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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative
2010 Volume II: Persuasion in Democratic Politics

Creating Authentic Student Leadership through Rhetoric

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I want my students to be problem solvers and use the leadership class as a platform for using their voices to create real change. This unit will guide my students through a process of engaging the school community, assessing the needs of our school, analyzing case studies of community activism and rhetoric, studying possible solutions, and ultimately using rhetorical devices to develop their writing and speaking skills to help launch campaigns to implement those solutions. This unit falls under the umbrella of service learning, which can be defined as pedagogy that integrates academics, civic participation, community service, and reflection. While the skill that students are developing in this unit is rhetoric, the underlying goal is for students to use that skill to become leaders and engage the larger community. Teaching rhetoric in a leadership class will provide a unique context for students to learn these skills in a very authentic situation.

(Developed for Leadership, grades 7-8; recommended for Leadership, grades 6-9)

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