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The Untouched Verse: Exploring Teachers' Attitudes and Approaches to Poetry in EFL Classrooms

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1. Introduction

The use of literature in the language classroom has a long history, yet its role has also been increasingly questioned (Hanauer, “The task of poetry” 295). Hanauer (“The task of poetry” 296) points out that while stylistic research has contributed valuable insights into the analysis of poetry, it remains unclear what role poetry should play in the language classroom and how learners actually engage with it. Moreover, research suggests that poetry is often associated with negative feelings and perceived as especially challenging by students (Xerri, “Colluding in the torture” 135). Within English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction, poetry is often marginalized. As Xerri (“Colluding in the torture” 135-137) argues, highly analytical classroom approaches and the pressures of assessment tend to sideline poetry, contributing to its marginal status. Yet rather than being a dispensable luxury, poetry – particularly short-form poetry – can offer precisely what many language learners lack: concise yet rich texts that invite emotional engagement, linguistic play, and personal interpretation.

Several scholars argue that short-form poetry can be particularly valuable for EFL teaching, since its brevity makes it accessible even for less proficient learners while still allowing exploration of rhythm, tone, and figurative language (Suwastini & Rahmayanti 3-8). Recent scholarship further highlights how contemporary short poetic genres – most notably Instapoetry – can make poetry teaching more motivating and dynamic by linking classroom practices with students’ online literacies (Barbosa & Sales 69-73; Suwastini & Rahmayanti 3-8). Despite these widely acknowledged advantages, poetry nevertheless tends to be relegated to the margins of the EFL classroom. This tension between potential and practice is particularly salient in contexts where teachers feel under pressure to deliver measurable outcomes and adhere to performance-based curricular goals.

To better understand poetry’s limited presence in EFL instruction, it is necessary to consider how teacher beliefs, training, and confidence shape classroom practice. Research has consistently linked poetry’s marginal status in EFL instruction to teacher insecurity, citing insufficient preparation and pedagogical confidence as key obstacles (Blake & Snapper 1; Gönen 28; Creely et al. 1, 5-8). Blake and Snapper (1) point to inadequate subject knowledge and pedagogical fear as primary obstacles, while Gönen (28) notes that many teacher education programs neglect to prepare future teachers to use literary forms – including poetry – for language instruction. Teachers may have studied poetry as students, even written about it academically, but still feel unequipped to teach it creatively. Creely et al. (1-8) emphasize this distinction, noting that the ability to engage students with poetry in meaningful ways depends

less on literary expertise and more on the capacity to design dynamic, accessible, and student-centered activities. Some teachers may naturally connect with poetry, but others benefit from structured support, such as workshops or thematically framed units that allow gradual entry into poetic teaching.

While teacher confidence and preparation play a crucial role, research also highlights the importance of student attitudes. Student resistance is another challenge frequently reported in the literature. With studies noting that learners often perceive poetry as “boring, irrelevant and difficult” (Xerri, “Poetry on its way” 10), a perception that is reinforced when poetry is taught mainly for assessment purposes (Xerri, “Colluding in the torture” 135-136). Similar concerns are echoed in Gangchuk (13), who reports that students perceived poetry as “difficult, irrelevant and something they should not be studying in the 21st century”. Mironova (143-144) likewise notes that students often achieve only a fragmentary understanding of poetry, which limits their ability to engage with texts on a deeper level. At the same time, Xerri (“Finding a Language” 611) highlights the role of parental expectations and performative academic cultures in narrowing the space for creative exploration. By contrast, Farrah and Al-Bakri’s (22-23) study with Palestinian EFL students found that learners generally enjoyed poetry and perceived it as motivating, particularly for improving language skills and critical thinking. Despite this, research consistently shows that when students are given opportunities to engage with poetry that is meaningful and relatable to them – such as spoken word, Instapoetry (short, often image-based poems shared on platforms like Instagram), or collaborative writing – they often respond with enthusiasm and creativity (Curwood & Bull 154-156; Gilmour 300-306; Barbosa & Sales 76).

Building on this literature, the current study pays particular attention to the intersection between teacher confidence, material availability, and perceived student receptivity. Preliminary conversations with teachers revealed a broad interpretation of what counted as poetry in the classroom: song lyrics, rap, chants, memes, and social media texts were frequently mentioned alongside more traditional poetic forms. This diversity reflects both pedagogical pragmatism and the influence of student interests. By allowing teachers to define poetry inductively – based on what they use in practice or feel drawn to – the study opens a space to reconsider poetry’s place in EFL pedagogy not as a fixed category, but as a flexible, culturally embedded practice.

In the Austrian AHS Unterstufe curriculum for English (BMBWF 664), communicative competence, receptive and productive language skills, and intercultural awareness are emphasized as key goals of instruction. Poetry is explicitly mentioned as part of the “Gesprächs-

Lese- und Hörstoff" (conversation, reading, and listening materials), grouped alongside songs, anecdotes, and short narratives (BMBWF 664). Furthermore, the curriculum encourages creative and playful methods of teaching, including film clips, short videos, and poems, to promote age-appropriate, competency-based learning (BMBWF 77). In the AHS Oberstufe curriculum, creativity is framed more broadly: under "Kreativität und Gestaltung", English instruction is expected to foster creative and productive writing tasks and the production of aesthetic texts, including multimodal and multimedia forms (BMBWF 342). While these curricular framings leave ample room for interpretive freedom, they remain relatively unspecific. Poetry is gestured toward rather than clearly positioned, with little indication of its role within the broader aims of English language teaching.

Such curricular openness creates both opportunity and constraint. Teachers are free to explore diverse poetic materials and methodologies, but they may also lack the support or training to do so confidently. The disconnect between curricular ideals and classroom realities has been observed in other international contexts as well, where teachers report avoiding poetry due to fears about complexity, student disengagement, or a perceived lack of relevance (Xerri, "Teachers as Readers" 37-38; Gönen 28; Matthews et al. 739-749). In Austria, little empirical research has examined how these dynamics unfold at the lower-secondary level, where foundational attitudes toward literature and language learning often take shape.

Given this lack of empirical research, the present study seeks to address the gap by exploring how Austrian EFL teachers at lower-secondary AHS schools perceive the challenges and opportunities of using poetry – particularly short-form poetry – in their classrooms. Through a series of focus group interviews, the research investigates how teachers understand poetry's pedagogical value, how confident they feel incorporating it into their teaching, and what role they believe materials, student reactions, and institutional expectations play in shaping their choices.

The central research question guiding this thesis is: How do EFL teachers perceive the challenges and benefits of implementing short-form poetry in lower-secondary schools, particularly in relation to fostering students' motivation and creative expression? A secondary question addresses teachers' resource awareness: How aware are EFL teachers of available teaching materials for incorporating poetry in AHS classrooms? Underlying this inquiry is the hypothesis that teachers who feel confident in sourcing or adapting poetry materials are more likely to integrate poetry into their classroom practice.

To explore these questions, this study adopts a qualitative case study approach, drawing on three focus group discussions with a total of nine Austrian EFL teachers from different AHS lower-secondary classrooms. Participants were current EFL teachers, reflecting a range of teaching experience and perspectives. While each focus group consisted of teachers from a different school and some contextual differences were noted, the analysis primarily centers on individual voices and the beliefs, experiences, and concerns each teacher brings to the conversation. Although the sample size is small, this format allows for in-depth engagement with teachers' lived experiences. The study prioritizes teachers' voices, positioning them not as passive implementers of curricular mandates but as active negotiators of meaning, creativity, and pedagogical risk.

The thesis is organized as follows: Chapter 2 reviews the relevant literature on poetry in EFL contexts, teacher confidence, curricular pressures, and creative pedagogy. Chapter 3 outlines the methodological design, including participant selection, data collection, and ethical considerations. Chapter 4 presents the key findings, organized around thematic patterns that emerged in the focus groups. Chapter 5 discusses these findings in relation to the literature and research questions. Chapter 6 addresses the study's limitations and Chapter 7 suggests directions for future research. Finally, Chapter 8 offers a conclusion that synthesizes key insights and considers the broader implications for teacher education, curriculum design, and poetry pedagogy.

In investigating how poetry is understood, avoided, adapted, or embraced by lower-secondary EFL teachers, this thesis aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of how poetic literacy is shaped in everyday school settings – and how its untapped potential might be realized.

2. Literature Review¹

2.1. Introduction

This literature review situates the present study within existing scholarship on poetry integration in EFL classrooms, teacher attitudes, and creative pedagogy. It outlines the concepts and findings that directly shaped the design of the focus group interviews conducted with Austrian lower-secondary EFL teachers. Although this research ultimately employs an inductive, qualitative approach to highlight teachers' own perspectives, the literature reviewed

¹ Parts of this literature review and subsequent chapters draw on work originally submitted for the Applied Research Seminar at the University of Vienna. This reuse has been approved by the supervisor of this thesis.

here provided the foundation for framing the interview questions, highlighting underexplored tensions, and clarifying why poetry – particularly short-form poetry – warrants closer attention in the context of foreign language teaching.

In the Austrian AHS Unterstufe curriculum for English (BMBWF 664, 77), communicative competence, receptive and productive skills, and cultural awareness are underscored as primary goals of EFL instruction, with literature – including poetry – highlighted as one possible means of achieving these aims. Poetry appears only in general terms, grouped alongside songs, anecdotes, and short narratives. This broad framing provides teachers with wide latitude in interpretation but also leaves the curricular role of poetry only loosely defined. The literature on poetry pedagogy, teacher confidence, creativity, and curricular pressures therefore offered crucial lenses for formulating the focus group questions, ensuring they resonated with known challenges while remaining open to teachers' lived experiences.

2.2. Theoretical lenses: Self-efficacy, and Motivation

A central premise in exploring poetry integration in EFL classrooms is that teacher attitudes fundamentally shape whether, how, and to what extent poetry is taught. Albert Bandura's concept of self-efficacy, introduced in 1977 as part of his broader social cognitive theory, describes individuals' beliefs in their capabilities to organize and execute the actions needed to manage prospective situations (Bandura 193). Bandura's (193-198) framework suggests that teacher confidence is not solely about knowing what to teach (outcome expectancy), but about believing they can effectively deliver the lesson and manage the classroom to achieve learning goals (efficacy expectation). This belief influences whether teachers attempt certain teaching strategies or topics, how much effort they invest, and how long they persist when faced with challenges such as student apprehension or difficulty with materials.

This is particularly salient in Austrian lower-secondary EFL contexts, where poetry often carries a reputation for abstraction or interpretive difficulty. Teachers with lower self-efficacy may gravitate toward safer, grammar- or vocabulary-focused lessons, avoiding what they perceive as high-risk literary tasks. In contrast, those who possess stronger self-efficacy beliefs are more likely to experiment with creative, student-centered activities, persist in the face of initial student resistance, and reframe perceived risks as manageable challenges.

Ryan and Deci's Self-Determination Theory (SDT), developed in the mid-1980s, offers a complementary motivational framework. It emphasizes that intrinsic motivation flourishes when three psychological needs are satisfied: autonomy (feeling in control of one's choices),

competence (feeling capable and skilled), and relatedness (feeling connected to content, colleagues, or students) (Ryan & Deci 70, 74). If teachers feel constrained by rigid curricula (undermining autonomy), insecure about their literary expertise (weakening competence), or disconnected from poetry as personally meaningful (lacking relatedness), their motivation to integrate creative approaches can falter (Ryan & Deci 71). Conversely, when these needs are met, teachers are more inclined to take pedagogical risks, explore diverse materials like poetry, and invest in fostering students' interpretive and creative skills.

Complementing these perspectives, Dörnyei ("Motivation" 273) offers a nuanced understanding of motivation in the L2 learning context, which can also be read in light of Ryan and Deci's Self-Determination Theory. He emphasizes that motivation in language learning involves not only the acquisition of new knowledge but also engagement with personal and social dimensions (Dörnyei, "Motivation" 274). Particularly relevant to this study are the teacher-specific motivational components he outlines – including personality, teaching style, feedback, and student-teacher relationships – all of which can influence whether poetry is embraced or avoided in the classroom (Dörnyei, "Motivation" 277). In addition, he describes course-specific components (e.g., teaching materials and methods) and group-specific components, which include the peer dynamic within the learning group – a factor that emerged clearly in this study, both in classroom examples and in the social interplay of the focus groups themselves (Dörnyei, "Motivation" 277). Furthermore, Dörnyei ("Motivation" 278) describes one of the most important factors in this teacher-specific motivational component, namely the affiliative drive. This refers to students' desire to please their teachers, which often leads them to perform better in school – especially when they hold their teacher in high regard (Dörnyei, "Motivation" 278). In addition, Dörnyei ("Motivation" 280-282) offers a range of teaching strategies to motivate L2 learners, including 30 specific techniques such as adjusting task difficulty to match students' abilities and reducing anxiety by creating a supportive learning environment. While these strategies provide a useful theoretical scaffold, their practical implementation often diverges significantly in real classrooms. Although Dörnyei's framework was developed over three decades ago, it continues to offer valuable insights, though some aspects may warrant re-evaluation in light of contemporary educational challenges. The goal remains to embed motivational strategies into students' daily language learning experiences.

While not always framed explicitly through psychological theory, studies by Matthews (359-362) and Hennessy et al. (341-342) nonetheless echo the dynamics described in concepts like self-efficacy and autonomy. Matthews (360) connects diminished teacher agency directly to testing pressures, noting how performative cultures often narrow both student and teacher

creativity. Hennessy et al. (341-343) similarly observe that teachers' limited personal engagement with poetry outside of school – seldom writing, listening to, or attending poetry events, and rarely receiving relevant training – was linked to lower confidence and less inclination to experiment with poetry in the classroom.

Although these theories did not serve as deductive models for the research reviewed here, they offer crucial conceptual grounding. They help explain how systemic factors such as standardization pressures, heavy reliance on coursebooks, or lack of professional development can either undermine or nurture the psychological conditions necessary for creative, literature-based pedagogy. Taken together, the insights of Bandura, Ryan and Deci, and Dörnyei underscore how systemic factors shape teacher confidence and autonomy – both of which are critical for creative, literature-based pedagogy in EFL classrooms.

In the context of this study, student motivation is not examined through formal psychological models but inferred from teacher-reported indicators such as engagement, enthusiasm, and emotional responsiveness during poetry activities. While the teachers interviewed rarely used the term “motivation” explicitly, their reflections frequently referenced observable student behaviors – such as heightened focus, creative risk-taking, or enjoyment – that align with broader definitions of motivational classroom dynamics. As Xerri (“Poetry on its way” 4-5) emphasizes, students' motivation and learning are often strongest when they are able to engage with poetry on a personal and emotional level. Similarly, Spiro (*Creative Poetry* 10) argues that when students experience what it feels like to be writers, they become more confident and invested in their learning, illustrating how poetry's multimodal nature can deepen motivation. These accounts support a broader interpretation of motivation as experienced and described in everyday pedagogical terms.

2.3. From Scaffold to Slam: Exploring Poetic Practice in the EFL Classroom

Building on the theoretical lens of self-efficacy, this chapter explores how structured frameworks and performance-based approaches shape poetry instruction. Poetry is widely acknowledged as a valuable component of language learning, yet in many EFL contexts it remains underutilized or treated as a “high-risk” genre. Gönen's Poetry Teaching (POT) framework offers six scaffolded stages of poetry instruction – Tune-in, Basic Comprehension, Detailed Analysis, Cultivation, Bridge, and Reflection – each supported by adaptable activities (Gönen 29-32). This structure can reduce teacher reluctance by offering clear progression, particularly for novice teachers (Gönen 31). However, while Gönen does not explicitly position

the model as a precursor to more autonomous teaching, its carefully staged approach arguably provides a pedagogical foundation that may bolster teacher confidence and, over time, encourage more flexible, student-centered practices. Yet this very stepwise format also raises critical questions about whether such frameworks inadvertently discourage risk-taking or deeper literary exploration.

This tension is well documented in the literature. Xerri (“Poetry on its way” 7-8) warns that teachers’ gatekeeping practices can unintentionally limit students’ creative and affective engagement with poetry. Boldireff and Bober’s (57-83) systematic review echoes this concern from a broader perspective, showing that poetry has often been marginalized in ELT as “too difficult”, despite substantial evidence of its linguistic, cultural, and affective value. Paran (“Role of Literature” 469-470) similarly critiques a methodological gap in the field, noting that many studies privilege academic perspectives without adequately considering how teacher experience intersects with theoretical claims. He emphasizes, drawing on prior studies, that while teacher attitudes matter, the actual task design and the level of student engagement are equally critical for effective literature teaching (Paran, “Role of Literature” 470-474). Indeed, Paran (“Role of Literature” 479) reviews that student-centered literature teaching, where learners actively interpret and respond to texts, is generally better received than teacher-dominated lessons.

Spiro (*Creative Poetry* 7) brings a nuanced perspective to this debate, arguing that poetry is “peculiarly suited to the demands of the language classroom” because its formal features, such as repetition and pattern, both structure language practice and create opportunities for creativity. In her work, she builds a compelling case for poetry’s unique suitability in the language classroom, blending theoretical rationale with practical tasks. She highlights haiku for its vivid imagery and brevity (Spiro, *Creative Poetry* 179), praises ballads for merging narrative and song in ways that resonate with learners (Spiro, *Creative Poetry* 182), and even advocates for sound poetry, describing how “elements of the word can be played with like plasticine, to give students confidence and courage” (Spiro, *Creative Poetry* 17). Her broader view that words in poetry are “more like colours that change according to their neighbours” (Spiro, *Creative Poetry* 48) captures the dynamic, associative nature of poetic language.

Other scholars emphasize how rethinking form can challenge perceptions of poetry as overly abstract. Beloufa (143) observes that many students struggle to grasp a poem’s image and dominant theme. Her Algerian study supports this perception: 70% of learners reported finding poetry more difficult than prose (Beloufa 148). Beloufa (144-151) further argues that concrete

poetry – where the poem’s visual form directly contributes to meaning – can help disrupt such apprehension. By making text a literal object of interpretation, concrete poetry invites active, personal readings and enhances critical thinking (Beloufa 144-151). Abrams and Harpham (63) similarly describe concrete poetry as a form “that experiments with the visual shape in which a text is presented on the page,” forcing readers to treat language as spatial and sculptural. Spiro (*Creative Poetry* 147) adds that linking words to visual shapes “just like an object we can touch and hold” can also aid vocabulary retention by embedding language in sensory memory.

Beyond structured scaffolds, the literature highlights performance-based approaches – like spoken word and slam poetry – as powerful avenues for demystifying poetry and engaging students creatively. Alexander (69-70), writing about Irish curricular traditions, shows that reading aloud has long been central to poetry pedagogy, underlining how poems are often encountered through voice rather than silent reading. Building on this oral tradition, contemporary formats such as spoken word and slam can be seen as energizing ways to approach poetry, positioning texts not merely as words on a page but as scripts to be embodied through sound and rhythm. Spiro (*Creative Poetry* 183) expands this by discussing rap as a form “halfway between poem and song,” rooted in communal performance and designed to be read, danced, or drummed – highlighting poetry’s rich multimodal potential. Empirical work with youth poets confirms this potential: Curwood and Bull (154-163) show how spoken word projects foster creativity, agency, and strong engagement, enabling students to connect poetry to their lived experiences.

These approaches are especially pertinent given Gönen’s finding that reception – interpreting, analyzing, and responding critically to poems – is often the least emphasized skill in EFL teacher education (Gönen 30). This gap is compounded by studies showing many teachers view poetry as “beyond their ability” (Gangchuk 13). Cahnmann-Taylor et al. (71-94) further note that there remains little documentation on how preservice teachers cultivate their own creative practices, asking pointedly, “If we hope for TESOL educators will teach creatively, how do we train TESOL teachers as creative teacher-artists themselves, practiced at the aesthetics of language choice and use?” (Cahnmann-Taylor et al. 73). Such insights reveal that challenges in poetry pedagogy often stem less from resource or curricular constraints and more from deeper issues in professional preparation, confidence, and pedagogical imagination.

At the same time, the literature also points to encouraging dynamics. Beloufa (145-151) and Piscayanti et al. (377) found that students who were initially wary of poetry became more motivated once they were actively engaged in interpretation and creation. Such tasks enhanced

writing, critical thinking, and even well-being, especially when combined with mindfulness techniques (Piscayanti et al. 376-377). The metaphor of poetry as a “bridge,” helping learners connect new linguistic worlds to their own, recurs throughout these studies – encapsulated by Piscayanti et al.’s (377) assertion that poetry enables learners to “build a new perspective and create a new possibility of meaning”.

These perspectives illustrate a lively scholarly debate: some champion scaffolded safety to lower barriers, while others warn of inadvertently stifling the very creative, personal, and risky dimensions that make poetry pedagogically transformative. This tension – between support and constraint – informs the critical questions this thesis asks about how Austrian teachers navigate poetry in practice.

2.4. Voice, Risk, and Contemporary Poetry Practices

While frameworks like Gönen’s provide valuable scaffolds for hesitant teachers, a parallel body of research argues that poetry’s deepest educational value lies in nurturing personal voice, risk-taking, and meaning-making that transcend neat instructional stages. Hanauer (“Meaningful Literacy” 108) captures this succinctly, describing language learning as “part of a process of widening and deepening the ways an individual can understand, interpret, feel and express [...] personally meaningful understandings [...]” In this view, poetry serves not merely as a linguistic exercise but as a practice of self-articulation within social contexts. His pedagogy rests on the belief that “on a deep level every human being wishes to express and explore the meaning of their own lives,” positioning poetry writing as a particularly powerful vehicle for such exploration (Hanauer, “Meaningful Literacy” 112). This perspective complicates highly structured models: if the goal is to cultivate expressive resources grounded in personal meaning, rigid stepwise approaches might constrain precisely what poetry is best equipped to unlock.

Cahnmann (29-34) similarly frames poetry as “a risky business”, yet also a source of discovery, noting that “through poetic craft and practice, we can surprise both ourselves and our audiences with new possibilities” (Cahnmann 34). At the same time, she critiques the dominance of critical analysis, suggesting it “has taken away from what might otherwise be a pleasurable experience, an unlabelled appreciation of the language, image, and music in verse,” leaving many with a lasting distaste for poetry rooted in their own schooling (Cahnmann 29). Such critiques highlight why approaches that overemphasize formal interpretation may inadvertently reinforce the very anxieties they aim to reduce.

Other scholars focus on how contemporary, multimodal forms can revitalize engagement. Barbosa and Sales (66-68), investigating Instapoetry in Brazilian EFL classrooms through action research, highlight how these digital texts – dense with emotion and often blending words, images, and visual layout – offer students a more immediate, emotionally relatable entry point. Their classroom intervention showed that exposure to Instapoetry enriched learners’ linguistic repertoire and markedly increased enthusiasm (Barbosa & Sales 76), though they caution that without thoughtful guidance, such engagement risks remaining superficial (Barbosa & Sales 73).

Reazul (314-319) adds another dimension, contrasting the promise of digital modes with the enduring convenience of print. His examples, such as working with Wordsworth’s “I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud,” show that traditional poetry can also build critical and communicative skills – if paired with meaningful, interactive tasks (Reazul 319-323). However, he notes that the complexity and authenticity of literary language can both attract learners and, if not carefully matched to their level, risk intimidating them – underscoring the need to match texts carefully to learners’ capacities (Reazul 316-317).

This is echoed by Samanik (23-24), who advocates a diverse repertoire of poetry activities – from writing inspired by students’ environments and interests, to reading that incorporates movement and body language. Such embodied, sensory practices resonate with Spiro’s (*Creative Poetry* 11) view that poetry can be danced, mimed, or sung. Together, these insights suggest poetry flourishes pedagogically when treated not as a static text to decode, but as a living, multi-sensory experience.

Xerri’s reflections further complicate the picture. In “Teachers as Readers and Writers of Poetry,” he points out that many teachers lack personal connection to poetry, having rarely written poems or engaged with them outside curriculum demands (Xerri 39). This absence of lived poetic experience can make teachers hesitant to embrace contemporary forms like spoken word or Instapoetry, thereby reinforcing safer, test-centered routines. However, Xerri (“Teachers as Readers” 39-40) suggests that when teachers begin to explore poetry themselves, they gain confidence and are better able to create classroom contexts that foster student creativity and engagement. This resonates with his later observation that spoken word and slam poetry have gained huge popularity, attracting new audiences and broadening participation in poetry (Xerri, “Finding a Language” 605-606).

Across these accounts, a common thread emerges: poetry’s pedagogical power lies less in technical mastery than in its capacity to foster personal voice, emotional risk-taking, and

creative pleasure. Whether through multimodal forms like Instapoetry, embodied classroom practices, or performances that challenge conventional roles, the literature points to poetry as a dynamic and often unpredictable force. This unpredictability is not a drawback but a source of its educational value – one that invites both students and teachers into experiences of self-discovery and expressive freedom. These studies show that poetry’s unpredictability is not a limitation but a pedagogical strength – when carefully supported. Effective poetry pedagogy must thus balance vulnerability with vitality.

2.5. Scaffold or Straitjacket? Teacher Autonomy and Coursebook Use in EFL Classrooms

A persistent tension in EFL pedagogy is how teachers navigate between creative, student-centered approaches and the structural safety of coursebooks. This is especially relevant in poetry instruction, where teachers often feel caught between institutional expectations and their own desire to innovate. Studies across diverse contexts show that coursebooks can either scaffold or constrain teachers, depending on how much autonomy they perceive and how confident they feel in adapting materials.

Korkmazgil’s (777) mixed-methods study with Turkish EFL teachers reveals this ambivalence clearly. Teachers acknowledged that designing lessons entirely from scratch was unrealistic given workload and administrative demands, making coursebooks a practical scaffold (Korkmazgil 777). However, Korkmazgil (777) notes that scholars have warned of a potential “deskilling effect”, arguing that coursebooks may restrict teachers’ agency and creativity by reducing their control over lesson content. The metaphors the teachers used are particularly telling: a coursebook was “a compass” for navigating uncertainty, “a Band-Aid” useful in emergencies but not a long-term solution, “a full but light suitcase” appearing comprehensive yet hollow, or “a dinner table,” providing basic structure but still needing the teacher to curate the pedagogical “menu” (Korkmazgil 783-784). This resonates with Gilmour (300), who describes how teachers valued opportunities to move beyond narrow, prescriptive demands of the curriculum, which created more space for creativity.

Similar patterns emerge elsewhere. Grossman and Thompson (2020-2025), in their longitudinal study of early-career U.S. teachers, observed that novices often latch onto ready-made materials to solve immediate classroom problems, sometimes relying on them for years. They warn that while coursebooks can provide important scaffolds, they risk functioning as crutches that limit teachers’ flexibility and professional growth (Grossman & Thompson 2015-2024). In his study of Swedish EFL teachers, Allen (255, 259) found a striking contrast: while digitally savvy pre-

service teachers still relied heavily on coursebooks, indicating that technological competence does not automatically translate into curricular autonomy, in-service teachers went further, using metaphors that highlighted their ambivalence. Some described the coursebook as a “straitjacket”– restrictive and creativity-blunting – while others called it a “crutch”, conveying both support and dependency (Allen 254-255). Taken together, these metaphors underscore how curricular tools can simultaneously scaffold and constrain teacher agency.

Rathert and Cabaroğlu (1833) also highlight this tension in Turkish settings, noting that many teachers use coursebooks less for pedagogical reasons and more to satisfy administrative requirements and keep up with mandated pacing. Because most EFL coursebooks are produced in English-speaking countries, they frequently mismatch local student needs and cultural contexts, making it even harder to adapt creative content like poetry (Rathert & Cabaroğlu 1818). This critique is highly relevant for Austrian AHS classrooms, where the curriculum does encourage creative and intercultural engagement – including through poetry – but where teachers may receive little structured support or training to actualize these goals.

Teacher agency plays a central role in how poetry is selected and taught. Watson et al. (341) emphasize the importance of teachers being able to choose texts that reflect their interests and values. In the English context, Elliott and Courtney (91-100) show that poetry is the genre through which students are most likely to encounter authors of color. However, they caution that such texts are often narrowly framed around themes like racism or identity, limiting the ways students engage with diverse perspectives (Elliott & Courtney 91-99).

The risk is well documented: external pressures such as heavy workloads, curricular constraints, and limited time can push teachers to treat the coursebook as the curriculum itself (Korkmazgil 783-785; Grossman & Thompson 2020). In such situations, what is designed as a flexible scaffold can function more like a straitjacket, constraining teacher autonomy. Myhill and Warren (58) caution that some researchers have argued scaffolding can, if handled too rigidly, shift from being a temporary support into a kind of “straitjacket” that restricts student learning. This reflects Littlejohn’s (185-186) concern that published materials, by selecting and sequencing content in advance, often leave teachers to follow predetermined pathways rather than exercising professional autonomy.

At this point, scholars like Spiro and Paran offer particularly instructive insights. They argue that when teachers are given the autonomy to select texts that are topical or personally meaningful, the literary experience becomes far more engaging for both teachers and students (Spiro & Paran 24). Syamsia and Hamid (2) echo this point, emphasizing that effective text

selection also depends on ensuring that materials are thematically relevant, appropriate in length, and accessible to students' comprehension levels. However, Spiro and Paran (24) caution that in many textbook-dominated classrooms, such freedom is often lacking, and the provided texts may not resonate with students' backgrounds or current concerns. Similarly, Gangchuk (12-13) underscores the importance of allowing teachers to choose poems that reflect their students' interests and needs – a practice that can foster both motivation and deeper engagement.

Grossman and Thompson (2020-2025) emphasize that the core issue is not whether coursebooks are inherently beneficial or harmful, but how teachers are supported to use them. When time, mentorship, and curricular flexibility are available, coursebooks can be springboards for innovation. Without such support, they risk becoming rigid scripts that undermine agency – an insight echoed by calls for more research and professional development into how teachers perceive their curricular freedom and the extent to which classroom dynamics and institutional structures foster or constrain creative literary teaching (Matthews et al. 745-748; Rathert & Cabaroğlu 1833).

Even beyond direct institutional pressures, how teachers are trained also plays a subtle role. Gönen (27, 34-35) found that Turkish pre-service teachers often viewed literature – especially poetry – as theoretical rather than practical, largely because their education emphasized textbook-driven instruction. The Austrian context is somewhat different, with schoolbook series like *More!* including poems, but Gönen's findings suggest that access alone is not enough. Without teacher education that models creative and adaptive approaches, coursebook content is unlikely to translate into meaningful classroom practice (Rathert & Cabaroğlu 1833; Grossman & Thompson 2020).

Paran ("Role of Literature" 480) further notes that non-native English teachers often lack confidence in literary interpretation precisely because their own teacher education did not prioritize robust approaches to poetry – sending an implicit message that poetry is peripheral rather than central to language teaching. This is particularly pertinent in Austrian grammar schools, where teachers whose first language (L1) is German may have had limited exposure to English poetry pedagogy.

This also ties to the role of the L1 in literature teaching. Paran ("Role of Literature" 475) observes that studies focusing on literature, rather than on language development, often report greater tolerance of L1 use in the classroom. This may reflect the specific aims of literature classes, where drawing on multiple languages can support interpretation. Similarly, Spiro and

Paran (19) argue that whereas L1 use was once frowned upon, newer research on multilingual identities shows that learners' other languages offer rich opportunities for meaning making in reading.

This same tension between institutional expectations and teacher autonomy surfaces in teachers' use of coursebooks – sometimes as scaffolds for creativity, at other times as constraints.

Finally, Korkmazgil (777-784) found no statistically significant link between teaching experience and coursebook dependence, though qualitatively, more experienced teachers were somewhat more likely to adapt materials. This underscores a broader pattern across studies: coursebook reliance is shaped less by experience alone than by the interplay of confidence, institutional expectations, and available support. Ultimately, coursebooks are neither inherently restrictive nor liberating – their impact hinges on teacher education, institutional culture, and the space teachers are given to adapt materials creatively.

2.6. Freedom or Formula? Teaching Poetry Between Constraint and Creativity

Expanding on the theme of constraint versus creativity, this section explores how poetry nurtures learner voice and interpretive engagement. A strong theme across the literature is that poetry can support not only language acquisition but also deeper personal engagement, creativity, and the development of learner voice. Numerous studies explore how poetic activities prompt students to interpret texts critically, experiment with self-expression, and at times produce unexpectedly original work. This recurring emphasis underlines why these dimensions – creativity, interpretation, and personal investment – merit close attention in EFL contexts like Austria.

Xerri's ("Finding a Language" 605-608) earlier arguments about the impact of performance and spoken word remain relevant here, particularly in how these modes foster student receptiveness and enjoyment. As Spiro (*Creative Poetry* 183) has noted, poetry's inherently playful and multimodal nature makes it particularly engaging – especially when linked to student creativity and agency.

Spoken word poetry, in particular, has become a space for adolescents to articulate personal and political concerns, promoting critical engagement and emotional resonance (Curwood & Bull 154-164). Poetry's potential to foster activism and self-expression is also underscored by Concannon-Gibney (1-4), who incorporates poems about climate change and bullying to

connect literature with students' lived experiences. Calafato and Paran's (29-35) study of Russian EFL teachers adds further support, showing that teachers across age groups perceived literature as valuable not only for linguistic development but also for broadening cultural awareness. Their findings reinforce the potential of poetry as both a language-learning tool and a gateway to intercultural empathy and reflection.

Meanwhile, Gönen (30) notes that reception is often overlooked in teacher education, leaving many teachers underprepared to guide students through poetic interpretation. In a similar vein, Creely et al. (1, 5-9) highlight the importance of rethinking how poetry is addressed in teacher education, arguing that programs can better support teacher confidence by modelling creative and dialogic pedagogies. Together, these findings help explain why subsequent research frequently examines how teachers balance reading, writing, and performing poetry, and how they address students' common perceptions of poetry as confusing or overly abstract. Such pedagogical choices profoundly shape student engagement, confidence, and interpretive skill.

Rosenhan and Galloway (3) explore this through the idea of "creative language play," arguing that while orthodox communicative approaches stress self-reflection and correctness, creativity often thrives in the tension between conforming and deliberately bending linguistic norms. As they put it, "Creative language play [...] adds an important dimension to these orthodoxies of the communicative approach, such as self-reflection and subversion that ignore a wide range of other communicative repertoires" (Rosenhan & Galloway 3). In other words, by pushing against established conventions, learners can open up new communicative possibilities and experiment with broader repertoires of language use. They also emphasize that "an ideal creative writing pedagogy centres on activities in which intrinsically-motivated learners are allowed the space and time to express their voice and create" (Rosenhan & Galloway 4).

Matthews (358-365) offers a critical view of how pressures to teach for examinations can curtail both student and teacher creativity. In his study of English classrooms, teachers often felt compelled to prioritize test-related knowledge over exploratory or imaginative activities, which limited students' creative opportunities and reduced teachers' own professional agency (Matthews 360-364). He further observes that in a performative culture where success is narrowly defined by measurable outcomes, teachers often hesitate to deviate from established scripts (Matthews 365-367) – a caution that may be unconsciously passed on to students.

Hall (396-398) complements this by stressing that genuine literary engagement is driven as much by emotional involvement and pleasure as by analytical skill. He contends that fostering enjoyment in reading is crucial for deeper understanding and retention, yet literature – including

poetry – is often presented in ways that leave learners anxious or lacking confidence rather than engaged (Hall 397-398). Together, these insights show why developing pleasure-oriented approaches to poetry teaching requires more than classroom technique; it demands a broader shift in how educational systems value imaginative learning.

As previously discussed, Hanauer's (106-113) "meaningful literacy" framework emphasizes poetry as a means of personal meaning-making. In this section, it becomes clear how this idea also supports learner motivation and identity-building in classroom contexts.

Mardiningrum and Adriyanti (619) echo this in their study from Indonesia, where student interviews revealed that many found poetry helpful for processing emotions, sometimes even describing it as a relief. As one participant noted, "Sharing personal experiences is not always easy. Poetry makes it easier to do it" (Mardiningrum & Adriyanti 619). Students also emphasized the importance of having the freedom to explore what inspired them – whether that meant a quiet environment, a bustling atmosphere, or media such as songs, films, and pictures (Mardiningrum & Adriyanti 621). Similarly, Andania et al. (200) found that unlike typical classroom topics, poems encouraged students to develop creativity, with culturally responsive approaches helping them engage more deeply. They argue that personalized creative writing can "deepen students' linguistic experiences," moving beyond vocabulary drills toward more reflective language use (Andania et al. 200).

Rosenhan and Galloway (3-4,11) argue that creative language play contributes to learners' metalinguistic awareness and multiple competencies. In their discussion, they highlight how literary texts invite experimentation with non-standard forms of language, which can broaden learners' sense of what counts as 'correct' expression (Rosenhan & Galloway 3,11). This is underscored by Hanauer's later study in Pennsylvania, which found clear evidence that second-language learners could construct discernible identities through poetry – expressing how they saw themselves in new linguistic and cultural contexts ("Measuring Voice" 71, 80). Such findings highlight how constructing a voice and identity in another language is central to poetry's educational value, consistently showing how creative tasks enable students to explore self-representation in the target language.

Spiro (*Creative Poetry* 10) similarly links creativity to ownership, arguing that when students actively read and write poetry, they not only practice new language but also begin to understand "what it feels like to be a writer", an experience that fosters both linguistic skill and personal agency.

Cahnmann-Taylor and Hwang (399-415) extend this perspective from a TESOL teacher education angle. In their study with Chinese, Vietnamese, and U.S.-born English teachers enrolled in a poetry-writing course, they found that “the arts serve as meaningful tools in creative learning where students grow as interactive producers of meaning-making, not just passive receptors of language form” (Cahnmann-Taylor & Hwang 402-411). They caution that large, test-focused classrooms – like those in many Asian contexts, but also highly relevant to Austria – can easily sideline poetry (Cahnmann-Taylor & Hwang 410-411). As they observe, “by teaching global English teachers to become translingual poets we found we were teaching entanglements with discomfort as well as discovery” (Cahnmann-Taylor & Hwang 411), highlighting how poetry can reshape both classroom practices and teachers’ own creative identities.

Finally, these studies clarify why it is important not only to highlight poetry’s broad creative benefits, but also to examine how specific classroom tasks develop critical and analytical skills. As Spiro (*Creative Poetry* 183) notes, performance-based forms such as rap and spoken word encourage playful, multimodal engagement, fostering both creativity and deeper interpretive connections. Likewise, Hanauer (“Meaningful Literacy” 108) and Rosenhan and Galloway emphasize how poetry’s unique blend of linguistic experimentation and creative play expands learning beyond purely grammatical or lexical practice, while Piscayanti et al. (377-378) highlight its role in fostering self-expression and new possibilities of meaning through personal reflection.

2.7. Reluctant Voices: Teacher Confidence and the Marginalization of Poetry

As earlier sections have shown, much of the literature on poetry in EFL teaching grapples with a tension between creativity and caution – whether in scaffolded frameworks, multimodal performance, or fostering personal voice. Running through all these pedagogical debates is a deeper, often more personal factor: teachers’ own confidence, or lack thereof, in teaching poetry. This section examines how perceptions of poetry as abstract, inaccessible, or overly complex affect teacher self-efficacy – and how this, in turn, contributed to poetry’s marginalization in classroom practice.

Boldireff and Bober’s (57-83) systematic review of 43 studies underscores this, revealing that poetry is frequently marginalized in ELT because it is perceived as too difficult. While their broad scope highlights common trends across contexts, they also point to methodological

shortcomings and call for more systematic, practice-oriented research into how poetry functions in classroom practice (Boldireff & Bober 71-77).

Studies situated in specific educational systems add valuable nuance. For example, Weaven and Clark (198-210) show that even experienced Australian L1 teachers doubted their competence with poetry, citing pressures around assessment and student disinterest. Their action research, which fostered peer reflection and professional learning communities, demonstrated how collaborative approaches can rebuild teacher confidence (Weaven & Clark 199, 200-210) – an approach that may be particularly relevant in the Austrian context, where no empirical studies to date have explored how institutional pressures or teacher isolation affect teachers’ engagement with poetry.

Paran (“Role of Literature” 480) draws attention to compounded challenges in L2 environments: many teachers lack confidence not only in interpreting literary texts, but also because their own training often modeled literature as peripheral to core language teaching. Gönen’s (27, 34-35) research on Turkish pre-service teachers reinforces this point: because their education largely emphasized textbook-driven instruction, they often regarded poetry as a theoretical rather than practical tool. The Austrian context adds nuance to this discussion. While schoolbooks like *More!* include poems, Gönen’s insight suggests that mere access is insufficient if teachers lack the training and support to integrate poetry meaningfully.

This lack of confidence is often rooted not only in content knowledge but also in what Blake and Snapper (1) call “pedagogical fear”, a reluctance to engage with poetry due to uncertainty about how to teach it effectively. Xerri (“Teachers as Readers” 37-40) proposes targeted workshops that build teachers’ confidence by reigniting their own creative engagement with poetry. Such professional development, when focused not just on knowledge but on pedagogical creativity, can empower teachers to serve as literary role models. Cahnmann-Taylor and Hwang (406-409) similarly recommend workshops to cultivate both student and teacher creativity through writing. However, while such interventions are promising, they are not always feasible in practice – particularly in systems where time, funding, or institutional support for in-service training is limited. As such, the effectiveness of workshops depends not only on their design, but also on whether they are sustainably integrated into teachers’ professional environments.

Several studies highlight how a teacher’s personal enjoyment of poetry, along with their sense of creative identity, can foster greater professional confidence and pedagogical risk-taking. Hennessy et al. (335-342), for example, found that many Irish teachers rarely engage with

poetry outside of work – reading or writing it only within curricular demands. This lack of personal connection often translates into hesitance or discomfort when teaching poetry, particularly when compounded by external pressures such as parental expectations or exam-oriented systems (Hennessy et al. 336). These findings echo broader critiques of performative educational cultures (Matthews 360-367) and resonate with more recent work by Barbosa and Sales (68-74), who argue that digital genres such as Instapoetry can motivate learners and expand poetry pedagogy by connecting with students’ lived experiences and online practices.

Finally, Rozimela et al. (1396-1397), drawing on earlier research, stress that reflective practice (RP) is crucial for strengthening teachers’ critical thinking and pedagogical awareness. Their Indonesian study showed that while many teachers acknowledged the need to reflect more deeply on their lessons before, during, and after teaching, their actual practices often remained limited to surface-level activities (Rozimela et al. 1397-1399). Teachers also expressed that structured opportunities for feedback – whether from peers, supervisors, or principals – would be valuable for professional growth, but such practices were rarely systematic (Rozimela et al. 1398-1400). These findings suggest that cultivating stronger reflective habits could help teachers move beyond feelings of inadequacy and reframe poetry not as a “risky” or marginal activity, but as integral to developing both linguistic competence and personal expression.

Taken together, these studies show that teacher confidence in poetry instruction is rarely just a matter of technical skill. It is deeply intertwined with personal identity, prior educational experiences, and the institutional cultures in which teachers work. Teacher confidence is shaped not only by training but also by personal connection to poetry. Strengthening this connection may be key to reintegrating poetry meaningfully into the EFL classroom.

2.8. Institutional and Curricular Pressures: Navigating Creativity in Constrained Spaces

Beyond personal confidence and creative drive, teachers’ attitudes toward poetry are also heavily shaped by external forces such as curricular demands, assessment pressures, and systemic expectations. Several studies highlight how these factors can constrain experimentation: Matthews (360) documents how teaching-to-the-test cultures often suppress both teacher and student creativity, while Rathert and Cabaroğlu (1833) show that rigid curricular pacing frequently compels teachers to adhere to prescribed materials at the expense of innovative practices. Korkmazgil (783-784) further illustrates this tension through metaphors of coursebooks as “compasses”, “Band-Aids” or even “full but light suitcases,” underscoring how institutional frameworks can alternately support or stifle poetic exploration.

Matthews et al. (745-748) highlight this tension in the English education system: while creativity was explicitly encouraged in teacher education through activities such as poetry writing or painting, many teachers reported that once in school, they suppressed creative expression in order to meet measurable outcomes. Their interviews revealed that teachers often felt caught between fostering students' imaginative engagement and preparing them for rigid assessments (Matthews et al. 745-746). Matthews (360) shows how, in the English context, creative literature teaching can be sidelined under assessment pressures. Similar dynamics are reported in other settings, such as Turkish EFL classrooms, where exam objectives dominate at the expense of creativity (Rathert & Cabaroğlu 1833). Such findings underscore the vulnerability of poetry and other artistic forms to systemic pressures that privilege measurable outcomes over exploratory learning.

Proitsaki (121-122) sheds light on similar institutional frictions, noting that poetry collections can be financially burdensome for schools and often face skepticism about why they should replace the teaching of "great novels." Moreover, she found that students themselves were rarely excited to tackle poetry (Proitsaki 121). In response, Proitsaki (122) developed classroom strategies to bypass both administrative hurdles and initial student disinterest, demonstrating how teacher initiative can counter institutional and affective barriers to poetry. These findings suggest that decisions about which texts to prioritize may not be based solely on cost, but also on longstanding curricular assumptions held by administrators and departments about the value of poetry in language education. Such examples highlight the practical importance of teacher agency in sustaining literary engagement despite systemic or motivational challenges – particularly in contexts like Austria, where curricular traditions and institutional priorities may implicitly limit the inclusion of poetry.

Hall (396-398) offers a broader philosophical angle by arguing that pleasure and understanding are equally essential for meaningful literary experiences. He writes, "In brief, literary understanding is promoted by emotional involvement, which in turn develops from an effort to understand better another's words" (Hall 397). At the same time, he notes that learners often approach literature with anxiety or uncertainty, which makes the teachers' role crucial: "the task of the literature teacher in particular is to motivate, to contextualize and to individualize often anxious and insecure readers' experiences of texts to promote pleasure and understanding, and so to promote meaning and memorability" (Hall 398).

These challenges point to a broader tension between pedagogical ideals and classroom realities: while literature is meant to foster emotional resonance and critical thought, assessment practices and curricular norms often limit how poetry is experienced and evaluated.

