



## Latin Culture Through Art and Literature

Curriculum Unit 00.04.08  
by Dina Secchiaroli

I teach English at a Regional Aquaculture Center, The Sound School, in New Haven. Many of our students come to our school because they love aquaculture and/or need a smaller school environment. There are only 260 students in the entire school. Many of the students are at-risk high school students. This unit can be used not only for English class, but also for social studies and art classes. I will be using this unit with all the levels of junior English classes. Each lesson is intended to be used during a 40-minute class period, and also to be used, combining two to three lessons, for our hour and twenty minute blocks. I will explore how literature and art help shape Latino culture, sharing its values and identity. I will also give a brief history of Latino culture in the United States, addressing the variety of Latino populations in this country. Many of the activities in this unit will be project-based, creating greater student involvement. Lessons will also prepare students for the CAPT test. At a time in life when students are trying to understand and define their own identities, this unit will help them learn to explore not only a culture that makes up a third of the student population, but will also empower all students to better understand themselves through the models presented in the pieces we study.

In my American Literature classes, I teach a variety of literature including African-American, Japanese-American, Anglo-American, and Native-American. Although I do touch upon Latino literature, I do not know much about the writings or the culture. One of the reasons for this curriculum unit is so that I can fill the holes in my entire class curriculum. I also want to serve my student population better. In the past, I feel I have been doing a disservice to my Latino students. They know their culture at home, but many don't know about the literature, art, and music of their own culture. They often feel that the education system doesn't address them and that literature excludes them. I also, unknowingly may have been reinforcing stereotypes of the culture through my ignorance of the subject.

One aspect that I would especially like to focus on is the similarities and differences between the various Latino cultures. Many Americans group the different Latino cultures into one people, rather than recognizing and appreciating the diversity within. This unit will help differentiate the cultures, and also help the students appreciate their own diversity better. Although many teachers use the term "diversity" because it's pedagogically fashionable in our society, I firmly believe that we all need to appreciate the differences in each other. Also it's important to realize that these differences add to our culture as Americans and create a strong, bountiful beauty in our country. It is not a question of focusing on a minority; rather, it is a question of learning about us by comparing the values in our culture to those of others. Augenbraum and Stavans say, "A sense of self, place, and history pervades our literature" (xix). We can learn about our own history by exploring the history of others, a history that is both shared and dissimilar.

Each piece of literature and art will explore a different aspect of Latin culture. These selected pieces will allow our Latino population to explore their own cultural identity, while enabling our non-Latino students to appreciate and value traditions both similar to and different from their own. The students will be analyzing the works selected to determine exactly how the piece reflects a value and what value(s) is being dealt with. The students will then compare these values to their own personal and cultural values, thus making personal connections and interacting with the works. The students will also explore how culture shapes values and helps make people who they are. Hopefully, this will help students navigate through the confusing task of forging their own identity as independent members of the adolescent and adult society. All students will be given the opportunity to celebrate the diversity that makes them uniquely themselves. This exploration will take place through a variety of teaching modes, so I can accommodate the variety of learning styles among my students. Some techniques include, but are not limited to, writing prompts, small and whole group discussion, and analysis of literature and art.

Students will explore Latino culture using a variety of art forms. One way they will analyze the material is through the five-paragraph essay. I use the writing process to teach them to develop their writing. They will prewrite, developing their thoughts, until they narrow down their topic and develop a thesis statement. Students will then write a rough draft, supporting their ideas with quotes from the text. They will peer-edit their work and write a final draft. Further, the students will view Latino art either at a museum or on slides. The students will then use a variety of materials to create an artistic representation of their feelings, which may end up being concrete or abstract. Materials for this project can include markers and colored pencils, different pieces of cloth or fabric, string or yarn, etc. The students will have to explain their art in front of the class.

