



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
2008 Volume II: Storytelling: Fictional Narratives, Imaginary People, and the Reader's Real Life

Reshaping Our Lives with the Circular Journey of Storytelling

Guide for Curriculum Unit 08.02.05
by Elizabeth K. Johnston

Whether we like to admit it or not, as teachers, we must face the reality that most of our ninth-grade students find almost every other aspect of twenty-first-century living more interesting than reading. This makes our job, especially the job of teaching literature, difficult, to say the least. I've designed this unit, for the beginning of the school year, with this challenging reality in mind. However, in having students trace the journeys of their own lives, in teaching them to see themselves somewhere in other people's stories, I'm telling them they've got to find stories interesting; they are about them! This unit focuses on storytelling in literature, beginning with children's picture books. It contains a variety of ideas, strategies and lessons designed to help students see themselves as storytellers, readers, and an invaluable part of a larger learning community. The unit is recursive in nature, as students will continually go back to their past memories, as well as their past writing, in an attempt to grow as individuals, and as readers and writers of stories.

(Recommended for English Language Arts, grade 9)

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