Where I'm From

Connecting Students through Poetry

Tim Flanagan

Fulbright Distinguished Teacher, 2016-17

Hanoi, Vietnam

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Introduction

In September 2016, I traveled to Hanoi, Vietnam as a Fulbright Distinguished Teacher. My proposal for this grant included teaching a series of poetry lessons and creating this poetry-sharing website to develop students' global competencies.

Connecting students across cultures and helping them understand multiple points of view are important skills in today's world. This has become even more evident during my time in Vietnam as so many students shared how their lives are impacted by the culture of fear taking hold in the US and other countries. It is my hope that these poems are a step towards promoting an understanding of people from around the world and preparing students for a future where cooperation and collaboration among cultures will be vital for a peaceful and prosperous world.

I have taught for several months at Nguyễn Tất Thành School in Hanoi, a middle/high school on the campus of Hanoi National University of Education. I have worked with students from grades 7, 9, 10, 11 and one university level English class. The students are all native Vietnamese speakers with varying levels of English proficiency.

The culmination of this work can be found on my project website:
tflanagan.us/shareyourpoem

Although I am finishing this phase of the project, it is really just beginning. My hope is that more schools will participate by contributing poems so that students can continue to learn about each other through poetry. Classes can write a poem together to introduce themselves. Students or groups can create a video or audio recording of their poems to be posted. Perhaps students from different countries can even collaborate on poems. The possibilities are endless.

I invite teachers to have their students submit poems. Lesson Eight has the guidelines and directions for how to do this.

How to Use this Curriculum Guide

This guide contains a series of eight poetry lessons. Four of the lessons introduce an autobiographical poem for students to analyze and model. These lessons are based on poems that are widely available online or in print format. The other four lessons focus on revising, editing and publishing poems.

The lessons can be adapted as needed. I have used these lessons with native English speakers as well as with students who are learning English. The revising and editing lessons can easily be expanded and I have included ideas for doing so in the "Additional Lesson Ideas" section.

Use the Table of Contents to find the lessons or resources you need. All of the materials needed for a lesson are included in the pages following the lesson plan. The lessons follow an order based on the complexity of the poems being modeled, but they can be taught independently in any order.   At the end of this guide is an annotated bibliography with useful resources related to the lessons.

Acknowledgments

Over the course of my four months in Vietnam, I have had the pleasure of working with many people who have made this project possible. In fact, there are people and organizations who helped me long before I arrived in Vietnam.

The staff at the **Institute for International Education** conducted nearly all of the behind-the-scenes work to make this Fulbright grant run smoothly. I appreciate their help in preparing me for this project as well as their continued support throughout my time in Vietnam.

The Fulbright staff at the **US Department of State** in Washington and the **US Embassy in Hanoi** were also especially helpful in providing me with all the tools necessary for living and working in Vietnam. One of my first contacts in Vietnam was my Fulbright advisor, **Ms. Hanh T. Nguyen**, Fulbright Program Assistant, who matched me with the Hanoi National University of Education.

I was lucky to be assigned **Ms. Ngo Diem Hang** from the Hanoi National University of Education as my project advisor. Ms. Hang guided me throughout my stay in Vietnam and was also an excellent Vietnamese teacher. Among other things, I appreciate her feedback on my project and her help in planning seminars for the university faculty. I enjoyed many discussions about education in Vietnam and learned so much from her.

The professors and staff of the **Vietnamese Faculty** made me feel welcome and taught me much about Vietnamese culture. It was my pleasure to help them improve their English while learning more about Vietnam.

I will be forever grateful to all of the teachers and staff at Nguyễn Tất Thành School. **Ms. Thu Anh Nguyen**, principal of NTT, is an inspiration to the students and staff at the school. She successfully seeks out opportunities for the students to interact with foreigners and learn about the world. **Ms. ThuyDuong Nguyen**, my advisor at NTT, took great care of me. She arranged for me to observe as many classes as possible, invited me to assemblies and ceremonies, introduced me to other international educators associated with the school, and more. Her endless energy and dedication to her students are truly inspiring.

The following teachers at Nguyễn Tất Thành School and the Hanoi National University of Education welcomed me into their classrooms and gave up valuable teaching time for me to conduct poetry lessons each week. I am thankful for their support and interest in my project and for the opportunity to work with their students. Teachers in Vietnam are under pressure to teach the curriculum and get their students to pass state exams, so giving up class time for a visiting teacher is no small request.

