



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute  
1999 Volume II: Art and Identity in Mexico, from the Olmec to Modern Times

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## **Broken Shields/Enduring Culture**

Guide for Curriculum Unit 99.02.07  
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Abstract: "Broken Shields/Enduring Culture" is a six week unit in language arts, social studies, and art for sixth graders that will provide an appropriate curriculum for Hispanic Heritage Month. The unit can be adjusted to younger grades. Multidisciplinary hands-on projects will be combined with writing assignments throughout. Maps and graphics included.

Part One is Picturing the World. Students will work with compasses and then label the walls of the classroom with the four directions of the compass written in a number of languages. To strengthen their sense of time and place, students will work with maps, marking their own trip to Mesoamerica with Maya and Aztec glyphs. They will also make screenfold books in which, like the Maya and the Aztec, they can record important information. They will study several versions of the European Contact that dramatically changed Mesoamerica and will also create collage maps of the ways in which the Maya have continued to picture their world.

Part Two is Living in the World. Now students will construct a small Maya village, exploring its ecology. Teams will begin research projects on Aztec as well as Maya topics, culminating in a fiesta for families or other classes in which they present their work and serve chocolate caliente Mexicano. Finally they will study, through an NEH video, the sacred book of the Quiche Maya, the Popol Vuh, regarded as the masterpiece of Native American literature. Characters and themes will be familiar to students from work already done in the unit.

(Recommended for Language Arts, Social Studies, Arts and Science, grades 3-6.)

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