



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
2005 Volume II: The Challenge of Intersecting Identities in American Society: Race/Ethnicity, Gender and Nation

The Americas in America: Un Mar de Identidades

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What does it mean to be Hispanic? Is there a Hispanic identity? And if so, what races and ethnicities embrace the Hispanic identity?

As a high school Spanish teacher, I always think about including aspects of diverse cultural groups in my lessons about peoples from around the world. It is important not to exclude any major culture or ethnic group because I believe my students should be raised facing the highly diverse society that we all live in. However, because the Spanish language is spread among cultures and continents, I feel the need to emphasize cultural components of countries of the Hispanic world.

As an educator, I also value and extend towards each and every one of these societies since I personally value each as key to the growth of our students. For this reason, I am going to focus on the study of one of the most numerous immigration groups in the United States today: the Hispanic/Latino group. We will take a more detailed study of some of the countries that have had a stronger influence in the United States: Mexico, Puerto Rico, Colombia and Cuba. The students will also be learning about Guatemala, because of its cultural richness. Guatemala will also serve as a model on how students should present their PowerPoint lesson. I have chosen Guatemala because of its complexity: historically, artistically and culturally speaking. The students will be able to see how they can conduct serious research in order to teach their lesson. The approach to these countries is going to be a special one since we are going to develop some aspects from different points of view.

The unit is to be used at The Sound School Regional Vocational Aquaculture Center in New Haven. It is a unique small interdistrict magnet school with a hands-on marine education program, which seeks to prepare students for both college and the work place depending on the academic skills and desires of the student. The school enrolls students from New Haven and eighteen surrounding towns (about 60 percent of the students come from these suburban towns). The result is a racially, ethnically and socioeconomically diverse student body with a broad range of academic abilities in which we encourage students to be participants in the global, multi-cultural society by involving them in a wide based high school experience.

The unit "The Americas in America: Un Mar de Identidades" is being designed for my Spanish 4 students, who possess an Intermediate level on the ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) Performance Guidelines for K-12 learners. Therefore, most of them are able to:

- Express their own thoughts using sentences and strings of sentences when interacting on familiar topics in present times;
- Are understood by those accustomed to interacting with language learners;
- Use pronunciation and intonation patterns which can be understood by a native speaker accustomed to interact with language learners;
- Make false starts and pause frequently to search for words when interacting with others;
- Are able to meet practical writing needs such as short letters and notes by recombining learned vocabulary and structure demonstrating full control of present time and evidence of some control of other time frames.

The classes and the majority of the activities are intended to be held in Spanish most of the time but English will be utilized as is necessary. With proper modifications, the unit could also be taught in Spanish 3 or even Advanced Placement Spanish classes.

The material is designed to be covered within a period of 25-30 sessions which are from forty to seventy minutes in length. We have a rotational period system which changes everyday. The longer periods will enable the teacher to use various classroom materials such audiovisual devices. The average class size will be twenty or so, which is a perfect number for some of the "group classroom" activities I want the students to work on.

The primary purpose of the unit is to create a global consciousness and an international perspective in all the students through the study of identity, society and culture of some of the Hispanic countries that form what has been called the Americas. In order to meet this objective, I would like to focus on providing the students with the tools necessary to independently complete a major research project, being able to express their own perspective rather than repeat other author's opinions, and enabling them to plan and teach a class to their classmates.

Students will be able to reflect on the importance the Americas had and still have in the formation and development of the United States. They will also be able to recognize, reject and modify misrepresentations and stereotypes that American society imposes as a result of a lack of interest or even information. In other words, they will better understand and develop an unbiased perspective of the Hispanic/Latino world.

Rationale

Students will reach a general sense of the extensive complexity of the Americas and the peoples that inhabit them. In order to do so, they will learn about the complex history of power, domination, migration, cultural and ethnic amalgamation, conflicts and change that created the Americas in their earlier stages.

There is always controversy when using the terms Spanish, Hispanic and Latino. Spanish is a person born in Spain; Hispanic is a person who descends from one of the Spanish-speaking countries in the world. The term "Hispanic America" is frequently used to refer to the Western Hemisphere countries that were once colonies and in which Spanish is still the official language. These countries include Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama, Cuba, Colombia, Ecuador, Dominican Republic, Venezuela, Peru, Paraguay, Uruguay, Bolivia, Argentina and Chile. All of these countries are also part of a broader region called "Latin America," which comprises all those countries or territories and nations where the predominant language is of a Latin origin, including Portuguese (Brazil); and French (Haiti, Martinique and French Guiana,) as well as Spanish. (Ochoa, 6.)

The debate is always pending about whether the term "Hispanic" is somehow offensive or whether it is correct. I personally think it is correct and respectful, but I have come across different people and authors who consider it to be offensive because it directly refers to the Spanish heritage and reminds them of the violent and barbaric ways the Spanish imposed their culture to the natives that were in the Americas when they arrived.

