

Curriculum Units by  
Fellows of the  
Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute  
Guide  
2022

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## *Preface*

In February 2022 teachers from New Haven Public Schools became Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute® to deepen their knowledge of the subjects they teach and to develop new curricular material to engage and educate the students in their school courses. Founded 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 STEM fields in our community's schools. Through the Institute, Yale faculty members and Public Schools teachers join in a collegial relationship. The Institute is also an interschool and interdisciplinary forum for teachers to work together.

The Teachers Institute has repeatedly received 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 that showed 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 the Institute announced the Yale National Initiative to strengthen teaching in public schools®, a long-term endeavor to influence public policy on teacher professional development, in part by establishing in states around the country exemplary Teachers Institutes following the approach developed in New Haven and implemented elsewhere. Evaluations have shown that the Institute approach exemplifies the characteristics of high-quality teacher professional development, enhances teacher quality in the ways known to improve student achievement, and encourages participants to remain in teaching in their schools.

Teachers had primary responsibility for identifying the subjects on which the Institute would offer seminars in 2022. Between October and December 2021, teachers who served as Institute Representatives and Contacts canvassed their colleagues in New Haven public schools to determine the subjects they wanted the Institute to address. 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 those topics both to Institute seminars and to courses they teach. Their principals verified that their unit topics were consistent with district academic standards and significant for school curricula and plans, and that they would be assigned courses or grade levels in which to teach their units during the following school year.

Through this process three seminars were organized, corresponding to the principal themes that emerged during the canvassing. The seminars were:

- “Writing about Nature,” led by Jill Campbell, Professor of English;
- “The Long Fight for a Free Caribbean, 1700s-1959,” led by Anne Eller, Associate Professor of History;

- “Ethnic Studies: Theory, Practice, and Pedagogy,” led by Daniel HoSang, Professor of Ethnicity, Race, and Migration, and of American Studies

Between March and July, Fellows participated in seminar meetings, studied the seminar subject and their unit topics, and attended a series of talks by Yale faculty members. The curriculum units Fellows wrote are their own; they are presented in a volume for each seminar. The units, which were written in stages over time, contain five elements: content objectives, teaching strategies, examples of classroom activities, lists of resources for teachers and students, and an appendix on the academic standards the unit implements. They are intended primarily for use by Institute Fellows and their colleagues who teach in New Haven.

This *Guide* to the 2022 units contains introductions by the Yale faculty members who led the seminars, followed by synopses written by the authors of the individual units. The Fellows indicate the courses and grade levels for which they developed their units and other places in the school curriculum where the units may be applicable. Copies of the units are deposited in New Haven schools and are online at [teachersinstitute.yale.edu](http://teachersinstitute.yale.edu). A list of the 236 volumes of units the Institute has published between 1978 and 2022 appears in the back of this *Guide*.

The Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute is a permanently endowed academic unit of Yale University.

James R. Vivian

New Haven  
August 2021

## *I. Writing about Nature*

### **Introduction**

Black men building a Nation,  
My Brother said, have no leisure like them  
No right to waste at trees  
Inventing names for wrens and weeds.  
But it's when you don't care about the world  
That you begin owning and destroying it  
Like them.

Gerald Barrax Sr., "To Waste at Trees"

This year, when I told people the topic of the Teachers Institute seminar I was leading, they sometimes responded with surprise or even a bit of skepticism. "Writing About *Nature*?" – to some, that didn't sound like a subject with obvious relevance for students and teachers in New Haven Public Schools. By contrast, three years ago, when I mentioned the topic of my YNHTI seminar—"Digital Lives"—most people quickly grasped the importance of thinking about the place of digital media and digital devices in students' everyday 21st-century lives. As Daniel Croteau, one of the Fellows in our seminar, remarks at the beginning of his unit: "As an urban teacher, the idea of nature seems theoretical as the city is not the first place one visualizes when visualizing this concept. My students would agree with that. To my students, nature is not a tangible concept but something that is not available to them."

The sense of incongruity that seminar Fellows and I sometimes encountered between the subject of "nature" and assumptions about New Haven students' lives—and more pointedly, the gap Dan highlights when he notes his students' perception of nature as "something that is not available to them"—generated some of the most fundamental guiding questions for our work in the seminar: What does "Nature" mean, and where can it be found? Does the experience of nature belong to some people and not to others? How can students in the urban setting of New Haven have access to nature as a part of their daily experience and as a subject for their own writing?

We didn't aim to arrive at a definitive answer to the first of these questions, operating instead with an open-ended concept of nature and affirming that experiences of the natural world can be found in the city as well as in designated areas of "wilderness." But we pressed hard on the second and third of these questions, because to assume urban students' exclusion from a broadly-defined experience of nature is to accept a profound loss—and indeed, an injustice. A number of recent studies have demonstrated the significant and measurable benefits of time spent in "green spaces" (settings with natural elements, including within a city) to the physical, mental, and emotional health of both children and adults. Amy Brazauski, Michelle Romanelli, and Eden Stein each discuss

some of this research in their units and describe their plans to provide opportunities for students to spend time outdoors and attending to the natural world during the school-day, building habits and practices of attention that will enhance their long-term sense of themselves and of the world.

The natural world elicits acts of close and patient observation from all the writers whose work we sampled in our shared readings for the seminar, whether scientists, environmentalists, poets, novelists, essayists, or writers of memoirs; and all the units developed in our seminar emphasize practices of close observation. The simple, reiterative methods of the “sit spot” and of nature-journaling support the development of these practices in several Fellows’ units, whether designed for the Life Sciences, Art, or English classroom and for students in elementary, middle-school, or high-school grades. As Lauren Whitelaw, a Life Sciences teacher, remarks, all of the methods of scientific inquiry “stem from one skill: making observations”; while Amy Brazauski, an English teacher, points out that observational skills are essential to “reading comprehension, writing, and abstract thinking skills,” and to both understanding and creating narrative. In a STEAM unit integrating Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math, Stephanie Smelser prompts her middle-school Art students to discover the ubiquity of the spiral form in nature, from seashells to tornadoes, and invites them each to choose one spiral form to observe closely, to research, and to respond to in a work of original art.

