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Latinx Biographies and Social Activism: An Untold Latinx History

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Introduction

Latinx figures are always missing from U.S. history books. There are some figures that are seen in history books, but Latinx figures are ignored in American history. Many of my heritage students cannot recognize figures like Dolores Huerta, Cesar Chavez or Roberto Clemente. I teach Heritage Spanish, and, in the course, heritage speakers can learn about history that is part of their heritage and that is normally not taught in the public school system. The textbook and curriculum that is offered for this course does not contain a variety of Latinx figures (for example, Afro Latinx figures are missing from these textbooks). The lack of Latinx figures in textbooks and curriculum is not just in history courses, but also in the language courses. The Spanish textbook and curriculum that is provided by the district is Eurocentric in the culture, grammar, and vocabulary portions of the textbook. This can be frustrating for Heritage students who do not see themselves represented in any course.

I would love for heritage students to learn about the impact that Latinx figures that have made an impact on American history. This unit will introduce students to Cesar Chavez, Dolores Huerta, Celia Cruz and Roberto Clemente, among others. It is important for Heritage students to see the contributions made by people who look like them because Heritage students feel voiceless and invisible. We will focus on Latinx figures and social movements in the 20th century. I will be focusing on three types of Latinx figures: social activists, celebrities, and athletes. I want my Heritage Spanish students to see figures that look like them who are active in social causes. During my years of teaching, I have seen my Latinx students become more involved in social movements that affect them, like gun control, teacher walkouts, Black Lives Matter protests and DACA demonstrations. If students see people like them and from the same background as them participating in social movements and using their platform, what is to stop Latinx students from doing the same? This unit is meant to empower my Heritage students to use their voice and collective power to change their world.

Background Information

I teach at one of the highest achieving high schools in the district and state. The school is a diverse school, where 37% are White, 28.8% are African American, 17% are Latinx, 8.7% are multi-Racial, 4.8% are Native American and 3.7% are Asian/Pacific Islander. The school's diversity is reflected in my classroom. There are a wide range of ability levels present in my classroom, including English Language Learners and students who are on IEP's (Individualized Education Program) and many of my students are on free or reduced lunch which is based on parents' income. While many of my students are high achieving and are reading at or above grade level, there are also students in my classroom that are barely reading at or below grade level. This can be a challenge when teaching a foreign language.

What is unique about my school is that it is a historically African American high school, and they offer African American Studies. In my school district, African American Studies is taught at many high schools. The demographics in my school district are changing and are not reflected at my school yet. The largest demographic in my school district is Latinx. Currently, there is no course offered for Latinx students that teaches Latin American Studies. I teach Spanish for Heritage Speakers where heritage speakers can learn about history that is part of their heritage and that is normally not taught in the public school system.

Many of my heritage speakers do not know or recognize Latinx figures in American history. It is important for my students to understand important movements and figures due to the overwhelming amount of prejudice towards people of color. It is important for marginalized students to know they can make changes in their world.

Unit Content

To teach the unit, it will focus on six Latinx figures that have influenced the United States. The unit will focus on three types of social movements/activism, the Farm Workers Movement, Celebrities and Athletes and their Activism.

Why Biographies?

Biographies are a way to humanize history for students. According to Lerner "By encountering such individuals, students may learn they are not alone, that others who have gone before them have found ways of coping, of overcoming hardship, of responding to difficult stations in well-considered, constructive ways."¹ I want my Heritage students to be empowered to use their collective voice to make changes in their lives. By using biographies, it allows students to not focus on only the positive attitude and attributes but also human flaws. By examining biographies, in the words of Lerner, "they (students) can monitor their own tendencies, reflect on their choices, and consciously better their responses to various situations."² Biographies allow students to have role models to look up to and allows them to question their decisions and make changes to their lives.

Biographies can challenge students to think critically about history. They can also contribute to engaging class

discussions and they can be used to challenge students to write more analytical class papers.³ It is an engaging way to bring history to life for students. Biographies allow students to make connections with figures who used their voice for change. This will allow students to be empowered to use their own voice to change their lives.

The United Farm Workers Movement

As a young five-year-old, my parents would tell me about the time that they “couldn’t” buy grapes, telling me it was to help “our people.” At the time, I had no idea what they were talking about or who “our people” were. As I got older, I did not think much about that story until Cesar Chavez was mentioned in my history class in high school. It was then that I made the connection of the Grape Strike and Cesar Chavez. Many heritage students might learn about Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers Union Movement in their high school history class, but there is a possibility that some of these students will never hear the name. Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta are two figures that played big roles in the United Farm Workers Movement in the 60s and 70s. Cesar Chavez is the figure who is associated with the United Farm Workers Movement, and it was not until recently that Dolores Huerta played a role in the movement as well. Students need to learn that the movement was not only led by men, but that women played a crucial role in the movement.