The Hispanic Americas are the result of a mixture of biological and cultural development; a mix of Spanish, Native American and African traditions. As a result of this blending we see a group of societies and nations that possess an astonishing devotion to local tradition but also an incredible willingness to mix. These two main characteristics were inherited from Spain. Spain has historically been marked by the blending of cultures/peoples and separation into distinct regions. Many Hispanic Americans who come to the United States still share these features. Despite their diverse origins, Hispanic Americans are aware of their common heritage and identity. This identity sometimes leads to disagreement, even with the term Hispanic. Some people in this large community prefer to call themselves or be called "Latinos" rejecting the English coinage "Hispanic" for its emphasis on Spain (*Hispania* is Latin for Spain). They consider the term to be "euro-centric." Latino, on the other hand, is an authentic Spanish word that does not directly mention Spain, but does credit the ancient origin of Spanish as a Latin language. I am going to use Hispanic American or Hispanic in this unit, because I consider it to be more accurate since I will not include Brazilians and other non-Spanish-speaking Latinos in this particular unit.

European Heritage

I refer to the peoples of a Hispanic background who live in the United States as opposed to a resident of one of the Spanish-speaking countries as Hispanic American. This ethnic group is currently estimated to be 12.5% of the United States population. Hispanic Americans are the fastest-growing minority group in the United States. Experts predict that Hispanic Americans will add up to more than 50 million by the year 2025. (Ochoa 7)

There is neither a single Spanish race nor a Spanish culture. Hispanics may be white, black, Native American or any combination thereof. The very nature of being Hispanic, with its mixture of ethnic influences and stocks, weakens the notion of race as a clear and separate category. This blending of cultures is, as mentioned before, one of the central characteristics of Hispanic America inherited from Spain. From the distant past, many Spanish people have exhibited both the keenness for blending of cultures and the devotion to local traditions that would characterize the Americas (or Hispanic America).

Because of its geography, Spain welcomed peoples from many places and cultures: from Africa, southern Europe and Asia (via the Mediterranean); and from northern Europe (via mountain through the Pyrenees). So all of the following peoples contributed to Spain's ethnic mix: Iberians, Celts, Phoenicians, Greeks, Romans, Alans, Vandals, Suevi, Visigoths, Jews and Moors. Once in Spain, each group tended to become isolated by

geography, dividing the country up into separate regions. The result was a wide-ranging collection of distinct local cultures independent of each other in most of the cases; although they exchanged some aspects with each other in some occasions, as for example in Toledo, where in the 14th and 15th centuries the Jewish, Christian and Moorish communities lived together.

Right before the birth of Hispanic America, Spanish society was a unified, stratified, autocratic and colonialist society empowered from a great military victory against a rival religious and political power. The country became a unified kingdom (by the union of the two main Spanish kingdoms when Isabella I (of Castile) married Ferdinand V (of Aragon) in 1474 and dedicated themselves to preserving and expanding the Catholic faith. Isabella and Ferdinand, the "Catholic Monarchs," initiated the Inquisition in 1478, completed the reconquest of Spain from the Moors and were responsible of the ruthless expulsion of the Spanish Jews in order to spread out Catholicism.

The peoples that Spanish explorers found in the New World shared some cultural characteristics, but not their identity. These peoples had completely different ways of life marked by their geographical conditions. As a result of these, they varied greatly in their fundamental cultural traits: they had different languages, living arrangements, religion, economic, social and political structures, and different diets. They also differed greatly in other aspects such as music, clothing styles, arts and crafts.

The Role of Race

Although the Spanish colonizers did have slaves, their attitude towards slavery and race was completely different of the English settlers. The long period of Arab domination in the Iberian Peninsula left a unique legacy of racial and cultural blending. By the 15th century, there were mixed groups such as the *Mudejar* (Muslims that continued to live under the Christian rule) or the *Mozárabes* (Christians who learned to speak Arabic and adopted Muslim habits.) This tradition of racial mixing made it more acceptable for Spanish settlers to engage in sexual or marital unions with both Amerindians and Africans.

But racial mixing did not mean racial equality. As the Indian population of the Americas gradually rebounded and the black slave labor assumed a greater role in colonial plantation production, the Spanish and Creole classes became fearful of revolt. As a result, the Council of the Indies -the Crown's administrative body for the colonies-banned all marriages between whites and free blacks or *mulatos*. The ban did not stop the practice of mixed racial marriages. (Gonzalez, 18-19)

Fray Bartolomé de las Casas, a former landowner who become a Franciscan missionary, was the first to denounce and condemn the ill treatment of the Amerindians. As a result of his campaign against Indian enslavement, Spain adopted the "New Laws" in 1542. The codes recognized Indians as free and equal subjects of the Spanish Crown, but landowners in many regions refused to observe the codes and kept Indians in virtual slavery for generations. (Gonzalez, 12)

Native American Heritage

Native Americans (or American Indians, in commemoration of Columbus' mistake when he thought he had reached the Indies) are those people whose ancestors lived in the Americas and developed indigenous societies before the arrival of Columbus. These Native Americans were living throughout North, Central and South America 11,000 years ago; they lived by fishing and hunting. Later on, in the valley of Tehuacan (south-Central Mexico) they started to grow different crops such as tomatoes, potatoes, corn, cocoa, peanuts or tobacco. Having to take care of crops, gave these peoples leisure time facilitating the development of arts and

science and often this led to social stratification: leisured people were at the top and hard working peasants at the bottom of the hierarchy. This societal system encouraged people to stay in one place and therefore, cities and towns began to appear.

