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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1982 Volume II: Autobiography

Scribe of Self

Guide for Curriculum Unit 82.02.04
by Rosemary F. Hamilton

Through the study of autobiography Jr. High School students can be motivated to do creative writing. This curriculum unit is geared for the slower reader who needs structured activities. Here I have combined short reading assignments of famous people with writing assignments ranging from the diary, the journal, the script, to actual autobiographical sketches. By grading papers holistically it gives students a chance to succeed in a non-threatening atmosphere. To have students feel good about themselves and express it in writing is my goal. Encouraging a better self-image writing familiar material may foster a needed confidence. Some of the best writing stems from writing what we know best. What better way than to start with yourself? Students need to realize they are just as important as anyone else. By studying autobiographies and biographies the writer will have the chance to remember his own life and jot down ideas. This unit lends itself to teaching career education to an impressionable age. The many job possibilities and the talents needed to acquire them are discussed in one of my activities. Students can be led to realize how important schooling is today to prepare for the future. It is an eye opener for them to look at some of their heroes and the many struggles needed often times to achieve.

(Recommended for 7th and 8th grades with low reading skills English, Social Studies and Reading)

Key Words

Autobiography Literature Ethnicity Writing Instruction

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