Nguyễn Tất Thành School
- **Ms. Le Thi Thanh Huyen**, Class 7A5
- **Ms. Vu Thi Thanh Huyen**, Class 9A5
- **Ms. ThuyDuong Nguyen**, Class 10D1
- **Ms. Nguyen Quynh Trang**, Class 11D1

Hanoi National University of Education
- **Ms. Nguyen Thuy Huong**

In addition, I appreciate the countless teachers at both schools who allowed me to observe their classes as I learned about schools in Vietnam.

I also wish to thank the university volunteers who assisted in several of my classes. **Ms. Nguyễn Thị Hà Nhung**, from the International Cooperation Office at HNUE, helped me recruit these qualified volunteers to work with my classes. They are: **Nguyễn Minh Trang, Nguyen Thu Trang, Đỗ Hồng Hạnh, Nguyen Thanh Thuy, Tran Thi Lan, Tran Thi Hong Toi, Tong Khanh Linh, Pham Thu Tra,** and **Nguyễn Mỹ Linh.** Thanks to these volunteers, we were able to provide more individual support to writers which was a great help when working with classes of 45 students.

Additional thanks goes to one more university student, **Huệ Trịnh**, who provided assistance in creating the poetry website. She took time out of her schedule to meet with me in cafes and do the often mundane work of putting together the website. I am so grateful for her help in this task which was, at times, very overwhelming.

There are many people who have helped me in ways they will never know. I gained confidence from the support and friendship of fellow Fulbrighters in Vietnam, to friends and family at home who read and commented on my blog, Skyped, emailed or just kept me in their thoughts. Selling most of my possessions, taking a leave of absence from my job and moving to Vietnam sounded like a crazy idea to most people in my life, but they never faltered in expressing their support and confidence in me. That has truly made a difference. It was also comforting to know I was following in the footsteps of **Ms. Libby Frato-Sweeney**, the first Fulbright Distinguished Teacher to travel to Vietnam. Her advice, sense of humor and perspective were invaluable, as was her continued support via email during my time in Vietnam, especially during the most frustrating moments.

Finally, I would like to thank all of the **students** who worked so hard writing poems in a language that is not their own. As I struggled to learn just a few phrases of Vietnamese for daily living, these students were expressing themselves in English in deep, thoughtful, expressive, funny and courageous ways. Many were hesitant at first, but persisted and were able to write beautiful poems. None of this would matter if they hadn't risen to the occasion, and for that I am truly thankful.

There were hundreds and hundreds of students whose classes I did not work with, but all of them made me feel so welcome. I have grown accustomed to students standing and greeting me at the beginning of each class and sometimes applauding at the end. I was greeted in the hallways, stairways, around campus and even as I walked through the local market. Their kindness, respect and keen interest in learning about me are representative of Vietnamese culture and are a big part of why I have grown to love Vietnam.

Lesson One: "I Am" Autobiographical Poem

Objectives: • Increase English vocabulary. • Analyze a poem to find the parts that make up a poem. • Use sensory details effectively. • Follow a model to write an original poem.	Vocabulary: stanza, autobiographical, characteristics, personality, adjective, imaginary, honking, worn, soak, (brainstorming sensory words - sights, sounds, feelings, etc.)
Time: One class period to teach and start writing; additional time (homework or in class) to continue writing.	Materials: Copies of sample "I am" poem (written by teacher or one of the other samples); copies of the "I am" poem template

1. How would you describe yourself (your personality)? How would your friends describe you? How would your parents describe you?
2. Share with partner or group. Write words on board. What can you add to your list?
3. Hand out **my poem** and read together.
   a. Read aloud; ask volunteers to read aloud (one stanza each)
   b. What vocabulary do you have questions about?
   c. What did you notice about how I put the poem together?
   d. If you had to teach someone how to write this type of poem, what would you tell them? Notice patterns, look for things that repeat. Notice how the poem is structured (number of lines and stanzas, lengths of lines). Notice what is missing (no rhymes, . . .).
   e. Create list of notes for poetry template. Hand out the **actual template** and emphasize that it is just a guide (My poem does not follow it exactly.)
4. Brainstorm sensory words: (This section is optional - it might be best to have them start writing first.)
   a. Sounds (don't just list words, list what they are doing or how to describe them)
   b. Sights
   c. Smells
5. Time to write (15-20 min)
   a. Try your own poem
   b. Don't just stop at the end; try adding more words or writing a new poem
   c. Try writing new lines for your poem; the template is just a guide.
6. Share
   a. Have volunteers write their first line on the board; discuss what makes a good first line (makes you wonder, want to read more); point out how they don't all have to follow the same formula (some might list two characteristics, others might write "I am a ____ who ____" or some other format.