In the technology-ridden society that we live in today, it is important for students to be able to use technological resources to obtain information. I will break students up into groups of three for a research project. They will use traditional resources as well as the Internet for their research. I will assign students a Latino group to research: Puerto Rican, Chicano, Caribbean, Cuban, and Central American. Students are to investigate the traditions and art/artists of their assigned culture. They will present their information to the class in a five to ten minute oral presentation. They will need to create visual aids to enhance their presentations. Students will gain invaluable skills during this project that they will need for life. Not only will they learn how to research a topic and express ideas and information in writing, they will get practice in public speaking. Students do not get enough opportunities to practice this. They will also gain team-building skills that are essential in many jobs. Most students, although apprehensive about getting up in front of their peers, love this type of project. They must take responsibility for the information, but can be as creative as they like about the presentations themselves. As long as the information is clear, accurate, and logical, they have control over many of the logistics of the project. Students will also research a Latino writer, artist, or musician, or aspect of the culture, using the Internet to accomplish their research. They will then orally and visually present their material in front of the class, for a five to ten minute oral presentation. Not only is it important for students to know how to express their ideas in writing, it is imperative they get practice at communicating these ideas aloud in front of their peers.

An important part of the Connecticut curriculum is the CAPT test, Connecticut Academic Performance Test. Students, who do not pass the CAPT test as sophomores, retake the test as juniors. Not only is teaching the techniques of the test important to pass it, it is also important because it helps students hone their critical thinking skills. No matter what level the students are or what grade they are in, the test covers the four different elements to thinking: reaction, interpretation, connection, and evaluation. Whether the students are studying a piece of literature, art, or music, they will be asked to react or respond to the work. They will then

interpret the work, making inferences into the purpose and message of the piece. Students will also make connections to their own prior knowledge and experience, thus making the learning process their own. Lastly, they will evaluate the work and judge its quality. All of this will be done in class discussions and in writing. This process empowers students to think for themselves and to believe in their own thoughts and ideas.

One of the problems of today's youth is that they take second-hand knowledge as rote. It is imperative that we teach our students to think about what they see, hear, and learn. They must learn how to judge what is truthful and factually accurate. Especially with information so readily available on the Internet and on television, students must learn to decipher what is correct and incorrect information.

## History of Latin Americans

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Before the class begins analyzing the different art forms in the Latino culture, I will give a brief history of the different Latino populations in this country. The earliest of Latinos to come to the United States was Christopher Columbus in 1492. In his three other trips he discovered Puerto Rico, Cuba, and the Bahamas. In 1542, approximately 300,000 Spaniards came to what they called the New World. They divided the land into four sections: what is now the United States, Nueva Galica, Mexico, Guatemala, and Santa Domingo. Racial lines blurred over a number of years, due to the fact that the Spaniards were reproducing with the indigenous people and women. This racially mixed group was called Mestizos. An important issue to cover in this introduction is how over 4000 Spaniards died in the American Revolution, which is too often forgotten or not included in our history. Hispanics also fought during the Civil War, World War I, and World War II. Further, in WWII, between approximately 250,000 and 500,000 Latinos served in the armed forces, making up 2.5 - 5% of all enlisted (Hispanic America USA, Inc.). In American history, we tend to downplay the role of all our American citizens in the participation of war.

Mexicans are some of the oldest residents of our country. In fact, in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, the Spanish southwest was annexed to the United States, and many Mexicans instantaneously became American citizens. California, Nevada, Utah, Colorado, Wyoming, Arizona, and New Mexico became part of the United States. The now Mexican Americans found themselves members of a society that did not have laws that protected them. Most had their land taken away from them and became bankrupt. In the 1930's about half a million Mexicans were deported, due to prejudice and discrimination. Then starting in 1948 many Mexicans were brought back to the United States, hired to farm the land. This was called the Bracero Program. Many of these workers were mistreated and poorly paid. Racism continued to plague the lives of Mexican Americans. Even though America treated them like second-class citizens, over 500,000 Mexican Americans served in World War II and in the Korean War. Even after they served, they were still treated poorly. Mexican Americans, Chicanos, have been ridiculed and oppressed throughout our history, and it wasn't until the 1970's that Chicano literature began to flourish. It is important to discuss Cesar Chavez and his contribution to the Latino civil rights movement. The civil rights movement is what helped spark this Latino literature influx. Traditionally, the Chicano population wanted to gain political power through education, but this was and still is difficult when the incoming immigrants are largely uneducated (Augenbraum and Stavans).