This model of the Americas was established long before Columbus and was the site of several flourishing urban civilizations – Aztec, Maya, Inca and Chibcha among others- all of which contributed greatly to the Hispanic American heritage. Upon contact with the Spanish, many of these Native American cultures contributed distinctive elements to the wide-ranging mixture that would later become Hispanic America.

Indigenous Peoples of the Caribbean

The islands in the Caribbean –the first location of the Americas to be reached by the Spanish explorers- were populated by two rival groups of people who lived of farming, hunting and fishing: the Carob and the Sarawak (or Thins.)

The Carobs:

The Carib (or Carob) occupied various regions of South and Central America. They probably came from the valley of the Orinoco River. The tribe practiced cannibalism (as a matter of fact, the word cannibal comes from the Spanish term for these peoples). During the late 15th century, they lived in today's Venezuela and most of the islands of the Lesser Antilles. They were really skilled in warfare and canoeing. Unlike some other Native peoples, they were not organized into a hierarchical structure under a chief, but fought as individual warriors and raided other people. Male captives were tortured and eaten; female captives became slave-wives. On land, they lived in small settlements where they farmed and fished.

The Arawak (or Tainos):

The Arawak originally inhabited the islands of the West Indies and present day area of Florida, as well as the coastal area of South America as far south as today's Brazil. They were skilled at weaving, pottery making and working with wood and metal. The Arawak were the first of the Native peoples Columbus encountered in his first trip.

Large Caribbean islands had elaborate societies ruled by hereditary chiefs who ruled over other classes. These groups developed a political and social hierarchy. A class of hereditary chiefs ruled over other three classes, of which the lowest was composed of slaves. Religion had a structure of deities parallel to their social formation.

Aztec, Maya, Inca and Chibcha

The Aztec:

When the Spanish conquered Mexico and Central America, the Aztec were the most prominent people in the region. They built the most powerful empire in Mesoamerica. Their language, legends, and art forms continue to influence the present day Mexican culture.

The founders of the Aztec empire settled in the valley of Mexico at the beginning of the 13th century. At the beginning they served as warriors for other groups. Later on, they founded Tenochtitlán in 1325. Their capital, Tenochtitlan, was one of the largest cities in the world at that time, an astonishing metropolis of about 250,000 people. As they gained power, they took over other surrounding older states, making them pay a tribute. By the 16th century, they were an empire with about 5 or 6 million inhabitants.

The Aztec society was extremely militaristic and possessed a highly centralized political system which was entwined with religion. The Aztecs built colossal pyramids to honor the gods, practiced an elaborate system of astronomy and calendar keeping, and educated their young people in fishing, food preparation but also in the arts: painting, stone sculpting and writing detailed histories in pictographs.

The Maya:

They were based in the Yucatan peninsula, but they ended up extending their power as far as Guatemala and Honduras. The civilization of the lowland Maya began about 600 and 400 BC in today's jungles of Guatemala, southeastern Mexico and Belize. The Maya lasted until the Spanish conquest, but the Mayan civilization reached its zenith during the Maya classic period (A.D. 300-900), when they built pyramids, reached great advances in scientific knowledge such as mathematics, astronomy, calendar keeping; and writing, agriculture, pottery and monumental architecture. These states developed into highly populated centers (with tens of thousands of inhabitants) with enormous temple platforms and ceremonial plazas which were built to reflect the power of the Maya.

Unlike the Aztec, the Maya did not develop a unified political structure but built city-states with a common culture (el Mirador, Tikal, Cerros, Becan, and Dzibilchaltun). The Maya chiefdoms had strong economic ties to one another. Like other Mesoamerican societies, the Maya were ruled by nobles who possessed both political and religious power. Smaller cities paid tribute to the rulers, who resided in the major urban centers.

Unfortunately, after A.D. 900 many of the lowland Mayan cities were abandoned without any reasonable explanation. They survived in the Yucatan area until the Spanish arrived in the 16th century.

The Inca:

Around A.D. 1200, the Incas settled in South America, in the valley of Cuzco (today's Peru).

The Inca was a strict hierarchically organized, centralized and stratified theocratic society; at the top of the hierarchy there was the emperor, believed to be a descendent from *Inti* (the Sun god). The Inca held religious ceremonies (animal and sometimes human sacrifices) devoted to their god: the sun. They had a large farming population subordinated to a small ruling class. The emperor ruled with divine authority and all power was in his hands. He chose his most important administrators or governors from blood relative (aristocracy) who would rule one of the four quarters (*suyus*) in which the territory was divided. Serving under each governor, there were other ten distinct governors for about 10,000 peasants, and so on until reaching the lowest unit which would be 10 peasants. Therefore, for every 10,000 people, there were 1331 officials who could control everything and kept strict accounts of all the people, gold, land, crops, and projects of the empire.