Cesar Chavez

Cesar Chavez is the one that is known as the leader of The United Farm Workers Movement. Cesar Chavez was born in Yuma, Arizona in 1927. Like many families during the Depression, they moved to California. His family were farm workers and moved from harvest to harvest. Cesar attended school up until the 8th grade.⁴ In the early 1940s, the family moved to Delano, California. In 1946, he joined the Navy and after two years of service, he returned to Delano and married his high school sweetheart. After this, they moved to San Jose, California. It was in San Jose, that he learned about the writings of Saint Francis and Gandhi from a local priest. From these readings he learned about the idea that nonviolence can be an active force for change.⁵ These ideas can be seen in his later work in the United Farm Workers Movement. In 1953, Chavez became a member of the Community Service Organization (CSO). The organization played a key role in teaching Chavez how to organize and deal with social problems. He became the president of CSO and when he requested to organize farm workers in 1962 and his request was denied. He resigned and returned to Delano.⁶

Between 1962 to 1965, Chavez traveled throughout the state of California talking to farm workers. He started a new organization, the National Farm Workers Association (NFWA) and used the model of community building that he has learned at CSO. Chavez was intentional with the naming of the NFWA; he did not want to call it a union due to the many failed attempts of creating agricultural unions.⁷ However, in 1965, things changed. The Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee (AWOC) went on strike when the Delano grape growers cut their pay rates during the harvest. Chavez and the NFWA joined the cause and quickly became the leader. Under Chavez’s leadership, it was about nonviolent tactics. The focus shifted to the cities where grapes were sold. Many supporters of the movement talked to consumers outside of grocery stores and asked them not to buy grapes. Over 13 million American supported the Delano grape boycott and the pressure from the boycott was too much. In 1969, the Delano growers signed historic contracts with the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee (UFWOC), which was later renamed to the United Farm Workers of America (AFW).⁸ In 1968, Cesar Chavez emerged in the political scene when Robert Kennedy visited Delano when Chavez ended his fast. After this encounter, Chavez committed the UFWOC to campaign for Kennedy in the California primary. It was thanks to Chavez and the UFWOC that Kennedy won the state’s primary.⁹ Due to his efforts with Kennedy, the

UFWOC became a political force demonstrating to the state of California and the country that Mexican Americans could create political change.¹⁰

As the UFWOC's political force was beginning, there were major setbacks with the farm workers. When the Delano grape farm workers' contracts expired in 1972, the growers sought out another, more powerful union, and signed contracts with them. This rolled back all the UFW's gains.¹¹ The UFW responded with strikes that left many people in jail and many of these strikes turned violent. Chavez then looked for a political solution. He supported Brown's bid for governor of California and in return, he engineered the nation's first law giving farmworkers the right to union elections. The California Agricultural Labor Relations Act of 1975 gave the UFW an overwhelming number of victories. The UFW had given up the boycott in exchange for union elections.¹² Chavez learned that relying on the law was not as effective as growers started to use the law to their benefit by delaying the signing of contracts. After the early successes of the law, Chavez pulled from organizing and traveled to promote awareness to the struggles of the farmworkers.¹³

Dolores Huerta

Dolores Huerta was born in Dawson, New Mexico in 1930. Her parents divorced in the mid 1930s and her mother raised her in the diverse community of Stockton, California. Dolores' parents became successful after this move; her mother became the successful owner of a hotel and restaurant in California and in New Mexico, her father became a union activist and an elected official.¹⁴ She was raised differently than many girls of the time. She was encouraged to foster her interests and self-confidence. Although she lived in a diverse town, that did not stop her from feeling discrimination in high school. Due to the discrimination, she experienced, she joined the women's club, El Comité Honorífico, which focused on celebrating Mexican holidays.¹⁵ She married her first husband right after high school in 1950. The marriage ended years later, and with the support of her mother providing childcare for her three children, Huerta attended Stockton Junior College to get her teaching credentials. When she began teaching, she noticed that her young migrant students often came to school without shoes. It was here that she began to think about how to address the issues outside of the classroom to improve her students' lives.¹⁶