Cuban-American history is a bit different, but the immigrants still encounter the prejudice of the other Latino groups. Cuba was a Spanish colony until the Spanish-American war in 1898. America felt its victory was a great achievement, because Cuba was in a great location and offered economic opportunities for many Americans, especially in sugar, tobacco, and coffee. The 19th century brought the first wave of immigrants to

America, but because of Fidel Castro's dictatorship in Cuba, in the late 1950's and throughout the 60's the first truly big wave of Cuban immigrants entered the country as refugees. They had to leave in Cuba all of their money and possessions, but they brought along with them a rich culture as is seen in their literature, art, and music. The Cubans that arrived were mostly well-educated, middle class citizens who rose in society and also economically. Many Americans, as well as Castro, called them Gusanos, which means worms, showing prejudice that was sometimes shown towards them. Many Cuban refugees were Caucasian, though, so they didn't receive as much prejudice as many other Latino immigrants did. The second big wave of immigrants came to Miami in the 1980's. These immigrants had lower incomes than their predecessors. They were also more rural, less urban; in fact, some were convicted criminals released from Cuban jails. Most were political prisoners, but about 3,700 were dangerous criminals or criminally insane (Novas). Many, though, were blue-collar workers looking for the economic opportunities America had to offer. Also included in this wave were people looking for their relatives from whom they were separated during the revolution. Many Cuban-Americans expect to go back to Cuba when Castro's reign comes to an end.

Latinos from Puerto Rico have a different story. They are American citizens, without the right to vote unless they live on the mainland. In 1898 in the Treaty of Paris, which ended the Spanish-American war, America came to possess Puerto Rico. For a long time, America was directly involved in the affairs of the island. Puerto Rico was in a state of dissatisfaction about being a United States protectorate. About 20,000 Puerto Ricans served in World War I. Even though they fought for the U.S., the U.S didn't help their poverty until Eleanor Roosevelt and Luis Munoz Marin raised awareness of the struggling island. President Roosevelt then made helping the island one of his priorities and conditions improved. Puerto Rico became a commonwealth in an election in 1952, and voted to maintain that status in 1993. There is still great debate on the island about the commonwealth status. If Puerto Rico were to lose this status and become a state, the unemployment rate would skyrocket. This would be due to the fact that companies don't have to pay federal tax on profits there. Residents would also have to pay federal income tax, and since one third of all islanders live in poverty, it would be unbearable (Novas). Because Puerto Rico is a commonwealth, movement to the mainland is not considered immigration. The Puerto Rican population on the mainland grew to large numbers in the 1940's. The immigrants were mostly concentrated on the East Coast, especially in New York. They were the first population to be able to easily return to their original country, which put them at an advantage over many other Latino populations. Many came for better economic opportunities, for they had the lowest standard of living compared to other Hispanics in the United States (Augenbraum and Stavans). The Puerto Rican community stuck together, often living in barrios, as many Latino cultures do.

Dominican Republicans live under poor economic conditions. Under the rule of Joaquin Balaguer, over half the residents live in poverty. In the 1960's, due to the civil war going on in the Dominican Republic, immigration into the United States rose greatly. An economic depression caused another wave of immigration in the 1980's, which has continued into present day. Because they are one of the newest Latino groups to enter the U.S., they are not economically well off, yet. They have met a lot of prejudice and discrimination, the kind that Latinos and African-Americans have run into. They have a reputation for being poorest from the island, but they are in fact quite educated professionals, but most can only get low-income jobs (Novas).

Central and South Americans are also immigrating into the United States. I will give a brief history of the different cultures represented in these regions, but will not go into as much detail as the others, unless students show great interest or request more information.

With knowledge of the different Latino populations, students will then begin to compare and contrast the similarities and differences of each culture and its art and literature with a greater understanding. The Latino

community in The United States is split in many ways, besides the origin of country from which people came. One way the Latino community is split is that many Latinos are here temporarily and may return to their original country when they retire. Others are here permanently, and still others have been here before there even was a United States of America. Further, there is a conflict with Latino authors. If they write in Spanish, less Americans will read the work, although more in the country of origin would read it. If these writers write in English, the Spanish speaking readers often attack the text. It is seen as selling out to White America (Augenbraum and Stavans). Another problem that many Hispanics share is combating stereotypes, both positive and negative in literature. When Anglo-Americans use Latinos as main characters, it usually reinforces stereotypes. The one element that most Latino writers have in common is that writers combine both English and Spanish, called Spanglish or code switching.