The Incas had no writing system; they kept records by means of what they called *quipu* a series of short, knotted strings hung at intervals from a long top string. They varied the colors and kinds of string used and the spacing of the strings and knots in order to document populations, troops, and tribute, as well as information. The *quipu* was a complex memory aid rather than a literal record.

Agriculture was the economic base, producing all the products necessary for their diet corn, potatoes, beans, peppers, squash, peanuts and cereals. Their economy was also supported by their extensive deposits of gold and silver until the ransacking of the Spanish in the 16th century.

In the 15th century, they established an enormous empire around Cuzco that was more than 250,000 miles

from north to south and about 500 from east to west, along parts of today's Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Chile and Argentina.

They built a network of stone roads to unify the vast empire, raised great temples and palaces, and were able to build irrigation canals and rope suspension bridges. They established a lunar calendar, and possessed accurate standards of measurement. The Incas were also able to develop art (textiles, pottery and metal work) as well as culture. For example, they produced a rich body of music.

The Chibcha (Muisca):

Settled in three different areas: the Northern Andes area (what is today's Colombia), northern tropical forests (Venezuela) and Southern South America (Paraguay, Uruguay, Argentina and Chile).

The Chibcha, who lived in the northern Andes area were politically powerful; settled in numerous towns and villages and built palaces and temples. They developed extensive agriculture with a wide system of irrigation, wove cotton, traded and showed great artistic skills in making gold ornaments (although they were ignorant in the use of bronze or copper).

The Chibcha resembled to the Inca, next to them, they had the largest and most politically centralized society when the Europeans arrived, being able to resist the Spaniards until they were finally subdued and almost exterminated.

When the Spanish colonizers arrived in the 16th century, they enslaved and forced these peoples to work the land. The indigenous Native Americans could not survive under the conditions of slavery and some of these groups were exterminated because of their exposure to European diseases (measles, smallpox, bubonic plague, cholera, typhoid fever, scarlet fever, pleurisy, mumps, diphtheria, pneumonia, whooping cough, malaria, yellow fever, and various sexually transmitted diseases) or as a cause of the unbearable labor they were forced to produce.

The Spanish then started to bring Africans to the Americas because it was believed that they could endure forced labor and could bear any climate.

Before the United States:

When the Spanish arrived to this continent they found still more Native American peoples in what is today's Arizona, New Mexico, Southern Colorado and Northern Mexico. Among these people there were:

The Animal of Arizona:

They were the descendants of the Hohokah who migrated to Arizona from Mexico around the year 300 B.C. The Animal were farming people who irrigated their fields and lived near the riverbanks in villages in huts. They were governed by an elected chief and a council.

The Pueblo:

Descendants of the Anasazi who originally settled in the southwest of today's United States, the Pueblo flourished around the year 700 B.C. They built stone constructions and *kivas* (underground chambers used for

rituals). They grew corn, beans, squash and probably cotton. They were really skilled in weaving and pottery making.

The Navajo (Diné) and Apache:

The Navajo and Apache are closely related; both tribes migrated from western Canada and settled in the southwest between 1400 and 1700.

The Navajo were nomadic hunting-gatherers and warriors who were used to raiding the Pueblo towns for food. They learned weaving and pottery from the Pueblo, and silversmith from the Mexicans. Originally, they hunted deer and smaller game, gathered wild plants and carried out raids on farming peoples. When they interacted with the Pueblo and the Spanish, they became shepherds (goat) and farmers, growing corn, beans, squash and some fruits.

As for religion, they believed in mythology relating to nature, with gods who were believed to intervene in human affairs. They frequently invoked their gods, making offerings to them. Navajo also believed in ghosts (spirits of dead ancestors), witches and healing rituals.

The early Apache were nomadic as well who extended throughout what is now Mexico and the United States. They were warriors for centuries, hunted bison and practiced limited farming. When the Spanish arrived into their territory in the late 1500s, they disrupted the Apache trade connections they had with the tribes nearby. They made little pottery, but were known instead for their fine basketwork.

In the traditional Apache culture, each band was made up of extended families with a headman chosen for leadership abilities and merits in war. Men participated in hunting and raiding activities, while women gathered food, wood, and water. Religion was a fundamental part of their life. They believed in supernatural beings such mountains spirits, or *Yusn* (the "Giver of Life"), who were represented in religious rites such as the puberty and healing ceremonies.

The African Heritage

The associations between Africans and Hispanic Americans are key to the Hispanic / Latino identity.

Black Americans were brought to the Latin American and Caribbean regions as slaves to the colonies, where they contributed to the cultural and genetic heritage of Hispanic America. As a fact, African immigration to the Americas could have started before the arrival of Europeans: before the transatlantic slave trade began, African societies captured, sold and used slaves. This slave trade increased after the Portuguese explorers reached Cape Verde and the mouth of the Senegal River in 1444-1445. The Portuguese began to trade with the Africans in exchange for pepper, gold, ivory and slaves.

