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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1993 Volume II: Folktales

Folktales and Social Development

Guide for Curriculum Unit 93.02.07
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Folktales are used to teach social development concepts such as non-violence, conflict resolution, communications, and social relationships. Students read, analyze, and apply the stories to their own personal and social situations. Each story is presented for its instructional value. Every story is lively and seeks to facilitate the exploration of social, cultural, and moral values and behaviors. The teacher plays a major role in this curriculum unit because a thorough and directed interpretation of the story is imperative. Problem-solving and critical analytical skills are important features of this unit, and are actively pursued by the teacher and students.

There are three major phases in this unit. The first section attempts to familiarize students with the genre of folktales. Students will glean insight about the vastness of folklore in general, and folktales, in particular. The universal nature of oral traditions and the commonalties underlying many stories are presented from a global perspective. The second phase includes actual stories selected to correspond with the social theme under investigation. However, teachers and students should select folktales that sustain their interest and are the most relevant to their circumstances. Finally, there is an opportunity to tell and write stories. Not only is this activity fun and entertaining, but also socially therapeutic.

(Recommended for Social Development or Social Studies, Grades 1-12)

Key Words

Problem Solving Mathematics Folktales Literature Folklore

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