Embodied, mindful, repeated experiences of nature can foster our students’ sense of their own place in the world and cultivate their cognitive and intellectual skills. Observational practices may also be the basis of a more affective level of engagement and response—the kind of “care” for the world that the speaker of Gerald Barrax Sr.’s poem, “To Waste at Trees,” finds lacking in “them,” those (implicitly white people) who relate to the natural world only by “owning and destroying it.” In our time of rapid climate change and environmental crisis, the consequences of relationships to nature that lack the dimension of “care” have become alarmingly clear: the natural world we live in is not a stable background, to be observed and appreciated when we wish – it is in imminent peril.

Although the study of writing about nature has often centered on a narrow tradition of white English and American men, we embraced and explored a more diverse range of perspectives on nature, especially emphasizing Black and Indigenous North American voices. In poems included in the anthology *Black Nature* (ed. Camille Dungy) and in writings by N. Scott Momaday (Kiowa), Louise Erdrich (Ojibwe), and Robin Wall Kimmerer (Potawatomi), among others, we found an array of relationships to nature that do not take mastery, extraction, profit, and ownership as their premise. The curriculum units developed in our seminar do not focus primarily on climate change or environmental crisis; but our shared hope is that strengthening students’ connections to nature will both provide them with a source of inner sustenance in our uncertain times and establish the basis for attending with care to the condition of our planet.



The units written for our seminar range widely in subject matter from study of weather and climate in a third-grade classroom (Michelle Romanelli) to plans for survival themed book clubs, embedded in a year-long series of opportunities for experiential learning outdoors (Eden C. Stein); from middle-school study of a graphic novel featuring Native American origin stories, Matt Dembecki's *Trickster*, paired with oral storytelling (Daniel Croteau) to a scaffolded, multi-phase investigation of nature and environmental justice in a high-school English Language Arts classroom (Amy Brazauski); and from the practice of nature-journaling as a key element of scientific method in a Life Sciences class (Lauren Whitelaw) to a multi-disciplinary dive into the study of spirals form in middle-school Art (Stephanie Smelser). They all seek to advance students' capacities for close attention and observation, and for a sense of connection to nature—aiming, even, to renew young people's readiness to feel wonder.

It is the present and the possibilities of a future that must concern us. Ours is a damaged world. We humans have done the damage, and we must be held to account. We have suffered a poverty of the imagination, a loss of innocence. There was a time when "man must have held his breath in the presence of this continent," this New World, "commensurate to his capacity for wonder." I would strive with all my strength to give that sense of wonder to those who will come after me.

--N. Scott Momaday, *Earth Keeper: Reflections on the American Land*

Jill Campbell



## **Synopses of the Curriculum Units**

### **22.01.01**

#### **The Urban, the Wilderness, and Me: An ELA Journey into Nature and Environmental Justice, by Amy Brazauski**

Stemming from a desire to connect urban high school students with the natural world, this English curriculum unit dives into the complex and sometimes unseemingly ways nature remains as constant as life itself. The unit begins by exploring the benefits of nature on mental health and communication for students within the classroom and their social lives. Focusing on the individual, students reflect on their personal understanding and relationship to nature as well as begin to grow their perception of community and cultural connections to nature in the past as well as present. Students engage in hands-on learning by growing plants, visiting local natural sites, such as New Haven's Long Wharf, and participating in Wilderness Inspired Leadership Development activities. Along the way students develop and strengthen skills such as observational thinking, narrative writing, research, and public speaking skills. Students also develop knowledge on environmental justice and activism as a way to learn to become agents of change in their school, local, and global community. This unit can also be used in tandem with US History as well as Ecology, Biology, and Math curriculum.

(Developed for English, grade 10; recommended for English, Social Studies, and Natural Science, grades 9-12)

### **22.01.02**

#### **From the Beginning: Understanding & Creating Origin Stories, by Daniel Croteau**

Students will be reading the core text, Matt Dembicki's *Trickster*. While reading, students will examine the science in the story as well as build a stronger understanding of how setting impacts their learning and understanding. As a part of this unit, students will examine their understanding of concepts through sketchnotes. While doing so, students are asked also to consider the role oral storytelling plays in understanding a text. The culminating activity in the unit asks students to create their own story in the style of Native American origin stories.

(Developed for Language Arts, grades 7-8; recommended for Language Arts, grades 6-8, and English, grade 9)

### **22.01.03**

#### **The Impacts of Weather and Climate on Communities, by Michelle Romanelli**

This eight-lesson unit was designed to introduce elementary students to the impact severe weather has on an area. Specifically, students will be able to describe climate and

identify how it affects a particular area or region of the world. They will be able to look at different weather systems and patterns that impact daily life for all living things. Additionally, students will be able to understand the five different climate zones categorized by the Köppen-Geiger Climate Classification System.

Within the unit, students will also have the opportunity to observe weather by creating a sit spot for daily observation both at home and at school. They will also be able to participate in many different hands-on activities such as meeting a meteorologist and learning what their daily tasks involve; visiting the Connecticut Science Center; and measuring the weather and creating a rain gauge. Ultimately, the goal of this unit is for students to understand how weather and climate impact living things and how to prepare and stay safe during extreme weather.

(Developed for Science, Non-Fiction Reading, and Non-Fiction Writing, grade 3; recommended for Science, grade 4)

#### **22.01.04**

#### **Spiral Introspective: Discover Spirals through Art in S.T.E.A.M, by Stephanie Smelser**

This unit is a progressive art unit that combines hands-on art foundations, S.T.E.A.M. contents, and mindful practices, all while engaging in the growing world of technology communications. It is scientifically proven that students learn best when they feel connected and can see real world connections. Revealing the appearance of spiral forms in nature, art, science, technology, and math, I suggest how this unit on spirals may be adapted for each age group from PreK to Grade 12, with their very different developmental learning needs. I provide a detailed account of the unit's design for a focus group of middle-school students (Grades 5-8). I have included a spiral slideshow that is a working slideshow document, hours upon hours of intellectual property for you to share and enjoy with classrooms all over the world. I am passionate about students' love for learning and I believe this unit is transformative in changing the approaches to teaching and learning.

