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

Finding Yourself Through Autobiography

Guide for Curriculum Unit 88.03.11
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The unit is intended to give students in an above average sixth grade English or humanities class a better sense of autobiography and to open up an avenue of inspiration for writing. Throughout the unit samples of autobiographical writing are presented for their intrinsic value as good literature and as an aid to help students to recognize the value in their own life experiences as a source for their own writing. The unit begins with an autobiography of a “rich and famous” sports personality, Dave Winfield, and develops into reading about ordinary people dealing with difficult situations. From the readings, activities are developed which employ autobiographical writing skills such as journals, interviewing, and writing one’s own autobiography. While the primary focus is on improving reading and writing skills, the unit will also demonstrate to students the positive feelings gained from self-reflection and empathy with others, whether the others are family members, fellow students or friends.

(Recommended for English classes, grade 6; and Humanities classes, grade 7)

Key Words

Autobiography Reading Instruction Journals Writing

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