



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1994 Volume II: Poetry in the Classroom: Incentive and Dramatization

Dramatic Interpretation of Monologue Poems

Guide for Curriculum Unit 94.02.05
by Carol Penney

This curriculum unit will develop a complementary relationship between poems and theater. Acting techniques and disciplines will be used to develop and interpret character as presented in selected monologue poems of Alfred Tennyson, Robert Browning, and T.S. Eliot. Prerequisites include basic acting skills and experience, with a strong commitment to theater. Students will have previously studied works of Shakespeare, Chekhov, and Albee. These students will become better actors through exercise and acquisition of acting skills in the context of literature not specifically written for the theater. The actor's skills will be enhanced through sensory exercises, work with costume and objects, place, picture, and tableau exercises, and a variety of improvisations.

Emphasis will be on character development as each student seeks to bring life and credibility to unique individuals, real or fictional, rather than limiting ourselves to acting out narratives or events as told in poetry. Classroom work will combine the study of acting techniques with both literary and dramatic interpretations of monologues and soliloquies. Because each student will autonomously explore and discover his or her own very personal and individual interpretation of a selected character, there will be no objectively "correct" interpretations, only more or less believable ones. The students will also become better informed actors, acquainted with new writers, literary forms, and ideas, and we hope imbued with an appetite to learn more.

(Recommended for Theater, grades 11-12)

Key Words

Acting Reading Writing Drama Theater

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