



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute  
2007 Volume IV: The Science of Natural Disasters

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## Preface

In March 2007, sixty-one teachers from twenty-eight New Haven Public Schools became Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute to prepare new curricular materials for school courses. Established in 1978, the Institute is a partnership of Yale University and the New Haven Public Schools, designed to strengthen teaching and improve learning of the humanities and the sciences in our community's schools. Through the Institute, Yale faculty members and school teachers join in a collegial relationship. The Institute is also an interschool and interdisciplinary forum for teachers to work together on new curricula.

The Institute has repeatedly received national recognition as a pioneering model of university-school collaboration that integrates curriculum development with intellectual renewal for teachers. Between 1998 and 2003 it conducted a National Demonstration Project which showed that the approach the Institute had taken for twenty years in New Haven could be tailored to establish similar university-school partnerships under different circumstances in other cities. Based on the success of that Project, in 2004 it announced the Yale National Initiative to strengthen teaching in public schools, a long-term endeavor to establish exemplary Teachers Institutes in states throughout the country.

Teachers had primary responsibility for identifying the subjects the Institute would address. Between October and December 2006, Institute Representatives canvassed teachers in each New Haven elementary, middle, and high school to determine the subjects they would like the Institute to treat. The Institute then circulated descriptions of seminars that encompassed teachers' interests. In applying to the Institute, teachers described unit topics on which they proposed to work and the relationship of these topics to Institute seminars and to courses they would teach in the coming school year.

Five seminars were organized, corresponding to the principal themes of the Fellows' proposals. The seminar entitled "The Science of Natural Disasters" was led by David Bercovici, Professor of Geophysics. Between March and August, Fellows participated in seminar meetings, researched their topics, and attended a series of lectures by Yale faculty members.

The curriculum units Fellows wrote are their own; they are presented in five volumes, one for each seminar. A list of the 181 volumes of Institute units published between 1978 and 2007 appears on the following pages. Guides to each year's units, a topical *Index* of all 1644 units written between 1978 and 2007 and reference lists showing the relationship of the units to school curricula and academic standards are available from the Institute. An electronic version of these curricular resources is available on the Institute's Web site (<http://teachersinstitute.yale.edu>).

The units that follow contain four elements: objectives, teaching strategies, sample lessons and classroom

activities, and lists of resources for teachers and students. They are intended primarily for the use of Institute Fellows and their colleagues who teach in New Haven. Teachers who use these units may submit comments on them at <http://teachers.yale.edu>.

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New Haven

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