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Boricua, Morena: Latin-Caribbean American and African American Cultural Connections En ciudad de Filadelfia

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Overview

People and their culture perish in isolation, but they are born or reborn in contact with other men and women of another culture, another creed, another race. If we do not recognize our humanity in others, we shall not recognize it in ourselves. (Fuentes 1992)

According to The Historical Society of Pennsylvania and the 2000 federal census, Latinos are the fastest growing ethnic group in the Greater Philadelphia Area, with over 129,000 in the city. (The Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 14 June 2007) Puerto Ricans are the largest Latino group with an estimated 91,527 residents. The Mexican population is estimated to have surpassed 12,000 in 2003. Dominicans were estimated at 4,337 by the Census Bureau in 2000. Of the School District's more than 250,000 students, Latino students represent close to 15% of the total population, while African Americans and White students make up 66% and 14%, respectively. (Thornton, 2004) But most African American and Latino students seem isolated from each other in Philadelphia schools, despite the fact that they share common historical and popular cultural connections.

I am the literacy leader and teach 6th grade reading, writing and social studies at Beeber Middle School, located in the West Academic Area of the School District of Philadelphia. Beeber's student population is over 700. Most of the students come from working class families and over 70% of the student body qualifies for free or subsidized lunch. The student body is 95% African American and less than 1% percent is Caucasian. The balance of other students is bi-racially mixed or other ethnic backgrounds. We have a small but growing immigrant population of Latino, Caribbean and African students, and a growing number of Dominican and Puerto Rican corner stores have replaced Asian shop owners in the surrounding community. But while our school remains predominantly African American, the Central East Region of the district has a student make-up that is 72% Latino and 16% African American.

In recent years, my school has been developing an arts magnet program while striving to meet mandates of School District of Philadelphia's Core Curricula Standards which are aligned to the Pennsylvania Department of Education Standards (see appendix 1). Most of my students have minimal exposure to other languages or arts outside of school. However, I have found my students to be fully engaged in learning when they are creating and discovering the power of culture, language and the arts.

My topic draws upon social studies content, music, dance, film, and literature to show the interactions

between Latino and African-American culture. The films *Mad Hot Ballroom* and *West Side Story* will serve as one entry into exploring how Latin-Caribbean roots in arts and culture are complicated yet interconnected with African-American cultural roots. My students and I will concurrently explore and analyze popular Latin-Caribbean dance movements, music, poetry, historical and current events to appreciate what Puerto Rican, Dominican and African American cultures have in common. I plan to have my students involved in a pen-pal exchange program with sixth and seventh grade students at Hon. Luís Muñoz Marín School, a predominately Latino school located in the Central East Region, where I already have made contact with an interested teacher. To culminate this unit, I plan to have students present multi-media renditions of what they learned about the connections between Latin-Caribbean and African American cultures.

Narrative

My father liked them separate, one there, one here (allá y aquí), as if aware . . .

until my tongue (mi lengua) learned to run where his stumbled. And still the heart was one. . .

he stood outside mis versos, half in fear of words he loved but wanted not to hear. (Espailat 1998)

At a recent *Poetry Out Loud* recitation contest, Armon, one of my daring sixth grade students, chose to recite Rhina Espailat's poem "Bilingual/Bilingüe" at our school-wide contest. When he initially selected the poem, I asked him if the Spanish words would be difficult for him to pronounce. He indicated a few of the words might be hard, but that he liked the poem so much he would practice a lot. Fortunately, I had Juan Carlos my only Puerto Rican student -newly transferred- in my class. I asked Juan Carlos if he would help Armon correctly pronounce the Spanish words in the poem. This collaboration proved very fruitful. During the contest, in a crowded auditorium, Armon stepped to the microphone to recite the poem; students were drop dead silent. He awed the crowd with his recitation and interpretation of a bilingual poem. Prior to the contest, I would not have predicted a bilingual poem would resonate with students. The judges liked his recitation as well. Armon took first place honors. Juan Carlos became less shy and more confident to use his bilingual skills in subsequent writing assignments. This act of encouraging the recitation of a bilingual poem was transforming. I told myself that I need to provide more opportunities to use Spanish and learn about the richness of Latino culture.

Why teach a predominately African-American class about Latin American culture? First, because the School District of Philadelphia's curriculum requires teaching about diverse cultures. In particular, the sixth grade social studies curriculum covers the Western Hemisphere which includes the history, geography and culture of people from Latin America and the Caribbean. Second, Spanish is not offered at my school or at many Philadelphia middle schools. In high school Spanish and other world languages are offered. However, it is important that students are exposed to other languages before they attend high school. Third, giving the trend of more Latino families moving into West Philadelphia, it can be expected that my school will have a steady growth of Spanish first language speaking students. "The Latino Philadelphia Report" compiled by The Historical Society of Pennsylvania, indicated that Dominicans are slowly but steadily settling in West Philadelphia.(The Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 14 June 2007) Fourth, from exploring the connections

between Latinos and African Americans, my students may discover they are influenced by the same kinds of music, dances, playing of games, dressing and speech patterns. Last, my students may discover how Latin-Americans and African Americans common experiences draw them closer together. For example, how did the experience of housing, employment and educational discrimination of Puerto Ricans and Africans Americans give rise to the hip-hop culture? (Flores 62)

As a part of its reform policy and the federal *No Child Left Behind* mandate, the School District of Philadelphia has its own *Children Achieving-High Expectation* agenda. Accordingly, the district promotes the infusion of multi-cultural studies within the curriculum. The specific multicultural competency goal indicates that a Philadelphia graduate should demonstrate knowledge of his and her own cultural background and that of others. The methods to reach this goal include but is not limited to using linguistic skills to communicate in a multilingual, global society; working cooperatively with others across cultural backgrounds; promoting conflict resolutions; recognizing and challenging injustices caused by bias and historical exclusion. (Thorton 2004)

There exist some tensions in meeting the school districts' policies, goals and methods of promoting multi-cultural studies. First, many schools in Philadelphia are racially isolated. Second, teachers often superficially teach about culture without making deeper connections or inquiries into the role language and cultural play in students' lives. The international heritage lesson in which students bring in a special dish is an example of this superficial approach. Third, it is challenging in our environment to improve students' multilingual skills. My school, like other racially isolated middle schools or K-8 schools, has no world language teachers. If students are not exposed to world languages at an early age it makes it more difficult for them to learn a new language in high school. Fourth, using multi-cultural studies can present challenges for teachers, who often form our views about other cultures through stereotypes. Finally, using the arts to promote cultural understand is becoming increasingly more difficult. With budget pressures and core curriculum time constraints, art programs are being reduced.

