



Yale-New Haven  
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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute  
1997 Volume IV: Student Diversity and Its Contribution to Their Learning

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## Cultural Diversity and Identity Project

Guide for Curriculum Unit 97.04.06  
by Pamela Monk Kelley

What is it to be an “American?” With America experiencing the immigration waves, we should know the contributions of major ethnic and racial groups, with special emphasis on Blacks and Hispanics, to the development of the “American Way of Life.”

Family ethnicity in America has taken on different orientations and configurations. Differences among them are the consequence of unique demographic and ancestral backgrounds, cultural histories, ecological processes, and economic origins and statuses. The concept of ethnicity addresses a group’s shared place of origin, race, social class, or religion. The ethnic person has been used as a case study in transcending the complex maze of barriers, pedestals, and doors that form the boundaries which confine human beings to “groups.”

This curriculum is divided into four components: knowledge, awareness, skills, and action. It allows each individual to research his or her origin and/or explore cross-cultural roots of students experiencing difficulty with their colorline and identity so the students may share the effects of cultural contact and exchange. The individual is encouraged to understand his or her family beyond the facile tags based on place of origin, race, social class, or religion. The first part of the curriculum deals with cultural awareness and ethnicity. The second part sends the students on a “generation journey” by searching for their heritage.

(Recommended for Multicultural Education, grades 8-12)

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