## Latin American Women Writers

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As in most cultures, women's histories differ from men's. In fact, this difference is what makes the literature between men and women often vary. To fully understand a culture, we have to look at all people of that culture. I found the following history of Chicana women in a great book called *Infinite Divisions: An Anthology of Chicana Literature*, edited by Tey Diana Rebolledo and Olliana S. Rivero. I've had trouble finding information about other Latino groups of women. In the 1500's, women went to New Mexico with the men to explore. They lived on farms and ranches, located far from each other. Life was very difficult for the women, but they had more rights than most of their Anglo-American counterparts. Spanish women had the right to inherit and own property. Under Spanish law, they had the right to take legal action for themselves, separately from their husbands. During the next hundred years or so, the racial lines blurred, because men and women of both Anglo and Mexican descent began to reproduce. This multiracial individual was called coyota/coyote. In 1680 during the Pueblo Revolt, in which Native Americans rebelled against their oppression, approximately 400 men died. Due to the fact that the women were widowed, the Chicana women became very strong and independent. Historically, women are survivors. When Mexico freed itself from Spain, again many women were left without husbands.

In 1848, the time of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hildago, many Yankee immigrants fled to America. Due to the history of oppression caused by the Yankees, the Mexicans lost a great deal of their land and became impoverished. Prejudice invaded their lives, forcing many to change not only their dress, but also their language. Spanish wasn't allowed to be spoken in the schools, and in fact, students were severely punished when caught speaking Spanish. Also with the influx of Anglos, many of the more elite Mexican women intermarried.

Throughout Latino history, women have played the role of the storyteller. Actually, this role was valued by all and was source of power for the women. It created a voice for them. When Hispanics lived in the barrios, the literacy rate for Latinos rose. This rise in literacy enabled these stories to evolve from the oral tradition to the written tradition. The Spanish Language Press was a place for the written tradition to be shared among the people of the culture. In the early 1900's Los Angeles tripled in size to over 300,000. This large grouping during the Great Depression had women working to help combat poverty.

Literature of resistance sprouted up during this time period. In the 1930's, women captured in writing what they perceived to be a "vanishing culture." They did this by following five strategies. The first strategy is filling the pages with the great detail of the people, names, the self-hatred often found during the time period. The

second is by using a nostalgic tone, longing for a past environment that revolved around community. Strategy three is mixing different genres in order to create attention to details, as in the tradition in oral storytelling. The fourth is including a purely feminine voice, which was usually not seen in writing. The fifth and final strategy is including in the writing the cultural misunderstanding and the oppressive nature of the Anglos.

During World War II, women went to work to help out the war effort, as well as to take over for the men away in the war. This war contribution did not curb the prejudice that Hispanics encountered, though. Children's names were Anglicized in school and still no Spanish was allowed in schools. In the 1960's and 70's, a Chicano Renaissance flourished. Although the writing was predominantly male, some women were included. Chicana literature became more mainstream in the 1990's. More personal essays by women were being published and read. Further, the traditionally patriarchal society was challenged. Women faced the male figure and even poked fun at them. Similarly, women writers faced their own sexuality, celebrating rather than being ashamed of this part of them. To sum up the 90's for Chicana writers, these women explored the forbidden aspects of their culture.

Infinite Divisions breaks up Chicana literature into subdivisions. These divisions make sense in the order of which to teach this subject. First, discuss Foremothers in the Chicano culture. The grandmother was traditionally the storyteller, a very important role. While the men were out mining, the women would do the laundry or clerk at offices. Young girls lived a sheltered life, having a chaperone with them at all times. The storyteller was criticized for promoting stereotypes in their writing. At this point I will discuss the role that hegemony plays in society and how it makes the victims internalize the stereotypes. Many Chicana writers wanted the women of the past to confront the issues head on as the writers of the 90's did. Some of the foremothers document the struggle to preserve their cultural heritage and land. Certain themes are repeated in these writings: the importance of family, the preservation of tradition, and the folkloric element of healing. The women safeguarded these stories and poems by hiding them away in storage or in drawers (39).

