



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
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Genetically Engineered Food: Altering the Blueprint

Guide for Curriculum Unit 07.05.04
by Karen A. Beitler

The issue of genetic modification remains controversial for numerous reasons. The methods and knowledge of the processes of genetic modification have been with us for many years and the possibilities with this new technology are continuing to evolve. The most controversial issue is whether or not genetic modification should be allowed at all. The 1997 film *Gattaca* portrays a world where genetic imperfection, or natural births of humans are not the norm. Is that what people are afraid of? Will humans seek to eliminate diversity and make everyone alike? This is not likely; there are far too many minds that would oppose such an attempt at making a "master race." Diversity is desired and although we still have our prejudices and preferences, the majority of people would not seek to make everything identical. This unit looks at genetic modification of food and the issue of labeling. Students in high school are required to write a persuasive pamphlet about this issue. The aim of the unit is to provide teachers with background and some lesson plans that will help them give their students a good background in subject. The unit integrates portions of the high school biology curriculum to create a comprehensive lesson on this controversial subject. Upon completion of the unit students will be able to form an educated opinion regarding the labeling of genetically modified foods and have gained important background information about biotechnology and biomedical engineering.

(Recommended for Biology, grades 7-11.)

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