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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative
2005 Volume II: Art and Identity in Mexico, from Olmec Times to the Present

Taste the Richness of Mexico

Curriculum Unit 05.02.01, published September 2005
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Overview

This unit is written for collaborative teaching. It is written for the Spanish and Costume teachers at Rogers Creative and Performing Arts School to introduce the culture of the growing Spanish community of Pittsburgh PA., to all grades.

The Spanish teacher will teach both his classes and mine about the historical culture and language. The costume teacher will teach art, popular culture, and clothing, both historical and current. We will exchange classes as needed to accomplish our stated goals.

It will also be written in such a way that teachers of other disciplines might participate. This will of course make the learning more interactive and meaningful. Those teachers who choose to participate can bring music, dance, drama, creative writing, singing, photography, videography, muralists, and stage craft students into the mix to help create a truly marvelous unit.

The unit will culminate in a festival with a cafe that serves authentic foods. Parents and community partners will be asked to become actively involved in all aspects of this unit.

Rationale

I have long been interested in the Spanish language, yet I can't speak a word. Maybe it's just nosiness on my part but I want to know what so many people have to say. They are so very expressive as they communicate with one another. Also have you ever looked at the Spanish speaking population in America? They don't look alike. This is not to say that all of them must resemble, but if you group them there are almost familial differences in the groups of people you see. This made me wonder about the backgrounds of Spanish speaking people from different countries. What is their history? Where did they originate? With what other ethnic groups have they mixed and mingled through time? The faces of our cities are changing as these new people move into our neighborhoods. I can remember a time when the only time I saw someone of Spanish descent or heard the speaking of Spanish was when I visited Florida or New York. Now I can just walk around

in the city in which I live and encounter these new neighbors.

Many of these new neighbors have come in large part because they are attending one of the four universities or three colleges located in Pittsburgh. The children of these students often become students in the public school system where they come under my watch.

When these new young people enroll in Rogers I am frequently disappointed at the reaction of some students with these new members of the community who exhibit different language, accents, and customs. I know children often parrot the opinions of the adults in their lives. And I am aware that these opinions filter down, to come out of the mouths of babes, and hurt the feelings of others. So one of my reasons for writing this unit is to help students who have lived here all of their lives become more knowledgeable about this growing group of people. Spanish speaking people are, after all, becoming a major force in all areas of our lives.

I had once before had an opportunity to study the people of ancient Mexico, but I approached it from a different perspective. And there was so much I still didn't know. Therefore when the opportunity to be a part of the seminar on Art and Identity in Mexico was offered I felt this was a fortuitous chance to further my understanding of the people who spoke the language I was interested in. The fact that I would be able to study them from the historical point of where it all started was, for me, a blessing. As part of my classes the students must study the history of folks before we try to copy their clothing. What I knew and understood about Mexico historically up to this point would not have been much help for the unit I envisioned. We would have been doing lots of learning together. This second round of study has taught me what to look for. My research thus far has only skimmed the surface but has given me lots of information on the clothing they wore. It has shown me the reasons why some styles have remained constant through the years. It gave me insight into the meaning of costumes worn during ceremonies and during commemorative celebrations. Then too, this has taught me things that I can use to hook my students into wanting to know more. I can't wait to see the first of my students write messages on their personal clothing that no one understands but those who have taken the time and energy to study what all the hieroglyphs, symbols, and numbers mean. Maybe a new fad, however brief, will be born, writing messages in the language of the Mayas, or Aztecs.

Another reason for the writing of this unit as it is being done is to assist my students in their reading and writing skills. The focus of all school districts now is the federally mandated "No Child Left Behind." As our students read for research purposes and write the information they read, in essay form, they will solidify for themselves many of the concepts taught in their language arts classes. It has become increasingly important for students to have strong reading comprehension skills in my particular class because it is necessary to do so much research on the people and historical timeframes of the productions that are presented in our school. Students with strong comprehension skills open up time for more learning of construction techniques. And because the world in which we live is so very competitive those who can't analyze and interpret the written word will find they play a minor role in the larger scheme of life.

