A Cultural Celebration
(A Guide for Incorporating the Hispanic Culture into the
Elementary Classroom)

An Honors Thesis

by

Emily Maria Neal

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Susan Tancock

Ball State University
Muncie, Indiana

December 2001
Date of graduation: December 16, 2001
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Startling Statistics</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Ethic of Caring</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hearing from Hispanics (Poetry and Personal Interviews)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celebrating through Literary Experiences</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to Plan a Successful Fiesta</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silent Messages</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incorporating Technology</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reproducibles</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Works Cited</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Acknowledgements

First, I must thank Dr. Susan Tancock for accepting the responsibility to advise this thesis project. She was always an encouragement to me, and her flexibility is much appreciated! Secondly, I want to also express appreciation to all of the Hispanic people with whom I spoke during my research. What a beautiful heritage you have! Thank you for sharing it with me! The fourth grade class at Tri Elementary also deserves some praise. Thank you for letting me practice all of my ideas on you. Wasn't the fiesta a fun experience?! I must give my appreciation to Ball State University's Teacher's College and Honor's College. I feel very prepared and excited as I enter the professional world. Finally, many thanks to my family and my fiancé! I know that my combination of procrastination and perfectionism can be harmful to the health of those around me! However, you have supported me throughout a project that I have thoroughly enjoyed creating.
Dear Professional Educator~

The appearance of the elementary classroom has changed much within the past few decades. Bulletin boards come alive with interactive ideas. Learning centers can be found throughout the room. Computers and other technological devices provide other avenues for extended learning. However, probably one of the greatest differences is actually found among the students themselves. They are so varied! Today, our students bring different cultures, different beliefs, and even different languages to our classrooms!

As elementary teachers, it is our goal to meet the needs of each student, but sometimes this can be a challenge. I have created this resource packet for teachers who desire to celebrate and understand the Hispanic culture. I hope that you will gain ideas, factual knowledge, and most importantly, a deeper appreciation for one of the most lovable cultures upon this beautiful planet that we call Earth.

Sincerely,

Miss Emily Neal
The Essence of Teaching

“What a nobler profession than to touch the next generation - to see children hold your understanding in their eyes, your hope in their lives, your world in their hands. In their success, you find your own and so to them you give your all.”

~Author Unknown
Startling Statistics

- According to population projections for the year 2005, the Hispanic population will surpass the African American population to become our nation's largest minority group (http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/cb96-36.html).

- Overall, Chicanos/Latinos are a young group with the median age being 25. In 1990, nearly 70% of all Latinos were under the age of 35 (Gonzalez et al. 203).

- As population shifts are occurring, we still find that only 1 teacher of color for every 10 White teachers is available. According to the Digest of Educational Statistics, only 3% of all school administrators are Hispanic (Reyes et al. 3).

- By age 9, Chicana(o)/Latina(o) students lag behind in the areas of reading, mathematics, and science. Thus, they score lower than White students in all three areas (Tejada et al. 34).

- The poverty rate for Hispanics in 1996 was 29.4%, statistically unchanged from 1995 (http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/cb97-162.html).

- Out of 100 Hispanic high school students, 56 students will drop out of high school, and only 44 students will go on to graduate (Tejada et al. 35).

- Latinos have increased at a rate five times that of non-Hispanic whites, African Americans, and Asians combined (Gonzalez et al. 4).

- Of the estimated 2.3 million limited English proficient students in grades K-12, almost 75% of those students speak Spanish (Slavin and Calderon 4).

- As of 1997, nearly 4 in 10 of the nation's Hispanics were foreign born (http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/cb98-ff.11.html).

- Approximately 75% of limited English proficient students in grades K-12 speak Spanish (Slavin and Calderon 3).
The Ethic of Caring

As professional educators in the 21st century, let us endeavor "to produce acceptable persons—persons who will support worthy institutions, live compassionately, care for older and younger generations, be admired, be trusted, and respected" regardless of ethnicity (76).

Source:

Part One—Summary:
I recently read an interesting article that was based on the “ethic of caring” constructed by Nell Noddings to more adequately instruct the youth of America. To a nation that is struggling with its multicultural environment, Lynn Zimmerman prescribes this “ethic of caring” as the foundation of a curriculum that would serve all nationalities. According to Noddings' theories, caring involves creating authentic relationships with others. In order to develop these relationships, there must be an understanding of and responding to one another’s needs. Zimmerman firmly believes that educators must reconstruct the curriculum for bilingual education so that it will mirror this ethic of caring. Her thesis seems to be that “bilingual education is [actually] a manifestation of Noddings' theory” (72).

Zimmerman creates the background for her thesis by portraying the importance of language in a society, and she delves into the history of American education to uncover the ideologies in the earliest creation of our curriculum. She argues that language is the most important component of a cultural identity. American culture has a history of being monolinguisitic and Anglocentric (72). Therefore, she claims that the disadvantages of minority cultures are fostered by school systems that do not instruct in any other language. Zimmerman explains that compulsory schooling was established to maintain a
homogeneous student body. Today, there are still those who believe that bilingual education creates disunity among its recipients. However, the author provides various examples to remonstrate that there is an underlying curriculum that devalues all minority cultures.

Zimmerman explains the different types of bilingual programs throughout America. She differentiates between the submersion method and the separatist method. She attributes the success of any bilingual program to the level of quality within that program. In other words, she is not advocating one particular method. Instead, she is urging fellow educators and administrators to take the responsibility to create such quality programs. Zimmerman reveals her ideal bilingual education program as one that would produce students fluent in both English and their native language. In this ideal program, the students would feel that their dual languages and dual cultures were valued.

Critical Issues of this Article

According to the author, there must be a transformation in bilingual education and its foundation must be “the ethic of caring.” She reasons that the American image has changed, so its ideologies must follow this same pattern of change. Therefore, English-only education is simply inadequate in the twenty-first century. The bilingual curriculum should find its stability in the ethic of caring for the growth and development of the individual student. The children should value both of their languages as well as both of their cultures.