I Am

I am a traveling teacher who loves to learn.
I wonder if I'll ever be able to speak Vietnamese.
I hear the honking motorbikes outside my window.
I see the warm smiles of the new people I meet.
I want the weather to cool down.
I am a traveling teacher who loves to learn.

I pretend that I can solve the problems of the world.
I feel a hidden force giving me confidence.
I touch the worn pages of books to soak up their knowledge.
I worry that I cannot achieve my goals.
I cry for those whose voices are not heard.
I am a traveling teacher who loves to learn.

I understand I cannot see everything the world has to offer.
I say that all children deserve to learn.
I dream of equality for everyone.
I try to understand different points of view.
I hope to make a difference in the world.
I am a traveling teacher who loves to learn.

- Tim Flanagan

What do you notice about this poem?

Patterns, Repetition	Questions I have
I think the author is trying to say . . .	Other things I noticed (structure, poetic devices, interesting words, etc.)

I AM Poem

FIRST STANZA
I am (two special characteristics you have)
I wonder (something you are actually curious about)
I hear (an imaginary sound)
I see (an imaginary sight)
I want (an actual desire)
I am (the first line of the poem repeated)

SECOND STANZA
I pretend (something you actually pretend to do)
I feel (a feeling about something imaginary)
I touch (an imaginary touch)
I worry (something that really bothers you)
I cry (something that makes you very sad)
I am (the first line of the poem repeated)

THIRD STANZA
I understand (something you know is true)
I say (something you believe in)
I dream (something you actually dream about)
I try (something you really make an effort about)
I hope (something you actually hope for)
I am (the first line of the poem repeated)

I am a nutty guy who likes dolphins. I wonder what I, and the world, will be like in the year 2000. I hear silence pulsing in the middle of the night. I see a dolphin flying up to the sky. I want the adventure of life before it passes me by. I am a nutty guy who likes dolphins. I pretend that I'm the ruler of the world. I feel the weight of the world on my shoulders. I touch the sky, the stars, the moon, and all the planets as representatives of mankind. I worry about the devastation of a nuclear holocaust. I cry for all the death and poverty in the world I am a nutty guy who likes dolphins.	I understand the frustration of not being able to do something easily. I say that we are all equal. I dream of traveling to other points on the earth. I try to reach out to poor and starving children. I hope that mankind will be at peace and not die out. I am a nutty guy who likes dolphins. --SANDY MAAS

Lesson Two: "Fourths of Me"

Objectives: ● Identify patterns in a poem. ● Understand that poets choose words to create a rhythm in their poems. ● Follow a model to write an original poem.	**Vocabulary:** fraction, rhyme, rhythm, syllable, cyberspace, muffling, stalking
Time: One class period to teach and start writing; additional time (homework or in class) to continue writing.	**Materials:** Copies of "Fourths of Me" by Betsy Franco "Fourths of Me" template for students with lower English level

1. Draw a circle on the board and demonstrate how your life can be divided into parts based on your interests, hobbies, job, school, etc. Ask students to make their own circle and do the same for their life.
2. Hand out the poem "Fourths of Me" and read aloud to the class. Ask volunteers to read it aloud 1-2 more times. Have combinations of students stand in front of the room to read one stanza at a time. Tell students to underline unfamiliar words and phrases, write down questions or comments, make a note of any patterns in the poem, and be ready to discuss the poem when finished reading.
3. Have a class discussion about the poem. Discuss unfamiliar words and anything else the students noticed. Students should notice the following:
   a. Number of stanzas and lines. Short lines and stanzas. Poem is written in sentence format.
   b. Repetition ("One fourth of me"); Rhyming (last two stanzas).
   c. Message behind the poem (probably a teenager who is trying to find herself/himself).
   d. There are "five-fourths" in the poem. Discuss why the author chose to do this.
4. Some students may notice that there is a syllable pattern in each line. If the class is ready for this, you can spend time teaching the syllable patterns and how that creates a rhythm in the poem.
5. Tell students to use their circle created at the beginning of class and this poem to write their own "Fourths of Me" poem.
   a. Remind students to use the model as a guide. It can be changed (for example, they can write a "Sevenths of Me" poem).
   b. Stop periodically to share interesting lines and stanzas students have written.
6. Continue to follow the Writing Workshop format:
   a. Students can go back and work on poems previously taught.
   b. Check in with individuals or small groups to discuss their poems.

c. Remind students to keep writing. They can write more poems based on the models and/or work on revising their poems.
7. Have a few volunteers share their drafts at the end of class.