Rogers Performing Arts has been privileged to have a newly expanded Spanish department with the services of a full time teacher, who has come with a bag full of ideas. When this new teacher asked if my department would work with him on a project I agreed because I think my students benefit from working with other departments. It allows them to see that costume/and fashion does not operate in an educational vacuum, but is much a part of the wider society of learning.

After much brainstorming and discussion, the idea to have a festival was born. Of the four main holidays that Mexicans celebrate, the festival that observes the defeat of the French by a small group of Mexicans called Cinco de Mayo was chosen. It symbolizes Mexican unity and patriotism. Today it has been embraced

throughout the United States as a celebration of freedom and liberty. It is a happy occasion that generates fun, games, food, music, crafts and dancing. A festival such as this allows the students to be immersed in the language and culture and learn a multiplicity of new things while having a good time. An active cafe is to be a part of our Cinco de Mayo celebration. Posters, murals, dramatizations, poetry, music, costumes, and more will be a part of the culminating activities.

When the study of Mexican history is introduced the students will notice they're only a few holidays that are celebrated and several of them are related to the history of their fight for independence from those who would take over their country.

It is necessary to understand the relevance of May 5, 1862 to some people. It is not the date celebrated for Mexican independence. Their independence day is celebrated annually on September 16. This represents the end of a war with Spain that lasted 10 years. They won the right to govern themselves. There were several more wars one of which would change the boundaries of the Mexican countryside. But the war that is the reason for Cinco de Mayo was a situation that generated national pride. In the aftermath of the Mexican American war the French invaded Mexico. Mexico was tired and poorly equipped to handle such a thing. The French had been assured of the backing of the United States and Spain. Eugenie wife of Napoleon wanted to extend her husband's monarchy and felt Mexico was the place to do so. Together they wanted to place Emperor Maximilian of Austria as head of this country because he was young, controllable and a relative. The conservative Mexican aristocracy and church leaders had issued an invitation for this to occur.

Five thousand tired but valiant farmers defeated an army more than twice their size. When these farmers realized their way of life was threatened they wanted to fight along side of their president, Juarez, who like them, was from a poor peasant family. The French were expecting no resistance and were taken by surprise. Many poor farmers died that day to preserve a way of life. This fight, as no other, became for many a symbol of unity, patriotism, freedom and liberty.

I want to take this opportunity to state that this particular celebration is observed as much if not more than by the Mexicans that live in the States than it is by those who still live in their native land. But it is, as I stated before, a happy celebration and one which we should share as a means of learning about others.

We then discussed ways to attract other departmental areas to voluntarily participate and make it a school wide unit. It was decided that we would create a lesson design that could be built into the schools calendar of events and into its curriculum guide for each departmental area for the coming year. Spanish is the only language taught at Rogers. The students must pass a special test in grade 8 that allows them to take an upper level Spanish class in grade 9. Therefore, the idea is that this unit could be beneficial in placing a sustained focus on the Spanish language in each department while allowing us all to have fun in working towards a specific final activity.

The Spanish teacher and I decided that he must work with each teacher closely so that they might not feel the extra burden of working outside of the state and Board of education mandates for their classes. He will be responsible for creating Spanish vocabulary for "word walls" to be placed in each classroom. He will place words around the building in order that students will see the language everywhere they go in the building. He will assist in any research needed by other academic areas outside of any suggestions and resources to be found in the bibliography if this unit.

As I write this unit I will include suggestions for other departments. I will include books and on line resources that I have found and reviewed. But I won't write any actual lesson plans for them to follow. Nor will I suggest

any time frames for them to work under. I will however write very specific plans for my costume students, as we will have to design and construct articles of clothing to be worn during the final celebration.

This unit is a collaborative dream. It will also be a major undertaking. The staff at Rogers CAPA has a history of working collaboratively across disciplines. When I first came to Rogers the history teacher at that time wrote a series of skits about historical figures. Many of these figures were people that were involved in activities that changed how we viewed our world but had never gotten recognition. The drama department assisted in casting and directing. The costume department made the costumes. These skits opened up opportunities for the rest of the arts staff and academic programs to participate so the students became captivated by the culture of the people portrayed. These productions were called "Shapers of History."