Xerri (“Poems look like” 1) criticizes the practice of assessing poetry primarily through essay writing, arguing that it narrows student engagement and limits their emotional response. Building on this, Collyer (391) reflects on the value of balancing poetry analysis with opportunities for creative writing, noting that writing poems gave students greater insight into how meaning is constructed and sustained their engagement with poetry. Kirkgöz (400-401) describes using rubrics to assess students’ poetry writing, focusing on dimensions such as originality, variety of ideas, and overall impact rather than on mechanical correctness.

Myhill and Wilson (101-107) offer a critical perspective, arguing that the increasing emphasis on knowledge reproduction and “teaching to the test” has progressively marginalized opportunities for imaginative thinking in many classrooms. In their interviews with teachers, one participant worried: “[...] you can teach [students] [...] certain techniques, you just can’t teach creativity [...]” (Myhill & Wilson 106). Another described poetry’s low position in the curriculum as double-edged: its marginality theoretically allowed more freedom, yet in practice this freedom was rarely seized (Myhill & Wilson 106). Though their work focused on L1 English contexts, their findings strikingly mirror Austrian teachers’ concerns about losing autonomy when bound to textbook-driven exam prep – a theme captured vividly in Matthews (360), who observed that teachers’ own creativity and agency may be reduced in a “performative culture.”

This concern about balancing critical thinking with curricular risk aversion underscores why scholars like Myhill and Wilson (101-107) see poetry’s low status as both a challenge and a potential site for richer intellectual engagement. Poetry’s marginal status within the curriculum reflects wider tensions between measurable outcomes and imaginative learning – a tension that shapes both classroom choices and teacher perceptions.

2.9. Poetry as Personal Growth and Critical Play

This final section explores how poetry operates as a space for both personal development and critical literacy. Rather than merely supporting language acquisition, poetry invites learners to reflect on their experiences, question norms, and engage language in transformative ways.

Poetry has been described as disrupting conventional approaches to language learning by fostering personal reflection, emotional expression, and playful “rule breaking” – elements that

may stand in tension with rigid curricular norms. As Cahnmann-Taylor et al. (70-94) note, poetry writing can disrupt conventional norms of correctness, creating opportunities for learners to focus on meaning and expression rather than rigid standards. This inherent tension between poetry's open-ended nature and the demands of measurable outcomes is a recurrent theme in scholarship on poetry pedagogy. Researchers have repeatedly emphasized how institutional constraints intersect with teachers' efforts to sustain creativity in the classroom (Myhill & Wilson 103; Matthews 360; Xerri, "Teaching Poetry" 7-8).

Coles (386-396) also highlights that creativity is too often cast as the domain of rare geniuses, not everyday learners. Yet in her primary school study, Coles (390) found poetry particularly effective for children who struggled with longer writing. As one teacher explained: "Poetry had been a good area of focus particularly for those children who did not find writing easy, because [...] poetry at this level generally has a shorter length than story writing" (Coles 390). Even though this was an L1 context, it offers a compelling parallel for Austrian EFL classrooms where shorter texts might reduce linguistic intimidation. Coles (391) observed that students responded positively when teachers adopted a 'co-learner' stance, underscoring the role of classroom relationships in fostering creative participation.

The interdisciplinary dimension is also reflected in Moya-Méndez and Zwart's (739-740) study, which found that writing poetry gave students greater freedom to reflect on nature, fostering personal and emotional connections that complemented the more technical definitions of science learning. Kirkgöz (395-400) supports this view, emphasizing that poetry stimulates imagination and creativity, motivating learners and involving them personally in the learning process.

Samanik (23-24) underscores that suggested poetry activities – writing inspired by personal interests, using body language in reading, or discussing interpretations – are often sidelined because teachers lack clear objectives or preparation. Azizi et al. (287-295) further show how poetry can bolster critical thinking by pushing students to analyze and reflect, but also found that teacher support was pivotal for student confidence. One participant in their study emphasized how working with peers and receiving teacher encouragement improved their willingness to engage in poetic tasks (Azizi et al. 292).

Taken together, these studies highlight a central tension in the literature: while poetry holds rich potential for personal voice, emotional expression, and critical thinking, its impact depends heavily on supportive pedagogical conditions and teacher preparedness. This tension sets the

stage for examining how Austrian EFL teachers perceive and approach poetry in their own classrooms.

While existing research offers valuable insights into the affordances and challenges of teaching poetry, studies in the Austrian EFL context remain scarce. To explore how these broader themes manifest, the next chapter details the methodological approach used to examine Austrian teachers' perceptions and practices surrounding poetry in the classroom.

3. Methodology

3.1. Methodological Approach

This master's thesis employed focus group research; a qualitative method specifically chosen to elicit in-depth opinions and foster dynamic discussion among participants (Burns 75; Xerri, "Use of Interviews" 140-141). Originally developed by psychologists and social scientists in the late 1930s (Krueger 7), focus groups offer a platform in which the researcher typically adopts a less dominant role than in one-on-one interviews, empowering participants to express their perspectives freely (Sachdeva et al. 303). Beyond gathering individual viewpoints, the method encourages collaboration and the emergence of deeper insights (Sachdeva et al. 302), while the group dynamic can help reduce individual anxiety (Burns 77). Recognizing the potential for dominant voices, I moderated the focus groups carefully to ensure an inclusive environment where all participants felt comfortable sharing their experiences (Winlow et al. 7).

Focus group research inherently combines structure and flexibility (Dörnyei, *Research Methods* 144), enabling thematic comparison while acknowledging individual diversity (Burns 75). In line with principles of reflexivity, I continuously reflected on my own beliefs and assumptions regarding the research topic to mitigate potential bias (Xerri, "Use of Interviews" 141). This method was deemed particularly suitable for understanding the needs, interests, and challenges faced by teachers (Sachdeva et al. 304), as the direct interaction facilitates clarification of responses (Sachdeva et al. 307).

3.2. Participants and Recruitment

The target group for this study consisted of Austrian school teachers working as English teachers at the lower secondary level within an Allgemeinbildende Höhere Schule (AHS). To ensure a broad spectrum of perspectives, English teachers from diverse age groups and with professional experience spanning from 1 to 25 years of service were purposefully recruited. This range allowed for insights from both early-career and more senior teachers. The aim was

to create a comfortable and engaging atmosphere conducive to the exchange of ideas and mutual influence among participants (Krueger 6).

Table 1 provides an overview of the participants' teaching experience in years to illustrate the professional diversity within the sample.

Pseudonym	Focus Group	Years of service
T1	FG1	19
T2	FG1	25
T3	FG1	4
T4	FG2	1
T5	FG2	5
T6	FG2	1
T7	FG3	3
T8	FG3	1
T9	FG3	3

Table 1: Overview of participants' teaching experience in years

Participants were recruited from three distinct secondary schools: a private Catholic school, a public school in Lower Austria, and a private school in Vienna. This sampling approach resulted in three focus group interviews conducted at the respective school sites. This purposeful, homogeneous sampling strategy (Dörnyei, *Research Methods* 127, 144) allowed for the exploration of shared experiences within the specific context of Austrian AHS English teachers.

The recruitment process involved leveraging existing professional connections and contacting schools directly via official email addresses on their websites. A concise promotional text outlining the study's purpose and target audience (in-service English teachers) was used to encourage participation, aiming for a sample capable of providing varied and rich insights (Dörnyei, *Research Methods* 126). Prior to each focus group, the respective headmaster or

headmistress was informed, provided with an information sheet about the study, and a declaration of consent (see Appendix E: Declaration of Consent) for participants to sign. A quiet room and suitable times were arranged in advance.

A total of nine participants were recruited, forming three focus groups of three teachers each. Theoretical saturation was reached after the third focus group, consistent with the principle of saturation and Krueger's (ix) assertion that smaller groups provide greater individual speaking opportunities and are more manageable. Conducting three focus group interviews facilitated the identification of recurring trends and patterns across the groups (Krueger 6).

3.3. Interview Environment

Quiet and available rooms within each school served as the interview settings to ensure an undisturbed environment. These neutral spaces, typically meeting rooms or language classrooms, were arranged to facilitate face-to-face interaction around a table, a setup preferred for encouraging engagement and reducing self-consciousness (Krueger 48).

3.4. Data Protection

Participants were informed about confidentiality and data storage procedures at the beginning of each session, in line with established ethical guidelines (Winlow et al. 9). They were reminded of their right to withdraw from the study at any point until March 31st, 2025, without consequence. All audio recordings were securely stored on an external, password-protected hard drive immediately after the interviews. Transcriptions were pseudonymized to protect participants' identities across the different focus groups. Ethical protocols, including the acquisition of informed consent and data protection measures, were rigorously observed throughout the research process.

To ensure clarity while maintaining anonymity, each participant was assigned a pseudonym in the form of "T" followed by a number (e.g., T1, T2, T3). These identifiers were systematically assigned based on the original focus group composition (i.e., T1-T3 participated in Focus Group 1, T4-T6 in Focus Group 2, and T7-T9 in Focus Group 3). While the primary focus in the findings chapter is on individual teacher responses, occasional references to specific focus group contexts (e.g., FG1 or FG2) are included where relevant to highlight shared dynamics or school-specific patterns. This approach maintains internal consistency in the analysis while minimizing interpretive bias associated with focus group membership. Broader group dynamics and inter-group comparisons are considered in the discussion chapter.

3.5. Methods of Data Collection

Qualitative data were gathered through semi-structured focus group interviews conducted with nine participating teachers. Following an emergent qualitative coding approach (Miyaoka et al. 4), data were collected, analyzed, and patterns were identified as they emerged from the discussions. This approach aligns with Farahian & Parhamnia's (160-171) finding that reflective knowledge sharing within teacher groups can enhance professional learning, thereby providing a strong foundation for the present research questions.

I served as the moderator for all three focus groups. Prior preparation focused on developing effective moderation techniques, recognizing the value of a friendly demeanor and a sense of humor (Krueger 103). Feedback received from participants at the conclusion of each session indicated the creation of a warm, welcoming, and encouraging atmosphere, where participants felt comfortable and valued.

The duration of each focus group interview ranged from approximately one to one and a half hours; a timeframe communicated to participants beforehand. Each session commenced with a brief introduction emphasizing confidentiality and data storage procedures. It was explicitly stated that there were no right or wrong answers, and participants were encouraged to share their personal views and experiences (Dörnyei, *Research Methods* 145). A brief winding-down phase concluded each discussion, offering positive feedback (Dörnyei, *Research Methods* 146) and outlining the subsequent research steps.

To foster a comfortable environment and acknowledge their time investment, participants were provided with refreshments (soft drinks, nuts, dried fruit, and chocolate) and the promise of teaching materials as an incentive. A Google Drive link containing teaching resources for levels A1-B1 was shared with participants. These materials incorporated various poems from online sources and poetry collections into lesson plans connected to coursebook topics or public holidays. As a personal gesture of gratitude, each participant also received a thank-you card and a chocolate bar. These incentives were well received, with participants expressing surprise and appreciation for the provided resources.

Data collection involved audio recording (Winlow et al. 9) using both an iPhone and a MacBook to ensure data security. Participants were informed about the recording process in advance. Immediately following each interview, audio files were securely stored on an external, password-protected hard drive. Transcription of the recordings was facilitated using MAXQDA

software. The transcribed data were then reviewed for accuracy, corrected, and pseudonymized to maintain the anonymity of participants across different focus groups. Full transcription preceded the data analysis process to facilitate triangulation (Winlow et al. 10).

The interview guide (see Appendix A: Focus Group – Interview Guide) was structured thematically, incorporating opening, introductory, transition, key, and closing questions. This format was adapted from Sachdeva et al.'s (305) recommendations and aligned with Dörnyei's (*Research Methods* 137-137,144) recommendation that interview guides should be organized around clearly defined topics to ensure coherence and comparability in the data. The core thematic categories in this study were: *Attitudes Toward Poetry and Personal Experience*, *Challenges*, *Resource Evaluation*, and finally, *Stimulus Materials*. The stimulus materials (see Appendix B: Stimulus Materials) were strategically introduced towards the end of the interviews to encourage more detailed responses and re-energize the discussion (Xerri, "Teacher's Experiences" 292-294).

Stimulus Material A was taken from the third-grade *More! Student's Book* (Gerngross et al. 115B). It was selected because it introduced poetry not merely as a text to be read or sung, but as a task prompting students to produce poetry themselves. The aim was to explore whether and how teachers implemented this task in their day-to-day teaching – whether they left it out, modified it, used it as-is, or had specific reflections on it.

Stimulus Material B was selected from *The Bee's Knees*, a poetry collection by Roger McGough. The poem "*Imagine If ...*" (McGough 6-7) was chosen for its brevity, accessible vocabulary, and the pedagogical potential it offered for creative and language-focused classroom activities. Although the collection is aimed at primary school children in an L1 setting, I considered this particular poem adaptable for a lower-secondary EFL classroom.

Handwritten notes were taken during the interviews to capture any significant nonverbal cues (Sachdeva et al. 306). However, these notes had only a marginal impact on the data, as the absence of a co-moderator limited the ability to fully document such cues. Transcription and initial analysis were conducted promptly after each focus group to preserve the context and nuances of the discussion (Sachdeva et al. 306).

3.6. Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed inductively from the bottom up, following Kuckartz's suggestions for thematic analysis. Initial open coding was performed in MAXQDA on the

verbatim transcripts of the focus group discussions. This initial stage allowed for the identification of key ideas and concepts directly from the participants' narratives.

Following open coding, the emergent codes were systematically reviewed and organized into three overarching themes: Perceived Benefits, Perceived Challenges, and Materials and Resources. Each theme encompassed several subcategories that were developed and refined to ensure alignment with the central research questions.

A full recoding was conducted using MAXQDA, and the finalized coding framework was applied to relevant transcript excerpts. A segment matrix was constructed in MAXQDA to map participant statements to the identified themes and subcategories. Representative quotes were then selected for each subcategory to illustrate recurring patterns and provide empirical support for the data interpretation. All data were exported to Excel for further analysis. This study also incorporated quantitative elements through the use of a coding matrix in MAXQDA, which enables the systematic categorization of the focus group discussions and provides frequency counts of specific themes and codes. These quantitative insights help to illustrate the prominence of particular attitudes or challenges among teachers in this dataset, offering a complementary perspective to the qualitative analysis. While qualitative data remain central, the frequencies of coded segments help illustrate the prominence of certain themes.

This matrix-based approach facilitated both a within-group analysis, identifying common themes among participants within each focus group, and subsequently enabled cross-group comparisons to explore similarities and differences across the three focus groups. The constant comparative method (Glaser) was employed throughout the analysis to identify emerging themes and ensure theoretical saturation was reached (Krueger 88). This iterative process involved continuously comparing new data with existing codes and themes, allowing for the refinement and development of the analytical framework. The aim was to identify key patterns in participants' responses within the framework of the discussion questions and the overall focus group structure. This collected data were then considered in relation to the existing literature and current research on the topic, and areas of convergence and divergence were identified. This cyclical approach, with a focus on iteration (Dörnyei, *Research Methods* 126-127), allowed for the refinement and improvement of necessary steps throughout the research process.

3.7. Coding System

The thematic coding system was developed inductively to address research questions concerning teachers' perceptions of the challenges and benefits of implementing short-form poetry in their classrooms, as well as their awareness of available teaching materials. Initial data analysis further refined the coding system.

The final coding system consisted of three overarching themes: Perceived Benefits, Perceived Challenges, and Materials and Resources. Each theme contained specific codes that captured key insights:

Theme 1: Perceived Benefits

Definition: This theme captures the advantages and positive outcomes that EFL teachers associate with using short-form poetry in their lower-secondary classrooms.

- Student Engagement – Anecdotal: Refers to specific instances or stories shared by teachers illustrating student engagement with poetry.
- Student Engagement – General: Encompasses broader statements about poetry's ability to engage students.
- Teacher Attitudes: Reflects the teachers' own positive feelings or beliefs about using poetry.
- Creative Potential: Focuses on the perceived ability of poetry to foster students' creativity.
- Future Improvements: Suggestions or ideas teachers have for how the implementation of poetry could be made more effective in the future.
- Student Motivation: Relates to the teachers' perception that poetry can increase students' motivation in the EFL classroom.

Theme 2: Perceived Challenges

Definition: This theme encompasses the difficulties and obstacles that EFL teachers perceive when considering or implementing short-form poetry in lower-secondary education.

- Students' (perceived) Skill Level: Concerns teachers have about their students' language proficiency being a barrier to students' understanding of a poem.
- Teacher Apprehension: Reflects teachers' own lack of confidence, knowledge, or comfort in teaching poetry.

- Student Reluctance/Peer Dynamics: Addresses any perceived resistance from students or negative peer influences related to poetry.
- Pragmatic Challenges: Encompasses practical difficulties encountered in the classroom.
 - Curricular Pressure: Relates to the constraints imposed by the curriculum that might limit the integration of poetry.
 - Time Constraints: Focuses on the lack of sufficient time within lessons to dedicate to poetry.

Within the overarching theme of Pragmatic Challenges, two subcategories were identified: Curricular Pressure and Time Constraints. While these concepts are closely related – curricular pressure often manifests as limited instructional time – they were treated as distinct codes due to the way participants discussed them separately during the focus groups.

Theme 3: Materials and Resources

Definition: This theme explores teachers' current perspectives on the availability and use of teaching materials for incorporating poetry in AHS classrooms.

- Integration of Songs/Visuals/Digital Tools: Refers to the use of multimedia resources in conjunction with poetry.
- Use of Alternative Teaching Materials: Encompasses the use of resources beyond standard textbooks.
- Use of Coursebooks: Relates to the extent to which teachers utilize coursebooks for poetry content.

The coding system was applied systematically to the transcribed data through inductive coding. Relevant data segments were assigned one or more codes based on thematic alignment. This structured approach enabled the identification of patterns and informed conclusions regarding perceptions of the benefits and challenges of poetry (Themes 1 and 2), as well as awareness of supporting materials (Theme 3), thereby directly addressing the primary and secondary research questions.

While the coding system (see Appendix D: Coding System) was explicitly developed to examine perceptions of poetry in the EFL classroom, it became evident during analysis that participants frequently referred to broader creative or literary activities – such as the use of songs, memes, or humorous tasks – which they perceived as analogous or complementary to poetry. These instances were coded within the existing framework, preserving the thematic

structure while capturing the interconnected ways in which teachers discussed student engagement, creativity, and affect. This approach allowed the coding system to remain consistent with the study's original focus, while still reflecting the richer classroom dynamics and teaching practices described by participants.

4. Findings

This chapter presents the key findings from the qualitative data gathered through three focus group interviews with nine Austrian lower-secondary EFL teachers (T1–T9). It is organized around three main themes that emerged from the analysis: perceived benefits of poetry and literary materials, perceived challenges to their integration, and the role of teaching resources. These themes directly address the study's research questions (RQ1 and RQ2) by illustrating how individual teacher experiences, professional beliefs, and institutional contexts shape the use of poetry in EFL classrooms. While the focus remains on qualitative insights, short quantitative summaries are included to highlight patterns and contrasts across participants.

4.1. Theme 1: Perceived Benefits – Student Engagement, Creativity, and Attitudes toward Poetry

4.1.1. Student Engagement in Literary Tasks

Theme 1 explores how teachers perceive the benefits of using poetry and related literary materials in lower-secondary EFL classrooms. This theme draws on both anecdotal and general reflections to explore how student engagement, teacher beliefs, and classroom dynamics intersect with poetry teaching. The findings relate to RQ1 – how and under what conditions poetry is used in the classroom – and RQ2, which investigates teachers' beliefs and awareness about poetry materials.

Although student motivation was not frequently named explicitly by participants, many of their reflections on student engagement, participation, and emotional investment indirectly point to motivational processes. In this sense, the findings speak to motivation as experienced and enacted in classroom settings – aligning with Dörnyei's ("Motivation" 277-279) emphasis on contextualized, group-based motivation. Teacher comments about what "works" or what students "enjoy" often reflect their perceptions of what motivates learners, even if not labeled as such in the focus groups.

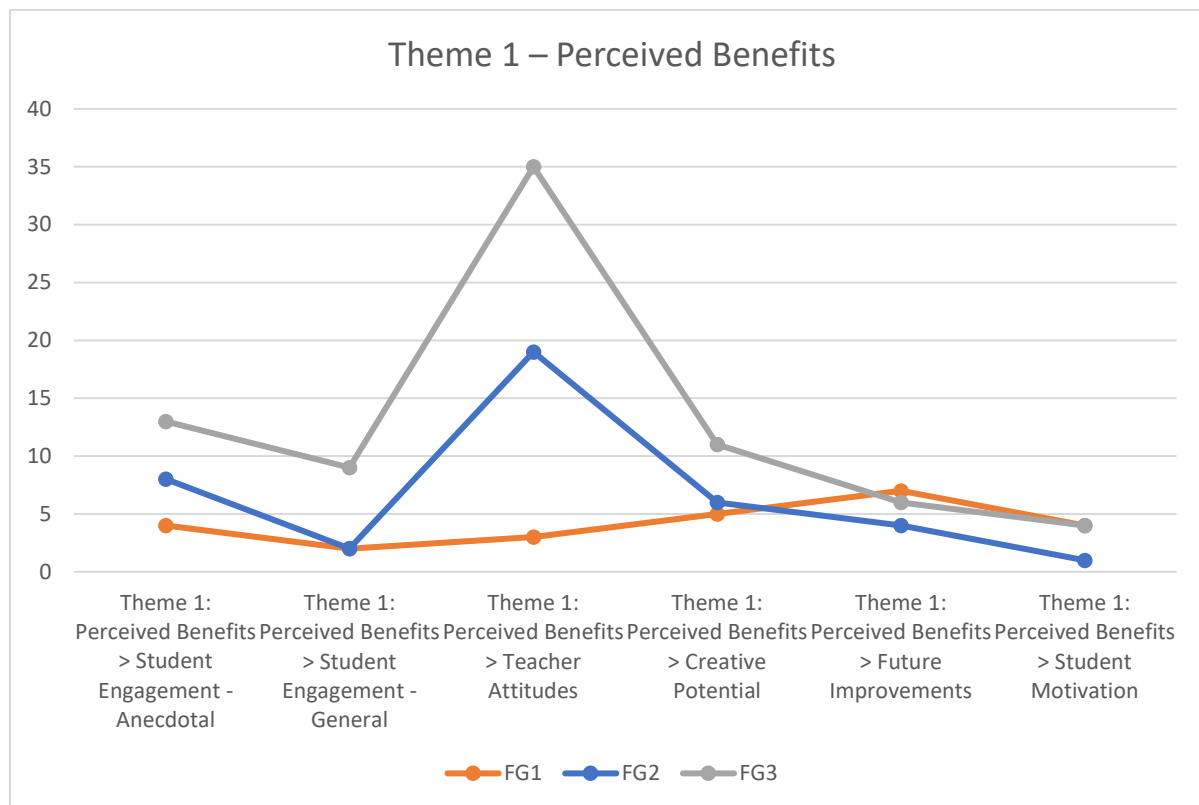


Figure 1: Theme 1 – Perceived Benefits

Teachers from all three focus groups described moments of high student engagement, particularly when lessons involved creative or emotionally resonant elements. Quantitative data (Figure 1) show that anecdotal references to student engagement were most frequent in FG3 (13 mentions), followed by FG2 (8) and FG1 (4). Across these narratives, student engagement was most prominent when students could relate the material to their lives. One teacher with just one year of service (T8) recalled using a culturally relevant Eminem rap: “They really enjoyed it because it was very much a topic at the time.” Similarly, in FG2, a Bruno Mars song integrated into a vocabulary lesson stood out: “They sang along [...] It’s an actual song. And that’s what they liked [...]” (T5, 5 years). While these examples did not involve poetry directly, they indicate some of the conditions under which poetic or literary materials may be made engaging: relevance, rhythm, and recognizability.

4.1.2. Relational and Contextual Factors

Teachers in FG1 offered a more relational view of engagement. In one example, students threw themselves into a dubbing task “because they loved him. They did it for him” (T1, 19 years), referring to a native-speaking teaching assistant. This illustrated how affective dynamics – such as admiration for a teacher – can drive participation and override other instructional variables.

These moments echo RQ1 by demonstrating how classroom context and interpersonal rapport shape the reception of literary materials.

Poetry itself was not commonly linked to spontaneous student enthusiasm, but there were some notable exceptions. One teacher from FG3 (T9, 3 years) discussed introducing Shakespeare's *Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?* and how "they were quite surprised [...] and it opened up a few other discussions." The teacher clarified that the surprise stemmed from the poem being addressed to a man, which prompted reflection and curiosity among the students. This illustrated how even canonical poetry can resonate if introduced in ways that challenge assumptions and provoke critical discussion. Rather than relying solely on updated formats or youth-targeted themes, such moments suggest that poetry's potential depends on how it is contextualized and on the questions it is allowed to raise in the classroom.

4.1.3. Creative Expression and Student Agency

A recurring motif across focus groups was the importance of creative freedom. In FG2, T4 (1 year) described a story-completion task that initially seemed unpromising: "I thought, no, that's not going to work because it's just so weird." However, one student produced "two full pages on both sides [...] illustrated it, and it was very bloody. So, she put fake blood on it [...] but it was so creative." Despite the extreme content, the student's investment was evident, and the teacher's reflection highlights how openness in task design can lead to unexpected and memorable outcomes – principles that could also apply to poetry tasks.

In another example from FG1, a blog-comment assignment resulted in a student initiating an exchange with a real blogger: "He started the conversation because of this school task. And the blogger answered him personally [...]. He even sent him a video message" (T1, 19 years). Though not a poetry activity, this anecdote underscores the value of tasks that connect students to audiences beyond the classroom, suggesting that with the right structure, poetry could also serve this function.

4.1.4. Teacher Beliefs and Poetic Practices

Teacher reflections on student engagement often touched on the interplay between peer dynamics, classroom atmosphere, and task design. FG3 recorded the highest number of mentions in this area (9), followed by 2 mentions respectively in both FG1 and FG2. Participants frequently emphasized how classroom cohesion and mutual trust among students influenced their willingness to participate in creative or literary tasks. As T8 (1 year) put it, "It

depends on which classes are comfortable with each other [...] if they're not comfortable, they'll be embarrassed about more things." This insight pointed to the importance of a psychologically safe environment where students feel at ease expressing themselves – a condition that may be particularly relevant for the more personal and expressive nature of poetry tasks.

Similarly, T7 (3 years) reflected, "Some classes you can just do creative things [...] because the class likes it," underscoring that student enthusiasm is often contingent not just on content, but on broader group dynamics. These observations reinforced the notion that the successful implementation of poetry – or any literary material – depends as much on interpersonal and affective factors as on pedagogical ones, aligning with RQ1's emphasis on contextual conditions for poetry use.

At the same time, teachers acknowledged that even in favorable classroom climates, engagement is rarely universal. T9 (3 years) noted, "The students that are always apprehensive [...] we're not gonna catch them. But the others are. They're fine with that." Rather than interpreting this as a failure, the teacher framed it as a pragmatic acceptance of the diversity of student responses. This realistic view cautions against assuming homogeneous outcomes from poetry integration and highlights the need for flexible, differentiated approaches – especially relevant given the small-scale, qualitative nature of the study.

These reflections suggest that teacher beliefs about poetic practices are not binary (for or against) but instead shaped by a matrix of classroom-specific variables: student confidence, social cohesion, and the perceived emotional risk of engaging with creative content. Taken together, they offer a more nuanced picture of the kinds of conditions that enable or hinder poetry's use in practice – further supporting both research questions, particularly the first, which addresses how poetry functions within specific instructional contexts.

4.1.5. Bridging Personal Interest and Professional Use

Across focus groups, many teachers expressed a personal affinity for poetry – often citing specific poets, texts, or emotional experiences tied to poetic reading. However, these personal inclinations were not consistently mirrored in classroom practice. For some, poetry remained a valued form of expression in their private lives, but an impractical or peripheral option in school settings.

For instance, T3 (4 years) shared, “Florence Welch has a really great poetry book [...] it has a special place in my heart,” yet made no reference to bringing this enthusiasm into lessons. Similarly, T2 (25 years) noted saving favorite poems from magazines to re-read later but did not describe translating this engagement into teaching. These instances suggested a disconnect between personal enjoyment and pedagogical implementation – one potentially shaped by curricular priorities, student expectations, or the pressure to meet formal assessment criteria.

Other teachers indicated that personal interest did, in some cases, open pathways for experimentation. T8 (1 year), for example, reflected, “I personally like when poems rhyme for children especially, I think it makes them more catchy, memorable,” implying that their aesthetic preferences informed the kinds of texts they might consider using. Similarly, T7 (3 years) described encountering creative poetry formats on Instagram, including a reverse-structured poem: “That’s a lovely poem. It’s really cool. Where like when you read it, um, from the top. It’s like ‘I hate myself’ [...] and then when you read it backwards, it’s a very positive and encouraging poem. I would love to show that to my students.” Although they could not recall the exact wording, they emphasized its emotional impact and expressed interest in sharing similar material with learners.

Yet these bridges between the personal and professional were often tentative. Teachers frequently qualified their interest with concerns about feasibility: time constraints, lack of materials, or doubts about student readiness. This hesitation suggests that individual enthusiasm, while a potential asset, requires institutional or curricular support to be leveraged effectively.

In sum, personal engagement with poetry appears to contribute to teacher openness but rarely serves as a strong enough motivator on its own to overcome structural limitations. This aligned closely with RQ2, indicating that awareness and confidence alone are not always sufficient – systemic support and contextual alignment are also necessary to translate interest into practice.

4.1.6. Poetry’s Place in the Curriculum

Teachers held differing views on when and how poetry should be introduced in the school curriculum. Some saw poetry as more appropriate for upper secondary due to perceived cognitive demands: “It opens up a lot more possibilities [...] but only in upper secondary” (T9, 3 years). Others made the case for earlier exposure, noting the challenge of beginning from scratch with older students: “If they’ve never experienced creativity or dealing with poetry

[before], it's hard to start from scratch" (T5, 5 years). These statements illustrated a lack of shared understanding about where poetry fits within the progression of language learning.

A few participants framed poetry as a genre uniquely suited to project weeks, optional assignments, or interdisciplinary work. Some suggested that its relative brevity made it ideal for targeted language practice or as part of thematically broader lessons. For example, "You could teach different social aspects [...] different authors" (T7, 3 years), one teacher explained. Another added that poetry could help students understand "how language can convey certain emotions" (T9, 3 years). These reflections suggest that poetry, when framed appropriately, may offer cross-cutting benefits beyond language learning.

Still, structural concerns – such as time constraints and lack of scaffolding – limited many teachers' willingness to explore poetry in depth. One remarked that while they valued the genre personally, "it would take too much time to adjust it" for everyday lessons (T8, 1 year). As such, poetry's marginal position in the lower-secondary curriculum appears less a matter of resistance and more one of feasibility – connecting again with both RQ1 and RQ2.

4.1.7. Potential for Future Integration

Several teachers also pointed to ways poetry might be integrated more meaningfully in the future. In FG3, one suggested using a rap song, which had engaged their students previously: "They really enjoyed it because it was very much a topic at the time" (T8, 1 year). Another linked student motivation to the teacher's own enthusiasm: "I try to find some songs which fit the topic [...] they like the melody maybe, or the singer" (T3, 4 years). One teacher also shared a positive experience using Roald Dahl's *Little Red Riding Hood*, not for grammar instruction but to explore how familiar stories can be reimaged: "The kids love it [...] taking a text and turning it into something new" (T1, 19 years). Another teacher mentioned possibly drawing from Florence Welch's poetry collection but noted the need to carefully select a suitable text: "I might try one [...] but I really would have to browse through the book and take a closer look." This cautious openness reflects how personal enthusiasm alone does not guarantee classroom implementation; confidence in choosing accessible material remains a key factor. Together, these reflections point toward a music-poetry connection that could be developed further in curriculum design.

In summary, Theme 1 suggests that poetry is valued for its creative and affective potential, but its use remains selective and highly contextual. While quantitative data show FG3 to be most

engaged with poetic materials, the overall picture is more nuanced: teacher confidence, classroom dynamics, and structural supports all shape implementation. Rather than strong endorsement or resistance, the findings reflect cautious interest – reinforcing both RQ1 and RQ2’s emphasis on context, confidence, and curriculum alignment.

4.2. Theme 2: Perceived Challenges – Barriers to Implementing Poetry in the EFL Classroom

This theme explores the perceived challenges that hinder the integration of poetry into lower-secondary English teaching. Drawing on both quantitative and qualitative insights, it highlights four major areas: student skill level, teacher apprehension, student reluctance, and pragmatic barriers. These findings respond primarily to RQ1 by illustrating how contextual constraints shape the use of poetry, while also touching on RQ2 where teacher confidence or material awareness are linked to the implementation of poetic practices.

4.2.1. Assessing Readiness: Students’ Language Proficiency and Exposure

The perceived language proficiency of students emerged as a key factor influencing teachers’ willingness to introduce poetry and other complex literary materials. Quantitative data show that this concern was referenced 10 times in FG3, 7 times in FG1, and 6 times in FG2 (*Figure 2*).

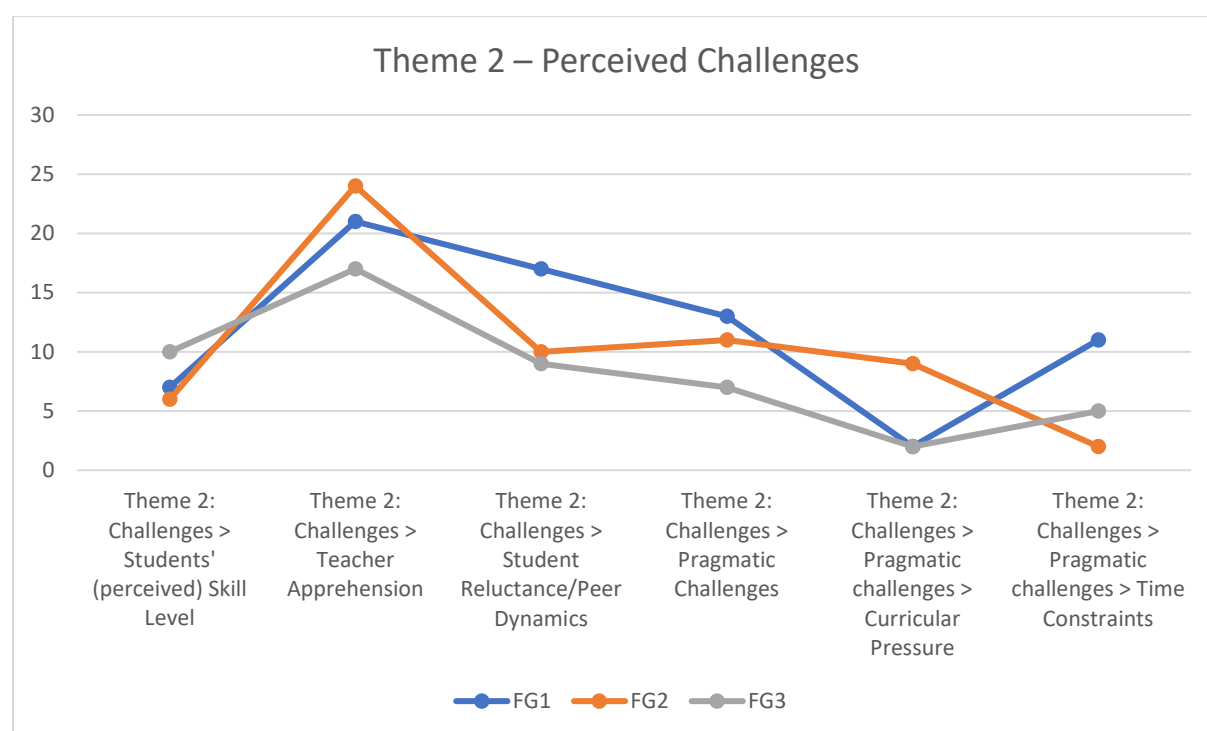


Figure 2: Theme 2 – Perceived Challenges

Teachers described student competence as a threshold condition for engaging with more creative or interpretive tasks. T1 (19 years) recalled, “I did a lot of poetry, and we talked a lot about Shakespeare, but that was a special group [...] Advanced, highly interested. Um. Very gifted”. Similarly, T8 (1 year) observed, “Some were really good because it's a really good class. Like their level is amazing.” These views suggest that teachers often wait for perceived student readiness before attempting more ambitious content.

However, linguistic competence alone was not the only issue. As T9 (3 years) pointed out, some students lacked exposure: “Apparently they never had poetry before, and they were a bit overwhelmed in how they should approach the whole thing.” Even with scaffolding, highly stylized texts like Shakespeare remained challenging: “Especially the Shakespearean English [...] that's still pretty overwhelming [...] I don't think you should expect them to be able to work with that.”

FG2 teachers often linked poetry avoidance to broader comprehension difficulties. T5 (5 years) noted, “Many students struggle with understanding the basic information that is given in a text or even in instructions.” While some students engaged meaningfully – such as those discussing patriarchy during a lesson based on Beyoncé’s *If I Were a Boy* – others failed to grasp the lesson’s purpose. As T4 (1 year) put it: “You have 2 to 3 people who are talking about patriarchy [...] but the others are just like, what's going on?”

Teachers also expressed frustration with disparities in ability within single classrooms. “Some students [...] just write and speak and you know, it's just brilliant. And then there are others they cannot get one straight sentence out” (T4, 1 year). One teacher suggested that reading “doesn’t really work” unless the group is already literature inclined. The cancellation of enrichment programs for gifted students was also mourned: “We were able to do a lot with [gifted students]. But this program was cancelled” (T1, 19 years).

4.2.2. Navigating Uncertainty: Teacher Apprehension and Discomfort

Teacher apprehension was a prominent theme across all three focus groups, with FG2 reporting the most references (24 mentions), followed by FG1 (21) and FG3 (17). This apprehension emerged from a complex intersection of personal history, institutional expectation, and emotional exposure. It was frequently tied to RQ1, where perceived constraints shape curricular choices, but also to RQ2, as teachers’ self-perceived gaps in confidence or training influence the likelihood of using poetry in the classroom.

Many participants described an ambivalent relationship with poetry: they recognized its literary and affective potential but also saw it as emotionally and pedagogically risky. A key concern related to form – particularly rhyme schemes – which some teachers saw as limiting rather than enabling. T9 (3 years), for instance, clarified that the reluctance was not toward poetry in general but toward rigid structures: “I know why it’s used [...], but in my experience [...], I think it’s more restricting. That’s why I’m circumventing the whole thing.” In this context, poetic form was not a creative scaffold but a constraint that could inhibit rather than foster students’ expressive potential. This was, however, used in the context of rhyme schemes and not the entire poetry genre.

Curricular and assessment pressures exacerbated this uncertainty. Teachers expressed frustration that poetry’s value was misaligned with exam-oriented teaching cultures. “For life, yes – absolutely. But for the final exams? No. Because creativity just doesn’t matter there” (T4, 1 year). In this pragmatic environment, tasks perceived as open-ended or interpretive – like poetry writing or analysis – were seen as luxuries that could not compete with the demand for test-relevant output. Thus, systemic structures reinforced teachers’ tendency to deprioritize poetry, even when their personal inclinations leaned otherwise.

Emotional vulnerability also played a critical role. Teachers highlighted the risks of bringing personal investment into the classroom. Poetry was often described as “too intimate” for the typical school setting, a genre that blurred the line between the personal and the pedagogical. T1 (19 years) noted, “If there is something that I really, really love, then I don’t want people to talk badly about it.” In this formulation, poetry becomes not only an instructional challenge but a potential site of personal hurt – where critique of the text may feel like critique of the self.

Apprehension extended to concern about students’ emotional safety as well. Teachers were wary of asking students to share personal experiences through poetry, fearing it might cause discomfort or conflict. T3 (4 years) described hesitation around student writing: “Maybe they don’t like me that much [...] that might be a problem.” This highlighted how the act of sharing poetry can be fraught in both directions – teachers fear being exposed, and students may feel similarly vulnerable in teacher-student dynamics that lack trust or emotional safety.

For others, the discomfort stemmed from their own perceived inadequacies as readers and interpreters of poetry. “Oh, if what I’m conveying is what the poem is trying to convey,” T8 (1 year) reflected, voicing a common anxiety about misinterpretation and the difficulty of assigning meaning to a genre often resistant to definitive explanation. For some, this insecurity

originated in their own academic histories. As T4 (1 year) put it, “I honestly always skipped all the literature courses I could [...] and all the poems I was supposed to read [...] nobody was able to bring that fire to me.” The legacy of uninspiring or inaccessible literary education continued to influence professional choices, particularly for those whose teacher education included little or no explicit preparation for working with poetry.

Poetry’s interpretive openness was thus viewed as both a strength and a risk. T1 (19 years) captured this tension: “A poem is a piece of art, and I would feel afraid of standing there with this piece of art and no one being able to appreciate it.” This fear – of the poem falling flat, of the room being silent, of students being indifferent – reveals how aesthetic ambiguity can paralyze rather than inspire. Without the protective scaffolding of “right answers,” teachers may feel exposed to judgment, failure, or silence.

Yet, some participants shared moments of quiet appreciation for how poetry can connect with emotions and lived experience. One teacher described an unexpected emotional resonance: “I really wonder why my first reaction is, oh my God, it’s hard. But when I think about it, I always get that feeling of joy [...] you can really immerse, you can totally drift away. That’s the beauty of poetry. But I think that’s the problem with school. A poem is something very private, and you do not have the privacy” (T1, 19 years). This observation encapsulated the core dilemma: poetry is powerful because it invites intimacy, but that same intimacy is what makes it difficult to safely implement in formal classroom settings.

In sum, teacher apprehension is a deeply layered challenge – rooted not only in institutional expectations but in personal identity, prior experience, and emotional risk. These findings respond directly to both RQ1 and RQ2, showing that even when teachers value poetry, they may avoid it due to concerns about vulnerability, relevance, or pedagogical confidence. Rather than simple reluctance, what emerges is a nuanced terrain of avoidance, shaped by emotion, training, and fear of failure in both professional and personal domains.

4.2.3. Group Dynamics and Reluctant Engagement

Student disengagement with poetry emerged as a consistent theme across all three focus groups, though its manifestations varied by context. Quantitatively, FG1 reports the highest number of references to reluctance or negative group dynamics (17 mentions), followed by FG2 (10) and FG3 (9). These figures, when viewed alongside qualitative data, point to poetry’s particularly fragile status in the EFL classroom – dependent not only on curriculum or teacher enthusiasm,

but on the social and emotional climate of each class. The findings here are primarily linked to RQ1, as they speak to the conditions under which poetry is avoided or resisted, but they also touch on RQ2 in highlighting how teachers adapt – or refrain from adapting – poetic tasks in light of interpersonal challenges.

A recurring explanation for student reluctance was the genre's demand for emotional and cognitive effort. T1 (19 years) captured this succinctly: "There's a huge lack of interest in students for poetry." According to this teacher, the disinterest was not simply generational, but cognitive: "It's hard work, [...] you have to read it carefully [...] and you have to read in between the lines, which is not so easy." This comment reflected a perception of poetry as requiring a kind of interpretive patience or attention span that many students – particularly those unfamiliar with literary genres – are unaccustomed or unwilling to develop.

Others emphasized that poetry's demand for empathy and openness could be developmentally or socially challenging. As T1 put it, "You have to confront yourself with the mindset of another person, [...] and I think that's what's so problematic", suggesting that the reflective or affective dimensions of poetry conflicted with adolescent self-protection or peer norms. As students struggle with identity formation and social belonging, tasks that require perspective-taking or emotional honesty may feel intrusive or uncomfortable.

Group dynamics, in particular, were a frequent source of tension. Several teachers described a "performance gap" between a few highly engaged students and a largely indifferent majority. "Three students would take it seriously, but the others are just like, I don't know" (T4, 1 year). The underlying implication here is that classroom norms often favor conformity or detachment over risk-taking, especially with emotionally expressive forms like poetry. In such environments, student enthusiasm for poetry may become socially risky rather than rewarded.

Peer pressure and fear of judgment further intensified this reluctance. T1 recounted how students explicitly admitted to censoring themselves: "We are afraid of getting hate comments [...] we have opinions, but we do not want to share them." This anxiety around exposure – whether of personal taste, identity, or emotion – could significantly reduce willingness to participate in poetic tasks, especially those involving writing or performance. As one teacher noted, even students with genuine interest in poetry may hide it from their peers: "Even if students are into poetry, they would not post it" (T6).

In FG3, a newer form of disengagement was noted – namely, students’ overreliance on generative AI tools for homework. “Some of them don’t really take homework that seriously,” T8 (1 year) observed, linking the use of ChatGPT to a broader culture of shortcut-seeking and performative effort. While not unique to poetry, this trend highlights a shift in how students engage with language-based tasks: the process becomes less about exploration or self-expression and more about efficiency and compliance.

Beyond reluctance, teachers frequently emphasized how variable classroom cultures were, and how this variability dictated the feasibility of creative or literary work. “Some classes are more creative [...] and then you have other classes where the main goal is that they’re not starting to fight” (T7, 3 years). This candid remark illustrated the broader tension between aspirational pedagogy and classroom management realities. While some groups allowed room for experimentation, others required teachers to triage behavior before content could even be considered.

A recurring theme was the fragility of psychological safety – both for students and for teachers. Teachers acknowledged that students often avoided expression not because they lacked ideas, but because they lacked trust. As T3 (4 years) noted in another section, students might hesitate to share writing with a teacher they didn’t feel comfortable with. In this way, affective trust becomes a prerequisite for poetic engagement – an insight that underscores the deeply relational nature of poetry pedagogy. At the same time, it is important to note that not all poetic tasks require emotional exposure. Poetry can also be playful, ironic, or detached – as in limericks or humorous verse – allowing students to engage with form, rhythm, and language play without the need to reveal personal feelings. This suggested that psychological safety may be fostered not only by relational trust, but also by the careful choice of poetic genres and tasks.

