



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

Promoting Diversity in Elementary School Curricula

Guide for Curriculum Unit 97.04.10
by Johanna M. Wilson

The following narrative focuses upon our nation's number one problem, racism, which has economic, political, social, and philosophical implications.

My unit focuses on social studies, but within an interdisciplinary approach, other areas of the curriculum will be involved. Although it was planned specifically for my third grade classroom, it can be modified by elaborating on and/or deleting information and activities to make it more flexible and age-appropriate for other grade levels.

It is my plan to spend approximately 2 to 3 months on a fairly in-depth study of the following ethnic groups: Native-Americans, African-Americans, Asian-Americans, and Hispanic-Americans.

The classic textbook approach to learning about our country and its evolution has been to read and study the typical White books and lessons and history—with maybe a few days before Thanksgiving to learn about the “Indians” and maybe in some schools, a week in January or February to learn about “Black History.” But since the true story of our country and its evolution began many hundreds of years ago, and since People Of Color have been oppressed and victimized for many hundreds of years, our way of teaching must change. The history of our ethnic groups took hundreds of years to evolve and cannot be taught in a few short weeks.

For these reasons, I see this project, the study of Diversity, as a year-long endeavor, rather than as a separate and distinct month-long unit.

(Recommended for Social Studies, Diversity, Literature, Art History, Race Relations, Multiculturalism, and Music, grades 1-5)

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