por semana.
( ) Sim, mas apenas de vez em quando ( ) Raramente ( ) Nunca. Não sou obrigada.

**7. Você já leu livros em inglês?**
( ) Sim. Mais ou menos quantos? _____
( ) Não.

**8. Você acredita que a leitura de textos em inglês possa favorecer o seu speaking?**
( ) Não, não vejo a relação.          ( ) Sim, muito.          ( ) Sim, mas só um pouco.


(OPCIONAL) **9. Use o verso da folha para relatar alguma experiência marcante que você teve lendo algum texto literário em língua inglesa.**

**ATTACHMENT 2** – Questionnaire 2

**1.** (você pode marcar mais de uma opção) **O que você achou do projeto de poesia desenvolvido por Sheila Machado?**
( ) fraco        ( ) eeeeh, mais ou menos.   ( ) interessante        ( ) uma chatice

( ) revelador, eu nem sabia que eu gostava de poesia            ( ) MUITO LEGAL!!1!

( ) _____

**2. O quanto este projeto te ajudou com a leitura de poesia em inglês?**
( ) nada        ( ) pouco      ( ) razoavelmente    ( ) muito      ( ) eu não seria nada sem esse projeto

**3.** (você pode marcar mais de uma opção) **O que você acha de atividades de leitura em aula de língua adicional?**
( ) importante          ( ) chato              ( ) desnecessário          ( ) interessante

( ) desinteressante    ( ) eu posso ler em casa, pra que ler na aula?      ( ) legal

( ) muito educativo    ( ) pouco didático    ( ) motivante              ( ) desmotivante

( ) _____

**4. Na sua futura experiência como professora de inglês você usaria textos literários?**
( ) sim!              ( ) talvez.            ( ) não.
**Explique:**_____

_____

_____

**5. Quanto a poesia especificamente, você usaria em sala de aula?**
( ) sim.              ( ) talvez.            ( ) não.
**Explique:**_____

_____

_____

**6. O que você mais gostou no projeto?** (pode marcar mais de uma alternativa)
( ) a metodologia            ( ) eu li em inglês textos que pareciam impossíveis! Wow!

( ) Poesia <3                ( ) Emily fuc*%!# Dickinson !!1!1    ( ) _____
**Comente:**

_____

_____

**7. Em que aspectos você acredita que o projeto contribui para o seu aprendizado de inglês?**

( ) vocabulário

( ) estratégia de leitura

( ) conheci novos autores de língua inglesa

( ) agora me sinto mais preparada para ler textos desafiadores

( ) _____

**8. Comente a respeito das 5 lições. Considere aspectos como:**

**A) metodologia** (collaborative close reading)**;**

**B) os poemas lidos** ("Introduction to poetry" – Billy Collins; "I dwell in Possibility", "The brain wider than the sky" e "I heard a fly buzz when I died" – Emily Dickinson; "Why I am not a painter" – Frank O'Hara; "Since feeling is first" e "Buffalo Bill's defunct" – E. E. Cummings)

**C) a sua participação em aula** (gostaria de ter participado mais ou se sente mais à vontade respondendo a atividades escritas?);

**D) se você acredita que aprendeu alguma coisa com as 5 lições e o que exatamente.**

**ATTACHMENT 3 –** Reflexive Journal

**Class notes – first class**

Afternoon:
While I was explaining the basics of poetry, they seemed more or less interested since they were taking notes and nodding in agreement. However, they remained very silent throughout the class. They seemed very shy, they probably did not feel like talking to a stranger, me. They didn't respond to simple questions like "what words didn't you understand?", that's a problem to which I found no solution. I tried speaking in Portuguese from time to time to make sure they understand me, but also to inspire responses and still they remained silent. There were some problems with vocabulary that only realized when I had already made them questions, for instance when I asked what senses were being evoked in the poem, I noticed I should have given them the name for the senses when I explained 'imagery'. Of course, when I noticed that I went back and explained, but that is bad because it makes them feel bad for not knowing the matter. The next class depends on their participation so I really hope they will talk…

Evening:
Sts responded very well to the class, even the ones who claimed not like poetry were giving me satisfactory answers. They still take some time when I ask an open question, which is normal, but the problem is that if I didn't ask any questions they wouldn't make any comments on the poem. The closed questions were answered very promptly which was very good and made the class a lot more fluid then the one with the other group. Maybe because they know me and trust me, all of them immediately asked words that they didn't know the meaning or couldn't remember. During the interpretation time less students responded but they all seemed interested and seemed to understand 'where I was going".

