



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative
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Reading as an Act of Creating Value: Character Education in a Public Montessori School

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by Sheila L. Carter-Jones

This curriculum unit gives a theoretical basis for the need to present character education in a Montessori public school. The idea that reading is a valuable act through which students can learn to interact with people is brought into concrete form in activities and writing. The quality of prepared activities, discussions and writing assignments that encourage self-motivated learning is reflective of the Montessori philosophy of education. This unit seeks to provide some creative dramatic activities that guide students to recall sensory experiences, discipline the movement of the body and body parts, and endeavor to develop creative critical thinking. Much discussion occurs in debriefing that is based on carefully developed teacher questions aimed at reflecting critically on characters' thoughts, words, and behaviors.

This curriculum is developed around a unique situation in that I am the only Communications teacher at the middle school level of the k-8 school where I teach. This affords me the opportunity to teach and learn with the students over a three year period of time. To make use of such an opportunity, I have developed this curriculum so that a quality of character education would be discussed at each grade level. As well, the unit calls for a reread of a previous grades novel that is required reading on the school district scope and sequence. This reread of a text is called a text revisited or T-R. The second reading is for character education: engaging the text in a different way than for reading and comprehension. For sixth grade the T-R is *I Thought My Soul Would Rise and Fly*, for seventh grade the T-R is *Holes* and for eighth grade it is *The Giver*. Also incorporated in the reading is a picture storybook for each grade level that has a similar theme as each of the longer novels. The picture story books offer a nonthreatening way to begin to look at respect, justice and courage as qualities of character education being put forth in this unit.

(Recommended for English, Theatre Arts, and Communications, grades 6-12)

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