The next subsection is titled "Self and Identity". This one is an important issue for my curriculum, because I want the students to explore their own self and identity, which is what adolescence is all about. Recurring themes are the alienation felt by both Mexican and American peers and society, political affirmation, class and race struggles and the affect on their self-image as individuals as well as a culture. Most students will be able to relate to this in some way, which is what makes this literature so engaging for students. Many of my students are also living between languages and cultures. Further, Chicana women are caught between stereotypes and roles, as are most women today. They are "drop-outs, educated and Anglicized, dope-pushers or community organizers. . ." (77). Women are also traditionally the caretakers and nurturers of the young and of the men. And of course, they are still oppressed. The literature reflects all of these struggles and problems.

"Self and Others" is the next subsection covered. What others think of us and how they treat us helps define our roles in society or helps us combat those modes. In the Chicana culture, the father and grandfather weren't the nurturers, they were the discipline givers. The patriarchal authority that was dominant in the culture oppressed women. The literature of the past explores this and the literature of the present challenges this patriarchy. The aging woman in the family was revered, though. All treated her with respect and love. Chicano children had a strong bond with their mothers and grandmothers.

Myths and archetypes largely show values of a culture through religious figures and heroes. They display the "traits considered desirable by a group or society" (189). The legend of Marianismo depicts the Virgin Mary as a heroine. The Virgin of Guadalupe represents the merging of European and Native American culture. The valuable character trait of unselfish giving, as well as being the ideal mother is shown. But many consider this

myth a symbol of failure, because they say the Virgin wasn't active enough. This discrepancy shows the generational gap between mothers and daughters. Her critics say she "advocates acceptance and endurance, not action" (191). Further they compare her to the Statue of Liberty, because she represents the lie of freedom and equality. La Malinche is an Aztec woman who was sold into slavery by her family. She was also raped and pillaged. Some would say that she represents the male oppression in society. She also represents the European conquest of the Native American, acknowledging the relationship between the Mexicans and the Native Americans. She is seen as a translator and also as a survivor. La Llorona is a weeping woman who is mourning the murder of her children; hence, she is stuck in purgatory as a ghost. She represents the mother who has lost her children to the Anglo-American culture, through assimilation. Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz is a 17th century nun who represents a strong, independent woman who put the law of god ahead of the law of man. She defied the authority that told her she could not continue her studies. She "elevated everyday chores" into science. The virtues that she embodies are her fierce love of knowledge, her writing ability, her power of language, her independent spirit and agony and her eventual silence (Rebolledo and Rivero).

What a culture celebrates conveys what that culture values. Women wrote about celebrations within the Chicana culture. Many contemporary writing celebrates being women, as well as an appreciation of their foremothers. Love is celebrated, which ties Chicano culture to other cultures. Chicana writers "celebrate their joy of being" (342). Chicana people have great pride and cherish this, as is seen in their writing. The writing rejoices in the fact that they feel solidarity as one people, strong family ties, etc.

Some famous Latina women are Manuela Medina, who led rebels during the struggle for Mexican independence. She won many battles. Another strong woman of this time was Dona Josefa Ortiz de Dominguez. In 1810, Gertrudis Bocanegra organized revolutionary armies. Josefina Sierro, in the 1930's, helped organize an underground railroad that helped Mexicans come back to the United States after being deported. Many of the Mexicans helped were actually United States citizens. In the great book Everything You Need to Know About Latino History, by Himilce Novas, there is a list of "Nine Latinas who have made a difference". This list includes Joan Baez, Fabiola Cabeza de Baca, Linda Chavez, Dolores Huerta, Virginia Musquiz, Antonia Novello, Helen Rodriguez, Josefina Sierro, and Emma Tenayuca.

## Latino Art

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The art portion of the unit will be refined as I teach it and learn more about it myself. What I have studied is incredible and important. Each piece that I will use has a message and teaches the students something about Latin culture. Some of the themes that will be explored is hybridity, or the mixture of the Latin and American cultures and genes, oppression, family, heritage, and healing.