FOURTHS OF ME

Betsy Franco

One fourth of me

is at the mall

joking with my friends.

One fourth of me's

in cyberspace

stalking her or him.

One fourth of me

is in my room

muffling out a scream.

One fourth of me

is on my phone

texting clever things.

One fourth of me

wants to know

which parts of me are real

so I can add up

to a whole

and trust the way I feel.

Fourths of Me
Template

Things to notice:

● Write short lines and stanzas.
● Can use rhyming words, but not required.
● You don't have to use fourths. You can write a poem with fifths, sixths, sevenths, eighths, ninths, tenths, etc.
● Use this template as a guide. It's okay to change it.
	● Focus on saying something about *you*
	   ○ What message do you want to say about yourself?
	   ○ Do you have a special hobby or interest? Your entire poem can be about that one things (football, singing, a favorite pop star, etc.)

First Stanza

One fourth of me

is at the _____ (place)

_____ (-ing word) with _____ (who?).

Second Stanza

One fourth of me's

in _____ (place)

_____ (-ing word) _____

(who/what/where?)

Third Stanza

One fourth of me

is in my _____ (place)

_____ (-ing word) _____

(who/what/where?)

Fourth Stanza (optional)

One fourth of me

is on (at) my _____ (thing or place)

_____ (-ing word) _____

(who/what/where?)

Last Stanza (or last two stanzas)

One fourth of me

_____

_____

(Add two more lines that end your poem. It could tell the point of the poem (the message), ask a question, say something you *wonder*, etc. You can use words from the last two stanzas of the original poem.)

Lesson Three: "Just Because"

Objectives:	Vocabulary: stereotype, prejudice, race, gender, ability, class
● Identify patterns in a poem. ● Identify the theme of a poem. ● Follow a model to write an original poem.	
Time: One class period to teach and start writing; additional time (homework or in class) to continue writing.	**Materials:** copies of the poem "Just Because" "Just Because" template for students with lower English level

1. Ask students if they have ever been stereotyped or judged in an unfair way. Discuss the meanings of these words and share examples. If they are having trouble thinking of examples, share obvious ones (How are boys and girls judged or expected to be in your culture? Does every boy or girl fit the mold of what is expected? How are teens judged? How are smart students judged? What happens when someone does something against what is expected - for example, a girl who is good at football?)
2. Read aloud the poem "Just Because" to the class. Ask volunteers to read it aloud 1-2 more times. Have combinations of students stand in front of the room to read one stanza at a time. Tell students to underline unfamiliar words and phrases, write down questions or comments, make a note of any patterns in the poem, and be ready to discuss the poem when finished reading.
3. Have a class discussion about the poem. Discuss unfamiliar words and anything else the students noticed. Students should notice the following:
   a. Number of stanzas and lines. Repeating lines.
   b. Changes in language in each stanza ("I'm not" to "I don't like" to "I do like").
   c. Overall meaning of the poem. What is the author trying to say about race or identify? (This is a good time to start using the word "theme".)
   d. How the last line changes to questions.
4. Tell students to try writing their own "Just Because" poem based on how they feel they are judged by others. This poem can be difficult for students. It may be necessary to provide more specific support by writing sample lines on the board and having students fill in the blanks.
   a. Remind students to use the model as a guide. It can be changed.
   b. Stop periodically to share interesting lines and stanzas students have written.
5. Continue to follow the Writing Workshop format:
   a. Students can go back and work on poems previously taught.
   b. Check in with individuals or small groups to discuss their poems.
   c. Remind students to keep writing. They can write more poems based on the models and/or work on revising their poems.
6. Have a few volunteers share their drafts at the end of class.

Just Because

Example #1

Just because I'm half Japanese
I'm not a California roll
I'm not a Sony TV or radio
I'm not a Toyota or a Nissan

Just because I'm half Japanese
I don't like being considered one race
I do like being considered a Jew
I'm not a "mixed up person"

Just because I'm half Japanese
I do like things that you do like to do
I do like and play basketball

Just because I'm half Japanese
What is race?
Is there a thing called race?
Can't you just like me because I'm me?
I think so.

 - Author Unknown

Example #2

Just because I'm American
I'm not loud and obnoxious
I'm not trying to force my culture on you
I'm not always right

Just because I'm American
I don't like being put on a pedestal
I do understand the privileges of my passport
I'm not proud of everything my country has done

Just because I'm American
I do like freedom and independence
I do like democracy and diversity

Just because I'm American
Where do I fit in?
Can I be a citizen of the world?
The future depends on our understanding of
each other.