To mitigate resistance, scaffolding was repeatedly emphasized as essential. As T7 explained, “A lot of scaffolding is required to make sense of the whole thing [...] why you’re even using it and how they should be able to draw any benefit from it.” However, several teachers also expressed doubt about whether such individualized scaffolding could be implemented consistently, given time and curricular demands. While some teachers described adaptive strategies – such as working through the first stanza together or using simplified models – others simply avoided poetry altogether in more resistant groups.

Ultimately, the findings here suggest that poetry’s success in the classroom hinges as much on relational dynamics and group climate as on pedagogical technique or curricular design. Even

when teachers were equipped and willing, group-specific factors – ranging from peer pressure and classroom atmosphere to emotional maturity – often proved decisive in determining whether poetry would be embraced, tolerated, or rejected.

4.2.4. Structural Limitations: Curriculum, Time, and Resource Pressures

Curricular and institutional constraints were frequently cited as powerful barriers to the integration of poetry in lower-secondary EFL classrooms. Quantitatively, FG2 shows the highest concern regarding curriculum-related pressures (9 references), while FG1 and FG3 each report two. Time-related limitations, however, were more strongly voiced in FG1, with 11 mentions, suggesting that while formal structural pressures are more acutely felt in some schools, time scarcity and pacing issues are a shared concern. These findings responded directly to RQ1, revealing how systemic factors – not teacher interest or curricular openness per se – ultimately delimit the feasibility of implementing creative genres like poetry.

Although teachers broadly agreed that the Austrian national curriculum is written in flexible and open terms, they repeatedly emphasized that external expectations – particularly centralized testing formats – undermine this potential. As T1 (19 years) explained, “The curriculum is open. We can do whatever we want, but the centralized testing formats force us.” This distinction between curricular theory and institutional practice was a recurring theme. Similarly, T5 (5 years) lamented that students risk being penalized in the Matura when exercising even minimal interpretive freedom: “You're not even allowed to interpret anything. No interpreting. Then it's gone wrong.” This suggests that poetry, which inherently invites open-ended thinking and nuanced language work, is often rendered incompatible with rigid assessment frameworks.

Coursebooks, too, were seen as an unofficial form of curriculum that reinforced this rigidity. T4 (1 year) admitted, “I feel like the curriculum [...] is the book, to be honest.” Rather than serving as a scaffold, coursebooks were often described as pacing mechanisms that created pressure to “get through” rather than to explore in depth. This sentiment was echoed by several other teachers, who saw coursebooks as both a constraint on pedagogical autonomy and a symbol of performative accountability.

Notably, the view that equated curricular authority with the coursebook was voiced by less experienced teachers (e.g. T4, 1 year). While the small sample size prevents drawing firm conclusions, this suggests that professional experience may shape how teachers position themselves in relation to curricular freedom. Early-career teachers, in particular, may be more

likely to rely on the coursebook as a structuring device, echoing anecdotal claims that younger teachers often structure their teaching around coursebook sequences.

For younger or less experienced teachers, this pressure was compounded by peer comparison and departmental norms. “I also feel kind of pressure from very experienced teachers [...]. And I’m like, oh my God, no” (T4) highlights how internal school culture – not just external structures – can shape whether teachers feel confident enough to introduce non-standard materials like poetry. This connected with RQ2, pointing to differences in teacher disposition, confidence, and departmental alignment as key influences on the implementation of poetic practices.

Time constraints, especially in FG1, were another major factor inhibiting poetry integration. Several participants described how poetry had effectively disappeared from their repertoire. “I have realized that I have really nearly stopped doing it. And it's a pity. But it's a time problem” (T1, 19 years). Even broader literature instruction was affected by these pressures. One teacher noted: “I try to take like only two weeks, so I keep it short” (T3, 4 years). These abbreviated engagements often limited opportunities for deep discussion, student production, or aesthetic appreciation – key pedagogical goals that poetry is uniquely positioned to support.

The issue of preparation time also emerged strongly. T1 reflected, “It really takes a lot of time. And I feel like I do not have this time,” underscoring how creative or non-standard teaching practices often demand additional planning and resource development. These demands were especially discouraging when paired with pressure to align with colleagues, as T2 (25 years) explained: “Don’t want to fall behind [...] that might actually mean you have to do the next test in a different way.” In this way, collaborative teaching structures – intended to support consistency – could inadvertently discourage curricular risk-taking or innovation.

Moreover, poetry was often framed as an inefficient or “luxury” genre – difficult to justify within the compressed reality of exam preparation and outcome-driven instruction. “The material has to be effective and timesaving, and a poem is not timesaving and it’s not effective. A picture could do that too” (T1) reflects a utilitarian logic that marginalizes poetry’s less immediately quantifiable benefits. Others echoed this sense of missed potential: “We can't afford working on the language level so much,” suggesting that the richness of poetic language is seen as desirable but ultimately expendable under current time pressures.

These insights suggest that poetry's marginalization in lower-secondary EFL teaching is not due to its perceived irrelevance or difficulty alone, but because it sits uneasily within a broader ecology of standardization, time scarcity, and efficiency-driven teaching. While some teachers voiced regret or ambivalence about this, few felt they had the structural conditions or professional security to challenge it. Thus, even in schools where teachers were personally enthusiastic or pedagogically well-prepared, systemic barriers continued to delimit what was realistically possible.

4.2.5. Compounding Challenges to Poetry Integration

Theme 2 reveals the multifaceted and interlocking barriers that restrict the sustained integration of poetry in the lower-secondary EFL classroom. Far from being a matter of individual preference or pedagogical oversight, the marginal role of poetry appears to be the product of a dense web of structural, interpersonal, and psychological constraints. These include perceived student limitations in language proficiency and interpretive readiness, teacher apprehension rooted in both professional insecurity and emotional discomfort, peer dynamics that discourage creative risk-taking, and systemic pressures related to curriculum pacing, test preparation, and resource efficiency.

Crucially, these challenges do not operate in isolation. Instead, they reinforce one another. For instance, a teacher's lack of confidence may be amplified by students' reluctance to participate, which in turn is shaped by group dynamics that are themselves influenced by institutional constraints such as standardized assessments and rigid time frames. Even teachers with high levels of experience or intrinsic motivation – those who expressed genuine appreciation for poetry's affective and aesthetic potential – often felt they had little space to implement it meaningfully within the limits of their school culture.

In terms of RQ1, this theme underscores how institutional and contextual factors – such as the demands of centralized testing, perceived curricular rigidity, and time scarcity – directly shape how and whether poetry is included in teaching practice. It becomes clear that teachers do not necessarily lack the will or awareness to engage with poetry but rather face a range of pressures that render such engagement difficult to sustain.

The findings also speak to RQ2, highlighting how teacher experience (*Dienstalter*), training, and confidence interact with these broader forces. Less experienced teachers (e.g., FG3 participants) were sometimes more open to creative experimentation but also more likely to

express self-doubt or rely on peer expectations. In contrast, more seasoned teachers (e.g., FG1) occasionally showed greater self-assurance but also greater resignation to the institutional status quo. In both cases, uncertainty around how to “do” poetry – whether due to a lack of training, fear of misinterpretation, or discomfort with its emotional demands – was a recurring theme.

While isolated examples of success or enthusiasm did emerge – such as using morning rituals to introduce classic poems or adapting creative tasks with scaffolding – these were the exception rather than the norm. Most reported experiences with poetry were sporadic, brief, or framed as experimental rather than embedded in long-term curricular thinking. The genre’s emotional and cognitive richness, while acknowledged, often remained overshadowed by logistical realities and pedagogical caution.

Overall, Theme 2 demonstrates that poetry’s marginalization is not the result of disinterest but of constrained conditions. For poetry to become a regular and valued component of EFL instruction, significant shifts would be needed – not only in teacher education and material design but also in broader institutional structures that currently reward efficiency over exploration and predictability over risk.

4.3. Theme 3: Materials and Resources – Supporting or Hindering Poetry Integration

This theme explores how teaching materials – particularly multimodal resources, coursebooks, and teacher-created content – support or limit the integration of poetry in lower-secondary EFL classrooms. Drawing on both quantitative coding (*Figure 3*) and qualitative insights, the analysis reveals varied approaches across the three focus groups, with FG3 demonstrating a broader use of multimodal materials – though this was not always explicitly linked to poetry. These findings offer insight into both RQ1 and RQ2 by showing how institutional constraints and teacher beliefs intersect with material use.

4.3.1. Poetry in the Multimodal Classroom: Songs, Visuals, and Digital Tools

Quantitative analysis shows that FG3 referred to multimodal materials (songs, visuals, digital tools) 24 times, compared to 10 times in FG2 and 8 in FG1 (*Figure 3*). These figures suggest broader engagement, but closer examination indicates that poetry-specific use remains limited.

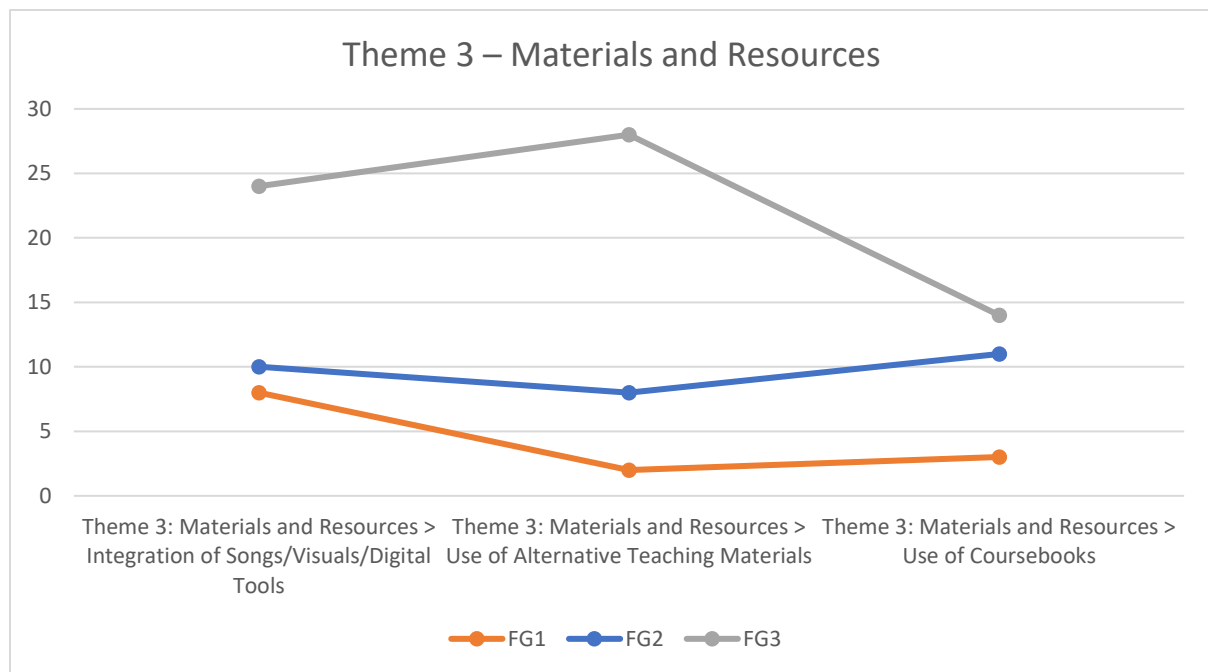


Figure 3: Theme 3 – Materials and Resources

Several teachers described using popular songs as teaching tools, though more often for grammar or vocabulary development than for fostering poetic appreciation. T5 (5 years) offered a detailed account of incorporating a contemporary song: “When I learned that my second grade is listening and practicing a Bruno Mars song – I think Bruno Mars featuring Lady Gaga – I integrated that song in a lesson, where we focused also on vocabulary and a little bit on meaning and expressions, and they loved it. They sang along. It’s a real [...] an actual song. And that’s what they liked.” This emphasis on relevance to students’ lifeworlds and personal interests reflects a common strategy across focus groups.

T3 (4 years) described using the *Toy Story* song *You’ve Got a Friend in Me* to explore the concept of friendship, saying, “I always use the song [...] and they love it a lot.” Meanwhile, both T3 and T1 (19 years) underscored the grammatical benefits of song lyrics: “I like to talk about grammar with songs because lyrics are very often very repetitive,” and “For certain structures of grammar, it’s brilliant.”

In addition to songs, visual and digital tools were prominent – particularly among FG3 teachers. T8 (1 year) explained, “I like to use memes and my students do memes. And that’s also playing with language in a way,” suggesting a playful, student-centered approach to language. This openness to visual media extended to social platforms, with T8 also describing the use of Instagram Reels, including “a funny sort of sketch on what it would be like if teachers said the things that students say regarding homework.” While these tools create opportunities for

multimodal expression, explicit links to poetry were rarely made without prompting, highlighting poetry's relatively marginal role even in creative practices.

Notably, T7 (3 years) described using the online platform Fobizz to create a poetry worksheet titled "What is poetry?", which featured an example poem: "roses are blue, violets are blah blah blah." Students were then asked to write their own poems and submit them digitally. The teacher shared: "Then I showed it on a beamer," and reflected that while some of the responses were "mean and violent and aggressive," others were surprisingly thoughtful. They admitted, however, that "since then, I haven't really actively introduced poetry," suggesting the activity remained an isolated experiment rather than a sustained approach.

Digital tools also played a broader role in creative lesson planning. Teachers from FG2 and FG3 described using ChatGPT to support idea generation. For instance, T8 (1 year) shared: "If I struggle with creativity, I ask ChatGPT to give me a creative idea. And then very often, those work very well. And I then create the material based off of ChatGPT's idea, but I do like to use it for ideas." Similarly, T6 (1 year) added succinctly: "I would ask ChatGPT." While this demonstrates openness to digital support, its application to poetry tasks remained largely exploratory. These examples illustrated that while multimodal practices are common, their connection to poetry remains tentative – addressing both RQ1 and RQ2 by highlighting both creative potential and implementation gaps.

4.3.2. Between Curriculum and Creativity: Teachers' Own Materials

Teachers across all focus groups discussed creating or adapting supplementary materials, though the frequency and nature of these practices differed: FG3 reported 28 mentions of using additional resources, compared to 8 in FG2 and 2 in FG1 (*Figure 3*), suggesting differing levels of diversification in classroom materials across groups. At FG3, supplementing or replacing coursebook materials was described as routine. As T8 (1 year) noted, "We do that a lot on a regular basis it's part of the job." These resources ranged from entirely self-made tasks to adapted worksheets and previously used materials from their own school days.

These supplementary materials were frequently used for literature or project-based tasks, but direct engagement with poetry remained rare. A noteworthy exception came from T9 (3 years), who described introducing poetry through a low-stakes morning ritual: "I've put a huge emphasis on my fifth grade we have a ritual where we give them some food for thought for the day. And I often have been using some poems from classics," citing *Ozymandias*, Robert Frost,

and Walt Whitman in simplified forms to suit student comprehension. This informal context allowed space for poetry as reflective material, though such practices were not widely echoed.

At FG2, T5 (5 years) described adapting methods learned during university training for literature-based reading projects – offering students comics, graphic novels, or choose-your-own-adventure books. However, these adaptations did not extend to poetry. “I think it’s called blacking out or blackout,” they recalled of a training method, “but yeah, I never actually used it.” The comment suggested that while creative approaches were known, they often remained unused due to either time constraints, lack of confidence, or curriculum pressures. It also illustrates how poetry is sometimes recalled as an ‘extra’ or peripheral practice, rather than as a regular part of teaching routines, underscoring its marginal position in everyday classroom practice.

In response to a question about whether they actively seek out poetry materials, T1 (19 years) acknowledged, “I never looked for sources intentionally.” This suggests that despite extensive experience, there may be uncertainty or low prioritization when it comes to sourcing poetry resources.

4.3.3. Coursebooks and the Marginalization of Poetry

Despite universal use of the *More!* series by Helbling, teacher perceptions of its poetry offerings were mixed and often critical. Quantitatively, FG3 referenced coursebook content (songs, poems, texts) 14 times, followed by FG2 with 11 and FG1 with 3 (*Figure 3*). However, a higher number of mentions did not necessarily reflect enthusiasm – rather, it sometimes signaled critique or selective use.

Teachers in FG2 expressed strong dissatisfaction with the poetry content in the *More!* coursebook. T4 (1 year) plainly stated, “I always leave it out because I hate poems. [...] They’re so boring in German and in English.” This personal aversion was echoed by colleagues. T5 (5 years) described the poems as “too childish,” while T6 (1 year) remarked that students “just make fun of it,” suggesting a disconnect between the material and students’ cultural or developmental realities. The accompanying videos intended to modernize the content were dismissed as “cringe,” pointing to a perceived failure of the coursebook to engage learners in ways that felt relevant and credible to them. These insights directly related to RQ1, which explores perceived challenges of poetry integration, especially regarding student motivation and relevance.

In FG1, the treatment of poetry was more passive. T1 (19 years) acknowledged that “it would be beneficial” for language development but ultimately did not implement it. They criticized the coursebook’s reliance on superficial strategies – what they called a “quick fix” – implying that such efforts lack depth and pedagogical rigor. This also tied to RQ2, suggesting that more experienced teachers may deprioritize poetry if it appears inadequately supported by curricular materials.

FG3 participants, while not uncritical, demonstrated a more flexible and responsive approach. T9 (3 years) commented, “I’m quite happy with the *More!* book,” but admitted to struggling with how to “make [poetry] work in lower secondary.” Rather than omitting coursebook materials entirely, teachers like T7 (3 years) adapted their use of *More!* songs based on student responsiveness – retaining them in classes where students “celebrated” the songs and skipping them where engagement was lacking. T8 (1 year) observed that some content felt “too basic,” reflecting sensitivity to students’ proficiency levels. These examples illustrated a more nuanced, context-sensitive pedagogy, potentially shaped by newer teaching experiences and openness to experimentation (cf. RQ1 and RQ2).

A nostalgic tone emerged across FG2 and FG3. Teachers recounted singing the same coursebook songs as students. As T4 put it, “Nowadays nobody’s interested in singing along anymore,” hinting at a generational shift in learning preferences. T8 similarly noted that older colleagues still remember and sing these songs, suggesting the materials once held greater staying power. Whether this indicates a decline in teacher enthusiasm or student engagement remains unclear, but it adds an intergenerational layer to the discussion of materials.

4.3.4. Stimulus Materials and Poetry Implementation

Two poetry-related tasks were introduced as stimulus materials to explore how teachers engage with poetry in classroom settings and how they evaluate existing pedagogical prompts.

Stimulus Material A – an acrostic poem task from the *More! 3 Student’s Book* (Gerngross et al. 115B) – was met with widespread skepticism. In FG1, T3 (4 years) reported that students found the task “useless,” saying: “They really asked me why do we have to do that? They didn’t get the sense behind it.” And furthermore, reflected that the problem may have stemmed from insufficient scaffolding: “Maybe I should have told them a bit more about it, or introduced the topic a bit more or better in a way.” This teacher admitted assigning the task as homework, which limited in-class support.

At FG2, the critique was more fundamental. T4 (1 year) dismissed the task entirely: “This is exactly the kind of task I leave out.” Teachers criticized the framing (e.g., referencing blogs) as outdated and pointed to problematic vocabulary choices like “nerd” or “outsider” for reinforcing stereotypes. Still, their rejection came with constructive alternatives: collaboratively brainstorming vocabulary in class before moving into guided poem writing. This emphasis on contextualization and support echoed FG1’s concerns.

Several participants from the third focus group noted unfamiliarity with the task, largely due to limited experience teaching the relevant grade level. Nevertheless, their responses showed a willingness to adapt it. One teacher suggested doing the first poem together in class and assigning the second as homework. T7 (3 years) emphasized simplifying vocabulary to improve accessibility: “I would have to adapt the vocabulary, otherwise it’s too difficult.” Compared to others who either rejected the task outright or focused on missed opportunities, these teachers more actively explored ways to tailor existing materials to their classrooms.

Stimulus Material B – Roger McGough’s “Imagine If...” – elicited more imaginative responses across the groups. FG1 teachers appreciated the poem’s thematic openness and suggested linking it to animals or diversity (T1, T2). However, concerns emerged over practical limitations. As T3 (4 years) noted, “They really need the time to think about what rhymes [...] Maybe that’s an obstacle.”

FG2 responses reflected cautious skepticism. T5 (5 years) described the poem as “too childish,” while T4 (1 year) raised concerns about the complexity of conditional grammar structures. Nonetheless, these critiques were often accompanied by constructive suggestions, including using visual support, implementing pair work, or adapting the poem’s animal references. While these teachers recognized the material’s creative potential, they expressed uncertainty about its practical implementation without stronger curricular alignment.

FG3 teachers approached the poem with a mix of pragmatism and creativity. While T8 (1 year) noted, “I would not use it, as it would take too much time to adjust it,” they suggested using only the first half of the poem as a springboard for creative writing. One participant also considered adapting the poem for use in earlier grades, reflecting an openness to working with more complex material when adequate scaffolding is provided.

Across all focus groups, the main concerns with both tasks were consistent: vocabulary accessibility, scaffolding, and curriculum fit. While responses varied, FG3 teachers were

somewhat more likely to suggest concrete adaptations. Rather than signaling superiority, this reflects differing degrees of familiarity, confidence, or perceived flexibility in adapting poetic materials – factors that tie directly to RQ1 and the broader role of institutional and individual conditions in shaping poetry integration.

4.3.5. Resource (Mis)Alignment with Poetry Integration

Theme 3 highlights a persistent gap between the availability of materials and their effective use for poetry integration. While teachers frequently draw on multimodal, coursebook, and self-created resources, explicit engagement with poetry remains limited. Barriers include perceived student disinterest, concerns about age-appropriateness and linguistic complexity, and a lack of clarity around curricular expectations.

Although all groups expressed interest in creative and student-centered approaches, actual implementation of poetry-focused materials was inconsistent. FG3 teachers – despite having less overall teaching experience – offered more examples of adaptation and contextual tailoring, which may reflect differences in training, school culture, or perceived curricular flexibility rather than confidence alone.

These findings respond directly to both research questions. In relation to RQ1, they underscore how institutional, curricular, and pedagogical factors constrain poetry’s presence in the EFL classroom. In relation to RQ2, they reveal uneven levels of teacher preparedness and initiative when it comes to sourcing or adapting poetry-related materials, pointing to a need for clearer support structures, targeted training, and better-aligned resources to foster sustained integration.

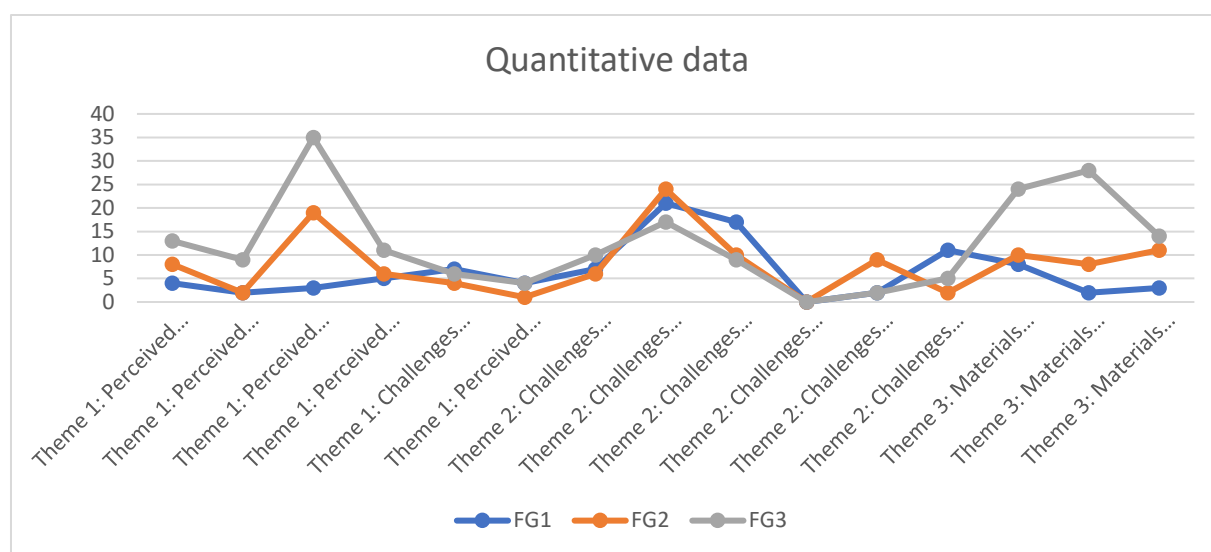


Figure 4: Quantitative data total

The combined quantitative data (*Figure 4*) illustrate how the frequency of references across the three focus groups varied by theme and subtheme. FG3 generated the highest number of coded references overall, particularly in areas related to teacher attitudes, creative potential, and the integration of multimodal materials. FG2 showed more frequent concerns with teacher apprehension and curricular pressures, while FG1 reflected a pronounced emphasis on time constraints and pragmatic limitations. These patterns reinforce the nuanced, context-specific nature of poetry integration discussed in the qualitative analysis.

Overall, the findings illustrate how poetry occupies a paradoxical space in Austrian lower-secondary EFL classrooms – valued in principle for its unique capacity to support linguistic, creative, and affective development, yet frequently marginalized in practice due to a confluence of perceived student limitations, teacher apprehensions, and systemic constraints. These results not only corroborate existing research on the challenges of integrating creative literary forms into language teaching but also extend it by highlighting the nuanced ways individual teacher beliefs, classroom dynamics, and institutional structures intersect to shape instructional choices. The following discussion chapter critically examines these patterns, situating them within broader theoretical frameworks of self-efficacy and motivation, and considers how they both align with and complicate the current literature. In doing so, it seeks to illuminate the conditions under which poetry might be more fully realized as a pedagogical resource in foreign language education.

5. Discussion

This study set out to explore how Austrian lower-secondary EFL teachers perceive the challenges and benefits of implementing short-form poetry in their classrooms, particularly regarding fostering students' motivation and creative expression. In doing so, it addressed two guiding research questions: (1) How do EFL teachers perceive the challenges and benefits of implementing short-form poetry in lower-secondary schools, particularly in relation to fostering students' motivation and creative expression? and (2) How aware are EFL teachers of available teaching materials for incorporating poetry in AHS classrooms?

A central hypothesis underpinning this investigation was that teachers who feel confident in sourcing or adapting poetry materials are more likely to incorporate poetry into their teaching practices. Previous research highlights a wide range of benefits: Piscayanti et al. (377) emphasize poetry's potential to foster creativity, identity-building, and self-expression, while Suwastini and Rahmayanti (3-8) report that prospective teachers associate poetry with gains in vocabulary, pronunciation and writing. Yet despite these advantages, poetry continues to play

a relatively marginal role in many EFL contexts, making it essential to examine how teacher beliefs, classroom contexts, and institutional pressures shape its implementation.

The findings of this study reveal a nuanced landscape. Teachers consistently articulated the value of creativity, fun, and meaningful engagement – often illustrated through examples involving songs, memes, or student-generated narratives. Poetry, meanwhile, tended to be approached more cautiously: while teachers generally recognized its potential, they frequently perceived it as demanding, somewhat risky, or not readily aligned with curricular expectations. This perspective both echoes existing research on the role of teacher confidence, personal familiarity, and broader systemic pressures, and adds nuance by showing how these dynamics play out in specific classroom contexts (Xerri, “Poetry Education Research” 379; Proitsaki 123-124; Gönen 28; Matthews et al. 745-749).

At the same time, the study surfaced distinctive local patterns – notably, that even highly experienced teachers with nearly two decades of classroom service still cited time constraints and testing regimes as principal barriers. Such findings underscore the intertwined influences of self-efficacy (Bandura 193), professional autonomy and competence needs (Ryan & Deci 70), and broader performative cultures of assessment (Matthews et al. 749; Hennessy et al. 344-348).

This chapter discusses these findings across three interrelated thematic areas. It begins by examining how teachers’ appreciation for creative, playful, and personally meaningful language tasks underscores both the promise and the elusive realization of poetry in practice. It then explores the role of teacher apprehension, vulnerability, and efficacy – situating these within established psychological and pedagogical frameworks. Finally, it turns to systemic constraints, including curriculum structures and teaching to the test imperatives, that further delimit poetry’s integration. In doing so, this discussion aims to illuminate not only how the present findings confirm or nuance prior scholarship, but also what they may imply for more confidently embedding poetry into future EFL classrooms.

5.1. The Creative Promise of Poetry – and Its Elusive Realization

A striking feature that emerges from this study is how frequently teachers associated high student engagement with tasks that were creative, playful, or personally meaningful – yet seldom with poetry itself. The participants offered vivid, often enthusiastic accounts of lessons animated by humor, surprise, or aesthetic experimentation. As described in the findings (see 4.1.1), one student’s elaborate, “bloody” reimagining of a story ending illustrated how openness

in task design can spark intense personal investment. This example echoes Spiro's ("teaching as a writer" 79) assertion that creativity is not the exclusive domain of naturally gifted students, but something all learners can engage with when the conditions allow.

Yet alongside these examples of creative investment, some teachers expressed a different concern: that students might not be inclined to engage in the kind of reflective reading that poetry often demands. This reluctance echoed earlier findings (see 4.2.3), where teachers noted that poetry demands more reflective reading than many are willing to engage in. Samanik (22-23) reports that poetry is frequently perceived as too difficult for EFL learners to grasp, a perception that often leaves students working only at a literal level of understanding rather than moving toward deeper interpretation. This resonates with Gangchuk's (13) finding that students themselves often perceive poetry as "difficult, irrelevant and something they should not be studying in the 21st century", a view that frequently stems from frustration over not fully understanding poetic texts.

In contrast, students responded enthusiastically when tasks were tied to culturally relevant and emotionally resonant materials (see findings 4.1.1 and 4.3.1 for examples such as rap lyrics, pop songs, and memes). These activities illustrate how relevance and playfulness can drive motivation, even though teachers rarely framed poetry itself as the natural vehicle for such engagement. These examples align closely with Samanik's (22) argument that teachers are responsible for creating not only attractive and harmonious learning environments but also memorable teaching experiences. Similarly, Piscayanti et al. (377) describe effective language teaching as building a "bridge" between students' existing worlds and new linguistic experiences.

T8's observation that rhymes, even simple nursery rhymes, are "catchy, memorable" also aligns with Spiro's (*Creative Poetry* 181) discussion of refrains – common in both poetry and music – as powerful mnemonic structures. These patterns help students remember content while also offering a rhythmic, engaging atmosphere that keeps them attentive, a feature that songs make particularly effective use of. Such mnemonic and affective features are not only theoretical ideals but appear in teachers' everyday practices. This was also emphasized by T1 (see 4.1.1), who highlighted the repetitive nature of lyrics as both pedagogically efficient and enjoyable.

Yet strikingly, despite their clear valuation of these creative, affective, and mnemonic elements – qualities that poetry is arguably uniquely positioned to deliver – teachers rarely framed poetry itself as the natural conduit for such outcomes. Instead, their examples overwhelmingly drew from songs, humorous or dramatic writing, or digital artifacts like memes. This tension

underscores a key finding relevant to RQ1 (concerning how and under what conditions poetry is used): while teachers enthusiastically facilitated creative exploration, they seldom identified poetry as the preferred medium for doing so. This suggests that poetry's creative promise is widely acknowledged in theory but remains elusive in practice, at least within these lower-secondary EFL contexts.

Part of this gap may stem from differing expectations. As Proitsaki (123) notes, people often report disliking poetry after a few disappointing encounters, whereas their attitude toward music tends to remain more open, even if not every piece appeals to them. This distinction helps explain participants' preferences in this study. While they readily embraced artistic or playful tasks that felt culturally familiar and pedagogically secure – such as rap lyrics, pop songs, or digital humor – they approached poetry more cautiously, perhaps perceiving it as a higher-stakes and less accessible form of creative engagement.

This also speaks directly to dimensions of teacher self-efficacy (Bandura 194-195) and the basic psychological needs of competence and autonomy identified by Ryan and Deci (70). According to Bandura (193-194), teacher confidence is primarily developed through successful performance experiences. Positive outcomes with poetry instruction, for instance, could reinforce a willingness to try similar tasks in the future. Conversely, repeated failures, especially early on, could lower their confidence. Another aspect that Bandura (197) mentions is that of “vicarious experience” which entails teachers observing successful use of poetry in the classroom setting, especially when the model teacher is seen working through difficulties, can strengthen observers' belief in their own ability to do the same. This reinforces Bandura's notion that people tend to apply new strategies in areas where they already feel competent. Teachers narrated these creative classroom successes with evident pride, but the spaces they chose for experimentation were often those where they felt most capable. Opting to work with songs to illustrate grammar or memes to encourage playful language use can be read as pragmatic choices that balanced novelty with a sense of mastery. Poetry, by contrast, seemed to sit in a more uncertain zone, where teachers' feelings of competence – and their perceptions of how students might respond – were more fragile.

The result is that while many teachers clearly possessed a well-developed intuitive sense of what makes classroom activities engaging – relevance, repetition, surprise, humor, emotional resonance – they did not necessarily see poetry as the best vehicle for fostering these dynamics. This gap is especially noteworthy in light of Papachristou & Kanonidou's (4-11) findings, which suggest that poetry can enhance vocabulary, pronunciation, and writing precisely

because it is engaging, much like the songs and rhymes teachers already favored. Given these parallels, it is surprising that teachers have not more systematically harnessed poetry's potential. This suggests an unrealized potential: a domain in which poetry's distinctive qualities could more systematically be harnessed, were it not for lingering uncertainties about its fit, feasibility, or student receptivity.

This thematic strand also offers a nuanced partial answer to RQ1: teachers' personal openness to creativity and their familiarity with playful or emotionally resonant teaching methods did not automatically translate into confidence or clarity about how to integrate poetry. Instead, poetry seemed to remain on the periphery – acknowledged as valuable, even culturally or personally meaningful, but often sidelined in day-to-day pedagogy in favor of media and forms perceived as safer or easier to implement. Overall, the findings suggest that while teachers possess strong intuitive awareness of what engages students creatively, poetry remains underutilized due to perceived pedagogical risk, unfamiliarity, and uncertainty about student receptivity.

Beyond these practical and affective considerations, however, a more conceptual issue emerges. Much of the teacher talk seemed to equate “integrating poetry” with creative writing tasks, while overlooking the fact that poetry could also serve other learning aims such as vocabulary practice, pronunciation, cultural reflection, or grammar awareness. Teachers' reluctance may therefore not only reflect institutional constraints but also a lack of clarity about what poetry can offer in language education more broadly. Combined with limited familiarity with a diverse repertoire of poetic texts, this conceptual gap may explain why poetry was rarely prioritized, even by teachers who expressed personal enjoyment of it.

5.2. Balancing Confidence and Creative Risk in Poetry Pedagogy

A central thread emerging from this study's focus group data is teachers' apprehension and emotional vulnerability when it comes to teaching poetry. Many participants, despite years of classroom experience, voiced persistent doubts about their own preparedness and their students' readiness for engaging with poetry. This is not simply a matter of individual preference but rather reflects broader psychological constructs like self-efficacy (Bandura 193-194) and the satisfaction of the needs for competence and autonomy as described by Ryan and Deci (70). It also points to gaps in professional preparation: as Gönen (28) underscores, “almost no place is reserved to guide pre-service teachers [...] to use literary forms for language teaching purposes,” meaning that while prospective teachers often study literature, they may receive little training on how to employ it effectively in language classrooms.

This gap in preparation makes the classroom environment – and the teacher’s role within it – even more central. As Dörnyei (“Motivation” 278) emphasizes, teachers play a pivotal role in shaping L2 learners’ motivation, functioning as group leaders whose behaviors and attitudes model the learning environment. Task presentation – particularly drawing students’ attention to the purpose of activities – is another key factor, as is the nature of feedback (Dörnyei “Motivation” 278). For instance, overly judgmental feedback can stifle learners’ self-confidence and discourage creative risk-taking (Dörnyei “Motivation” 278-282). Moreover, when students sense hesitancy or discomfort in their teachers, they may mirror that uncertainty, resulting in lowered engagement or increased anxiety around poetry. The data suggest a reciprocal dynamic, in which teacher vulnerability (e.g., concerns about exposing personal attachments to poetry, see 4.2.2.) and student reluctance (e.g., fear of peer judgment, 4.2.3.) reinforce one another, making avoidance more likely on both sides. This dynamic surfaced in FG2, where a teacher with one year of experience explained a preference for short stories and creative writing tasks, noting that “[the students] are just more used to it”. To which T5, with five years of experience, responded, “Or we are more used to it because we don’t like poetry.” This brief exchange hinted at how even in the early stages of a teaching career, preferences and avoidance patterns can begin to take root. While years of teaching experience may not directly determine teachers’ beliefs about poetry, it appears to influence how those beliefs are enacted in everyday decision-making. If teachers convey discomfort with poetry, even implicitly, students may absorb that unease, making poetry feel alien or inaccessible for everyone involved.

Dörnyei (“Motivation” 281-282) offers a range of strategies designed to foster student motivation in authentic and sustainable ways. However, Dörnyei (“Motivation” 280) cautions that these strategies “are not rock-solid golden rules, but rather suggestions that may work with one teacher or group better than another and that might work today but not tomorrow as they lose their novelty”.

In practice, this variability is visible in how teachers navigate constraints and make pragmatic decisions. As noted in the findings (see 4.2.4), one experienced teacher explained that she had “nearly stopped doing [poetry]” due to time pressures, highlighting how pragmatic constraints often reinforce teachers’ avoidance. While this frames poetry avoidance in practical terms, it also subtly reveals a protective maneuver: by steering clear of poetry, teachers shield themselves from situations that might threaten their sense of competence. This retreat into pedagogical safety reflects not only an individual coping strategy but also underscores how professional identity is shaped by internalized expectations of performance and expertise. When

teachers internalize the belief that poetry demands mastery, any deviation from this perceived standard becomes risky. Thus, avoidance becomes a rational response to an environment where vulnerability is not institutionally supported. As Bandura (194) notes, individuals are more likely to approach tasks when they feel assured of their capabilities and avoid those where they anticipate failure. This is echoed by Matthews et al. (745-749), who found that many teachers feel their creative freedom is stifled by assessment pressures, leading them to retreat to safer, more familiar instructional territory.

Blake and Snapper (1) relate teacher reluctance to a lack of subject knowledge and pedagogical fear – factors that appear prominently in the current study as well. Several teachers voiced concerns about “not doing the poems justice”, echoing longstanding anxieties about interpretive authority and expertise.

Interestingly, these findings resonate with Masbuhin and Liao (29-31), who found that teachers with greater exposure to poetry sometimes reported a lower desire to teach it, a reluctance they connected to perceptions of poetry as difficult – a pattern reflected in this study as well. For example, T1 with 19 years of experience, noted having written nearly all longer university papers on poetry, T3 (5 years) referenced an appreciation for a poetry collection by Florence Welch, and T7 (3 years) described reading works by Rupi Kaur for enjoyment outside of school. While differing in experience, all three expressed personal enthusiasm for poetry, yet none described integrating it regularly into their teaching practice. This tentative pattern may suggest that personal literary interest alone does not guarantee pedagogical confidence or implementation – a dynamic that appears to hold across varying levels of professional experience. At the same time, as Barbosa and Sales (72-76) note, popular digital forms such as Instapoetry – including the work of Rupi Kaur – can offer productive entry points for connecting teachers’ personal enthusiasm with classroom practice.

This gap may be explained, in part, by the emotional stakes of poetry teaching. Indeed, several teachers described feeling emotionally exposed by poetry – for instance, T1 remarked, “If there is something that I really, really love, then I don’t want [students] to talk badly about it.” This underscores poetry’s deeply personal character, which can heighten apprehension. Xerri (“Teachers as Readers” 41) argues that teachers’ personal (dis)engagement with poetry profoundly shapes their professional willingness to teach it. Those lacking personal confidence or enthusiasm often transmit this reluctance to students, consciously or not.

Gönen (28) further highlights that teacher education programs frequently neglect to prepare teachers to use literature – especially poetry – as a tool for language teaching. This can leave

even experienced teachers like those in this study feeling underprepared. Similarly, Weaven and Clark (208) report that teachers often feared their own lack of knowledge or skill in poetry, a perception that heightened their sense of vulnerability in the classroom. This sense of vulnerability surfaced in the data as well. As noted earlier, T3 connected their hesitation to relational dynamics, while T8 captured a more discipline-centered uncertainty: “And I think sometimes I’m also a bit hesitant because I want to do the poetry justice. I don’t know, sometimes I’m like, do I know enough about this?” Together, these reflections illustrate how personal insecurities and professional expectations can intertwine to complicate teachers’ willingness to integrate poetry.

These emotional and pedagogical tensions are echoed in Papachristou and Kanonidou’s (4-10) survey of Greek EFL teachers, where poetry was described as both a rich resource for self-expression and a challenge to integrate meaningfully. Their participants reported that poetry and song lyrics made lessons more engaging (98 %), fostered creativity (68 %), and helped build rapport with students (61 %) (Papachristou & Kanonidou 9). In their literature review, the authors also emphasize earlier research showing that rhythm and musicality can heighten enthusiasm and reduce classroom anxiety (Papachristou & Kanonidou 3). Extending this point, they note that such practices may be particularly supportive for introverted learners, for whom such activities offer a more comfortable outlet of expression (Papachristou & Kanonidou 9). Taken together, these perspectives closely align with the experiences of teachers in this study who sought emotionally “safe” ways of using literary tasks. These findings reinforce the idea that poetry’s success hinges not only on material or curriculum alignment, but also on teachers’ confidence to manage the affective climate it generates.

From the perspective of Ryan and Deci’s (70-71) Self-Determination Theory, such vulnerability directly impacts perceived competence and autonomy. Teachers in this study frequently emphasized constraints – from time shortages to curricular rigidities – that left them feeling unable to teach poetry “their own way.” This was reflected in teachers’ remarks equating the curriculum with the textbook (see also 5.4), which limited their sense of autonomy and reinforced doubts about their own effectiveness. Matthews (366) similarly notes that when creative approaches are relegated to the margins of school life, such as after-school clubs, they are framed as peripheral rather than integral to the curriculum – a dynamic that restricts teachers’ sense of agency and belonging.

Apprehension was also tied to uncertainty about student responses. As noted in the findings (see 4.2.2), one teacher expressed fear that poetry might be presented as a ‘piece of art’ that

students would fail to appreciate. This anxiety illustrates how aesthetic ambiguity can discourage teachers from taking creative risks. This fear was compounded by the belief that poetry demands “reading between the lines,” a skill many students are thought to find too difficult – a challenge also reported in Gangchuk’s (13) study of Bhutanese learners. Yet, paradoxically, this very ambiguity can be a powerful pedagogical tool: Reazul (315) suggests that students’ surprise at unusual language can deepen engagement and aid memory. Still, teachers wary of confusion or loss of control might sidestep such opportunities, preferring to avoid the uncertainties that poetry entails.

Notably, these apprehensions were often framed against broader institutional forces. Matthews et al. (740) and Hennessy et al. (344-345) each emphasize how the pressure to teach to the test systematically sidelines creative forms like poetry. Teachers in this study mirrored this, stressing how “the centralized testing formats force us [...]” (T1), leading them to prioritize exam-aligned content over exploratory, open-ended tasks (for systemic detail, see 5.3.).

This dynamic – where self-doubt intertwines with systemic constraints – contributes to a complex landscape of pedagogical avoidance. As Xerri (“Poetry Education Research” 379-386) notes, established teaching habits and institutional expectations often discourage teachers from sharing interpretive authority, leading them to maintain control over how poetry is approached in the classroom. Paran (“Researchers and Teachers” 500) similarly observes that teachers’ assumptions about what works in the classroom do not always align with students’ actual learning needs or preferences. This tendency surfaced clearly in the focus group discussions. T9, for instance, described the careful selection of “simpler poems so they don’t feel overwhelmed,” reflecting a recurring tension between accessibility and the fear of “dumbing down” content – a concern also raised by Gerald Dawe in Xerri’s interview (“Finding a Language” 608).

Moreover, poetry’s perceived need for personal reflection or self-expression intensified these worries. Mardiningrum and Adriyanthi (622-624) found that while poetry can foster students’ self-expression, it also underscores the importance of teacher guidance. They argue that teachers must balance allowing creativity with providing support, since students still require personal resources and structured assistance to produce meaningful work (Mardiningrum & Adriyanthi 624). Teachers in this study recognized this: T3 expressed concern that students might not want to share their writing because “they might feel too exposed or don’t like me,” highlighting how teacher-student relational trust becomes pivotal.

Taken together, these findings underline that poetry's marginal place in the classroom is not due to inherent disinterest but to a nuanced interplay of personal, pedagogical, and systemic factors. Teachers navigate fears of inadequacy, loss of authority, and emotional risk – all within structures that prioritize efficiency and quantifiable outcomes over creative exploration. To truly harness poetry's promise, teacher development must address not only skills and materials but also these underlying dimensions of self-efficacy, competence, and autonomy.

These broader tensions were also inflected by professional experience, which shaped how teachers positioned themselves toward poetry. While years of teaching experience did not directly determine teachers' core beliefs about poetry, it clearly influenced how these beliefs were enacted in practice. Early-career teachers often voiced uncertainty and relied more heavily on coursebooks or departmental norms, yet they also showed curiosity and a greater openness to experimentation. More experienced teachers, by contrast, enjoyed greater authority and curricular flexibility but tended to highlight systemic barriers such as time scarcity or exam-oriented pressures, sometimes describing a gradual withdrawal from poetry for pragmatic reasons. These patterns indicate that novices and veterans each start from different positions: one marked by openness but insecurity, the other by authority but institutional constraint. For teacher development, this suggests that support for younger teachers should focus on building confidence and autonomy, while experienced teachers may benefit from professional spaces that re-legitimize creative risk-taking.