This unit builds on my longstanding interest in using art, and finding ways to collaborate with people outside my school to improve students' learning. What follows are some methods to address the challenges of providing multi-cultural instructions while working in a racially isolated school settings and still addressing school district's standards.

Pen Pal Exchange

Encouraging my students to appreciate the complexity of multiculturalism through a pen- pal exchange with the Marín School provides an immediacy that should be very useful. During this proposed exchange my students will learn about Latin-Caribbean students' interests and values. Because the Marín School is within travel distance students will have an opportunity to meet in person. Other precedents exist for using pen-pal programs to promote cultural understanding. Michelle Lemkuhl describes a bilingual pen-pal program between students in Tucson, Arizona and an inner-city school in Toledo, Ohio, and she notes that those involved in this program improved their reading and writing skills and gained more knowledge about their city and state. (Lemkuhl 5 July 2007)

Partnerships

I believe in the value of partnerships. Last year, my students wrote a mini-musical in collaboration with the Prince Music Theaters' Rainbow Connection program. This program provides the opportunity for middle school students to write a musical performed by a multi-cultural group of teens. My students composed a musical about cultural adaptation. The muse for the musical came from my students' inquiry projects about Chinese

culture. Building upon this experience, I plan to use lessons about Latin and African American cultural connections as seed ideas for a new musical my students will compose with the Rainbow Connection. I may also collaborate with the Philadelphia Art and Education Partnership, and other Latino arts organizations. Furthermore, my students will be able to elicit feedback from students at the Marín School, and invite them to view the musical at the Prince Music Theater's performance festival.

Addressing Stereotypes

I have noticed that students often embrace stereotypes gleaned from popular magazines, television shows, and music videos. In his article "Drums of Resistance Hybridization, Cultural Imperialism, and Caribbean Popular Culture in the Classroom," Kirwin Shaffer refers to these forces as the Coca-Cola-ization effect. I plan to teach my students to appreciate the impact popular culture plays in shaping values. Furthermore, I want to try to dispel stereotypes by helping them understand the context that give rise to certain Latin-Caribbean forms of self-expression. I want, as Shaffer suggests, to avoid the "video-tourist" approach when teaching about Caribbean culture. (Shaffer 146).

Using the Arts

In my view, the arts provide an effective means for students to understand culture and themselves. According to the *Philadelphia Arts in Education Partnership, Program Assessment Report 2002-2005*, when students participate in arts based learning projects; there is a noted improvement in literacy skills, critical thinking and student learning outcomes (Leach et al, 19). I believe arts in general and studying Latin American music, dance and literature in particular will provide students with a means of seeing connections between Latin-Caribbean and African American cultures.

I have found that dance provides a way for students to communicate their feelings. Salsa and merengue are the major dance styles students will explore. These styles derive from Afro-Cuban traditions. Salsa is a Spanish word for sauce, which connotes its ingredients are "mixed up." Salsa which typically dominates Latin dance clubs in Philadelphia is closely associated with Puerto Ricans. Salsa moves follow a core rhythm that lasts for two measures of four beats each. The basic step typically uses three steps each measure. Merengue is a dance style mainly attributed to the Dominican Republic. This dance style has distinct African roots and is very similar to Haiti's "meringue." Merengue is a two-step beat that uses lots of hip movement and requires partners to bend their knees slightly left and right. (Morales 7, 21, 56-57) This kinesthetic approach to learning about culture should appeal to my students. Ultimately, by using the Latin music, dance and literature students will be motivated to read, research and critically write about their world.

Objectives

While focusing on Latin-Caribbean topics, I will teach the geography, history, poetry and culture of this region to enhance the pen-pal connections. I specifically plan to lead my students' inquiry into the connections that Puerto Ricans and Dominicans have with African Americans. Through this process students will improve their, reading, writing, speaking, critical thinking, research and multi-cultural competency skills. Detailed objectives within three major categories are described below.

Researching and Analyzing Puerto Rican and Dominican Culture

To provide students with background knowledge I will do a topical review of Puerto Rican and Dominican geography and history using the school district prescribed social studies textbook, *World Cultures and Geography: Western Hemisphere*. I also plan to use *The Historical Society of Pennsylvania* website, to expose my students to the history and presence of Puerto Ricans and Dominicans in Philadelphia. Once students obtain background knowledge about Puerto Rican and Dominican cultures, they will conduct their inquiry about how the music and dance of Latin-Caribbean and African American cultures are interrelated. Students will conduct web research on dance styles and music associated with Puerto Rico and Dominican Republic. Students will explore how the confluence of these dances and music styles reflect the connections between Latin-Caribbean and African American cultures. Lastly, students will complete a first person narrative research report about their journey of discovering the connections between Latin-Caribbean and African American cultures.