Carmen Lomas Garza is a wonderful contemporary artist. She grew up in Texas and her art is a tribute to her roots. In her paintings, she explores the Chicano way of life. In a book of her paintings, *A Piece of My Heart*, her works are narrated, so the reader can learn some of the underlying messages of the works, as well as gain help in interpreting her work. I will show five of her works to the class. *Curandera* depicts the faith healers, while the home altars are in the background. The painting shows tradition and also shows some of the values of the Chicanos. Many artists paint for a self-healing purpose. This will also be discussed. *El Milagro* depicts devotional practices. The Virgin of Guadalupe has appeared on a water tower. This devotion is mixed with different aspects of Chicano life, including the offerings of the men, snakes. *Tamalada* shows the importance of family, with a twist. The scene is around the kitchen making tamales, but the men are participating which is

unusual. There is great symbolism in the painting, including the picture of the last supper and the calendar. This painting also shows the role of food in the culture, as well as the tradition of the food itself. Para la Cena shows the generational gap between mother/grandmother and children. It depicts the misunderstanding of tradition as well as the acculturation of the young.

Other art pieces I will use will be from a fabulous book, Contemporary Art and Multicultural Education. Luis Cruz Azaceta is a Cuban exile and has lived in the United States for over 30 years. His Lotto: American Dream shows the hopelessness of many Latinos, for whom the only hope for economic success is, he depicts, winning the lotto. Isla del Encanto by Marin Gutierrez uses symbols from Puerto Rican culture, both historically and contemporarily. The next piece is very important and one of my favorites. Yolanda M. Lopez did Portrait of an Artist as the Virgin of Guadalupe. Many contemporary Latino artists and writers question their heritage, and that is exactly what Lopez is doing with this piece. She takes the Virgin of Guadalupe and modernizes her, creating a modern role model for Chicanas. Her version of the mythological figure also challenges the patriarchal society, and encourages women to be self-assertive. Dolores del Rio VI, by Amalia Mesa-Bains, shows an altar that memorializes the actress, but more importantly shows the importance of home altars in Latin culture and can lead to a discussion of the important holiday, Day of the Dead. Elizabeth Sisco, Louis Hock, and David Avalos created a highly controversial public art piece called Welcome to America's Finest Tourist Plantation, which is actually a bus poster. It depicts the exploitation of Mexican labor and led to many heated debates.

The use of art in the classroom gives students another medium to understand and interact with the themes and lessons of the class. I also use art to teach CAPT. Often, students can answer the Capt questions with something visual easier, because the reading is removed. Art is a great vehicle to develop students' critical thinking skills.

## Classroom Activities

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Growing up is an important part of people's lives, regardless of race and ethnicity. Students will relate to this deeply, for they are growing up before our eyes and coming of age is written about in most cultures. We look back at our growth process to figure out what has made us who we are today. What is rare and precious is when we are in one of those moments and realize it. When we ask students to be cognizant of their life, we enable them to recognize history in the making and appreciate and value these moments. Exploring how we grow up also allows us to peer into our heritage. Further, and more fitting for some students, when we deal with the past, we can often put to rest demons that still plague us. Many of my students have had traumatic events in their lives and need to face their past so they can have inner peace.

It is my philosophy that my job is more than only teaching students how to read and write. It's my job to help students navigate through adolescence, which I consider the most difficult time in life. I do this through literature, writing, thinking, and communication. . . The following lessons are examples of some of the things I will do with my students. These are the types of lessons that I do all year, along with other activities and lessons.



## **Lesson Plan One: CAPT Response to Literature activity based on the connecting the story “The Horned Toad” to their own lives.**

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Since the students have historical background on the different cultures in the story, they will be able to use this story in the following lesson plans. I can use this lesson as a CAPT activity, but I can also use as an important connection activity without bringing up the CAPT. It is extremely important for students to interact with whatever text we are working with. Connection is one way to do this.

Story: “The Horned Toad” by Gerald Haslam, which is a great short story about a young boy, a mixed race, whose Latin American grandmother comes to live with him. They conflict immediately, but soon gain an understanding of one another. The story reflects generational gaps, as well as cultural. In the end, he learns an important life lesson from the grandmother and teaches the adults.

Objectives: Students will. . .