Beyond individual experience, the social context of the focus groups also influenced how teachers articulated their perspectives. Importantly, the social structure of the focus groups themselves – conducted with three teachers from the same school respectively – may have shaped how participants expressed vulnerability, confidence, or dissent. Being among colleagues likely fostered a degree of openness and shared language but may also have introduced subtle self-monitoring. For instance, expressions of uncertainty about one's ability to teach poetry might have been softened in order to maintain professional credibility within the group. Conversely, the familiarity among participants also allowed for rich, spontaneous storytelling and affirmation of shared experiences, particularly around pedagogical risk-taking. These focus group dynamics mirror the social dimension of self-efficacy (Bandura 197-198), where perceived judgments from peers influence one's confidence to act. Moreover, Ryan and Deci's (71-75) concept of relatedness – the need to feel accepted and understood by others – likely shaped the tone and depth of reflection in each group. As such, the collegial setting of the focus groups simultaneously enabled and constrained the discourse, a reminder that professional dialogue is always filtered through relational dynamics.

These relational dynamics, combined with the emotional and pedagogical uncertainties surrounding poetry, point to the value of structured support systems that can help guide teachers through the complexities of poetry instruction. One promising example is Gönen's (29-32) Poetry Teaching (POT) framework, previously discussed in the literature review. Its scaffolded, six-stage design offers a structured pathway for poetry instruction that may help address the confidence gap identified in this study. While none of the participants referenced specific pedagogical models, the hesitations they expressed – especially around lesson sequencing, instructional depth, and anticipated student reactions – highlight the potential utility of such frameworks. The POT model (Gönen 31-32) may be particularly helpful for novice teachers by providing a sense of progression, while also serving as a springboard for more autonomous and creative practice over time. At the same time, its structured nature raises questions about whether such approaches might limit spontaneous or interpretive engagement – suggesting a need for balance between guidance and flexibility in future teacher development.

5.3. Teaching to the Test: Curricular Demands and the Sidelining of Creativity

Another prominent thread emerging from the findings is the pervasive influence of high-stakes assessment on teachers' curricular decisions. Participants repeatedly framed poetry as a genre at odds with the exam-driven priorities of Austrian secondary education. T1, with 19 years of teaching experience, candidly admitted that despite personal appreciation for poetry, they had “nearly stopped doing it” due to time constraints – a pragmatic adaptation to the need to cover examinable content efficiently (for links to teacher motivation, see 5.2.). This pragmatic choice reflected a broader structural issue. Matthews et al. (749) similarly observe that teachers feel their creative freedom is restricted by the demands of assessment, monitoring, and performative pressures. As T2 added, falling behind the established testing schedule was a professional concern that implicitly deprioritized exploratory or literary learning.

Such dynamics align with what Xerri (“Teaching Poetry” 8) and Hennessy et al. (344-345) describe as the growing frustration among teachers whose poetry instruction is increasingly constrained by exam specifications and the pressure to “teach to the test.” In the Austrian context, this is most evident in the orientation toward the Matura, which shapes expectations not only at the upper-secondary level, where the exam is administered, but also indirectly shapes expectations and content choices in lower-secondary classrooms. One participant in FG2 illustrated this by describing how students themselves become narrowly focused on passing the final examination, reducing their openness to creative ventures in the classroom.

In addition to institutional demands, the Irish poet Gerald Dawe highlighted in an interview with Xerri (“Finding a Language” 611) that teachers also face external pressures from parents: “I know this is changing, but [teachers] do have a sense of empowerment that they can teach a lot of what they want to do themselves, even though there’s going to be that ultimate need for the kids to do well on their exams otherwise mommy and daddy are going to be banging on the door”. This underscores how teacher decision-making is shaped not only by institutional benchmarks but also by the anticipations – and anxieties – of families invested in measurable outcomes.

Hennessey et al. (344-347) similarly document how time scarcity and the pressure to prepare students for standardized assessments constitute the biggest barriers to poetry’s integration in English classrooms. Teachers in that study, like those in this research, often found it more pragmatic to focus on exam-relevant tasks, sidelining genres perceived as less directly tied to testing outcomes. This echoes Gönen’s (28-29) argument that tight curricular pacing and the workload involved in developing creative literary lessons discourage teachers from venturing beyond familiar textbook-driven approaches.

What becomes particularly striking in these findings is the sense of resignation. Teachers such as T1, who once conducted richer literary explorations, expressed a sense of loss over this shift (see also 4.2.4). This suggests that poetry’s marginalization is not rooted in pedagogical disinterest, but rather in a perceived incompatibility with the efficiency and predictability required by exam-oriented schooling.

This pattern is echoed in Papachristou and Kanonidou’s (10) findings from the Greek EFL context, where more experienced teachers expressed a consistent desire to use songs, lyrics or poetry in their classes – yet did not actually implement them. A closer look at the data showed that this disconnect stemmed from the limited time of teaching and the amount of material to be covered throughout the year (Papachristou & Kanonidou 10), showing how systemic constraints override even well-established pedagogical inclinations. Their study further noted that even with extended instructional hours, teachers felt unable to incorporate creative elements due to an “extreme focus and extensive training on various examinations” (Papachristou & Kanonidou 10), which restricts flexibility in material choice.

Together, these reflections underscore how assessment-driven teaching can structurally exclude creative content – even when teachers are willing. Indeed, as Matthews (366) notes, there is an implicit message in many systems that creativity is treated as an extra, often relegated to after-school clubs rather than woven into core curricular time.

Moreover, some participants hinted that even when poetry was included in coursebooks, its purpose often became utilitarian: T1 described using song lyrics for grammatical structures due to their repetition – an efficient but reductive use of poetic language that bypasses interpretive or affective potential. This underscores how standardized curricula and time pressures can narrow the scope of poetry to easily testable functions, sidelining its potential for fostering deeper interpretation, empathy, or personal expression.

Overall, these insights illuminate a broader tension: while teachers recognize poetry's value for creativity, critical thinking, and affective learning, the structural imperatives of teaching to the test constrain both the time and the perceived legitimacy of engaging with poetry meaningfully. This highlights a core challenge for future curriculum development and teacher education – developing models of accountability that leave room for literary risk-taking, student voice, and meaningful engagement.

5.4. Materials & Resources: The Promise and the Gaps

A prominent thread running through the focus group discussions was how heavily teachers depend on coursebooks and established resources – and how limited these often are when it comes to poetry. This issue speaks directly to the secondary research question of this study, which explored teachers' awareness of and access to suitable poetry materials for the lower-secondary EFL classroom.

Most participants reported following the *More!* series by Helbling, often treating it as an unofficial curriculum guide. T4 admitted frankly: “I feel like the curriculum [...] is the book, to be honest.” Yet the poetry content in *More!* was almost uniformly dismissed. T4 outright stated, “I always leave it out because I hate poems,” and T5 found the selections “too childish,” while T6 remarked that students “just make fun of it.” These concerns mirror Gangchuk's (16) findings from Bhutan, where teachers likewise cited a lack of engaging, age-appropriate poetry in textbooks. Mohammadzadeh (287) emphasizes that students quickly lose motivation when confronted with uninspiring or linguistically difficult texts, and he cautions that what teachers find compelling may not always match learners' interests.

Faced with uninspiring or age-inappropriate textbook poems, many teachers looked elsewhere for materials that felt more engaging, accessible, or pedagogically useful. This gap often nudged teachers toward using songs instead. As T1 explained (see 5.1), their repetitive structures make them especially useful for grammar – a pedagogical quality Spiro (*Creative Poetry* 181) similarly associates with refrains as linguistic anchors. However, Proitsaki (125) offers a

cautionary counterpoint, noting that “opting for song lyrics of the students’ choice, on the other hand, generally results in banal and repetitive texts”, suggesting that while repetition can support retention, it may come at the cost of richer, more complex language exploration.

Yet while songs predominate, actual poems or poetic texts are rare. T7 shared one attempt to introduce poetry using Fobizz to create a “What is poetry?” worksheet, while T9 described morning rituals with simplified classic poems such as *Ozymandias* or poems by Walt Whitman – though these took place in a fifth-grade beyond the study’s core focus. Even so, such glimpses suggest how poetry might begin to find a more sustained place in classroom practice.

Outside of textbooks, teachers occasionally ventured into more multimodal or digital territories. While T8 had earlier described memes as playful vehicles for language exploration, this also highlights how teachers reach for creative, student-centered tools when traditional materials fall short. Such media use shows teachers’ openness to creative language play – an openness that could serve as a foundation for introducing poetry in more accessible, multimodal forms. This resonates with Andania et al.’s (200) findings on using Instagram to publish student writing, which broadened students’ sense of audience and supported the development of student voice. Yet such practices were largely incidental and rarely tied explicitly to poetry.

Watson et al. (341-346) emphasize that teachers’ autonomy to select texts aligned with their interests can enhance emotional engagement and motivation – a point echoed in this present study by teachers who described selecting poems “they personally liked” or “found beautiful”, even when they diverged from prescribed materials.

Despite evident creative instinct, teachers often missed opportunities to extend them into poetry-specific resources. Teachers did not report actively seeking out poetry anthologies, online repositories, or contemporary spoken word resources. This mirrors Hennessy et al.’s (344) observations that time, resourcing, and entrenched habits constrain teachers’ willingness to go beyond familiar or convenient materials. Even when teachers like T9, who felt confident in selecting poems because they “know the class”, rarely described systematically exploring a wider range of poetry materials. This mirrors findings by Rathert and Cabaroğlu (1819-1826), who show that teachers’ reliance on familiar coursebooks often stems less from disinterest than from institutional constraints such as limited access to alternative sources, workload, and insufficient professional development. Their study underscores how institutional constraints can reinforce teachers’ dependence on standard coursebooks, thereby narrowing curricular possibilities.

In the absence of structured, accessible poetry resources, some teachers relied on personal teaching archives accumulated over time. As T9 shared: “Whenever I go home, I take out the old folder and grab the things that I still remember where I thought, yeah, this wasn’t a waste of time. This was actually useful and has been my main resource ever since.” While this pragmatic strategy may stem from a desire to work with trusted, familiar materials, it also points to broader gaps in institutional support. Grossman and Thompson (2020-2025) similarly observed that novice teachers often continued using the same curriculum materials for years, relying on them as a safe and familiar solution in the absence of stronger institutional support. Rather than signaling disinterest, such practices highlight the systemic absence of structured, trustworthy, and context-relevant poetry materials that teachers can confidently adopt. This may explain why platforms like eduki – which T9 described as “confusing” and overly commercial – have not become reliable alternatives.

These limitations reflect a wider lack of scaffolding and pedagogical support for integrating poetry meaningfully into the EFL classroom. Moreover, the lack of targeted scaffolding materials was often cited as a barrier. T3, for example, reflected on trying an acrostic homework assignment and admitted: “Maybe I should have told them a bit more about it, or introduced the topic a bit more or better.” Similarly, T5 pointed out that “if the foundation is missing, then it’s quite hard to do it later on”, highlighting how gaps in early exposure can make subsequent poetry teaching considerably more challenging at advanced stages. This concern is echoed by Weaven and Clark (207), who found that teachers often feel introducing poetry at the secondary level comes too late, wishing it had been embedded earlier to better fit curricular timeframes and build comfort with the genre. These perspectives collectively underline Mohammadzadeh’s (293) argument that well-designed pedagogical approaches – such as stylistic analysis or structured interpretation tasks – can greatly enhance both teacher confidence and student motivation. Without such supports, poetry tends to remain on the margins of classroom practice, with its potential constrained by the absence of accessible, well-structured materials.

Thus, this aspect of the findings offers particularly strong insight into RQ2. While teachers frequently value creativity, they often lack either the awareness of rich poetry-specific resources or the professional development needed to integrate them meaningfully. The result is a heavy reliance on generic coursebooks that do little to capitalize on poetry’s potential to foster language play, emotional engagement, or critical thinking – leaving the promise of poetry in EFL education largely unrealized.

This tension between creative potential and hesitancy became particularly visible in how teachers responded to the two stimulus materials (see 4.3.4). Their reflections on Material A, a coursebook task, and Material B, a selected poem, revealed not only their attitudes toward poetry but also underlying beliefs about their own teaching competence and classroom authority. Reactions to the poem often included expressions of hesitation or doubt, such as wanting to “do the poem justice” or questioning whether they “knew enough” to guide interpretation – classic indicators of diminished self-efficacy (Bandura 193-194). At the same time, these reactions can be interpreted through Ryan and Deci’s (70-71) lens of basic psychological needs: when teachers felt uncertain about their expertise, their sense of competence diminished; when the material felt imposed or unfamiliar, their autonomy was undermined.

Dörnyei’s (“Motivation” 277-278) framework further enriches this interpretation by emphasizing that teacher motivation is shaped not only by personal beliefs but also by course-specific motivational components, such as the perceived relevance and clarity of materials. Material A, being drawn from a familiar coursebook, often elicited more procedural or confident responses, while Material B – despite being intentionally simplified – was met with greater caution or emotional distance. This contrast underscored how material familiarity and emotional safety strongly influence teachers’ willingness to take creative risks. As Dörnyei (“Motivation” 277-281) notes, strategies are only effective if they align with the participants’ sense of relevance, expectancy, and confidence, making sustainable implementation dependent on perceived purpose and competence. Teachers’ willingness to experiment is thus not simply a matter of personality or training, but a reflection of the complex interplay between material design, perceived competence, and motivational alignment.

5.5. Self-expression, Identity & The Social Dynamics of Poetry

If materials and structural supports constitute one dimension of the underuse of poetry, another equally powerful factor lies in the affective and relational terrain of the classroom. Throughout the focus groups, teachers repeatedly framed poetry as something uniquely personal, even risky – a genre tied closely to self-expression, emotional exposure, and social dynamics. This view resonates strongly with the idea advanced by Piscayanti et al. (377), who describe poetry as a “bridge” between the writer’s voice and the reader’s mind, as well as with Reazul’s (314) caution that learning devoid of creativity and personal investment can risk flattening students’ identities.

Yet precisely because of its emotional resonance, poetry also holds powerful potential for supporting students' personal development and social awareness. Kirkgöz (395-399) highlights how poetry can engage learners both cognitively and affectively, particularly when connected to real-life issues. Similarly, Concannon-Gibney (1-4) illustrates how poetry addressing themes such as bullying or climate change can evoke strong responses and encourage reflection.

Several participants in this study offered revealing glimpses into these dynamics. As highlighted in the findings (see 4.2.2 and 4.2.3), both teacher-student relationships and peer dynamics significantly shaped willingness to engage with poetry. As one teacher noted, students' reluctance to share their writing might reflect their relationship with the teacher, underscoring how trust functions as a prerequisite for creative engagement. A similar issue was raised in relation to peer interactions: some students explicitly admitted holding back opinions out of fear of "hate comments" from classmates. Such concerns illustrate the delicate social negotiations that accompany self-expression in adolescent peer groups – a point also supported by Mardiningrum and Adriyanti (622-624), who found that teacher encouragement is central to creating the safety students need to risk voicing personal ideas.

As discussed earlier (see 5.2), Papachristou and Kanonidou's (9) questionnaire study showed that most teachers saw poetry and song lyrics as engaging, creative tools that also helped build rapport with students. Such findings reinforce the idea that poetry and similar expressive formats can serve not only cognitive and creative goals, but also relational ones – particularly when implemented in emotionally safe classroom environments.

Importantly, these kinds of relational concerns are not just anecdotal – they reflect deeper motivational patterns shaped by the classroom's social climate. These patterns also align closely with Dörnyei's ("Motivation" 277-279) emphasis on group-specific motivational components, particularly the influence of peer norms and classroom atmosphere on learner behavior. According to Dörnyei, the emotional tone of the learning group, including mutual respect and support among peers, significantly affects students' willingness to participate in open-ended or emotionally expressive tasks. If students fear negative evaluation from classmates – or sense vulnerability is not socially approved – they are less likely to engage with activities like poetry writing or personal reflection. In this way, both teacher-student and peer relationships become key variables in shaping the motivational climate of the classroom. A similar emphasis on the relational and affective dimensions emerges in Sigvardsson's (588, 592, 594-596) review, which shows how standardized curricular frameworks and high-stakes testing constrain creative poetry pedagogy, and argues for approaches that validate students' personal responses. When

creativity is seen as extraneous or risky, both students and teachers may retreat from personal engagement.

Interestingly, what teachers described as poetry's riskiness was often double-edged. On the one hand, T1 described poetry as "too intimate," expressing concern that introducing personally valued poems could lead to feeling slighted if students reacted dismissively. This was strikingly similar to the concern voiced by Gerald Dawe in Xerri's interview ("Finding a Language" 609), who stresses that the value of poetry teaching lies not primarily in self-expression but in making students think and in helping them find a language that works for them. Such an approach presupposes a classroom climate that tolerates uncertainty and openness, which can make teachers feel exposed. This discomfort illustrates how emotional exposure can both hinder and enrich poetic engagement. On the other hand, the same intimacy and open-endedness are precisely what make poetry a powerful site for voice and identity formation. As Mardiningrum and Adriyanti (624) put it, even though poetry is "about free self-expression," students still rely heavily on teachers to create the structures and reassurance that allow genuine creativity to flourish.

This tension was also apparent in discussions of creative freedom. Teachers often described poetry as overly rigid in terms of structure and rhyme scheme – "I circumvent it because rhyme schemes feel restricting," T9 explained. Yet what teachers view as restrictive, students may see as reassuring: poetic freedom itself can feel overwhelming without enough scaffolding. Indeed, Mardiningrum and Adriyanti (623) note, drawing on previous research, that students often find poetic freedom daunting and may prefer the clarity of more structured academic writing. This highlights the crucial mediating role of teachers in balancing guidance with openness, helping students navigate the unfamiliar terrain of poetic play without feeling lost or overly exposed.

Social dynamics among students further complicated this picture. Poetry was frequently portrayed as something embarrassing, or likely to be judged by peers. As Proitsaki (130) noted in the Swedish context, having students read random poems anonymously was often more effective than asking them to read their own work, precisely because it reduced social risk. This insight aligns with T4's perceptive comment that for some students "[poetry] doesn't set fire to [their] soul. [...] You could have students who are like that, and you should, like, support them with that, I guess". This remark highlights the awkward balance: poetry might be profoundly meaningful for a few yet easily dismissed or even ridiculed by others. It also underscores the importance of teacher support, regardless of students' starting points. In classrooms where

performative compliance dominates, the intimate, exploratory work that poetry invites may be seen as too hazardous.

While reading poetry aloud is often promoted as a strategy for enhancing both confidence and expressive language use, teachers in this study voiced considerable hesitation. Drawing on earlier research, Syamsia and Hamid (5) summarize that poetry's distinct features – rhyme, rhythm, and pitch – can foster students' self-esteem, encourage freer emotional expression, and support all four major language skills – listening, speaking, reading, and writing – ultimately raising learner motivation. Yet these potential benefits are not always realized in classroom practice. As T6 reflected, “And generally. Reading aloud, it's just torture. And we learned that at university as well, that it's not really the best thing you could do as a teacher.” This perspective, offered by a teacher with only one year of experience, underscores how recent training and limited classroom practice can shape perceptions of what is pedagogically appropriate. It suggests that while reading poetry aloud is widely considered beneficial, its implementation may be hampered by early-career discomfort, limited experience, or concerns about student resistance – once again highlighting the importance of context-sensitive adaptation.

At the same time, there were glimpses of how poetry might still function as a scaffold for identity and voice. T8 drew connections between poetry and nursery rhymes, emphasizing how such texts are memorable and emotionally charged, while several other participants offered cautious experiments with poetic or playful language, revealing both curiosity and uncertainty about how far to pursue such approaches. These moments suggest that the same qualities that make poetry feel risky – its subjectivity, its resonance with personal experience – also make it uniquely valuable in supporting the kinds of creative, reflective, and relational learning that extend beyond grammar drills or rote comprehension.

Taken together, the evidence points to a recurring tension between poetry's pedagogical potential and the classroom conditions that limit its use. Ultimately, these findings reinforce Xerri's (“Poetry Education Research” 379-386) claim that the challenges associated with poetry stem less from its intrinsic difficulty than from entrenched beliefs about poetic texts and how they are approached in the classroom. When teachers and students alike see poetry as a high-stakes, vulnerable genre, it becomes easier to avoid – especially in environments lacking the trust, time, or encouragement needed to embrace its challenges. Thus, poetry's promise as a medium for self-expression and identity work remains largely unfulfilled, constrained by fears of exposure and the complex social economies of the classroom.

5.6. Future Directions: Small Cracks in the Wall?

While this study has highlighted multiple structural, relational, and psychological barriers to poetry instruction, it also uncovered small but promising moments of experimentation – signs that poetry might still be meaningfully reintroduced into lower-secondary EFL classrooms. These “small cracks in the wall” hint at possible avenues for reinvigorating poetry pedagogy in ways that respond to both teacher realities and student needs.

Several teachers described experimenting, even if cautiously, with formats that extend poetry beyond traditional reading or writing. T9, for instance, spoke of incorporating shorter, simpler poems as part of a morning ritual – offering students “food for thought for the day.” While modest, this practice resonates with Mohammadzadeh’s (293) broader point that manageable literary tasks can stimulate mental constructions and support motivation – suggesting that even small-scale poetic encounters may hold pedagogical value. T1 similarly reflected on once using *Little Red Riding Hood* as a playful text in class, noting a desire to return to such approaches. Likewise, the focus group discussion prompted T5 to remember blackout poetry explored during a university course but largely neglected in professional practice – suggesting that conversations about poetry alone may help reignite pedagogical curiosity.

Building on this spirit of experimentation, several participants showed curiosity about performative approaches. As Curwood and Bull (156-165) argue, poetry slams offer students a way to critically engage with the genre and connect it to personal and social concerns – an avenue that could be further explored in Austrian EFL contexts, especially for building motivation and identity. In a complementary vein, Mironova (144-145) emphasizes that effective poetry pedagogy should foster what she terms “open individuality”, encouraging students to reflect on themselves, engage emotionally, and discover personal meaning in texts. She argues that such engagement is essential for cultivating students’ creativity (Mironova 144-145).

Other participants expressed curiosity about spoken word or poetry slams, echoing Abrams and Harpham’s (271) description of poetry slams as public competitions judged by audiences, where rhythm, clarity, and cultural relevance are foregrounded. Such events reframe poems as performative experiences rather than purely textual ones. This potential for deeper engagement is not limited to literary expression. Moya-Méndez and Zwart (739-740) similarly demonstrate how creative expression through poetry can deepen engagement even in non-literary domains: in their study, students reported greater freedom and deeper reflection on environmental themes

when writing poems compared to conventional assignments. This suggests poetry's potential as a cross-disciplinary tool, enhancing not only language awareness but also critical thinking and emotional resonance across curricula. Alexander (69-70) similarly highlights slam poetry as a way to make poetry heard rather than merely seen on the page. Building on this, it can be argued that such approaches may help circumvent some of the embarrassment students feel about exposing personal ideas in writing, allowing them to explore voice and perspective in less textually bound ways.

Along similar lines, T8 described using YouTube clips of spoken word poetry to illustrate rhythm and emotion. These explorations align with Samanik (26) and Andania et al.'s (200) observations that digital platforms like Instagram can allow students to share poetic content with broader audiences. Together, these approaches resonate with the idea of using poetry not simply as a static curricular object, but as a living form that engages with students' digital identities and social worlds.

However, these glimpses of future practice are still largely peripheral and experimental. Teachers often qualified their interest with reminders of curricular or time constraints or concerns about classroom readiness. Even so, they illustrate that under the right conditions – with scaffolding, trust, and institutional support – poetry's promise to foster creative language use, personal voice, and intercultural engagement remains very much alive. One promising example comes from Kangasharju et al. (2), who describe the "Poetry Machine" – an AI-based classroom tool that provided students with draft poems as models. These drafts functioned as starting points, encouraging students to experiment with poetic features while supporting students' own creative choices (Kangasharju et al. 2-5). Such tools offer teachers low-threshold entry points for encouraging poetic experimentation without requiring heavy preparation and may help bridge the gap between creativity and curricular feasibility. Nonetheless, the successful implementation of such tools depends on infrastructural realities; in many schools, limited technological resources or lack of training may render their use impractical or unevenly distributed. Hennessy et al. (345) document that teachers often cite lack of time, resources, and training as major barriers to developing poetry pedagogy. Matthews et al. (749), meanwhile, highlight how exam-driven and performative structures restrict teachers' agency and marginalize creativity – suggesting that meaningful change would require moving beyond the current culture of compliance.

Though still tentative, these teacher-led innovations hint at a future where poetry can become not an add-on, but a vital part of student-centered EFL practice – provided the system is willing to nurture risk-taking and creative growth.

6. Limitations

The participant selection process proved to be a significant limitation, demanding considerable time and effort. Scheduling challenges frequently arose due to teachers' limited availability, illness, or childcare responsibilities, leading to short-term cancellations or participants needing to depart early. In addition, the study was small in scale. Each focus group consisted of three teachers, all colleagues from the same school, with groups drawn from three different schools located in Vienna and Lower Austria. While this design enabled rich, context-specific insights – particularly into shared institutional cultures – it also limited the range of perspectives represented. Although participants varied in teaching experience, from one to 25 years of service, future research would benefit from a broader and more diverse sample across different school types, regions, and institutional profiles. Such expansion could enhance both the depth and generalizability of the findings. All participants in this study taught at AHS lower-secondary schools, a school type that typically serves academically inclined students and follows a selective academic curriculum. While this context enabled valuable insights into how poetry is perceived within this specific educational setting, it also limits the applicability of the findings to other types of schools, such as middle schools or vocational institutions, where curricular goals, student demographics, and teaching cultures may differ significantly. Furthermore, conducting focus groups within individual schools reinforced the culturally and socially specific perspective of the findings: while this provided valuable depth, broader recruitment would be required to yield more saturated and generalized insights. Future research should therefore examine poetry pedagogy across a wider spectrum of Austrian EFL classrooms to capture a more comprehensive picture.

The absence of a co-moderator or research assistant also presented a limitation. Having an additional person would have been beneficial for managing audio recording and carefully documenting contextual information such as body language and non-verbal cues observed before, during, and after the discussions. Due to logistical constraints related to time and the geographical spread of the schools across Vienna and Lower Austria, securing consistent assistance for all focus groups was not possible. While existing personal connections within each school facilitated access as an external researcher, this also made it challenging to involve another individual in the data collection process.

Group dynamics, shaped both by interpersonal differences and collegial relationships, varied across the three focus groups. While most participants contributed actively, in some cases, quieter individuals required gentle encouragement to share their views. This may have influenced the depth and balance of perspectives represented, particularly if more vocal participants shaped the tone or direction of the discussion. At the same time, the collegial composition of the groups – with all participants working at the same school – may have encouraged openness but also led to self-monitoring or reluctance to express dissenting views. Teachers may have tempered critical reflections or hesitations in order to maintain professional credibility or collegial harmony. These interpersonal dynamics, while subtle, could therefore have influenced how freely vulnerability or disagreement was expressed.

Additionally, as with any qualitative research, the process of coding and thematic analysis was shaped by subjective interpretation. While efforts were made to ensure consistency and transparency, the selection and framing of themes inevitably reflect my own perspective.

Another challenge was managing the flow of conversation and adhering to the interview guide while simultaneously fostering a natural and engaging discussion. Balancing the need to ask specific questions with the organic trajectory of the group dynamic required careful navigation. Moreover, the group setting itself may have influenced participants' willingness to disclose personal insecurities or more critical opinions, potentially leading to more moderated, socially acceptable responses.

While the poetry stimuli used in this study generated valuable insights into teacher perceptions, their design may also have shaped the scope of the discussion. The decision to use short, text-based poems – chosen for their accessibility – may have inadvertently narrowed the exploration of poetry to more traditional forms, excluding genres such as visual poetry, spoken word, or multimodal digital texts. Teachers responded to the materials with a range of reactions, including curiosity, nostalgia, and in some cases, avoidance – responses that might have differed had the stimuli been drawn from formats more aligned with contemporary student media habits. While not explicitly discussed in the focus groups, it is plausible that students' engagement with poetic expression on platforms such as Instagram or TikTok could offer untapped potential for connecting poetry pedagogy with their lived experiences. In light of this, future research could explore how exposure to a broader array of poetic forms influences not only teachers' conceptualizations of poetry, but also their motivation and confidence to incorporate it into classroom practice. Such investigations would also align with Dörnyei's

(“Motivation” 277-282) emphasis on task variety and personal relevance as key factors in sustaining both teacher and learner engagement.

In addition, although all focus groups were conducted in English and participants remained in English throughout, several teachers expressed concern beforehand about using English for extended professional reflection. This initial apprehension may have influenced the depth or spontaneity of some responses, as participants could have been more cautious in expressing nuanced views outside their native language.

7. Implications and Further Directions

The findings of this study highlight the complex interplay between teacher beliefs, classroom dynamics, and institutional structures in shaping the integration of poetry in Austrian lower-secondary EFL classrooms. While participants broadly recognized the creative and affective potential of poetry, its use remained constrained by factors such as student proficiency, teacher confidence, and the perceived misalignment between poetry and curricular or assessment demands.

One key implication concerns the need for more targeted support in teacher education and professional development. Many participants – particularly early-career teachers – expressed a willingness to explore poetic materials but lacked strategies, scaffolding techniques, or assessment tools suited to the genre. Integrating poetry pedagogy more thoroughly into pre-service training and offering in-service workshops could help address this gap, particularly by normalizing creative risk-taking and offering adaptable frameworks for classroom use. Bandura’s concept of self-efficacy suggests that when teachers gain confidence through successful experiences and observe peers modeling effective poetry instruction, they may feel more empowered to experiment with poetry themselves. At the same time, however, professional development alone cannot substitute for teachers’ own sustained engagement with poetry. Many participants noted that, in practice, they often select poems quickly from online sources, which risks arbitrary or pedagogically mismatched choices. Developing what might be called a “selection competence” requires that teachers regularly read and explore poetry, gradually building a personal repertoire of texts to draw upon. This ongoing practice not only broadens the pool of suitable materials for different learner groups and classroom aims, but also deepens teachers’ confidence in making deliberate, informed selections. In this way, institutional support is complemented by a personal commitment to engaging with poetry as a living practice rather than merely a classroom resource.

Second, the findings suggest a need to re-evaluate existing teaching materials. Participants routinely described coursebooks as limited, outdated, or developmentally mismatched. While some teachers supplemented these materials creatively, poetry remained marginal. Publishers and curriculum developers could respond by offering poetry units that are developmentally appropriate, culturally relevant, and accompanied by flexible assessment rubrics. Aligned with Ryan and Deci's Self-Determination Theory, such materials can foster both teacher autonomy and student intrinsic motivation – particularly when they reflect students' interests, identities, and engagement with contemporary media.

Third, the study underlines the importance of psychological safety and classroom trust – not only for students but for teachers as well. Participants repeatedly described poetry as a genre that invites vulnerability, which in turn requires a classroom climate where students and teachers feel comfortable taking interpretive risks. Creating a supportive classroom climate may be a crucial condition for successfully integrating poetry and other creative genres.

From a curricular perspective, poetry currently occupies a paradoxical position: encouraged in theory but de-prioritized in practice due to time pressures and exam preparation. To address this, educational policy could consider embedding poetry more explicitly into curriculum standards, supported by formative, creativity-oriented assessment frameworks that acknowledge the genre's interpretive openness. Doing so could alleviate the pressure on teachers to “justify” poetry's use in utilitarian terms and instead foreground its contribution to linguistic, cultural, and emotional literacy.

Furthermore, the frequent mention of AI tools (e.g. ChatGPT) suggests a need to rethink digital literacy and creative autonomy. Rather than viewing generative AI as a threat to student-authored work, future curricular strategies might include tasks that integrate these tools critically – for instance using AI to generate poetic prompts, followed by student revision and personal adaptation. This could position technology not as a shortcut but as a catalyst for deeper engagement.

In light of these findings, several directions for future research emerge. Longitudinal studies could be particularly valuable in tracing how teacher attitudes toward poetry develop over time, especially as teachers gain experience or engage in targeted professional development. Understanding how confidence, pedagogical strategies, and institutional factors evolve would offer deeper insight into the sustainability of poetry integration in EFL classrooms.

In addition, classroom-based intervention studies could help evaluate the impact of scaffolded poetry units on student outcomes. These might include not only linguistic development, but also affective dimensions such as motivation, emotional literacy, and engagement. Given the findings of this study, such interventions would ideally account for group dynamics, trust-building, and opportunities for student agency.

Finally, while this study focuses on teacher perspectives, incorporating the voices of students themselves would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the conditions under which poetry resonates in the classroom. Future research could examine how students experience poetry tasks emotionally, socially, and cognitively, and whether their perspectives align with or challenge those of their teachers. Doing so could uncover further opportunities to align pedagogical approaches with learner needs and preferences, making poetry a more accessible and valued part of language education.

8. Conclusion

This thesis aimed to explore how Austrian lower-secondary EFL teachers perceive both the challenges and benefits of incorporating short-form poetry into their classrooms, with a particular focus on its potential to foster student motivation, creative expression, and emotional engagement. In doing so, it also investigated the extent to which teachers are aware of, and make use of, available teaching materials that support poetry instruction. These guiding questions were addressed through a qualitative research design, involving three focus group interviews with a total of nine AHS teachers, each bringing different levels of experience and institutional perspectives. The data generated rich and multi-layered insights into the beliefs, pedagogical practices, and hesitations that currently shape poetry's status in the Austrian EFL classroom.

The findings reveal a nuanced and often ambivalent picture of poetry in language education – one marked by both admiration and apprehension. On the one hand, teachers widely acknowledged the value of creativity, humor, and personal relevance in foreign language instruction. They described moments of strong student engagement with emotionally resonant or multimodal content, such as songs or stories, emphasizing the pedagogical power of affect and relatability. However, poetry – despite being recognized as a genre capable of activating these very qualities – rarely emerged as a preferred medium. Instead, it was often regarded as too intimate, too interpretively demanding, or too misaligned with curricular expectations to be viable in everyday teaching.

This apparent disconnect was reinforced by confidence gaps among participants. Many teachers, particularly those with fewer years of service, voiced uncertainty about how to teach poetry “correctly,” expressing doubts about their own literary knowledge, or ability to facilitate student responses. For some, this insecurity was rooted in prior educational experiences in which literature had been taught in uninspiring or overly rigid ways. This mirrors previous research noting the limited emphasis on literature pedagogy in language teacher preparation.

Structural and systemic constraints further compounded these challenges. Participants repeatedly referenced the pressure to prepare students for standardized assessments such as the Matura, which often prioritize grammatical accuracy and receptive skills over interpretive or expressive capacities. This exam-focused environment, along with the prescriptive influence of widely used coursebooks, was seen to limit opportunities for open-ended tasks like poetry writing or analysis. Even teachers who maintained personal relationships with poetry – whether through private reading, writing, or social media engagement – tended not to bring these interests into the classroom. This reluctance points not only to a gap between personal and professional identities but also to broader cultural narratives about what constitutes “serious” or “efficient” language instruction.

Nevertheless, the study also uncovered meaningful exceptions to this trend. Across focus groups, participants shared small but significant moments of experimentation. Some described using simplified canonical poems as part of morning rituals or warm-up activities, offering students a chance to engage with poetic language in low-stakes settings. Others recounted lessons involving spoken word videos, Instagram poetry, or song lyrics with poetic features – blurring the boundaries between literature, popular culture, and digital media. These practices – though not always labeled as ‘poetry teaching’ – suggest that core poetic competencies like metaphor recognition, rhythm, and emotional inference are already being cultivated through adjacent forms of engagement, indicating that the groundwork for deeper poetic exploration is often already present in EFL classroom.

These findings also offer a direct answer to the first research question regarding student motivation and creative expression. While participants rarely used these terms explicitly, their classroom practices often prioritized activities that fostered enjoyment, personal voice, and emotional resonance – key indicators of intrinsic motivation. Teachers described how humor, rhythm, or relevance to students’ lives led to higher engagement, suggesting that motivation thrives when materials feel relevant and emotionally resonant. Likewise, moments of creative

expression emerged in tasks like story invention, lyric interpretation, or experimental writing, even when these were not labeled as poetry. This indicates that teachers already value and cultivate creativity but tend to do so in non-poetic formats they find more accessible or safer.

Such moments hint at poetry's potential to play a more central role in language education, provided that certain conditions are met. Key among these is the need to address teachers' self-efficacy when it comes to literary instruction. As Bandura (191-215) notes, self-efficacy beliefs significantly influence whether individuals take on challenging tasks or persist in the face of difficulty. If teachers are to feel confident integrating poetry into their lessons, they require both the skills and the belief that they can do so effectively. This underscores the need for sustained professional development – focused not only on literature itself, but on building teachers' confidence to model interpretive openness.

While this study focused on teacher perspectives, the absence of student voices represents a limitation that future research could address. Investigating how students experience poetry – whether as a daunting task, a form of play, or a means of emotional expression – would complement the present findings and offer more holistic insights into how poetry functions in EFL learning. Moreover, student feedback could inform the development of materials that are age-appropriate, culturally resonant, and cognitively accessible – qualities that teachers in this study identified as essential.

The findings of this study offer a clear response to the research questions guiding this thesis. Teachers perceive poetry as a potentially rich but emotionally and pedagogically complex genre. While they recognize its capacity to support student motivation and creative expression, they also face constraints related to time, curricular alignment, and personal confidence. Furthermore, the results support the hypothesis that teachers who feel more confident in sourcing or adapting poetry materials are indeed more likely to integrate poetry into their practice – a relationship shaped by both individual beliefs and structural supports.

In summary, this thesis has shown that poetry, while often perceived as peripheral in the Austrian EFL context, possesses significant untapped potential. Teachers are not opposed to poetry per se; rather, they are navigating a terrain shaped by curricular pressures, personal insecurities, and institutional passivity. Yet within this setting, there are clear openings for change: moments of experimentation, expressions of curiosity, and an underlying belief in the value of creativity. With the right pedagogical, institutional, and emotional support, poetry could move from the margins to the mainstream of language education. In doing so, it would

not only support students' linguistic development but also offer them tools for reflection, empathy, and self-expression – qualities that are increasingly vital in both academic and real-world contexts. Ultimately, this study affirms that unlocking poetry's pedagogical value depends less on its perceived difficulty and more on the confidence and curricular freedom granted to teachers.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Focus Group – Interview Guide²

1. Introduction & Purpose (5 Min)

Welcoming participants and explaining the purpose of the focus-group interview. Emphasize that they can leave the research at any time. Explain that they are provided with teaching resources afterwards and especially thank them again for taking the time!

2. (2min) Introduction of participants

Participants prepared a two-minute introduction!

3. Introductory Questions (5 Minutes)

1. "Do you use literature in your teaching?"

→ And do you also sometimes teach poems or poetry?

Core Research Questions

Category 1: Attitudes Toward Poetry – Personal experience (20min)

1. What would a poetry lesson need to look like for you to consider using it?
2. What can your students learn with poetry? What can you teach with poetry?

² The interview guide was used flexibly; questions were occasionally reworded, reordered, or adapted based on the natural flow of each group discussion.

- What benefits can you make out in terms of teaching poetry?
- 3. What feelings or emotions come to mind when you think about teaching poetry?
- 4. How would you define poetry? (rap, hip-hop, grammar chants, sonnets..?)
 - Would you think about reading a poem or asking them to perform it?
- 5. When you teach poetry do you focus more on reading, writing, or performing? What do you think works best?
 - Do your students every say they find poetry confusing? How do you help them 'get it'?
 - Even if you don't use poetry, do you use other creative texts, like song lyrics or short stories? What makes those work better for you? → because it is in the coursebook or because you or they are more interested in it?
- 6. How do your students usually react to poetry? Do they enjoy it, or is it a struggle?
- 7. What was your experience with poetry as a student in English or German? How has it shaped your approach to teaching it?
- 8. In terms of creativity do you think poetry helps students express themselves? Have you ever had a student surprise you with something creative?
- 9. Do you think poetry helps students improve their reception skills (e.g., interpreting, analyzing, or critically engaging with texts)?
 - Do you see poetry as a tool for developing students' critical thinking skills?
 - is this more possible in lower – or upper secondary school?
- 10. "Does poetry feature in your private life?" (TikTok, Instagram, novels, songs?)
- 11. Apart from coursebooks, have you come across any good poetry resources? Anything you've found really helpful? Or is that something you have not yet touched upon?

Category 2: Challenges

- 12. "Do you feel confident selecting poems for your students? What guides your selection process?"
- 13. Are there any problems/challenges with teaching poetry?
 - Are these challenges related to time, curriculum demands, or student motivation/engagement?

14. "Do you think the curriculum gives you enough flexibility to explore poetry creatively?
Why or why not?"

→ Do you think group dynamic in the classroom has an effect on creativity?

Category 3: Resource Evaluation

15. "Can you remember any poetry in the coursebooks? Have you used any poetry that is offered in the coursebooks?"
16. Do you feel the poetry selections in coursebooks reflect the needs and interests of your students?
17. Have you ever thought about taking your students to a poetry slam, or spoken-word performance?
18. Have you ever used digital resources (e.g. Instagram, Youtube) in your teaching?
19. Have you ever had students write their own poems?
20. Have you ever come across useful poetry materials outside of coursebooks, such as online platforms or teacher networks?

I am now going to show you some stimulus material for you to have a look at, and talk about if you would use or have already used it (coursebook) and what grade level do you think this would be useful for (Imagine If...)

STIMULUS MATERIAL A (*More! 3 page 115*)

10min

STIMULUS MATERIAL B (*Imagine If... by Roger McGough*)

Do these materials match what you'd like to see in a coursebook? Or is there something missing?

4. Final Questions & Reflections (10 Minutes)

- **Wrap-Up Question:**

1. "What would you wish for most for your poetry teaching? - materials? resources? time?" → is there an anecdote from your years of experience and teaching in regards to teaching literature/poetry?
2. Is there anything else you'd like to tell or ask me?

Appendix B: Stimulus Materials

Stimulus Material A – More! 3 Student's Book

13 CHOICES

Writing for your Portfolio

DIS A Send a note (40–60 words) to Tina to tell her what you think of her decision.
In your note:

- say why you (don't) like her decision
- give her an example of how you decided in a dilemma
- wish her all the best for the future and say what you hope for

B On Christopher's poetry blog you find the poem "Nerd". He asks other people to send in poems like his. The words he suggests are:

gang outsider friend friendship dilemma

Choose two of the words and write two poems you'd like to send in.

Nobody calls me 'the Nerd' any more.
Endless times of being alone are over.
Reading my poems to you, looking at you.
Dreaming of being together.

GRAMMAR

If-sentences (2nd Conditional)

Wenn du ausdrücken willst, wie etwas oder jemand sein könnte oder dass etwas geschehen könnte, wenn ein bestimmter Umstand eintreten sollte, dann verwendest du das 2nd Conditional.

How to form it:

If-Satz **Hauptsatz**
If + Person + past form Person + would + Grundform des Verbs

If he **wasn't** such a nerd, they **wouldn't pick** on him all the time.
They **wouldn't speak** to me if they **knew**.
Carla **would give** her brother an alibi if he **told** her why he needs one.
If I **needed** the money, I'd **keep** it and leave the wallet.

Manchmal hörst oder siehst du auch die Formen if he/she/it were.
Im Alltagsenglisch werden diese Formen aber seltener verwendet.

Choose the correct option.
We use the 2nd conditional to talk about something that will / might happen.

If he wasn't my friend, I wouldn't read his poem.

WB p. 101, 102, 104, 105 CYBER 39 **UNIT 13** 115

Source: Gerngross, Günter, et al. *More! 3 Student's Book*. Helbling Languages, 2018.

Imagine If . . .

Kittens were slimy
Rabbits were prickly
Crocodiles were cuddly
Tigers were tickly!

Imagine if . . .

Dogs had webbed feet
Penguins had antlers
Snakes had feathers
Ducks had trunks!



Imagine if...



Elephants could hop

Birds could bark

Pigs could dance on one trotter

Hippos could swing from tree to tree!

Imagine how funny
the world would be!



Source: McGough, Roger. *The Bee's Knees*. Puffin, 2003.

Appendix C³: Focus Group Transcripts

C1: Focus Group 1

I: So, is that okay if I sit here? Because T1, I'm in your back. Is that okay? Let's start with the prep sheets I gave you. So, I mean, we're in the same school, right? So, [school in lower Austria], that's clear for all of us, but T1, do you want to start with how many years of experience you have, and what schoolbooks you use?

[0:00:48.6] **T1:** Yeah. So, this is a Catholic private school, and I've been teaching here for 19 years. We've just realized. Yeah. Crazy. That's right. Not here. I started, in general yeah. And so, it's a grammar school. So, the kids we teach are between 10 and 18 years old in general. I started working at different kinds of schools, professional vocational schools. One focusing on business and the other one focusing on presentation and various kinds of things. The course book we are using at the moment is *More!*, and I think I have never taught with any other kind of book. Has it always been *More!*?

[0:01:49.8] **T2:** when I started, it was *You and Me*. Yeah. *You and Me*. So that was the first coursebook we used.

[0:01:56.2] **T3:** I think I had it.

[0:01:57.5] **T1:** I had it in the first year. Yeah, maybe. But then we switched to *More!*. Mhm. the subjects, I've been teaching here, just English, but I taught French in the other schools. Mhm. No. Ah no, I taught French for a year. Just a year. Yeah, I remember, yeah. And additional relevant information to me is years ago I did a diploma on, educating the gifted. The ECHA-diploma. And I did quite some work in that field. Pull out courses and other courses. Mhm. I also still work, for a different, schoolbook, but not for *More!*.

[0:03:03.2] **I:** In the creation process, right? Creating material?

[0:03:06.7] **T1:** Yeah, yeah yeah yeah. At the moment, it's, basically online material that I'm doing. Yeah. I think that's the most important information.

[0:03:17.0] **I:** Thank you. Perfect. Okay.

T3: my name is T3. I've been employed here I think, like four years. For four years? I'm still studying, so I'm studying, English for my bachelor's degree and history and geography for my masters. Mhm. Any other information that you might need? Yeah. I'm also teaching history and geography here. And also, English but only for first until fourth grade and any additional relevant information. I guess there is none because I'm quite young.

