



Yale-New Haven
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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
2012 Volume II: The Art of Biography

Authors Behind the Pages

Guide for Curriculum Unit 12.02.05
by Waltrina Kirkland-Mullins

How do we inspire children at the primary-grades level to understand the intricacies that go into story writing? How do we rouse students to enthusiastically embrace literature and to create stories themselves? Educators can set the tone by introducing young learners to phenomenal, contemporary children's book authors and their work, putting the accent on author's craft by way of doing biography. This unit proposes ways to achieve this end by spotlighting two award-winning author-illustrators, Floyd Cooper and Yangsook Choi. Targeted at third graders, the unit introduces novice writers to the elements of creating biography. Via this curriculum unit, blossoming biographers will be immersed in realistic fiction, memoir, and/or biographical works created by each of these noted authors. Students will examine key questions based on those literary creations to gain insight into the lives and personae of the authors themselves; they will conduct additional research to learn more about the author and their story creations. Based on their findings, developing writers will collaboratively create biographies about each respective author. Language-arts activities engage young learners in the writing process and in making use of metacognitive know-how that include defining character traits, using prediction, inference, picturing, logical thinking skills, and more. Through this interactive study, author's craft becomes experiential and reading comprehension skills are enhanced. It is hoped that this unit serves as a model to inspire elementary students to become lifelong readers and writers, and to embrace the human experience across cultures.

(Recommended for English Language Arts and Social Development, grades 2-5)

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