In that same vein the drama and language arts departments currently hold a yearly "Theatre Festival". A play of a certain time frame and country is selected and cast. All departments are encouraged to become a participant. The language arts department read selected pieces written about or during that time. The art department decorates for the culminating activity. The costume department constructs clothing for the characters

reminiscent of that era. The play is put on for the students on a Friday. The following Saturday the play is repeated for parents, community partners and others who wish to eat, drink and become educated with us. We host a costumed luncheon where we dress and serve foods as authentically close to the historical time frame as possible.

The last cooperative gala we had at Rogers CAPA was a rousing success in that every department made a significant contribution. It was apparent that the students had become heavily invested in its success and understood the premise on which the festival was based. The focus was the Worlds Fair of 1904. The play selected was "Meet Me in St. Louis"

Because this was such a pivotal time historically we were called upon to research what changes were happening in our arts/academic areas and share them with our students. Because all of the departments actively participated we had a completely engaged student body. We had a frontal replica of an actual train from that time. The stagecraft students constructed it. The music department entertained us with music of that time. Visual artists created posters and decorated. We hosted a fair that mimicked the fair of 1904. It allowed students to play games, eat goodies, win prizes and have safe fun. The staff and students dressed in historic clothing. The PTA and various other groups opened booths to raise money and share information. This was a glorious two-day affair.

As a costume teacher I realize my part in this endeavor will be to focus on current culture and clothing both old and new. I will additionally teach about the art of the regions studied, because part of my students' class requirements will be to create wearable art. It is essential for my students to understand that in order to focus properly on the fashions or costumes people adorn them selves with, we must have more than a passing suggestion of the "Who, What, When, Why, Where, and How of their lives. This means we study the lifestyles of the populace. Who were they? What were their daily concerns? Were they well - to -do? Were they slaves or artisans, farmers or warriors? Where did they live? What was the climate? When did they live? How did they travel? How far afield did they travel from their homes? Who were their friends or foes? What supplies were available to be used in daily activities? Did they have a caste system or hierarchy? These and many more questions must be answered before we can design and create costumes for our festival. So, much of this unit will, of necessity, focus on Mexican history.

This unit will be a replica of how I teach my students as it includes the study of Mexican people. Each era of time has its own fashion history. Until recent times each country of the world had its own fashion identity. This is no longer true of most countries unless you focus on ethnic costumes. But whenever a play is to be dressed by my students we will research the people and the time. This is extremely important if we are to replicate the clothing worn. Many theatre lovers aren't sophisticated enough to recognize the clothing time frame. But I insist that my students dress the characters

truthfully and cater to the one person who will recognize a costume out of focus. So this unit will fit right in to my curriculum as I currently teach it.

The students I teach in the costume department are all in grades six, seven, and eight. They come to me with minimum to no experience in sewing. All of them do however audition to become a part of my class. They must exhibit a desire to learn, have lots of "outside of the box", imagination, and be willing to learn. These factors show up in the audition process. As I write this unit I take into consideration that each student works at his/her own pace. It should also be noted that some sketch better than others. Some sew better than others. Some make patterns better than others. Some design, make hats, make jewelry and more. So I must allow them to be successful where they can while encouraging them to work towards success in less capable areas. I further recognize that as learning is incremental the grade 8 students will know more than grade 6, so I design lessons to reflect where they should be on the learning continuum. My expectations are that each of these students will reach or pass the above average level of proficiency for my class.

From the perspective of the Spanish teacher, I wouldn't dream of telling him what to do, or how to teach as it involves his area of expertise. We will however work closely together and we will probably overlap when each of us touches on the cultural history of Spanish speaking countries, particularly Mexico.

Objectives

There are multiple objectives for this unit. They should reflect all of the potential areas of teaching that might become a part of this unit. The Pittsburgh Board of Education has specific bench marks that each student must achieve and standards they must meet as part of their learning.

The costume department is comprised of an intimate number of students so we can bring a finer focus on the cultural aspects as it defines the way the peoples of Mexico adorned themselves.