(Developed for Art, grades 5-8)

#### **22.01.05**

#### **Reading and Writing about Nature - Surviving and Thriving, by Eden C. Stein**

This unit aims to familiarize middle school students who live in an urban environment with the benefits of spending time outdoors and in their own natural surroundings. The topic of survival in nature is connected to how nature can help us thrive as individuals and a society. The elements of the unit are spread throughout the school year with time spent outside. Students will read nonfiction, prose and poetry and write about the natural

phenomena they encounter with a focus on trees. Writing will include nature journaling, poetry, responses to text and even short fiction. A focused portion of the unit is in survival themed book clubs and the author provides a curated list of such books appropriate for middle school. Students will do a brief study of global climate change and its impact on natural surroundings. American Indian legends are interwoven with time spent outdoors during various seasons, as a way to encourage students to see their own obligations to preserving our planet. Experiential learning is encouraged whenever possible so that students can experience nature through all their senses. Students will complete a culminating project as well as final reflection to solidify their year-long learning about nature.

(Developed for English Language Arts, grade 7; recommended for English Language Arts, grades 6 and 8)

### **22.01.06**

#### **“I Notice...” Learning Observation Through Nature Journaling, by Lauren Whitelaw**

The purpose of this unit is to present students with methods to make observations through connecting with their natural world. The unit will take students through an introductory routine that prompts them to synthesize their thinking into statements of wonder and driving questions.

The human connection with the natural world is in peril, and it is my hope that through nature journaling, participating youths can foster a relationship with nature rather than pass through it.

Through the practice of nature journaling, students will be writing, diagramming, and drawing to introduce and practice the skill of observation. This unit is designed to be facilitated in the outdoors and offers advice in achieving this. It also provides an opportunity for students to express themselves in a way that combines art, writing, and science. While written to be facilitated in a high school setting, this unit is also suitable for middle and upper elementary school students.

(Developed for Aqua Biology, grade 10; recommended for Biology, grade 10; Environmental Science, grades 9-12; Phychem, grade 9; and Life Science, grades 7-8)



## ***II. The Long Fight for a Free Caribbean, 1700s-1959***

### **Introduction**

In *The Long Fight for a Free Caribbean, 1700s-1959*, we engaged with Caribbean history during and after slavery, connecting them to similar histories in Latin America and the United States. As a foundation for the seminar, we analyzed the depths of plantation slavery in the region, the epicenter of sugar production for hundreds of years. Critically, we focused also on scholarship about the African Diaspora in the Caribbean, which examines questions about politics, religion, and culture with new specificity. A textbook, Laurent Dubois' and Richard Turits' *Freedom Roots: Histories from the Caribbean* (UNC, 2019), offered a foundation for the flurry of names and dates.

The curricula that Fellows developed from our discussions hold this foundational assumption to be true: that trans-Atlantic slavery served as the foundation of capitalism and infiltrated every element of life, from diet, to literature, to popular culture to global politics, in the Caribbean, the United States, and also across the Atlantic. In the shadow of this tremendous legacy of exploitation, we analyzed how the path away from slavery was difficult, and how abolition arrived differently to islands across the Caribbean. But every moment, resistance emerges as a central theme. Through the questions raised by the history of nineteenth-century Caribbean life – food security, the fight for meaningful political power, and the meaning of independence – the Fellows developed curricula that move beyond the caricature of Caribbean history as “paradise” and speak to struggles against racism and the long history of liberation contests that continue in the present day.

The fruits of our discussion and readings were the following curricula:

**Carol Boynton** constructs a participatory, lively, and vivid kindergarten curriculum unit that brings Caribbean folktales to the classroom and invites the students to participate in their narration. The curriculum unit offers portraits of a collection of picaresque characters, including Anansi and Mami Wata, who are well known in West Africa and the Caribbean and who have tales of adventure. The activities are crafted to include many open-ended questions aimed at sparking creativity and developing higher-order thinking skills. Finally, the curriculum unit also includes some call-and-response storytelling methods that invoke rich traditions and encourage the vocal participation of the students. It is supplemented with an extensive bibliography.

**Felicia Fountain** brings United States' history into the framework of a longer legacy of enslavement in the Americas, beginning in the seventeenth-century Caribbean. As she establishes, English and Spanish colonization experiments in the Caribbean both predated and influenced the development of plantation slavery in North America. In a curriculum unit designed for middle school Social Studies, Fountain invites teachers and students to pursue the question of voice, truth, and interconnected histories through the narratives of

those who were enslaved. She highlights the mediated autobiography of Esteban Montejo, recorded when he described his experiences and escape from Cuban slavery in an interview in his later years, as a unique window into both the oppression and liberation struggles of plantation slavery in the Americas.

**James Osborne** crafts a detailed and rigorous comparative analysis of enslavement and liberation struggles in Saint-Domingue (after independence, Haiti) and Cuba for high school Social Studies students. Osborne presents a deeply interconnected tale of exploitation in the French and Spanish colonies. At the center of his curriculum unit is the Haitian Revolution (1791-1804), a massive and heroic struggle that brought together enslaved strategists from Central and West Africa and others in a pitched and multi-sided fight for liberation from slavery (and soon, from France). As slavery ended in Haiti, however, it only expanded in the neighboring island, as Osborne details. Cuba's independence and anti-slavery struggles were even more prolonged. By considering the development of, and resistance to, slavery in Haiti and Cuba, students are invited to consider interconnecting histories throughout the hemisphere.

