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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1997 Volume I: Twentieth Century Latin American Writing

A Close Look at Mexico

Guide for Curriculum Unit 97.01.04
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The purpose of this unit is for students (grades two through four) to become familiar with Mexico's culture. The unit does not discuss in detail Mexico's history or government, for this may be too abstract for the chosen grade level. It does, however, cover topics and subject areas such as art, music, people, food, clothing, and literature. It is suggested that students experience firsthand as many activities as possible to maintain interest. For example, students will be required to become familiar with traditional Mexican foods and prepare these foods after reading recipes. All cooking should be done in the class by the students. As a culminating activity for this area of the unit, it is suggested to "open a restaurant" in the classroom and have each student do a specific task to run the restaurant. This is a good opportunity to invite parents and staff when the restaurant opens.

With regards to art, the works of Diego Rivera are the focus. The concept of the mural is discussed and a story on his life is suggested. It is also suggested that students create a mural in the style of Diego Rivera on a section of wall or large bulletin board.

The other topics, such as people and clothing, are introduced through literature. Specific books are suggested to introduce these topics, as well as follow-up activities including learning Spanish, making clothes, and being friends with a child from Mexico for a day.

(Recommended for Social Studies, grades 2-4)

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