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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
2002 Volume IV: The Craft of Writing

The Craft of Writing through Narrative History

Guide for Curriculum Unit 02.04.04
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The Craft of Writing through Narrative History unit is designed for bilingual students in third grade. It explores literature and writing using stories about real people. Writing is a form of expression: it gives our thoughts a home, a place where they can settle and take shape. Writing allows expression of our imagination in a way that visual images cannot because language is filled with nuance and shared meaning. Writing also records oral history so that other cultures and societies can share in each other's stories.

The focus of writing through history is to encourage students to flourish within their culture as well as in the larger society. The lessons in this unit will explore the lives of real people and their perspectives on the world around them through stories taken from their dairies and journals. I think a first person experience will motivate my students to get excited about writing. Students will experience history from the first-person point of view by using biographies and autobiographies

Students will also examine literature as models for their own writing; investigate the events that shaped the author's stories; and relate what they learn about other people to their own lives. At the end of the unit students will have written several of their own narratives that will help them understand more about themselves and to understand their place in history. Understanding the world and how the students are a part of it are the general themes of this unit.

(Recommended for Language Arts, ESL, and Social Studies, grades 3-6.)

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