



Contemporary Drama: A Unit in Boundary-Breaking

Guide for Curriculum Unit 80.03.03

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My unit presents an approach to contemporary drama. I mean approach literally because the plays themselves are subsumed into a larger structure called Boundary-Breaking, arising out of my belief that what is done in preparation before the play is considered as important and as embracing the play itself. The primary focus of my unit, therefore, is upon social learning experiences. The plays are considered not as discreet objects for interpretation—our traditional approach to drama in the classroom—but as analogous to the lives that our students encounter, where the plays can be seen by them as having real meaning to their lives. To do this I have developed a sequence of activities, dramatic in nature, which connects common thematic concerns in the plays with students' boundary experiences. By boundary-experiences I mean those restrictions and barriers to growth that every adolescent must confront and deal with as he weaves his way through his maturation tangle. The activities are designed to help students define their boundary conflicts, work through their definitions to developing scenarios for dramatic improvisations, and a chance to act out some of these boundary-conflict situations. Selected cuttings from the plays are then considered in light of specific boundary-conflict experiences. Students are encouraged to make the connections between the boundary conflicts in the plays and those that occur in their own lives. These connections form the basis for either additional improvisations or for script-writing.

(Recommended for 11th and 12th grade English and Drama.)

Key Words

Performance Exercises Drama

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