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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1983 Volume III: Reading the Twentieth Century Short Story

Small Packages

Guide for Curriculum Unit 83.03.04
by Anthony F. Franco

“Small Packages” offers a different treatment of short fiction for the middle and high school student. The unit introduces students to a variety of quality short fiction with various themes. The theories of phenomenology and hermeneutics provide the basis for a methodology of reading that urges the teacher and students to forego traditional literary analysis and encourages the readers to listen to what the story is really saying. Students encounter each story and construct metaphorical relationships between the story’s environment (setting), character, and experience (plot) and their own environment, character and experience. Finally, the unit attempts to improve student writing skills by having the students write essays detailing these metaphorical relationships. Thus, by examining the world of fiction, the unit brings the student face to face with his own world. It is hoped that the students will be able to learn a little something from each short story read by virtue of the metaphorical relationships they construct.

A suggested student bibliography of twenty-two excellent short stories is included although the methodology of this unit will work with any short story. In its entirety, the unit is designated to encompass approximately two marking periods although this may be expanded or compressed according to the user.

(Recommended for Grades 7th through 12th English)

Key Words

Short Stories Writing Instruction

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