



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1990 Volume I: The Autobiographical Mode in Latin American Literature

In Search of . . . the “Yo Latinoamericano,”

Guide for Curriculum Unit 90.01.07
by Harriet J. Bauman

I like to infuse culture into my foreign language classes as often as possible. I spend a great deal of the time teaching about the daily lives of the people, as well as their art, music, literature, history, and popular culture. One of my classes is a language exploratory course for ninth graders. They spend one semester learning French and one learning Spanish. The textbooks I use do not incorporate the culture in any meaningful way; therefore, I design the cultural components of the course from various sources.

I take a creative approach with the culture for the exploratory class. Because the students are usually of low ability, I try to include a lot of hands-on project work based on cultural topics. Many of the activities suggested in this unit will make the subject matter more meaningful to the students, as they will be actively involved in pursuing the information about Latin America provided in the unit. Latin America, with its cultural diversity, lends itself to a great variety of topics for study and student projects. With this unit the students will study about the people and events that made Latin America unique: the discovery of the New World and the early settlers.

The unit uses first person accounts from the era of exploration to begin to define who a Latin American is. This very descriptive, colorful, and personal material is a means of discovering the common origins and experiences of the Spanish-speaking countries in the Western Hemisphere. The students will read, in English, excerpts of Columbus' first voyage; and the adventures of Cabeza de Vaca and Bartolome de las Casas. In addition, the students will be exposed to Pre-Columbian art which will help them visualize what life was like in the Americas before Columbus and other explorers arrived.

(Recommended for Exploratory Spanish; Spanish Levels I-V; and American Literature, grades 9-12; and American History, grade 11)

Key Words

Explorers History American Literature Hispanic Latin American Autobiography Spanish Language Instruction

<https://teachersinstitute.yale.edu>

©2019 by the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute, Yale University

For terms of use visit <https://teachersinstitute.yale.edu/terms>