**Nancy Bonilla** tackles the question of “racial innocence” in discussions of slavery and identity in Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic. Grounded in the text *The Skin I'm In*, by Sharon G. Flake, as well as a collection of historical images, the middle-school English Language Arts curriculum unit will challenge a denial of the history of slavery in both islands. The injustice of Puerto Rico's colonial status, with all of the inequalities that that implies, has sometimes edged out discussions of racism and the history of slavery within the island itself. Similarly, anti-Haitian prejudice in the Dominican Republic often compounds racism within the territory while denying a domestic history of slavery. As the curriculum unit establishes, however, identifying colorism and discussing these histories constitute an important anti-racist praxis.

**Sean Griffin** presents teachers and students with the opportunity to consider heroism and inspiration through the prism of the imagination of the artist Jacob Lawrence (1917-2000). In a curriculum unit designed for middle school English Language Arts– but appropriate also for more advanced students and also for Social Studies courses– students will engage with the tremendous importance of the popular memory of revolutionary hero Toussaint Louverture, one of the leaders of the Haitian Revolution, in African American politics and culture. In his artwork, Lawrence drew on liberation struggles of past and present. Through journaling, an art exhibit walk, and other activities, students will creatively engage with the revolutionary legacy of Haiti, the artwork of Lawrence and other artists of the Harlem Renaissance, and also with influential people in their own lives.

Anne Eller



## **Synopses of the Curriculum Units**

### **22.02.01**

#### **Folktales from the Caribbean, by Carol Boynton**

This four- to six-week literacy unit for primary students focuses on folktale characters from the Caribbean. It is a cultural study to help students learn the idea that folktales can be specific to cultures and locations with characters that have familiar traits. They will learn about Anansi, the trickster spider and notable figure throughout the Caribbean; Papa Bois from St. Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago, guards forests and land animals; Mami Wata, a mermaid who protects the rivers in West Africa and Haiti; Bacoos from Guyana and Barbados, are small, bearded men who can appear in houses and have the ability to grant wishes, if treated well; Lit'mahn is a tiny fellow who is magical and mischievous.

The students will participate in five-character studies as they learn the traits of the folktale heroes and troublemakers and the various ways they are depicted through art and description.

(Developed for Reading and Writing, grade K; recommended for Reading and Writing, grades K-2)

### **22.02.02**

#### **Imprints of Transatlantic Caribbean Slavery on the United States Using Narrative, by Felicia Fountain**

Social Studies involves the study of land, people, culture, events as well as the changing of hands of political power. Economics is also a major element of social studies. Humanity's desire for power and wealth has often impacted nations and their people.

The transatlantic slave trade involves many of these themes, including Caribbean influence on the United States. This unit will be a 4-to-6- week unit. It is part of the eighth-grade American history curriculum. Students will use research and narratives in this process to look at economics, enslaved people in the United States and in the Caribbean and the impact on one another. We will explore the 1600s until the 1900s.

Through their research, students will discover that much of the information that they need to complete this cannot be found in their Social Studies textbooks. In some classes students learn about narratives, memoirs, and diaries briefly when studying important figures in history – presidents, human rights and civil rights leaders, etc. However, they are not often used as regular tools in the classroom. Students will research the narratives of enslaved people from Africa who were placed in the Caribbean as well as in the United States. They will also research the narratives for those involved directly in the

settling of colonies and the trade of force/enslaved Africans, African Caribbeans and Indigenous people.

Essential questions for this unit are:

- How, if at all, was slavery in the United States related to Caribbean slavery?
- How do narratives change society/popular opinion?
- How do a group or set of people become enslaved by another? What are the factors that influenced that enslavement ?
- How did economics affect the enslavement of Africans, African Caribbeans and indigenous people?
- Where did the remnants of Caribbean slavery exist in the United States?
- How are the narratives of enslaved people from the United States as well as narratives of Caribbean and slave different from Social Studies textbooks?
- How are people affected by marginalization and erasure?
- How does a dominant narrative develop?

Students will research narratives. Life stories and events will be important part of their research. Their reading of narratives students should be able to gain a more accurate account of the transatlantic slave trade.

Students have a choice of several culminating projects. One project is to create or compile songs that would represent a soundtrack of the enslaved person's life, based on narratives. Another project is to map the route of African Caribbean slaves and their arrival in the United States. An additional culminating project involves having students compile a respiratory of narrative-based on the research. This should be a living digital repository.

(Developed for Social Studies and American History, grade 8; recommended for U.S. History, grades 8-12, and for American History, African American Studies, and Black and LatinX Studies, grades 9-12)

### **22.02.03**

#### **The Struggle for Abolition and Independence in Haiti and Cuba 1790-1902, by Bob Osborne**

This curriculum unit for high school students examines the course of the Haitian and Cuban independence movements that sought the abolition of slavery in both countries and the political independence won by the Haitians from the France and the independence of Cuba from Spain.

The production of sugar on the islands' plantations by peoples brought from the west and central coast of Africa in slavery is the common economic, political and cultural thread.

In both islands there were attempts to abolish slavery and subsequent efforts to win independence from their European colonizers in both countries. The success of the Haitian Revolution (1791-1804) hastened abolition and independence, while at the same time creating an opportunity for Cuban planters to replace Haiti as the prime producer of sugar in the Caribbean in the following years.

There is a comprehensive narrative for students to read and then accompanying lesson plans: one focusing on Africa and its peoples that were forced to come on the Middle Passage and one on the Haitian inspired Aponte Rebellion in Cuba in 1812. The unit can be adapted to meet a teacher's class schedule. There is also an excellent bibliography for both teachers and students.

