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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1982 Volume VI: The Changing American Family: Historical and Comparative Perspectives

On Becoming Husbands/Wives—Mothers/Fathers: From Fantasy to Reality

Guide for Curriculum Unit 82.06.05
by Judith L. Digrazia

This is a unit about marriage. It was designed primarily for high school students, however, it can easily be adapted for middle school students. The unit can be utilized by science, social studies, and social science teachers. The goals are to give students an opportunity to explore their feelings and attitudes about love and marriage, to examine the possible problems in marriage and to learn problem-solving techniques. Emphasis is on developing strong communication skills. Students are taught to be aware of their own feelings as well as each other's. My reasons for writing this unit were many. I believe young people are entering into marriage and parenting roles at an earlier age with unrealistic expectations of what the implications of these roles will be. This is due in part to the lack of time spent with students on developing realistic goals and expectations, and in part to the impact of the media, which present a distorted view of relationships. Often young people feel they have no one to discuss their concerns with. In our rushed, stressful age, family communication is not a well-developed skill. This unit addresses the need created by these circumstances by encouraging students to explore and discuss their feelings and beliefs about love, commitments, marriage, and problems. It examines the implications of these topics. Through the development of communication skills, it teaches students that they do have choices and options. I hope that by showing students they can direct their own futures, the quality of the relationships they establish will be more positive.

(Recommended for 8th through 12th grade Social Science, Social Studies, and Science [Mental Health].)

Key Words

Family Management

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