In 1955, the Community Service Organization (CSO) came to Stockton to recruit potential organizers. At the time, she was married to her second husband and was hesitant to become involved due to some of the communist politics of the organization. She was interested in the issues the CSO was addressing and became the cofounder of the Stockton chapter of the CSO in 1955.¹⁷ In the late 1950s, she became a member of the Agricultural Workers Association (AWA) and the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee (AWOC). In 1961, she turned to lobbying for legislation that would recognize the rights of Spanish-speaking and poor workers and their families. Many of the bills she advocated were passed and made into law.¹⁸ When Cesar Chavez resigned from CSO in 1962, Huerta followed him to Delano and co-founded the National Farm Worker's Association (NFWA). During the Delano grape strike, she was elected as the first vice-president of the United Farm Workers (UFW) and became the most vocal and visible woman of the movement. Huerta was a key figure during the Delano grape strike where she regularly gave speeches at rallies and was a contract negotiator.¹⁹ The skills that she gained as an organizer were recognized when the UFW supported Robert Kennedy's campaign for president. She became active in the Democratic Party and is still active today.²⁰

Huerta's feminism is reflected in her stance on issues regarding women farmworkers and their families. She believed that Mexican American farmworker women were the decision makers within the family on whether they supported the union.²¹ To Huerta, the woman farmworker developed strength from her ability to maintain

a family unit under the conditions that required her to rely on older children for childcare or pack up the family to follow seasonal migrations. The presence of women and children fortified the UFW's philosophy of nonviolence.²² She started the Dolores Huerta Foundation after winning a lawsuit with the city of San Francisco which aims to train potential organizers in low-income communities of color. Her activism of labor, support for women, the poor, racial minorities and working people has gotten her notices and received several awards.²³

Celebrities and Activism

Celebrities are influencers in society. Many people want to be like them and support them on social media or by attending their concerts. Celebrities are role models for our students and many of them look up to them. While there are Latinx celebrities that are well-known in the United States, Selena, Jennifer Lopez, and Marc Anthony to name a few. This unit will focus on two celebrities that are not as well known to Generation Z, Celia Cruz and Jorge Ramos. Many Latinx students might be familiar with Jorge Ramos who might appear on their television screens in their living rooms, but many might not be familiar with Celia Cruz, who passed away in 2003. These two figures are not just celebrities, but they have both been active in social causes. Celia Cruz was an active critique of Fidel Castro and the Cuban dictatorship. Jorge Ramos became famous as a newscaster for Univision (An American Spanish language television network), but became famous for using his platform to advocate for Latinx immigrants and took a strong stand against Donald Trump in the White House Press Briefings. There are other Latinx celebrities, like Lin-Manuel Miranda, Bad Bunny, Eva Longoria, and John Leguizamo, who use their platform to advocate for the Latinx community and the social issues that affect their community. Celebrities are not just people who are famous, they are also passionate about social causes.

Celia Cruz

Celia Cruz was born around 1924, the exact year of her birth is not known. As a child, her family noticed her talent for singing and encouraged her to pursue singing. She participated in amateur hours on radio stations in the 1930s and by the 1940s she was well known in Havana.²⁴ She got her first major break when she was asked to join the famous Cuban conjunto, La Sonora Matancera. For the next 10 years, she would record hit after hit with the group. The group was featured in Havana's famous nightclubs and traveled throughout the Caribbean and the United States.²⁵

In 1959, shortly after the Cuban revolution, Celia Cruz moved to Mexico with La Sonora Matancera while they were on tour. They were exiled by Fidel Castro's regime and not allowed to return to Cuba. During the 1960s and 1970s, she continued to perform with the Sonora Matancera but began associating with timbalero, Tito Puente and recorded a couple of songs that went unnoticed.²⁶ In 1962, Celia Cruz tried to go back to Cuba to bury her mother but was famously denied by Fidel Castro to enter the country. It was then that she decided that she would not return to Cuba under Fidel Castro's regime.²⁷ At the time, Celia was Cuba's most famous artist, and it would have been convenient for the government to have her on their side. While Celia did not get political, she did not shy away from giving her opinion about the Castro Regime. Celia had met Fidel Castro on two occasions; both times happened before the Cuban Revolutions. The first time was at a party she was playing. Everyone stood up and went to Fidel Castro, but Celia stayed with the pianist at the piano because she did not like him. On the second occasion, she was playing at Teatro Blanquita and Fidel Castro was in the first row. Everyone wanted her to dedicate a song to him, and her response was that she did not bring the music. She didn't bow to Castro, and she sang to the right and he was sitting to the left.²⁸ She showed her disdain for him, but her music was never political, but she often alluded to her dislike of him in her

performances and her demonstration for her love of Cuba.