(Developed for AP World History, grades 11-12, and U. S. History, grade 10; recommended for AP World History, grades 10-12, U. S. History, grade 10, and World History, grade 9)

#### **22.02.04**

#### **The Origins of Colorism in Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic and its Effects on Identity Formation, by Nancy Bonilla**

One of the main objectives of this unit titled: The origins of Colorism in Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic and its effects on identity formation is to introduce the concept of colorism. This concept of colorism should not be confused with racism and it is important to make that distinction. The next objective of the curriculum unit is to present a brief look at the history of the two Island nations mentioned and their history and relationship to slavery. Once the history and origin of the African population on these Islands is established, students can then begin to see the relationship between slaves, Europeans, and Indigenous people in regards to socio economics and familial dynamics. The unit then goes on to address the history of slavery in the United States. This front loading of history in regards to slavery helps re-enforce the ties we all share and how colorism evolves and takes form. The unit then moves on to the study of colorism in the present day and how we may be guilty of having those predispositions but may not be aware. We are also able to see the effect of colorism on people in the media. One commonality shared by the Hispanic and Black population is that no one is exempt from colorism. The unit then closes out with students changing the narrative and recognizing colorism and taking concrete steps to make the necessary changes to switch the negatives to positives.

(Developed for ELA, grade 6; recommended for ELA and Social Studies, grades 5-9, and Social Justice, grades 8-10)

#### **22.02.05**

#### **Jacob Lawrence, Toussaint Louverture and the Haitian Revolution, by Sean Griffin**

In this unit I attempt to help students make a connection between the Haitian Revolution, the Harlem Renaissance and their own lives. I begin the unit with an introduction to the slave trade which manned the plantations, producing massive amounts of sugar and other crops throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> century Caribbean, and ultimately leading to the uprising. Highlighting one of the revolution's legendary leaders, Toussaint Louverture, I lead students through a brief overview of the complicated conflict before flashing forward to the Great Migration which sprung from a similar desire for a better life. Focusing on the Harlem Renaissance artist Jacob Lawrence, we revisit the revolution through Lawrence's forty-one panel narrative depiction of the life of Toussaint Louverture. Finally, recognizing that Lawrence sought to tell the stories of many heroes through his work, I challenge students to illustrate and narrate the stories of one of their heroes and to share their work with others in a gallery walkthrough open to other teachers, classmates and their families.

(Developed for Language Arts, grade 7; recommended for Language Arts and U. S. History, grade 8; Creative Arts, grades 7-8)

### *III. Ethnic Studies: Theory, Practice, and Pedagogy*

#### **Introduction**

When many people think about the civil rights movement and historic struggles for racial justice in the United States, their attention turns to a set of familiar issues including policing, fair housing, fighting discrimination in the workplace, and desegregating schools. To be sure, all of these were important issues. But another central legacy of this era were the social movements led by college and high school students demanding changes in both what they were taught (curriculum) and how they were taught it (pedagogy).

In many ways, these efforts were part of a longer legacy, stretching back to the early 20th century, in which African American, Indigenous, Asian American, and Latinx communities insisted that the transformation of curriculum, pedagogy, and knowledge production was essential to achieve a more just, humane and equitable world.

Our seminar, “Ethnic Studies: Theory, Practice, and Pedagogy” sought to build on these traditions. Ethnic Studies today refers to both course content in an array of subjects, including social studies, humanities, creative arts, and science and math education. It also describes an approach to teaching and learning that is collaborative, seeking to build relationships with students, communities, and social movements.

The seminar explored examples of Ethnic Studies approaches used by teachers across the country both historically and in the present. It drew on diverse sources—the writing of James Baldwin and Toni Morrison, the art of Faith Ringgold and Titus Kaphar, Chicana music from Los Angeles, indigenous knowledge production and cultural life, queer intimacies, Critical Race Theory, and legacies of Eugenics and scientific racism—to explore the ways teachers can use cultural texts and primary materials in their pedagogy and practice.

Four talented New Haven teachers completed curriculum units in the seminar, representing a range of grade levels and subject areas.

“Voices of Power, Voices of Change: Narrative Writing in the English Language Arts Classroom” by Madeline Craig, a middle school English language arts and writing teacher, introduces a writing workshop model centered on students’ own experiences to explore diverse social issues. The unit helps students build fluency in reading, composition, and creative expression, but not by simply memorizing the formal “rules” of composition and grammar alone. Instead, it invites students to draw on their own experiences, insights, and imaginations to investigate the power of the written word to develop an ethical vision rooted in shared community issues.

Annie Lerew, a high school math educator, developed a 10-part curriculum unit for her ninth-grade Algebra I course titled “Revealing Truth.” The unit supports students in reflecting on their own mathematical stories and heritages and introducing them to the many diverse traditions of mathematical thinking and problem solving. As a result, students develop competence in core concepts in algebra by connecting mathematical reasoning to the wider social historical world.

Larissa Giordano, an upper elementary science teacher, developed her unit, “Race, Racism and Genetics” to introduce her students to basic concepts in genomics and human biology by exploring the ways that race is constructed as a social concept. In doing so, the unit disrupts many of the common sense and often unstated assumptions students carry that the race concept represents a “natural” or scientific way to classify human variation and difference.

Finally, lower elementary teacher Alison Smith’s unit “Building Unity in New Haven within Lower Elementary Education,” draws on the rich histories of community formation in the city of New Haven to invite students to reflect on their own families, histories, and visions for the common good. It emphasizes the long traditions of multiracial and multicultural engagement in this diverse city through critical literacy projects and community and family-based assignments.

Ethnic Studies has always been a field in motion, shaped by the ongoing and continuous forces of social progress and change; a broad tapestry weaved by many hands. These curriculum units contribute to this tradition by activating new sites of knowledge, intellectual curiosity, and social consciousness.