Part Two—Critique:

The author of this article seems to feel that the bilingual curriculums of America are actually destructive forces working to oppress those in the minority race. Zimmerman has researched the history of public, compulsory education, and it appears to her that the American education system was constructed to preserve Anglo-American culture and its English language. Throughout history, this ideal has remained prevalent in our culture. For example, Zimmerman documented a psychologist, Judith Krugman, who introduced the concept of cultural deprivation. This theory simply stated that minorities are not genetically inferior... just culturally inferior. Zimmerman traces statements, theories, and practices
down through the history of American education that displays only strict assimilation into the majority culture. Therefore, a hidden curriculum has been fabricated that devalues minority cultures and accepts the minority only when they embrace the ideology of the majority.

Zimmerman translated the issues of compulsory schooling. In her studies, she found that at the immigrant children in the early 1900's became a part of a self-fulfilling prophecy. The educators did not feel that education should be "wasted" on these children because they were only allowed low-paying jobs in society. Zimmerman portrays the unfortunate ideal that children will live up to the expectations of their instructors. Throughout this article, Zimmerman translates historical facts to support her position on this topic.

At the end of the article, Zimmerman gives specific examples that go against the opponents of bilingual education. For example, many argue that minorities must become fluent in English to reach a desired rung on the economic ladder. Zimmerman expresses that the economic scene in America is extremely diversified already and will continue in that direction. The workplace of American is no longer English-only. Other opponents say that children may feel unresolved internal conflicts if they are expected to be bicultural. However, Zimmerman states that bilingual education will provide an environment that will actually create a "healthy blend of the home culture and the majority culture" (75). The author provides many responses to the arguments of opponents, but these seemed to be two of the most substantial concepts.

It did not seem to me that Zimmerman put her reasons for change on any type of continuum. She simply stated various views of the opponents, and then she tried to disprove these views by quoting various studies. However, I infer that Zimmerman's best reason for a caring type of bilingual education is "to produce acceptable persons—persons who will support worthy institutions, live compassionately, care for older and younger generations, be admired, be trusted, and respected" regardless of ethnicity (76).

This article reminded me of John Dewey's writing because she seems to think that learning is almost completely a social process. The author places much emphasis on the dialogue among peers as well as
the dialogue between student and teacher. She also assumes that becoming a multicultural society is a positive phenomenon. She seems to believe that both teachers and students are learners in a school environment. At the end of her article, the author quotes Paolo Friere's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. In his statement, individualism and isolation lead to an inevitable relationship between an oppressor and the oppressed. These entities are in direct conflict with the "pursuit of full humanity," which I understood as a certain unity among all groups of a society.

I think that this author did try to portray the "other side" of the argument, but for most of the counterexamples, she wrote ideas that would lead the reader to question the validity of those counterexamples. For example, she wrote that some educators in the past believed that the brain was only capable to thoroughly know one language fluently. She argued that studies have shown that bilingual students actually have larger, more creative vocabularies than monolingualistic students. She did provide one counterexample that seemed very realistic. She stated that some cultures feel that ideas about ethnicity are best taught within the home environment instead of within the public school system.

I think that the author's facts were very realistic, and it was obvious that she had spent much research on this topic. However, I found some of the same fallacies of logic that I have discovered in Dewey's writings. Because their ideal process of learning is based almost entirely on the social aspect of learning, some of their thoughts are rather idealistic to me. For example, what if the home life of a child is not receptive to this idea of bilingual education? What if they would like to keep their ideals of ethnicity within their own home?

Zimmerman completely believes that a change must come to the American system of public education in the dealings with bilingual students. She wants these students to be fluent in both their native language as well as English. She also believes that all students and parents should feel comfortable being part of the school community. She is asking her readers use the ethic of caring to make these changes possible. She wants educators to do more than "train the intellect." She desires that school be a place of authentic, respectful relationships.
Part Three—Response

The ethic of caring that Noddings conveys is very powerful. The picture that this ethic paints is aesthetically beautiful, but I'm afraid that it is not completely realistic. I do not believe in the “banking method” of education, but I realize that the learning of some concepts must take place in the minds of our students. In other words, I believe that there must be a balance between the training of the intellect and the training of the heart. I suppose this is an assumption on my own part, for I feel that when one deals with the ideas of culture, one is dealing with one’s own heart. As I begin my teaching career, I will be working to find that equilibrium between educating the minds and the hearts of the children who are put in my care.

I worked as an English as a Second Language tutor in The Learning Center at Ball State, so I was constantly in communication with those of a minority race. I found that at the college level there are many levels of minority students. Some of them really desire to become Americanized while others simply want to learn enough English to insure employment. I encouraged them to communicate with me about their cultures, but I also invited them to learn about American culture. In the end, I found that each client decides how much American culture he/she wants to learn and how much native culture he/she wants to share. I felt honored to be the individual to open this line of communication, but I have realized my inability to bridge all of their cultural gaps.

I think that there are many humanitarian ideas that can be taken from this article. I want to combine some of these techniques with actual successful activities to bring other cultures to life in the classroom. Although I do not think that we, as professional educators, should be expected to be the savior for all of the minority students in our classroom, we must do our best to create a community-like feeling in our own classrooms. I think that the most powerful of Zimmerman’s statements was that students must be taught that there is not “right” way to talk or a “right” life one’s life.
Hearing from Hispanics
(Poetry and Personal Interviews)
A Puerto Rican Girl’s
Sentimental Education
By Johanna Vega

Your daughter didn’t pass
the English reading test in second
grade.
Left back like a donkey
or another number on
the red, white, and blue
statistical roster.

Mrs. Rivera,
The section & projects
breed social dilemmas

Or was it

Ms. Hernandez,
My records tell me your name is
Fernandez.