In the 1970s she became involved in the New York Salsa Boom and recorded many songs with Johnny Pacheco, Willie Colón, and La Sonora Ponceña. By 1988, she had recorded multiple albums and finally earned a Grammy.²⁹ After winning her first Grammy, she was awarded a star on Hollywood's Walk of Fame, received honorary doctorates from Florida International University and Yale University and won many other awards and recognitions. She released hit songs like *Azucar Negra* (Black sugar) and *La Negra Tiene Tumbao* (The Black Woman Has a Drum) which are examples of music where she spotlights Afro Latinx women.³⁰

In 1999, 30 years after she left, she returned to Cuba in Guantanamo to perform for American Troops. She made a later trip, and these performances were the closest she got to returning home. In the end, she never returned to Cuba. During these trips she grabbed a handful of Cuban soil and kept in a jar until her death: it is buried with her. Celia died in 2003.³¹ Celia represented more than just the AfroLatinx community, she has accidentally become a political figure and became a symbol for a free Cuba. Everywhere she went, she the exiles' flag of free Cuba.

Celia Cruz is one of the most recognized Afro-Latina artists and Salsa artists, which was dominated by men. To honor her legacy after her death, a telenovela, *Celia*, was created to commemorate her life and her legacy. She represented the Cuban exile: a poor black woman who left Cuba and conquered the world with her music.

Jorge Ramos

Jorge Ramos is a journalist who is well known thanks to his show on Univision. Jorge Ramos was born in 1958 to a lower middle-class family in Mexico City. He attended a Catholic school, and it was there that he discovered his passion for soccer and sports.³² He entered the Centro Deportivo Olimpico Mexicano (the Mexican Olympic Training School) and was not as talented as other athletes at the time, but he wrote a convincing letter to the Olympic Committee and was given a spot. Once he was enrolled, he had a minor setback and had to stop training for the Olympics.³³ Jorge then turned to his academics and attended Universidad Iberoamericano in Mexico City. It was here that he began to study communications and psychology. He knew that he did not want to go into journalism, but he would graduate with a bachelor's degree with honors in communication in 1981.³⁴ He later attended the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) from 1983-84 and earned a professional designation in journalism. He also attended the University of Miami from 1993-95 and earned a master's degree in international studies.³⁵

After graduating from the Universidad Iberoamericano, he took a part-time job in the newsroom of a local radio station. He was surprised that the work appealed to him. He got a minor break in 1981 when there was an assassination attempt on President Reagan.³⁶ He was the only journalist in the office who had command of the English language and a passport and visa that allowed him to travel to the United States. After this trip, he got his first big break and became an investigative journalist for Televisa. He became disillusioned with the job because Televisa and the Mexican government censored his reports on official corruption and abuses of power.³⁷ After experiencing censorship, Ramos decided to leave Mexico and move to the United States where he began working for a Spanish-language television station in Los Angeles. He had his own news show that caught the attention of 2 executives from the Spanish International Network (SIN) (would later be known as Univision). Ramos became the face of *Noticiero Univision* along with Maria Elena Salinas and became one of the most famous anchors and most influential Latinos in the United States.³⁸

Ramos is passionate about issues that affect the Latino community due to his experiences of censorship. He

uses his platform to highlight the struggles of immigrants in the United States. Jorge Ramos challenges the people he interviews to get authentic answers. In recent times, Ramos challenged political figures like Donald Trump and was barred from entering the White House briefings during Trump's presidency.³⁹ Ramos was an active critic of the Trump presidency due to the President's anti-immigrant policies. Jorge Ramos is an excellent example of someone who uses their voice for change.

Athletes and Activism

Athletes (not all) have been involved in activism in some shape throughout their careers and even after. When we think of Latinx athletes, most people think of Baseball players. The MLB (Major League Baseball) is notoriously known for recruiting Latinx players to the league. We can see this in ESPN's 30 for 30 series, *Fernando Nation*, *Brothers in Exile*, and *the Dominican Dream*. These three episodes of 30 for 30 demonstrate how the MLB recruits and retains their Latinx players. For this unit, I will focus on two baseball athletes that have not only had a profound influence in the game of baseball but have also been involved in activism. I hope students note that we are focusing on only male, baseball players. There are other Latinx athletes, for example, Carmelo Anthony and Devin Booker in the NBA (National Basketball Association). I want students to note the absence of women athletes. The only woman athlete who came up in my research was Laurie Hernandez, a well-known gymnast for the U.S. Olympic team. There are Latinx women athletes, they are just not well known. A goal is for students to research Latinx women athletes and share their biographies with their peers. Athletes are not just bound to their sports; they always find a way to make a change in their communities.