1. Listen to a story read by the teacher and by class
2. Make a connection between the story and their own lives
3. Display response in a detailed entry in their journals

Procedures:

1. Prereading activity: Students will recall an experience in their lives when they learned a life lesson. They will do a quick-write, 5 minutes, on this and some will share their responses with the class.
2. Students will read the story “The Horned Toad” aloud, each student reading a paragraph.
3. Class will discuss the lessons that the narrator learns in the story. We will explore the ways in which he learns the lesson, including the time in which he learned it, the circumstances, etc.
4. For homework: Students will write a two page minimum entry in their journal, explaining in detail one specific experience they had in their lives, where they learned a life lesson. They will compare their experience to that of the narrators. If they can’t come up with something of their own, they must use the words “if that happened to me” or “I can imagine that” in order to not only relate to the story, but to learn empathy.

## **Lesson Plan Two: Living in between cultures and breaking down these cultural and generational barriers.**

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Again this lesson could be used for CAPT. Students will explore the story more in depth in this lesson. They will also learn how to navigate through some of the difficult aspects of life. Many teenagers feel they cannot relate to older generations and that they are misunderstood. Some tend not to think of their elders as “real” people, with a past youth. Hopefully for those who do have either a generational gap or a cultural gap, or both, this lesson will make the communication lines easier to open.

Story: "The Horned Toad" by Gerald Haslam

Objectives: Students will. . .

1. Examine Haslam's life and how his own experiences were similar to the narrator's in the story.
2. Utilize their knowledge of Latino history to describe the struggle that many children undergo living between cultures.
3. Make connections between the generational/cultural gap in their own lives and those they know to the one in the story.
4. Interact in small groups discussing these comparisons.

Procedures:

1. Students will take notes on Haslam's childhood and life.
2. Students will then infer why Haslam would write a story like this and how it relates to his own life, through discussion.
3. They will then relate this generational/cultural gap to the history of Latinos, which they've already explored. We will discuss the difficulties that often arise from this gap. One student will write the difficulties on the board as they are raised in class.
4. In small groups, students will discuss their own experiences with a generational gap and/or a cultural gap in their lives. They will collectively write down one story from each student. They will then share their stories with the class.
5. For homework: Students will write down suggestions for healthy ways other students can break through these generational/cultural gaps, to have better relationships with those they love. They must write down at least three suggestions in a paragraph for each.

### **Lesson Plan Three: Internet research on Latino culture.**

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Students will be doing a project on one aspect of Latino culture, as mentioned earlier. This will be one of the earlier activities for the project. Again they must present this information in front of the class. I will give the students at least 3 weeks to complete this project.

Objectives: Students will. . .

1. Utilize the Internet for research.
2. Locate information on different Latin/ Latin American food, fashion, music, artists, celebrations, holidays, etc. They will locate the information they chose to do their projects on.
3. Gather information to later synthesize for their oral presentations.

4. Document all sources properly, which they already know how to do.

Procedures: (in computer lab)

1. Students will use the following websites, but aren't limited to them, to locate information on their project subject.

<http://www.amarillas.com>: links to other Latin websites

<http://www.latinoweb.com>: covers most aspect of Latin American culture

<http://www.latinolink.com>: covers Latin literature, art, and music

<http://ladb.unm.edu/www/retanet>: includes information on various Latin American aspects. Has lesson plans, photos, etc.

<http://www.lamusica.com>: has great Latin music selections

2. They will then take notes and/or print out anything relevant to their research.

3. They need to make sure they are properly documenting the website. They also have a checklist to make sure the website is factual and reliable.

## Teacher Bibliography

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Augenbraum, Harold and Ilan Stavans. *Growing Up Latino: Memoirs and Stories*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1993.

Great book of memoirs from various Latino writers, from all different regions, discussing stories of their youth and experiences growing up.

Cahan, Susan and Zoya Kocur, ed. *Contemporary Art and Multicultural Education*. New York: The New Museum of Contemporary Art, 1996.

Fabulous book of multicultural art. User friendly. Tells how to teach the art and includes lesson plans that can be used for any art.

Cisneros, Sandra. "The Monkey Garden", "My Name", "A Rice Sandwich", "The Three Sisters"

Great stories about her experiences as a youngster.

Colon, Jesus. "Little Things are Big".

Great short story about his experiences with prejudice and how they stopped him from helping someone. He discusses his regret about this.

Coffer, Judith Ortiz. *Silent Dancing: A Partial Remembrance of a Puerto Rican Childhood*. Houston: Arte Publico Press, 1952.