In the costume department we will encounter standards from several areas for each objective. Objective number one is that each student must comprehend the cultural complexities of Native Mexican Spanish peoples. Objective number two is that all students will have basic knowledge of historical Mexican People [Aztecs, Mayans etc] Objective number three requires all students to understand the relevance of Mexican festivals especially Cinco de Mayo. Objective number four: All students of costume will physically and artistically participate in the creation of the festival and cafe. Objective number five: All students learn Spanish words that pertain to the construction of costumes. Objective number six: Each student will learn about historical and current

Mexican fashions. Objective number seven: All costume students will present at the festival and in a fashion show the costumes and wearable art with Mexican influences they have constructed

The standards associated with these objectives are as follows, language Arts standards number 1. All students use effective research and information management skills, including locating primary and secondary sources of information. Language arts standards number four, All students write for a variety of purposes including to narrate, inform and persuade, in all subject areas. Language arts standards number six, All students exchange information orally including understanding and giving spoken instructions, asking and answering questions appropriately, and promoting effective group communications. Math standards number two, All students compute, measure, and estimate to solve theoretical and practical problems, using appropriate tools. Arts and Humanities standards number three, All students relate various works from the visual and performing arts and literature to the historical and cultural context within which they were created. And Arts and Humanities standards number four, All students produce, perform, or exhibit their work in their art form and describe the meanings their work has for them.

The Spanish department sees each student in Rogers two or more days per week. The objectives for the Spanish part of this unit will be these; Number one, All students in grades six, seven, and eight will learn from the Spanish teacher about the cultural history of Mexico. Objective number two, All students will learn as much of the Spanish language as they are introduced to, especially that which pertains to the creation of the festival. Objective number three, All students in the Spanish class will learn as much as they can about the festivals of Mexico. Objective number four, All students will participate physically and artistically in the creation of the festival and cafe.

The standards that will be the focus of these objectives are stated below. Language arts number nine, All students converse at a minimum level of intermediate low as defined in the oral proficiency guidelines developed by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages in at least one language other than English including a native language if other than English. Citizenship Standard number one, All students demonstrate an understanding of major events, cultures, groups, and individuals in the historical development of other nations and describe the patterns of historical development. Arts and Humanities standard number four, All students produce perform or exhibit their work.

As I contemplated the basic objectives I would request of the other teachers who might become involved I decided on the following. Objective one; All students attempt to learn the Spanish words connected to their arts and /or academic classes. Objective number two; all arts forms produce a minimum of one performance or presentation piece

for the festival or cafe stage. Objective number three; all students in academic classes participate in learning as much as your teacher presents during your class about the Mexican culture. i.e. Read a book about or by a Mexican author, Learn to read the Mayan glyphs. Learn to play ancient games. Etc.

Strategies

I will state first the strategies the Spanish teacher can use to involve the rest of the staff. . My focus will be the arts and academic departments we would like to participate in this unit. For each of these areas I will talk about possibilities. I will introduce them to resource materials in my bibliography so they won't feel the additional pressure of doing research before they can introduce the subject to their classes. I will announce each area by name so that no one will misunderstand the ideas I put forth for each area. I will discuss the

strategies he can use in helping my classes and I will make suggestions that I have gleaned from my readings and from the teachers of Spanish in my seminar. The lessons for the Spanish teacher will of course follow his curriculum guide. His entire focus will be Spanish-speaking countries and this particular holiday is His culminating activity for the school year.

Spanish is the bottom line focus of this unit. The Spanish teacher will provide for each of us vocabulary words pertinent to our subject areas. From these words the students can make a word wall to reflect both English and Spanish words. This will assist us in learning vocabulary. The teachers will have to be committed enough to point out the words before the class starts. They should also see to the changing of the posted words several times during the time we are using this unit.

May is the time of Cinco de Mayo. May is also the time most of our arts performances are presented to the school and outside community partners. Therefore, this is the perfect time to request that other teachers include this unit in their lesson plans. They will have to change little of what they do; they will just need to add a Spanish piece along with the rest of their program.

