



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

The Search for Self: Voices of Adolescence in Literature

Guide for Curriculum Unit 07.01.01
by Sean Griffin

Utilizing literature of the adolescent search for self, my unit is designed not only to understand the characters' struggles, but to allow students to examine their own struggles, to open up to each other and more importantly, to themselves. I want our students to realize that writing is a vehicle that they can utilize to help themselves find their way. I hope to help students to understand the power of writing and poetry.

Through participation in "Open Mic Fridays" and journal writing throughout the unit, students will share their thoughts on a variety of issues. Students will also create a class book of poetry in which their most meaningful and intriguing work will be bound.

Finally, students will be introduced to the Harlem Renaissance. The study of the Harlem Renaissance is a nice addition to the unit because students are able to see that the movement was a collective "search for self" as African American artists gathered in Harlem to create one massive, glorious voice.

(Recommended for English Language Arts, grade 8.)

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