



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
2000 Volume IV: Ethnicity and Dissent in American Literature and Art

"What's In Your Medicine Cabinet?" Exploring the Cultural Heritage of Our Personal Belief Systems

Guide for Curriculum Unit 00.04.05
by Leigh Highbridge

This unit was written for teaching Motivation and Justification in an Acting I level high school course. Any of the three lesson plans could be used as a supplement to any course curriculum that examines the development of a person's or a community's morality, belief systems, traditions and customs.

This curriculum unit is designed to optimally create an ensemble group dynamic that respectfully encourages different opinions and supports different methodologies. Perhaps most importantly, this cooperative group dynamic respects other people's reasons and ways of doing things, even if they disagree with the reason or practice being considered. Each individual learns how to disagree in a respectful manner, and to continue to work together cooperatively and supportively. Improvisational exercises foster creative cooperation, and the consideration of multiple options when making a decision.

This unit starts with the metaphor of a medicine cabinet, and takes the students through a step by step progression to evaluating the development of morality. The students will first examine common physical ailments and their remedies. The discussion, which follows the first exercise, will modify the metaphorical example to replace physical ailments and remedies with emotional or moral dilemmas. Throughout all the lessons, the students will be presented with opportunities to view behavioral responses as appropriate or inappropriate remedies.

(Recommended for Acting and Theatre, grades 9-11.)

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