



Yale-New Haven
Teachers Institute®

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

Introduction

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This seminar explored the idea of diversity and its contribution to student learning. The concepts of race, ethnicity, culture, multiculturalism, gender, and community held by the participants and their impact upon the self-esteem, learning styles, and the shared classroom experience of both teacher and student were explored. Seminar participants drew from their experiences and readings and shared their insights and ideas about diversity with the aim of furthering their understanding of how it influences their relationship with students and approach to teaching various subjects.

An assumption of the seminar was that embedded in the study of diversity are critical ways of thinking and knowing about others and ourselves that can facilitate the learning and growth of students. Seminar participants examined many of the implications of diversity in their work with students who represent a variety of backgrounds.

The readings for the seminar were Derrick Bell's *Faces At The Bottom Of The Well* ; Alice Miller's *Prisoners of Childhood: The Drama of the Gifted Child and the Search for the True Self* ; *Cross-Cultural Roots of Minority Child Development* , edited by Patricia M. Greenfield and Rodney R. Cocking; and *Family Ethnicity: Strength in Diversity* , edited by Harriette Pipes McAdoo.

Seminar participants included other general readings for discussion, as well as those particular to the design of their curriculum units. These units represent the final product of a very engaging seminar process which challenged the participants from a variety of angles. They evaluated the content of the seminar material, tested some of their assumptions about the meaning of diversity, and valued one another's experiences as they developed their curriculum units.

Reverend Frederick J. Streets

University Chaplain

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