Roberto Clemente

Roberto Clemente was a Puerto Rican baseball player who played for the Pittsburgh Pirates which led him to be inducted in baseball's Hall of Fame. He was a proud Puerto Rican and used his platform for charity in Pittsburgh, Puerto Rico, and many other Latin American countries.⁴⁰ He set the standards for many baseball players regarding stats but also in charitable work.

Clemente was born in 1934 in Carolina, Puerto Rico. He took an affinity for baseball at an early age. At the age of 18 he signed Santurce in the Puerto Rican Winter League. He soon caught the attention of Brooklyn Dodgers and was signed as a "bonus baby" and spent his first professional year (1954) with the Brooklyn's minor-league affiliate in Montreal.⁴¹ After the Dodgers failed to elevate him to the big leagues, the Pittsburgh Pirates drafted him after the 1954 season. He was the first Latin American to accumulate 3,000 hits and his powerful throwing arm were what left a mark on baseball history.⁴² He also made history in all 14 World Series games he played in 1960 and 1971 and he was named the Season's Most Valuable Player and the World Series Most Valuable Player.⁴³

His time in the MLB was not smooth as he encountered many challenges that distinguished himself from other Afro-Latinos, whose only opportunity to play in the United States was in the Negro League.⁴⁴ When Clemente joined the Major League, they had only been desegregated for 8 years and not only did he have to deal with being Black, but he also had to deal with racism for being Puerto Rican. He always spoke frankly to the press and had to deal with their treatment who accosted him for being Black and Puerto Rican.⁴⁵ In the end, Clemente believed he did not need the approval of the press to play; he played for the fans. He felt a personal responsibility to the fans and as a Puerto Rican and Black it motivated how he played and guided his off-the-field activities.⁴⁶

Off the field, Clemente worked hard to help the less fortunate and set a model for his colleagues in charitable activities and generosity. He died in 1972 en route to Nicaragua with relief supplies for earthquake victims.⁴⁷ In 1972, the MLB renamed the commissioner award, the Roberto Clemente Award, and the Puerto Rican and Latinx communities in the United States have commemorated Clemente by renaming schools after him.⁴⁸

What made Clemente unique was not only his dedication to the sport of baseball, but his work off the field. Clemente was one of the first baseball players to do charity work outside of work. He faced double racism due to being black and Puerto Rican, but that did not stop him from playing the game of baseball or doing charity work. He paved the way for many Latino baseball players for years to come and showed the country that athletes could do more than just play a sport.

David Ortiz

David Ortiz or “Big Papi” is a Dominican former baseball player with the Boston Red Sox. Ortiz was born in the Dominican Republic in 1975. He played baseball while attending school and caught the attention of the Seattle Mariners who signed him in 1992, just 10 days after his 17th birthday. He made his debut in 1994 for the Mariners of the Arizona League. He then moved to their Midwest team in Wisconsin.⁴⁹ While he played well there, he was traded to the Minnesota Twins in 1996. He made his debut with the Minnesota Twins in 1997 and was there until 2002 when he was let go as a cost-cutting move after the Twins were unable to trade him.⁵⁰

After his release from the Twins, David Ortiz had an encounter with Pedro Martínez at a restaurant in the Dominican Republic. Martínez was playing for the Boston Red Sox at the time and made a few calls and David Ortiz signed with the Red Sox as a free agent.⁵¹ Ortiz was successful with the Red Sox becoming one of their best players, winning a World Series and earning the Roberto Clemente Award. Ortiz would stay with the Red Sox until he retired in 2016.⁵² Ortiz founded the David Ortiz Children’s Fund, which supports a range of his favorites causes to help children from Boston to the Dominican Republic.⁵³ Through this foundation, he can do charity work for the global community than just be an athlete.

The Boston Red Sox are known to have had racial issues in its organization. They were notorious for not signing Colored players. The Boston Red Sox were the last team in the MLB to be fully integrated and it happened in 1959, 12 years after Jackie Robinson became the 1st African American to play in the MLB.⁵⁴ Since then, the Boston Red Sox management have worked to get rid of their racist image. The Red Sox took the lead in pushing to have the Congressional Gold Medal awarded to Jackie Robinson posthumously in 2005 and established an annual birthday tribute to Jackie Robinson.⁵⁵ It is astounding what the Red Sox have do get rid of the racist image they once had.

