



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1988 Volume IV: Responding to American Words and Images

Integrating Printmaking and Literature: A High School Art Curriculum

Guide for Curriculum Unit 88.04.05
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This is a class combining Literature and Art. It integrates both arts. It demands an innovative teacher who can work towards a double interpretation of literature through the process of an art form. The lessons and reading lists, which include poetry and short fiction, will need to be designed as a basis of deriving appropriate responses from the students. The reading of the literature aloud in class is the first step in inspiring reactions from the students.

The texts to be used are both used in high school. The short fiction will be found in a text called, "Norton Anthology of Short Fiction." The poetry will be found in the text, "To Read Poetry," by Donald Hall. The unit is developed into three parts. One is a description of how to elicit responses from the student about literature. This involves a discussion of the areas where this occurs. For example does he respond to the experience, to the setting of a piece or to the mood? Does he respond to the rhythm or to the sounds? Making the art about the writing requires other awareness such as a sense of what the poem is about and how to translate that into color, space, and form. The next area to discuss is the actual process of printmaking. There are five demonstrations clearly described for this purpose, and materials, objectives and processes are described in each.

There is finally a complete listing of the seven themes which will compose the unit. With these, there is a composite reading list for each theme. They are all found in the books listed above. The themes were chosen by reviewing the books carefully and selecting which were the most prevalent subjects. Donald Hall, for example, in his desire to spread his own appreciation, makes the best use of selection for poetry that will appeal to young people. "Children's Fantasy" (this is my own choice for starters), "Life and Death," "Nature, Animals, People and Places," "Comedy and Satire," and "Sports, Religion and Patriotism."

The process of integrating the process of printmaking with the students' emotional responses to the poems is described after the demonstrations. A good deal of intuition and hands-on approach come into play for doing the artwork. The students bring their experiences to the class, and from the readings and the choices they make can experience choices. The mental interpretations and the artistic responses are all based on his own perceptions of life and his experience. Hopefully, he can learn about himself more fully.

(Recommended for Fine Arts and Studio Art classes, grades 7-12; Printmaking classes, grades 7-12; and Creative Writing and Literature classes, grades 7-12)

Key Words

Poetry Painting Art Printmaking Literature

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