



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1990 Volume II: Contemporary American Drama: Scripts and Performance

Pick-A-Path Playhouse

Guide for Curriculum Unit 90.02.04
by Carol A. Wong

“Pick-A-Path Playhouse” introduces students, grades K-3, to the dramatization of children’s literature. Working from the story as a play, students are encouraged to take on the role of playwright and substitute either a different setting, character, or plot line for the original. How will this change/alter the path of the story? Brainstorming “what if” possibilities and consequences, students practice the concept of theme and variation, creating many new playlet ideas from the original story. Alternatives are discussed and a pick-a-path play is selected by the class or group to enact. The process of play-acting is a wonderful experiential counterpart to the more thought-provoking task of choosing a new path for the story. This creative problem-solving process asks students to stretch their imaginations. It also requires them to develop their communication skills as actors connecting to their audience and to the other cast members.

The three books adapted for “Pick-A-Path Playhouse” are “Anansi the Spider” by Gerald McDermott, “Who’s in Rabbit’s House?” by Verna Aardema, and “The Mountain That Loved a Bird” by Alice McLerran. Each of these stories weaves its own special magic as children’s literature. They provide a rich central focus to develop “Pick-A-Path Playhouse.” I have detailed a sequential five-day lesson plan of developmental drama activities as a guide for teachers, including ideas for the introduction and closure of each story.

(Recommended for “Enrichment,” grades K-3)

Key Words

Acting Elementary Instruction Children’s Drama

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