Daniel Martinez HoSang

## **Synopses of the Curriculum Units**

### **22.03.01**

#### **Voices of Power, Voices of Change: Narrative Writing in the English Language Arts Classroom, by Madeline Craig**

The current English Language Arts classroom is filled with Gen-Z students grappling with the polarizing political, personal, and institutional pressures that surround them daily. Ethnic Studies programs around the country have seen substantial success in their ability to increase students' critical thinking skills and academic achievement while developing their understanding of the interactions of race, class, gender, and sexuality from the experiences of multiple social groups. Despite the documented success of these programs in multiple settings, whether it be elementary to secondary schools, most school districts do not have an Ethnic Studies program or graduation requirement. However, any social justice oriented teacher has the ability to incorporate an Ethnic Studies lens to their curriculum. This unit aims to do two things. The first is to analyze how the current writing workshop works in tandem with oppressive educational frameworks to subdue creative and cultural values that add to the writer's voice and craft. This analysis includes the dangers of limiting the American cannon to a single perspective and strategies to directly counter traditional, dominant practices of teaching writing. The second is to postulate that students need the safety of the classroom to explore their feelings and perspective regarding our ever changing world. It's my intent to provide a framework for students to explore their voices through narrative poetry and prose as well as learn to utilize writing as a tool for self-discovery and advocacy.

(Developed for English Language Arts, grade 8; recommended for English Language Arts, grades 7-10)

### **22.03.02**

#### **Revealing Truth: An introductory Unit for Algebra I, by Annie Lerew**

This ten-lesson unit is for a 9th grade Algebra 1 course and is recommended to be taught as the first unit of the course. Most students enrolled in this course in my school district are classified as "behind" or "severely behind" grade level. Typically, students lack mathematical enthusiasm and have great anxiety about studying mathematical topics. Students frequently self-classify as "bad" at or "hating" math. The teachers of this unit should be focused on dismantling systems of oppression that exist in mathematics curriculum and classrooms that often leave Black, Latinx, and Indigenous students disenfranchised from their own mathematical potential. Acknowledgement that mathematics classrooms are not race neutral spaces will be a key component to successful implementation of this unit.

This unit aims to help students reframe their own thinking about studying mathematics through two simultaneous and equally important strategies. First, students will spend time reflecting on their own mathematical stories and heritages culminating in a project where students write personal math narratives, which they will submit at the end of the unit. Second, the unit focuses on the history and very nature of mathematics. Students will spend time writing and thinking about the infinitesimal and infinite, patterns, irrationality, and the history of humanity's interactions with these concepts.

Through individual writing and thinking as well as small group and full class discussions, students will unpack their own mathematical histories and rebuild their frameworks around the discipline in ways that will serve them throughout their high school mathematics endeavors.

(Developed for Algebra I, grade 9; recommended for Algebra I and Pre-Algebra)

### **22.03.03**

#### **Race, Racism and Genetics, by Larissa Giordano**

This unit will teach students about Ethnic Studies, its history and its role in our lives. It is the study of the histories, experiences, cultures and issues of racial-ethnic groups. This unit will provide a deeper understanding that while 'race,' as a cultural, social and historical concept has real life consequences, it does not describe human biological variation from a scientific perspective. Students will learn the history of the concept of 'race' from a social context and what scientific researchers have to say about it. 'Race, Racism and Genetics' uses research, lesson plans and activities to explain genetic similarity and variation. Biologically speaking, 'race' is not real, but racism is. In this unit, students will discuss sensitive issues based on what they know about genetics and how it pertains to the social construct of 'race' and ethnicity, including the ways in which they identify and are identified. Students should then be able to relate the ideas of which they are learning to the world around them in terms of controversies like 'race' and health, 'race' and IQ and 'race' and sports over the course of four weeks. Students will see how 'race' and racism is embedded in our lives and can affect our everyday thinking and relationships.

(Developed for Science, grade 6; recommended for Science, grade 6)

### **22.03.04**

#### **Building Unity in New Haven within Lower Elementary School, by Alison Smith**

This unit is intended for lower elementary school students to learn about the importance of their diverse community and how it was developed. The first few lessons focus on recognizing the Quinnipiac Tribe as the original New Haveners, which provides a bite size history of how New Haven was developed through an unbiased perspective. Through



class discussions, students will come to understanding that Indigenous peoples are not simply people of the past, but present in today's society and ways of living, too. The lessons discuss how waves of immigration played a vital role in the development of the city as customs and cultures created a unique fusion over time. The unit encourages students to discuss and explore the importance of their community while recognizing all people as important community members. In this learning process, students can understand the importance of their place in society while living in unity with others by recognizing and accepting all people.

(Developed for Social Studies and English, grades 2 and 4; recommended for History, Social Learning, and English, grades 2-4)



**Curriculum Units by Fellows of the  
Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute  
1978-2022**

	<b>2022</b>	
Volume I		Writing about Nature
Volume II		The Long Fight for a Free Caribbean, 1700s-1959
Volume III		Ethnic Studies: Theory, Practice, and Pedagogy
	<b>2021</b>	
Volume I		The Social Struggles of Contemporary Black Art
Volume II		Developing Anti-Racist Curriculum and Pedagogy
Volume III		How to Do Things with Maps
Volume IV		The Earth's Greenhouse and Global Warming
	<b>2020</b>	
Volume I		The Place of Woman: Home, Economy, and Politics
Volume II		Chemistry of Food and Cooking
	<b>2019</b>	
Volume I		Digital Lives
Volume II		Teaching about Race and Racism Across the Disciplines
Volume III		Human Centered Design of Biotechnology
	<b>2018</b>	
Volume I		An Introduction to Income Inequality in America: Economics, History, Law
Volume II		Engineering Solutions to 21st-Century Environmental Problems
	<b>2017</b>	
Volume I		Adapting Literature
Volume II		Watershed Science
	<b>2016</b>	
Volume I		Shakespeare and the Scenes of Instruction
Volume II		Literature and Identity
Volume III		Citizenship, Identity, and Democracy
Volume IV		Physical Science and Physical Chemistry

## Curriculum Units by Fellows (continued)

### 2015

Volume I	Teaching Native American Studies
Volume II	American Culture in the Long 20th Century
Volume III	Physics and Chemistry of the Earth's Atmosphere and Climate
Volume IV	Big Molecules, Big Problems

