



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1989 Volume I: American Communities, 1880-1980

A Conceptual Model for Community Development

Guide for Curriculum Unit 89.01.07
by Cynthia Mcdaniels

This unit is an interdisciplinary approach to the study of New Haven communities. History and geography are the main academic disciplines used to examine local communities. Problem-solving and field-based research are the most widely-used pedagogical techniques in the study of local communities.

An understanding of the idea of a community from a knowledge and action base is germane to this unit. Therefore, a conceptual model, coupled with questioning strategies which tap into both the natural curiosity of the learner and prior knowledge of their residential area, is strongly promoted. An in-depth analysis of the community dynamics is undertaken throughout the unit, with special intensity in the first phase. This takes the learner step by step through the major aspects of their community. Students will concentrate exclusively on their own community because they are most familiar with it.

Subsequent lessons are designed to allow students to examine the formation of other New Haven communities. This unit dealt with the inception of the Italian community and origins of the free slave efforts on the part of New Haven residents. Additional lessons in the classroom (not included in abridged version) were on the Jewish, Anglo, Nordic, Greek, Irish, and Latin communities. Of course, this unit can be enlarged to include any racial, ethnic, political, or socio-economic community.

It is imperative that students not only learn about the various communities, but apply their knowledge in a beneficial and worthwhile manner, in their own community or any community in New Haven. Skills, knowledge, improved social dynamics, are just some of the by-products of such an endeavor.

(Recommended for Social Studies, History, and Geography classes, Grade 8)

Key Words

New Haven Connecticut Communities Ethnicity American

<https://teachersinstitute.yale.edu>

©2019 by the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute, Yale University

For terms of use visit <https://teachersinstitute.yale.edu/terms>