



'poetry for "special" Students

Guide for Curriculum Unit 89.02.05
by Victoria Mallison

Poetry for "Special" Students is designed to meet the needs of the S.E.M. student in the urban setting. My aim is to keep the attention of the class by meeting them on their level of interest, therefore I have incorporated Rap into my unit. Rap music is very popular among the youth today. The unit has four objectives: 1. to enhance the reading curriculum; 2. to improve reading and writing skills; 3. to serve as a basis for affective education; and 4. to teach the appreciation of poetry.

I will use the unit twice a week for 90 minutes each time. I will meet the objectives by breaking the unit into three sections: 1. Listening to and reading Rap, Pop, and Gospel music; 2. Reading poetry and using some poems for discussion of feelings; and 3. Writing poetry.

Some of the poets whose works we will review are: Langston Hughes, Maya Angelou, Robert Frost, Jack Prelutsky, and Stephen Vincent Benet. The students will look at long, short, rhymed, free style, happy, and sad poems. During the reading section I will use some of the poems to discuss alternative ways of dealing with their emotions. The writing section has been influenced by Kenneth Koch's "Wishes, Lies, and Dreams." The students will first write a collaborative poem, and later write an individual work. There are four detailed lesson plans as well as teacher and student bibliographies included in the unit.

(Recommended for Reading and Language special education classes, grades 7-12)

Key Words

Poetry American Literature Special Education

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