



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1986 Volume IV: The Process of Writing

Thoughts to Page: Explorations and Expressions

Guide for Curriculum Unit 86.04.11
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While many middle and high school students have difficulty mastering the stages of writing, there is a kind of student in our schools for whom expression and writing have become one more negative experience in the educational system—that is, they cannot write and the classroom serves as a daily reminder of this failure. These are my students.

When these students come to my Resource Room, the central task I face is to rebuild their confidence that what they have to say is valuable and that they can master some basic writing skills. There exist a number of different approaches to opening up the student with limited skills. The lessons in this unit are based on the techniques of modeling and clustering. I believe that modeling leads the students to achieve, step-by-step, certain beginning skills in writing and expression without placing undue expectations on them (and thus creating a sense of failure once again). Clustering helps them to move from speech to writing with ease, and reinforces beginning thinking skills.

This unit describes the kind of student who has problems in language and expressions; describes the modeling and clustering approaches to learning; gives a brief overview of how this unit fits into this school semester; and gives detailed, daily lesson plans for 8 weeks based on the above approaches.

(Recommended for English classes, grades 5-8)

Key Words

Basic Skills Writing Instruction

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