### 2014

Volume I	Picture Writing
Volume II	Exploring Community through Ethnographic Nonfiction, Fiction, and Film
Volume III	Race and American Law, 1850-Present
Volume IV	Engineering in Biology, Health and Medicine

### 2013

Volume I	Literature and Information
Volume II	Immigration and Migration and the Making of a Modern American City
Volume III	Sustainability: Means or Ends?
Volume IV	Asking Questions in Biology: Discovery versus Knowledge

### 2012

Volume I	Understanding History and Society through Visual Art, 1776 to 1914
Volume II	The Art of Biography
Volume III	Anatomy, Health, and Disease: From the Skeletal System to Cardiovascular Fitness
Volume IV	Engineering in the K-12 Classroom: Math and Science Education for the 21st-Century Workforce

### 2011

Volume I	Writing with Words and Images
Volume II	What History Teaches
Volume III	The Sound of Words: An Introduction to Poetry
Volume IV	Energy, Environment, and Health

### 2010

Volume I	Interdisciplinary Approaches to Consumer Culture
Volume II	The Art of Reading People: Character, Expression, Interpretation
Volume III	Geomicrobiology: How Microbes Shape Our Planet
Volume IV	Renewable Energy

## Curriculum Units by Fellows (continued)

### 2009

Volume I	Writing, Knowing, Seeing
Volume II	The Modern World in Literature and the Arts
Volume III	Science and Engineering in the Kitchen
Volume IV	How We Learn about the Brain
Volume V	Evolutionary Medicine

### 2008

Volume I	Controlling War by Law
Volume II	Storytelling: Fictional Narratives, Imaginary People, and the Reader's Real Life
Volume III	Pride of Place: New Haven Material and Visual Culture
Volume IV	Representations of Democracy in Literature, History and Film
Volume V	Forces of Nature: Using Earth and Planetary Science for Teaching Physical Science
Volume VI	Depicting and Analyzing Data: Enriching Science and Math Curricula through Graphical Displays and Mapping

### 2007

Volume I	American Voices: Listening to Fiction, Poetry, and Prose
Volume II	Voyages in World History before 1500
Volume III	The Physics, Astronomy and Mathematics of the Solar System
Volume IV	The Science of Natural Disasters
Volume V	Health and the Human Machine

### 2006

Volume I	Photographing America: A Cultural History, 1840-1970
Volume II	Latino Cultures and Communities
Volume III	Postwar America: 1945-1963
Volume IV	Math in the Beauty and Realization of Architecture
Volume V	Engineering in Modern Medicine
Volume VI	Anatomy and Art: How We See and Understand

### 2005

Volume I	Stories around the World in Film and Literature
Volume II	The Challenge of Intersecting Identities in American Society: Race/Ethnicity, Gender and Nation
Volume III	History in the American Landscape: Place, Memory, Poetry
Volume IV	The Sun and Its Effects on Earth
Volume V	Ecology and Biodiversity Conservation

## Curriculum Units by Fellows (continued)

### 2004

Volume I	The Supreme Court in American Political History
Volume II	Children's Literature in the Classroom
Volume III	Representations of American Culture, 1760-1960: Art and Literature
Volume IV	Energy, Engines, and the Environment
Volume V	The Craft of Word Problems

### 2003

Volume I	Geography through Film and Literature
Volume II	Everyday Life in Early America
Volume III	Teaching Poetry in the Primary and Secondary Schools
Volume IV	Physics in Everyday Life
Volume V	Water in the 21st Century

### 2002

Volume I	Survival Stories
Volume II	Exploring the Middle East: Hands-On Approaches
Volume III	War and Peace in the Twentieth Century and Beyond
Volume IV	The Craft of Writing
Volume V	Food, Environmental Quality and Health
Volume VI	Biology and History of Ethnic Violence and Sexual Oppression

### 2001

Volume I	Medicine, Ethics and Law
Volume II	Art as Evidence: The Interpretation of Objects
Volume III	Reading and Writing Poetry
Volume IV	Race and Ethnicity in Contemporary American Art and Literature
Volume V	Bridges: Human Links and Innovations
Volume VI	Intelligence: Theories and Developmental Origins

### 2000

Volume I	Women Writers in Latin America
Volume II	Crime and Punishment
Volume III	Constitutional and Statutory Privacy Protections in the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century
Volume IV	Ethnicity and Dissent in American Literature and Art
Volume V	Sound and Sensibility: Acoustics in Architecture, Music, and the Environment
Volume VI	The Chemistry of Photosynthesis
Volume VII	Bioethics

## Curriculum Units by Fellows (continued)

### 1999

Volume I	Women's Voices in Fiction
Volume II	Art and Identity in Mexico, from the Olmec to Modern Times
Volume III	Immigration and American Life
Volume IV	Detective Fiction: Its Use as Literature and as History
Volume V	How Do You Know? The Experimental Basis of Chemical Knowledge
Volume VI	Human-Environment Relations: International Perspectives from History, Science, Politics, and Ethics
Volume VII	Electronics in the 20th Century: Nature, Technology, People, Companies, and the Marketplace

### 1998

Volume I	The Use and Abuse of History in Film and Video
Volume II	Cultures and Their Myths
Volume III	Art and Artifacts: The Cultural Meaning of Objects
Volume IV	American Political Thought
Volume V	Reading Across the Cultures
Volume VI	Selected Topics in Contemporary Astronomy and Space Science
Volume VII	The Population Explosion

### 1997

Volume I	Twentieth Century Latin American Writing
Volume II	American Children's Literature
Volume III	American Maid: Growing Up Female in Life and Literature
Volume IV	Student Diversity and Its Contribution to Their Learning
Volume V	The Blues Impulse
Volume VI	Global Change, Humans and the Coastal Ocean
Volume VII	Environmental Quality in the 21st Century

### 1996

Volume I	Multiculturalism and the Law
Volume II	Environmental and Occupational Health: What We Know; How We Know; What We Can Do
Volume III	Race and Representation in American Cinema
Volume IV	Remaking America: Contemporary U.S. Immigration
Volume V	Genetics in the 21st Century: Destiny, Chance or Choice
Volume VI	Selected Topics in Astronomy and Space Studies

