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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative
2010 Volume III: Creating Lives: An Introduction to Biography

I Have a Story to Tell: Learning through Peer Biographical Inquiry

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Biography is seen in various technological and media representations. Social networking, Facebook, YouTube, video sharing websites, and reality television are just a few examples of how students see the lives of others daily. The goal of this unit is to help students learn how to use information about other people in a productive manner for personal growth. Students will examine a variety of biographical forms designed to promote interactivity with peers. Students will review the lives of notable persons and identify key characteristics and events that are relevant or important to them. The process allows students to engage in dialogue that encourages cultural discovery and elevates self-actualization. Topics such as cyberbullying and negative consequences of online publishing help students understand ethical issues during decision-making. Students use higher-order skills to gather information using oral history and interviewing techniques about a peer. The process concludes with a creative biographical presentation of the peer in digital media format as students learn more about themselves and each other. Basic research, communication, and technological skills provide practice and teach students new methods to gather and share information.

(Developed for Technology Education, grade 12; recommended for Language Arts, Social Science, and Technology Education, grades 10-12)

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