



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
2007 Volume I: American Voices: Listening to Fiction, Poetry, and Prose

Poetry and Prose to Increase Literacy and Writing Skills

Guide for Curriculum Unit 07.01.07

by Carlos A. Lawrence

This unit is designed to provide literacy and writing teachers with strategies and activities that use poetry, songs, speeches, and historical documents to increase reading comprehension and encourage the revising aspect of the writing process. The unit is designed to fit the United States national standards and objectives for language arts curriculum with regard to multicultural understanding, evaluation strategies, communication skills, and applying language skills. This unit is also designed to adhere to the No Child Left Behind Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act with regard to standard-based and individualized education methods.

The methodology includes integration of literacy and writing objectives through analysis, interpretation, and comparisons that teachers may use to stimulate meta-cognition. This unit is designed to be inclusive of students with different learning styles and cognitive abilities and will be especially useful for teachers who use a multi-level approach of instruction that addresses these learning diversities in the classroom. The analytic approach focuses on the analysis of distinction in a writer's voice with a focus on allusion, repetition, alliteration, simile, anaphora, analogy, metaphor parallelism, and imagery. This unit is divided into three sub-units entitled "Hip Hop and the Classics," "Who Gets It Right the First Time?," and "What Are We Really Watching?" These units encourage critical thinking, oral discussion, collaborative learning, and written responses based on Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) objectives. These objectives are: understanding of the main idea, developing an interpretation, making connections to a text, and demonstrating a critical stance. The teacher will guide the students toward composing and articulating their own poems and speeches and creating their own mock television commercials. The unit is intended to provide activities that teachers can use to help students appreciate and enjoy poetry, the writing process, and encourage public speaking.

(Recommended for Literacy and Writing, grades 5-8.)

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