## Curriculum Units by Fellows (continued)

### 1995

Volume I	Gender, Race, and Milieu in Detective Fiction
Volume II	Film and Literature
Volume III	The Constitution and Criminal Justice
Volume IV	Coming of Age in Ethnic America
Volume V	The Geological Environment of Connecticut

### 1994

Volume I	Family Law, Family Lives: New View of Parents, Children and the State
Volume II	Poetry in the Classroom: Incentive and Dramatization
Volume III	Understanding the Ancient Americas: Foundation, Flourishing, and Survival
Volume IV	Racism and Nativism in American Political Culture
Volume V	The Atmosphere and the Ocean

### 1993

Volume I	The Symbolic Language of Architecture and Public Monuments
Volume II	Folktales
Volume III	Twentieth-Century Multicultural Theater
Volume IV	The Minority Artist in America
Volume V	Environmental Science

### 1992

Volume I	The Constitution, Courts and Public Schools
Volume II	Writing and Re-writings of the Discovery and Conquest of America
Volume III	Reading and Writing the City
Volume IV	The National Experience: American Art and Culture
Volume V	Ecosystems: Tools for Science and Math Teachers

### 1991

Volume I	Regions and Regionalism in the United States: Studies in the History and Cultures of the South, The Northeast and the American Southwest
Volume II	The Family in Art and Material Culture
Volume III	Afro-American Autobiography
Volume IV	Recent American Poetry: Expanding the Canon
Volume V	Adolescence/Adolescents' Health
Volume VI	Global Change



## Curriculum Units by Fellows (continued)

### 1990

Volume I	The Autobiographical Mode in Latin American Literature
Volume II	Contemporary American Drama: Scripts and Performance
Volume III	The U.S. National Parks Movement
Volume IV	American Family Portraits (Section I)
Volume V	American Family Portraits (Section II)
Volume VI	Genetics
Volume VII	What Makes Airplanes Fly? History, Science and Applications of Aerodynamics

### 1989

Volume I	American Communities, 1880-1980
Volume II	Poetry
Volume III	Family Ties in Latin American Fiction
Volume IV	Detective Fiction: Its Use as Literature and History
Volume V	America as Myth
Volume VI	Crystals in Science, Math, and Technology
Volume VII	Electricity

### 1988

Volume I	The Constitution in Public Schools
Volume II	Immigrants and American Identity
Volume III	Autobiography in America
Volume IV	Responding to American Words and Images
Volume V	Hormones and Reproduction
Volume VI	An Introduction to Aerodynamics

### 1987

Volume I	The Modern Short Story in Latin America
Volume II	Epic, Romance and the American Dream
Volume III	Writing About American Culture
Volume IV	The Writing of History: History as Literature
Volume V	Human Nature, Biology, and Social Structure: A Critical Look at What Science Can Tell Us About Society
Volume VI	Science, Technology, and Society

## Curriculum Units by Fellows (continued)

### 1986

Volume I	The Family in Literature
Volume II	Writings and Re-Writings of the Discovery and Conquest of America
Volume III	Topics in Western Civilization: Ideals of Community and the Development of Urban Life, 1250-1700
Volume IV	The Process of Writing
Volume V	The Measurement of Adolescents, II
Volume VI	Fossil Fuels: Occurrence; Production; Use; Impacts on Air Quality

### 1985

Volume I	Poetry
Volume II	American Musical Theater
Volume III	Twentieth Century American Fiction, Biography, and Autobiography
Volume IV	History as Fiction in Central and South America
Volume V	Odysseys: Nineteenth and Twentieth-Century African-American History Through Personal Narrative
Volume VI	Time Machines: Artifacts and Culture
Volume VII	Skeletal Materials-Biomineralization
Volume VIII	The Measurement of Adolescents

### 1984

Volume I	Elements of Architecture, Part II
Volume II	Greek Civilization
Volume III	Hispanic Minorities in the United States
Volume IV	The Oral Tradition
Volume V	American Adolescents in the Public Eye
Volume VI	Geology and the Industrial History of Connecticut

### 1983

Volume I	Elements of Architecture
Volume II	Greek and Roman Mythology
Volume III	Reading the Twentieth Century Short Story
Volume IV	America in the Sixties: Culture and Counter-Culture
Volume V	Drama
Volume VI	Cross-Cultural Variation in Children and Families
Volume VII	Medical Imaging

## Curriculum Units by Fellows (continued)

### 1982

Volume I	Society and the Detective Novel
Volume II	Autobiography
Volume III	The Constitution in American History
Volume IV	An Unstable World: The West in Decline?
Volume V	Society and Literature in Latin America
Volume VI	The Changing American Family: Historical and Comparative Perspectives
Volume VII	Human Fetal Development

### 1981

Volume I	The "City" in American Literature and Culture
Volume II	An Interdisciplinary Approach to British Studies
Volume III	Human Sexuality and Human Society
Volume IV	Writing Across the Curriculum
Volume V	The Human Environment: Energy
Volume VI	Computing

### 1980

Volume I	Adolescence and Narrative: Strategies for Teaching Fiction
Volume II	Art, Artifacts, and Material Culture
Volume III	Drama
Volume IV	Language and Writing
Volume V	Man and the Environment
Volume VI	The Present as History
Volume VII	Problem Solving

### 1979

Volume I	The Stranger and Modern Fiction: A Portrait in Black and White
Volume II	Themes in Twentieth Century American Culture
Volume III	Remarkable City: Industrial New Haven and the Nation, 1800-1900
Volume IV	Language and Writing
Volume V	Strategies for Teaching Literature
Volume VI	Natural History and Biology

### 1978

Volume I	Language and Writing
Volume II	20th Century Afro-American Culture
Volume III	20th Century American History and Literature
Volume IV	Colonial American History and Material Culture