



YALE NATIONAL INITIATIVE

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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative

2013 Volume IV: Invisible Cities: The Arts and Renewable Community

Travel Stories: Mapping the Vision, Walking the Journey

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The pathway of one's personal travel story is a richly textured avenue of investigation for adolescent students. In this unit students will explore ways to articulate and creatively illustrate their stories of migration and urban mobility. The high school campus is a mirror of the migratory landscape of the modern city. In present day the city has become a mecca for families moving across geographies both global and local. Significant to this cultural dynamic is the fact that cultural traditions and social customs play out in adolescent students' personal histories as they are lived throughout the school day. This contributes to cultural visibility and invisibility in our urban school community. In the classroom the challenge, for even the most experienced educators, is to rethink the design of instruction to address the often transitory conditions of student engagement.

This curriculum unit seeks to develop students' awareness of the virtual environments within which we act out our lives every day. These 'invisible cities' are the physical, social, political, economic and cultural dimensions of life active within both the urban milieu and its microcosm, the urban school campus. Inspired by Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities*, this curriculum unit explores students' own travel stories as a path to creative expression in written and visual formats.

(Developed for Visual Art, intermediate, IB Middle Years Program, grade 10; recommended for Visual Art Intermediate, Creative Writing, and Theatre Arts, grades 10-11)

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