



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

Writing from the Heart

Guide for Curriculum Unit 86.04.12
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“Writing from the Heart” introduces students to journal writing, the value of process, and the writing process. In its focus on the concerns and beliefs of the student, the unit is my attempt to guide students through an examination of their goals and values. During this process, they are learning to improve their thinking, listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills.

The unit is designed for the developmental level student. Emphasis is placed on the student rather than the teacher in a response-centered method where students work primarily in small groups. The teacher circulates and acts as a facilitator and resource expert along with classroom aides and volunteers. Much one-on-one attention is given to students to maximize remediation of reading and writing problems.

The unit contains a chart which gives the reader a quick overview of the unit schedule and the core activities in the average week. The sequence of the three core activities are as follows:

1. two days of value exercises, discussion, and journal writing
2. two days of guided reading, paragraph composition or poetry writing, and peer and teacher evaluation of writing process skills; and
3. one day of oral readings, summary discussion, and additional sources of values information.

This progression of activities is repeated through the first four weeks of the first marking period. A two-week break follows for mid-marking-period evaluation conferences and individual remediation with students. During the last two weeks, students construct a “values coat-of-arms shield” where they artistically represent personally relevant values which they have investigated throughout the marking period.

(Recommended for Developmental English 1 classes and Basic English 1 classes, grades 9-10)

Key Words

Basic Skills Writing Instruction

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