Reading, Writing, and Responding about Puerto Rican and Dominican Culture

To improve literacy practices, students will write pen-pal letters, research reports, expository essays and other creative writing. The letters will be informed by students' inquiry and mini-lessons provided about Puerto Ricans and Dominicans presence in Philadelphia. Students will use the pen-pal exchange to further inform their inquiry about the role music and dance plays in their pen-pals' lives. Furthermore, I plan to use school district prescribed Latin-American fiction, non-fiction text, other picture books and bilingual poetry to demonstrate the diversity of experience of Latin Americans. Jill Kuhniem in her article, "Cultures of Lyric and Lyrical Culture: Teaching Poetry and Cultural Studies," notes that her students frequently comment that reading poetry is like reading a foreign language. Incorporating poetry to learn about Spanish words and Latin-Caribbean culture will allow me to intermingle the aesthetics of culture with its actual practices. For example, I can use poetry to describe or explore Afro-Cuban dance or music styles or I can use music lyrics to explore deeper questions about identity. Students will interpret and analyze films to situate culture in its proper context. (Kuhniem 123) Through interpretation and analysis of films students will learn to appreciate the complexities of Latin American identity along with their own identity. Students will learn to read and respond to film in much the same way they would a work of fiction or a non-fiction text, and they will make connections with theme, character, setting, plot, etc. Students will learn to critically view film such as *West Side Story*, and determine what stereotypes are promoted in such Latinized films. Lastly, students will have writing workshops to compose expository essays about how to dance; write bilingual poetry; or respond to music, film or other art derived from Latin-Caribbean culture.

Creating and Performing Representations of Puerto Rican and Dominican Culture

To support students in creating performing arts and multi-media end products, I plan to collaborate with Latino community arts organizations such as the Asociación de Músicos Latino Americanos or Taller Puertorriqueño. Both these organizations work to promote the awareness of Latin American culture in Philadelphia through performing and visual arts. They are also both located in the heart of the city's Latino community which is in close proximity to the Marín School. To culminate this unit, students will document and show case what they have learned by performing in a Nuyorican Poet's Café format. The Nuyorican Poets Café began in the early 1970's in the East Village as an outlet for Puerto Ricans in New York to innovatively express themselves through poetry, music, hip hop, video and visual arts. (Algarín and Hollman 23) I have previously staged Poetry Cafes with my students that more closely match Russell Simon's Def Poetry Jam which has played on Broadway and aired on HBO. For our *Filadelfian* Café students will demonstrate Latin dance styles,

recite bilingual poems and rap lyrics, and show clips of digital stories showing their reflections of learning about Latin-Caribbean and African American connections *en ciudad de Filadelfia*.

Strategies

I plan to teach this unit primarily during my social studies learning block for 6-8 weeks. I meet with students for social studies 5 days a week for about 45 minutes. Some of the content for this unit could also be taught during my literacy block which is at least 90 minutes everyday. Alternatively, I can teach this unit during an entire marking period incorporating more literacy lessons embedding the Latin American literature recommended by the school district.

Inquiry Learning

Inquiry learning provides students an opportunity to improve their critical thinking skills. David S. Jake, et al. in an online article *Inquiry Based learning and the Web* on biopoint.com posits that Inquiry-based learning is a process where students formulate questions, obtain facts, and then build knowledge to reflect on their original question. (Jake et al 15 March 2007) To support students' inquiry and research skills, I will ask them to explore the essential question "what cultural connections do Puerto Ricans and Dominicans have with African Americans?" An essential question such as this one frames the research and requires students to make decisions and make a plan of action. My students will complete a first person narrative research project. Through their discoveries, students will explore the aesthetics of dance, music, and poetry and understand how culture connects Latin-Caribbean Americans and African Americans.

Letter-Writing

The pen-pal program will be planned with the collaborating teacher at the Marín School. We will decide how to match up each student. For example, will we match by gender; strong writers with weaker writers; etc? Students may complete surveys this process. Mini-lessons will cover formatting and structuring a friendly letter, as well as revision and editing techniques. Students will draft their letters using a structured format that includes the salutation, and informal introduction about themselves. The body of their letters will include questions related to their inquiry project. For example, students could ask what kind of music their pen-pal likes, or more specific questions about their pen-pals' family heritage. The letter closings could include post script with informal Spanish salutation such as adios, más tarde, ¡hasta luego! , etc. Follow-up letters will be written for advice about writing bilingual poetry or how-to-essays on Latin-Caribbean art forms. To enhance the exchange, arrangements will be made for students to meet their pen-pals at the Marín School, or at an event sponsored by a Latino community arts organization.

Films, Music Videos & Lyrics

A complete list of resources is provided in the annotated resources section. What follows is a brief description of how I plan to use some of the multi-media resources.

I will use the films *West Side Story* and *Mad Hot Ballroom Dance* to anchor our exploration of Puerto Rican and Dominican music, dance, arts, culture and identity. I will use clips from the film *West Side Story* to uncover Puerto Rican stereotypes. *West Side Story* is a Broadway musical written by Arthur Laurents (book), Leonard

Bernstein (music), and Stephen Sondheim (lyrics). The story is based loosely on Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. The 1961 film was directed by Robert Wise, and starred Natalie Wood, Rita Moreno and George Chakris. Frances Negrón-Muntaner describes Leonard Bernstein's ironic process for researching Puerto Rican culture, in the chapter "Feeling Pretty" of her book *Boricua Pop: Puerto Ricans and the Latinization of American Culture*. In an interview Bernstein said, "We went to a gym in Brooklyn where there were different gangs that a social organization was trying to bring together. I don't know if too much eventually got into *West Side Story*, but everything helps." Though controversial, this film will offer my students an opportunity to question how *West Side Story* stereotypically represents Puerto Rican identity -men as criminal and women as victims.- (Negrón-Muntaner, 62) I will use the documentary film *Mad Hot Ballroom* to demonstrate what role dancing plays in lives of young people. Although this film is very charming, it offers social commentary. Of three schools that are involved in this New York ballroom contest for kids, two schools PS 150 represent the affluent Tribeca area and PS 112 represents the primarily Italian and Asian area of Bensonhurst; while PS 115 represents kids from Washington Heights a predominately Dominican neighborhood. My students will view this entire film to appreciate the different styles of Latin dance and make connections with the students starring in the film. Students will maintain response logs to critique both films for their aesthetic quality along with any social commentary about Puerto Rican and Dominican identity.