In 2013 during the Boston bombing, many of the players, including Ortiz, were shocked. During the first game after the bombing, Ortiz was rebounding from an injury and gave an emotional speech that brought the city together.⁵⁶ It was at this moment that Ortiz demonstrated that he was not just an athlete, but he was part of the community in the city he played for. It was phenomenal to see a city and an MLB with a racist past come together and embrace Ortiz as one of their own. David Ortiz lived in Boston until recently and now resides in Miami, Florida.⁵⁷ While David Ortiz may not live in Boston anymore, the city of Boston and the Boston Red Sox, who were notorious for being racist, made a Dominican Black man an honorary Bostonian.

Teaching Strategies

As a native Spanish speaker, Spanish is taught differently at home than in a classroom. When taking Spanish classes, I learned from the dominant instructional model which was the formal/structural approach to foreign languages, with a heavy emphasis on vocabulary drill, grammar, and conjugation. Foreign language teachers all had experience abroad and would add an element of culture to their lessons. For heritage speakers, Spanish classes are not easy for them; they are to an extent, but many forget that heritage speakers do not learn grammar at home. Heritage speakers do not learn about their heritage in the history classroom and often do not learn about it at home. For this Heritage Spanish course, we will be using teaching strategies that students have encountered in their History and English courses.

Inquiry Based Learning

Inquiry Based Learning is another way to get students curious about learning. This strategy allows students to analyze primary and secondary sources for the lesson. This can be used as a substitution for Direct Instruction, where the teacher is lecturing and introducing a historical biography. With Inquiry Based Learning, the lesson will not begin with an introduction, instead students will analyze primary and secondary sources along with having the task of answering the guided questions provided by the teacher. This can be modeled during Direct Instruction by the teacher. For this unit, Inquiry Based Learning will be used when introducing the six Latinx biographies.

Peer Teaching, Student Presentations and Whole Class Discussions

Peer Teaching is when students help or teach their peers about an activity or topic. This allows students to learn from each other by explaining their ideas to others. In this unit, students will be creating a children's biography and teaching their peers and an elementary grade class what they have learned. This gives students confidence in their work and allows students to work on their presentation skills.

Student Presentations allows students to share what they have learned not only with their teacher, but also with their peers. This allows students to take pride in the work they have created and builds confidence. Students will present their work twice in this unit, once to their peers and the second time to an elementary school class. These presentations will be using writing pieces and Google Slides. They will share the information they have learned through these presentations.

Whole Class Discussions are part of every classroom. It involves the participation of every student in the classroom. This strategy is used in the beginning and/or ending of the class in order to guide students to a topic or to gather student opinion after an individual/group assignment. Whole class discussions are an excellent way for students to guide the learning process and have input in their education.

Guest Speakers

Guest speakers often provide an outlet for students to learn from someone other than their teacher. In the high school setting, it can sometimes be difficult to schedule guest speakers. I am fortunate enough to have block scheduling at my school. Having guest speakers come present, read, and/or discuss with students is beneficial to their learning. Use the speaker to enhance the material you are covering. A guest speaker conveys current, realistic information and a perspective on a subject that is not available from textbooks."⁵⁸

This is a fantastic way to present primary sources on any given topic. In this unit, there will be guest speakers in my classroom. The guest speakers will be from the Tulsa City-County Library. At the Tulsa City-County Library Hispanic Resource Center, there is a collection of the history of Hispanic people in Oklahoma. Students will be able to hear from the guest speakers about prominent Hispanic people and the role they have had in Oklahoma's history. This will be a great resource for students when they are working on their biographical project.

Online Platforms

COVID-19 has changed the way we teach and distribute materials to students. My school district started with Google Classroom in the Spring 2020, but for the 2019-2020 school year, it was switched to Canvas. Regardless of how the 2020-21 school year begins (virtual or in-person), online platforms are not going away. For this unit, online platforms (Canvas) will be used to upload worksheets, uploading links to sources, and having students submit their work. Canvas is connected to other online platforms like Mango, Ed Puzzle and News ELA. All these platforms are free and can also be connected to Google Classroom. Pear Deck is an interactive tool that allows students to interact and/or give feedback in a variety of ways on Google Slides. JamBoard is an interactive whiteboard with a pen, laser, and sticky notes. Students can interact from their own device and the result is a whiteboard that looks like a collaborative brainstorm on a whiteboard at school.

