



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute  
1997 Volume VI: Global Change, Humans and the Coastal Ocean

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## Students' Response to Global Change

Guide for Curriculum Unit 97.06.05  
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Most of the students for whom I am preparing this curriculum unit have emigrated from Puerto Rico, Mexico, and the Dominican Republic. As such, they have had some experience with tropical storms, strong rains, water overflow, erosion, and earthquakes. They wonder why these things occur. I am delighted to be able to teach them about these natural phenomena and global changes. My interest in writing this curriculum unit is to bring the students inside of something very important to humans, animals, plants, etc. I want to engage them in natural occurrences on our planet by immersing them in a study of natural phenomena.

Presenting such complex phenomena to my particular students will prove challenging. These middle school students have been labeled as Educational Mentally Retarded (EMR) or Socially Maladjusted (SMA). They have few independent reading and writing skills. Most have a very short attention span, hyperactivity, a low frustration tolerance, and very low or no interest in academics. Because of their low comprehension skills and short attention spans, I decided to cover a wide range of topics, to spend only a short time on each of the natural phenomena, and to use a wide variety of visual materials. Instruction will proceed in a simple, clear, visual, and concrete manner. Activities will allow the students to recount the vivid experiences that they faced while they lived in another place.

This curriculum unit will cover four weeks. In the first week, we will discuss the sun, the earth, earthquakes, and volcanoes. The second week concerns mountain valleys, deforestation, and erosion. In the third and fourth weeks, the subjects are rivers, oceans, the coastline, water floods, and storms.

(Recommended for Science and Social Studies, grades 6-8)

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