



Yale-New Haven
Teachers Institute®

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Understanding and Supporting Our Peers with Cognitive Challenges

Guide for Curriculum Unit 07.05.12
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All schools in New Haven enroll students with some cognitive disabilities. In fact, most classrooms have at least one member who has a disability, whether it be physical like hearing impairment or cognitive like an intellectual disability. All of our students must learn about the needs and feelings of their peers because students who are sensitive to the needs of their fellow students can better learn in a cooperative setting. Thus, any teacher in our school system could benefit from using this unit with his/her students.

The goal of this curriculum is to prepare students to meet the challenge of living and learning with *all* of their peers. Students will study the attributes of students with intellectual disabilities, specifically Down Syndrome and will gain knowledge and become aware of the perspective of some of these peers. They will compare and contrast challenges of students who live with intellectual disabilities, such as Down Syndrome.

Both federal and state law mandate educating our students who have disabilities alongside students who do not. Teachers who use this unit will learn about how and why all teachers are required to teach students with disabilities. Students will learn about their peers' challenges, and during reading and writing assignments, increase their proficiency on Connecticut's Mastery Test literacy strands.

(Developed for Literacy, grade 5; recommended for Literacy, grades 3-6, and Social Science, grades 5-6)

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