Great book of her own memoirs, broken up into short stories.

Erro-Peralta, Nora and Caridad Silva-Nunez, ed. *Beyond the Border: A New Age in Latin American Women's Fiction*. San Francisco: Cleis Press, 1991.

Great book of short stories. Fourteen to choose from, along with author biographies.

Garza, Carmen Lomas. *A Piece of My Heart*. New York: The New Press, 1991.

Contains her works as well as an introduction by the artist herself and commentaries of each piece.

Lopez, Tiffany Ana, ed. *Growing Up Chicana/o: An Anthology*. New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1993.

Incredible book of short stories with author biographies. Every story is incredible. Highly recommended.

King, John, ed. *Modern Latin American Fiction: A Survey*. Boston: Faber and Faber, 1987.

Contains background information on Latin American literature. Shows the different influences and genres.

Novas, Himilce. *Everything You Need to Know About Latino History*. New York: Plume, 1994.

Book every teacher of Latin culture must have. It tells everything in a very understandable way. In questions and answer format, so you can easily find the particular information you need.

Rebolledo, Tey Diana and Eliana S. Rivera. *Infinite Divisions: An Anthology of Chicana Literature*. Tuscon: The University of Arizona Press, 1993.

Fabulous book on Latina writers. Takes a historical perspective and moves through time. A must read.

Rodriguez, Richard. *Hunger for Memory: The Education of Richard Rodriguez*. Boston: David R. Godine, 1982.

Discusses his experiences in school and what he went through emotionally and personally because he was of Latin descent. Book is very moving.

Santiago, Esmeralda. *When I was Puerto Rican*. New York: Vintage Books, 1993.

Great novel about her experiences growing up. She discusses learning many Puerto Rican customs and then being moved to New York, where the rules are different.

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Allende, Isabel. "The Judges Wife". Chilean author of short story about a small timid woman who brought down a feared bandit.  
Anzaldúa, Gloria. "By Your Faces We Will Know You." Short essay about the struggle of self. "To live in the Borderlands means you." Poem about prejudice, cultural estrangement.  
Cisneros, Sandra. "The Monkey Garden", "My Name", "A Rice Sandwich", "The Three Sisters"  
Colon, Jesus. "Little Things are Big." Very short story about how prejudice stopped the narrator from helping others.  
Esperanza de Padilla, Maria. "Maria Esperanza." Poem about naming and the coming together of the old and the new.

Galarza, Ernesto. "Barrio Boy." Great short story. Gaspar de Alba, Alicia. "Juana Ines." Short story about the legendary nun before she became a nun. Gonzalez-Berry, Erlinda. "Malinche Past". Short story of mythical and legendary woman. Haslam, Gerald. "The Horned Toad". Short story about cultural gap between a mixed-race grandson and his Latin grandmother, and the lessons she taught him. Jimenez, Francisco. "The Circuit". Short story about the dilemma of the child migrant worker and moving from school to school.

Mora, Pat. "Legal Alien"- poem about bicultural struggle, "Plot"

Moraga, Cherrie. "For the Color of My Mother". Poem about the white daughter paying homage to her brown mother's struggles. "An Old Native Custom: La Curandera". Collected by the New Mexico Federal Writer's Project. Short story about the healers of tradition. Ortiz, Judith. "Silent Dancing" Otero-Warren, Nina. "Asking for the Bride". Short story about the traditional marriage arrangements. Perkins, Matali. "The Sunita Experiment" Rios, Alberto Alvaro. "The Iguana Killer". Short story about cultural gap from the mainland. Salinas, Marta. "The Scholarship Jacket". Short Story about the prejudice face in the educational system. Thomas, Piri. "Alien Turf" Torres, J.L. "My Father's Flag" Valdes, Gina. "The Border". Poem about the Mexican border, metaphorically. Villarreal, Jose Antonio. From Poncho. Excerpt about the prejudice in the educational system and how kids are slated for programs because of their race. Viramontes, Helena Maria. "The Moths". Short story about holding on to your heritage. Yzquierdo, Rosa Elena. "Abuela". Short story about a grandmother. Zamora, Bernice. "So Not To Be Mottled". Fabulous 5-line poem about being torn between identities and cultures.

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