**Second class.**
Afternoon:
Sts were understandably confused by the poem and thought it too difficult but they trusted me to make them understand it. They didn't have proper dictionaries (only Ing – Port). I lent my kindle to a pair of students and a trio had a computer, only one had a good English-English dictionary. Not knowing the students makes it a lot harder to decide who gets what term to look into, so I just gave words randomly. They gave their definitions with considerable difficulty, and I had to talk a lot more than I wanted to, in order to 'put the pieces together'. They didn't make much inference, except for one student who was talking about doors and said that you usually need a key. A few students who came in late didn't seem at all involved in the work. A student nicely delivered the definition of probability. Overall, I think the result was ok and at least they seemed interested until the end. I saw a few smiles at the end that appeared to be showing satisfaction. One girl said she 'liked this Emily Dickinson". It's interesting how a difficult poem can be more interesting, more pleasurable than one that speaks to you from the very first reading (even though it can have more meanings).

Evening: I handed them the poem and explained it was a very difficult one, but they seemed motivated anyway. However, when I finished the out loud reading with them following the words on the page they all were very confused 'what the heck does this mean", which is exactly what I was expecting and in fact good for the challenge.

**Third class**
Afternoon:

I begin the talk with a few students missing, but soon the whole group was there (that's the first time). This poem is easy to understand at first reading, but of course, other meanings must be extracted. Because of that, I prepared a few pre-reading questions. They answered the questions well, but only three or four students were responding (though that's what happens in any class in the history of ever in our environment). Then I read the poem aloud, there were few discreet laughs in one of the poem's most ironic moments. They all agreed that this poem was 'closer' to them in the sense that they could grasp something from a very unconcerned reading.

They laughed, but they couldn't understand or say the reason why. I hadn't developed any questions that would lead them to say that the poem was ironic because I thought it would be the first thing they would say about the poem… My bad. I tried to improvise, talking about humor and why were they laughing, a girl says "because he had a goal 'to write about orange' but he never talked about orange" I said "yes, and that is …..." "funnY" hauhuhahuahu no one said ironic, I said "Is it sarcasm, is it just a coincidence, what is it?" then one girl realized but wasn't sure about her English so she said in Portuguese that the poem was being ironic. I said yes. But I think I failed to show them that the poem is ironic all around, I could have have told them this: "since the title to the title of the works mentioned in the final line, this poem is ironic" and showed them some of that irony in some verses. But I just organized a grid on the board to show the structure of 'what happens' in the poem and of course the irony of it.

Evening: they seemed more skeptical about this poem, as if because they understood it, it didn't mean a lot. Maybe that's a perk of reading Dickinson, do all 'simple' poems become duller? Either way we read. First I read it without having them read the poem, and asked them what it felt like, they said it seemed like a story, with beginning, middle and end, with dialogue. I thought that was good. I handed them the copies of the poem and I asked one student to read it out loud. She had trouble with it, but that's good because I explained about the singularity of O'Hara's line breaks which create that difficulty - 'how should we read this?'. And in fact it's a strategy to call attention to the words on the page and maybe their relation to the words next to it (in oral speech we would never make those same pauses, so it's recommended that we read it as we would speak it). Of course I told them he's not the only poet to do that, but it's one of his most charming characteristics.

**fourth classroom**
Afternoon:
they seemed more at ease with me this time. Answered my pre-reading question "what season do you associate with love" quite promptly, were able to explain the reasons for their answers. Then, they took the poem, a stanza at a time and I asked them to work in pairs to put the poem together as they thought made more sense. Not surprisingly, everyone got the correct order; this might mean three things: 1. they know enough English and can think what makes sense in accordance to the rules of the language; 2. they know discourse well to be able to organize it; 3. they know poetic discourse well now. I'm not going to deepen my interpretation of that, because I think number 1 and number 2 are more likely to be the solution (even if you don't know a language but you recognize certain traits of it like conjunctive adverbs, coordinating conjunctions, discourse markers, it's possible to succeed in such exercise). But, the exercise is also valuable because it makes them read each part more carefully than they would otherwise. Also, when I asked for them to explain how they got to the correct order, just one boy was able to 'verbalize' WHY it made more sense that way.

I did the same exercise we did with Dickinson, the search for the words in the dictionary. They seemed very comfortable with the activity, perhaps because they done it

before and found it worthwhile. Still, when giving me the definitions they were not very eager to infer connotations. Just one or two students were participating more actively.