Systematic, elementary school
oppression, hippie teachers, granola
breaks
in the classroom.

A low-income prodigy child
Caught in the American cross fire,
between SATs and insular-
community vocabulary.
Mami and Papi told me to pray in
Spanish,

read the scriptures, mi nina.
Memories choke my throat,
stuttering in English, crying
into my grammar textbook.
Mental deficits, development crises
and bowlegged walks to the school
nurse.

Take the reading test over,
at the psychiatrist’s office.
Diagnosis: psychedelic,
psycholinguistic
genius survives the warring
factions
of cultural schizophrenia.

Like Charlie Brown vs. Cantinflas
Like the Beatles vs. Menudo.
Like myself divided into myself
Like I’m a movie in subtitles.

Now my mind’s tied up.
Hostage in a desert of hope and
opportunity.
Dyslexic like Albert Einstein and
Prolific like Cervantes’ ego in
prison.
Thesis Interview Questions
Interviewee: Ms. Jamise A. Kafoure
Occupation: Spanish Teacher at Lawrence Central High School
Date: May 20, 2001

- What do you think are some of the major cultural differences between people with Hispanic descent and those without?
  Answer: “People of Hispanic descent are much more open about displaying affection and caring about each other. Also, family closeness is much more pronounced, which expands to extended family.”

- Did you ever have any difficulties with elementary teacher because of cultural differences? If so, what were these difficulties?
  Answer: “No.”

- How can teachers in the lower elementary grades create a curriculum and a classroom that embraces the Hispanic culture? Would you advise different ideas for teachers in the upper elementary grades?
  Answers with a smile: “AWARENESS of other cultures is the key...the earlier, the better! Country studies, holidays, and traditions are some of the possible ways to encourage awareness. Also, invite natives of the culture to speak—especially parents and relatives of elementary students. Of course, food always helps as well!”

- How would you advise that elementary teachers communicate and bond with Hispanic parents so that there is a relationship between the home and the school?
  Answer: “Communicate often! Don’t just wait for a problem to discuss. Hispanics love to feel like they are valued and accepted by their community.”

- What are some of the feelings that children of Hispanic descent experience as they attend American public schools?
  Answer: “My high school students tell me that they feel somewhat ‘shut out’ and ‘unwelcomed’ by their American peers. They tend to ‘stick by themselves’ and are rarely invited to join social groups.”

- If you have any experiences or ideas that you would like to share with aspiring elementary educators about the Hispanic culture, please use this time to express those ideas or concerns.
  Answer: “This is being somewhat repetitive, but I cannot emphasize enough the importance of AWARENESS and ACCEPTANCE of cultural differences, and this must begin as EARLY as possible as the students are exposed to their diverse environment. Also, a clarification of the word “different” must be made and careful attention to the fact that it is not interpreted as lower class or below normal standards. Sometimes, and even often, we avoid or misjudge that which we don’t understand. Therefore, students must be given every possible opportunity to embrace and understand their Hispanic and OTHER culturally diverse classmates and community members.”
Describe your background and your occupation.
Answer: “I am a Colombian/American. I was born in New Jersey in 1972. My parents were both born in Medellin, Colombia. I speak, read, and write Spanish.”

What are some differences that you have noticed between American students and Hispanic students?
Answer: “Hispanic students seem to be more culturally aware than the average American students. They are very inwardly proud of their ethnicity. Hispanic students are very kind to one another. They enjoy helping each other, and they do not seem nearly as interested in cliches as American students are. Another difference might be that American students seem more serious than Hispanic students are. In Latin America, children are encouraged to have fun! They are expected to fully enjoy their childhood years. Hispanic young people are always laughing and joking. Sometimes, this is difficult to explain to American adults, especially teachers. However, Americans must respect that Hispanic young people are cultured to be light-hearted and fun-loving.”

Are there other cultural differences that we, as American educators, should take into consideration?
Answer: “You must remember that although English is widely used, it is still a very difficult language to learn. There are so many inconsistencies! For those students who are new to the country, they will be in complete culture shock. They will be amazed by how overweight many people are and how tall people are! They will be surprised that American children and young people tend to literally throw things around. This is considered rude in Latin America. Younger children will not understand the concept of ‘time out’ because this is not used in Latin America. Parental discipline is harsher in Latin American countries than in American. Finally, many times children will be surprised because everything is easily accessible in the United States. If you want it, you can get it.”

How can elementary teachers help Hispanic students and celebrate their culture?
Answer: “Respect their culture! Simply teaching American children about the Hispanic culture can portray this respect. Share Hispanic foods, celebrations, and activities with your students. As trite as it may sound, give every student a chance! Understand that just because they do not speak English this does not mean that they are not smart. I always say, ‘Put yourself in their position. How would you react if no one spoke your language?’ Above all, teachers must have patience with these students!”
Are there any other specific celebrations or festivities that you would want to share with me?

Answer: "I have learned that the people in Latin America actually do live, eat, and breathe soccer. They are true fans! Their devotion goes beyond that of any American sport. They show so much emotion when their teams win or lose. Upon a loss, many people will cry! However, if their team wins, they will yell, shout, jump, and rejoice in a large group."

"In the Hispanic mind, family, school, and fun take precedence over any job. When they leave the job, the stresses of the job remain there. Evening times and weekends are reserved for family and fun. Everyone attends church on Sunday morning, and the remainder of the day is family time. In Colombia, oftentimes, a pig is killed and roasted right in front of everyone! The children run around playfully, and the adults sit around the fire and talk about soccer and the world news. Other times, people will go horseback riding on Sunday afternoons."
Thesis Interview Questions
Interviewee: Senora Myra McIntyre
Occupation: Spanish Teacher at New Castle Chrysler High School
Date: May 26, 2001

What do you think are some of the major cultural differences between people with Hispanic descent and those without?
Answer: "American parents must understand that 'family life' among Hispanic children will be of utmost importance. It will take precedence over any school function. This is not because Hispanics do not value education. It is simply a cultural priority. Family is first. I think that American teachers should even allow themselves to be immersed in an atmosphere of Hispanics in order to appreciate it."