For the entire school, as we start our day, a simple greeting or message in Spanish and English could be read over the PA system. Simple questions can be asked in Spanish. Contests can be initiated to spark the children's interest. The person with the most correctly written words heard over the intercom wins. The person that solves the crossword puzzle wins. The students can play familiar games like bingo with word cards. At the end of the day when announcements are being made a farewell in Spanish can be done. Also a spirit of competitiveness can be generated by giving the children a task to

bring in completed for the next day. The persons who completed it will have a drawing for a small gift representative of the Mexican culture. Many other incentives can be utilized to make the students eager to learn Spanish.

The cafeteria can introduce a free snack representative of Mexico each week for one month prior to the cafe and festival. Each student must say one or more authentic words in order to get their snack. We might have several words of the week for them to learn. The students might have gotten a special pass from the Spanish teacher to get the snack. The teachers on cafeteria duty or parent volunteers can be responsible for this project. These are questions still to be answered.

In our vocal music classes the teacher can introduce music from different time periods in Mexico. The popular artists of the current time can be listened to. Songs from historical and current Mexico can be taught to the children for them to share with the school. Invite a professional person to come and share his or her knowledge of Mexican music

Instrumental music classes offer a multitude of musical opportunities. Classical guitar is one that comes to mind because we have such a talented teacher. Latin music has long been a favorite of the current teacher thus our students already play much of this music. The suggestion would be to enlarge on the existing repertoire and also to go back historically to what was played in earlier times. Again it is suggested that a professional be invited to come play and speak to the students as part of community participation

The dance department can of course teach their students traditional dances to perform at the festival. There are professional and semi-professional community dance groups that can be encouraged to visit and give a master class and perhaps a more public showing of their skills for the rest of the student body.

The drama department can cast and perform a small play written by or about Mexicans. This can be presented to the student body separately or as part of the festival

The visual art classes are a treasure trove of can do's for this unit. Think of the Aztec and Mayan works that can be replicated by the sculpture students in clay. Think of the murals that can be reproduced by these same kids. The history of art classes can teach about the richness of Mexican art. Art History must be taught anyway. Why not include this country. Mexico is the most populous neighbor of the United States, and it is important to know about its history. There is so much in this particular area I hesitate to mention much for fear of pigeonholing anyone's creativity. This is truly an area where ones artistic sense can fly high. The visual arts classes can also take the poetry of the Mexican writers and draw their impressions of their written words. All of the students like piñatas. The art students can make several to auction off at the festival or share with each other. Part of this lesson can be the learning of the meaning of the piñata. Most of are unaware that it was first used for religious services the first Sunday of Lent. The breaking of the piñata was a somber event and they weren't beautifully decorated until more modern times.

Creative writing can generate poetry, as well as stories that students can share with the rest of the school as they did before with the poetry lining all of the walls as we went up the steps. Everyone found himself or herself stopping to read what the students wrote. The imagery that could be presented after they read about the history of the peoples of Mexico is monumental. Also as stated about the visual artists these students can take a picture of Mexican art and write an Ekphrastic poem or other narrative about it and post both of them so everyone can see what you were responding to.

It is suggested that the Physical education Department focus its energy on the games played by the ancient Mexican people minus the ritualistic killing of the losers. All modern games that depend on a bouncing ball — whether soccer or basketball — come from the ancient games of Mexico. The P.E. teacher can look at rules and practice.

Mexico is a fixed unit of study for the 6a' grade social studies program. So I can only suggest the teacher focus on areas not generally taught and that he use enrichment activities to keep the students engaged. The 7th and 8th grade students must reach the history of Mexico through American or European history. Again it is suggested that they have some outside enrichment to help them focus, whether with speakers from the Universities or in a project like mask making as the 7th grades do yearly for African studies. They can focus on one person from the country and write a piece to share with the rest of the class. This can be used for the end of year portfolio each student is required to complete. How about inviting a person of Mexican ancestry to talk with the students about how and why they celebrate Cinco de Mayo and other major festivals? Because the history of Mexico is so closely connected to that of the United states it is important for our students to have a better understanding of both sides of the history, ours and theirs. There are some glaring differences in the hindsight of our respective historians.