When we were reading the second poem, it was surprising to me that they didn't recognize it as concrete poem, because the concrete movement was very influential in Brazilian poetry and if they don't know about it means they lack instruction on literary movements, which is surprising to me because my literature classes in high school were all about dates and movements and characteristics charts and not reading. So I 'know' ABOUT the movements. But they didn't. Well. We read the poem, they found it interesting for its format, their body language suggested so because they laughed when they received it and held it in different positions to look at. I encouraged them to do more of that… Can't remember if they said anything about what it resembles to them. Anyways, one specific usually very quiet student seemed really interested in my class today, and through this poem he tried to talk more. When I asked "what's capitalized in the poem" he and another two students answered correctly, but he was the one who said "the names". I complemented "the proper nouns are the only thing capitalized, usually E. E. Cummings doesn't capitalize anything at all, as you saw in the previous poem and as you can see here, when he uses the 'I' he does in low case letter". When I asked what is possible to know about Buffalo Bill from the poem, they answered me well and didn't take too long either. When I asked about the tone in the end, I didn't get the answer I was expecting but I got an interesting response from the same usually-quiet-student he made interesting point about the use of the word 'boy' in the end to talk about Buffalo Bill as if his 'wild westerner' persona in the moment of death is treated like a fragile being that was taken unexpectedly by death.

I think this class went quite smoothly and that feels very good.

Evening:

I had good expectations about this class mostly because in the afternoon, it worked so well, but I was very tired. Even though, I think I was more motivate than they were!! They seemed very tired as well.

Anyways, my first question was met with confident answers. They discussed their answers among themselves… It was nice. I gave them the poem cut in pieces they expressed resistance to the activity that I proposed, but they finished it very rapidly and they all got the correct order. But they couldn't explain why they got to the conclusion, all they said it was "it makes sense". Ok, I moved on to the aloud reading, and then I assigned the terms for each couple of sts. Maybe the thought the poem was too simple or maybe they didn't like or yet maybe they just weren't very motivated for different reasons, but they didn't speak much

Final class:

Afternoon: the stillness in the room was like the stillness in the air between the heaves of storm. Most students did not focus on the reading at all. I did the same exercise of searching for words and sharing definitions, but this time most of them didn't pay attention to the reading and were 'called back to class' whenever I read the word that they had searched for. After giving their definitions exactly like in the dictionary, they shrugged and looked away or returned to their side-conversation about whatever. I'm not really into soul-saving I have like zero strategies to 'call' people in. Anyways, I tried to stay close to them then I used to be in other classes so they would feel less comfortable talking about random subjects with their classmates. It was slightly effective in the beginning but by the end they didn't give a damn anymore. Sooo, I focused on the few students that seemed interested, but they were not talking a lot. I think maybe the poem was too difficult, but I can't trust that feeling because I think "I dwell in Possibility" is much more difficult and they reacted much better to it. Anyway, the class went on, it took me a lot more time than I thought, and I think they didn't get it as much because they were not doing many effort and just sat there waiting for me to

vomit my interpretation… However, one student said he liked the poem very much and usually he never showed any special appreciation for the other poems, so that's a win.

Evening: they seemed more enthusiastic than the previous week, but there were fewer people in class this time. We read the poem aloud three times, I read it two, and they shared one read among 4 students (each one with a stanza). I think it's very valuable to do that, because poems are music and they have a special power when read out loud, even though my project didn't focus on poetry's oral qualities. They participated more actively in the close reading even some sts who usually wouldn't participate. They didn't simply give me the definitions they were attempting at inferences and asking me questions. A few related how they were enjoying the poem and Emily Dickinson in general. I thought this class went very well, although in the end some were showing disinterest I think it was more due to hunger and they wanting a break then from the activity. But I also think that happened in other classes and I think it might be because when they decided they had already understood part of the meaning of the poem they disregarded the more intricate, detailed hidden meanings, which I was still trying to make them get, insisting on the same sentences…

**ATTACHMENT 4 –** Multiple questions results

QUESTIONNAIRE 1: twenty-two responses
Question 1: the average frequency of activities for each ability:

| Ability | Average |
|---|---|
| Reading | 7,35 |
| Writing | 6,85 |
| Speaking | 5,7 |
| Listening | 6,7 |

Question 2: the average frequency of activities for each ability as teachers:

| Ability | Average |
|---|---|
| Speaking | 8,58 |
| Listening | 7,88 |
| Writing | 7,76 |
| Reading | 7,35 |

Question 3 "What do you think of reading activities in class?"

| **QUESTIONNAIRE 1** (22 responses) | **QUESTIONNAIRE 2** (20 responses) |
|---|---|
| **21** important | **19** important |
| **12** interesting | **11** interesting |
| **5** motivating | **6** motivating |
| **2** very educational | **4** very educational |
| **7** cool | **8** cool |
| **1** not very didactic | **0** not very didactic |
| **1** demotivating | **0** demotivating |
| **1** I can read at home, why read in class? | **0** I can read at home, why read in class? |

Question 4 "In your experience as an English student did the teacher or professor ever worked with or asked that you read any literary texts for class?"

7 No

15 Yes

Question 5 "how much important do you think literary texts are in terms of learning English?"

0 I don't see any relation between reading literary texts and the development in the English

language

20 very important

2 more or less important

Question 6: "do you usually read in English (any kind of text - on the internet, for school, etc)"

6 yes, everyday

5 yes, from five to six days per week

7 yes, but only sometimes

4 rarely

0 never

Question 7: "Have you read any books in English?"

