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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
2013 Volume I: Literature and Information

The Brain Manual

Guide for Curriculum Unit 13.01.05
by Christina Ferraro

Teaching metacognition is a hard thing to do, and yet, it is the heart of all we do as teachers. This unit will introduce students to the organ that makes us who we are. Using a mix of fiction and nonfiction students will gain an understanding of their brain's inner workings, and examine some of the emotions it inspires, in order to gain confidence in their cognitive abilities. It takes an immense amount of courage for a child to risk making a mistake in front of their peers. Teaching students about their own learning process, their strengths as well as their needs, will allow students to feel less unique in their reasoning skills and more able to discern which habits of the mind are beneficial in learning and in life. This unit uses a variety of texts to help students understand how the brain develops and why specific comprehension strategies work. Students will be responsible for answering the question: *In what way does this information impact how I learn, and how can I use it to my advantage?*

Emily Dickinson wrote, "The Brain is wider than the Sky." Teaching students about their brains will help them see this.

(Developed for Language Arts, grade 5; recommended for Language Arts, grades 5-8)

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