



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

Melting Pot Theater: Teaching for Cultural Understanding

Guide for Curriculum Unit 90.02.11
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“Melting Pot Theater” refers to the integration of the various subject areas in the Elementary School curriculum. The unit details a plan to combine the efforts of many staff members to teach three cultures over an eight-week period. Although the three cultures of Ghana, Puerto Rico, and Russia are focused on in this unit, other cultures can be added or substituted. The purpose of the unit is to promote cultural awareness and understanding. The unit concludes with two performances demonstrating some of the unique characteristics of each culture. Descriptions of the tasks of the participants, a sample master schedule for participating staff to follow, sample lessons, and an annotated bibliography are included. “Melting Pot Theater” has been developed for use with students in Kindergarten through Fourth grade. The teacher who chooses to use this unit should be in a role within the school to coordinate teachers and ancillary staff, i.e., a Curriculum/Staff Developer, or Itinerant Arts Teacher.

After students have completed this unit they will be able to: identify at least three cultures which have helped to make up the U.S.A.; count from one to ten in Spanish, Temne, and Russian; identify the U.S.A., Puerto Rico, the U.S.S.R, Russia, Africa, and Ghana on a map; tell at least one folk tale from each culture; sing at least one song from each country; name at least two natural resources from each culture studied; identify traditional folk music from each of the three cultures; take part in a performance which will focus on some aspects of life in Russia, Puerto Rico, and Ghana.

(Recommended for Social Studies, Language Arts, Music, Drama, Dance, Visual Arts, and Mathematics, grades K-5)

Key Words

Drama Spanish English Bilingualism Children’s Foreign Language Instruction Education

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