I: Yeah. Perfect. Thank you. Great.

[0:04:04.7] **T2:** Okay. My name is T2, and I think, I guess I've been here longest. Teaching 25 years English and history. Yeah. In the meantime, I also prepared some students for *Berufsreifeprüfung*. But it was some years ago I stopped doing it because of a lack of time. Yeah. I'm also involved in other things here at school. that concern administration. Mhm. yeah. And I also teach in a way or yeah. I conduct courses in the holidays for primary school children. Mhm.

[0:04:56.2] **I:** Okay. Perfect. That's a lot. Okay. Perfect. In English?

³ The transcripts have been lightly cleaned for readability (e.g., removal of redundant fillers, correction of punctuation) while preserving the original content and meaning. Speaker labels are pseudonymized: I = interviewer, T1–T9 = teacher participants.

[0:05:01.3] **T2:** No, not in English but in creative subjects or subjects, I mean courses in a way. Workshops, we could call it.

[0:05:12.9] **I:** Creative. In what sense? Do you have an example?

[0:05:14.9] **T2:** We do. We do. Art.

[0:05:20.2] **I:** Arts and crafts?

[0:05:22.4] **T2:** Arts and craft. Yeah. Also, sports. Mhm. So not just creative, but also physical activities.

I: Yeah. Perfect.

[0:05:31.1] **T1:** Do you do that in your hometown?

[0:05:32.3] **T2:** Yes.

[0:05:33.4] **T1:** Okay.

[0:05:35.0] **I:** Okay. Perfect. That's it. Thank you. Great. So, let's begin with an introductory question before we move on to the core questions. So, do you use any literature in your teaching? (.) Occasionally. In the broadest sense?

T2: Occasionally, yes.

[0:05:54.7] **T1:** Occasionally, I used to do it a lot, and I have realized that I have really nearly stopped doing it. And it's a pity. And I would like to reintroduce it, but it's a time problem. In fact, it's a time problem. Yeah.

[0:06:20.1] **I:** T3 I think you haven't said anything yet.

T3: Yeah, I, I also occasionally work with literature in my class. Mhm. It does take or it does consume a lot of time. Mhm. Which makes it hard to implement that in our classrooms. I try my best to read at least one book per year with one, with one class. And I try to take like only two weeks, so I keep it short. Therefore, the homework for them. Yeah, it's kind of much or a lot. So, they have to read also at home. And yeah, I think that's all that I can say. It takes really a lot of time. Mhm.

I: And do you also sometimes teach poems or poetry.

T3: Mhm. I have never no. No never.

[0:07:15.2] **T2:** I mean occasionally there are poems as well.

[0:07:17.9] **T3:** Yeah. In the book maybe some, some small poems.

[0:07:20.6] **T2:** Yeah.

[0:07:21.1] **T1:** I remember with my first class here, I did a lot of poetry, and we talked a lot about Shakespeare, but that was a special group. They were more.

[0:07:36.4] **I:** More advanced?

[0:07:37.4] **T1:** Advanced, highly interested. Very gifted. Mhm. Yeah. Mhm. Very special.

[0:07:46.2] **I:** What do you think, what would a lesson have to look like for you to be able to integrate literature or poetry? (..) Maybe more, more advanced students, more time, more resources?

[0:07:59.4] **T1:** Definitely more time.

T2: More time!

[0:08:01.3] **T2:** And more advanced students as well. Yeah. Yeah.

[0:08:05.0] **T1:** Absolutely.

[0:08:06.1] **T2:** And especially interested students.

[0:08:08.4] **T1:** Yes. I think it should be some kind of like when we used to have our courses for gifted children. We were able to do a lot with them. And we also always had writing classes and reading classes and, even theater classes. But this the program was cancelled. Yeah.

[0:08:35.8] **I:** For lack of funds or time?

[0:08:39.1] **T1:** It was redirected, I think into.

[0:08:41.9] **T2:** Yeah, different. It changed all the time.

[0:08:43.2] **T1:** Yeah, it changed.

[0:08:43.6] **T2:** Yeah.

[0:08:46.5] **T1:** And it also depends on the people who are available. And all the people who used to do it went into maternity, maternity leave. And so, I think the school had to rethink.

[0:08:58.6] **I:** It had evolved somewhere else.

[0:09:00.2] **T2:** Right. Yeah. There are certain programs, but yeah, they go in different directions and other directions. Not this direction.

[0:09:06.1] **T1:** Yeah. Not the languages. Yeah. Yeah.

[0:09:10.2] **T2:** Well, they do in languages when you think about Cambridge.

T1: Yeah. That's perfect. Yeah.

[0:09:15.1] **T1:** Yeah. But this also does not focus on literature. Yeah. It's nearly the same formats that we use and that we have to prepare the kids for, for the Matura. Mhm. Which is brilliant.

[0:09:29.0] **T2:** Yeah. It's just English training then. Yeah. Yeah. Mm mm.

[0:09:34.4] **I:** And what feelings or emotions come to mind when you think about teaching poetry?

[0:09:39.8] **T1:** Teaching poetry?

[0:09:42.2] **I:** What's the first thing that comes to mind?

[0:09:49.0] **T1:** It's. It's a pity. every, every bigger written paper I did was on poetry. Mhm. Never intentionally. It was always a coincidence. I always thought I wouldn't like poetry. And in the end, I always ended up with poetry. But it's the same thing in the classroom. It's like it gives me a ...

I: hesitance?

T1: yeah.

[0:10:18.2] **I:** An apprehension?

[0:10:19.3] **T1:** Yeah. I don't know why. Mhm. Yeah.

[0:10:25.5] **T2:** And what comes to my mind is something that is old fashioned because that's what students sometimes think even though it is not. Yeah. Yeah. Because there are lots of, modern forms.

Yeah. Yeah. But they are not acquainted with them. Yeah. So, I'm afraid to. Yeah. That's something.
[0:10:42.8]

T3: There's a huge lack of interest in students for poetry.

[0:10:47.2] **T1:** I guess it's probably that. That, when you want to talk about poetry, you really have to think. And you have to make the people think. And, the poem is, is a piece of art with a certain kind of beauty. And the people would have to appreciate that. And I guess it's that, I would have a certain expectation, which would probably not be met. And I would feel afraid of standing there with this piece of art and no one being able to appreciate it. So, this was different 20 years ago. It was appreciated. Yeah.

[0:11:33.2] **I:** I think a perfect segue to what T2 said before was that how would you define poetry? Because you said it can also be something modern. Right? So, would you consider a grammar chant in the course book poetry or a rap song? Hip hop even, or a Tik Tok post or spoken word performance, for instance? What do you think about that?

[0:11:55.4] **T2:** Yeah, in some way. Yes. yeah, I would say yes.

[0:11:58.3] **I:** Because you said old fashioned, right. So, when you think about poetry, you think about sonnets, Shakespearean sonnets. And then you're like, well, that's boring, probably? Or it's not appreciated, as **T1** said.

[0:12:09.8] **T2:** Or it's difficult to understand for some students because it needs a certain skill.

[0:12:14.0] **I:** Then some students are left behind. And then the more advanced are like, I enjoy it. The others are left behind.

T2: Yeah, that's true. Mhm.

[0:12:21.3] **T1:** But I think that is true with any kind of poem because a poem is dense language and the language is different. So yeah. The problem of the kids not being able to interpret it is there even if it's modern. Yeah.

[0:12:44.9] **T2:** It's hard work for them. And sometimes they avoid hard work. Yeah. I mean, because you have to read it carefully. Yeah. And you have to read in between the lines, which is not so easy. Yeah.

[0:12:57.7] **T1:** And you have to confront yourself with the mindset of another person. That's it. And I think that's what's so problematic that I get the feeling that a lot of kids today are not prepared to open themselves to different ways of thinking. Yeah.

[0:13:17.0] **T2:** Yeah.

[0:13:17.3] **T1:** It's their world. It's their opinion. I discussed that with my class seventh, seventh grade, because very often we have interesting topics, and I have the feeling that there are opinions, but they don't share them. And I asked them why and they said because we are afraid of getting hate comments. We do not. We do not want to. We have opinions. We do not want to share them because we are afraid of the reactions the other ones might give.

[0:13:52.0] **T2:** And so, outside the lessons or after the lessons?

[0:13:55.4] **T1:** In the classroom.

[0:13:55.8] **T2:** In the classroom? ok.

[0:13:57.5] **T1:** They do not dare sharing their opinions because they might get negative feedback. They only want positive feedback. Which is crazy because I think life is about discussing, discussing, and having different opinions and sometimes even expressing them directly. Yeah, this is life. And they say that they don't want to do that. They don't want that friction. They don't want that emotion. Yeah. I was never aware that this might be the problem. I thought they don't have opinions. I really thought that they don't have opinions. They do; they do. They just don't want to share them. Only in their closed community. And that's interesting. Yeah.

T2: They do have opinions!

[0:14:48.4] **I:** So, would you even think about, well, reading a poem, asking, asking them to perform it or would that be something like you said? That might not be possible.

[0:14:58.8] **T1:** [laughs]

[0:15:00.2] **I:** Is that too much?

[0:15:00.8] **T1:** Don't want to, if they don't want to share their opinions. I think last year I think last year the TA. Did you do that with your groups too? That was interesting. He had, a commercial and, he, cut off, the voices and the kids had to do the speaking, and they had to perform it. They did brilliantly because they loved him. They did it for him. But you could see that they were so embarrassed they had to play a dog.

[0:15:44.1] **T2:** All right.

[0:15:44.9] **I:** Okay, okay. Yeah, okay.

[0:15:46.2] **T1:** Things like that. But they performed well. But it was just because the atmosphere was so relaxed. And it was him. It was [TA]. Yeah.

[0:15:55.6] **T2:** I think the only way they'd like to publish it would be just to put it up somewhere. Yeah, where everybody can read it, but they would not dare to present it. Yeah.

[0:16:08.5] **T1:** I think that the thing with presenting, exposing yourself that has become difficult for the children. They have ideas. We were. You can see the posters there. We were doing animals, and they had to create their own animal and present it. And they all loved drawing it and writing about it. But most of them didn't want to talk about it. Mhm. Yeah.

[0:16:40.5] **I:** So, you have tried to invite students to write their own poems?

[0:16:45.3] **T1:** Not yet.

[0:16:46.5] **I:** Not yet. So just reading and talking about it?

[0:16:52.9] **T2:** Probably simple ones. Yeah. Simple ones. One stanza. Yeah. Yeah.

[0:16:58.1] **I:** About familiar topics. Friendship for instance. Maybe. Or. Mhm. Okay. do you get the feedback that poetry is confusing to students?

[0:17:12.0] **T1:** Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

[0:17:14.4] **I:** So, nodding. Yeah. Yes.

[0:17:16.5] **T2:** Again, it's the language which is more complicated. You can use language in a different way which they are not used to. Mhm. And of course, then, yeah, it's difficult to understand.

[0:17:28.3] **I:** How do you help them? Do you have some strategies? Some scaffolding. (.) Or do you just avoid it? (..)

[0:17:39.7] **T2:** Because there's not much time for it. Yeah. I mean, I don't do quite a lot of poetry. I do, I mean. (.)

[0:17:51.3] **I:** Do you use other creative texts then, like song lyrics or short stories? Sometimes? More so than poetry?

[0:18:00.5] **T2:** Yeah. Definitely.

[0:18:01.8] **I:** Yes. Because it's in the course book, or because you're interested or more interested in it yourself? Yeah.

T3: as I'm quite interested in music, I try to find some songs which, fit to the topic, and then we go through the lyrics. We also listen to the song. We try to do some interpretations. Anything. The students liked it quite a lot, and it's easier for them because they're used to it. They like the melody, maybe, or the singer or songwriter. Therefore, it's easier.

[0:18:39.0] **T2:** And I think that's the point because they like it.

[0:18:41.1] **T1:** Yeah, exactly.

[0:18:42.3] **I:** Yeah.

[0:18:43.3] **T1:** I liked, used to do it. I like to talk about grammar with songs because lyrics are very often very repetitive.

T2: Yeah. That's true. Yeah.

T1: And for certain structures of grammar, it's brilliant.

[0:19:02.5] **I:** Do you have an example?

[0:19:04.9] **T1:** Conditionals. I did a lot of conditional work with song lyrics. Mhm. (.) Yeah. I think that was the major element. I did it in French a lot. Mhm. Yeah. So, yeah. Past tense. Past tense. Yeah.

I: T3?

[0:19:25.9] **T3:** Yeah. Same. Same. So, Conditionals. Yes. Also, conditionals. I think there's a famous song by Ed Sheeran. But don't. Don't ask me further questions. Yeah, but there is one where several conditionals are included. And that one I like to use a lot.

I: I also know one, from Adele. I think it's present perfect tense.

[0:19:46.3] **T1:** Yeah. Yeah.

[0:19:47.6] **I:** I think it's Hello. Probably. Mhm. Mhm. So that works better for you. Right? So, something that the students feel like they enjoy and that's closer to home?

T3: Yeah definitely.

[0:19:58.5] **T2:** That's a way to introduce topics sometimes. Yeah. You start a topic, and you've got a song. Yeah.

[0:20:03.2] **T3:** Like like for example friendship. And I always use the song from Toy Story, *You've Got a Friend in Me* and they love it a lot. And then we will talk about. Yeah. Friends.

[0:20:14.1] **T1:** And I mean, it's funny, I've got a friend who's a huge Taylor Swift fan.

[0:20:21.5] **T2:** Yeah.

[0:20:22.4] **T1:** She is. Yeah. And when the new album came, came out, it's about poetry. I mean, it's it's the the lyrics are very, lyrical. And she said, like, I mean, you could stop preparing. You could just take a song every lesson and, you can talk about any topic, and it speaks

I: Speaks for itself.

T1: speaks for itself. You can analyze it on the language level. You can, work on it on the topic level. It's perfect. (4)

[0:21:01.9] **I:** Coming off topic, maybe a little bit here, but what was your experience with poetry when you were a student? So be it in German or in English. Are there any feelings that come to mind? Can also be negative? Of course. (.)

[0:21:17.0] **T2:** It's uhm.

[0:21:18.4] **T1:** I really wonder why my first, reaction is, oh my God, it's hard. And when I think about it, I always get that feeling of joy because you work with the words, you get into it. You can really you can immerse, and you can totally drift away. That's the beauty of poetry that you really you need to shut out the world. And you really have to get into the text, and you have to focus, and blend out everything. And I think that's the problem with school. I think a poem is something very private, and you do not have the privacy.

[0:22:10.4] **I:** A lot of nodding. Do you want to add something?

[0:22:12.8] **T2:** Yeah, I agree with you. I remember one situation when we had to write a poem after an excursion to Mauthausen, and I found it a really great idea, and I wrote the poem, but I wouldn't have liked it to be presented to anyone. I mean, I wrote it for the teacher. That's it. But it's a way to express emotions.

[0:22:36.9] **I:** Too intimate, is what I gather?

[0:22:39.1] **T2:** Yes, too intimate.

[0:22:41.2] **T3:** Yeah, it's also an intimate topic, I guess. in school we only did poems, in German lectures or German classes. Never in English classes. Mhm. Yeah. (.)

[0:22:59.7] **T1:** Yeah. We rarely had to write poems. And I remember only one situation when the teacher came in and said this is the topic, write a poem. And I really didn't feel like doing it at that moment because I was just not in the mood.

[0:23:17.0] **I:** Not in the headspace. Yeah.

[0:23:18.8] **T1:** You need to be in the mood of writing it. And if you aren't, then you can't force it. Mhm. Yeah.

[0:23:26.7] **T2:** The right mood of reading it as well. Oh yeah. The same thing actually. Yeah.

[0:23:31.8] **T1:** Absolutely.

[0:23:32.6] **T2:** Because they give you or they, they pass on some message. Mhm.

[0:23:38.8] **I:** And then students I think sometimes expect something else from an English lesson. Right? Mhm. Maybe they don't expect to be in a mood or in a headspace for something creative. Yeah. They think they're going to hear something about grammatical structures. Yeah.

[0:23:58.1] **T1:** And it's, it's basically the problem in how far students, the older students want to get productive. I often have the feeling that they just want to receive.

[0:24:12.6] **I:** Yeah. Okay.

[0:24:14.1] **T1:** And they do not want to give. Yeah.

[0:24:17.5] **T3:** I mean, I do a lot of creative writing in my classes. Mhm. Because I don't always want to give them write a letter or write an email. Mhm. They always do that. So, I want to give them an opportunity to you know think about a topic that they might like and write something. Mhm. The thing with poems I guess is that I will have to read them too. Mhm. And maybe that's the problem because they know if they write something very intimate maybe, which is super important for them. And then I read it and maybe they don't like me that much or they are concerned because of, of their grades or something. That might be a problem as well.

I: An invasion of privacy somehow?

T3: Maybe. Yes.

I: Is the feeling I'm getting. Yeah. Mhm. Mhm. Anything you would like to add?

[0:25:11.5] **T2:** No, I think that's it. Yeah.

[0:25:13.4] **I:** In terms of creativity, because you said creative writing, do you think poetry helps students express themselves or express feelings they have in a creative way? (..)

[0:25:28.2] **T2:** I mean, that's the intention of a poem anyway. Yeah. Yeah.

[0:25:31.7] **T1:** If they are able to.

[0:25:33.7] **T2:** That's it. Yeah.

[0:25:35.1] **T1:** Yeah. If they want to open them up.

[0:25:38.4] **I:** Do you think it's more possible in lower secondary or upper secondary?

[0:25:42.7] **T1:** Probably the younger ones.

[0:25:44.8] **T3:** Yeah. Really?

[0:25:45.4] **T2:** I think so, yes. But they don't have the language skills then? Yeah.

[0:25:50.8] **T3:** I'm quite hesitant to do that with my students, because I don't think that they might be able to come up with. Brilliant. Okay. That one was not the best wording, but they they might not have the vocabulary that they need to express themselves. Mhm. Maybe.

I: Have you ever had something a student created that you were really surprised with?

[0:26:15.0] **T2:** Stories.

[0:26:15.6] **I:** Yeah, stories?

T3: Stories are sometimes really, really great.

[0:26:19.5] **T1:** There a lot of different things that amaze me. Mhm. The last thing was, they had to write, blog comments. Mhm. And one of my students, regularly converses with a blogger and then he or he. No, no, no, I remember he started the conversation because of this school task. And the blogger answered him personally. He wrote him, he sent him. He even sent him a video message. Oh, yeah. And

that was really amazing because, the topic was something coming directly from his heart. And yeah, he put it into action, and it became part of his life. And now there is a friendship going.

[0:27:13.7] **T2:** That's amazing. Yeah.

[0:27:15.7] **T1:** Yeah. And I think nearly any kind of task I give always, always shows me that there are at least 1 or 2 kids that amaze me. Mhm. Yeah. That's that's what I love about our job. Yeah. You, you set the task. You think it's boring and then you realize it is not. Yeah. What, what they can do. What they what kind of opinion they have. Which they only share with me but not with the class. Yeah. Mhm. And that's the importance of writing, I think. Mhm. Yeah. Yeah.

[0:27:55.9] **I:** And do you think these creative processes improve their reception skills at all or interpreting or analyzing? Critical thinking even?

T1: Sure. Definitely.

T3: Yeah, I think so. Yeah.

[0:28:08.6] **T2:** Yeah. Mhm.

[0:28:10.7] **I:** Then does poetry feature in your private life at all? So, for instance, TikTok poetry if you know that or Instagram poetry, or is that not something you come across.

T3: I'm, I'm a huge fan of Florence and the Machine. And Florence Welch has a really great poetry book, and I love it. Yeah. Mhm. Yeah. So, in my private life I do love to read a lot. Maybe not poems, but this poetry book is. Yeah. It has a special place in my heart. Mhm.

I: That's beautiful. Mhm. Okay. And the others. Not so much?

[0:28:46.1] **T2:** I mean when I occasionally come across a poem in a magazine. Mhm. And I find it really good then I try to remember it. Mhm. Or I try to keep it somewhere. Yeah. But I don't read poetry books.

[0:29:01.8] **I:** So, it's more like short form poetry is what I gather from that. Right. So, a few stanzas only? Mhm. Okay. Apart from coursebooks, have you ever come across any good poetry resources? If you've ever looked for it.

[0:29:18.6] **T1:** I just haven't I never looked for sources intentionally.

[0:29:23.8] **I:** Okay. Do you just stumble across it? Okay. Yeah. Mhm. Okay. Would you feel confident in selecting poems for your students from any resources or materials?

[0:29:41.1] **T1:** No. Because, in my teaching, poetry hasn't got a big place. Yeah. That's a pity. But it is as it is for others.

[0:29:56.1] **T2:** I'm afraid it's the same with me. Yeah.

[0:29:58.1] **T3:** Yeah. I might try one from Florence Welch, but yeah, I really would have to browse through the book and take a closer look. Which one would fit better, or which one is really easy to perceive.

[0:30:11.5] **T1:** Yeah, I think the big problem is I do not want, I do not want to share things that I really like in classes, because I also would not want that thing destroyed for me. So, if there is something that I love. Yeah, I would not take it here. Yeah. Things I like. Yes. Things that I think are good. Yes. But not things that I really love.

[0:30:44.9] **I:** That hit closer to home then? If something were to be said?

[0:30:48.3] **T1:** Yeah, I wouldn't want to do because I think when you do something in the classroom, you have to, you have to be prepared to get all the sides, the negative to positive sides. You have to discuss it from every angle. And if there is something that I really, really love, then I don't want people to talk badly about it. So yeah. Yeah. (.)

[0:31:17.3] **I:** So, I think what you said in the beginning is relevant here now, with the next question. The curriculum. Right. It doesn't give enough flexibility. Probably? It's rather rigid.

[0:31:29.3] **T2:** When you think about the past. We read more in the past, especially in the upper grades.

[0:31:34.4] **T1:** I think it's not the problem of the curriculum. It's a problem of the test formats that force us. It's not. The curriculum is open. We can do whatever we want, but the centralized testing formats force us to. We've been talking about that a lot, the parent feeding of the kids and preparing them for the task and the testing, which I really think does not make sense. But we have to do it because it's our task to prepare them for their finals.

[0:32:08.8] **I:** So, it's teaching to the test.

[0:32:10.0] **T1:** Teaching to the test.

[0:32:11.7] **T2:** And yeah, I mean you can go a bit beyond. Yeah.

[0:32:16.3] **T1:** But that's what we all do.

[0:32:18.8] **T2:** Yeah. Yeah, sure.

[0:32:20.5] **T1:** But not far beyond.

[0:32:21.6] **T2:** You don't want to fall behind. Yeah. And we always work together. So, we try to, to do the same things at the same time more or less. Mhm. So, if I wanted to introduce, I don't know, a book and the others don't want to read it, that might actually mean that you have to do the next test. Yeah. In a different way. Yeah yeah yeah.

[0:32:43.4] **I:** Okay. Mhm. So, let's move on to resource evaluation. It's the last category for today. Can you remember any poetry in the course books you've already used? So, does anything come to mind that you've enjoyed using or do you skip it sometimes?

[0:32:59.5] **T2:** I skip. That's totally right.

[0:33:01.4] **I:** That's okay. That's totally fine.

[0:33:02.5] **T1:** Just skip it.

[0:33:03.3] **T2:** Yeah yeah. We moved on to film script instead. That was the next step. Yeah.

[0:33:11.1] **T1:** Yeah.

[0:33:12.8] **T2:** Okay.

[0:33:13.5] **T1:** The others?

T1: Same here. Same here. Skipped. Yeah.

[0:33:17.0] **I:** Skipped it. Okay. (.) okay. Have you ever thought about taking your students to a poetry slam before? Or spoken word performance? Do you think they would enjoy it?

[0:33:30.2] **T1:** In fact, I think. Haven't we discussed this?

[0:33:33.4] **T3:** We have discussed this.

[0:33:34.6] **T1:** I think we talked. Yeah. Yeah.

[0:33:38.0] **T3:** We were talking.

[0:33:39.1] **T1:** When was that? Do you remember? (.) I can't remember. Yeah.

[0:33:45.7] **T3:** We were talking about it in the relax room when we had a coffee.

[0:33:49.0] **T2:** Yeah, we were too relaxed.

[0:33:51.5] **T1:** I think I remember when we were talking about a poetry slam, but I don't remember the reason why, but we also..

[0:33:59.4] **T3:** Agreed that it would be maybe really nice to do that with students. Yeah.

[0:34:04.2] **T1:** Absolutely.

[0:34:05.2] **T2:** Maybe the interview was the reason.

T1: No, no, no.

[0:34:08.1] **T1:** It was not the reason. I think it.

[0:34:09.7] **T3:** was in November or December when we talked about.

[0:34:12.0] **T1:** Yeah, because I remember we had a huge family gathering from my husband's side and one of his great grand whatever uncles, runs a theatre. Yeah.

[0:34:24.2] **T3:** Yeah. It was the.

[0:34:24.9] **T1:** Theatre. They very often have, poetry, poetry slam performances there. And I was like, yeah, I would really like to go there. And you said, yeah, we should take the kids. That was it. That was it.

[0:34:37.4] **I:** Yeah. You didn't go?

[0:34:38.5] **T1:** No. No, of course not.

[0:34:41.4] **T2:** Obviously not. (..)

[0:34:45.8] **T1:** But we should.

[0:34:47.6] **I:** Yeah, maybe I'll ask again in a few months. Maybe something has blossomed?

[0:34:51.1] **T1:** But we've got [colleague]. We've got colleagues who perform.

[0:34:56.2] **T2:** Yeah. That's right. Yeah. Yeah. [colleague].

[0:34:59.1] **T3:** [colleague] and [colleague] also. Yeah.

[0:35:00.9] **T1:** [colleague] and [colleague]. Yeah.

[0:35:02.8] **T2:** And there was one student who danced. What was her name? our blind student. Or half blind? I think she was involved in. We had one student.

[0:35:20.2] **I:** Really cool.

[0:35:21.6] **T1:** Yeah. Oh, my God, I remember [student]. Oh.

[0:35:26.7] **I:** Anyway.

[0:35:28.6] **T1:** Okay. Back to poetry.

[0:35:31.1] **I:** I will now show you some stimulus material. I will first. (.) I will first start with stimulus material A, which is, from a course book. So, you can see that B is circled. Maybe you've come across it in. It's from the *More!* book three.

[0:35:52.1] **T2:** Mhm.

[0:35:53.1] **I:** Have you ever used it?

[0:35:54.7] **T1:** No no no.

[0:35:56.6] **T3:** I used that one. Yeah.

I: What did the students think?

T3: They thought it was useless, to be honest. Yeah. They really asked me why do we have to do that? They didn't get the sense behind it.

I: Do you think they needed more scaffolding?

T3: Yeah. Maybe I should have told them a bit more about it or introduced the topic a bit more or better in a way.

I: What do you generally think about it if you look at it? What do you think? (.)

[0:36:29.0] **T2:** Mm. I think if I did it in class, not as a homework, but in class and introducing them to this kind of text. Mhm. It might work. Yeah. With some students. Yeah. But not as a homework. Yeah. I would have to pick.

[0:36:42.7] **T3:** It was a homework and, and therefore it was a huge problem for them somehow.

[0:36:48.2] **T2:** Okay, not as a homework. Yeah. Yeah.

[0:36:50.0] **I:** **T1**, what do you think?

[0:36:52.4] **T1:** (.) There is again this. I had a term. It popped up today. The glass ceiling. Mhm. And it's exactly that feeling that there is this this obstruction that isn't there. There is this obstacle that isn't there. But you feel it somehow. Mhm. Mhm. (.) Yeah.

I: So, would you skip it?

[0:37:24.6] **T1:** Yeah. Mhm.

[0:37:25.9] **T1:** Okay. But again, it depends on the class. I think when I think of the past groups there is one group I would have done it with. Mhm. And they would have performed well. Mhm. And with the others.

[0:37:42.9] **T3:** Probably not.

[0:37:44.4] **T1:** Yeah. Yeah, it really depends on the kids in there. Yeah.

[0:37:48.4] **I:** Mhm. Okay. So, I will give you another Stimulus material B. You can read through it. It's from Roger McGough. Yeah.

[0:37:59.6] **T1:** Yeah. Little Red Riding Hood. But that's that's a poem. I forgot about little Red Riding Hood by Roald Dahl. That's a poem that I like doing.

[0:38:08.5] **I:** And you still do it?

[0:38:09.8] **T1:** Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. The kids love it.

[0:38:12.8] **I:** Yeah. And with a grammatical structure or just?

[0:38:15.4] **T1:** No, it's just, it's really just about understanding, what it's about, and. Yeah. Also, this idea of taking, taking a fairy tale and turning it, turning it into something new, of taking a text and turning it in, turning it into something new. Yeah.

I: Perfect. Thank you for the example. (9)

[0:38:47.4] **I:** So, if you've read through it, what do you think about it? (42) Any ideas so far?

[0:39:35.4] **T2:** I mean, it's not difficult in terms of language. and I think that could also work in, in context, with a specific topic then. Yeah.

[0:39:48.3] **I:** Do you have something in mind? Animals and adjectives?

[0:39:54.1] **T1:** Yeah, probably. Yeah. So, I mean, I think it goes well with the things we did with the posters. It's. Yeah, write a write a poem about animals. Yeah. (4)

[0:40:13.4] **T2:** I mean, you could also work in the context of friendship, I don't know. Or how different people are. Mhm. Yeah. And yeah. Diversity in a way. Yeah.

[0:40:24.6] **I:** Would you use something like that or would you like to have it in a course book. So, it's more easily available to you. Poetry like that?

[0:40:35.2] **T1:** I mean I think our problem is that the material has to be effective and time saving, and a poem is not time saving and it's not effective. And what do we look for? A quick prompt that the kids get quickly and, makes them react quickly. And a picture could do that too. So that's the problem. Yeah. The effectiveness, the efficiency.

[0:41:05.3] **I:** Efficiency?

[0:41:06.0] **T1:** The efficiency of the prompt. Mhm. And I always have the feeling that we can't afford, working on the language level so much. Mhm.

[0:41:22.2] **T2:** But when I think about us our, our books it might work at the beginning of a topic again. Yeah. So to get them into it. Yeah. Yeah. And we usually have and that is how, how our book works. We usually have statistics and pictures, so why not a poem? Yeah, not all of the time, but I think the variety there could be a greater variety.

[0:41:46.8] **T1:** In fact, for the language level it would be beneficial. Yeah, but we just I mean, also the authors just go for the fast, for the quick fix for the fast. Yeah, that's true. Mhm.

[0:42:04.2] **I:** Okay. T3 anything you would like to add?

T3: I think that they would have to use their imagination a bit more if they would have to write something like this. Yeah. And I'm not sure if every student would be happy with this task to be honest. Because as well as you already have said they would use, they would have to use some more time for that. Mhm. They really need the time to think about what rhymes, what, what rhyme scheme would be great. Does it really have to rhyme or not? Maybe that's an obstacle for them. Yeah.

[0:42:41.5] **T1:** Have you already had a lot of experience with the language prompts you have for the orals, for the individual long turn, because we used to have those compare and contrast picture things. And now I think it's obligatory to have some quotes or a poem, whatever as a prompt and my kids hate it. Mhm.

T2: They've got quotations, and they've got words. Yeah.

[0:43:14.7] **I:** Because they can't prepare.

[0:43:16.0] **T1:** I don't know. They don't want. I think to me that it's easier to talk about a concept that is expressed with words, but to them it's not. They want the pictures.

[0:43:25.9] **T2:** But it's easier. Pictures are easier. That's what they are used to. That's what they always have on their mobile phones. So, they see pictures.

[0:43:33.9] **T1:** Yeah. But it is so limiting.

[0:43:34.6] **T2:** Yeah, then they have to think.

[0:43:37.5] **T1:** Same thing. It's the first idea is, oh my God, these are words. This is difficult. But in fact, it is not. Because when you start thinking about it then many more you have to think about it. And the associations come, and you can talk far longer. I can talk far longer about it than with the pictures. But the first, the first reaction is words. Words are difficult compared to pictures. yeah.

[0:44:12.0] **T3:** Yeah, I think so too. But I, I also think that in other classes like history or geography, they are also taught to describe pictures more. So, I think that's that might be also an issue. The focus on describing pictures.

[0:44:31.6] **T2:** And.

[0:44:32.0] **T1:** More poetry in your geography. Put more poetry into your.

[0:44:35.9] **T3:** Yeah. Why not? Yeah, maybe there's a way to do that. Or history.

[0:44:40.1] **T2:** Lessons. Not about the economy. (5)

[0:44:47.4] **I:** So, would you wish to include poetry more often in the classroom from now? (..)

[0:44:55.7] **T2:** I will think more about it. Yeah, I like to think more about it.

[0:44:58.9] **T3:** Yeah, I will.

[0:45:00.3] **T1:** My conscience will be much worse now when I skip. (..)

[0:45:07.8] **I:** That wasn't the goal.

[0:45:10.1] **T1:** Damn it. (.) I know, I know. I think, I will do the I will start doing the things that I used to do again. So, I will include the little Red Riding Hood thing again. (..)

[0:45:32.0] **I:** Okay, so one of the participants already has to leave. We're also coming to the wrap up and reflection question. So, is there anything else you'd like to tell me? Is there something that came to mind now? Bye. Thank you.

[0:45:44.0] **T3:** Thanks. (.)

[0:45:46.5] **I:** While we talked about it. Is there some anecdote from, I don't know, your years of experience and teaching? (..)

T1: Considering poetry or anything in literature?

[0:46:00.7] **T2:** Literature? Yeah. (..)

[0:46:06.3] **T1:** (..)

[0:46:10.7] **T2:** Hmm. (5) I've been always looking for a good way of, dealing with literature in class, and I have to admit, I haven't found the perfect way. And I think it's also, or it also depends on the class. Yeah. And the students? Yeah. If they they are into reading, it's easier, of course. And if they are not, then you need to pick a specific book or a specific short story. Or if it's a poem, then a specific poem that. Yeah. Might raise the interest. Mhm.

[0:46:53.4] **T1:** Yeah. It's the feeling that I remember that is connected with doing literature in, at school for me as a teacher is disappointment because of course I pick books which I like. Yeah. And when I realise that they don't get it at all, or don't dare liking it in front of the others, then this is. It's dissatisfactory. It's not satisfying. It's.

[0:47:31.9] **I:** That reminds me of something you said before about the group dynamic. Right? Mhm.

[0:47:37.6] **T1:** Yeah. I think you really need a special a group out taken out of the classroom, people who come together because they like literature, people coming together because they like reading. And I think then it would work. But in the classroom, reading in the classroom. (..) Yeah. I think it doesn't really work.

[0:48:04.5] **T2:** I mean, you can't really read in a class anymore in a lesson anyway because it isn't very meaningful. Yeah. And yeah, forcing students to do that at home is quite tricky. Quite difficult. Yeah, sometimes they will read it. And sometimes you just read summaries, or they ask people to tell them the story.

[0:48:27.6] **T1:** It's a pity that [colleague] is not here because he reads a lot.

[0:48:31.4] **T2:** Yeah, he reads a lot.

[0:48:32.5] **T1:** And it's a pity that [colleague] is not here, because she also reads a lot. But I don't know how they do it so that it's good for them, too.

[0:48:42.9] **T2:** And if they're happy with what they're doing. Yeah.

[0:48:45.6] **T1:** So that it's not disappointing for them. Mhm.

[0:48:48.6] **T2:** Yeah, I mean I was quite successful with teaching historical. Yeah. Topic and reading a novel on that. For example, when you think about Animal Farm and then you do Russia and the development of communism and communistic regime. Yeah. That mostly worked. Mhm. And I keep doing that in the seventh form then. Yeah. Yeah. Because then they can connect things.

[0:49:19.6] **T1:** Mhm. Mhm.

[0:49:20.4] **T2:** And they like to discuss them.

I: And if you feel something works then you're more likely to use it again.

T2: Mhm. Yeah. Mhm.

I: Anything else? (4)

[0:49:36.5] **T1:** Yeah. The problem is that I am so enthusiastic about literature that I think I get carried away. And then again you will really need an extra lesson for that. Not in regular lessons. Yeah.

[0:49:55.2] **T2:** That's it. It it really takes a lot of time.

[0:49:58.5] **T1:** And I feel like I do not have this time. Mhm.

[0:50:02.5] **I:** Yeah, I mean 50 minutes are quite short.

[0:50:05.3] **T1:** Yeah. Mhm. (.)

[0:50:09.6] **I:** Okay then I think I would wrap it up. Thank you so much.

[0:50:12.8] **T1:** Thank you.

[0:50:14.1] **I:** So, I will stop the recording now.

[0:50:17.3]

C2: Focus Group 2

I: Okay. (5) All right. Good. So, let's maybe start with the introduction of yourselves. T4, do you want to start?

[0:00:18.5] **T4:** So, I'm T4. I work at [school in lower Austria], here. I'm currently only teaching lower secondary students, and we have the *More!* books, and the upper secondary students have the *English in Context* books, but I'm not teaching them at the moment. I have been working for seven months or something in this profession. So, it's not even one year of professional experience. And I am teaching English at the moment, and that's also the only subject I have ever been teaching, and I don't think there is any other additional important information to share.

[0:01:01.4] **I:** Thank you.

[0:01:02.5] **T5:** Okay, cool. I can only add to that I'm also teaching at [school in lower Austria] and I'm also only teaching in lower secondary. So, using *More!* books. Mhm. I've been teaching for almost five years now and yeah; I'm teaching English and Biology as well. Mhm. Yeah, I think that's it.

[0:01:21.8] **I:** Perfect. Thank you.

[0:01:23.1] **T6:** Okay. My name is T6. I'm also teaching at [school in lower Austria]. And my years of professional experience are like T4 seven months and the subjects I currently teach and have taught is sports. And. Yes.

[0:01:44.9] **I:** Okay, perfect. Good. So, let's start with an introductory question. Okay. So, this is quite broad. So, anything that comes to mind really. Do you use literature in your teaching?

[0:01:57.8] **T5:** Yes.

[0:01:58.5] **T4:** Yes.

[0:01:59.5] **T6:** Yes, we do.

[0:02:01.3] **I:** In what sense? Do you want to elaborate?

[0:02:04.4] **T5:** Generally, as reading projects. mainly I try to give them several options so different books they can choose from, and then they get, a range of exercises they can do. Some exercises have to be done by all of the students. And some exercises are specific to the book they read. Yeah.

[0:02:27.3] **I:** So, it's novels? Generally?

[0:02:28.8] **T5:** It's novels. It's different kind of books. Also, what I like to use is, the choose your own adventure books. I don't know if you if you have heard. Yeah. or also comics, graphic novels. So different kinds of books.

[0:02:44.8] **I:** Amazing. So, a broad variety.

T5: Yeah, sure.

I: And how much time do you spend on these projects?

[0:02:49.7] **T6:** That depends on the book. Some projects, like the Choose Your Own Adventure book I tried to integrate into the lessons and only into the lessons. So, we do it in class. And right now, in my fourth grade, we're reading, Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children, and that lasts about eight weeks, I think. So yeah, that varies.

[0:03:13.4] **I:** Amazing.

[0:03:14.0] **T5:** Yeah.

[0:03:14.6] **I:** Perfect.

[0:03:16.1] **T4:** I mean, my inspiration kind of is T5, so, I yeah, I, I've adapted some of his tasks because he kindly sent them to me and right now, I'm reading. No, I've read with my second grade. I've read one book already, and right now I'm reading the second book. And with my third grade, I'm reading my first book. So, there's only one reading project that I have completed. I mean, it's kind of similar, especially because I've adapted some of his tasks for me for my classes. Yeah, but the first reading project that I did with my second grade. I gave them the book during, we have a phase that's called FlipiK here, and where students work completely on their own and in their on their own time also. And I gave them the book to read during FlipiK. So, they read it completely on their own which worked quite well in that class. So that's something that I, I think makes a lot of sense because reading is something that, that's very individual. And, you know, people do not have the same like speed. And some of them might need to look up more vocabulary than others. So, I think that was quite good to do it like that. Yeah.

[0:04:36.0] **I:** Okay. Do you want to add anything?

[0:04:38.3] **T6:** I think it's it's great. And if I would have an English class, I would use it as well. And in university we as well learned that it's really good to have like a list of books, that your students can choose from because I know in my school time it was sometimes quite boring to like if all read the same book and you can't really discuss. It's really better if you have like a list of books that could be read in class. Mhm.

[0:05:07.5] **I:** Okay. Perfect. And do you also sometimes teach poems or poetry at all?

[0:05:12.9] **T4:** I have to say it's also kind of it's in the in the *More!* books. Also, there are some poetry.

[0:05:18.4] **T5:** Yeah.

[0:05:19.6] **T4:** But I always leave it out because I hate poems. I always thought they're so boring in German and in English, so I don't really do it because I personally think it's so boring. So. Yeah.

[0:05:30.6] **T5:** Yeah. I mean, you said you hate it. I don't hate it. Yeah. I also I also think it can be boring, but that would be up to us to change it, to make it not boring, to make it exciting. And back at university, I had a course that focused on how you could integrate poems and stuff like that in an exciting and fun way. And I haven't tried it yet, but maybe sometime I would like to try it and to combine, I don't know, poetry with creativity and start off with easy exercises and then depending on how the students like it, get into depth or I don't know, adapt it.

[0:06:10.5] **I:** Mhm.

[0:06:11.1] **T5:** Whatever.

[0:06:12.1] **I:** Mhm. In what sense do you think it's boring for you, or for the students?

[0:06:17.7] **T5:** I mean I'm just generally not so into poetry even though I like to do it just for fun in German, but I think students nowadays lack the connection to poetry and poems, I think. I'm not sure if that makes sense and if that is the case, but they can't just relate to what's up with that? Yeah. What am I supposed to do with it? Yeah. So, when talking about basic, I don't know, poetry, just rhyming or whatever.

[0:06:51.0] **T4:** Yeah, I think especially in lower secondary, because like the poems that are in the *More!* books, I think they might be a bit too childish for students.

[0:07:00.4] **T5:** Yeah, they are!

[0:07:02.0] **T4:** Yeah, because they are on a simple like level because they don't have the language level yet. But like, there's still like the topics and everything. Like in, in third grade, many students are not interested in animals that much anymore.

[0:07:15.5] **T5:** So, the *More!* the *More!* topics, the poem topics are so far away from their everyday life.

[0:07:21.5] **T4:** Mhm.

[0:07:22.0] **T6:** Yeah, I think so. And they are at such a different level in so many aspects. They can't relate to it, they just make fun of it and that's it. It's the same thing with the videos. Yeah, I don't know. The authors tried to be cool and up to date and I don't know, but that didn't really work.

T4: also, the songs.

[0:07:41.4] **T5:** Yeah, also the songs, sometimes. It just doesn't match their everyday life and where they are at with all that social media influence.

[0:07:50.5] **T6:** Yeah.

[0:07:51.6] **T5:** That just doesn't work.

[0:07:52.6] **T4:** And also, everybody listens to rap and hip hop and everything and the songs and the more they are just, I don't know, they're just everything is so happy. And yeah.

[0:08:01.0] **T6:** It's.

[0:08:01.1] **T5:** Just.

[0:08:01.4] **T6:** It's not relatable.

[0:08:02.5] **T5:** No, no it's not.

[0:08:03.6] **T4:** Not for someone who's 13. You know, when puberty hits and everything. Yeah. Yeah.

[0:08:09.1] **T5:** That's I don't know what their idea behind that was.

[0:08:14.5] **I:** Yeah. Maybe a good segue to what you've just said is another question I have for you. How would you define poetry? Because you've just said rap and hip hop. Now, would you think that's considered poetry?

[0:08:26.4] **T4:** I would say yes, actually. Sure. Good question.

[0:08:30.8] **T5:** Yeah, that would be an exciting way to integrate.

[0:08:35.1] **T6:** That's right.

[0:08:35.9] **T5:** Poetry in a wider context into our lessons. Yeah. Which would be more relatable?

[0:08:40.9] **I:** Yes. Because what I thought about now. And you just said it's boring. What comes to mind for you? Well, what comes to mind is probably a Shakespearean sonnet. Maybe?

T6: Yeah.

[0:08:52.9] **T4:** I mean, I think. That would be interesting, but my obviously lower secondary students are not able to. And even I don't think upper secondary students might not be able to analyze that, although I would think that would be more interesting because, you know, there's something behind it and there is something to analyze, but like poems about frogs and whatever.

T5: Oh yeah. Yeah.

T4: I don't know.

[0:09:18.5] **I:** Is that one from the course book or was it just an example?

[0:09:20.8] **T4:** I don't know. I don't know if it's about, but I remember something that was a bit.

[0:09:26.3] **T5:** I think Unit One is about that wide mouthed frog.

[0:09:29.0] **T4:** Oh yeah. Yeah yeah yeah yeah yeah. Okay.

[0:09:32.8] **I:** And you usually skip that is what I gathered.

T5: Yeah yeah.

[0:09:36.8] **T4:** Yeah.

[0:09:37.5] **I:** Okay.

[0:09:37.8] **T5:** I mean, I try to give them a listen to the songs and then they give me thumb feedback and it's always pointing down.

[0:09:44.6] **T4:** Yeah. Me too. And I always, I always ask them, do you want to listen a second time? No. We'd rather do grammar. Okay then. Okay. You know, and even when I started, they were like, no, we don't want to listen to it. It's so cringe, you know? And I always try to.

[0:09:59.3] **T5:** That's the thing. They have all that what I mentioned before, they have all that social media influence and that real life influence. And when I learned that my second grade is listening and practising a Bruno Mars song, I think Bruno Mars featuring Lady Gaga, I integrated that song in a lesson, where we focused also on vocabulary and a little bit on meaning and expressions, and they loved it. They sang along. It's a real a real life. It's an actual song. And that's what they liked and not those *More!* Happy Peppys.

[0:10:30.9] **T4:** I also did that.

[0:10:32.0] **T5:** Yeah.