To support students in appreciating of the aesthetics of Latin music I will use a variety of lyrics and songs. The song *Latinos en Estados Unidos* (Latinos in the United States)

written by Titti Sotto and performed by Celia Cruz, is an example of a song I will use to help students explore issues about Latin identity. To demonstrate Latin music's influence beyond Puerto Rican and Dominican communities, I will use the websites like latinrapper.com or perrealo.com to show Latin hip-hop lyrics and profile Latin artists.

Multiple Intelligences

Through catering to varying learning styles, I will use music, dance and media arts to encourage students to look at culture from multiple perspectives. The notion of varying learning style or *Multiple Intelligences* was developed by Howard Gardner, a noted professor at Harvard University. Gardner contends that students learn in at least 7-8 different ways. This unit will cater to: Verbal/ Linguistic Learners, Logical/Mathematical Learners, Visual/ Spatial Learners, Bodily/ Kinesthetic Learner, Musical / Rhythmic Learners, Interpersonal Learners and Intrapersonal Learners (Gardner, 1993). In preparation for the culminating showcase I will have students apply for specific jobs and tasks and arrange for students to be interviewed by parent volunteers or collaborating teaching artists. Refer to the Appendix - 2 Job Descriptions. . . for details.

Graphic Organizers

Graphic organizers provide an effective way to elicit students' prior knowledge and illustrate what they are learning. James Burke, author of *Tools for Thought: Graphic Organizer for Your Classroom*, offers a variety of graphic learning tools and methods to engage students from grades 6-12 in all subject areas. Examples of few graphic organizers that I plan to use are outlined below.

Vocabulary Squares

A vocabulary square is a graphic organizer divided into four quadrants to demonstrate understanding of the word origin or part of speech, synonyms or antonyms for a word, visuals logos or icons and a formal brief definition of words (Burke, 178) I will use vocabulary squares when introducing common words derived from

Spanish words as well as interesting or difficult terms found in other text. Vocabulary squares can be found on the following link: <http://www.englishcompanion.com/pdfDocs/vocabsquares.pdf>.

BDA (Text Rendering)

The BDA strategy (Before Reading, During Reading and After Reading) is an interactive note-taking tool that allows students to read and comprehend information and literary text. Before reading, students can prepare to read by scanning text and pictures for clues, making predictions, or setting a purpose. During reading, students can ask questions and have dialogue with the text. "Text rendering" is an example of a during-reading activity. Text rendering directs students to say or highlight any words, phrases or sentences that resonate for any reason, including confusion and lack of understanding. I plan to use BDA strategies for reading song lyrics, non-fiction and fiction text related to Latino culture.

Writing & Research Graphic Organizers

Graphic organizers can also assist students in generating ideas for planning and drafting writing assignments. I plan to use a graphic organizer to assist students in writing bilingual poetry. For example, a bilingual cinquian organizer could be used to plan five line stanza poem describing a person, place or thing. Students may be provided English words with Spanish translations to compose their poem. A cinquian Graphic Organizer is available at http://www.readwritethink.org/lesson_images/lesson51/cinqgraphic-apple-bi.pdf. To support students in conducting research, I will provide students with research graphic organizers. These graphic aids will help students prepare their first person narrative research report. The home page of the ReadWriteThink website which is a partnership between the National Council for Teachers of English and the International Reading Association contains a search engine where teachers can find a variety of graphic organizers to support students with reading, writing and researching.

Because the strategies of the unit are varied, lessons can be easily staggered over a longer time period, or implemented as discrete lessons taught in a stand-alone fashion. The strategies in this unit can be similarly grouped into three categories:

Researching and Analyzing Strategies

I will conduct mini-lessons on the inquiry process to support students' research efforts. To support students in collecting secondary data about Puerto Ricans and Dominicans, I will use our social studies textbook and *The Historical Society of Pennsylvania* website. Students will collect primary data during field trips to special Latino community arts organizations. Students will also use their pen-pal letters to gather data for their inquiry projects. Special guest artists may visit my classroom to present topics about Latin-Caribbean and African American cultural connections. Furthermore, students will visit the school library and music-media lab to conduct web searches on their inquiry topics.

Reading, Writing, and Responding Strategies

To support students' reading, writing and critical thinking skills I will conduct mini-lessons on interpreting and analyzing film. I will model how to respond to Latin dance movements, music, poetry, and other forms of texts. As per the school districts' writing requirement for sixth grade, my students will write an expository essay. A how-to essay writing rubric will be used to assess students' proficiency in describing the process of performing or responding to Puerto Rican or Dominican art forms. Furthermore, I will use the school district standardized reading test taking strategy to help students respond to open ended prompts about Latino arts and culture.

For example the *TAG it 3* strategy graphically helps students to *Turn* the prompt into an opening statement; *Answer* the prompt; *Give* details, evidence and examples from the text to support the answer. Refer to the link <http://www.phila.k12.pa.us/schools/creighton/PSSA%20tag.pdf> to see how this strategy graphically looks and works.

Recitation, Performing and Multi-Media Strategies

I will use cooperative learning approaches to prepare students for the culminating *Filadelfian Poets Café*. The poem *Bilingual/Bilingüe* by Rhina P. Espaillat on the *Poetry Out loud Contest Website* <http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poems/audiocd.html>, will be used to model constructive criticism. A sample recitation rubric is provided in appendix 3. I also plan to use poems and videos about dance to show how "dance is action and shape designed in space and time to express feelings and ideas." (Kuklin 1-32) I will use visual cues to help students process how Latin dance moves follow specific patterns. Lastly mini-lessons will be conducted either by a visiting artists or me on how to use audio and video clips with I-Moive or Garage Band to make digital stories or pod cast showcasing poetry, songs, dance moves and discoveries about the connections between Latin-Caribbean American and African American cultures.

