



Yale-New Haven  
Teachers Institute®

Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute  
1984 Volume I: Elements of Architecture, Part II

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## Introduction

Elements of Architecture II was the second time around for this course. It was my belief, and evidently the Fellows' as well, that the original ten sessions could only be introductory, especially to a subject like architecture which is not conventionally introduced in public education, and which furthermore tends to be cloaked in the mysteries of professionalism.

In the first year we investigated the meaning of architecture as an artifact of culture, while in the second we began to examine some of the specific means of organizing space. For the latter purpose I asked each Fellow to try to modify the designs of their own homes, tasks which ranged from adding a skylight, adding a gazebo in the garden, or rerouting stairs in a house that no longer served their original purpose. I was particularly anxious that they select a project that they could afford to build so that they might provide an example of the reality rather than the myth of design to their students.

Once again I was excited by the realization that each of them could indeed solve elementary architectural problems with considerable skill (obviously some had the advantage of already being painters, photographers, and draftsmen), but I was especially delighted that they could do so with a good dose of romanticism and sense-of-joy rather than retreating to the merely utilitarian task of scribing square footage.

Those attempts, which I have asked the Fellows to include at the end of their curriculum units, did not divert them from the task of designing effective curriculum units based on issues of teaching specific students in specific neighborhoods as well as focusing on very general historical and theoretical issues in the subject of architecture.

It became apparent to me through discussions with the Fellows that many young students today do not have basic training in measuring, understanding distances, or comprehending the social and physical concepts of environment. I found that rather shocking, and I hope that the subject of architecture will serve to require those basics in general education.

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