



YALE NATIONAL INITIATIVE

to strengthen teaching in public schools®

Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative

2006 Volume IV: Native America: Understanding the Past through Things

Preface

In April 2006 the Yale National Initiative to strengthen teaching in public schools accepted fifty-one public school teachers from ten cities to participate in five national seminars held at Yale. The Initiative is a long-term endeavor to establish exemplary Teachers Institutes in underserved school districts in states throughout the country. Following the approach developed in New Haven and demonstrated in Houston, Pittsburgh, and other cities, it builds upon the success of a four-year National Demonstration Project. Teachers Institutes are educational partnerships between universities and school districts designed to strengthen teaching and learning in a community's public schools. Evaluations have shown that the Institute approach promotes precisely those dimensions of teacher quality that improve student achievement.

Half of the teachers, designated Yale National Fellows, were from seven cities that are planning or exploring the establishment of a new Teachers Institute: Atlanta, Charlotte, Jacksonville, Philadelphia, Richmond, Santa Fe, and Wilmington. Other National Fellows were from Teachers Institutes that are members of the National Initiative League located in Houston, Pittsburgh, and New Haven. The Fellows attended an Organizational Session of the seminars held in New Haven on May 5-6. The seminars reconvened during a ten-day Intensive Session from July 3-14.

The seminars, which concluded in mid-August when the Fellows submitted their completed curriculum units, included "Stories around the World in Film," led by Dudley Andrew, Professor of Comparative Literature and of Film Studies; "The Supreme Court in American Political History," led by Robert A. Burt, Alexander M. Bickel Professor of Law; "Children's Literature, Infancy to Early Adolescence," led by Paul H. Fry, William Lampson Professor of English; "Native America: Understanding the Past through Things," led by Mary E. Miller, Vincent Scully Professor of the History of Art; and "The Science of Global Warming," led by Sabatino Sofia, Professor of Astronomy.

The twin purposes of the national seminars were to provide public school teachers a first-hand acquaintance with the Institute approach to high quality professional development, and to cultivate their leadership either in a League Teachers Institute or in the development of a new Teachers Institute. Each participating teacher wrote a curriculum unit to teach his or her students what they had learned and to share with other teachers locally and, over the Internet, internationally. The units contain four elements: objectives, teaching strategies, sample lessons and classroom activities, and lists of resources for teachers and students. The curriculum units National Fellows wrote are their own; they are presented in five volumes, one for each seminar.

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New Haven

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