Assessment

Assessments will include an evaluation of students' letters, research report and their creative performances (dance, music, and spoken-word). The first person reflection-research report will be graded on the completeness; proficient writing standards (focus, content, organization, style and convention) and the validity of students' research sources. Included in the grade will be an assessment of the student's ability to use internet sources, personal interviews, direct quotes, and lyrics. Students' pen-pal letters will demonstrate the connections they share with many Puerto Rican and Dominican students. Student expository essays will be assessed on how completely they describe the process of performing or responding to a selected Latin-Caribbean art form. Ultimately students should uncover that many Latinos responses to racism, poverty, and other social issues are very similar to the African-American experience.

Classroom Activities

Presented here are 3 sample activities for this unit. Teachers can use the ideas for a single lesson or plan an entire integrated unit based upon the strategies aforementioned.

Sample Activity 1

Title: Latinos en Estados Unidos - Puerto Rican and Dominican Identity

Grade Range: 6th - 8th Grade

Subjects: Social Studies and Literacy (Reading and Writing):

Duration of Lesson: 4-8 Class Periods of at Least 45 Minutes.

Specific Goals

Identify significant Latino cultural groups in the Americas and in the city of Philadelphia.

Explain the history of Puerto Rico and Dominican Republic, and explore the shared experiences Puerto Ricans and Dominicans have with African Americans.

Analyze how movies, internet, and popular magazines create stereotypes of Latinos.

Use primary, print and electronic sources to gather information for research topics.

Understand cognates and the relationship between some Spanish and English words and read and analyze bilingual text to write reflective responses.

Inquiry Question: What does it mean to be Latino in the United States?

Warm Up Activity - Before Reading: / Vocabulary Squares (Cognates)

Students will first scan the Spanish text in the lyrics *Latinos en Estados Unidos* (<http://www.hsp.org/files/celiacruz.pdf>) then locate cognates to create vocabulary squares. (example nació for nation) After this, students will share at least 4 vocabulary squares they completed with a peer. The vocabulary square will provide the part of speech or word origin; synonym or antonym; a symbol or icon for the word, and a brief definition for the word. Lastly students will listen to the Spanish version of the song, with English version to read a long.

Mini Lesson - Puerto Rico and Dominican Republic Background.

Using the *World Cultures and Geography: Western Hemisphere* text book and the *Historical Society of Pennsylvania's Latinos in Philadelphia* web site and resources (<http://www.hsp.org/default.aspx?id=103>) the teacher will present historical background and timeline of Puerto Ricans and Dominicans migration and immigration in the US and to Philadelphia in particular. The students and teacher will read oral histories of Latin Americans families living in Philadelphia.

Activities - Constructed Response (TAG) - the Lyrics *Latinos en Estados Unidos*

Students will listen to the song one more time and do a close reading of the lyrics paying attention to how the song describes what it is like to be Latino in America. The teacher and students will explore the figurative language found in the lyrics as well discuss the importance of the refrain "let's unite, let's unite." Students will then write a constructed response to the following prompt.

In the song *Latinos en Estados Unidos*, the speaker shows that it is important that Latinos respect and honor their cultural heritage. Who is the speaker talking to and why is the speaker providing a message about Latin pride. Provide at least 3 examples from the text to support your answer. Students will use the TAG strategy to complete this prompt.

T- Turn opening statement into prompt.

A- Answer the prompt.

G - Give details from the text to support answer.

Wrap up or Extension— Latino Life in America - Growing Up Puerto Rican or Dominican In Philadelphia

As a wrap-up students may compose poems or short narrative stories using 3rd person point of view of what it must be like growing up Puerto Rican or Dominican in Philadelphia. Students can use ideas from the *World Cultures and Geography: Western Hemisphere text book*, the *Historical Society of Pennsylvania's Latinos in Philadelphia* web site and the lyrics *Latinos en Estados Unidos*.

Sample Activity 2

Title: Bilingual Pen Pals Letters and Inquiry Projects

Grade Range: 6th - 8th Grade

Subjects: Social Studies and Literacy (Reading and Writing):

Duration of Lesson: 4-8 Class Periods of at Least 45 Minutes.

Specific Goals:

Learn the format and style of bilingual-friendly letters.

Begin the inquiry process of finding out what cultural connections Puerto Ricans and Dominicans share with African Americans.

Inquiry Question: What cultural connections do Puerto Ricans and Dominicans share with African Americans?

Warm Up Activity - KWL

Students will complete a KWL chart listing what they already know about Puerto Rican and Dominican culture? What new things they want to know? After the project is complete they can list what new things they learned.

Mini Lesson - Format of Friendly Bilingual Letter

Teacher will model how to write a friendly letter; covering formatting and structuring tips. Teacher will also review some Spanish salutations that could be used in the opening or closing of letters.

Activities: Composing Letters

Students will draft and revise friendly letters to their new pen pals at the Marín School. Students letters should include information their hobbies and interests; things they have learned about Puerto Rico and Dominican Republic; question about what kind of music their pen-pal likes; and about their pen-pals' family heritage.

Wrap up or Extension - I Search - Inquiry

After completing their first pen-pal letters, students may begin their inquiry projects on what cultural connections Puerto Ricans and Dominicans share with African Americans. Students will use the internet, as well as other secondary and primary sources to write their own first person narrative about their process and discoveries.

Sample Lesson Plan 3

Title: On the One or Two: So You Want to Latin Dance?

Grade Range: 6th - 8th Grade

Subjects: Social Studies and Literacy (Reading and Writing):

Duration of Lesson: 6-8 Class Periods of at Least 45 Minutes.

Specific Goals

Produce, perform and exhibit Latin style dances, music and bilingual poetry.