In our monthly and yearly calendar we have other areas where people of Mexican heritage can be asked to participate and educate our children. I speak of our annual Women in History day where speakers come to address the student body. We also have bring your parent to school day. This can be a show and tell of Mexican life for the students.

My use of this unit will begin at the start of the second semester and continue until the end of the school year. I intend to make the study of Mexico the main focus of each of my classes for this time. The end result of this semesters work will be a fashion show with many clothes inspired by the art of Mexico. My students will also have to design and create costumes for the cafe and festival participants.

During this time my students will look at all available videos on Mexico. We will also look at movies. about Mexico to contrast and compare Hollywood's version of Mexican clothing to that which we saw in more authentic books and videos. We will read books from a selected list. These will include both historical books and costume books. The students will research, as required, the traditional lifestyles, foods, art and clothing styles. from the various times in Mexican history The students will also engage in all of the tasks connected to their departmental tasks. This includes sketching, pattern making, fabric manipulation, construction techniques and more. Each of these activities is a part of our usual lessons so we can focus on Mexico and still get the information we need to sharpen our skills in fashion/costuming.

As we look into the art and life of Mexican people we will study the art to be found in our local museum. The students will also take a field trip to the University of Pittsburgh to visit the nationality room that represents Mexico. This gives a visual picture of the way people traditionally lived in Mexico. This room is representative of middle to upper class people only. This can spur costume, writing and Spanish language projects

. This will be a time of great sharing and opportunity to ask questions for clarification of the culture. At the end of this time each student will share their research with their classmates. I am going to look for someone that knows how to wrap the hair into the ropes and pin into beautiful high styles on the head. I saw this in a book about Mexican clothing. It is reminiscent of the styles many women of African descent wear today.

A part of my program for the year focuses on weaving as done by the women of ancient Mexico. This is especially formulated for the 6th grade students. We will make/purchase back strap looms and learn to use them. We will also have a master class with a professional weaver to learn techniques of weaving on a larger loom. The students will make a personally useful article from the piece they weave. The students of this level will create small items that represent the historic Mexico that can be displayed at the cafe and, or sold as part of the festival.

The 7th and 8th grade students will be required, as part of their personal fashion project, to design and construct one article of clothing that was inspired by traditional or historic Mexican clothing or art. This is a piece they will model in our fashion show. These students, as the people with the most sewing experience, will be responsible for costuming the people participating in the cafe.

All of the fashion / costume students will be required to keep a journal about their experiences and feelings while working on the research and hands on projects. They will also add to their fashion morgue clothing styles from and reminiscent of Mexico. As a part of their sample book they will each add sewing, embroidery techniques discovered to be from the Mexico area. The use of half sized bodies will come into play as we make small costumes for display. All classes can benefit from this because the time it takes to make small costumes doesn't take away from larger projects and it gives experience in sewing without the major loss of fabric if mistakes are made.

Inspiration boards have become a large part of our design process. Each student is required to produce an inspiration board to show what motivated them to design a particular article of clothing. This board is a collage made up of pictures [tear sheets from fashion magazines] colors, words that interest you, or that speak about the subject you are studying music titles and lyrics, pictures of the environment and in this instance pictures from the country of Mexico. From this, the students will design a project and explain what made them create that particular item. This board is the perfect opportunity to teach about the abundant use of vibrant colors and fabric designs used historically and today by the people of Mexico. It is also a good time to reflect on the similarities of clothing worn today and that which was worn historically. I would point out the shawl and ever popular ponchos the girls are wearing today. It reminds us that some styles are classic and others repeat

every twenty to thirty years.

As we work towards a better understanding of the people of Mexico I must emphasize that we need to take into consideration the Spanish speaking people of this country. So much of the history has and continues to be very closely entwined with the history of the United States.

Classroom activities

During the month of February all classes will learn the basic curriculum on Mexican history and current culture. Because this is the beginning of an extensive project each day during this month will be spent on Mexico. Each student will keep a journal of information, impressions, opinions, and vocabulary. A quiz will be given each Monday on the previous weeks lessons..