5 No

17 Yes. (the average is fewer than 10)

QUESTIONNAIRE 2: twenty answers

Question 1: "What do you think of the poetry project developed by Sheila Machado?"

| | |
|---|---|
| 13 very interesting | 0 weak |
| 7 SO COOL!!1! | 0 boring |
| 6 revealing, I didn't know I liked poetry | 0 so-so |

Question 2: "How much did this project help you with the reading of poetry?"

| | |
|---|---|
| 0 nothing | 2 little |
| 14 a lot | 0 I would be nothing without this project |
| 4 reasonably | |

Question 4: "In you future experience as teacher would you use literary texts?"

17 Yes!          3 Maybe          0 No

Question 5: "in your future experience as teacher would you use poetry?"

9 yes!          10 maybe          1 no

Question 6: "What did you like the most about the project? (you can mark more than 1

option)"

14 methodology                                          5 poetry <3

11 I read texts in English that seemed impossible   2 Emily Fuc*%!# Dickinson!!1!1


Question 7: "in which aspects do you think the project helped you with English?"

15 vocabulary

14 reading strategy

4 Now I feel more prepared to read challenging texts

9 I've learned about new authors

**ATTACHMENT 5 –** The poems

Introduction to poetry – Billy Collins


I ask them to take a poem

and hold it up to the light
like a color slide

or press an ear against its hive.

I say drop a mouse into a poem
and watch him probe his way out,

or walk inside the poem's room
and feel the walls for a light switch.

I want them to waterski
across the surface of a poem
waving at the author's name on the shore.

But all they want to do
is tie the poem to a chair with rope
and torture a confession out of it.

They begin beating it with a hose
to find out what it really means.


466 – Emily Dickinson


I dwell in Possibility –

A fairer House than Prose –
More numerous of Windows –
Superior – for Doors –

Of Chambers as the Cedars –
Impregnable of eye –
And for an everlasting Roof
The Gambrels of the Sky –

Of Visitors – the fairest –
For Occupation – This –
The spreading wide my narrow Hands
To gather Paradise –


632 – Emily Dickinson

The Brain—is wider than the Sky—
For—put them side by side—
The one the other will contain
With ease—and You—beside—

The Brain is deeper than the sea—
For—hold them—Blue to Blue—
The one the other will absorb—
As Sponges—Buckets—do—

The Brain is just the weight of God—
For—Heft them—Pound for Pound—
And they will differ—if they do—
As Syllable from Sound—


Why I am not a painter – Frank O'Hara

I am not a painter, I am a poet.
Why? I think I would rather be
a painter, but I am not. Well,

for instance, Mike Goldberg
is starting a painting. I drop in.
"Sit down and have a drink" he
says. I drink; we drink. I look
up. "You have SARDINES in it."
"Yes, it needed something there."
"Oh." I go and the days go by
and I drop in again. The painting

is going on, and I go, and the days
go by. I drop in. The painting is
finished. "Where's SARDINES?"
All that's left is just
letters, "It was too much," Mike says.

But me? One day I am thinking of
a color: orange. I write a line
about orange. Pretty soon it is a
whole page of words, not lines.
Then another page. There should be
so much more, not of orange, of
words, of how terrible orange is
and life. Days go by. It is even in
prose, I am a real poet. My poem
is finished and I haven't mentioned
orange yet. It's twelve poems, I call
it ORANGES. And one day in a gallery
I see Mike's painting, called SARDINES.


Since feeling is first – E. E. Cummings


since feeling is first
who pays any attention
to the syntax of things
will never wholly kiss you;
wholly to be a fool
while Spring is in the world

my blood approves,
and kisses are a better fate
than wisdom
lady i swear by all flowers.  Don't cry
—the best gesture of my brain is less than
your eyelids' flutter which says

we are for each other: then
laugh, leaning back in my arms
for life's not a paragraph

And death i think is no parenthesis

[Buffalo Bill's] – E. E. Cummings

Buffalo Bill 's

defunct

    who used to

     ride a watersmooth-silver

               stallion

and break onetwothreefourfive pigeonsjustlikethat

                    Jesus

he was a handsome man

         and what i want to know is

how do you like your blue-eyed boy

Mister Death

591 – Emily Dickinson

I heard a Fly buzz - when I died -
The Stillness in the Room
Was like the Stillness in the Air -
Between the Heaves of Storm -

The Eyes around - had wrung them dry -
And Breaths were gathering firm
For that last Onset - when the King
Be witnessed - in the Room -

I willed my Keepsakes - Signed away
What portion of me be
Assignable - and then it was

There interposed a Fly -

With Blue - uncertain - stumbling Buzz -
Between the light - and me -
And then the Windows failed - and then
I could not see to see -