Display multi-media and art reflecting the connections between Puerto Rican, Dominican and African American popular cultural.

Inquiry Question: How is Puerto Rican and Dominican Dance, Music and Poetry related to African American forms of self expression?

Warm Up Activity - Bilingual Text Rendering - "In The Beginning"

Students will first silently read the poem "In the Beginning" by Sandra Maria Esteves; then in groups of four read the poem a loud. After this, students will choose a word, phrase, or line that in some way stands out; their words may be Spanish or English. As a whole class students will recite their selected word, phrase, or line from this poem.

Students will share aloud one word that summarizes their feelings after reading this bilingual poem "In The Beginning." Afterwards, they may create beats to accompany the recitation of this poem.

Mini Lesson - Demonstrate Clave Beat

The teacher or teaching artist will provide a mini-lesson on the origin of the clave beat. The clave is Afro-Cuban music, based on a call and response pattern. The basic clave follows a 3-2 or 2-3 pattern meaning either the measure with the three strokes is played first with the two-stroke measure following, or the two stroke is played first followed by the three-stroke measure. (Washburn 15, July 2007) The teacher or teaching artist will model how clave based dances are related to the call and response patterns.

Activities - Mad Hot Ballroom- How To Salsa and Merengue

Students will do a close viewing of the film *Mad Hot Ballroom* paying attention to how the Latin Dance styles are performed in the documentary. The teacher and students will explore the conflicts young people face in competing in a city wide dance contest as well as discuss issues related to social class found in the film. Students' response notes may cover the following questions.

What are the basic steps of Salsa or Merengue?

How did seeing the film change your views about Latin or ballroom dancing?

Did seeing this film inspire you to want to learn new dance styles? Why or why not?

How are salsa or merengue dance styles similar to African American dance styles?

How does it make you feel to know that a most of the kids at one school PS 115 in Washington Heights were

predominately Dominican, while the kids from the other schools PS 150 and PS 112 were more culturally diverse?

Wrap up or Extension — *Filadelfian Poets Café*

This unit may culminate with a Nuyroican style showcase. With support from a community arts partnership such as the Philadelphia Arts Education Partnership and Asociación de Músicos Latino Americanos or Taller Puertorriqueño the students' showcase may be presented at outside venues. In preparation for the show case students may work in groups of fours; students will form production teams to produce a digital rendition of bilingual spoken word poems, Latin dance moves or music lyrics. For examples students may perform the recitations of "Bilingual/ Bilingüe" by Rhina Espitlata, "You Bring Out the Latino in Me" written by Erick Piedrasanta a 16 year old writer, or "Dance With Bill T. Jones" by Susan Kuklin. Students could use the clave beat as background rhythms to accompany the recitation of poems or include dance movements to serve as interpretations of the poems. The teacher or teaching artist will model how to use story boards, for students to produce their own digital film or pod cast. Students may use images found when preparing their research, how-to essays, pen-pal letters as well as create their own illustrations. Students will use a multi-media images and present live performances of bilingual poetry, spoken word, Latin dance moves to reflect on their inquiry findings

Annotated Works Cited / Resource List

Works Cited / Teacher Resources

Algarín Miguel. Hollman Bob. *Aloud: Voices From the Nuyorican Poets Café*. New York: H. Holt, 1994. Provides a great muse for bilingual poetry. More suitable for mature readers. I may find a few poems to share with my students

Allen, Raye. Wilcken Lois. *Island Sounds in the Golden City: Caribbean Popular Music and Identity*. New York: New York Folklore Society: Institute for Studies in American Music, Brooklyn College, 1998. Great articles and references for Puerto Rican and Dominican music.

Benjamin, Herold. *Teacher Quality Inequitable in Philadelphia's Schools*. Research for Action. Summer 2005.
http://pdf.researchforaction.org/rfapdf/publication/pdf_file/232/Herold_B_TQ__inequitable.pdf> This article provided data on the impact of racial isolation of many Philadelphia public schools.

Burke, James. *Tools of Thought: graphic organizers for your classroom*. Portsmouth,

NH: Heinemann, 2002. A book written by Jim Burke of Burlingame High School, California, is a must have for teachers using graphic organizers for English and Humanities content.

Filadelfia Latina. Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

<http://www.hsp.org/default.aspx?id=251>> 16 June 2007. Excellent regional website,

which contains timely information about Latino immigrants in Philadelphia.

Flores, Juan. *From Bomba to Hip-Hop: Puerto Rican Culture and Latino Identity*. New York. NY. Columbia University Press, 2000. This

book provides useful information on the Puerto Ricans' influence on U.S.A. music, dance and popular culture.

Fuentes, Carlos. *Hispanic USA: A Mirror of Others*. The Nation Vol. 411, 12. pg 245 March 1992. This book provides a cultural study of Latin American and its complex identity from Spain and the Americas.

Gardner, Howard. *Multiple Intelligences: The Theory in Practice*. New York, NY:

BasicBooks, Perseus Books Group, 1993. This publication provides the framework and theory behind Gardner's Multiple Intelligences pedagogy, which has had a great impact on how teachers view teaching and learning.

Jake, David, Pennington Mark E., Knodle Howard. A. *Using the Internet to Promote*

Inquiry-Based Learning. 15 June 2007.

<http://www.biopoint.com/inquiry/jibr.html>.> This e-paper describes a structured

approach to using the internet to support inquiry-based learning.

Kuhnhiem, Jill S. "Cultures of Lyric and Lyrical Culture: Teaching Poetry and Cultural

Studies." *Cultural Studies in Curriculum: Teaching Latin America*. Ed. Danny J. Anderson, Jill S. Kuhnhiem. New York: Modern Language Association, 2003. This article provides insights on using poetry to teach about Latin American culture.