Blacks traveled with Christopher Columbus on his first voyage in 1492, such as the navigator Pedro Alonso Ni-o and the black colonists who helped Nicolás de Ovando form the first Spanish settlement on Hispaniola in 1502. The earliest Spanish and Portuguese explorers brought to the Americas their slaves (black Africans) who were born or lived in the Iberian Peninsula. The traffic of slaves was light at first; they would send them to Europe to work as domestic servants, or as laborers, especially in the mines (depending on the geographical area they would be sent to).

These slaves –called *ladinos* (word derived from the Latin term for "learned" and still a strong identity in Guatemala) were heavily Europeanized: they shared their masters' language, religion and culture. They were the first Africans to go to the Americas. The *bezels* (a highly offensive word which referred to the muzzles used on dogs or horses) on the other hand, were the slaves sent to the Americas directly, and therefore, they were unfamiliar with the diverse European language or culture.

After the discovery of gold on the mainland, free Spaniards were reluctant to do manual labor or to remain settled in certain areas. The demand of slaves was enormous since only the slave labor could assure the economic viability of the colonies. By 1518, King Charles I of Spain sanctioned the direct transport of slaves from Africa to the American colonies because the slave trade was controlled by the Crown.

Strategies

First of all, in order to frame the unit in a widest context possible, I am going to focus on history, briefly describing the ethnic and social situations in Spain and in the Americas immediately before the colonization in order to list the ethnic, cultural and social composition of the various tribes that were present in the continent when Christopher Columbus and the colonizers arrived. We will then center our later attention, upon the countries I have previously mentioned: Mexico, Puerto Rico, Colombia, Cuba and Guatemala. We will be exploring a different cultural aspect or an artistic field for each country, so the students can easily focus and research in that aspect.

Every week, we will work on the unit for a period or two; we will start searching for preliminary information that will give the students an idea of what to look for in their independent research and development. I will provide students with various sources –most of them in Spanish with a few exceptions- and they will have to choose the ones that they like because they will be the ones to establish their own searching criteria –always under my supervision and help. This will allow them to have an active role in the learning process.

The research will be in small groups of two or three people (depending on the number of students.) I will emphasize the positiveness of working in groups so the students will learn to value the importance of learning from their classmates and how they can help each other.

We will work in the library for two or three class periods during which all the groups will research a different previously determined aspect (history, economics, culture and/or art) of the country we are working on at that time. The students will end up being "teachers for a day" so they will be teaching and presenting the information to their classmates. They will be able to answer any question or problem that might emerge.

Once we have completed this "process of immersion," we will start working with the reading: poems, songs, stories, fragments..., focusing on the cultural aspects and emphasizing the influence these countries had in the past or are having in American society today. This reading section of the unit will allow the teacher to work on grammar as well. For example: when working with Maná's (Mexican Band) song, "*Justicia, Tierra y Libertad*" from their CD, *Revolución de Amor*, we will be able to review the imperative and subjunctive, as well as work on listening comprehension skills and vocabulary.

We will end each section or country with a movie (or part of it) when possible because there is either limited filmography or the movies are difficult to get as in the case of Colombia and Puerto Rico. Each movie will be

accompanied by a written questionnaire that will interrelate the aspects previously used and that will facilitate critical thinking, meaning the ability to provide support for their ideas. This phase of the unit is truly important for me, since I consider students this age to be capable of reflecting and reinforcing this critical thinking in order to have their own points of view without having to repeat or agree with other people's ideas or theories.

Poster-map

We will be posting a gigantic map on the wall in which students will mark/draw the different tribes of Native Americans that inhabited the Americas when Christopher Columbus arrived to the what it was called the "New World."

The students will mark later on, all the features or people (artists, writers...) that they consider important to the improvement of the students' work.

This activity will directly address one of the nine *intelligences* (Gardner, 1983) Professor Charles R. Hancock explained in a visit to the seminar: the visual-spatial.

Movies

Audiovisual devices such as movies are very helpful in a foreign language class, with movies you work with the visual-spatial, the verbal-linguistic and the musical-rhythmical intelligences at the same time. Students will be watching movies or scenes of various movies which will illustrate many of the cultural, social, political..., aspects presented to the class.

- México: *Mi Familia* (1995), (English)
- Guatemala: *El Norte* (1984), (Spanish)
- Cuba: *Great Day in La Havana* (2001) , (Spanish)

Another English-language movie that could illustrate the influence of the Spanish in the Americas would be *The Mission* (1996).

Students' "Initial Evaluation"

After learning about the diverse sociocultural situation in Spain and the Americas during the process of the colonization, students will write a one page (typed and double spaced) composition. This time it will be written in English, since my main concern is to make sure the students have acquired and understood the information. They will explain the processes that have made countries in Latin America to develop to what they are today.

This "initial evaluation" will help students to understand the influence the different ethnic groups had upon the intrinsic growth of each Latin-American country.

Power Point presentation and "teaching experience"

Students will complete a research paper which, they will make into a power point presentation. They will teach their classmates about the cultural aspect or country they have been researching. They will have to be "teachers for a day," so they will have to have a plan for the lesson. This is a valuable and highly effective activity for the students since they learn a lot and apply the maximum effort on it.

