



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1997 Volume VII: Environmental Quality in the 21st Century

Nutrition: It's in Your Hands

Guide for Curriculum Unit 97.07.09
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The purpose of this unit is to put personal health and nutrition on the forefront of the minds of the children. Steps will be taken that can be repeated and shared by the students long after this unit is completed. It is hoped that the children will, by word and example, educate their families and community by letting them know that they control the causes that affect their environment.

The class will begin this study by looking at connections. In almost everything that they do, see, or experience the students think the incidents are isolated. The water could run in the sink while they brush their teeth for five to eight minutes. They are not concerned. They do not pay the rent as it goes up or the water bill for homeowners. These are things they should be concerned with.

Our government should be more concerned about connections too. A call for stricter standards and reducing pesticide use and other contaminants is a must. We must move toward cleaner food. Effective testing of pesticides/food combinations is quite difficult. Just which pesticides have been used on which crops is hard to know. But I am sure there is some connection between the chemicals they use and some illnesses that affect our children.

This unit covers land, air, and water pollution and the movement of contaminants through the food chain. Then it will cover nutrition, as well as the basic needs of plants, soilless gardens, and planning and preparing a meal from produce grown in our own garden. There is also a section on healthy snack alternatives.

It is written in simple, teacher-friendly language and may be modified to be used for second through sixth grade. Excellent hands-on lessons are included along with plenty of opportunity to do research and work in cooperative groups.

(Recommended for Science and Ecology, grades 3-5)

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