

## The Value of Bio Poems

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This month I have started using Bio Poems as way for students to introduce themselves to me. This activity was presented at our last Institute and has been proven to be an effective tool in getting to know my students better. It has given me the opportunity to see what is important to them, what fears they may have, and what goals they may have for themselves.

Prior to starting this activity, I thought most students may not be open to attempting it. For many adult students, writing can be very intimidating. They were also being asked to write about themselves which could make themselves feel vulnerable. I kept this in mind as I proceeded.

- I began this exercise in our job readiness class by telling them that writing can be used as a stress management tool.
- I then introduced this activity as a way to get to know each other.
- I then read my own Bio poem to the class.
- Next, I passed out the template for the poem (see below). I did not introduce this activity as a poem because writing poetry can often times elicit an uncomfortable feeling in students. I wanted them to be comfortable, relaxed, and free to express themselves with their words.

The majority of the students were eager to start writing. Some had to pause for a moment because it had been a long while since they had taken a moment to reflect on who they are as a person. I mentioned that this would be a wonderful activity to do with their children, and most of the students requested copies to take home to their children.

As I continued to gather the poems, I found many themes running through them. All of my students want to be loved; they want to love others, and they want a better life for their children. They also want to be successful and financially stable. In our society, there is often a preconceived notion that those that are receiving government financial assistance are doing so because they are "lazy." I am hoping that these poems will put faces to the people receiving benefits and show that they want the same things out of life that we all want: to be happy, loved, productive, and to be able to provide a better life for our children.

I am finding this to be an invaluable tool to getting to know my clients: one on one and in class. They are enjoying taking a few moments to reflect on themselves, and I am taking the opportunity to get to know what is important to them. It is helping to break down barriers that may be between us and giving us a chance to know each other beyond the classroom walls and beyond the employment skills that I am teaching them. It is the start of building a relationship with my students that is built on trust and a deeper understanding of who they really are.

Please see samples of my students/clients: [Bio poems](#) - Vermont Adult Learning

## ***Bio Poem Template #1***

First Name

Who is (insert four descriptive words that describes your character)

Who loves

Who fears

Who needs

Who gives

Who believes

From

[www.educationoasis.com/curriculum/LP/LA/personality\\_poems.htm](http://www.educationoasis.com/curriculum/LP/LA/personality_poems.htm)