Did you ever have any difficulties with elementary teachers because of cultural differences? If so, what were these difficulties?"
Senora McIntyre laughs and answers: "Oh yes! Those small, seemingly insignificant cultural differences can sometimes cause problems. For example, the grading system can be very threatening to Hispanic parents. Some of them may have no idea what the grading scale even means! They are wondering, 'What is an 87%? What does a C mean?' If the teacher doesn't feel comfortable explaining things like the grading system, there must be a mediator!"

"Hispanics feel very differently about weather patterns than Americans do. They are very serious about the weather and what it means. There is even a term in the Spanish language that means 'the air of rain.' This 'air of rain' could even cause parents of Hispanic children to keep their child at home for the day. In some Hispanic countries, rainy days are even celebrated!"

How can teachers in the lower elementary grades create a curriculum and a classroom that embraces the Hispanic culture? Would you advise different ideas for teachers in the upper elementary grades?
Answer: "Regardless of the grade level, the appreciation of cultural differences must be taught on a daily basis. In response to a cultural difference, a student might say, 'That's WEIRD!' It is the responsibility of the teacher to say, 'Isn't that GREAT that we are so different! What a boring world it would be if we were all alike!' This is especially important during the middle school years because students at this age are formulating judgements that will stay with them for years to come. I really think that cultural appreciation is more of an attitude than it is a series of events. Teachers must be models of that behavior."

How would you advise that elementary teachers communicate and bond with Hispanic parents so that there is a relationship between the home and the school?
Answer: "I think that several weeks before school begins, there should be an openhouse especially for parents of various cultures. I think that this would increase the respect for the school and decrease any insecurities that these parents might have. In this way, the parents would feel catered to. Above all, availability is the key! Teachers must let parents know that their profession is one of service to the community. Teachers need to
create a variety of avenues for availability. Parents should feel comfortable to approach or contact the teacher at any time throughout the semester. Teachers should also encourage questions of any kind. The cliché is often quoted, 'The only dumb question is the one that is not asked,' but this concept should be reiterated time and time again to culturally diverse parents.

What are some of the feelings that children of Hispanic descent experience as they attend American public schools?
Answer: "Well, I will just speak from my own personal experience. I know that I felt anxiety. I felt the pressure, as all students do, to 'fit in.' However, not only did I have to worry about fitting into a particular clique, I had to worry about fitting into the entire culture. As I said before, I found this anxiety to be especially hard to deal with during the junior high years. In the haze of high school, I also felt pride concerning my ethnicity. I knew that I was different, and in a sense, that made me very proud!"

If you have any experiences or ideas that you would like to share with aspiring elementary educators about the Hispanic culture, please use this time to express those ideas or concerns.
Answer: "I think that the issue of standardized testing is one of major concern especially for students who are experiencing the cultural and literacy barriers. In eighth grade, I took my first standardized test, and I was clueless as to how to even fill one out! When I received my scores, the results basically told me that I didn't know anything! This was so frustrating, and it, of course, added to my list of insecurities. Although I do not claim to have all of the answers for standardized testing, I really think that during the few first years of language acquisition, it is basically asking the children to perform some type of impossibility."

"The second issue that I would address would be to remind teachers to always remember the importance of prior knowledge. I remember reading the classics in my junior high and high school classes, and many times they really meant very little to me because I didn't have the same prior knowledge that the other students had. I had a different collection of prior knowledge. For example, when I was a teenager, Huckleberry Finn and To Kill a Mockingbird were just simply books to me because I did not understand all of the underlying issues that were addressed in these works of literature. I reread many of the classics after attending college, and it was as if a whole new world had opened up to me."
Thesis Interview Questions
Interviewees: The Romero Family (Senor and Senora Romero, Manuel, and Ricky)
Date: Saturday, November 10, 2001

Background Information
The Romero family is originally from Aguascalientes, Mexico, a city in the center of the country. Senor Romero came to the United States seven years ago, and he obtained work in Alabama in the area of construction. It was in Alabama where he met his present boss, who owns a construction company out of Mount Summit, Indiana. His boss persuaded him to come to New Castle, Indiana to establish his permanent residency. Senor Romero lived in the United States for almost two years before he sent for his family. The Romeros knew no English before coming to this country. When the Romeros came, their sons, Manuel and Ricky were in elementary school. Manuel was enrolled in fourth grade while Ricky was in the second grade. Today, the Romeros are a bilingual family. Senora Romero and the children have been in the United States for five years, and they have adapted very well! Manuel is a freshman at New Castle Chrysler High School. He plays on the varsity soccer team, and he also plays trumpet for the band. Ricky is in the seventh grade at New Castle Middle School. He, too, is involved in soccer and the band. Manuel and Ricky speak English fluently, and Senor and Senora Romero also speak the language quite well.

Why did you decide to come to the United States?
Senora Romero answers, "When we were young, growing up in Mexico, we never thought that we would come to the United States. However, as our boys grew older and we realized the scarcity of jobs in Mexico, we decided that we would come. In Mexico, there are simply not as many opportunities as in this country, and it is more difficult to get good jobs. We did not come because we wanted to leave our culture. We came so that our boys could have the opportunities that are offered here."

How did you feel when you first arrived in the United States? Were you scared or excited?
Senor Romero answers, "I was never scared. I was very excited! Some parts were very difficult though. It is hard for an adult to learn a new language, and it was very difficult for me to be away from my wife and children during those first two years.

I say, "However, you had a goal in mind though, so that made it easier, right?" He smiles, nods heartily, and reiterates, "I was very excited!"