Classroom Activities

This unit will be implemented in my 12th grade Heritage Spanish I course. The unit will take place over a three-week period in September-October during Hispanic Heritage Month. I am being intentional with the way that figures will be introduced. I will introduce Latinx figures by categories: Social Activists, Celebrities and Athletes. I have one class of Heritage Spanish I and see this class four times a week.

Weeks 1 and 2: I will begin with an introductory lesson using direct instruction to present the six figures the unit focuses on. We will do close readings of diverse types of biographies in class and have students go through the list of Latinx figures and pick their top three. Students will begin research over their top three figures during Week 2 and students will have chosen their figure to write their children's biography by the end of Week 2.

Example Lesson:

Week 1

Monday: Introduce the United Farm Workers Movement and Cesar Chavez using direct instruction.

Wednesday (Block Day- 2-hour period): Continue with the United Farm Workers Movement and do close reading of Dolores Huerta's biographies. Students will be split up into groups and read several types of biographies of Dolores Huerta (these are listed under Resources for Teachers and Students). We will come back as a class and discuss the similarities between a children's biography and a "normal" biography.

Thursday: Visit to the school library with the librarian about how to access biographies in school databases. The librarian will talk about the differences that exist in biographies. Students should pick a Latinx figure

under Social Activists List as one of their three Latinx figures.

Friday: Start class with a Kahoot/GimKit over the United Farm Workers Movement. Introduce celebrities and activism and introduce Celia Cruz. Students have the option of watching episodes of Celia (available on Telemundo's website for free) and answer questions that go with the episodes for extra credit.

Week 2

Monday: Start class with a Kahoot/GimKit over Celia Cruz. Introduce Jorge Ramos and do small close readings of his autobiography. Students will need to pick a Latinx figure under the Celebrities List as one the three Latinx figures they will research.

Wednesday (Block Day- 2-hour period): Introduce both athletes, Roberto Clemente and David Ortiz to students. Students will have class time to pick a Latinx figure from the Athletes list and do research on this figure. By now students will have three Latinx figures to write their children's biography.

Thursday: At the beginning of class students will tell the teacher who they will be writing their children's biography over. I have a small class to where no student will write over the same Latinx figure. After students have chosen their figure, they will write 5-6 facts about this figure. Students will present their facts in the target language. Students will play Guess Who? I will give students a figure and they will have to ask their peers questions to figure out which figure they are. This will give students an opportunity to learn about other Latinx figures in a fun and interactive way.

Friday: Students will use class time to begin their children's biography by conducting research over their chosen figure.

Week 3

This week will focus on students using class time to produce their children's biography. The children's biography will be written and presented in the target language. Students will also present their work to their peers and to students at a local elementary school.

Example Lesson:

Monday: Students will have produced facts to include in their children's biography and share with the teacher. Students will have the opportunity to work on children's biography.

Wednesday (Block Day- 2-hour period): Students will meet with me to see their progress on their children's biography.

Thursday: Students will present their biographies to the class. Instead of presenting to peers, teachers could have a guest speaker come in.

Friday: Visit Dual Language Academy (or any elementary school will work for this) and present children's biographies to 3 classes.

Students will be offered extra credit to participate in the Hispanic Heritage Month Assembly during the historical figure catwalk. They can dress up as the figure and can teach their peers about their Latinx figure.

Resources for Teachers and Students

Ben Brooks *Cuentos Para Niños Que se Atreven a Ser Diferentes* is a terrific book that highlights important men throughout history.

Celia Cruz Novela- All episodes can be viewed on Telemundo's website. This Novela does a wonderful job of humanizing Celia Cruz and her struggles. <https://www.telemundo.com/shows/celia>

Celia Cruz Worksheets- I found these worksheets on Teachers Pay Teachers and love them. You can create your own worksheets to go along with the episodes if you do not want to spend the money. <https://tmdo.co/3jva8214>

Dolores Huerta biographies- These biographies are great for doing close reading of Dolores Huerta. <https://lillibros.com/products/dolores>
<https://www.womenshistory.org/education-resources/biographies/dolores-huerta>
<https://www.goodreads.com/en/book/show/14740980-dolores-huerta>
<https://doloreshuerta.org/doloreshuerta/movie/>

Éne- bé- a - The NBA (National Basketball Association) hosts Latin Nights for the month of March. You can find more information in the following links. <https://bit.ly/3jEoLRo> <https://bit.ly/3rXqo08>
http://www.espn.com/espn/page2/index/_id/7647708

Guess Who? Game Instructions- https://www.educationworld.com/a_lesson/learninggame/learninggame030b.shtml

Irene Cívico y Sergio Parra's *Las Chicas son Guerreras* and *Las Chicas son de Ciencia* are enjoyable books that highlight women in social movements and the sciences.