Each grade level will have its own set of lesson plans and expected outcomes. They will also each have their own set of projects to choose from. They will construct this project using teacher-approved techniques. All grades of the Costume classes at the Rogers Performing Arts School will start this unit at the beginning of the second semester. One purpose of this is that they might have the maximum time available to learn as much useful Spanish as possible before the end of the school year. Another purpose is that each costume major will gain a working knowledge of historical costumes from Mexico. The outcomes are to construct useful and wearable clothing or accessories and participate in hosting a café to celebrate Cinco de Mayo

Grade six has this class two periods five days per week. They will focus on the Mexican culture two days per week or four periods each week till the last week of April

Grades seven and eight have this class three periods per day or 15 periods per week. They also will focus on this unit until the last week in April

Week one - Detailed discussion of the reasons for this unit. This will generate interest, excitement, and inspiration for the end of year projects. Teacher will introduce the word walls and language that will be learned in our departmental area. The Spanish teacher will spend several classes to assist Costume teacher set proper tone for historical information. Resources to be used at this time: Mexican Posters, Costumes, Music, Art, pictures of ancient civilizations and family life. At this time the Spanish and Costume classes will work together and attend the various field trips together. The costume teacher will also teach several Spanish classes to give correct information about the clothing Mexicans wore and the reasons behind specific practices.

Week two - Field trips to the local museum and the International rooms of the University of Pittsburgh will be taken. The docents will share historical information and artifacts from a variety of Mexican groups. This will be the week we view videos of Mexico gotten from the main branch of the Carnegie Library. Part of this weeks work will be to assign a time frame and areas of Mexico for the purpose of individual research by the students. Everyone will be required to use Internet and hard cover book sources. They will share their information with the group at the end of the month.. This allows for more information to be disseminated in a shorter period of time. All students will be responsible for a typed paper and poster board of pictures about the lifestyles of their selected group. Grade six must complete a two- page paper double spaced with a # 12 font. Grades seven and eight will complete a four-page paper double spaced with a # 12 font.

Week three and four - Comparison of ancient and current cultures through food clothes, art, religion, and music is our next concern. Resources to be used will be movies and videos on Mexican life, books on particular subjects i.e. food, costumes, classes with the Spanish teacher, speakers from the University, speakers from the Spanish community

March and April - The classes will spend two days per week focused on designing and constructing wearable art projects and artifacts reminiscent of authentic Mexican culture. Each will make a costume morgue [scrapbook] of clothing that represents historical looks and current clothing that use some of the colors, weaves, and styles of historic and ethnic clothing. This morgue is a handy reference when one must remember quickly what was worn when, as we dress certain productions.

In the first week of March grades six, seven, and eight will have three days of Master classes in weaving techniques using back loom, hand looms, and small table loom. These students will take a field trip to the studio of our professional weaver/ master teacher to see first hand how it's done on a large scale.

Grade six will be required to make a project using the weaving skills learned. Grades seven and eight can use at their discretion the skills learned to make an accessory for a larger project.

During the months of March and April grade six students will also make piñatas and masks for the cafe/festival in May. We can work with the art department in the making of these articles.

Grades seven and eight will have two projects required during these two months. They will design and construct a personal project using authentic Mexican clothing as inspiration for this garment. They can use any time frame but it must be an article that is wearable today. The second project will be to design and make a full-skirted outfit that replicates the outfits worn by the native Mexicans on special days. These skirts and matching blouses will be worn at the cafe/festival on Cinco de Mayo.

As the grade seven and eight students prepare for making their personal projects they will be asked to call upon the lessons learned previously in fabric manipulating, painting on fabric, appliqué, silk screening, marbledizing, and batik. This will allow them to place faces and scenes such as the Olmec heads, the temples, glyphs, and gods on fabric.