[0:10:33.5] **T4:** I also did that with if I Were a Boy from Beyonce for the Conditional two. If I were, I would do blah blah blah. And they loved it. And you know, the topic it's about, it's about someone breaking up and lying to each other and betraying. So, it's kind of, you know, what, they like that. And it was interesting. And it wasn't about frogs, you know?

T5: Yeah. It's not that childish. It's not all good mood. It's just real. If you could say that I don't know. Mhm. Yeah.

[0:11:02.6] **T6:** In university as well. Like authentic material. Yes. So good for students and they really enjoy it.

[0:11:09.8] **T5:** Yeah. But that requires that you as a teacher understand and find out where your students are.

[0:11:15.9] **T6:** Yes. And it takes sometimes more work.

[0:11:18.4] **T5:** Yes, of course it does.

[0:11:19.2] **T6:** Because you can't just rely on like, the *More!* books. Yeah, but still, if you have it, you have it. You can use it over and over again.

[0:11:25.7] **T5:** Yeah, sure.

[0:11:26.4] **T4:** Yeah.

[0:11:27.0] **I:** Yeah.

[0:11:27.5] **I:** What do you think you could you teach with poetry? Does anything come to mind for you?

[0:11:32.9] **T6:** How do you mean?

[0:11:34.0] **I:** In terms of grammatical structures or also critical thinking skills.

[0:11:38.1] **T5:** Everything.

[0:11:38.9] **I:** Everything?

[0:11:39.6] **T5:** Yeah, I think so.

[0:11:40.7] **T6:** Vocabulary?

[0:11:41.7] **T5:** Yeah. (..) Why not?

[0:11:44.9] **T6:** Yeah. Yeah.

[0:11:46.7] **T5:** So, if you have a song, if you have a song like what you just mentioned Beyonce or yeah, that focuses on conditionals. Yeah. Why not go for it? Yeah. Combine arts with grammar. And there we go.

[0:11:59.5] **T4:** Yeah.

[0:12:00.4] **T6:** Yeah. You could, like, give them the lyrics of a song, and then they could, like, point out all the grammar items.

[0:12:07.1] **T4:** Yeah.

T5: Sure.

[0:12:08.2] **T6:** Mentioned in the song. Yeah.

[0:12:09.6] **T5:** Maybe they could even pick everybody could pick their favourite song and then just let's go and analyse.

[0:12:14.7] **T4:** Yeah. I mean, I don't know, that's. I tried to kind of do that and I got some really, you know, if, if then songs and a lot of rap songs are about, you know, sexual harassment like that. So, you cannot listen to that. Yeah.

[0:12:30.7] **T4:** Of course you need you, you.

[0:12:32.5] **T6:** You set some rules.

[0:12:33.7] **T5:** Yeah. Set the rules. Do some scaffolding.

T6: Give them a list of songs.

[0:12:37.5] **T5:** Sure. That's what you also could do. Yeah. Give them some kind of autonomy. Not full autonomy, but some kind of. Choose the songs wisely and then. Yeah, deal with those songs. Yeah.

[0:12:49.1] **I:** And maybe coming back to what you just said before that you hated poetry or dislike.

[0:12:55.8] **T4:** Yeah, dislike is a better word.

[0:12:58.5] **I:** For the others. What feelings come to mind when you think about poetry or what emotions?

[0:13:08.0] **T5:** Mhm. I don't know. Not hate. No not not necessarily hate but maybe respect. Since I was never really into poetry and so it would take a lot of effort to prepare and get into it and to prepare properly so that it makes sense. Yeah. So, I would say respect maybe. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Respect.

[0:13:32.7] **I:** Mhm.

[0:13:33.3] **T6:** Mhm. Yes. I think I misunderstand poetry because I think people who are really into poetry, they really enjoy it, and they really cherish it. And for me, I think I'm just not that kind of person who could cherish it. So, I think I'm just, I don't know, mixed feelings about it because I think it's a great thing and for a lot of people, but not necessarily for me. Mhm.

[0:13:58.9] **T5:** Dou you think it's possible to understand it wrong in a wrong way. I mean that's where I'm at. Yeah, I totally feel you. But is it possible to understand it the wrong way?

[0:14:11.1] **T4:** I don't think so.

[0:14:12.1] **T5:** I'm not sure.

[0:14:12.8] **T6:** It's open for interpretation. Yeah, it is if it doesn't set fire to your soul. I don't know. Yeah, because some people are like. Really into it.

[0:14:23.8] **T5:** Yeah, they're really into it.

[0:14:25.0] **T6:** And that's amazing. I mean, it's really nice, but. Yeah. Not me.

[0:14:30.2] **T5:** Yeah, totally feel you.

[0:14:31.4] **T6:** Either way you could have students who are like that, and you should, like, support them with that, I guess.

[0:14:38.4] **T5:** Yeah. Yeah. Mm.

[0:14:41.1] **I:** Mhm. If you were to integrate a poem or a poetry in your classroom, would you ask the students to simply read it or maybe also perform it?

[0:14:51.7] **T4:** I think there are like if I think about my third grade now, I have one third grade and I think that it would be awesome if they performed it, because they're also into music and into performing stuff and everything and they have, you know, Arts Lab and all of that stuff. So, with them yes, absolutely. With my other third grade. Not at all. Not in any way. Yeah. That would just be. Yeah.

[0:15:16.4] **T6:** It depends on the class.

[0:15:17.8] **T5:** Yeah. Yeah, totally.

I: So, would you say it's group dynamic?

T4: Yeah.

T5: Yeah.

[0:15:21.7] **T6:** Yeah, definitely. Yeah.

[0:15:24.3] **I:** In what sense can you elaborate or just in a general sense?

[0:15:29.2] **T5:** In general, so every class is so individual. And of course, the students are so individual. And if you have a class where you know you could do role plays, you could add role plays to the poem, it's fine. But maybe the parallel class, you can just do a role play with them because they're just not into it. Yeah. The same thing with my classes. I have one third grade. They love doing role plays and also my second grade. But the fourth grade, they are totally not into it. You can't move them no chance.

[0:16:02.1] **I:** Because they're shy? They don't want to do it?

[0:16:04.6] **T5:** Yes. I think it's a mix of puberty, shyness and I just don't give a fish. And what else? Yeah, I can just

T6: Maybe they are embarrassed.

T5: Yeah, maybe also embarrassed.

[0:16:17.4] **T4:** But they can't show it.

[0:16:18.4] **T5:** Yeah. They can't show it. And coming back to group dynamics, since they are ashamed and maybe afraid and shy. So, it's a really complex setting.

[0:16:28.4] **T6:** Especially at that age. Yeah.

[0:16:31.0] **T5:** Of course. Yeah.

[0:16:32.3] **I:** Difficult?

[0:16:33.1] **T5:** Yeah. And then add 2 or 3, let's call it mean students who just mock you. Yeah. Because you're, I don't know, pronounce a word the wrong way or whatever. And then you can totally forget it.

[0:16:46.0] **T6:** And generally. Reading aloud, it's just torture. And we learned that at university as well, that it's not really the best thing you could do as a teacher.

[0:16:54.7] **T4:** Some students love it. They love it. They want to do it like they always ask, can we read? Can everybody read one sentence?

[0:17:00.8] **T5:** And I tried. I tried to let them all read at the same time.

[0:17:06.0] **T4:** Oh.

[0:17:07.3] **T5:** So those who love to read.

[0:17:09.5] **T4:** Does it work?

[0:17:10.0] **T5:** Yeah, it does. Those who love to read, read out loud or louder. And those who are a little bit shy or ashamed. They just do it, very quietly. But all of them do. That's good.

[0:17:22.1] **T6:** That's a good idea.

[0:17:22.6] **T5:** So I don't know if.

[0:17:23.7] **I:** So they are all exposed at the same time? Yeah, in that sense.

T5: Yeah.

[0:17:27.5] **T5:** And if you want to focus more as a student, you want to focus more on listening. Then you read more quietly and focus on the pronunciation of the others. And if you like it, you can go a little bit louder. I mean, it needs a, it needs a lot more elaboration.

[0:17:43.9] **T6:** Mhm.

[0:17:45.0] **T5:** Yeah. It just came to my mind out of nowhere. I want to I wanted to try it so. Yeah.

T4: Which is interesting.

T5: But yeah. Reading out loud.

[0:17:52.6] **T4:** Interesting.

[0:17:53.9] **I:** Would you also consider letting them write a poem?

[0:17:58.3] **T4:** Yeah. Again, with one class. Yes. And with the other class. I know if I told them to write a poem, that would just be BS. You know, like three students would take it seriously and I would get great poems, but the other, like 25, that's just, I don't know.

[0:18:14.3] **T5:** Yeah. Not taking it for full. Yeah. And it also depends on your guiding and scaffolding beforehand. Yeah. Because if they don't know what a poem is or what a poem could be. Yeah, they just can't start. They don't know where to start.

[0:18:29.6] **T6:** They will only think about these old poems they don't really have a connection with. Yeah, instead of maybe even songs or something. Something that rhymes, even. You know, it doesn't have to be like this old.

[0:18:39.2] **T5:** This classic poem. Yeah. It could be so much more.

[0:18:42.1] **T4:** Mhm.

[0:18:43.3] **T5:** Yeah. Mhm.

[0:18:44.9] **I:** If you've already integrated a poem, do you think the students found it confusing at first?

T4: I haven't.

[0:18:53.2] **T5:** No. No, I did it some years ago. I can't really remember but they weren't confused. It was a very basic I don't know what it was. Basic alphabet poem. Mhm. And that's coming back to the question what is a poem. And this very, very easy, very low-level poem was only about finding one word for each letter of the alphabet.

[0:19:16.1] **T4:** It's an acrostic isn't it. Called acrostic or something like that.

[0:19:19.5] **T5:** I can't remember, but it could be. Yeah. And they weren't confused. It's very easy, very low level. And yeah, they just add words. There we go. It was okay.

[0:19:30.2] **I:** Okay.

[0:19:30.6] **T5:** Yeah. If you would consider that a poem.

[0:19:34.4] **I:** Even if you don't use poetry, do you use other creative texts in your classes, like you said, song lyrics?

T4: Yes. Songs. Yeah.

I: Or even short stories? Maybe?

[0:19:44.3] **T4:** Yeah. Kind of. I try to do some kind of creative writing because I like always just reading these emails. I don't want to see emails anymore. So. And I've only been teaching for seven months. Yeah. But yeah, kind of and also kind of giving them, you know, keywords and they have to come up with a story using these keywords and stuff like that. Yeah. More than poetry. Yeah.

[0:20:10.0] **I:** What makes those work better for you than poetry? (...)

[0:20:18.4] **T4:** I think they're just more used to it. Yeah, right.

[0:20:22.5] **I:** Because of their surroundings?

[0:20:26.5] **T5:** Or we are more used to it because we don't like poetry.

[0:20:30.7] **T4:** Yeah.

[0:20:31.0] **T6:** Maybe they feel freer. They have, like, more room for their ideas because they think poetry could be something that is just some very specific kind of text. And with stories you could go, like, any way, but in poetry you could do that too. But I think that's not how students think.

[0:20:54.0] **T4:** Yeah. Right. They feel restricted. Right.

[0:20:56.3] **T6:** Yeah.

[0:20:56.7] **T5:** Mhm.

[0:20:57.1] **I:** By the structure?

[0:20:58.8] **T6:** Yeah, I guess so. Yeah.

[0:21:01.1] **I:** Mhm. Okay. Are short stories sometimes used in the coursebook as well? And would you consider using them?

[0:21:14.7] **T4:** Can you call them a short story. I don't know how long a short story is.

T5: It was sort of a short story. So, they have in each unit there's some kind of, I don't know what's called short story or a longer dialogue or.

[0:21:27.1] **T4:** yeah.

[0:21:28.7] **T6:** Yeah, kind of.

[0:21:29.0] **T5:** Like two pages.

[0:21:30.1] **T4:** Yeah. Two pages. It's a short, short story. Shorter story.

[0:21:35.3] **T5:** Yeah.

[0:21:36.5] **T5:** Yeah. There are short stories.

[0:21:38.2] **T4:** Yeah.

[0:21:38.8] **I:** So if, a good poem would be in the more course books, would you consider using it or would you also skip it?

[0:21:46.9] **T5:** No. If it was.

[0:21:48.3] **T5:** What's a good poem?

[0:21:50.3] **T4:** It's not about frogs.

[0:21:53.0] **T5:** It's not.

[0:21:53.8] **T6:** Childish. Yeah.

[0:21:55.0] **T4:** Yes.

[0:21:55.3] **T4:** Like it has to do something with the reality of the student's life.

[0:21:58.7] **T5:** Yeah yeah.

[0:21:59.7] **T4:** Yeah.

[0:22:00.2] **T6:** Yeah.

[0:22:00.9] **I:** Yeah.

[0:22:01.2] **T4:** For that age. That's a good poem for me.

[0:22:04.6] **T6:** Yeah.

[0:22:05.2] **T4:** And like the texts, I don't know, I think some of the texts are also weird. Some of the short stories are also completely weird, but others are not too bad.

[0:22:16.0] **T5:** Yeah, I think it's all about being relatable. If they can relate.

[0:22:20.2] **T4:** Yeah, but now I think like the talking to Belinda in the third-grade course book. When I read it, I was like, oh my God, that's. And I had it. I read that as a student and then I.

[0:22:30.0] **I:** It is very long.

[0:22:30.8] **T4:** Yeah, it is, it is. And I thought, oh my God, no, that's just so not, you know, relatable. And but I gave them, you know, the task of writing an ending to that story. And I thought, no, that's not going to work because it's just so weird. But they were so creative, and I got so many also weird but very creative stories. So, I was surprised by that. It wasn't too bad, honestly, and some of them really put some effort into it.

[0:22:58.7] **T5:** Cool.

[0:22:59.1] **T4:** Yeah, I don't know. So sometimes they surprised me when I think it's not relatable. But then.

[0:23:07.4] **T5:** Yeah, sometimes it is.

[0:23:08.5] **T4:** It is.

[0:23:09.2] **T5:** Yeah, I don't know.

[0:23:11.9] **I:** So, they do enjoy the creativity sometimes?

[0:23:15.3] **T5:** Yes, they do.

[0:23:15.8] **T4:** They do. So yeah. Yeah.

[0:23:17.3] **T5:** But you need to give them some space, I think. I do not always stick to the prompts and instructions in the books, because I think that's in some way too restrictive. Yeah. Even if it's only about, I don't know, focus on that and that. Yeah. I say let's ignore that and that bullet point. Let's focus only on, I don't know, the word limit. Maybe give them a range. Mhm. And then write about what comes to your mind. Make it fit. Make it make sense. And then there we go. Mhm. Yeah.

[0:23:46.9] **I:** Mhm. Yeah. what was your experience with poetry as a student in English or in German because you've touched upon it, I think.

[0:23:56.1] **T5:** As a student?

[0:23:56.9] **I:** Yeah. As a student. So in school or in university that doesn't matter.

[0:24:02.8] **T5:** I can't even remember. That we dealt with it since I went to a mercantile school. HAK. I attended HAK and there was no time and no importance to poems. And in university. I can't remember. I'm so sorry.

[0:24:20.1] **I:** You said a had course about poetry earlier on.

[0:24:22.4] **T5:** Yes. Of course.

[0:24:24.5] **I:** That's why the segue to you.

[0:24:26.3] **T5:** Oh. yeah.

[0:24:28.5] **T5:** Yeah, there was a course, and the professor was totally motivated and gave us some, some means on how to, to make poetry and poems and, and literature more fun, more exciting and more relatable. But yeah, the only thing I can remember is the Alphabet poem. And there's one more method, but I don't know what it's called. It's like when you, you give the kids, a sheet of paper and on that paper is, I don't know, a part of a story or it's a page of a book. Mhm. And then I think it's called blacking out or blackout I don't know. That's when they try and draw pictures on it. Like, what would the basic approach be? You blackout everything except for some words, and then this whole page goes. Whole page goes black. And you only have, I don't know, five words left. And that's what you call your blackout poem. I don't know.

[0:25:31.1] **I:** And have you used it already in class?

[0:25:33.4] **T5:** No. Unfortunately, not. No.

[0:25:34.4] **I:** Okay. Would you like to. Or was it just not something you wanted to?

[0:25:37.8] **T5:** It was. I really liked it. But then I totally forgot about it. And now it just came to my mind. So. Yeah. It's perfect.

[0:25:43.8] **T4:** Yeah. All right.

[0:25:45.7] **T5:** Let's go for it on Monday. FlipiK project. Oh, yeah. Yeah.

T4: They have to be quick.

[0:25:51.2] **T6:** Not me. I have too much respect for respect for, poetry. Yeah, I'm a little bit afraid, I don't know. Yeah. Yeah. Something hinders me, I think.

[0:26:04.5] **I:** Interesting.

[0:26:05.0] **T4:** Yeah.

[0:26:05.7] **I:** Okay.

[0:26:07.2] **T4:** I kind of are. In school, we haven't read any poetry in English. Certainly not, although I. Yeah. We've also not really read a lot of books, so kind of in German. We did a lot of poetry, and that was just so boring because we've only read like 100,000-year-old poems. Yeah. And then at university, I honestly skipped all the literature courses I could and took all the linguistics courses I could, and I only did the literature courses. I really had to, you know, when there was no other option. And then I always

chose stuff where it's not about poems and all the poems that I was supposed to read. I honestly, nobody was able to bring that fire to me. I of course, I read these poems, but that was just not like I enjoyed the literature parts and enjoyed reading the books and the stories and everything, but poetry was just never something that I don't know. I was always somebody who liked to use a lot of words. And in poetry you cannot use that many words, you know? Yeah. If you write stories, you know, and you like to talk and to blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, then poetry is maybe the wrong thing because you cannot do that. Then it's not a poem anymore, but a story. So that was always something that I don't know. Yeah.

[0:27:29.4] **I:** So, do you think the experience you got from your German classes when you were a student. Yeah, basically maybe hindered you?

[0:27:37.6] **T4:** Certainly. Yeah, certainly. And my English teacher couldn't save me anymore, so. Yeah. Okay. Yeah, certainly.

T6: Yeah. True.

[0:27:46.8] **I:** Okay. Thank you.

[0:27:48.1] **T6:** Yeah. I had a very similar experience. We did poetry in German as well, and one time we could act it out as well. And I really enjoyed that. It was really funny, but it was upper secondary as well. And in English? Never. Yes, and in university as well. I always skip the literature courses, but now I'm in one literature course and in a bachelor program course. And in the first lesson we had to name our favourite author or like poets and our favourite poem. And I was like, I'm sorry, but they're like, and that's what I meant before. There are people burning for that. They really love it. And they have like, and this one and that one. And the lecturer was like interacting with them. And I was like, I'm sorry. Yeah.

[0:28:41.2] **I:** Does that make you feel like you don't belong in that class?

[0:28:44.3] **T6:** Yes. Pretty much yes. And you feel stupid. and I think, in English classes, it could be the same, like some students would burn for that. And I think especially in our school or like in, in a, in an AHS, especially the, the kids who enjoy poems would feel left out and not the other way around. So how I feel in the literature class? Yeah, and it's not nice because you give up already because, you know, okay, you can't like, compare yourself with the others because you're far behind. So. Yeah.

[0:29:18.8] **I:** So, there's also a hindrance.

T6: Yes. Yes, yes. Mhm.

[0:29:22.4] **T5:** I think that's why it's important to, to provide several options to, to different exercises. Give them a choice. Choose whatever you like best from that. I mean if there are students who don't like any option okay you have to deal with that as well. But yeah, providing let's say even only two options is so much more than providing only one way in everybody, every student has to follow your lead. Mhm. Yeah, I think that's so important.

[0:29:55.0] **I:** Mhm. Also, in terms of creativity.

T5: Yeah definitely.

I: and helping students express themselves. Do you think poetry is especially made for that?

[0:30:06.6] **T5:** It's one way.

[0:30:07.6] **T4:** To express.

[0:30:08.7] **T6:** Expression. Sure.

[0:30:09.8] **T5:** Yeah.

[0:30:10.5] **T4:** Yeah. As I said, I don't know. I think poetry just doesn't have a lot of words. And I think there are students that are like me, you know, the ones who write texts with like 300 words at like 11 years old, you know, they just want to, you know, get it all out. Yeah. And maybe for them, it's, you know, they are they feel too restricted with poetry, you know. But then there's maybe others.

[0:30:36.7] **T5:** yeah.

[0:30:38.0] **T4:** Like that. Yeah.

[0:30:39.5] **T6:** Yeah.

[0:30:40.5] **I:** Has a student ever surprised you with something creative they've written or performed?

T4: Yeah. Yeah.

[0:30:45.8] **T5:** All the time.

[0:30:46.5] **T4:** Yeah, all the time. A lot of times.

[0:30:47.5] **T6:** Yeah. Many times.

[0:30:48.7] **I:** Do you have an example maybe that comes to mind?

[0:30:51.7] **T4:** I don't know. I have the talking to Belinda like an end to that story. And one student, she wrote like that. It was two pages. Two full pages on both sides. In third grade. And she spent so much time on it. And then she also illustrated it, and it was very bloody. So, she put fake blood on it and everything. It was very disturbing. It was very, very and very dark. But it was so creative, you know. And that was.

[0:31:22.2] **T5:** That's so cool. That's when they engaged with language combined with creativity. Yeah. And that's so important. It's so important. Yeah.

[0:31:31.4] **I:** Thanks. For the example.

[0:31:32.5] **T5:** Yeah.

[0:31:33.0] **I:** Do you also have one?

[0:31:34.8] **T5:** yeah. Also, when it came to writing, when they have the chance to be creative and when the prompt is not too restrictive, then they come up with long stories, interesting stories. They put effort in; they put time into it. Or also, when it comes to role plays, when we deal with a certain, text from the books or short story, or a role play which is already in the book. And then I give them the option to either, prepare that one story or role play, or adapt it in a certain way. And when they start adapting, then their creativity comes to the surface. Mhm. Yeah.

[0:32:16.9] **T6:** Mhm.

[0:32:17.3] **T5:** And it's so cool to see.

[0:32:18.8] **I:** Do you think it's more doable in lower or upper secondary or do you think it's doable in no matter the level?

[0:32:27.0] **T4:** I think both of them. But then I think that especially I mean I'm not teaching them right now, but I kind of since it's my first year, I kind of go with an experienced teacher and, you know, sit in her lessons and in upper secondary and, and I think that in upper secondary, I don't know, you might not really have a lot of time to do a lot of creative writing. And because you have to do all of that essay and

report and stuff. Writing, you know, which is not good, but there's just no way around it. They just have to know how to write that essay and that report, and they might not be too happy to write even more, you know, because you have to motivate them to, to write that stuff that they have to write, you know. So, I don't know. It's not good. You know, it's all of that teaching to the test and stuff. But in the end, they have to take the final exams and that's just it. So, I don't know.

[0:33:25.0] **T6:** Yeah.

[0:33:26.1] **T4:** That would require a lot of motivation I think from the student side.

[0:33:30.1] **T5:** And it also depends on their lower secondary experiences. Since you just mentioned you don't have too much time in upper secondary. And if they never if they have never experienced creativity or dealing with poetry in a lower secondary.

[0:33:45.3] **T6:** Mhm.

[0:33:46.4] **T5:** How would you how would you integrate that in upper secondary with no time at all, because you would have to start from scratch.

[0:33:54.8] **T4:** Yeah. And yeah.

[0:33:56.2] **T5:** I'm not sure if that's going to work with upper secondary students.

[0:34:00.2] **T6:** Mhm.

[0:34:01.0] **I:** So, the foundation is missing for that.

[0:34:04.0] **T5:** Yeah.

[0:34:04.7] **T5:** And that's that foundation is all about us teachers.

[0:34:07.8] **T6:** Mhm. Mhm. Mhm. Yeah.

[0:34:09.5] **I:** Speaking of foundation is also like interpreting and analysing. So critical thinking skills. Do you think poetry or literature in general would aid students in that. So, reception skills in general. (..)

[0:34:24.7] **T5:** Mhm. (..)

[0:34:27.6] **T4:** I mean aid in what kind of way. You know aid them to pass their final exams or aid them for life. You know, that's the question, I think. Right.

[0:34:39.9] **I:** How did you understand the question?

[0:34:41.6] **T4:** In life, I think. Yes. For the final exams I think no. Yeah. And it's all about what is the responsibility here, you know? Yeah. So, for life. Yes. Absolutely. For the final exams? No. Because creativity just doesn't matter there, you know.

[0:34:58.7] **I:** But analysing skills kind of do?

[0:35:02.0] **T4:** Yeah. But I think they are so specific. You know, you have all of these test formats you exactly know okay. It's true false justification. You need to have this and this skill to find that and that information in this in that text. You know, it's so specific and you have these specific strategies I don't know.

[0:35:20.6] **T5:** And if I may add, the students focus on more or less straightforward texts.

[0:35:25.3] **T4:** Yeah yeah.

[0:35:26.7] **T6:** Yeah.

[0:35:27.0] **T5:** There is not much to analyse. You have that information, scan it, skim it, whatever. And then let's go for true or false justification.

[0:35:36.2] **T4:** You're not even allowed to interpret anything. No interpreting. Then it's gone wrong. Yeah.

[0:35:40.8] **T5:** You have a problem. You only you can't bring in your, what is it called, common sense or whatever you have learned so far. Since you only are supposed to deal with the information in that text, even though it's maybe wrong, even though you may know more about it, that doesn't matter at all. Deal with the information that is given to you.

[0:36:01.2] **I:** So, you're not encouraging, or the students are not encouraged to critically engage with the text at all?

[0:36:07.7] **T4:** Not really.

[0:36:10.3] **I:** Or in a limited sense, maybe.

[0:36:14.8] **T5:** Not when it comes to the finals.

[0:36:16.3] **T4:** No.

[0:36:16.6] **T6:** Yes. Especially in upper secondary and in my assessment. And I don't know how it's called assessment. I'll just call it assessment. Yeah. Yeah. And they talk about backwash like positive or negative backwash and like, the negative backwash is exactly this that especially students who are closer to the Matura, they just learn, they just focus on these kinds of tasks, and they do not widen the horizon because it's already a lot. And I get that. But there's no time for critical thinking or like, maybe even questioning the exercises they get, because that's on the Matura. So, we have to know it. We have to practice that. Mhm. Yeah.

[0:36:58.1] **I:** Mhm. And then lower secondary? What do you think about that?

[0:37:02.1] **T4:** I mean students they are often very critical if they find information in texts that they know is not true or not complete, they are always. Yeah. You know, so they like to be critical about texts. I think they're really proud.

[0:37:15.5] **T4:** Yeah. Yeah.

[0:37:17.2] **T6:** There is room for that.

[0:37:18.0] **T5:** But on the other side, so many of them have problems in, in understanding the basic information that is given in a text or even in instructions.

[0:37:29.0] **T4:** Yeah.

[0:37:29.4] **T5:** So, the spectrum is very, very broad.

[0:37:31.9] **T6:** Yeah. Mhm. Yeah.

[0:37:33.1] **T6:** It really depends on the student as well because some students especially in lower secondary need this guidance of every exercise is the same. And I know this how this works especially in like the Schularbeit or something. And some students really enjoy and thrive from more open exercises.

[0:37:49.2] **T5:** On their own. Right. And others. Yeah, you need to take them by their hands.

[0:37:54.6] **T6:** Yeah. And if you have like these big classes, it's really difficult to implement.

[0:37:58.3] **T4:** If you have 30 people, that is.

[0:38:00.1] **T5:** Yeah.

[0:38:00.9] **T5:** Yeah. That is so far away from.

[0:38:04.0] **T4:** I mean, I did that If I Were A Boy thing and I tried to do some critical, you know, thinking also about because it's a lot of I thought maybe we could talk about, you know, is, is this like hating men and accusing all men? You know, I thought we could talk a little bit like, critical about that because, you know, is that bashing or anything? But they were not really, you know, it was a bit difficult. It was third grade, of course, you know, but it was a bit difficult. Like we had trouble, like understanding everything. Like, what is it about? Yeah. And then going one step further and thinking critically about that was difficult. Some you know that the very, very bright ones, you have 2 to 3 people who are talking about patriarchy and whatever, but like the others are just like, what's going on? Yeah.

[0:38:50.2] **T5:** So, but I think again, it's about foundation.

[0:38:52.5] **T6:** Yeah.

[0:38:53.1] **T5:** If they have learned to deal with that and to focus on or do that one more step, that extra step, you can focus on that. But you just took over the third grade I assume? Yeah. So, there are two years of where they had a different teacher. And if that teacher has never focused on that.

[0:39:12.4] **I:** Yeah, a different foundation.

[0:39:14.0] **T5:** Yeah, it's all about foundation.

[0:39:17.0] **I:** And also, about the mixed proficiency in the classroom. That's what you just mentioned.

[0:39:21.3] **T4:** Yeah, sure.

[0:39:22.0] **T5:** Yeah.

[0:39:22.5] **T4:** I mean you have some students, they they're like they just write and speak and you know, it's just brilliant. And then there are others, and they cannot get one straight sentence out.

T5: Yeah, that's true. It's kind of, you know, very.

[0:39:38.0] **T6:** Brutal.

[0:39:38.3] **I:** Does poetry feature in your private life at all? Also, on social media. Maybe on TikTok or Instagram or whatever you use?

[0:39:48.4] **T4:** Yes. Oh, yes. There are how is she called Rupri Kaur. Yeah, whatever. I often see that on my algorithm provides me with these. Yeah. That's awesome poetry right.

[0:40:01.9] **T5:** Yeah.

[0:40:02.4] **T4:** I mean kind of. Yeah.

[0:40:04.1] **I:** So, you do engage with it?

[0:40:05.6] **T4:** I do now as I think about it. Yeah. You're right. But yeah, I think that might be a little bit too much for, for 12- or 13-year-olds, because a lot of that is about also like mental, you know, and but yeah.

[0:40:21.4] **T5:** What about upper secondary?

[0:40:22.6] **T4:** Yeah. For them probably. Yeah. Yeah. I don't have them but yeah. Yeah, yeah for that. Yeah.

[0:40:30.1] **T5:** And that would be relatable. Yeah, that would be everyday life. Yeah. Social media linked with I don't know short. Yeah. Poetry.

[0:40:38.0] **T4:** Yeah. Yeah. That's the thing. Poetry. Short. It is very short. It is short and it's relatable. Yeah. That's right. That would be an option. Good one. Okay.

T5: You're welcome.

T4: Thank you. (..)

[0:40:51.5] **I:** And all the others? Not really?

[0:40:53.6] **T5:** No.

[0:40:54.0] **T6:** Not really.

[0:40:54.9] **I:** Yeah. Just maybe novels or songs?

[0:40:57.8] **T6:** Yeah. Music, I really enjoy music.

[0:40:59.9] **I:** Apart from course books, have you come across any good poetry resources if you've looked for them or did you just not look for them? Which is also fine.

[0:41:15.5] **T5:** No, I haven't looked into it. Sorry.

[0:41:18.2] **I:** No, no that's okay, that's fine. Okay. Good. Can you name specific problems or challenges you have with teaching poetry, or is it more related to curriculum demands, student engagement, or related to time? (...)

[0:41:40.0] **T4:** I think. I mean, the curriculum. I don't know, I feel like the curriculum, like the unofficial curriculum kind of is the book, to be honest. Yeah. The unofficial one, you know, and the problem is, do I finish all of these units and all of this stuff with, like, this one year and I find it difficult to I mean, I'm reading this book, but I kind of found it difficult to find the time for it. You know, I had to cut like, like to leave out some other stuff and which I think is fine, but yeah.

[0:42:18.5] **T5:** Yeah, it is totally fine.

[0:42:19.7] **T4:** Yeah, sure. Yeah. But then, now thinking about, you know, also integrating poetry. Now, what other stuff do I leave out then. Yeah. I mean, there's always stuff to leave out. But then one day.

[0:42:32.3] **T5:** Yeah, but the question is, what of all those topics in the book? Yeah. Do you really need what is really important?

[0:42:39.9] **T4:** Yeah. That's right. Yeah. But it's really difficult to decide.

[0:42:42.9] **T5:** Yeah, it is. Of course it is. Yeah, sure.

[0:42:44.5] **T4:** For me it is. Yeah. Right now, maybe it will be easier one day. Yeah. Right now.

[0:42:49.7] **I:** I mean, even if it's just a short poem in spoken word form on TikTok, that might be manageable. Even staying within the constraints.

[0:42:58.1] **T4:** I don't know if I want to, you know, integrate TikTok. That's something that I it's. Yeah. On the one hand, I think I mean everybody is there. Who are we kidding? But then like, not us but our

students, you know. So, I think yeah. But then on the other side, I think it's so harmful for many young people that I don't, you know, it's a bit difficult for me to, to make that decision.

[0:43:19.1] **T6:** To promote it and.

[0:43:20.0] **T5:** yeah.

[0:43:20.7] **T4:** yeah.

[0:43:21.5] **I:** In what ways in terms of concentration or?

[0:43:25.2] **T5:** That.

[0:43:26.2] **T6:** And also kind.

[0:43:26.8] **T4:** Of what they see there because there's just no control in whatever. You know, that's just here. It's disturbing.

[0:43:33.9] **T5:** It circles back to critical thinking.

[0:43:35.8] **T4:** Yeah.

[0:43:36.6] **T4:** Yeah. But also, to kind of media competence and everything. Yeah, I think that's just not manageable for one teacher.

[0:43:45.0] **T6:** No.

[0:43:45.8] **T4:** It's just. And so much is not in our hands to be honest, because so much happens in the afternoon.

[0:43:50.6] **T6:** Yeah. That's true.

[0:43:52.4] **T5:** Yeah. So yeah, as you mentioned, time is definitely can be a problem. Let's say it that way.

[0:43:59.0] **T4:** Mhm. I don't know. I mean sure it's you always have time for stuff that you want to do. It just depends on do you want to do it. You know that's the thing, I think.

[0:44:07.1] **T6:** Yeah.

[0:44:08.7] **I:** Mhm. Well, you're both incorporating literature. So how do you select the novels or the books or graphic novels for that. What's the selection process?

[0:44:20.2] **T5:** Either based on personal experience or based on colleagues, colleagues' experiences with certain literature.

[0:44:30.7] **I:** And do you feel confident in selecting appropriate material, or is that something you're not sure about?

[0:44:36.0] **T5:** Just generally, yes. I would say, yeah. I mean there's there is or will be a point at which, you know, your kids, you know, your class. Yeah. And that's when you are able to decide what fits.

[0:44:55.2] **T4:** Mhm.

[0:44:56.3] **T5:** But that requires engaging with the literature.

[0:44:59.9] **T6:** Mhm.

[0:45:00.3] **T5:** So, you know in which level is the literature then you know your students. Yeah. And then you can match.

[0:45:04.9] **T4:** Mhm. Yeah. Yeah. Mhm.

[0:45:07.6] **I:** Would you also feel confident in selecting a poem for a specific topic?

[0:45:15.3] **I:** Or is that difficult?

[0:45:17.6] **T5:** Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Difficult.

[0:45:19.3] **T6:** Yeah.

[0:45:19.8] **T5:** Since I or we haven't done it too much. Yeah.

[0:45:23.3] **T4:** Yeah. Mhm.

[0:45:25.1] **I:** Would you know where to look for it?

[0:45:28.1] **T4:** No, no I wouldn't.

[0:45:29.6] **T6:** No, I would ask ChatGPT. Honestly, because I.

[0:45:32.8] **T5:** Yeah, sure. Yeah.

[0:45:34.9] **I:** Or other resources like eduki?

[0:45:38.0] **T5:** Yeah.

[0:45:38.6] **T4:** Mhm.

[0:45:39.1] **T4:** But also do we have. Because you know we have. He actually is. Maybe there is something some special qualification for you because you are the manager of our English literature. Yeah, you are. You're the boss.

[0:45:55.4] **T6:** I don't know I'm only giving out the books.

[0:45:57.9] **T4:** Yes.

[0:45:58.3] **T5:** That's it.

[0:45:59.0] **T6:** No, I don't know, so. But the thing is, we have a lot of like, you know, novels and stuff to read. But do we also have, like, poetry to read? No. Or do we?

[0:46:09.1] **T5:** We have a collection of short stories.

[0:46:11.3] **T4:** Yeah.

[0:46:12.2] **T5:** I'm not sure if we have poetry.

[0:46:14.9] **T4:** So, we see how much of a role it plays.

[0:46:17.8] **T6:** But maybe we have, like an English colleague who is really into poetry. Because at the Anglistik department. You always meet people who really enjoy poetry and here it could be the same. And then you could ask the person. Did you use it in class and stuff like that? Yeah. You would need to talk to your colleagues about it.

[0:46:35.9] **T5:** There is an exchange of materials so that that works well, I think.

[0:46:39.2] **T4:** Yeah.

[0:46:40.4] **T6:** But poems I would not ask you two.

[0:46:45.4] **T5:** Yeah.

[0:46:47.7] **I:** Do you think the curriculum allows for that flexibility to include creativity whenever you find the time for it? (..)

[0:46:57.4] **T4:** I think the official curriculum. Yes. The unofficial curriculum. No, that's what I would say.

[0:47:07.7] **T6:** So, you mean like you have to finish all the units? That's the unofficial thing?

[0:47:11.3] **T4:** If you want everything that's in there. Not at all. No chance. Yeah, but like the actual curriculum. Yes.

[0:47:17.9] **T6:** Leaves more space.

[0:47:18.7] **T4:** For that.

[0:47:19.2] **T6:** Because it doesn't say we have to finish the book.

[0:47:21.0] **T4:** No, it's not about books at all, you know? And, but it's just so I think the official curriculum. Yes. Mhm. Mhm.

[0:47:30.6] **T6:** Yeah.

[0:47:31.1] **T4:** And that's the curriculum. Right. There is no official one. Yeah.

[0:47:36.1] **I:** So do you feel you feel the pressure from the course book?

[0:47:39.8] **T4:** I kind of do. And I also like to be completely honest. I also feel kind of pressure from, you know, very experienced teachers here who are like, I've done this and this and this. And I'm like. Oh my God, no.

T5: But they have already. Found their way.

[0:47:53.4] **T4:** Yeah. Yes.

[0:47:54.5] **T5:** They know what they want to focus on and what they want to leave out and what's their way.

[0:48:00.2] **T4:** Yeah. And I haven't and that stresses me out a lot.

[0:48:03.6] **T5:** And that's totally fine.

[0:48:04.5] **T6:** But sometimes it's easy then to just rely on the book in your first year. I heard a lot of English teachers who were like, okay, *More!* is the Holy grail because you can really.

[0:48:15.1] **T5:** I think it.

[0:48:15.3] **T4:** I don't think it is. Yeah, that's my problem.

[0:48:17.0] **T4:** I don't think it is, but I'm not the Holy Grail either. Yeah.

[0:48:20.7] **T5:** But you don't, you don't have to be. No, no.

[0:48:23.3] **T6:** And this helps to just focus on the book at first. That's fine.

[0:48:27.0] **T5:** No, that's for your first steps. First years. And then when you get used to it, you used to get used to teaching. You can try and find your own way.

[0:48:35.2] **T4:** Yeah.

[0:48:36.6] **I:** Critically engaging with it. Yeah.

[0:48:38.6] **T5:** Yeah.

[0:48:40.1] **T4:** Yes. Yeah.

[0:48:43.4] **I:** Can you remember any specific poetry in the course book, and have you used it or have you intentionally skipped it?

[0:48:51.8] **T5:** Intentionally skipped it.

[0:48:53.4] **I:** Yeah.

[0:48:53.7] **T5:** Multiple times.

[0:48:54.5] **I:** Okay. A specific one?

[0:48:57.8] **T5:** Almost all of it.

[0:48:58.5] **I:** Okay. Also the grammar chants?

[0:49:01.6] **T5:** Yes. Definitely the grammar. The grammar chants. What is that? What is it supposed to be? I don't know, but that is based on my experience with my classes. They just don't like it. No matter if it's a first grade, second, third or fourth grade lower secondary. They just don't like it.

[0:49:19.8] **I:** So, you've never used it? You've tried it, but never worked?

[0:49:22.1] **T5:** I tried it. Then multiple times I've tried it. Then I wanted them to give me feedback. Like I mentioned earlier, thumb feedback and majority of thumbs were pointing downwards.

[0:49:32.5] **I:** Okay.

[0:49:33.0] **T4:** Yeah.

[0:49:33.8] **T6:** Mhm.

[0:49:34.6] **T5:** Yeah.

[0:49:35.2] **T5:** Yeah. And that's why I decided to skip all of them.

[0:49:38.5] **I:** Do you think when they have to show thumbs, they feel peer pressured?

[0:49:43.2] **T5:** Yeah maybe. Oh, they do. Yeah.

[0:49:46.9] **I:** Mhm. Mhm.

[0:49:48.4] **T5:** But yeah.

[0:49:50.7] **I:** Mhm. Well just

[0:49:54.2] **T5:** Yeah, that's a good point.

[0:49:57.2] **I:** You can make them.

[0:49:58.7] **T5:** I'm self-confident enough and experienced enough.

[0:50:01.5] **I:** Okay.

[0:50:02.2] **T5:** To tell you.

[0:50:04.0] **T4:** The one with experience.

[0:50:04.2] **T5:** Yeah. Here I go. That I know my classes well enough to take that feedback as reliable feedback. Mhm. Yeah. And not too biased by peer pressure.

[0:50:23.6] **I:** Okay.

[0:50:24.0] **T5:** Yeah. I would say that.

[0:50:25.5] **T4:** Mhm.

[0:50:25.8] **T5:** Yeah.

[0:50:26.3] **I:** You can always ask them to close their eyes.

[0:50:28.7] **T5:** Yes, I know.

[0:50:29.9] **I:** Yeah. That would also be. Yeah. Mhm.

[0:50:32.7] **T5:** But they just don't like it.

[0:50:34.0] **I:** Okay.

[0:50:34.6] **I:** Yeah. Closing their eyes?

T5: No no no.

[0:50:38.8] **T5:** Maybe I don't know. Yeah. Poetry.

[0:50:43.8] **T5:** What was I.

[0:50:44.1] **T5:** Saying?

[0:50:45.3] **I:** Poetry?

[0:50:46.2] **T5:** Yeah. (..) It's like. It slipped.

[0:50:50.1] **I:** Anyway. Okay, good. So, do you feel that poetry selection in course books reflect the needs or interests of your students?

[0:50:59.8] **T4:** Nope.

[0:51:00.2] **T5:** Nope. No, not at all.

T6: No.

[0:51:02.1] **T4:** And I remember a specific one that I left out? It was in unit six of *More!* three in the in the conditional in the in the conditional one unit that was about superstitions, and I left that out. And all the others. But I remember that one. Yeah, because it was just because I then took that. I mean, that was conditional two, but I took I took that song and that was just so much better and so much more interesting and that.

[0:51:27.2] **T6:** But I think it's so sad that the course books just give you this, these like bad examples because students get biased. They will be like, okay, poems are not for me because they're so bad in the course book. It's really sad.

[0:51:42.2] **T4:** I think it's also because times have changed, because also with the songs, I remember when I also had the more books when I was a student and we always sang along. We listened to these songs multiple times and, you know, but that were different times. And nowadays nobody's interested in singing along anymore. And but the songs are the same.

[0:52:04.6] **T5:** More or less.

[0:52:05.2] **T4:** Yeah, more or less like ten years ago.

[0:52:06.9] **T5:** You mentioned before maybe that singing along is too childish. Yeah, too childish even for lower secondary.

[0:52:12.5] **T4:** But it wasn't too childish for me when I was.

[0:52:14.4] **T5:** I know.

[0:52:14.9] **T4:** Yeah.

[0:52:15.4] **T5:** For me neither.

[0:52:16.1] **T4:** I think it's just.

[0:52:16.9] **T5:** Yeah. I don't know.

[0:52:17.7] **T4:** Times are changing, I don't know. Yeah.

[0:52:19.7] **T6:** Yeah.

[0:52:20.6] **I:** Mhm. What do you think about incorporating diversity themes into the classroom. Would you maybe do that with poetry?

[0:52:30.3] **T4:** I am reading Billy Elliot now at the moment with the second grade. Yeah. Who are struggling with the word gay a little bit? And I have heard they don't know that. I know, but I have heard them, I've overheard them talking about it. And some of the boys, which, you know, are like, they're coming. Why do we have to read such a gay book? You know, so, and that, I mean, I read it exactly for that reason, because I've heard them misusing that word a lot of times, and I know that some of them have struggled a little bit with, like, their definition of masculinity and everything. Mhm. So yeah, it's difficult and they don't even know yet that there is a gay character. We are reading a gay book because a boy is dancing, and they don't even know that there's an actual gay character in there. So that's gay. And they have to read a gay book, you know. So, I don't know.

[0:53:32.2] **I:** Okay. It's so difficult.

[0:53:33.4] **T4:** Yeah. I mean, not difficult. I think it's that's why I'm doing it, but. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. (...)

[0:53:41.8] **T5:** But yeah, I think you could do it via poetry. Why not? Sure. Mhm.

[0:53:46.2] **I:** It's a different. It's a difficult topic I think to.

[0:53:49.1] **T5:** Yes it.

[0:53:49.4] **T6:** Is. Yes.

[0:53:50.2] **I:** Yeah. To incorporate. Yeah. Yeah. Have you ever thought about taking your students to a poetry slam or spoken word performance? Or is that not something they would be interested in? (..)

[0:54:02.6] **T5:** Maybe that's rather for upper secondary.

[0:54:05.5] **T6:** Yes.

[0:54:06.1] **T4:** Yes.

[0:54:07.0] **T5:** But for them.

[0:54:07.8] **T4:** Yes. Yeah, sure.

[0:54:08.7] **T6:** Yeah.

[0:54:09.2] **T5:** Yeah. Why not?

[0:54:10.5] **T4:** Sure.

[0:54:12.7] **I:** So, to a topic that might be relatable or something like that?

T5: Yeah. Mhm. Yeah. Mhm.

I: In general, about social media, have you ever used digital resources at all in your teaching like Instagram posts or TikToks or anything else, YouTube videos, even YouTube?