-    Tim Flanagan

Just Because Poem
Template

A **stereotype** is a popular idea about a group of people. Stereotypes are used to judge others, often wrongly. This poem should relate to a stereotype others may have about you. It could have to do with gender (Just because I'm a girl), race (Just because I'm Asian), height, appearance, your likes (Just because I like Justin Bieber), social class, or anything else about you. The goal is to challenge the false ideas others may have about you.

Use this template as a guide. It is okay to change lines to make them work for you!

Just because I'm

_____

Doesn't mean (or "Im not")

_____

Doesn't mean (or "Im not")

_____

And doesn't mean (or "Im not")

_____

Just because I'm (repeat first line)

_____

I don't like

_____

I do like

_____

I'm not

_____

Just because I'm (repeat first line)

_____

I do

_____

I do

_____

15

Just because I'm (repeat first line)

_____

(Ask a question)

_____

(Ask a question)

_____

(Ask a question)

_____

(Make a statement, repeat a line, or make the questions your last line).

_____

Just because I'm (repeat first line)

Lesson Four: Revising - Similes and Alliteration

Objectives:	Vocabulary: simile, comparison, alliteration, consonant, initial
- Understand the purpose of using similes and alliteration in poetry. - Identify examples of similes and alliteration. - Write examples of similes and alliteration.	
Time: One class period to teach and start writing; additional time (homework or in class) to continue writing.	**Materials:** copies of the Alliteration and Simile worksheet

1. Brainstorm with a partner: List of five characteristics of poems (stanzas, short lines, rhyming, a message or theme, repetition of words or lines, patterns)
2. Hand out the Alliteration and Similes worksheet and Introduce similes.
   a. Show examples from poems
   b. Create examples together describing things in the classroom
   c. In groups: Create your own examples of similes. Add to class list (or online page such as Padlet).
3. Repeat the steps with examples of alliteration. Ask them if they know of any more song lyrics with alliteration,
4. Have students try this out on their own poems and add at least one example of each.
5. Students can also return to any poems previously written and work on them.
6. Use this time to check in with individual students for brief conferences about their poems.

Alliteration and Simile

Alliteration: Repeating the same beginning consonant sounds.
- The boys broke the baseball bat.
- Leah listened while the lion roared.

Simile: Comparing two things (especially things that you wouldn't normally compare) using the words "like" or "as"
- Okay: The sheets are as white as snow.
- Better: Her laughter was like a warm blanket.

Example poems

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Balloons (Simile) - Poem by Taylor Dixon
Light like a feather on wind,
Colorful as one hundred magic markers,
Round like the mouths of laughing children.
Floating swiftly to the sun.
Balloon

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Love is Like (excerpt)
- by Allen Steble

Love is like a painting
filled with all colours and shades
love is like a bleeding heart
cut with many sharp blades
love is like a never ending story
that always begins with a kiss
love is like a space everlasting
that fills bitterness with bliss
love is like the circle of eternity
always there to take for free

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Just like
- By Katherine Ayala

Just like a glass
my heart is broken
Just like a star
you light up my life
Just like a rose
that blooms it's beauty
Just like the rain
that never stops crying
Just like another human being
you let go of me
Just like others
you broke my heart
Just like clouds
you are soft
Just like bullets
that you shot into my heart

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Alliteration in Song Lyrics

Let it Be by The Beatles
    Whisper words of wisdom

Human Nature by Michael Jackson
    Hear her voice
    Shake my window
    Sweet seducing sighs

Bad Blood by Taylor Swift
    And, baby, now we've got bad blood

So Sick by Ne-Yo
    Said I'm so sick of love songs, so
    sad and slow

Knock You Down by Keri Hilson
    So what we gonna have, dessert or
    disaster?

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Write your own examples of:

Similes	Alliteration

Lesson 4A: Revising - Zooming in on Details

This could be an alternate lesson for classes that are not ready to write similes and use alliteration in English. It can be an additional revising lesson for classes that need it.

Objectives: ● Identify general verbs and nouns and write more specific words for them. ● Make revisions to a poem by writing more specific words.	Vocabulary: general, specific
Time: One class period	Materials:

1. Ask students to list as many verbs as they can for things that happen in a classroom.
2. List examples on board and point out how the specific words (erasing, scribbling, yawning, preparing, slouching, responding) are more interesting than the general words (sitting, listening, doing, writing, answering).
3. If necessary, repeat this example by having students name all of the verbs associated with a sport or activity that they are interested in.
4. Tell students that this is like zooming in with a camera. Try to show the reader more specific details by zooming in on specific places and actions.
5. Show examples of student work with some general words and have students rewrite the lines with more specific words.
6. Ask students to find at least three words in their poems that they could change to more specific words. As needed, stop and brainstorm English words for some of the most common general words being used by the students.
7. Ask volunteers to share their revisions with the class.