Jorge Ramos' *Detras de la mascara, Lo que vi: experiencias de un periodista alrededor del mundo*, and *Atravesando fronteras: un periodista en busca de su lugar en el mundo (No Borders: A Journalist's Search for Home)* are Jorge Ramos' autobiographies. These are great to use as an example when showing students distinct types of biographies.

Lists of Activists, Celebrities and Athletes- this is a google sheet that I created that will be updated regularly with Latinx figures. <https://bit.ly/3IFTaBs>

Pedro J. Fernandez 's *Había una vez mexicanas que hicieron historia* and *Había una vez mexicanas que hicieron historia 2* are books that teach students of the impact that Mexican women have not only in Mexico, but around the world.

The United Farm Workers Movement is the movement/union that was started by Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta. Understanding the history of the United Farm Workers Movement is essential when you are presenting Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta. <https://ufw.org/> <http://www.fightinthefields.net/> <https://bit.ly/3xvNb48>

Appendix on Implementing District Standards

Tulsa Public Schools implements the State of Oklahoma’s World Language Standards throughout the district. Oklahoma’s World Language standards are broad and give room for teachers to be creative and give them flexibility to meet the standards.

Goal 1 Communication; Standard 2 Interpersonal Communication Students can participate with ease and confidence in conversations on familiar topics. Students can usually talk about events and experiences in various time frames. Students can usually describe people, places, and things. Students can handle social interactions in everyday situations, sometimes even when there is an unexpected complication.

Goal 1 Communication; Standard 3 Presentational Communication Students can make presentations in an organized way on school, work, and community topics, and on topics students have researched. Students can make presentations on some events and experiences in various time frames. Students can write briefly about most familiar topics and present information using a series of simple sentences. Students can write on a wide variety of familiar topics using connected sentences. Students can write on topics related to school, work, and community in an organized way. Students can write some simple paragraphs about events and experiences in various time frames.

Goal 2 Culture; Standard 1 Relating Cultural Practices to Perspectives Students can interact using culturally appropriate patterns of behavior in everyday informal and social situations. Students can explain different traditions and customs of the target cultures in simple terms. Students can reflect on cultural experiences and social activities common to a student of similar age in the target cultures. Students can identify and discuss some perspectives typically associated with the target cultures’ belief systems and social, economic, political, and professional practices. Students can discuss and evaluate some commonly held generalizations about the target culture.

Goal 2 Culture; Standard 2 Relating Cultural Products to Perspectives Students can explain the significance of objects, images, symbols, and products of the target cultures. Students can describe major contributions of influential figures, past and current, from the target cultures. Students can identify and explain the influence of the target cultures on the products of my own culture. Students can explain how geography impacts the products of the target cultures. Students can identify the target cultures’ basic perspectives through art, literature, music, and dance.

Goal 3 Connections; Standard 1 Making Connections Students can transfer and apply information and skills from other content areas to experiences related to the target language and cultures. Students can apply information gathered through target language resources to other content areas to supplement learning.

Goal 3 Connections; Standard 2 Acquiring Information and Diverse Perspectives Students can seek out authentic target language sources, analyze the content, and acquire unique information available only through the target language and its cultures. Students can use authentic sources to explore the distinctive perspectives of the target cultures.

Goal 4 Comparisons; Standard 1 Language Comparisons Students can explore the historical and cultural reasons for cognates and borrowed words when applicable. Students can use knowledge of sound and writing systems in the target language to better understand their own. Students can compare identified structural

patterns of the target language to structural patterns in their own language. Students can use appropriate idiomatic expressions in limited settings.

Goal 4 Comparisons; Standard 2 Cultural Comparisons Students can give simple descriptions of the similarities and differences in verbal and nonverbal behavior between cultures. Students can give basic descriptions of cross-cultural similarities and differences in the practices of the target culture. Students can give basic descriptions of cross-cultural similarities and differences in the products of the target culture. Students can give simple descriptions of cross-cultural similarities and differences in the perspectives of the target culture.

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