Students' "Final Evaluation"

This "final evaluation" will close the unit and will consist of another composition (in Spanish) in which the students will reflect on different aspects they have learned:

- the concept of identity and why is it so important on the Hispanic societies
- the importance of diversity.

Students will get a complete rubric with all the information they need to insert in this two to three-page long composition.

Classroom Activities

Sample Lesson Plans

Lesson Plan One: Guatemala

(This lesson plan is to be developed in a 70 minute class. However, it can be changed according to teachers needs)

A. Learning objectives:

Students will be able to:

- Practice their listening comprehension skills.
- Build on their reading skills.
- Develop understanding of other countries and cultures.
- Broaden their vocabulary.
- Understand the importance of history and tradition.
- Read and gather information on a text written in Spanish in order to express the ideas in their own words.

B. Special needs:

Students have previously read the story "*Quetzal nunca muere*" ("*Quetzal never dies*") for homework.

Resources

C. /

Materials:

-Computer.

-Smart Board.

-Copies of "Quetzal Nunca Muere" ("Quetzal Never Dies") in: Barlow, Genevieve. *Stories from Latin America / Historias de Latinoamérica*. Side by Side Bilingual Books.

-Map of Guatemala.

-Handout (questions.)

D. Lesson strategies:

-Initiation:

Handout (questionnaire): The teacher gives the questionnaire (in Spanish) to the students with questions like:

¿Qué sabes de Guatemala?: Escribid 5 o más cosas que sepáis de Guatemala, si no se os ocurre nada, contestad a las siguientes preguntas;

-Localización geográfica: ¿Dónde está?

-¿Tiene mar? ¿Cómo se llama?

-¿Cuáles son los colores de su bandera?

-¿Qué idiomas hablan en Guatemala?

-¿Cuál es su principal etnia?

-¿Qué te sugiere el nombre de Rigoberta Menchú?

(What do you know about Guatemala? Write 5 or more things that you know about the country. If you cannot think of anything, answer to the following questions:

-Geographical localization. Where is it?

-Is it in the shore? What is the name of the ocean / sea?

-What are the country's flag colors?

-What languages do they speak in Guatemala?

-What is the countries main ethnic group?

-What can you tell me about Rigoberta Menchú?)

-Development:

1. The teacher samples a Power Point presentation on Guatemala.
 2. Questions the students may have.
 3. Students consider and comment the main cultural aspects they have learned.
 4. Handout with 10-15 questions on the presentation. Correct it with them.
 5. The students read "*Quetzal nunca muere*" ("*Quetzal never dies*") out loud.
 6. The students identify and underline the vocabulary terms they do not understand or know. I always like to have them ask other students, if they do not know, I give them the answer and then I ask them to form a sentence with the word.
- E. Closure: The teacher asks different students what is the most valued fact learned about Guatemala.
- F. Assessment(s) / checking for understanding:

Homework:

1. Highlight all the preterit tenses you find in page 35, write: INDEF. for *pretérito indefinido* and IMP. for *pretérito imperfecto* , and explain why the author uses one or the other.
2. Write a 20-25 line long paragraph explaining the story in your own words.

Lesson Plan Two: "*Justicia, Tierra y Libertad*" ("Justice, Land and Freedom")

(To be developed in a 60 minute lesson)

A. Learning objectives:

Students will be able to:

- Practice their listening comprehension skills, filling in the blanks.
- Identify the importance of words and meaning of music as a way of expressing culture and demands.
- Build on their reading skills.
- Broaden their vocabulary.
- Identify some of the problems Native Peoples of Mexico still have today.

B. Special needs:

None

Resources

C. /

Materials:

-Computer, speakers.

-Maná's *Revolución de Amor* (song: "*Justicia, Tierra y Libertad.*")

-Handouts:

1. Grammar exercises: review formal and informal commands and gerunds.
2. Maná: information about the band (15-20 lines in Spanish)
3. "*Justicia, Tierra y Libertad* " lyrics (with blank spaces previously erased in order to make the students to carefully listen to the song.)

D. Lesson strategies:

-Initiation:

1. Ask the students about the gerund of infinitives: (e.g.: gerund of *estudiar*)

(I usually use this "*pass the bull* " activity in my classes in order to start. I use a toy (a bull) and throw it to the students so they have to answer as they get it. It is a good way to review: they see it as a game and you really get their attention!)

2. Commands, same thing: (e.g.: imperative, second person formal of *comer*.)

-Development:

1. Read the fragment about the Mexican band Maná: different students will read it out loud.

2. Brief discussion on Mexican culture, ethnic reality and internal politics.

3. Students will listen to the song:

-the first time they will listen to the entire song.

-the teacher asks if they understand it. If it is too difficult for them, the teacher will break it in smaller portions (a couple of stanzas, for example).

-repeat the song a couple of times so the students will be able to fill in the blanks.

