



Yale-New Haven
Teachers Institute®

Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1979 Volume IV: Language and Writing

Introduction

How can we teach middleschool and highschool students to write with clarity and vigor? How can we encourage them to read more accurately and more thoughtfully? If they now read and write at a level some three or four years below their gradelevel? how can we cope with that disparity? What strategies may help us to increase their motivation? Or to lessen their estrangement from the society for which the school aims to prepare them? How can we lead such students to see that linguistic skills may be means of personal growth, keys to mature independence, and foundations for a life in community?

These questions, in one form or another, were central to our seminar sessions, And to these questions each of the following units offers a rather different set of answers. Some emphasize training or imitation; others emphasize group cooperation or creativity. Each arises from a very specific teaching situation, in which the nature of the school, the needs of the students, and the talents of the teacher are conditions as important as any “content” or “skills” to be imparted.

Each unit has therefore been designed first of all as a further step in one teacher’s continuing experiment with education in New Haven. But each has also been designed as a proposal to be shared with other teachers in other situations. That transferability may appear in the form of suggested variations, It may be implicit in the way the writer has already adapted and extended the ideas of others, It is evident in each writer’s emphasis on basic principles or easily detachable exercises, Any teacher perusing this volume will surely find in each unit a number of ideas that will be useful in a quite different situation. And some teachers may find here a substantial basis for the development of curriculum units suitable to their own classrooms,

Thomas R. Whitaker

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