Manuel, on the other hand, remembers his feelings upon arrival in the United States. "I was scared to death!" he states. "I had no idea how they did things here!"

How did this community respond to you?
Senora Romero replies emphatically, "Oh, they were wonderful! When we first came, I remember being in Wal-Mart and people stopping to listen to us speak in Spanish. They were smiling and seemed really happy to hear our language. I had been worried
that people might look down on us because we didn't know English. Instead, this community went out of its way to help us.”

How did the school system help you and your children?

Manuel and Ricky both respond, “We had buddies!” Senora Romero explains, “There were fourth-year Spanish students from the high school who worked with the boys constantly. These teenagers would come to the elementary school during their Peer Facilitators classes, and they would bridge the gap for the boys.”

Manuel states, “We spent most of the first semester in the library working with our high school buddies. I was in the classroom for mathematics because I understood the numerical concepts. In fact, when I came, I was actually ahead of the children here because I had already worked with long division. The teacher would call on me when she knew that I understood what was going on.”

I smile and say, “Your teacher was wise. She was actually making you look good in front of the other students because she was focusing on your strengths.” Manuel nods emphatically, “Exactly! It made me feel good.”

Ricky states, “I had a little more trouble than Manuel because I was two years younger. At first, I was communicating using only symbols and sounds.”

After some conversation, we all decide that although Ricky might have had trouble when he first came to the United States, his young age was actually beneficial for him. He learned alphabetic concepts such as vowels, consonant clusters, and diphthongs at the same age that American students usually do.

What are some of the major cultural differences between the American culture and the Hispanic culture?

Manuel is the first to speak, “Religion is definitely a difference in this country. In Mexico, everyone is Catholic. Here there are such a variety of beliefs within the Protestant faith. For example, there are Baptist, Nazarene, and Methodist. This was really surprising to me because there are very few diversions in Catholicism.”

Senora Romero states, “We had to get used to the idea that we needed to call our friends before going to visit. In Mexico, it’s just not like that. If you want to visit someone, you just go!” She laughed, “This caused some embarrassment at first, but we learned.”

Senor Romero shares, “Hispanics are more affectionate than Americans. They are more comfortable showing their emotions.”

Manuel suddenly smiles, “Dating is a lot different in this country!” Ricky laughs in agreement. Manuel goes on to explain, “In Mexico, the boys like the girls, but they don’t have to choose a particular ‘girlfriend.’ I remember when I would see girls and boys holding hands, I would think, ‘What is going on here?’”
Senor Romero says, "I think that Hispanic dating rules are more traditional and respectful."

Senora Romero spends time sharing the dating customs in Mexico. Dating is done mostly in a group setting until the children are older. The fifteenth birthday for a girl is very important, for that is when she passes from childhood into adulthood. This birthday is called the quinceañera. However, even after that birthday, the girl may not begin dating exclusively for some time. The girls may simply have several close male friends for a while before focusing on one specific boy.

Senor Romero speaks about cultural differences within the family. He shares a beautiful snapshot with me of his extended family. He comes from a family of 11 children, and he states, "We are very close. Talking about them makes me miss them." The boys jump into the conversation, validating their father's remark, "They are the best family!"

It seems to Senor Romero that most Latin American families are closer than American families. He does not understand the American tradition that upon turning 18 years old, children are often encouraged to move away from their parent's home. "Sometimes their parents even kick them out, or the teenagers run away!" he exclaims with a questioning look on his face. He continues, "In Mexico, young people attend a college in the same town that they live or the closest college nearby. They can just live at home, be with their families, and still receive an education. In America, it's just not like that. Parents will send their children across the country, and the children will be happy to go."

We have talked about your positive experiences within this community. Have you had any negative experiences?

At first, no one responds, and then Manuel says, "I think that the only negative thing happened just this past fall during a soccer game. Someone from the opposing team made a racist remark toward me. I was a Mexican and a freshman playing on the varsity team, and I guess that made the guy mad. It was very upsetting to me. I was crying. I didn't know how to handle it because that type of thing had never occurred before."

Senor Romero nods slowly, "I didn't know what had happened. However, Manuel's coach and the Athletic Director of the school came to me immediately. They explained the situation, and they let us know that the problem would be addressed. We felt their complete support. It was still sad though. My son was crying, and I didn't know what to say."

I ask, "What did the school do about the problem?" Manuel explains that there was a lot of communication between the two schools, and the student was eventually dismissed from the team.
How can elementary teachers create a curriculum and a classroom that embraces and celebrates your culture?

“What you are doing right now is so important,” responds Senora Romero. “Communication is so important! We must feel comfortable to share our cultures with one another. It is important that differences are discussed and valued,” she continues.

“I have read many opinions on the best ways to celebrate the Hispanic culture in the classroom. Some say that we should find ways on a daily basis to promote the Spanish culture. Others seem to feel that any effort is a positive move toward appreciation of the culture. Would you be in favor of an activity like a fiesta, or would that be too focused?” I question the Romero family.

“If you taught Spanish concepts every day, you would spoil the Hispanic child! This is America. That child needs to feel that his/her Hispanic culture is appreciated, but the student should not always be the center of attention,” Manuel interjects.

Senor Romero nods agreeing with Manuel’s modest comment, “You should celebrate every culture!”

“I think that having a Spanish fiesta is a perfect way to introduce our customs and our foods! Who doesn’t enjoy a party?” Senora Romero questions with a smile.

“If you are teaching a child who is brand new to the states, I would encourage you to study about that child’s culture and homeland. For example, for that child’s birthday, you could celebrate with piñatas. What a great surprise that would be for the child!” Senora Romero instructs wisely.

I have thoroughly enjoyed talking with each of you! Are there any other helpful hints that you would share with an elementary teacher?

“This may sound dumb, but the teacher needs to be sure that necessities are taken care of. For example, children must be fed, and they must have time to get something to drink. Finally, children need to understand restroom rules,” says Ricky with a smile as the family erupts in laughter.