(For lower classes or difficult songs, what I do sometimes is to post a "word bank" on the board- this particular class the unit is designed for, will not need it)

4. Different students will read out loud one stanza, giving the answers to the blanks.
5. Discussion on the meaning of the song: focusing on the different connotations of justice, land and freedom in the Mexican context and realities.
6. Listen to the song for the last time.

E. Closure:

Write in a piece of paper:

- *¿Te ha gustado la canción? ¿Por qué?* (Did you like the song? Why?)
- *¿Qué es lo que más / menos te ha gustado?* (What did you like the most/ the less?)

F. Assessment(s) / checking for understanding:

Homework: Handout with exercises: commands and gerunds (construction: *estar + gerundio* (to be + gerund))

Lesson Plan Three: Cuba and Cuban Contemporary Artists

(To be developed in two 70 minute classes)

A. Learning objectives:

Students will be able to:

- Identify the various ethnic groups in Cuba today.
- Recognize that it is almost impossible to avoid politics in Cuba.
- Analyze, critique social and political events, music or artistic performances in today's Cuba.
- Practice their listening comprehension skills.
- Identify the importance of any manifestation of art as an expression of cultural and even political identity.
- Apply skills of critical analysis to oral communication.
- Sequence items presented visually.
- Discuss information presented visually.

B. Special needs:

None

C. Resources / Materials:

- *Querido Pablo* o. Pablo Milanés. (1985).

- Ry Cooder's *Buena Vista Social Club* (1999).

- DVD player and television.

- Computer and speakers.

- *Great Day in Havana*. Dir. Laurie Ann Schang and Casey Stoll. Cinemateca. 2001.

- Handouts:

1. Brief history of Cuba:

- Spanish colonization and rule.

- United States occupation.

- Search of stability.

- The Revolution.

- Castro's Cuba.

2. Assessment handout on the different historical, cultural and social aspects learned during the lesson.

3. Reflective questions on the movie.

D. Lesson strategies:

First day

- Initiation:

1. The students will hear Pablo Milanés' *Amo esta Isla* as they step in the classroom and get ready for the class to start.

2. "Pass the bull" questions:

- *¿Qué tipo de música es?* (What kind of music is this?)

- *¿Sabes de qué país es?* (Do you know what country could this song be from?)

- *¿De qué trata la canción?* (What is the song about?)

¿Qué instrumentos musicales oyes? (What musical instruments can you hear?)

- Development:

1. Brainstorm activity: students will work in pairs and will write down everything they know about Cuba.
2. Students and teachers will go over the list together and will discuss it.
3. Teacher introduces the students to the history of Cuba (in Spanish and English). In this process, the teacher will ask the students questions which will enable students to connect information and think critically.
4. The teacher gives students the handout on the history of Cuba, asking them to go over it quickly and ask any question which may rise.

-Closure (first day):

Students will write a 5-10 line reflection on the importance of political stability and democracy in Cuba.

-Homework:

Students will be asked to carefully go over the handout on the history of Cuba and answer to the assessment handout.

Second Day:

-Initiation:

1. The students will listen to the song *El Cuarto de Tula* by Buena Vista Social Club as they step in the classroom and get ready for the class to start.
2. Teacher and students will go over the homework.

-Development:

- The students are shown the movie *Great Day in Havana*, breaking it in different sections and stopping
1. after some of the artists, so students and teacher will discuss different cultural aspects, and will answer to the questions the teacher will provide them;
 - a. Asela Diaz (sculptor).
 - b. Narciso Medina (choreographer).
 - c. Tania Bruguera (performance artist).
 - d. Eloy Machado ("El Ambia") (poet) and Eloy Ruiz (writer and filmmaker).
 - e. Carlos Alfonso and Ele Valdés (musicians).
 - f. Carlos Varela (song writer and singer).
 - g. Israel del Monte (painter and graphic artist).

-Closure (second day):

The teacher will give students a crossword puzzle with important concepts such as: *balseros*, *plantaciones* ...

E. Assessment(s) / checking for understanding:

Homework:

Students are asked to make a poster / collage on those aspects of Cuba that they want. A detailed rubric will be provided.

Resources

Bibliography for teachers

- Acuna, Rodolfo. *Occupied America* . Pearson Longman, 1997. (History of Mexico, from the conquest to the present day.)
- Galeano, Eduardo. *Las Venas Abiertas de América Latina* . Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 1971-2004. (One-sided overview of Latin America from Columbus to the 60's. It might be a little biased, but it can be useful to read it to approach the history of Latin America from a different perspective.)
- Gracia, Jorge J. E. and Pablo de Greiff. Ed. *Hispanics/Latinos in the United States: Ethnicity, Race and Rights*. Routledge, 2000. (Collection of interdisciplinary essays. Discussions of Hispanic identity in education, politics...)
- Gonzalez, Juan. *Harvest of Empire: A History of Latinos in America*. Penguin Books, 2001. (Historical look at both Latin America and Latinos in the United States.)
- Habell-Pallan, Michelle and Mary Romero, Editors. *Latino/a Popular Culture*. New York University Press, 2002. (Collection of essays on current trends affecting Latinos who live in United States and Canada. Articles about Latino music, drama...)
- Halperin Donghi, Tulio. *Historia Contemporánea de América Latina* . Alianza Editorial, 2000. (History of Latin America, from the conquest to the 70's.)
- Morales, Ed. *Living in Spanglish: The Research for Latino Identity in America* . St. Martin's Griffin, 2002. (Portraits of Dominicans, Mexicans, Colombians, Salvadorians, Cubans and Puerto Ricans in the U.S. trying to move beyond identity.)
- Novaro, Marcos. "Identidad y Representación." In *Representación y Liderazgo en las Democracias Contemporáneas* . Ediciones Homo Sapiens, 173-261.
- Ochoa, George. *Atlas of Hispanic-American History* . Checkmark Books, 2001. (How Spanish, Native Americans and Africans influenced the cultures in Latin America. This book covers the background of Hispanic America. It has been extremely helpful for my research.)
- The Americas*. Culture Grams. World Edition 2004. Axiom Press, 2004. (Helpful book that includes facts of all the countries in America giving detailed information on history, the people, customs and courtesies...)

