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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute  
1988 Volume III: Autobiography in America

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## The Autobiography of...Me

Guide for Curriculum Unit 88.03.07  
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This unit is developed for fifth and sixth grade Learning Center students who have had minimal exposure to the process of writing and its rewards. I have incorporated into the unit several excerpts from anthologies of novels and short stories which are written by black authors. These are for the students to read, discuss and to mimic in their writing. These stories are also used to stimulate the students to write about their own experiences.

The unit begins with the opening of school and continues throughout the school year. The students are introduced to the procedures for writing in journals on a regular, daily basis. They have the option to use a prompt or just write from their own experiences from the day or night before. The journal is used with the wish that the students will be able to use it to solve their problems or just to sort them out in a cohesive manner. Along with the daily journals the class is taught the writing process beginning with prewriting skills, Me-Webs, and prompts through to the first draft, editing and revisions to produce a final draft free of basic errors. The students are encouraged a great deal to share their work and learn the correct way to give and receive criticism in the form of critiques. To further personalize their writing and improve as authors, the students individually meet with the teacher in a conference. The conferences are spent searching for those details the author left out and how to express them on paper the way the author wants.

Finally, at the end of every eight-week period, the students select that piece of writing which they would like to see published in a book form. The students revise it, rewrite it and eventually publish the book. (Recommended for English, Reading, Writing, and Language classes, grades 5-12)

### **Key Words**

*Ethnic Autobiography Reading Instruction Special Education Writing Autobiographies Creative*

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