I chuckle and wait, realizing that there has to be a story behind this comment.

“You see, I was in second grade when I moved here. I had no idea how to communicate, so I just wet my pants!” Ricky explains with a smile.

“I was in fourth grade, so of course, I didn’t do that. However, I would just get up and leave the class. My teacher talked to several of my little buddies who were sitting around me. Whenever I would start to leave, they would stop me and remind me to ask permission.” Manuel adds, laughing.
Finally, each member of the Romero family stresses the importance of communication between the home and the school. They are thankful for the experiences that they had when they first arrived in the United States, and they attribute much of their success to the help that they received from the community and the school system to bridge the cultural divide. Senor and Senora Romero's story is full of determination to become a part of the American culture and a desire to give their children lives of opportunity. Manuel and Ricky are grateful, and daily, they fulfill the age-old American dream.
Volver
By Berta G. Montalvo

Que no vuelvan los ayeres
que se quedan así
en ayer.

Que no vuelvan los sueños malos,
ni los buenos tampoco.

Es mejor que el hoy
alumbre un mañana
que no tenga que volver.

Return
Translated from the Spanish
by Lori M. Carlson

Yesterdays: do not return
remain
in yesteryear.

Bad dreams: do not come back,
nor good dreams either.

Better that today
shine to tomorrow that
will lead us to the future.
Celebrating through
Literary Experiences
Hispanic Books for Elementary Students

Stories

   Reading level: 2.
   This colorful story portrays the classic Hispanic family. As the mother, father, children, and grandparents gather every day for the family meal at two o’clock in the afternoon, the readers learn about the kinship that is so important in the Hispanic culture. Classic Spanish foods, such as *gazpacho* and *empanadas*, are introduced in this story.

   Reading level: 2.
   This humorous, cat-and-mouse story introduces many of the most common conversational terms used in the Spanish language. Because the plot revolves around an invitation to dinner, there are also many of the common food-oriented Spanish terms. In this particular story, two very happy cats invite a family of mice to dinner. Of course, these cats are planning to actually eat the mice for dinner. However, these cats are in for quite a surprise, for when the mice arrive for dinner, they have brought a guest of their own.

   Reading level: 3
   Graciela is overcome with surprise one day when her cat, Pip, begins to speak to her in Spanish. Can this really be happening? Graciela is determined to uncover the secret of her Spanish-speaking kitty. Soto creates a humorous fictitious story that encourages the imagination of the reader. There is a glossary for all of the Spanish words that are used in the text, and there are also footnotes throughout the test that translate the Spanish words.

   Reading level: 4.
   Class elections are here, and fifth grader, Miata Ramirez, is running for president! Unfortunately, she is running against school prankster, Rudy Herrera. Can Miata and her running mate, Ana, find a way to overcome the loud and attention-getting boys? According to the School Library Journal, this story is “a realistic, warm portrayal of a present-day Latino school in California.”
Tales and Legends


This legend of Lucia Zentone, the main character of this tale, is part of the oral history of the Zapotec Indians of Oaxaca, Mexico. Lucia Zentone is a beautiful woman with long, flowing hair, and when she arrives in town, all of nature falls in love with her. However, some of the younger generation disapproves of this wonderful woman. They taunt her and treat her cruelly. Finally, she is driven from the village. Amazingly, the river leaves with her. After many months of draught, the village begins to realize their mistake. As they invite Lucia back and beg for forgiveness, she has compassion on the village. Before she returns to the village, she asks a very important question of the people. It is a question that we must all ask ourselves everyday.


This is the Southwestern version of “The Three Little Pigs.” Through the text and illustrations, the geography, culture, and language of the southwestern United States is evident to the reader.


This is a humorous tale of a rabbit who is constantly outwitting the coyote. This book includes a glossary of the Spanish expressions used in the book. This glossary includes the meanings of the words as well as the transliterations. Therefore, non-Spanish-speaking children can pronounce the words correctly.


This is a traditional tale from Ayutla, Mexico and is very similar to the story, The Tale of Rabbit and Coyote. However, in this particular tale, the little lamb, Borreguita, tricks Coyote again and again. This story includes a small glossary of the Spanish words that are used in the story.


The Cinderella story is common to cultures around the globe. In this particular tale, a hawk blesses the Spanish Cinderella, Arcia, with a shining gold star in the middle of her forehead. However, her envious stepsisters are plagued with donkey ears and green horns growing out of their heads. Arcia is not boastful, but her stepmother and stepsisters are increasingly ruthless. Somehow Arcia maintains a kind attitude, and her star continues to shine. In fact, that star attracts a very special prince so greatly that he comes in search of her. The illustrations of Gloria Osuna Perez and Lucia Angela Perez add a special Hispanic flavor to this rendition of one of the most famous childhood tales.
Holidays


In this book, the reader is able to experience a Hispanic Christmas with Maria and her family. Unfortunately, Maria has misplaced her Mama's precious ring! This is a major problem for Maria especially when she thinks that it is inside one of the tamales! The illustrations portray a beautiful Hispanic family as they celebrate the wonders of the season.


Join eleven-year-old Kristen Lucero and the community of Espanola, New Mexico as they celebrate the nine nights of Las Posadas. Through the photography of Lawrence Migdale, we are able to see exactly how this beautiful ceremony appears in the Hispanic neighborhoods. This year is special for Kristen because she will be playing the part of Mary on one of the nights of Las Posadas!


When his parents and grandparents are late on Christmas Eve, Carlos is called upon to take over his grandfather's role of the innkeeper in the traditional Mexican reenactment of the Nativity, called Las Posadas. The illustrations in this book span entire pages and bring alive one of the oldest and most important Hispanic Christmas traditions.