Example from "Fourths of Me" poem
"One fourth of me is at the school playing with my friends." (Brainstorm better lines with students and then have them continue with other examples.) Some possible improvements to this line: One fourth of me is . . .
● at my desk doodling in my notebook.
● in the courtyard scoring the winning goal.
● sneaking into class five minutes late.
● hiding in the stairway laughing with my friends.
● slouching at my desk avoiding the teacher's stares.
● outside the front gate catching up on the gossip.
More lines to improve (write on board or use your own student examples).
● One fourth of me is at my house doing my homework.
● One fourth of me is at my house doing my housework.
● One fourth of me is in the classroom looking at the board.
● One fourth of me is at my house watching TV.
● One fourth of me is at the mall buying a shirt.

Lesson Five: "Where I'm From" (advanced English speakers) or "I Was . . . I Am" (beginner/intermediate English speakers)

Objectives:	Vocabulary: (choose vocabulary words from the poem)
- Identify patterns in a poem. - Identify the theme of a poem. - Follow a model to write an original poem.	
Time: Two-three class periods needed, or less class time with homework assigned.	**Materials:** Copies of either poem; "Where I'm From" template, if needed; "Where I'm From" slide show.

Depending on the class, students may want to listen to both poems and choose one to write, or just focus on one. Another option is to offer one of these poems to students who are ready while others continue to work on poems from the previous lessons. Below are plans for "Where I'm From" which is more challenging.

1. Introduce the idea of a quickwrite - writing whatever comes to mind as quickly as possible. Give students five minutes to write about their earliest memory (silent writing). They can write in their native language or in English.
2. Tell students today's poem is about memories and is challenging. There will be many difficult words, but they should see if they can get the overall message from the author. Read aloud the poem "Where I'm From." If possible, listen to the author read the poem and watch the video: http://www.georgeellalyon.com/where.html
3. Spend time to review the poem and *most important* vocabulary. Make sure that students understand the author built the poem around memories and revealed in the last stanza where many of the memories came from. You can also use this slide show that has images for key vocabulary: https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1Y7AeFnaMBbwialnWFE5c0D7ChA-IeRz7qXa0NonvpoM/edit?usp=sharing
4. Take time to discuss some of the author's tools such as alliteration and imagery. (Personification can also be introduced - last stanza.)
5. Offer the template as a guide, but remind students it is not meant as a specific set of rules for each line.
6. Encourage students to use authors' tools previously discussed while working on their poems (alliteration, simile, imagery, etc.)
7. Continue to follow the Writing Workshop format:
   a. Students can go back and work on poems previously taught.
   b. Check in with individuals or small groups to discuss their poems.
   c. Remind students to keep writing. They can write more poems based on the models and/or work on revising their poems.
8. Have a few volunteers share their drafts at the end of class.

The "WHERE I'M FROM" Template

Based on the poem by George Ella Lyon

Use this template as a guide. It is not a set of rules. You can change or add lines as needed. Even better, don't use the template at all and try writing your own unique version of a "Where I'm From" poem.

I am from _____(specific ordinary item),

from _____(product name) and

_____

I am from the _____ (home description... adjective, adjective, sensory detail),

I am from the _____ (plant, flower, natural item),

The _____ (plant, flower, natural detail)

I am from _____(family tradition) and _____(family trait),

from _____(name of family member) and (another family name) _____ and _____ (family name).

I am from the _____ (description of family tendency) and _____(another one).

From _____(something you were told as a child) and _____(another),

I am from _____(representation of religion, or lack of it). Further description.

I'm from _____(place of birth and family ancestry),

_____(two food items representing your family).

From the _____(specific family story about a specific person and detail),

the _____(another detail),

and the _____(another detail

about another family member).

I am from (location of family pictures, mementos, archives and several more

lines indicating their worth),

_____

_____

_____

Where I'm From

 - George Ella Lyon

I am from clothespins,
from Clorox and carbon-tetrachloride.
I am from the dirt under the back porch.
(Black, glistening,
it tasted like beets.)
I am from the forsythia bush
the Dutch elm
whose long-gone limbs I remember
as if they were my own.

I'm from fudge and eyeglasses,
        from Imogene and Alafair.
I'm from the know-it-alls
        and the pass-it-ons,
from Perk up! and Pipe down!
I'm from He restoreth my soul
        with a cottonball lamb
        and ten verses I can say myself.