Reading List for Students

- Barlow, Genevieve. *Stories from Latin America / Historias de Latinoamérica*. Side by Side Bilingual Books, 1995. (Bilingual. Different traditional stories and legends from various Hispanic American countries: Guatemala, Colombia, Mexico, Puerto Rico...)
- Ochoa, George. *Atlas of Hispanic-American History* . Checkmark Books, 2001. (How Spanish, Native Americans and Africans

influenced the cultures in Latin America. This book covers the background of Hispanic America. It has been extremely helpful for my research.)

-Olmos, Edward J. Editor. *Americanos: Latino Life in the United States* . Boston: Little Brown, 1999. (Bilingual book. Photographs, essays, poetry and comments from notable figures such as the writer Carlos Fuentes to capture Latino life and culture at its richness.)

- *Prisma: Método de Español Para Extranjeros. Continua (A2)*. Editorial Edinumen, 46. 2001. (Spanish Grammar and exercises book that includes readings in different issues.)

- *The Americas*. Culture Grams. World Edition 2004. Axiom Press, 2004. (Helpful book that includes facts of all the countries in America giving detailed information on history, the people, customs and courtesies... Really helpful for students!!)

Filmography for Teachers

- *Buena Vista Social Club*. Dir. Wim Wenders, 1999. (Documentary. In 1996 Ry Cooder gathered some of the greatest names from The Cuban music in the 40's and 50's such as Ibrahim Ferrer, Compay Segundo, Omara Portuondo... The film captures the amazing collaboration between these artists.)

- *El Norte* . Dir. Gregory Nava, 1984. (The film is the story of Rosa and Enrique, two young Guatemalans who are forced to leave their country to survive. It is the story of their long journey up: through Mexico to the United States. The film is divided in three parts: Guatemala, Mexico and the United States.)

- *Free to Fly : The U.S.-Cuba Link* . Dir. Estela Bravo, 2004. (Documentary. The story of the struggle to maintain links between the Cuban and American people. The U.S. embargo has severely limited the degree to which U.S. citizens can legally travel to Cuba.)

- *Great Day in Havana*. Dir. Laurie Ann Schang and Casey Stoll. Cinemateca. 2001. (Documentary. Havana artists: painters, sculptors, filmmakers, poets, musicians and choreographers share their worlds and their art to proudly display their city and their identities.)

- *Mi Familia* . Dir. Gregory Nava, 1995. (The portrait of a Mexican-American family in Los Angeles. Nava explores issues such as the importance of family and the problems they have to face.)

- *The Mission* . Dir. Roland Joffre, 1996. (The movie is about what happened in 1750 in the border of Argentina, Paraguay and Brazil when the Spanish and the Portuguese colonized the Guarani tribe, and how the Jesuits helped the indigenous peoples.)

Filmography for Students

- *El Norte* . Dir. Gregory Nava, 1984.

- *Great Day in Havana*. Dir. Laurie Ann Schang and Casey Stoll, 2001.

- *Mi Familia* . Dir. Gregory Nava, 1995.

- *The Mission* . Dir. Roland Joffre, 1996.

Materials for the Classroom

-Barlow, Genevieve. *Stories from Latin America / Historias de Latinoamérica*. Side by Side Bilingual Books, 1995.

- *Buena Vista Social Club* . Produced by Ry Cooder, 1997.

-Computer with Internet access and speakers.

-DVD / VCR player.

- *Querido Pablo*. Pablo Milanés. (1985)

- *Revolución de Amor* . Maná. (2002)

-Movies.

-Poster Board (very big) and color markers.

- *Prisma: Método de Español Para Extranjeros. Continua (A2)*. Editorial Edinumen, 46. 2001.

-Ry Cooder's *Buena Vista Social Club*. (1999) (Compact Disc)

-Smart Board.

-Television set.

Internet Resources

-Hispanic On Line. www.hispaniconline.com. (All Hispanic issues are found in this site. Information on Politics, education... A wealth of resource information.)

-Hispanicvista. www.hispanicvista.com. (This site contains articles written by Latinos about Latino issues and points of view.)

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