Heritage


Tomas and his brother, Enrique, love to listen to their grandfather's stories. Papa Grande soon encourages Tomas to go to the local library so that he can learn new stories to share with the family. As Tomas begins to visit the library, he gains a friend. The kind librarian nurtures Tomas' love of reading and introduces him to the many places that books can take us. This book is written in honor of Tomas Rivera, a migrant worker who valued education enough to fight for it. Although this book does not actually have a glossary, the Spanish words are translated within the text.


In this book, the reader travels with Adan to Puerto Rico, the homeland of Adan's parents. During his visit, he learns much about his heritage as he experiences the food, culture, and customs of Puerto Rico. One Puerto Rican custom, in particular, changes Adan's opinion of rainy days forever! This book contains the definitions and the pronunciations of the Spanish words used in the book.


As Carlos and his family travel back across the border to Mexico for the Christmas season, Carlos comes to a touching realization. He begins to understand that his parents valued his future so greatly that they left their home so that he would have "opportunities." Carlos also begins to be thankful for the
combination of those opportunities and his great Mexican heritage. Through the beautifully scripted words and the skillfully drawn illustrations, Bunting and Diaz create a story that reiterates the ancient saying that “home is where the heart is.” Although there is no glossary, the Spanish words are translated within the text.


Because it is too hot to take a nap, little Alicia persuades Mama to tell her the family tale of Rita. The tale paints a picture of a little Mexican girl, Rita, who has a wonderful relationship with her grandfather. He shows her how to play the flute so that the birds would sing along. The little girl and her grandfather worked together to make wooden birdcages, and Grandfather gave Rita a heavy blanket, a serape, to keep her warm at night. At the end of this story, it is revealed that Alicia has a very special connection to little Rita.


Miata has a terrible tendency to lose things, and this time she has really done it! She left her special skirt on the school bus. This skirt belonged to her mother when she was a child in Mexico. Miata needs this skirt to dance the folklorico on Sunday after church. Unfortunately, it is Friday, so Miata will not be going back to school until after the dance! Can Miata and her best friend, Ana, figure out a way to rescue her beautiful skirt before the dance? This is a heart-warming story about the blending of yesterday’s traditions with today’s styles.


This book combines beautiful, authentic illustrations and wisely scripted words to describe the life of one who grew up in Texas, fully surrounded by the Mexican traditions of her family. The author celebrates everyday activities, such as eating watermelons on the front porch, as well as once-a-year activities, such as birthdays. Children will enjoy comparing and contrasting the memories of the author with memories of their own.

❖ Nonfiction


This book is a well-balanced array of colorful photographs, diagrams, maps, and factual information. Whether the student wants to know about the climate, culture, or history of Mexico, this would be a great resource. The author covers a wide variety of topics succinctly yet professionally. This would be a wonderful book to add to your collection if you would like for your students to do small reports on Hispanic countries.


This author provides a complete overview of the country of Cuba. The large, realistic photographs are wonderful additives to the descriptive facts on each page. This book should answer broad questions about the land, food, clothes, work, education, pastimes, language, and celebrations of Cuba. The glossary,
additional references, and the pronunciation guides are nice additives to an already strong nonfiction book.


Who wouldn’t like to visit the beautiful island of Puerto Rico with its sandy beaches and waterfalls? The photographs in this book would encourage anyone to visit this Caribbean country. Although this book does not have an extreme amount of textual detail, it does include enough factual information for a good learning experience.


Mexico is a country rich with history, but it also has an exciting present. This book does a nice job of portraying the two faces of Mexico in a positive manner. The maps and photographs are large and colorful, showing the people, culture, and landforms of this beautiful country.

Poetry


This is a beautiful celebration of motherhood and femininity through the genre of poetry! There are various writers and Hispanic countries represented in this one book. However, the goal of each writer is to express appreciation for the influence of mothers and grandmothers. The illustrations of Paula S. Barragan add a special Hispanic flair to these poems. This is another book that is especially wonderful for bilingual students.


Growing up as a Latino in the United States has both negative and positive repercussions. The writers in this book of poetry understand two cultures, speak two languages, and in essence, have two lives that constantly unite within them. These poems are about families, education, dreams, and failures, and the languages of both Spanish and English flow throughout the entire book. This would be a choice book for sixth grade students as they learn to express deep emotions through the written word.
Guidelines for Selecting Multicultural Children's Literature
By Mei-Yu Lu

1. Positive portrayals of characters with authentic and realistic behaviors, to avoid stereotypes of a particular cultural group
2. Authentic illustrations to enhance the quality of the text
3. Pluralistic themes to foster belief in cultural diversity as a national asset as well as to reflect the changing nature of this country's population
4. Contemporary as well as historical fiction that captures changing trends in the roles played by minority groups in America
5. High literary quality, including strong plots and well-developed characterization
6. Historical accuracy when appropriate
7. Reflections of the cultural values of the characters
8. Settings in the United States that will help readers build an accurate conception of the culturally diverse nature of this country and the legacy of various minority groups

Source: Eric Clearinghouse on Reading English and Communication Bloomington, IN
Publication date: 1998
Lesson Plan Prompts

• Playing with Poetry

Book Selection: Love to Mama: A Tribute to Mothers. Edited by Pat Mora.


Appropriate Grade Level: 3-5

Pre-reading Strategy: Encourage the children to discuss what makes their grandmothers and mothers meaningful. What are some special characteristics that these people have? What are some memories that they have of these members of their family?

Reading Strategy: Share several of the poems from this book. This sharing can be done through a read-aloud, or the teacher can make copies of the poems for the entire class. If the students have copies, they may read the poems with partners. Some especially useful poems from this particular book might be "Las Abuelitas," "My Grandma Is Like a Flowering Cactus," "My Grandmother Had One Good Coat," or "Growing Up."

Post-reading Strategy: The class should spend time reflecting on the feelings and emotions that were portrayed through the poetry. Finally, the children can write their own acrostic poems using either the name of a particular relative, such as "Grandpa Jess," or the children could simply use the title of a relative, such as "Grandmother."