I'm from Artemus and Billie's Branch,
fried corn and strong coffee.
From the finger my grandfather lost
        to the auger,
the eye my father shut to keep his sight.

Under my bed was a dress box
spilling old pictures,
a sift of lost faces
to drift beneath my dreams.
I am from those moments--
snapped before I budded --
leaf-fall from the family tree.

"I was . . . I am" poem

I was... (a list of words describing yourself as a younger child)

I am... (a list of words describing you as you are now)

- Focus on using specific words
- Think about how you have changed over the years.

Examples:

I was...	I was . . .
different	shy
lost	timid
confused	unsure and uneasy
awkward	easily influenced
scared	unaware
alone & lonely	running away
alienated	avoiding problems
hurting	questioning
volcanic	accommodating
seething beneath the surface	obedient
searching for answers,	unsure of my future or
without knowing the questions	place in this world
I am...	I am . . .
iconoclastic	curious
curious	still shy, but more confident
questioning	thinking for myself,
less unsure of myself	while learning from others
not lonely or alone	embracing uneasiness
calmer	pursuing my dreams
more introspective	sometimes figuring things out,
less scared	and sometimes not
still awkward	older, but feeling young
reluctant to define myself	grateful
searching for valid questions,	evolving
believing there are no firm	sharing
answers	enjoying the uncertainties of life
-Art Belliveau	- Tim Flanagan

Lesson Six: Magic Foldable Study Guide

Objectives: ● Create a "magic foldable" with notes from poetry lessons	Vocabulary: crease, measure
Time: One class period	Materials: Construction paper (two different colors, one of each color per student), one-sided copies of magic foldable template and notes for each student, scissors, glue sticks, rulers

Creating the Magic Foldable is not necessary and takes some time to plan, but it is a handy and motivating way for students to use what they have learned in revising their poems.

Magic Foldable Directions:

1. Take one piece of construction paper and fold it in half like a book (hamburger fold).
2. Fold the top layer only back towards the first fold.
3. Fold the bottom layer back towards the first fold. The paper should now look like a W with four equal sections.
4. Measure across the middle fold (center of the W). Divide it into four equal sections. Cut from the top of the W down to the next fold to create three slits across the middle fold. The middle part of the W should now be in quarters.
5. Fold the second piece of construction paper in half (hamburger fold) and cut along the crease. Take one piece (half of the paper) and fold it in half. Cut again to make two pieces. You should now have one half sheet and two quarter sheets of the paper.
6. Take the two strips of paper (quarter sheets) and weave them into the slits of the first sheet of paper. The weaving should form a checkerboard pattern with the colors (one over-under, the other side is under-over) otherwise the "magic" part won't open.
7. Make sure all of the folds have good creases.
8. Hold the foldable in front of you with the W shape facing up. Carefully pull apart the middle of the W by placing your thumbs on either side of the top of the W. This will reveal the hidden section, or the "magic" part.
9. Lay the foldable flat. Cut out and glue each section of the magic foldable notes in the appropriate section. Note: Do not use too much glue, or the foldable will become glued shut. Glue sticks work best. Students can use the extra half sheet of paper as a working space for gluing. The magic foldable notes can be changed to suit your needs.
10. If you reverse the folds in each section, you can find another hidden section on the back. Students can use this to add more notes as needed.

Try these poems:	Alliteration	Personification	Submit at least one poem to publish online.
"I Am" "Fourths of Me" "Just Because" "Where I'm From" "I Was . . . I Am" Make up your own!	Simile	Verbs	1. Go to **http://tinyurl.com/share-my-poem** 2. Fill in the information. 3. Hit send!
	Repetition	Adjectives	**Optional:** 1. Make a drawing or design to go with your poem. 2. Take a picture and send it in, or give it to your teacher.
	Message (Theme)	Adverbs	

| **More Poetry Tips**

Write an interesting title. Don't call your poem "I Am" or "Just Because."

Get feedback! Share your poem with several people and use their comments to help you make it better.

Choose your words carefully. Keep looking for more specific words to use. Use Google to find synonyms.

