



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
2009 Volume I: Writing, Knowing, Seeing

I Came, I Saw, I Wrote: An Interdisciplinary Writing Unit for Bilingual Students

Guide for Curriculum Unit 09.01.01
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The possibilities of visual materials are investigated as sources of constructing new meaning in teaching writing to bilingual students in grades five through eight. The content of photographs is united by one theme - migration and immigration - that covers three disciplines: language arts, social studies, and science. The unit assists teachers working with English Language Learners with the teaching of writing - a highly demanding cognitive skill. Along with the main goal - to teach writing about something what one sees in a photograph - the unit aims to enhance students' oral language and improve their reading skills. Its theoretical part offers extensive research on the subjects of vision and photography. To ensure students have the contextual knowledge necessary to interpret a visual image, writing about a photograph is preceded by reading short texts on migration and immigration in the three content areas. The strategies in this unit are based on the premises that our vision is constructive and that students should be able to construct their own meanings of photographs that they study. Using writing strategies in a three-step process, they will write about their interpretations based on their prior knowledge and on the emotions aroused by an image.

(Recommended for English as a Second Language, grades 5-8)

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