[0:54:36.3] **T5:** Yeah. Videos. Yeah.

[0:54:37.8] **T4:** Yeah.

[0:54:38.8] **T6:** Social media.

[0:54:40.2] **T5:** Mhm. No, but not social media per se.

[0:54:42.9] **I:** Is there an intention behind it or are you just haven't thought about it. (..)

[0:54:49.2] **T4:** I mean with TikTok it's my the problem I've already talked about. Yeah. I don't know I don't feel like they are on Instagram anymore.

[0:54:59.2] **T5:** Really.

[0:54:59.6] **T4:** Instagram is not that popular anymore.

[0:55:01.9] **T6:** No.

[0:55:02.4] **T4:** So yeah, I don't know where they even are. TikTok.

[0:55:07.4] **T5:** Instagram. Snapchat. WhatsApp.

[0:55:11.4] **T6:** TikTok.

[0:55:11.8] **T4:** TikTok.

[0:55:12.5] **T4:** Yeah, but Instagram is not that.

[0:55:14.1] **T4:** No, not really popular anymore. I mean, they know it. Yeah, but.

[0:55:19.3] **T6:** Really, I didn't know. Now I feel old. I do.

[0:55:22.6] **T4:** Yeah, but like, students have requested to follow me, and they have like 29 followers and zero posts. So, it's like it's not really popular with them. They just have that account.

[0:55:33.0] **T6:** It's just to have it. Yeah. (..)

[0:55:37.3] **I:** Have you ever had students write their own poems, or do they know that they write poems and for instance, post them on social media platforms, or do you just not know?

T5: I don't know. No. No.

[0:55:48.8] **T4:** No idea.

[0:55:49.3] **I:** No. So even if they do it, they don't share it.

[0:55:52.8] **T6:** I think there is like with the with children are brutal sometimes. So, I think even if students are into poetry they would not post it. That's just my guess.

[0:56:05.9] **T5:** Could be.

[0:56:06.3] **T4:** Yeah.

[0:56:06.5] **T6:** Yeah yeah.

[0:56:08.8] **I:** Mhm. Yeah. Follow up question, even if you would like want to integrate a poem you loved, would you bring it into the classroom or would you feel like it's too intimate because you like it so much?

[0:56:23.0] **T5:** It depends on the class.

[0:56:23.9] **T4:** Yeah.

[0:56:24.5] **T6:** Also depends.

[0:56:25.2] **T5:** Yeah. Yeah, that strongly depends on the class.

[0:56:30.2] **T4:** Yeah.

[0:56:30.8] **T5:** Classes in which I feel comfortable with. Yeah. And I know the kids. Well, I have no problem with bringing in private topics in the topics. That's fine for me, depending on how intimate it is. But, yeah, with classes I just don't relate to or just can't deal with so. Well, I wouldn't do it.

[0:56:52.0] **T6:** Yeah. Yes.

[0:56:52.8] **T4:** yeah.

[0:56:54.1] **I:** So, all agree. Good. Okay. So, I'm now going to show you stimulus material A so that's a page from the course book. The *More!* book three, to be exact.

[0:57:06.3] **T6:** Oh.

[0:57:07.0] **T4:** Okay.

[0:57:07.6] **T5:** Unit six?

[0:57:09.5] **I:** It's unit 13.

[0:57:11.5] **T4:** The dilemma unit. Yeah. The dilemma unit.

[0:57:14.9] **T6:** Oh, I taught it in my class. I know this page. Yeah.

[0:57:20.1] **I:** Go through it and think about if you've already used it. And if not, why you wouldn't use it or why would you use it and how? (41) Any thoughts so far?

[0:58:16.6] **T4:** The students don't know what a blog is. They don't. I had them write blog entries in third grade. Not like the real Matura ones. But there was this blog and people asked me what is blog?

[0:58:30.6] **T5:** Yeah.

[0:58:31.8] **T4:** So that's the first problem.

[0:58:33.3] **T5:** Yeah.

[0:58:33.8] **T4:** What is blog?

[0:58:34.7] **T4:** Yeah, I think nobody deals with blogs anymore.

[0:58:36.9] **T4:** And what is a poetry blog? No, that's.

[0:58:39.7] **I:** Just about the task they would have to do in B. So just write about. I think friendship is one word.

[0:58:47.0] **T5:** Yeah, it's gang, outsider, friend. friendship, dilemma.

[0:58:51.2] **I:** Have you already used it?

[0:58:52.8] **T5:** No no no no I haven't.

[0:58:54.9] **T4:** This is exactly the task kind of task I leave out, to be honest.

[0:58:59.0] **T6:** Yeah.

[0:58:59.6] **T4:** Then I come up with an own, like. Like with my own writing.

[0:59:02.8] **T5:** Yeah. I mean, in general, the task per se is what I would call a low-level task, since you only have the first letter and then you could basically write what you want, make it make sense a little bit. So, every student I would say nearly every student could do that in some kind of way. But then again, the words from the box are I don't know. I would say they are rather negatively. Negatively connoted. The correct term connoted. Connotative connotative. Thanks. like gang outsider dilemma and that link to nerd, I don't know.

[0:59:41.7] **T4:** Yeah.

[0:59:42.3] **T5:** Maybe that's just.

[0:59:43.3] **I:** What you use it with other words that you come up with yourself. Do you think it's a creative way?

[0:59:47.8] **T5:** maybe.

[0:59:50.5] **T4:** I mean, I think you could provide your own words, but then you could say, and you don't have to use them like these are. That's kind of a help for students who are maybe not that creative, but yeah, they are for sure. There are students who are creative on their own. So, you maybe you don't want to force them to use the help. They can use help and inspiration, but they don't have to, I would say. (..) Yeah.

[1:00:20.1] **I:** T6, what do you think?

[1:00:22.2] **T6:** I'm having troubles with the word nerd. I don't like it. Yeah, I think it's just something you don't say anymore and it's really something bad, I have to say. So, I think I wouldn't promote it in a student book.

[1:00:39.1] **T5:** That's a good point.

[1:00:40.2] **T4:** yeah. (..)

[1:00:43.3] **T4:** That's a problem with the *More!* books because they're just a bit outdated.

[1:00:47.4] **T5:** Yeah. Yeah.

[1:00:48.3] **T4:** But like next year.

[1:00:49.9] **T5:** Yeah. I mean that's the old one right.

[1:00:51.5] **T4:** Yeah. So maybe.

[1:00:52.3] **T5:** Yeah. But the new ones aren't that much better, right? I don't know.

[1:00:56.5] **T4:** Yeah. Yeah. Right. But maybe. Maybe the nerd poem won't be in there anymore.

[1:01:01.0] **T5:** I don't know.

[1:01:01.7] **T4:** We could have a look. Because it's there. Right?

[1:01:04.3] **I:** But that sort of activity for them in general? Yeah. Maybe also in class as an introduction to something?

[1:01:11.8] **T5:** Yeah. You could do that in class.

[1:01:13.4] **T4:** Yeah.

[1:01:13.7] **I:** An introduction to a new topic. Maybe even with the word friendship because it's quite long. So maybe they have to think about something.

T4: Yeah. Yeah. Mhm.

[1:01:21.5] **T5:** Yeah, that would work. Yeah.

[1:01:24.4] **I:** Mhm. Okay. Any additional thoughts on that?

[1:01:28.1] **T6:** I would if you would do it with friendship I maybe would start with like a mind map with the word friendship. And then, then they have like some, I don't know ideas of what they could write and vocabulary. Yeah.

[1:01:40.7] **T4:** I mean they had the friendship unit before this unit, so they probably have. Yeah. That's unit seven right. So, they have a lot of like also friendship.

[1:01:49.5] **T5:** Yeah.

[1:01:49.9] **T4:** Vocabulary and stuff like that. Which is good.

[1:01:52.7] **T6:** Yeah, sure.

[1:01:54.2] **T4:** Yeah yeah yeah yeah yeah.

[1:01:57.0] **I:** Okay, good.

[1:01:58.0] **I:** Perfect.

[1:01:58.9] **T5:** Next.

[1:01:59.6] **I:** Yep. Next. Stimulus material B which is a bit longer, so I will give you more time. It's a poem from a poetry book from Roger McGough. I don't know if you know it.

[1:02:12.8] **T4:** How is it called?

[1:02:13.8] **I:** Roger McGough.

[1:02:15.1] **T4:** Go.

[1:02:15.8] **I:** Okay. (...) I will just leave you with it for a few seconds or minutes.

[1:02:22.8] **T4:** This is conditional two. It's good. (19) Mhm.

[1:02:45.7] **I:** Would you like to see something like this in the course book. Is that more of what you think is a good poem to use? (4)

[1:02:59.6] **T4:** I don't think so. No, I don't think so. My problem is this is conditional two structure. So, you cannot give this to first graders. I mean, you can, but then the question is why? What's going on.

[1:03:10.9] **T5:** What do you want to focus on? Yeah.

[1:03:13.1] **T4:** But I mean, even if you're not focusing on it, some of them might ask.

[1:03:16.6] **T5:** Yeah, sure.

[1:03:17.4] **T4:** What's going on here? You know, and then you have kind of a I mean, you can do it for this and for like third graders.

[1:03:27.5] **T5:** It's too childish.

[1:03:29.0] **T4:** Yeah.

[1:03:29.4] **T6:** Yeah.

[1:03:30.2] **T4:** So, I think you know what I mean. The poem itself is not bad, and I think it's great. You know, there's a structure in there, there's vocabulary in there.

T6: It's sweet!

T4: It's the adjectives. It's and it's animals. It's a grammatical structure, which is great, but it does not fit. Do you know what I mean? Or you or you do the structure in first grade, but I think it would be a bit too much. Yeah, sure. To do that, right?

[1:03:54.1] **T5:** Yeah. Also, you would have to do a pre poetry exercise focusing on all the words. Yeah. Prickly.

[1:04:02.7] **T4:** Oh yes.

[1:04:04.2] **T6:** They're not as important to, to know, I think.

[1:04:07.3] **T5:** Yeah, that's a good point. Yeah. So, I mean.

[1:04:10.2] **T6:** There are more important words.

[1:04:11.3] **T5:** Yeah. What would you expect. What do you want to do with it. What do you expect to be the outcome.

[1:04:16.2] **T6:** Mhm.

[1:04:16.8] **T4:** Yeah.

[1:04:17.1] **T5:** What do you want them to do. Mhm.

[1:04:20.7] **I:** Well in terms of adjectives or animals. Yeah. That's second grade.

[1:04:25.2] **T5:** Yeah. That would work.

[1:04:26.6] **I:** Yeah.

[1:04:27.8] **T4:** In first grade.

[1:04:28.5] **T6:** Yeah.

[1:04:29.6] **T6:** Animals. Yeah.

[1:04:30.5] **T4:** Another problem I think even better. I think in second grade animals might be. It might be a little bit too late. Maybe in second grade. Right. I mean, my second grade was not to. Yeah. No, they I mean, it was okay, but they weren't like. And I was in [colleague's] 1M two years ago and she did animals and adjectives in first grade because 2M they skipped kind of a year, blah blah blah. And they were so into it in first grade. They were so into that animal topic. That was crazy. So, I think the topic of animals would be better for first grade actually. Right. Yeah.

[1:05:12.0] **I:** Mhm. So is there an activity that comes to mind for using it. Or would you, would you just not use it because it doesn't really fit into any of the topics?

[1:05:19.9] **T5:** I mean you could just exchange or swap all the animals.

[1:05:25.4] **T4:** Mm mm. Mhm.

[1:05:27.0] **T5:** Like hippos could swing from tree to tree. Just swap that with whatever comes to the students' minds.

[1:05:32.4] **T6:** Yeah.

[1:05:32.6] **I:** So, focusing on the creativity aspect.

[1:05:34.7] **T6:** Yeah.

[1:05:35.1] **T4:** So maybe drawing for the creative ones. Drawing.

[1:05:38.4] **T5:** Okay. Yeah.

[1:05:39.4] **T4:** Drawing crocodiles.

[1:05:41.0] **T6:** Yeah.

[1:05:41.6] **T4:** Or whatever. Birds I don't know.

[1:05:44.7] **T6:** Yeah.

[1:05:45.1] **T5:** Yeah, sure.

[1:05:46.0] **T6:** Maybe. That's sweet.

[1:05:47.0] **T6:** I like that.

[1:05:47.9] **I:** That's a good idea. Yeah.

[1:05:49.3] **I:** So, one reads it and the other one tries to draw it, for example.

[1:05:53.3] **T5:** Yeah, that would be possible. Yeah.

[1:05:56.8] **I:** Mhm. Mhm. Mhm. Okay. Any additional thoughts or that's it.

[1:06:02.9] **T5:** No.

[1:06:03.7] **I:** No. Okay. Good. So, let's come to the wrap up question. Thank you. What would you wish for most for your poetry teaching in the future. Would you like to include it more or is it not something you would want to integrate? (6)

[1:06:29.1] **T4:** I think I'm more motivated now.

[1:06:31.4] **T6:** Yes.

[1:06:31.9] **T4:** To give it a try, not with that kind of poem, but with something students can work with.

T6: That fosters creativity.

[1:06:39.4] **T4:** Yeah. Especially yeah yeah yeah yeah.

T6: And maybe ask really ask some other teachers, like if they have something for inspiration because we are not really into the topic, but I think we would I don't know, some students would be really happy about a topic like that.

[1:06:57.5] **T5:** Yeah.

[1:06:59.4] **T4:** I do think it might be a good FlipiK task and maybe an option like optional task where they can choose so they don't have to do it. There's another option where you.

[1:07:10.7] **T6:** Write a song.

[1:07:11.6] **T4:** Yeah, but for the ones who want to do it, they have an option like that. I think that could be really nice. Yeah.

[1:07:18.4] **T5:** Not forcing them.

[1:07:19.8] **T5:** Yeah.

[1:07:20.3] **T4:** Yeah.

[1:07:21.2] **I:** So, it's also about self-motivation.

[1:07:23.3] **T5:** Yeah, it is.

[1:07:24.5] **T5:** Yeah. Mhm.

[1:07:25.9] **I:** Mhm. Last question. Is there an anecdote from your years of experience and teaching in regards to teaching literature or poetry that comes to mind. It can be something funny or a creative one. (12)

[1:07:55.3] **T5:** No no no not really. No. It's mostly about their facial expressions. When you come into class with a staple of books like OMG no!

[1:08:12.0] **T4:** Yeah.

[1:08:12.8] **I:** Not motivated.

[1:08:15.4] **T5:** Those who are motivated, I think. They don't show it.

[1:08:18.6] **T4:** Yeah.

[1:08:19.1] **T5:** They don't show it as much.

[1:08:20.2] **T6:** Not cool.

[1:08:20.9] **T5:** yeah.

[1:08:22.0] **T5:** That's a.

[1:08:22.4] **T5:** Really big. Problem with peer pressure. yeah. They wouldn't show it. And those who are annoyed, they will show it. Definitely.

[1:08:29.2] **T6:** Yeah.

[1:08:29.6] **T5:** Yeah. They will let you know.

[1:08:31.4] **T4:** Yeah.

[1:08:32.0] **I:** Yeah.

[1:08:32.5] **T4:** Although, like, I gave my third grade their books and some of them started to read it. And after class, after they've read like 2 or 3 chapters. They told me, you know, the book is not too it's not so bad.

[1:08:46.3] **T5:** Yeah.

[1:08:46.9] **T4:** It's okay. Yeah. Okay, great.

[1:08:49.5] **T5:** That's interesting. Yeah. The first the first reaction is always like being annoyed or whatever. Yeah. And then when they start realizing the book's interesting, maybe your exercises are creative. Interesting, funny. Oh, yeah. Let's go for it. Let's read that book.

[1:09:04.8] **T4:** Yeah.

[1:09:05.7] **T5:** Let's do some of the exercises. So.

[1:09:07.6] **T5:** But yeah.

[1:09:08.5] **T4:** I gave them the books and one of them immediately, like I had them guess, I gave them the 39 steps. I had them guess, you know, why. Where do you think they are, blah, blah blah. And everybody was pretty into that. And then one student was in there like reading the last page, you know.

[1:09:25.9] **T5:** No.

[1:09:26.2] **T4:** Yes.

[1:09:27.2] **T6:** Oh.

[1:09:27.5] **T4:** And then another student noticed it and everybody like, called him out and said, like you are like 'ehrenlos'. And you know, that was really like it was just, you know. So, they took that seriously. You know, they were. Yeah. And he immediately stopped. So yeah, that was important. Mhm. Mhm.

[1:09:47.5] **I:** Any additional things that come to mind or do you want to ask me something? (4)

[1:09:56.3] **T6:** Mhm.

[1:09:56.8] **T4:** Do you like poetry?

[1:09:58.4] **I:** Yes, I do. I also like to integrate it into. Mhm. Like when I teach also in PuP because that's my second subject but I wouldn't say that my soul burns for it like you said.

[1:10:18.7] **T5:** Yeah.

[1:10:20.0] **I:** Just always trying to find creative ways to teach that are fun for myself and also for the students. Yeah.

[1:10:26.1] **T5:** I think that's so important.

[1:10:27.6] **T4:** Mhm.

[1:10:27.9] **T6:** Yeah.

[1:10:29.2] **I:** Okay. So, I'll stop the recording. Thank you.

T5: You're welcome.

[1:10:34.9]

C3: Focus Group 3

I: And this one's also recording. All right. So we've already said hello. let's start with the welcome and introduction.

[0:00:13.1] **T7:** And my name is T7. I teach at [school in Vienna]. And I've worked here for three years, so this is my third year. I'm currently or I've only taught the lower- secondary, so I've never taught a upper - secondary. And we use, the *More!* books. Exactly. I also teach French, but mainly English. (..) That's basically it.

[0:00:46.0] **I:** Yeah.

[0:00:46.7] **T8:** Okay. my name is T8, and I also teach at [school in Vienna]. I am in my first year of teaching, so I have taught zero years, I guess. And I only teach English, and I've used the *More!* books and the *Way to Go* books. So also upper secondary.

I: Okay, perfect.

[0:01:06.2] **T9:** My name is T9. So I've been teaching for, I think this is my third year, and I've been teaching lower secondary and upper secondary using both the *More!* and the *Way to Go* books. Mhm. I'm also a teacher for geography and economics.

[0:01:22.8] **I:** Okay. Perfect. Let's get started with one introductory question at first. So do you use any literature in your teaching in general? (...)

[0:01:36.0] **T7:** well, I'm currently reading a graphic novel with my, class ah with my third graders, and I've once read, Peter Pan, I think, in second grade. But Peter Pan was mostly like, read it by yourself. And then we just discuss it, and now I, I'm really doing a project, with this graphic novel. Exactly. And otherwise, no. (..)

[0:02:01.2] **T9:** I think it's vital for teaching English. We are also discussing literature. At least one book per year, at best one per semester. But it can be tricky due to time constraints. But yeah, I'm also often using short stories, depending on the time of the year. Like for example during Christmas or Halloween. So, I'm very fond of using those. And I think there's there's an inherent connection as an English language teacher that they're also very fond of literature. Right? Hopefully.

[0:02:35.7] **T7:** True. Very true.

I: Do you have an example for a book that you've read with one of your classes?

[0:02:41.5] **T9:** So, we've been discussing *One of Us Is Lying* in my fourth grade, and we have also read, the *Dead Poets Society* this year in the upper secondary.

[0:02:51.9] **I:** And you've prepared all the resources and materials yourself?

[0:02:54.9] **T9:** Yeah. Pretty much. Also been basing the discussion of society on things that I still have from my, time as a student myself, so ah reusing those.

[0:03:06.9] **I:** Okay, perfect.

[0:03:08.4] **T8:** I'm also, I'm actually currently reading my first book with a class, and it's, *The Hate U Give* or *Thug* by Angie Thomas. And I also create everything myself, or have already created, worksheets in my studies, so I already did a project on that book.

[0:03:26.4] **I:** Mhm.

[0:03:27.1] **T8:** Yes, but it's my very first one.

[0:03:29.0] **I:** And how is it going so far?

[0:03:32.1] **T8:** Good for those that are reading it. Which is not all of them unfortunately. Quite obviously so I think, yes.

[0:03:41.6] **I:** Because they're not interested in it?

[0:03:44.3] **T8:** I think they do find the topic interesting because it's quite political and they want to talk about politics, but I think they don't really. (..) Think of it as. (...) I think a lot of them are trying to do it with ChatGPT, and it's not working out for them, to be honest. And I think a lot of them, some of them don't really take homework that seriously.

[0:04:10.2] **I:** Okay.

[0:04:10.9] **T8:** And especially if it's a reading one where they don't have to hand in things.

[0:04:15.3] **I:** So they don't see the joy in it?

T8: No. Half of them and the other half is liking it.

[0:04:22.7] **I:** Okay. Perfect. Mhm. Do you also sometimes teach poems or poetry at all? (..)

[0:04:31.4] **T9:** Actually, yes. I've put a huge emphasis on my, on poems during the teaching of my fifth grade, I think last year because I had a lot of lessons that started at 8 a.m. and we usually have a ritual where we like, kind of just give them some food for thought for the day and I often have been using some poems from classics that I think they should have read in school and, you know, based some discussions around those. So 5 to 10 minutes at the start of the day.

[0:05:05.0] **I:** Do you have an example of one?

[0:05:06.6] **T9:** Just the classics, *Ozymandias* and, I don't know anything Robert Frost has written Walt Whitman, those kinds of things.

[0:05:15.5] **I:** And you read it together, or you let them read themselves?

[0:05:19.4] **T9:** So we usually do a read through first together. And, depending on the type of poem, we often use a simplified version using modern English, for example. Especially with Shakespeare, it can be tricky for the students. Yeah.

[0:05:35.4] **I:** Yeah. Okay. Perfect. And the others?

[0:05:39.9] **T7:** I've done it once with your old class. Which one was it? 2. For me, it was 2C I think. So it's now 4C probably. And I've used I've or somebody showed me the tool Fobizz, which is a kind of an online tool where you can create online worksheets. And I prepared a worksheet for them. What is poetry? And gave them an example of, you know, roses are blue violets are blah blah blah. And then they had to write one by themselves and send it to me. And then I showed it on a beamer. Some were really good because it's a really good class. Like their level is amazing. And some of them were, you know, kind of mean and violent and aggressive, but in general it was fun. Since then, I haven't really

actively introduced poetry. But we do have poetry or poetry. We have short poems in the *More!* book, I think. Is that true?

[0:06:38.1] **T9:** Yeah, lots of rhymes.

[0:06:39.5] **T7:** Exactly. Rhymes. Yeah. So I think something with a crocodile or something where it's I don't know. Yeah, I know so in the book, yeah, there's a bunch of poems in the book and there I actively use them. But as I said, I've never taught upper secondary. So maybe I would introduce it then, but yeah.

[0:07:00.8] **I:** So do you think that upper secondary is more suited for poetry teaching?

[0:07:04.6] **T7:** No, not at all, actually, but I feel and I don't know, because I haven't taught in the upper secondary, but I feel that the lower secondary books are quite detailed. And in upper secondary, I've got the feeling that you could have more time for projects. Is that true or not? I don't know, because I feel, for example, in third grade I have more time to do a book project than more time than in the first and the second grade, because there you have so much basic grammar that you don't really find a lot of time to do other things, but I'm not sure if that's correct. That's just my hypothesis. (..)

[0:07:45.0] **T8:** I'm not sure if I should answer you or you now? Okay. I'm not. Except for the *More!* books. Not really incorporate any poetry. Except for. Would you count a rap by Eminem?

I: Sure.

T8: Okay. Then I have, it was the rap by Eminem about P.Diddy, and we analysed that together.

[0:08:06.5] **I:** Okay.

[0:08:07.4] **T8:** Yes. And they really enjoyed it because it was very much a topic at the time, and they thought it was quite fascinating. And I kind of wanted to spark their love for English with it.

[0:08:18.1] **T7:** Was it I'll Be Missing You?

[0:08:19.4] **T8:** No, it was the one where he criticises P.Diddy.

T7: Oh okay. Yeah.

[0:08:25.0] **I:** Mhm. Yeah. So it was just a real life topic that you brought into the classroom?

[0:08:30.2] **T8:** Yes. And then we went on from that to critical thinking. What are fake news. What's a conspiracy theory. Kind of naturally because they were bringing up all of these conspiracy theories. And I was like well, but how do you. Where did you get that information from? What's your source? And then. Yeah.

[0:08:49.4] **I:** Which grade was that?

[0:08:50.9] **T8:** Fifth.

[0:08:51.7] **I:** Okay.

[0:08:52.6] **T8:** Which is maybe I don't know, I think it was fine because they were very much interested in the topic, and they were very aware of it through their use of social media. But I think you have to evaluate which fifth grade it's with, because mine's very, very, (5) I can only think of the German word "leistungsstark".

[0:09:19.7] **I:** Yeah. More advanced?

T8: Yeah. More advanced. Yeah.

[0:09:22.7] **T8:** I have a course right now. And she. And she says not to use good or bad. So, I'm now trying to avoid that. Mhm. High. Highly. Very proficient. Let's do that one. Yeah.

[0:09:34.8] **T7:** But we also have one colleague who she, as you said we have to give them like food for thought or prayer or something. And she uses like small rhymes. So for example, she would enter the classroom and say, why be moody if you can shake your booty and stuff like that, right? She always has, like those great little small rhymes that she writes on the board. And, and I think that's very cute. It's not maybe not really poetry, but it's always some catchy line, you know. Yeah.

[0:10:00.9] **I:** Yeah. At least it gets them to laugh.

[0:10:02.4] **T7:** Exactly. It's brighten their day and. Yeah.

[0:10:05.8] **I:** Mhm. Okay. Any additional thoughts on that?

[0:10:10.6] **T9:** I certainly think regarding your question that there's a place for poetry or anything of the sort in the lower secondary because lots of children's books, for example, also use rhyme schemes and stuff. But for me personally, for my teaching, I think the using authentic poems in a more advanced setting, like in the upper secondary, is just more engaging, at least for myself. Also, I have to admit, but also, opens up a lot more possibilities with the students. So yeah, that's why they have found their way in my teaching. But only in the upper secondary. Yeah.

[0:10:45.8] **I:** Okay. (..) what do you think can your students learn with poetry or what can you teach with it? (..)

T7: A lot.

[0:10:57.3] **T8:** Right?

[0:10:58.2] **T7:** A lot. Reading between the lines, for one. But also grammar. Actually, if you wanted to, pronunciation, different, as you said, as a critical thinking. Critical thinking. Exactly. I don't know.

[0:11:18.3] **T9:** Presentation skills maybe. Or maybe just like how they present a poem, they're not just reading it, but they emphasise certain parts of the language. And they also maybe they get a I mean, best case scenario, they get a feeling for the kind of power or ability of language to convey certain emotions or emphasise or stress certain words or, I don't know, neglect others and I don't know just a feeling for how to present it.

I: Yeah, perform it?

[0:11:43.6] **T9:** That's perfect, yeah. Perform it.

[0:11:46.0] **T7:** But also you could, like, teach different social aspects. I guess if you take a poem from, I don't know, Shakespeare or I don't know that you teach them. Well, I don't know different authors or whether male voices are there or I don't know. Right.

[0:12:06.4] **T8:** Social aspect.

[0:12:07.8] **T9:** Historical aspect.

[0:12:08.9] **I:** Yeah. Mhm.

[0:12:11.1] **T9:** Yeah. They were quite surprised when we did "Shall I Compare Thee To A Summer's Day". And it's about a man. So that kind of was interesting for them. And it also opened up a few other discussions then.

[0:12:23.4] **I:** Yeah. If they're willing to discuss then that's perfect. Yeah.

[0:12:28.4] **T9:** I'm very lucky with this class.

[0:12:31.0] **I:** Yeah. What feelings or emotions come to your mind when you think about teaching poetry? (15)

[0:12:52.4] **T7:** I think it depends on the class you're thinking of, right? I would have classes where I would never or not never, but where I would be opposed to it, including poetry. And then when I think of one particular class, I have a very happy feeling and thinking of a great lesson. But then in other classes I would get probably get frustrated because there is.

[0:13:14.1] **T9:** No universal feeling attached to that. Yeah.

[0:13:17.9] **T8:** And I think sometimes I'm also a bit hesitant because I want to do the poetry justice. I don't know, sometimes I'm like, do I know enough about this?

[0:13:29.0] **I:** Mhm.

[0:13:30.1] **T8:** Yeah I don't know.

[0:13:32.0] **I:** In terms also of if they're having questions about the poem itself?

[0:13:37.5] **T8:** Yes. Oh, if I'm what I'm conveying is what the poem is trying to convey. Yeah.

[0:13:42.5] **I:** Mhm. Without misunderstanding the topic?

T8: Yeah!

I: Mhm. Okay. How would you define poetry? So as you said it can also be a rap. Right. Mhm. What else could it be for you?

[0:13:54.7] **T9:** I think for me it's anything artistic you do with the language. Like you can really stress the, the whole thing but I don't know, it doesn't even have to have rhymes. Or you could also include things like a haiku. I mean that's also poetry. So. Yeah. Yeah.

[0:14:09.9] **T7:** Mm. I agree. Yes. yeah.

[0:14:15.4] **I:** What do you think about Grammar chants like in the *More!* book, like you mentioned T7. Also poetry?

[0:14:21.7] **T8:** Yes.

[0:14:22.9] **I:** Yeah.

[0:14:23.5] **T8:** I think they are. I think they're very engaging, and I think they're. I think the students like knowing that they can understand a song or, you know, engage in a more creative way of using language, even at a very low level. So I would I would say yes.

[0:14:41.7] **T9:** I don't know. I of course, yeah, sure, if we have a broad definition, but I personally would disagree. I think a chant is a chant and poetry is poetry. Yeah.

[0:14:52.6] **I:** Yeah that's fine.

[0:14:54.2] **T7:** Yeah, I would agree with T9 as well. I wouldn't really see it as, as as poetry per se, but maybe also because I kind of think about what the goal was when they wrote this poem. And that's probably not to talk about the content or something, but rather to stress the importance of pronouncing something in a certain way or remembering the words or something. So, yeah, but I mean, I guess poetry is a very broad, broad notion. And, and, I mean, you could argue that almost everything could be poetry or I don't know. No. Yeah and I think also because, I mean, the grammar chants, we don't introduce

them as something very poetic. We don't introduce them. Now we're going to do something like or I don't know, just do it. Yeah yeah yeah.

[0:15:47.5] **T9:** Just discuss it.

[0:15:48.2] **T7:** Yeah.

[0:15:48.9] **I:** Do you all use them when they're in the *More!* book or do you skip it sometimes?

[0:15:54.9] **T8:** Depends.

[0:15:56.0] **T9:** If you don't forget about them then we use them. But it's not like something I'm looking forward to or I have to. Yeah. Does that make sense.

[0:16:04.0] **T7:** Yeah. Yeah.

[0:16:07.1] **T9:** I mean, I'm teaching pronunciation by repeating words together, but yeah.

[0:16:12.2] **T7:** I, I, I, I actually like them quite a lot. I think in the first grade there's one and we did it, I don't know, six times I think. And then we were like and now the boys and now the girls. And it was something like, I can da da da da da. And it had a good beat. So it was a really fun lesson. And in the end they could do it by heart. And we just, you know, and now everyone whose birthday is in March. Yeah. It was really fun. Yeah. So I think yeah.

[0:16:39.8] **T8:** I did not want to do them at first, but you encouraged me to and I love it now.

[0:16:43.9] **T9:** The kids love it.

[0:16:44.6] **T8:** Yeah! The kids love it.

[0:16:45.2] **T7:** Love it.

[0:16:46.0] **T9:** Students they're really fond of them.

[0:16:49.3] **T8:** I thought they would find them silly. And then I played it and they loved it. And now I play them. We have a little dance.

[0:16:57.5] **I:** Perfect. when you're teaching poetry, do you focus more on the reading or writing part or also sometimes on performing? (4)

[0:17:12.2] **T9:** Writing. In what sense? Like.

[0:17:14.2] **I:** Like having the students write a poem themselves. (4)

[0:17:21.7] **T7:** I mean, I just have this one example where we used Fobizz and there the emphasis was on writing. But then when students read something, for example, a grammar chant, or if they read, I don't know, then I then I try to get them to, you know, don't just read it like da da da da da, but to kind of convey a feeling while reading it or. Yeah. Yeah.

[0:17:46.5] **T9:** I think I'd have to order it like reading, writing, then performing, because the performing part, it can be a bit silly to be honest. I don't know, not everybody feels the the way poems are often presented. Yeah. Myself included. I'm not really fond of that most of the time. But. So yeah, there's not not really an emphasis on that. We might listen to some professional recording so they have an idea of what it's about, but I can't I don't want to spend time or force them to, to be able to present the poem in a specific way. I think that's the that's the idea behind it for me. Yeah.

[0:18:27.3] **I:** Yeah. Anything you'd like to add?

[0:18:31.0] **T8:** I might, I've only read poems with them. Not out loud and not. Not in a special way or written anything. So.

[0:18:40.2] **I:** And if you've read a poem with them, do you think they sometimes found it confusing?

[0:18:45.7] **T9:** Oh, yeah.

[0:18:46.3] **I:** Did they need a lot of scaffolding from you as a teacher? (..)

[0:18:52.7] **T9:** Yeah, 100%. Yeah. For sure. In the beginning, I was a bit too ambitious, I guess that they'd come up with certain suitable interpretations or stuff or how. How do you. I don't know, apparently, they never had poetry before, and they were a bit overwhelmed in how they should approach the whole thing but now we have established a system, and it works fine, but still, especially at the Shakespearean English or stuff that's still, like pretty overwhelming and you can't really work with that. You can't even. I don't think you should expect them to be able to work with that. And then you have the simplified version and it kind of loses something. So I don't know.

[0:19:36.7] **I:** Mhm.

[0:19:37.3] **T9:** So yeah I think a lot of scaffolding is required to make, to make sense of the whole thing, why you're even using it and then how they should be able to I don't know draw any benefit from it.

[0:19:49.7] **I:** Yeah.

[0:19:50.7] **T8:** Mhm.

[0:19:51.7] **T8:** Mhm. I'll agree.

I: Yeah. Mhm. If you don't use poetry that much do you use other creative texts or song lyrics or short stories? If you feel like they fit into the curriculum or what you're doing your topic, I think you said you're using short stories sometimes. Mhm.

[0:20:12.0] **T9:** Yeah. We did, I don't know. From the top of my head we had one, the Tell-Tale heart, for example, or I don't know, also just, I mean it's always the classics or the basic ones, but I think they're important. And yeah, I don't know. What about you guys? Yeah. (..)

[0:20:33.3] **T7:** Creative texts?

[0:20:35.5] **I:** Mhm.

[0:20:37.1] **T7:** (5) No not really I think. No, no it's more the other way around. Maybe that if you have a text or for example, we were at the theatre with our classes that you have the script for example, and then you would, I showed them for example, what Disney version we watched when we were young and we had a look at, you know, the Robin Hood Disney saga or something. So it's more like showing them other things about it.

I: Adaptations?

T7: Adaptations. Yes, but not really texts. Not so much actually.

[0:21:12.2] **I:** Or also like songs or song lyrics or songs?

[0:21:15.3] **T7:** We use a lot of songs, yes, but not really text.

[0:21:21.6] **T8:** I mean, we analysed the book and we try to analyse, different, different, mechanisms used to convey things or like foreshadowing and things like that. But other than that, no, I have, I know

some songs I want to use, but I've been keeping them sort of for the end of the year. Does that make sense?

[0:21:44.4] **I:** Yeah. Makes sense. Do you use the songs and short stories in the course book, or do you also sometimes skip those?

T8: I skip.

[0:21:54.6] **T7:** Skip, skip.

[0:21:55.8] **T9:** What? The songs?

[0:21:57.6] **I:** The songs and or the short stories in the course book.

[0:22:00.9] **T8:** I don't skip the song. Always the songs. I, I use some of the songs because my, my students like the songs, but the literature part in the upper secondary, I have skipped.

[0:22:11.2] **T7:** I only, I only, for example, the class, this class class 2A I know that they like they they're not. They don't like the songs too much. And then I skip them. Sometimes in other classes. I know they live for the songs and we celebrate the songs, but in this particular class I'm like, no, because they're just sitting there staring at me and like, yeah.

[0:22:36.3] **T9:** Never skipped a single one. (...)

[0:22:41.0] **T9:** Not, not. I'm not intending on doing that. No.

[0:22:44.9] **I:** Okay.

[0:22:45.8] **T8:** Dead serious.

I: A fan.

[0:22:47.5] **T9:** Okay, four minutes of the lesson check. I'm just kidding. But they love it.

[0:22:55.2] **I:** Yeah.

[0:22:56.8] **T7:** And I mean, I do also see the educational value because, I mean, let's face it, the songs usually already contain, like, the vocabulary that either the unit is going to be about or they summarise the unit in a certain way. They do. They are good. Yeah, they are good. Oh, sorry, I thought you said they don't. Yeah.

[0:23:16.1] **T8:** And what I would like to add is that we have spoken about the songs in our teachers room, and some of the teachers are a little bit older than us. They know, their songs from their time at school by heart to this day, and they started singing them. So the songs stick maybe more than other things.

[0:23:35.6] **T7:** Yeah, I want more, more, more. That one stick.

[0:23:40.9] **I:** Yeah.

[0:23:42.8] **T9:** Trojans.

[0:23:45.0] **T8:** Last one. Unit ten is really good. It's like a sort of country.

[0:23:49.0] **T9:** Jolly the horse.

[0:23:50.0] **T7:** Jolly the horse. Class 2B wanted to sing that song every lesson for a month.

[0:23:55.2] **T8:** It's so good.

[0:23:55.9] **T7:** I had to promise them that we could end the lesson like that for one month.

[0:24:00.1] **I:** Mhm.

[0:24:01.1] **T7:** Jolly don't ride horses.

[0:24:04.3] **I:** Is that second grade?

T8: That's first.

[0:24:07.2] **T7:** Ah. Is it first?

[0:24:08.1] **T9:** I thought it was second grade.

[0:24:09.0] **T8:** First grade.

[0:24:09.8] **T7:** And it's an American. Usually the songs are in. It's an American song, right? American English?

[0:24:15.9] **T8:** Yes. It's very western. Country.

[0:24:19.2] **T9:** The horses or loading a shotgun and stuff. I don't know.

[0:24:23.7] **I:** Okay.

[0:24:25.2] **T8:** It's very strange.

[0:24:26.1] **I:** Interesting for a first grade. Okay. How would you say your students usually react to poetry? Do they enjoy it? Or do they also sometimes struggle or are apprehensive? (...)

[0:24:44.4] **T9:** I think the first time they were curious, I think second, third and fourth, they were like, ah, by now I think they, they, they get it because I'm very careful with what I present them. So and I think the students that are always apprehensive to anything we do, then we're not gonna catch them. But the others are. They're fine with that. I mean, I also do like a regular kind of feedback that they should give me or provide, and poems have never been on the surprisingly never been a complaint.

I: Perfect. Okay. Mhm.

[0:25:26.7] **T7:** I can't really say something because I haven't used poetry per se in my teaching, so. (..)

[0:25:34.4] **T8:** Well I did the rap and they loved it and they loved the songs.

[0:25:39.9] **I:** Yeah.

[0:25:41.1] **T8:** That's my extent of poetry so. Yeah.

[0:25:44.2] **I:** So but if they enjoyed your encouraged more that you use it again or that you introduce it again. Yes. Yeah. That's the same with you? Yeah.

[0:25:52.6] **T9:** Yeah.

[0:25:52.8] **T8:** Of course.

[0:25:53.5] **T9:** And I, I wouldn't want to torture them with poetry if they don't want to hear it.

[0:25:58.1] **T8:** Yeah I've noticed. So I taught seventh grade for half a year and I don't anymore. But I did notice that there was more literature parts in that book. But my then in the fifth year that I'm teaching and but my. The seventh grade I had was not very proficient. So that's why I skipped them. But if with my more proficient class, I probably wouldn't. It again, just depends on the proficiency, I guess.

[0:26:28.1] **I:** Okay. What was your experience with poetry as a student? So be it in English or in German? Just in general. Nothing?

[0:26:38.8] **T8:** School? None. Mhm.

[0:26:40.8] **T8:** I went to a BHS.

[0:26:42.5] **I:** Mhm.

[0:26:43.6] **T8:** But none.

[0:26:45.8] **I:** Okay. And in your studies in university?

[0:26:48.9] **T7:** I mean at STEOP we had poetry right?

[0:26:54.3] **T8:** I guess I didn't, but I did with in, in the History of Literatures in English we had poetry.

[0:27:00.3] **T9:** Yeah.

[0:27:00.7] **T8:** True. The daffodils.

[0:27:03.1] **T9:** Yeah. I hated poetry in school. Boring. Especially in German. Was so bad. Like the rhyme scheme and stuff. Never, never understood the whole thing. But now I just give them the rhyme scheme. Cause I don't think. Why should they analyse the rhyme scheme for me? It doesn't make sense in my teaching.

[0:27:23.7] **I:** Like it's not about that for you.

[0:27:25.7] **T9:** Who's using it? No, but the content is what I'm after. Yeah. So I think that makes the whole thing a lot more bearable in my case.

[0:27:36.1] **I:** But it's interesting that you didn't distance yourself from it because of that experience.

[0:27:41.6] **T9:** Just the way in which I approach it. Yeah, maybe. Yeah, that has changed.

[0:27:48.3] **T7:** I actually don't remember if we had poetry. I think maybe I mean, in English, probably not so much in German, probably, yes. But I wouldn't remember that much actually. So I guess it wasn't great, but it wasn't super bad either. But yeah.

[0:28:02.8] **T8:** I remember that we did in German, in lower secondary. Yeah, we had to learn, a poem by heart. And I thought it was an awful lot of work. It was about how to behave.

T7: Oh. Okay. (..)

T8: "Wenn ich rede, bist du still." And so on. Like.

[0:28:24.6] **I:** Oh.

[0:28:25.5] **T8:** Yeah, I don't know. And everyone had to study it. That started at that school. But I think reciting by heart is something that is not done in modern teaching as much, is it?

[0:28:37.0] **T7:** No. But now I just remember that we teach a class 1A in English in Action. So that's nothing where there where we give them grades. Like Schwerpunktklasse. And we listen to the 50.

[0:28:50.4] **T8:** 50 Nifty.

[0:28:51.0] **T7:** 50 nifty United States song. And you know it's super. It's like it's a good song. And two of our students came to us.

[0:29:00.3] **T8:** Think it was three.

[0:29:00.8] **T7:** 3 or 3 of them and stood before the class. And they could they could recite the whole song and each and every state by heart. Yeah, they liked it like the song. And they and they really. They. Yeah. It was so catchy that they went home and studied it by heart. So that's super interesting, right?

[0:29:20.4] **T8:** Yeah. And they don't even get a grade.

[0:29:23.0] **T7:** No, not a plus or anything. It was just just wanted to.

I: Just engagement and motivation?

T7: Yes yes yes. And that kind of also has this kind of rap not rap form, but it has a certain rhythm and I don't remember now.

[0:29:36.4] **T8:** Alabama. Alaska. Arizona. Arkansas.

[0:29:39.3] **T7:** Yeah, exactly.

[0:29:39.8] **T8:** And so on.

[0:29:40.5] **I:** Yeah.

[0:29:40.8] **T8:** It's also alphabetical.

[0:29:42.1] **T7:** And it's poetry.

[0:29:43.3] **I:** Is it on YouTube? Yeah. Okay. Perfect example. Thank you. Okay.

[0:29:49.3] **T8:** And we also did the other song with them the. (..) The Christmas one.

[0:29:57.0] **T7:** Ah, yes. 12 Days of Christmas. Yeah yeah yeah.

[0:30:01.9] **I:** True. That's a good one. Yeah. Mhm. Mhm. And does anything from university come to mind for you? (7)

[0:30:15.4] **T7:** Oh, God.

[0:30:16.2] **T8:** Not so much.

[0:30:16.8] **T9:** No, no. Not really.

[0:30:18.5] **I:** Because there are some literature courses you have to take. Right? But the focus just wasn't on poetry?

[0:30:23.5] **T8:** It was.

[0:30:25.1] **T7:** Oh, yeah. For me, I had one course. The one where I wrote my bachelor thesis in. It was about literature in school, at schools. And there there was a focus on poetry as well and how you could implement it. And a lot of examples.

[0:30:37.2] **I:** Okay.

[0:30:37.9] **T7:** So that yes, we talked about it a bit, but not in detail. And I didn't teach at the time. So I think for me, it wasn't I didn't really care too much about it.

[0:30:51.0] **T8:** I personally only did the ones you had to for poetry and those were less, were not focused on, teaching at all. It was just knowledge. Building your knowledge base.

[0:31:04.0] **T9:** don't remember any poetry, but I also didn't do the STEOP in Austria, so.

[0:31:10.3] **T8:** Oh, you didn't. Aha.

[0:31:13.1] **I:** Where did you do it?

[0:31:14.1] **T9:** I did my bachelor's degree in Germany.

[0:31:16.5] **I:** Ah, okay.

[0:31:17.9] **T9:** But they also had History of English literature.

[0:31:20.2] **I:** And there it's a little different than here?

[0:31:23.1] **T9:** Pretty much the same. Just no poetry.

[0:31:28.7] **T8:** We have the daffodils with [professor at University].

[0:31:31.1] **I:** Mhm.

[0:31:32.1] **T8:** Yeah.

[0:31:32.9] **I:** Yeah.

[0:31:35.0] **T8:** And I remember that one because my nana knew it by heart. So it's a good one. Maybe not for teaching. Maybe it is. Maybe I should look at it. Mhm.

[0:31:45.3] **I:** Okay. In terms of creativity, do you think poetry helps students express themselves? And have you ever had a student surprise you with something creative?

