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Poetry and Differentiated Instruction in the Middle-School French Classroom

Guide for Curriculum Unit 09.02.06
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How do you meet the diverse learning needs of every student in your middle-school world languages classroom? How do you ensure that the newer or struggling student is able to comprehend, participate, and communicate, while the more seasoned or able student is also adequately challenged? How do you place vocabulary in a context that students will remember in a visceral sense, so that they will be able to automatically retrieve it when needed? I propose the use of poetry, in particular the reading, memorization, and recitation of poetry, as an invaluable method to accomplish these tasks in such a way that students will both enjoy what they are doing and experience a sense of confidence and success at being able to memorize pieces of French poetry.

In this unit I will provide a framework for incorporating poetry in the middle-grades language classroom to support differentiated language learning, allowing each child to progress at his or her own pace. I will include general techniques and practices that can be used across the board, as well as demonstrate how I apply them in slightly different ways in grades five through eight.

(Developed for French, grades 5-8; recommended for French, Middle School grades 5-8)

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