



Author Biographies as Reflected in the Mirror of Their Works

Guide for Curriculum Unit 12.02.03
by Christine A. Elmore

Biographies of celebrated authors can become truly inspiring to young readers because they can envision themselves tapping into their life-experiences and crafting their own stories. And what do young children know better than their own lives and those of the loved ones that nurture them?

My unit will focus on three award-winning authors/illustrators of children's picture-books: Cynthia Rylant, Mem Fox and Ezra Jack Keats. In it we will explore two questions: Where do authors/illustrators get their story ideas and how do they integrate their life-experiences into them? Interdisciplinary in scope, incorporating reading, writing and art, this unit will be implemented over a 3-month period. Designed for primary-aged children, this unit could easily be adapted for use by teachers in the intermediate grades as well. The purpose of this curriculum unit is to show children that their life-experiences, often similar to those of authors at some basic level, can be written about and shared with others.

This unit is divided into six sections:

1. From Inspiration to Published Story
2. Why Author Studies?
3. Cynthia Rylant
4. Mem Fox
5. Ezra Jack Keats
6. Telling Your Own Story

(Recommended for English Language Arts, grades K-6)

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