[0:31:57.6] **T7:** Creative, yes. Drawing or writing a text or something like that? Yes. Not poetry per se. And they only, well, I think in one class. In the class in class 2C they it helped them maybe to express something because there are some students who are very. Yeah. Very. Yeah. Who challenge everything. So for those I think it was a great way to express themselves, but otherwise I would say. But I don't know because I haven't taught a lot. But I would say that it helps them more to reflect upon things than to express themselves. I don't really think that they would go home and say, wow, now I've found a way how I can put my things into that. But that is a good starting point for reflecting further on a topic and to help them relate to something, etc. Mhm.

[0:32:52.9] **T8:** Actually, thinking of one of your students whose name I will not name from the third grade. She writes poetry and she has a little notebook. I know that you know who I mean. (..)

[0:33:08.9] **T7:** Write it down.

[0:33:09.3] **T8:** Because she, she asked me in the Mittagsaufsicht if she could do that.

[0:33:16.9] **T7:** Ah.

[0:33:17.8] **T8:** And so that's how I know. So. But rarely, rarely I think.

[0:33:23.8] **I:** Mhm.

[0:33:24.7] **T8:** and but creative things. Yes. especially with cutting videos and creating sketches for speaking activities. Oh, yeah.

[0:33:35.7] **I:** Interesting.

[0:33:36.4] **T8:** Which maybe, you know, with intonation, playing with intonation. And, it's not poetry, but it's quite creative. Mhm.

[0:33:45.2] **I:** Artsy.

[0:33:45.8] **T8:** Artsy.

[0:33:46.6] **I:** Mhm.

[0:33:48.6] **T9:** Yeah. Creativity for sure. But nothing related to poetry. We had I'm very surprised by my seventh grade at the moment because they were supposed to do just an audio recording, but they basically did like a whole radio play adding sound effects segments. It was hilariously funny. I don't know. Insanely creative. Having an advertisement segment in the middle with crazy ads. I don't know how they come up with that stuff. It was really good.

[0:34:17.2] **I:** Really good. But, what you just said and what you just said, kind of reminds me of what's what we're also listening and watching in our spare time, like YouTube videos or podcasts even.

[0:34:30.2] **T7:** Sorry. Yes. I'm sorry. I just something came to my mind. Yes. Not poetry either, but in my project there, we were talking about a girl who gets bullied in the book, and they. They had to write slogans or mottos, and they came up with like, super, super great rhyming things as well. Things that rhymed and yeah, beautiful slogans, actually, empowering slogans. I mean, that's also not a poetry, but. Yeah. Yes.

[0:35:02.2] **T8:** Which reminded me of I like to use memes and my students do memes. And that's also playing with language in a way.

[0:35:10.6] **I:** Yeah.

[0:35:11.6] **T8:** Yes.

[0:35:12.5] **I:** With the meme generator online or something else?

[0:35:17.4] **T8:** Well, they can choose. I just give them an overall topic, and then they have to create a meme that they think is funny. And so some have been writing the memes and then creating the pictures to go with it. On AI, some have been using meme generators, some have been. (5) Downloading pictures from the internet and putting the text over it completely legally. from open source sites. But yeah. Yeah.

[0:35:52.6] **I:** Have they also been drawing the pictures themselves?

[0:35:55.6] **T8:** No, I mean not because I do that mostly in upper secondary.

[0:35:59.1] **I:** Mhm.

[0:36:00.2] **T8:** Mine. Not so much. But apparently yours.

[0:36:02.6] **T7:** Lower secondary. Yes a lot.

[0:36:04.4] **T9:** Yeah. Mhm.

[0:36:06.3] **I:** Mhm.

[0:36:07.3] **T7:** I think they like that a lot to be able to create something by themselves. And I mean some classes do some not so much.

[0:36:17.3] **T8:** Reminds me of what some of my students do both lower and upper secondary when they're done with with a, with a task or something, they draw and then they create little speech bubbles and write messages either to me or the characters they draw, talk to each other and always in English as well. Mhm. Mhm.

[0:36:40.0] **I:** Interesting.

[0:36:41.6] **T8:** Very. And I've seen that across all age groups from first to seventh.

[0:36:47.6] **I:** Mhm.

[0:36:48.1] **T8:** Mhm.

[0:36:48.9] **T9:** But they never draw me.

[0:36:51.2] **T8:** I have received a draw, I have received multiple drawings.

[0:36:53.9] **T7:** Me too. Not not not charming ones.

[0:36:56.1] **T8:** Oh. Charming ones. You're. You're a cool teacher. Was one of them. That's nice.

[0:37:02.7] **T9:** Good for you guys.

[0:37:04.3] **T7:** No. Me neither. I'm not the most flattering.

[0:37:08.0] **T8:** But a lot of students rave about you.

[0:37:12.3] **T7:** Yes.

[0:37:13.7] **T9:** About the poetry, I'm sure.

[0:37:16.4] **T8:** No, no. But like, about you as a teacher.

[0:37:19.2] **T7:** He is really the teacher of the year. That was a joke before. You are.

[0:37:23.6] **T8:** A teacher.

[0:37:24.3] **T7:** Let me bully you. We made a joke that my colleague and I said, well, that's because he probably bought them chocolate and showed them how to do it, which is not true. Obviously, he's he's the coolest teacher in town. No, really. It's true.

[0:37:37.7] **T8:** Yeah.

[0:37:38.8] **T7:** No sarcasm.

[0:37:39.8] **T8:** Very loved by the students.

[0:37:41.1] **T7:** Yes. And by their colleagues.

[0:37:44.6] **I:** Perfect. Okay.

[0:37:49.0] **T7:** Include an apology. (..)

[0:37:53.1] **I:** Do you think poetry helps students improve their reception skills? So what I'm thinking about here is interpreting, analysing or critically engaging with texts.

[0:38:04.5] **T7:** Yes.

[0:38:05.0] **T8:** Can you repeat?

[0:38:05.7] **I:** Do you think poetry helps students improve their reception skills. So analysing, interpreting or critically engaging.

T8: Yes.

[0:38:13.3] **T9:** Yeah. Sure. Yeah. I think that's the whole point for me. Mhm. Yeah.

[0:38:17.8] **T7:** But as T9 said I think you need to check whether you need to scaffold because sometimes they would just maybe look at it and be just like yeah okay.

[0:38:27.6] **I:** Yeah.

[0:38:28.7] **T8:** Same with the, with the rap I did. They would have I don't think they would have realised by listening and reading without my. (..) Guidance.

[0:38:39.3] **I:** Yeah. So do you see poetry as a tool for developing students critical thinking skills?

T8: Yes.

I: And do you think it's useful?

[0:38:50.4] **T9:** I think so, yeah. Yeah. But I mean, how critical can you get if you require so much scaffolding that you basically present them with the answer, you know. So it's tricky.

[0:39:03.7] **I:** Mhm.

[0:39:04.7] **T9:** I don't know.

[0:39:05.4] **T8:** Maybe the scaffolding decreases over the years. Have you not had that experience? I wouldn't know because I'm in my first year but that's what I'm hoping.

[0:39:14.7] **T9:** I think there's better tasks for introducing critical thinking or scenarios and stuff.

[0:39:21.0] **I:** Do you have an example that comes to your mind?

[0:39:23.6] **T9:** Well, our language assistant [name], he always asks intriguing questions. Mhm. Like the boundaries of, I don't know what is acceptable if you, I don't know, base it on your religion for example, or what did we have. Did you also do the thing where like two people get abducted by aliens?

[0:39:43.4] **T8:** Yes.

[0:39:44.0] **T9:** They get merged into one person, and after ten years, they finally develop the technology to kind of split them back. But this new person wants to, I don't know, wants to remain this new formed person. So what do you do? Do you use it? Do you leave this person alone? And that kind of gets them all fired up. And you can basically discuss the whole. Mhm. For the whole lesson. Yeah.

[0:40:08.8] **I:** Mhm. Okay. Thank you for the example. Okay.

[0:40:11.5] **T7:** I think once again that it can be used to as a as a starting point for critical thinking. Right. Mhm.

[0:40:20.5] **T8:** Yeah I agree. And I think it's also a. (..) More like an easier way of, of introducing reading between the lines. Because if like my example, if you do a book, if you read a book with them, you analyse a book with them, then not everyone will read it. And with the poem you can just go through the whole thing and analyse the whole thing and just introduce reading between the lines for everyone. So I think that's really something that it's very. (..) Engaging and easy in that sense.

[0:41:00.1] **I:** Yeah. Perfect. Does poetry feature in your private life at all? So it can also be on social media?

[0:41:09.4] **T7:** Yeah.

[0:41:10.0] **I:** Yeah.

[0:41:10.4] **T7:** Mhm.

[0:41:11.6] **I:** Do you have an example?

[0:41:14.1] **T7:** Yeah, I recently bought this. What's her name? Ruby. Something. Kaur. Yeah.

[0:41:19.6] **T8:** Oh, I've heard of her as well.

[0:41:21.1] **T7:** Super great. But I mean, not not. I'm not reading poetry every. Yeah. Every day. Milk and honey. I think it's called. Yes. And I really like that.

[0:41:31.2] **T8:** for me, I think it's a lot of. (..) English like, sayings and nursery rhymes and things like that that just are recited in the family over and over and over again. So and then social media and raps and songs. I really like, analysing song lyrics. I'm very much a person that focuses on more the lyric part of a song than the music part as well. But the lyric part is very important to me. Yeah.

[0:42:06.3] **I:** Okay.

[0:42:08.3] **T9:** In songs, maybe, but I don't read poetry. Yeah. When I was a student, I used to write a lot of poems. I don't know, maybe that is why it has stuck. Mhm. But nowadays I don't really read poetry anymore.

[0:42:21.3] **T7:** But because you had. Sorry. Because you had to write the poems or just like for, for yourself?

[0:42:26.5] **T9:** I was a very sensitive boy and I wanted to have an outlet for my. Yeah. Feelings. Yeah. The pain I had to feel for the world. Yeah. I had to write it down.

[0:42:38.8] **I:** Mhm. And do you still do that?

[0:42:40.9] **T9:** No no.

[0:42:41.5] **I:** No.

[0:42:41.7] **T8:** But I do think that maybe fiction books can also include poetry. Mhm. depending if they're literary fiction.

[0:42:51.7] **T9:** You read a lot. Right?

[0:42:53.1] **T8:** I read a lot. And. But you do too.

[0:42:57.0] **T9:** Not as much as you by far.

[0:42:59.7] **T8:** Wouldn't you say that some of the books maybe are poetic in a way.

[0:43:04.7] **T7:** Yes, a lot of them, yeah. (..)

[0:43:08.6] **T9:** Except for Intermezzo, which.

[0:43:11.3] **T7:** It is poetic.

[0:43:12.9] **T8:** I just didn't understand it.

[0:43:17.6] **I:** Sally Rooney Intermezzo. Mhm.

[0:43:20.7] **T9:** Mhm.

[0:43:22.1] **I:** Mhm. And do you also sometimes come across poetry on TikTok if you use it or Instagram if you use that. Yeah. And do you enjoy reading or listening to that?

[0:43:34.4] **T8:** Especially if it's spoken I think. Mhm. But it's actually more often German.

[0:43:40.3] **I:** Mhm.

[0:43:41.0] **T8:** Which is funny because I don't really think German is a very emotional language. Mhm. Yeah, but.

[0:43:50.7] **T7:** I actually follow one. What is it called. It's not called a sticking with the Facebook page. It's not called Instagram page. What is it called?

[0:43:58.9] **T8:** Profile.

[0:43:59.8] **T7:** Profile. Yes. And it's called the English language Nerds or something. And it's so funny. I can really recommend it. Where they have poetries or, I don't know, just a sentence, and then they tell you how you could read it otherwise. Or if a comma is missing. What the. Yeah.

[0:44:15.4] **T9:** What's it called again?

[0:44:15.8] **T7:** The language nerds and some are really stupid, but there are a lot of funny ones. And sometimes I also show them to the students because it's really funny. Mhm but otherwise, no, I don't really follow poetry.

[0:44:30.9] **T8:** Do you follow the Wiener Alltagspoeten?

[0:44:32.7] **T7:** Yes.

[0:44:33.3] **T8:** But I'm not sure if that's really poetry but I love it. Mhm.

[0:44:36.8] **T7:** Of course.

[0:44:38.0] **I:** Mhm. (..) Okay. Any additional thoughts on that? No.

[0:44:44.9] **T9:** Don't really encounter poetry on social media, unfortunately.

[0:44:48.6] **I:** Yeah. That's fine. Apart from course books, have you come across any good poetry resources and what do you use for that? So web pages, like eduki for instance, for teaching resources?

[0:45:05.1] **T9:** Eduki I never got past the login because I think it's confusing and they always want my money, but, I don't know how it works, but, yeah. Online, there's a great there's a lot of great stuff. I don't know, maybe I was just lucky when I was in school, but I'm still using a lot of the worksheets and adapt them from back when I was in school. I, I whenever I go home, I take out the old folder and, grab the things that I still remember where I thought, yeah, this wasn't a waste of time. This was actually useful and has been my main resource ever since.

[0:45:39.9] **I:** So that seems like you were very organised as a student in English.

[0:45:45.0] **T9:** Yeah. Yeah.

[0:45:45.9] **I:** Yeah. Mhm.

[0:45:47.0] **T9:** That helped me.

[0:45:48.1] **I:** Mhm.

[0:45:48.6] **T7:** Mhm. I use eduki I do but not for poetry actually. I mean I've seen one, I would like to use one poem which I saw on Instagram. Which did I show it to you which you can read backwards?

[0:46:05.0] **T8:** Yes you did.

[0:46:05.8] **T7:** That's a lovely poem. It's really cool. Where like when you read it, from the top. It's like I hate myself. Or why do I hate myself? Or why am I so blah blah blah. And then when you read it backwards, it's a very positive and encouraging poem. I would love to show that to my students. I forgot it actually, but that I got from Instagram, for example. I just, I think eduki I would not really look for creative things, but rather for like grammar parts or some, I don't know, something like that. Yeah. (..)

[0:46:37.9] **T8:** I create most of my things. Yeah. So not really.

[0:46:45.6] **I:** And if you use poetry in your classes, where do you get it from? Just from your, student experience?

[0:46:53.3] **T9:** I mean, student experience. It's a good question. It's just, I don't know from my own experience, certainly there were some, some important things, but also just do a quick Google search. I mean, as embarrassing as it is, the most important poems of all time, and then I just, I don't know, grab, grab a coffee and read through the list and I read some poems and I think this they might understand this one might be too tricky and kind of just end up finding one that fits for the for the day, for the current event that we are about to discuss. That leads into that. And yeah, that's the process.

[0:47:33.2] **I:** So you decide on your own if it's suitable for your students?

[0:47:36.3] **T9:** Yeah, because I think it's you have to choose something that interests them at least slightly, that reflects their interests. So I have to go through them manually one by one. Yeah. Having my students in mind. Yeah.

[0:47:50.3] **T7:** And didn't you also take like, the Beautiful World book and read a, read a parts of the book to your student?

[0:47:57.9] **T9:** Yeah.

[0:47:58.1] **T7:** To discuss it.

[0:47:58.9] **T9:** Yeah.

[0:47:59.4] **T7:** Yeah. That's amazing.

[0:48:01.2] **T8:** Beautiful World Where Are You by Sally Rooney.

[0:48:03.6] **T9:** But I don't know if this one. I have to admit this one, but I don't know if they got what I wanted to say, but it was worth a try.

[0:48:09.9] **I:** Yes, sure. Always is. Mhm. Okay. What would you say are problems or challenges with teaching poetry? So is it more related to time, the curriculum demands or student engagement?

[0:48:26.8] **T7:** Hm. (6)

[0:48:33.9] **T8:** I think first of all, again, I'm scared that I won't do it, justice. Then I think it's creating good material, finding poetry again. But, I mean, T9 obviously has told us a good way of surpassing that problem. Yeah. I think it's a bit of a big scary thing that I do yet. And I need to do more. Mhm.

[0:49:05.9] **T7:** I also think it's just something that I don't necessarily have on my mind that I could find a nice poem to about this topic or something. Mhm. I think it's more not in my repertoire to Yeah. Mhm. And, but I mean as, yeah maybe as an input for the morning, it would be a nice thing as well just to have a little poem which we do, we all have like calendars in each classroom, and some of them are poems, actually. but. Yeah.

[0:49:39.3] **T8:** Yeah. (...) What she said.

[0:49:45.2] **T9:** I don't think I have anything new to add to that.

[0:49:49.3] **I:** That's fine.

[0:49:49.9] **T8:** I just think that I personally, I think I, I think more about what would the students like to talk about, like with the Eminem thing? Yeah. Rather than thinking about what? (..) What could I

introduce to them that's new? They may like or may not like. And so poetry is more in the second category I think. Mhm. Yeah.

[0:50:15.7] **I:** Yeah. Mhm. Do you think the curriculum allows you enough flexibility to explore it sometimes?

[0:50:24.4] **T7:** Yeah.

[0:50:25.2] **T8:** Yeah I think flexibility. Yes. Time? Depends. Yeah. Yeah.

[0:50:34.1] **T7:** I mean, I think that's also very individual because some people just rush through the book real quick and they're finished in time. And then there are others like me who take a lot of time for one.

[0:50:44.4] **T8:** Yeah.

[0:50:45.9] **T7:** topic and then.

[0:50:48.1] **T8:** I don't know yet. Again, my first year. Yeah.

[0:50:52.6] **I:** Mhm. But yeah.

[0:50:55.6] **T9:** It's always a delicate balancing act between adhering to the curriculum and I don't know, emphasising certain things. And time is always an issue.

[0:51:06.9] **T8:** Mhm.

[0:51:07.4] **T9:** Yeah, but so far it worked out great. We'll see. If we talk again at the end of the school year whether we have been able to achieve everything. But yeah, so far it's going good.

[0:51:20.0] **T7:** Mhm.

[0:51:21.1] **T8:** And I think, I think the curriculum itself would allow for it because it's written, we actually read through it yesterday in a course, but it's written in a quite broad way, especially in upper secondary but I think I feel more pressure from the book than the curriculum because the curriculum is quite broad. If maybe the book.

[0:51:45.7] **T7:** And I feel like if you're reading a novel or something, you could always, have the writing part, have the students write about something like you imagine you're a friend from the protagonist or something, but you would not give them a poem to say, okay, write about this poem or something, because that's just something that they wouldn't have learned properly. And where I wouldn't take the time to, I don't know, teach them how to. Yeah. How to write about a poem. Whereas they know how to write an email, they know how to write a diary entry, etc. So I think other forms of literature you could include better to even have in the test, whereas poetry might be too tricky.

[0:52:26.7] **T9:** Yeah. Also, I think it speaks against the whole idea of poetry.

[0:52:30.2] **T7:** Yeah.

[0:52:30.9] **T9:** I think that's why I'm so opposed to the whole rhyme scheme thing, because it kind of restricts you. And I think it's unnecessary if you just want to express yourself. Mhm. Yeah.

[0:52:40.8] **I:** Yeah. Mhm. (..) (...) Do you think group dynamic in the classroom has an effect on creativity?

T7: Yes.

T9: Oh for sure.

I: In which way. (..)

[0:52:58.3] **T7:** Well you as we all said before I think in some classes you can just do creative things and, and because the class likes it because they can work together. And then you have other classes where the main goal is that they're not starting to fight at any point in the lesson. And where you do the bare minimum just to, you know, I don't know. And some, some classes are more creative than others or want it more or. Mhm. Yeah I think it's a major part.

[0:53:26.7] **I:** Yeah.

[0:53:27.1] **T9:** Mhm. Yeah. Classroom management often interferes or I don't know. It's such a complex thing you know that who sits next to whom. Mhm. Who's able to concentrate. Who likes a more lively atmosphere. It's it's tricky sometimes.

[0:53:46.9] **I:** Yeah.

[0:53:47.1] **T8:** I also think it depends on who which classes are comfortable with each other. Mhm. And the more comfortable they are with each other the more creative they allow each other to be.

[0:53:58.9] **I:** Mhm.

[0:53:59.4] **T8:** Because they are teenagers and if they're not comfortable with each other they'll be embarrassed about more things. Mhm. Yeah.

[0:54:07.5] **I:** Yeah.

T9: I just want to add one more thing to the rhyme scheme thing. I see the point. I know why it's used, I know the techniques. And in order for students to, to, I don't know in order for poetry to appeal to them. In my experience with the classes I've had, I think it's more restricting. Yeah. So that's why I'm circumventing the whole thing. [0:01:57.4]

I: But then again, does poetry always have to have a fixed rhyme scheme? [0:02:02.0]

T8: No no no no, of course not. No. [0:02:06.0]

I: But just the structural. [0:02:09.3]

T9: Yeah. I mean, if you're asking about encouraging them to write poetry, then I think it would restrict them to express themselves. Yeah. [0:02:18.9]

I: Mhm. Mhm. (..) Okay. Do you feel confident selecting poems for your students? Maybe it's more targeted towards T9. Sorry. [0:02:34.0]

T9: Yeah. [0:02:36.5]

I: Yeah. [0:02:37.4]

T9: Most of the time. Sometimes I completely miss the mark. I guess, if I select something from Shakespeare again. But. (..) Most of the time, I think. [0:02:48.0]

I: It's a trial and error. [0:02:48.7]

I: Yeah. Mhm. Okay. Any additional thoughts? No. [0:02:55.7]

T8: My rap was good. [0:02:58.3]

I: Riding that high still (..) Okay. Can you remember any poetry that features in the course book, and have you used any poetry that is offered in the *More!* course book? (..) I think you said something about a crocodile. [0:03:14.8]

T7: Yeah, but that was more yeah, that was also a chant. Yes. Well, I think we use all of them. Almost. Yeah, but except for some classes. [0:03:23.4]

T8: So you would, you would think it is poetry. Mhm. [0:03:28.5]

T9: Mhm. [0:03:30.7]

T8: So yes I used poetry in the more books because I think it's poetry. [0:03:34.9]

T7: Yeah I also use them except for songs sometimes. [0:03:40.4]

I: Yes. And you think the students enjoy it. Yes. [0:03:43.8]

T7: Mostly. [0:03:44.6]

I: Mostly. Yeah. Mhm. Mhm. Do you feel the poetry selection in the course book reflects the needs and interests of your students? (4) [0:03:58.8]

T9: I think it's more about the topics themselves. Right. And I think the. Yeah. (...) [0:04:07.1]

T8: I think it's hard sometimes in the first year because. (...) Some of the topics are very basic. And then if they're proficient, it might seem a little bit like to them, like the book thinks they're younger than they are or the book is made for younger people. [0:04:29.9]

I: So childish? [0:04:30.8]

T8: Yes, but how would you overcome that if you're only starting to teach them English? Of course, the vocabulary is basic. Yeah. So. But it depends on the person. [0:04:43.6]

I: It depends. Okay. Mhm. Okay. Yeah. Do you feel that contemporary or even diverse poetry should be prioritised in the classroom? So, diversity themes. (6) [0:05:03.8]

T7: Ah well prioritised I don't know. I mean, they. [0:05:07.5]

T9: Should feature. [0:05:09.8]

T7: I agree. [0:05:11.2]

T9: I don't know if they're not. I often think if they don't encounter the, the whole Shakespeare stuff and so on, if they don't do it now, they're never going to do it. And they might encounter some contemporary thing or other forms of media. So yeah, but I think they certainly should feature. But. (..) [0:05:31.9]

T8: but not as a priority. [0:05:33.3]

T9: Maybe I'm too old, but yeah, not prioritising them. [0:05:36.2]

I: Yeah. That's fine. Have you ever thought about taking your students to a poetry slam? So a spoken word performance. [0:05:45.2]

T8: I had to go to one in as a student. [0:05:48.3]

I: Mhm. Did you enjoy it? [0:05:50.8]

T8: Yes, as far as I know. [0:05:52.5]

T7: I have never thought about it with my lower secondary, but I know that a German teacher. I think she does that. [colleague] did. Sometimes in German. [0:06:03.6]

T8: Yeah. [0:06:04.3]

T9: I never thought about it. Could be fun. I went to one, poetry slam once. I don't know, it was a mixed bag, like, the good ones were just funny. So it's more like stand up. Yeah. And the artsy ones, if I may say so. They were really out there. Okay. So I don't know if my students would enjoy that. Yeah. [0:06:31.3]

I: Fair enough. [0:06:32.7]

T8: Mine was a a final. [0:06:37.1]

I: Mhm. [0:06:37.9]

T8: So maybe that's why we enjoyed it. Because it was like the creme de la creme of the poetry slam in my area. So again not maybe the creme de la creme, but considering. (..) but I have never taken students there, and I don't know if I would. (..) [0:06:58.4]

I: Okay. Yeah. Mhm. Do you sometimes use digital resources in your teaching. Instagram post I think T7 you said that and then you said the songs [0:07:12.3]

T8: Instagram posts. [0:07:12.7]

I: Yeah. Mhm. [0:07:15.8]

T8: And videos sometimes reels. Yeah. [0:07:18.0]

I: Reels. Yeah. About what for instance? [0:07:21.4]

T8: Mhm. I think it was. (..) Classroom. It was like sort of like a funny sort of sketch on. Yeah. It was actually about what it would be like if teachers said the things that students say regarding homework like, ah, I forgot my schoolwork today. Things like that. [0:07:40.9]

I: Okay so something funny. [0:07:44.7]

I: Mhm. Yeah. And do you feel like the students enjoy it?

T8: Yes. [0:07:49.1]

T8: Yeah. I think they find it funny to see what we find funny. [0:07:53.2]

T9: Yeah. [0:07:54.8]

T7: Yeah. [0:07:55.9]

I: Mhm. (..) (...) Have you ever developed your own materials for anything creative? So it doesn't have to be poetry. [0:08:07.5]

T7: Yes a lot. I think we do that a lot on a regular basis. Right. [0:08:12.1]

I: Because you don't find anything suitable online or in the book or, or the coursebook or just because you feel like. [0:08:20.2]

T9: It's part of the job. [0:08:21.6]

T7: Mhm. [0:08:22.6]

T9: And it's fun. [0:08:24.1]

I: Yeah. You enjoy doing it. [0:08:26.0]

T7: Yeah. And I think sometimes you just want to teach beyond the topics in the course book or. Yeah. Go deeper into the topics or. Yeah. [0:08:36.2]

T8: And I also don't want to pay money and I don't want to plagiarise either, so I just create things. [0:08:45.0]

I: Fair enough. Yeah. yeah. (..) [0:08:48.9]

T8: I actually bought something once and I couldn't print it. So now I'm a bit apprehensive. [0:08:54.0]

I: Yeah. [0:08:55.6]

T7: Yeah. [0:08:56.7]

I: And if you use a song, I think T7 you said, do you also create a worksheet then for the students? [0:09:02.6]

T7: Sometimes. Yes, sometimes. But now for the graphic novel project. I created all of the material myself. And it was quite a lot. And writing prompts and.

T8: Yeah, they really liked it.

T7: Yeah. And and and things like that. [0:09:17.9]

T8: And I do it for other classes too. Yeah. I mean, it's not it doesn't take a lot of time to create something. I think when you have something in mind. Right. [0:09:29.4]

T9: Depends. Yeah. Yeah. For me, I sometimes I struggle with creating something. [0:09:35.6]

T7: T9 created a lot of pub quizzes, for example. [0:09:39.0]

T9: Oh, yeah. [0:09:39.8]

T7: That was awesome. Really fun. Pub quiz is for the whole lesson. With music and. Yeah. [0:09:51.1]

I: Yeah. Do you want to say something? [0:09:52.8]

T8: Yes. I think, if I struggle with creativity, I ask, ChatGPT to give me a creative idea. And then very often, those work very well. And, I then create the material based off of ChatGPTs idea, but I do like to use it for ideas. [0:10:11.5]

T7: Mhm. [0:10:12.1]

I: Mhm. And are there any other teacher networks you follow or anything like that. Maybe also on Instagram where you get inspiration from it.

T7: Mhm. No. Mhm.

I: Okay. Good. Then the question part is basically over. I'm going to show you some stimulus material. Now I'm going to start with stimulus material A which is a copied page from the *More!* course book, the third one, third grade, and you can see that B is circled. (5) While reading think about if you've used it. (..) And if not, why you didn't. [0:11:00.0]

T7: I didn't use it because I was just doing my graphic novel project, and I focused on other writing parts. Exactly. Yeah. So I actually skipped this one. [0:11:12.2]

I: But what do you think about the task itself? (..) Do you think the students would enjoy it? (4) [0:11:23.4]

T8: Depends on the class. [0:11:24.9]

I: Mhm. (..) [0:11:27.5]

T7: I think some would probably. Yeah. Yeah yeah. (..) And I think this one is maybe not that it is a good example because it asks students to think about vocabulary in English about a certain topic. So I think it's a good exercise. [0:11:48.0]

I: Would it be suitable for a homework? Do you think so letting them create it themselves? Or would you do it in class? Maybe together? So pick a word and try to come up with a short poem together. [0:12:01.2]

T9: I think we'd probably do one together maybe. And then one should be a homework exercise, because I think there's I've never taught a third grade. I've never seen this before. But okay. Yeah, I guess could be quite tricky for some, right? I don't know. [0:12:16.3]

T8: But I have never taught a third grade either. [0:12:17.9]

I: Okay. Yeah. Interesting. Yeah. What do you think about the words that are used in a task? (..) [0:12:24.8]

T9: I suppose they're part of the vocabulary because dilemma is definitely. Yeah, that might be tricky for them. [0:12:32.1]

T8: Yeah. Maybe not. Friendship. Not so much. (..) What is it? [0:12:39.4]

T7: Yeah. [0:12:40.2]

T8: I don't think. [0:12:40.8]

I: Mhm. Or would you create something like this task or with different words. That would maybe be easier for them. (4) Or more advanced. [0:12:57.8]

T7: I mean I did this with names in the first grade or in the second grade. I think that they had to think about words that they know and then just I don't know. [0:13:07.2]

T8: Yeah. [0:13:07.8]

T7: Mhm. Lisa loving idealistic I don't know something like that but not really with the topic I think. [0:13:16.4]

I: Mhm. That's also a good idea. Yeah. Mhm. Okay. Any additional thoughts or. That's it. (..) That's it. Perfect. Okay I will give you now stimulus material B it's a poem by Roger McGough. So from a poetry book for children. It's two pages, so I'll give you time to read it. (33) Mm. What do you think about it? (...) [0:14:20.5]

T8: I like it, I think it's very. So I personally like when poems rhyme for children especially, I think makes them more catchy, memorable. (..) [0:14:34.4]

T9: So also for a third grade or just in in general. [0:14:39.9]

I: There is no grade really. [0:14:41.1]

T9: Okay. [0:14:41.7]

I: What what would you think? [0:14:43.8]

T9: Then I think it's, suitable. Yeah. Especially for if sentences or something. [0:14:49.1]

I: So third grade or second. [0:14:53.5]

T9: Maybe even fourth. Right. Antlers, trunks. Webbed feet, I think. [0:14:59.0]

T7: Prickly. [0:14:59.6]

T9: Yeah. Quite tricky. Yeah. (..) [0:15:03.8]

T7: Trotter is also not something that. [0:15:06.0]

T9: Like the vocabulary is very advanced. [0:15:08.0]

T8: Yeah. [0:15:10.0]

I: Mhm. [0:15:11.5]

I: I mean animals and adjectives I think is in second and third grade. [0:15:16.6]

T9: Mhm. [0:15:17.6]

T8: Mhm. Animals is in first as well. (..) [0:15:22.4]

I: Mhm. [0:15:22.7]

T9: Yeah. Maybe for animals. And then just like maybe. [0:15:25.6]

I: Yeah. [0:15:26.9]

T7: Kittens. Rabbits. Crocodiles. I think actually I would probably not use this in a class. I think I'm sorry. It's not because I don't like the poem, but I think I. (..) Would. [0:15:41.3]

T8: I could imagine using a part of it, maybe the first part, and then having them write their own, but not the whole thing, because then I think it would be hard for them to think about something else. Other animals. [0:15:55.0]

I: Yeah. [0:15:55.8]

T8: But a small part as an input. [0:15:58.0]

I: Good idea. [0:15:59.1]

T7: But there the question would be in which grade? Because if it's for first grade it's a difficult second one, third one is. And third one it's a bit not too childish. That's not what I want to talk about. But I mean, you could get more out of them than just imagining that a I don't know, frog would be. [0:16:18.0]

T9: Yeah. Then I'm also struggling with which grades. Yeah, I would be able to employ this. [0:16:23.5]

T8: And then I think I would focus on the rhyming scheme. Hmm. [0:16:30.2]

T7: Hmm. [0:16:30.7]

T9: Maybe things like slimy. Prickly. Cuddly. [0:16:35.4]

T7: That's true. In the third grade, it would actually make sense. There is an animal unit. Maybe. And they learn about adjectives for animals. Maybe. Yeah. [0:16:48.2]

I: Mhm. Is that something you would want to see in the *More!* course book? (6) [0:17:00.1]

T8: Personally I think that other things I would rather see before I see this. [0:17:05.1]

I: Yeah. (..) [0:17:07.7]

T9: I have to agree, I'm quite happy with the *More!* book and I don't know, as I mentioned before, I like poetry. Yeah. But not in the *More!* I think the discussion I'm aiming for or the, the, the whole thing is more, I don't know, haven't found a way to make it work in the lower secondary. [0:17:28.3]

I: Mhm. Mhm. Yeah. I mean it is authentic material because it's from a poetry book for children but the implementation in like in a ESL context is quite difficult I think. [0:17:43.5]

T8: Because I think in in an English speaking country this would be primary school probably. Yeah. [0:17:51.6]

I: Mhm. [0:17:52.7]

T8: Or even younger. [0:17:55.2]

I: Yeah. Mhm. Any other activities that come to mind where you could make it work for you like you said with. Yeah. Any other ideas or. No. [0:18:05.8]

T7: Based on this or (5) I mean I could, I could see our English in Action class doing something fun with this for example. [0:18:21.4]

I: Mhm. [0:18:21.8]

T8: We would have to explain a lot, but would be possible. [0:18:28.7]

I: So more in the afternoon and not during the regular. [0:18:32.5]

T7: I think it's very cute, but I, I if I'm honest, I think I wouldn't find good use for it. [0:18:39.2]

I: That's fine. [0:18:40.3]

I: Okay. Perfect. Good. Any additional thoughts? No. So then let's come to the wrap up question. What would you wish for most for your future poetry teaching. (..) Does anything come to mind? (5) So would it be materials or resources or more time in general? (4) [0:19:13.5]

T8: Hm. (7) [0:19:21.7]

T7: Hmm. I mean, resources would always be great. For example, if there would be a web page with, I don't know, exactly. Open access with with poems sorted by topic or by. I don't know, year or something. Exactly. That would be awesome not necessarily the, the, the they would add material on how to teach it, but just that you have a good overview of what is there actually. [0:19:50.6]

I: Yeah. [0:19:52.9]

T9: I mean, I agree with you. No, sorry. An overview would be great, but. (..) specific scaffolding for poems like how to make them work. (..) I'm always looking for that. So more of that would be great. Yeah. [0:20:13.8]

T8: Yeah I would I would also appreciate information on how to teach it. And then I could of course adapt it. Examples would be nice. [0:20:25.7]

T7: I mean, I just thought of on Canva. There is a lot of material on different poets, and there is also if you just type in poetry, you will find a lot of great presentations on poetry that you can just download and use if you want to talk about poetry as a genre. Mhm. Yeah. [0:20:46.7]

I: Okay. Okay. An additional question. Is there maybe a funny anecdote from your years of teaching that come to mind for you in regards to teaching literature that you want to share? (4) [0:21:02.2]

T7: A funny one. [0:21:04.0]

I: Or something that stuck out to you doesn't have to be funny. (..) [0:21:08.7]

T7: For me, it was today we had a discussion on what the difference like how different the reading experience is when you read a graphic novel or a text without pictures. And it was a really great discussion because someone [student] for example, a guy who hates to read. He said for him, without the pictures, he doesn't feel like he can understand the story fully. And it's not a story for him. But with graphic novels he could read forever. And then the other parts were like, no, for me, it's I like to imagine the characters for me. And it was a really great discussion in third grade, which is quite young to discuss stuff like this. And it was just really, really, nice. Yeah. [0:21:52.1]

I: Yeah. [0:21:53.4]

T9: I'm sure there's probably a million things I can't think of right now, but, whenever it kind of, whenever they're visibly engaged in something that very text or something and they're really fond of it and they, I don't know, that's, that's always nice to see. And sometimes just their creativity when they, for example, have to finish a story or something or write an alternate ending or an inner monologue. Or sometimes I'm really surprised by what they come up with. Yeah. [0:22:26.8]

T7: Yeah. [0:22:27.8]

T8: I don't have one. [0:22:29.0]

I: That's okay. [0:22:29.7]

T8: I'm so new. [0:22:31.5]

I: That's okay. Okay. Anything else you'd like to tell or ask me? Ask me anything? (..) No? [0:22:42.9]

T7: I think we all use poetry more than we think. I think we don't think of every example or not poetry. But I think we do a lot of things we don't really think of but actively think about whether it's a rhyme or a poetry or, I don't know, showing them something. I think it's hard to reflect on what you're actually doing the whole day because you do so many different things. [0:23:09.0]

I: Yeah, probably. [0:23:10.3]

T8: Mhm. [0:23:11.6]

I: Yeah. Good. Thank you. [0:23:14.0]

T7: Cool. Thanks. Thank you. [0:23:16.0]

Appendix D: Coding System

Theme	Code/Subcategory	Definition	Examples
Perceived Benefits	Student Engagement – Anecdotal	Specific instances or stories shared by teachers illustrating student engagement with poetry.	“They were quite surprised when we did. Shall I Compare Thee to A Summer’s Day. And it’s about a man.” (T9)
	Student Engagement - General	Broader statements about poetry's ability to engage students.	“Yeah, because I think it’s you have to choose something that interests them at least slightly, that reflects their interests” (T9)
	Teacher Attitudes	Reflects the teachers' own positive feelings or beliefs about using poetry.	“I often think if they don’t encounter the, the whole Shakespeare stuff and so on, if they don’t do it now, they’re never going to do it.” (T9)
	Creative Potential	Focuses on the perceived ability of poetry to foster students' creativity.	“I think they like that a lot to be able to create something by themselves.” (T8)
	Future Improvements	Suggestions or ideas teachers have for how the implementation of poetry could be made more effective in the future.	“Hmm. I mean, resources would always be great. For example, if there would be a web page with, I don’t know, um, exactly. Open access with with poems sorted by topic [...]” (T7)
	Student Motivation	Relates to the teachers' perception that poetry can increase students'	“And they really enjoyed it because it was very much a topic at the time, and they thought it was

		motivation in the EFL classroom.	quite fascinating” (T8)
Perceived Challenges	Students’ (perceived) Skill Level	Concerns teachers have about their students' language proficiency being a barrier to engaging with poetry.	“But on the other side, so many of them have problems in, in understanding the basic information that is given in a text or even in instructions” (T5)
	Teacher Apprehension	Reflects teachers' own lack of confidence, knowledge, or comfort in teaching poetry.	“I always leave it out because I hate poems. I always thought they’re so boring in German [...]” (T4)
	Student Reluctance/Peer Dynamics	Addresses any perceived resistance from students or negative peer influences related to poetry.	“Again with one class. Yes. And with the other class. I know if I told them to write a poem, that would just be BS” (T4)
	Pragmatic Challenges	Encompasses practical difficulties encountered in the classroom.	
	*Curricular Pressure	Relates to the constraints imposed by the curriculum that might limit the integration of poetry.	“The curriculum is open. We can do whatever we want, but the centralized testing formats force us to, um, we’ve been talking about that a lot, the parent feeding [...]” (T1)

	*Time Constraints	Focuses on the lack of sufficient time within lessons to dedicate to poetry.	“I used to do it a lot, and I have realized that I have really nearly stopped doing it. [...] But it’s a time problem” (T1)
Materials and Resources	Integration of Songs/Visuals/Digital Tools	Refers to the use of multimedia resources in conjunction with poetry.	“Like [...] for example friendship. And I always use the song from “Toy Story” <i>You’ve Got a Friend in Me</i> ” and they love it a lot [...]” (T3)
	Use of Alternative Teaching Materials	Encompasses the use of resources beyond standard textbooks.	“[...] I’m also, I’m actually currently reading my first book with a class, and it’s [...] “The Hate U Give” by Angie Thomas.” (T8)
	Use of Coursebooks	Relates to the extent to which teachers utilize coursebooks for (poetry) content.	“I have to say it’s also kind of it’s in the More! Books. Also there are some poetry.” (T5)

Table 2: Coding System

Appendix E: Declaration of Consent (blank)

Name of the participant in block letters:

- In signing this document, I agree to participate in the focus group interview “literature in the English classroom”
- I had enough time to decide whether I would like to participate in this focus group. At the moment, I have no further questions.
- I will follow the requirements and instructions that are necessary for conducting the focus group interviews. This means I agree to be recorded (audio only) during this Focus Group.
- I agree that the data collected in this study via recording will be pseudonymized and transcribed with AI assistance for further use in [REDACTED] master’s thesis.
- I agree that my data are permanently saved electronically in pseudonymized form. I am aware that data that have not yet been pseudonymized are deleted after transcription and are stored in a form that is only accessible to [REDACTED], secured via password-protection and stored on an external hard drive until their deletion.
- I reserve the right to end my voluntary participation at any time, without this being to my disadvantage. If I want to withdraw from the Focus Group, I can do so at any time by alerting [REDACTED].
- If I want my data to be deleted at a later time, I can arrange for it by contacting the moderator ([REDACTED]) via email: xxx and without having to give a reason. I acknowledge that I can request to have my data deleted until March 31st, 2025.

(Date and signature of the participant)

.....

Abstract

The Untouched Verse: Exploring Teachers' Attitudes and Approaches to Poetry in EFL Classrooms

This thesis investigates how Austrian lower-secondary EFL teachers perceive the challenges and benefits of integrating short-form poetry into their classrooms. Although literature has been addressed in broader EFL research, little empirical work has examined how poetry is approached in Austrian classrooms – particularly in relation to student motivation and creative expression. Drawing on focus group discussions with nine AHS teachers, the study explores two central questions: (1) How do EFL teachers perceive the challenges and benefits of implementing short-form poetry in lower-secondary schools, particularly in relation to fostering students' motivation and creative expression? (2) How aware are EFL teachers of available teaching materials for incorporating poetry in AHS classrooms?

Confidence gaps, apprehension about emotional exposure, and a tendency to teach toward standardized assessments emerged as significant barriers. While participants acknowledged the potential of poetry to support language development, creativity, and personal engagement, they also voiced concerns over students' linguistic readiness, time constraints, and exam-focused curricula. Many teachers reported lacking confidence in selecting or teaching poetry, fearing they might not 'do the genre justice' or risk discomfort for themselves and their students. Nevertheless, some described experimenting with poems, spoken word activities, and digital tools. The findings suggest that poetry remains only selectively integrated into EFL classrooms, reflecting a cautious but genuine openness to its potential. They highlight a nuanced interplay of enthusiasm and hesitation, suggesting the need for supportive resources and professional dialogue to help teachers integrate poetry more confidently and creatively into their practice.

Keywords: EFL teaching – poetry pedagogy – teacher perceptions – creative language use – lower-secondary education – teacher confidence – curriculum

Zusammenfassung

Diese Arbeit untersucht, wie österreichische Englischlehrkräfte an AHS-Unterstufen die Herausforderungen und Potenziale der Integration kurzer Gedichtformen in ihren Unterricht wahrnehmen. Während Literatur im Fremdsprachenunterricht bereits breiter erforscht wurde, mangelt es bislang an empirischen Studien darüber, wie Poesie konkret im österreichischen Englischunterricht behandelt wird – insbesondere im Hinblick auf die Förderung von Schüler:innenmotivation und kreativem Ausdruck. Auf Grundlage von Fokusgruppendifkussionen mit insgesamt neun Lehrpersonen werden zwei zentrale Fragen beleuchtet: (1) Wie bewerten Lehrkräfte die Rolle von Poesie bei der Förderung von Schüler:innenmotivation und kreativem Ausdruck? (2) Wie vertraut sind sie mit vorhandenen Unterrichtsmaterialien, die den Einsatz von Poesie unterstützen können?

Dabei traten deutliche Unsicherheiten, Bedenken hinsichtlich emotionaler Offenheit sowie eine starke Tendenz zutage, den Unterricht auf standardisierte Prüfungen auszurichten. Zwar betonten die Teilnehmer:innen das Potenzial von Poesie, sprachliche Entwicklung und persönliche Auseinandersetzung zu fördern, äußerten jedoch auch Bedenken bezüglich des sprachlichen Niveaus der Schüler:innen, Zeitmangels und des Prüfungsdrucks. Viele Lehrkräfte berichteten von mangelndem Vertrauen in ihre Fähigkeit, geeignete Gedichte auszuwählen oder diesen literarischen Texten gerecht zu werden, und fürchteten dabei auch, sich selbst oder ihre Schüler:innen angreifbar zu machen. Dennoch schilderten einige, dass sie mit Gedichten, Formen des gesprochenen Wortes (Spoken Word) und digitalen Anwendungen experimentieren.

Insgesamt zeigen die Ergebnisse, dass Poesie bislang nur selektiv in den Englischunterricht einfließt – was auf eine vorsichtige, teils zögerliche Offenheit hinweist, Poesie stärker in den Englischunterricht als Fremdsprache (EFL) zu integrieren. Die Ergebnisse legen nahe, dass unterstützende Ressourcen und ein fachlicher Austausch notwendig wären, um Lehrkräfte zu einem selbstbewussteren und kreativeren Einsatz von Poesie zu befähigen.

Stichwörter: Englischunterricht – Poesiedidaktik – Lehrerwahrnehmungen – kreative Sprachverwendung – Unterstufe – Lehrer:innenkompetenz – Curriculum

Use of AI

Throughout the process of drafting this thesis, AI language models (specifically Open AI's ChatGPT) were used to support brainstorming processes, refine sentence structures, and improve aspects of cohesion and punctuation. All academic arguments, interpretations, and analytical decisions were made independently by me. AI was employed solely as a language support tool to enhance clarity and expression.