Leach Evan., Cohen Raye M., Schaeffer Pearl B. *Philadelphia Arts in Education*

Partnership Program Assessment Report 2002-2005. Philadelphia, PA: PAEP, 2005. This report provides a comprehensive assessment of arts-based collaborative partnership programs. The report is available on line at http://www.paep.net/paep_research.html .

Lemkuhl, Michelle. *Pen-pal letters: the cross-curricular experience* The Reading Teacher v. 55 no. 8 (May 2002) p. 720-2. This article provides validation of using cross-cultural and bilingual pen-pal programs.

Morales, Ed. *The Latin Beat: The Rhythms and Roots Latin Music from Bossa Nova to Salsa and Beyond*. Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2003. This book is useful, without being too technical. Provides great details on the origins of Latin Music.

Negron-Muntaner, Frances. *Boricua Pop: Puerto Ricans and American Culture (Sexual Cultures)*. New York, NY. New York University Press, 2004. This book provides an interesting critique of West Side Story. After reading the chapter "Feeling Pretty" I view the sexual politics of this film in a whole new light.

Roberts, John S. *The Latin Tinge: The Impact of Latin American Music on the United States*. New York, NY. Oxford University Press, 1979. The book seems to be written more for a musicologist. I find it useful, but too technical.

Shaffer Kirwin R. "Drums of Resistance: Hybridization, Cultural Imperialism, and

Caribbean Popular Culture in the Classroom." *Cultural Studies in Curriculum: Teaching Latin America*. Ed. Danny J. Anderson, Jill S. Kuhnhiem. New York: Modern Language Association, 2003. This article provides insights on using popular culture to teach about Latin- Caribbean stereotypes.

Thornton Gregory E. *The Philadelphia Story: Challenge, Opportunity and Promise*. School District of Philadelphia: Keynote PowerPoint Presentation. <http://www.hsp.org/default.aspx?id=251>>, http://www.phila.k12.pa.us/Children_Achieving/high_expect.html>16 June 2007. The School District of Philadelphia's Chief Academic Officer provides insights into the district's cultural diversity opportunities

and challenges.

Washburn, Christopher. *Clave: The African Roots of Salsa*. Latin American Folk Institute. 15 July 2007.

<http://www.lafi.org/magazine/articles/clave.html>.> This article describes the clave concept found in salsa dance styles.

World Cultures and Geography: Western Hemisphere- Teachers Edition. Geneva, IL. McDougal Littell 1996. This book is the district's standard social studies text book; it covers the geography, history and culture of the Americas, including the Caribbean.

Student's Bibliography / Resources

Espallat Rhina P. "Bilingual/ Bilingüe", *Where Horizons Go*. Kirksville, MO. Truman State University Press, 1998. This is a great bilingual poem my students will practice reciting.

Esteves Sandra M. "In The Beginning", *El Coro: A Collection of Latino and Latina Poetry*: Ed. Martín Espasda. Massachusetts : University of Massachusetts Press., 1997. This poem is included great anthology of poems that explore the borders between English and Spanish.

Hijuelos, Oscar. "Introduction". *Cool Salsa: Bilingual Poems of Growing Up Latino in the United States*. Ed. Lori M Carlson. New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1994. This book provides great bilingual poems that middle school students will enjoy.

Kuklin, Susan. *Dance with Bill T. Jones*. New York: Hyperion, 1998. A great photo-poetry book which provides a way for students to see a variety of dance movements.

Piedrasanta, Erick. "You Bring out the Latino in Me". *City of One: Young Writers Speak to the World*. Ed. Colette DeDonato. San Francisco: Aunt Lute., 2005. This poem was inspired by Sandra Cisneros' "You Bring out the Mexican in Me." All the poems in this anthology are written by young people between the ages 9-23.

Thomas, Piri. *Stories from El Barrio*. New York: NY. Knopf 1978. Excerpt of this book can be read aloud to students to allow them to hear the voice of a Puerto Rican who learned to navigate of the mean streets of New York.

Wáchale!: Poetry and Prose about Growing Up Latino. Ed. Ilan Stevens. Chicago: IL. Cricket Books 2001. This anthology of poems and prose provides a variety of Latin voices. I could use this book as supplement for my higher level readers.

Student Web and Media Resources

Mad Hot Ballroom. Dir. Agrelo Marilyn. DVD. Just One Productions 2005. A wonderful film that shows the power of young people learning ballroom dance.

Perrealo Home of Latin Hip-Hop <http://www.perrealo.com/>> 21 June 2007. This web site provides profiles of Latin American hip-hop and ragaeton artist.

Villa Africana Colob?. Dir. Kuetemeyer Michael, Shetty Anula. DVD. Grupo Motivos, Scribe Video Center, WYBE Public Television. 2006. This local made documentary provides footage of areas of which my students may identify. It also provides powerful visuals depicting the African roots in Puerto Rican culture.

Welcome to Puerto Rico <http://welcome.topuertorico.org/index.shtml>. 21 June 2007.

This web site provides basic background about Puerto Rico's geography, history and culture. It is a touristy site but has wonderful pictures and images of Caribbean island lifestyles.

West Side Story. Dir. Jerome Robbins, Robert Wise. Perf. Rita Moreno, Natalie Wood, George Chahkis. DVD. MGM Home Entertainment 1999. I will use excerpts of the film to compare Broadway dance movements to popular Latin dance movements. I will also use the film to explore issues around Puerto Rican stereotypes.

Appendix 1

Pennsylvania and School District of Philadelphia Curriculum Standards

Standard: Reading #1

Apply effective reading strategies to comprehend, organize, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate texts to construct meaning.

Standard: Reading #2

Read a variety of materials including fiction and non-fiction, classic and contemporary texts from a diversity of cultures (especially African, Asian/Pacific, European, Latino, and Native American cultures), communication systems, and functional texts.

Standard: Reading #3

Read for a variety of purposes: to seek information; to apply knowledge; to enhance enjoyment; to engage in inquiry and research; to expand world views; to understand individuality, shared humanity, and the heritage of the people in our city as well as the contributions of a diversity of groups to American culture and other cultures throughout the world.