During April and the first week of May parents and community partners will assist in creating the scene for the cafe/ festival. We will paint posters, make decorations, collect artifacts to be given away as prizes, and secure authentic foods to be sold. We will also participate in hosting a café to celebrate the holiday

My goal is to have a festival with all departments in Rogers CAPA participating.. The Spanish teacher and I will have a show featuring poetry, music, fashions, food, and games on the Saturday afternoon closest to May 5th The selection of this day is to allow more parents to take an active part in this production

Supply List

Each department that wishes to participate in the festival/café will supply their own materials for their students

Foam Board for weaving

Plastic combs for weaving

Small table looms for weaving

Yarn for weaving

Poster board for inspiration boards

Fashion magazines, newspapers, old pattern catalogs for inspiration boards

Scissors, glue, construction paper for inspiration boards

Fabric swatches for inspiration boards

Feathers for weaving and Aztecs headwear

Brown paper, markers, paint for posters

Foil, wire, and pleather, for ancient costume construction

Rope, and pleather for sandals

Paper Mache, glue, balloons for piñatas

Water paints for piñatas

Candy and prizes for piñatas

Fabric for wearable projects

Fabric paint, crayons, markers for wearable projects

Silk screen kit

Marbleizing kit

Batik supplies

Textbooks on fabric painting and manipulation

Standard sketching supplies

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Books

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Brock, V. Piñatas, New York: Abingdon Press 1966 History and how to construct Pinatas

Coe & Coe, True History of Chocolate, Thomas Hudson Pub, 2000 Coloring Book of Incas, Aztecs, and Mayas, Belloran Press

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McDonald, Fiona: You Wouldn't Want to be an Aztec Sacrifice, Franklin Watts Pub. N.Y. 2001. A humorous and gory tale written for students about the sacrifices made by the Aztecs to their gods.

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Mexico — Primary Source Cultural Guide Rosen Publishing Group N.Y. 2004. This book is a good source of information, both historical and current, about Mexico. It has historical site maps and more.

Netzley, Patricia D: Maya Civilization, Lucent Books, San Diego Ca. 2002. This a very readable book for students

PORTELLA, Leon: Broken Spears — The Aztec Account of the Conquest of Mexico Beacon Press, Boston 1990 . This is the story of the conquest as told by a person that lived through it. It should be contrasted with the accounts as told by the victors

Rain, Patricia: Vanilla Cultural History of the worlds Favorite Flavor and Fragrance, Penguin Group, N.Y. 2004

Schlecting, Kimberly: Textiles As a Reflection of Ancient and Contemporary Mayan Cultures, Washington, D.C. US Dept. of Education 2000

Soto, Gary: Nerdlandia — A humorous play in which a Chicago nerd undergoes a transformation- This has a Spanish glossary and phrases in the play. Paper star Pun N.Y. 1999

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Tuck, Mary: Mexico and Central America: A Fiesta of Cultures Crafts and Activities for ages 8 — 12, Chicago Review Press, Chicago, 2004

Internet

Martino, Gabrielle. A brief history of Cinco de Mayo [online] <http://soundprint.brandywine.american.edu>

Princeton on line is a teacher resource for much information about many subjects. I looked for art in Mexico and holidays

<http://www.princetonol.com>

Fuego Nuevo is a site that gives Mexican information in English or Spanish <http://www.fuegonuevo.com>

The New York Times site has daily lesson plans that give many useful ideas on a plethora of topics

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Videos and Recordings

Art of Mexico VHS set of two 100 minutes Kultur International Films This is a guide to understanding Mexican art past and present. It speaks of its beginnings of the works of Aztecs and Mayans to the works of Frida Kahlo. This can be found in the Carnegie Public Library of Pittsburgh Pa.

Tjader, Cal Plays contemporary Music of Mexico and Brazil: Sound Recording, Verve Recording Co. 2000

Van Houten, Robert: Easy Cooking: Familiar Mexican Dishes. Preparation of Five Basic Mexican Dishes Video Disc 45 minutes 2003 Carnegie Library Pgh. PA

Wood, Michael: Conquistador , A 2 piece DVD. This tells the tale of the men who conquered Ancient Mexico. Can be purchased from PBS Television. Look it up on www.pbs.org

<https://teachers.yale.edu>

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