Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
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Explorastories: CMTs, the Cinema and the 5Cs of Foreign Language Learning

Guide for Curriculum Unit 05.01.10
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I teach French at Betsy Ross Arts Magnet School, a New Haven middle school. It is a wonderful, creative environment in which students truly learn, grow, and thrive, utilizing and expanding on their strengths as they stretch and strengthen all their capabilities. I find that at times this enriching environment can be unwittingly compromised by the necessity to fulfill all of the city- and state- mandated testing requirements, which now include pre-testing, pilot-testing, practice-testing, and post-testing. As a French teacher I act as a support to the test preparation process; in that role I am afforded the opportunity to choose alternate sources for analysis that illustrate places where French is spoken and bring to life sounds of the Francophone world.

In this unit, I hope to demonstrate how a foreign language teacher can expose students to authentic representations of the studied culture while supporting necessary standardized test preparation. Students will view two films by François Truffaut, *Small Change* and *The Wild Child* , and will respond to these films just as they would to written texts. In particular, they will practice two Reading Comprehension skills assessed by the Connecticut Mastery Test, *Forming an Initial Understanding* and *Developing a Critical Stance* . Film is a familiar mechanism for reflecting and disseminating culture, imparting and exploring cultural values and norms in an aesthetically rich way. With it, students will come to understand the concept of film as visual text, which will open up new learning possibilities for them.

(Recommended for French, grade 8.)