Standard: Literature

Listen to, read, recognize, and respond to literature as a record of human experience that provides individual perspective, promotes understanding of multiple perspectives, and reflects the importance of cultural influences.

Standard: Writing #1

Plan, draft, revise, and publish writing using correct grammar, sentence structure, punctuation, spelling, and effective vocabulary, appropriate to the purpose, context, and audience.

Standard: Writing #2

Write for academic, personal, social, civic, and school-to-career purposes.

Standard: Writing #3

Write in a variety of forms including journals, essays, stories, letters, plays, poems, and reports using figurative, descriptive, literary, and technical language.

Standard: Writing #4

Conduct and document inquiry-based research using oral, print, and communications systems.

Standard: Speaking #1

Speak for a variety of purposes including informing, persuading, questioning, problem solving, sharing ideas and stories, reaching consensus, and responding sensitively and respectfully using language appropriate to the context, audience, and purpose.

Standard: Speaking #2

Speak using effective communication skills including enunciation, inflection, volume, fluency, and non-verbal gestures.

Standard: Listening #1

Listen actively for a variety of purposes including comprehending, interpreting, analyzing, evaluating, responding effectively, and for enjoyment

Standard: Listening #2 - Recognize the diversity of oral English language use, patterns, and dialects, and understand its implications across social contexts, cultures, ethnic groups, and geography.

Standard: Viewing

View media, technology, and live performances for a variety of purposes including gathering information, making informed judgments, processing information, and for enjoyment.

Social Studies Standards;

Culture

Demonstrate an understanding of culture and how culture affects the individual and society.

Time, Continuity, and Change

Analyze historical events, conditions, trends and issues to understand the way human beings view themselves, their institutions, and others, now and over time, to enable them to make informed choices and decisions.

People, Places, and Environment

Apply geographic skills and knowledge to demonstrate an understanding of how geography affects people, places, movement, and environments.

Individuals, Groups and Institutions

Demonstrate an understanding of the role of individuals, groups, and institutions and how their actions and interactions exert powerful influences on society.

Art Standards;

Media, Technique, Processes

Understand and apply art media, techniques, and processes.

Elements, Principals, Features

Demonstrate knowledge of elements, principles, and expressive features from diverse historical periods and cultures, especially African, Asian/Pacific, European, Latino, and Native American cultures.

Subject Matter, Symbols, Ideas

Recognize, select, and evaluate a variety of subject matter, symbols, and ideas from diverse cultures and historical periods, especially African, Asian/Pacific, European, Latino, and Native American cultures, in making original works of art.

Reflecting on Artwork

Observe, reflect, and value the characteristics, meanings, uses, and merits of one's own artwork and artwork from diverse cultural groups and historical periods.

Historical, Social, Cultural

Understand the visual arts and artifacts in relation to historical, social, and cultural contexts, especially African, Asian/Pacific, European, Latino, and Standard: Racial, Cultural Gender - Use the visual arts and artifacts as a way of understanding ourselves and our communities through racial, cultural, and gender differences and similarities. Native American cultures.

Appendix 2

Job Titles and Multiple Intelligences Used for Students' Culminating Project

Below find sample jobs titles, description of duties and dominant intelligences that could be used to match students with their appropriate skills and talents:

Job Title: Illustrators

Description of Duties

- Decides which poems will be accompanied by which mask and artwork.
- Designs, composes art work and selects artwork to be published in anthology
- Works closely with writers and readers

Intelligence Used-

Visual Learners enjoy visual metaphors, illustrations and drawings

Job Title: Readers/ Speakers

Description of Duties

- Selects poems and poets to read at show case
- Practices reading and presenting for live performances
- Works closely with writers and illustrators

Intelligence Used-

Verbal Learners enjoy reading poetry and dramatic dialogues

Job Title: Executive Writers

Description of Duties

- Edits and improves anthology selections for style, clarity and creativity
- Helps writers add figurative language, similes, metaphors, etc.
- Selects a variety selections from individual portfolios to be published in anthology
- Works closely with readers and illustrators

Intelligences Used-

Linguistic learners enjoy writing poetry; Intrapersonal learners can work alone and enjoy editing.

Job Title: Host and Promoters

Description of Duties

- Prepares and distributes subscription and invitation cards
- Makes budget and plans menu for show case performance
- Makes plans, caters for special guests and keeps order and maintain seating arrangement
- Works closely with set-up and music members

Intelligences Used-

Interpersonal learners work well in-groups and enjoy catering to others needs and feelings.

Job Title: Music and Sound Members

Description of Duties

- Conducts music survey
- Selects and makes music play list to correspond with poetry
- Auditions and selects Dee jay and any rap or dance presentations
- Works closely with host and set up members up and set-up members

Intelligences Used-

Musical learners enjoy rhythm and creating sounds; kinesthetic learners enjoy movement.

Job Title: Set-up Members

Description of Duties

- Makes sketch layout of stage and café performance venue
- Determines and makes lists of all materials required
- Places poetry displays and decorations at poetry café
- Works closely with hosts and illustrators

Intelligences Used-

Spatial learners enjoy making layouts; Logical learners enjoy analyzing problems.

Job Title: Coordinators

Description of Duties

- Works with all committees to make sure deadlines are set and made
- Encourages and praises all workers for completing assignments
- Assists senior coordinator (teacher) with special assignments

Intelligences Used-

Interpersonal learners are great leaders and motivators.

Teacher supports all intelligences used by students.

Appendix 3

Poetry Out Loud - National Recitation Contest Sample Evaluation Rubric (NEA / Poetry Foundation)

NAME OF PERFORMER

TITLE OF POEM

(table 07.04.02.01 available in print form)

TOTAL

ACCURACY (SUBTRACT UP TO 4 POINTS)

FINAL SCORE

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