Focus on a message. Your poem should say something important about *you.* What are you trying to say? Does each stanza help say it? | Favorite Words

Favorite Lines

Favorite Poems

Poetry Goals | _____
_____
_____
_____

_____
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_____

_____
_____
_____

_____
_____
_____ | **Autobio-graphical Poetry**

Name

_____
_____
_____

Class

_____ |

(This section not needed.)	Repeating the same beginning consonant sounds (blue ball)	Giving human qualities to a nonhuman thing (The flowers danced in the breeze.)	(This section not needed.)
	A comparison using the words "like" or "as" (Her laughter was like a warm blanket.)	crushing (instead of winning), slouching (instead of sitting), dashing (instead of running) _____ _____	
	Poems have patterns of repeating things - sounds, words, lines, rhymes, syllable patterns, etc.	scrumptious (instead of good), stunning (instead of amazing), warm-hearted (instead of kind) _____ _____	
	What you are trying to say with your poem. What do you want the reader to get from reading your poem?	rapidly, cheerfully, skillfully, heartily, courageously, anxiously, innocently, obediently, wearily	

Lesson Seven: Giving and Responding to Feedback

Objectives:	Vocabulary: Revise, edit
● Use feedback to make revisions and editing to at least one poem.	
Time: One-two class periods	**Materials:** Revising/editing checklist and/or Magic Foldable notes from previous lessons

1. Explain to the class that they should each choose one of the poems they have worked on and focus on finishing it, getting feedback, and revising it.
   ○ Students may submit more than one poem, but have them focus on just one for now.
   ○ Remind students to use the Magic Foldable they made in the last class. If necessary, assign a certain amount of revisions that should be made using the foldable.
   ○ Emphasize the importance of the revising/editing process. Students should understand that meaningful revisions will make their poem better. They should also understand that the revisions take time and many revisions end up being changed several times.
   ○ Classes with little experience in revising and editing will need more explicit instruction and shorter blocks of time for independent revising.
2. Revising and editing can extend for several class periods, depending on the experience of the class and the goals of the teacher. Here are some additional ideas for teaching revision.
   ○ Teach students the difference between revising and editing.
   ○ Teach a short lesson on writing a great title for your poem.
   ○ A great lesson for teaching the value of feedback and revision is "Austin's Butterfly." You can see a version of it on my website: https://sites.google.com/site/tflanagan214/argument/austin-s-butterfly
   ○ Have a "write around." Students sit in groups of four. Each student passes his/her notebook to the person on the right. Students are given 1-2 minutes to silently read the poem in the notebook, put a check next to their favorite line, and write a comment below. Students do not talk and they must wait until the teacher says to pass the notebook to the next person. This continues until each student gets his/her notebook back with comments from each person in their group.
   ○ Teach the formal process for having a peer conference.
   ○ Model a writing conference with the class by asking for student feedback on a poem the teacher has written. The teacher should use the feedback to think aloud and make changes to their poem.

Lesson Eight: Final Revising and Editing

Objectives: ● Use the writing process to publish a final copy of a poem.	Vocabulary: publish
Time: One class period	Materials: Students should have access to the internet in order to submit their poem online; Projector; Poetry evaluation form

1. Students will submit their poems online on a Google Form. If computers are not available, students can submit them from home or on paper.
2. Take time to go through the steps of submitting a poem online. Go through each question and show students the optional section for including additional information about themselves. The form can be accessed here:
   http://tinyurl.com/share-my-poem
3. Students can use this class to finish revising and editing, and for submitting their poem. They may also want to work on a drawing or sketch to be included with their poem.
4. If there is time during this class, students can complete the evaluation form for this unit: https://goo.gl/forms/xu642DUHIfBXuXVj1.

Please note the following criteria for submitting poems to this website.

1. Your poem should be autobiographical in nature (it says something about you).
2. You have used the writing process to revise and edit your poem. It is not a first draft. You have made changes to improve it and you are pleased with the final product.
3. It is your own work. Your poem may be modeled after another poem, and you are encouraged to get help with revising and editing, but it should reflect your own ideas and thinking.
4. You are submitting a poem because you want to, not because it is a requirement for a class assignment.

Additional Lesson Ideas

Class time can be given for the following lessons and activities as needed.
- Additional time for revising and editing poems.
- Time to publish more than one poem.
- Mini-lessons on additional skills, such as:
    - How to make a great title for your poem
    - Using techniques such as alliteration, onomatopoeia, personification, repetition, rhyming, etc.
    - Spelling and punctuation lessons connected to student poems
- Reading and modeling additional autobiographical poems.
- A final celebration for students to share poems.

Contact Me

Please contact me with any questions, suggestions or feedback regarding this curriculum guide. You can find more information about my Fulbright project on the project website and my blog. Thank you.

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Websites:
About Me: https://about.me/timflanagan
Blog: http://tflanagan.us/yearabroad/
Fulbright Project site: http://tflanagan.us/shareyourpoem/
School website: https:/tinyurl.com/tflan

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