My Own Experience: I read several of these poems aloud to my class on the day that grandparents were visiting the school for lunch. The students were able to create their poems specifically for their grandparents. When the grandparents arrived, my students proudly gave their poems to them! This activity allowed the students to express themselves through writing, and the grandparents left feeling very loved and appreciated.
• Seeing Cinderella in a New Way


Appropriate Grade Level: 3-6

Pre-reading Strategy: Discuss the fairy tale genre. The children may even try to list as many fairy tales as they can. As a class, they can decide what makes a story into a fairy tale. For example, they will probably come to the conclusion that all fairy tales are fiction. Explain to the children that many fairy tales are cross-cultural. In other words, many cultures have the same themes in their fairy tales. The teacher should challenge the students to try to figure out which American fairy tale is similar to this particular story.

Reading Strategy: This story can easily be done as a read-aloud activity. In order to make the story interactive, the teacher should always share the beautiful illustrations in this book. The teacher could create actual items from the text. For example, in this story, the Cinderella character receives a gold star, so the teacher could place a gold star sticker on the students' foreheads. The students will think it is very humorous when the teacher later places donkey's ears and cow's horns on their heads when the stepsisters receive their "rewards."

Post-reading Strategy: The children should be given time to share what American fairy tale is similar to this story. When the American version is finally revealed, the children can create Venn diagrams that compare and contrast these two versions.
• Down Memory Lane


Appropriate Grade Level: 3-5

Pre-reading Strategy: The beautifully painted illustrations create a very authentic experience while reading this story. Therefore, this is a perfect story in which to do a picture walk before actually reading the text. The children need to understand that this story is basically a scrapbook of the author's childhood memories.

Reading Strategy: The students can read this story silently, or they could easily read with partners. The students should be encouraged to do think-alouds, especially in response to the illustrations. After the children are finished reading, each child should share with his/her buddy which was his/her favorite memory that the author shared.

Post-reading Strategy: The students can create a classroom scrapbook. Each child can bring in a special family photograph and write a paragraph describing its importance. These papers and photographs can be compiled into a classroom scrapbook that can be read by each student during any independent reading time. The teacher may even want to make color copies of the photographs so that the scrapbook will not have to be disassembled any time during the year.

My Own Experience: My fourth grade class did this activity at the beginning of the year. I knew that they were having trouble expressing themselves through writing, but I also knew that children usually feel most comfortable writing about their family and their own experiences. They seemed to enjoy this activity, and I was able to gather a writing sample from each child. At the end of the year, they will be able to look at the scrapbook and realize how much their writing skills have developed!
• Changing Places

Book Selection: *Voices from the Fields: Children of Migrant Farmworkers Tell Their Stories*. Interviews and photographs by S. Beth Atkin


Appropriate Grade Level: 4 and up

Pre-reading Strategy: The interviews in this book are very realistic and moving. However, not every interview is appropriate for some of the elementary grades. Therefore, it is important that the teacher wisely select the interview examples that she/he wishes to share with the class. I think that the children should spend time discussing the word "different." Is being different a positive characteristic, or is it negative? How can we begin to appreciate differences even within our own community?

Reading Strategy: These interviews would probably be most meaningful if they are read silently so that the children can react to them on their own. I think that several of the interviews could be copied and passed around to the students. After reading the interviews, the students can spend time sharing their feelings about the particular interview that they read.

Post-reading Strategy: The students can write a simulated journal entry from the viewpoint of a child of a migrant worker. These journal entries should portray both positive and negative aspects of the lives of these children. I have found that students like to write their published copies on decorated paper. This can be simply colored paper, or decorated paper that can be purchased inexpensively at various stores.
Fun Facts


Appropriate Grade Level: 4-6

Pre-reading Strategy: Because this book is a nonfiction work, this provides a great opportunity to do a K-W-L chart. Therefore, the teacher can see the information that the children already know about Mexico. The chart will provide the class with some specific objectives for which to read. The objectives will guide the remainder of the lesson.

Reading Strategy: The teacher can read the pages that will directly answer the questions posed by the class. The teacher should always remember to share the photographs with the students!

Post-reading Strategy: After completing the K-W-L chart, the students can be assigned specific factual areas in which to do further study. For example, one group might be assigned to study the leisure activities of Mexico. These groups should find someway to visually represent their area. These projects could be displayed on a bulletin board in the room or in the school showcase.
**Christmas Customs**

Book Selection: *Carlos, Light the Farolito*. By Jean Ciavonne.


**Appropriate Grade Level:** 4-6

**Pre-reading Strategy:** The children can share some of their favorite Christmas traditions, and they should explain their reasoning behind why they chose those specific traditions. Although each family will have its own traditions, there are some that are practiced all throughout America. The children should be prompted to think of at least five American Christmas traditions.

**Reading Strategy:** This is a very detailed story that could easily be divided into several days of reading. If this book is read aloud, the teacher should abbreviate the story by skipping some of the detailed portions. The teacher can also light a lantern (farolito) while he/she reads the story. This is a wonderful book for practicing the skill of making predictions. The children should also be encouraged to do think-alouds throughout the story.

**Post-reading Strategy:** The children can write a journal entry sharing at least two Mexican Christmas traditions that they learned about during the story. They should be given time to illustrate these journal entries to make the response activity more meaningful. If the teacher is especially industrious, he/she could teach the children "Silent Night" ("Noche de Paz") in Spanish because this song is specifically referred to in the story.

**Sample Discussion Questions:**

1. What did Carlos get to do before the neighbors arrived?
2. Who came to Carlos' house? Why?
3. What did Carlos get to do that Grandfather usually did during Las Posadas?
4. How do you think Grandfather felt about Carlos that night?
5. What was Carlos' reward for being brave enough to take Grandfather's place?
BILINGUAL BOOKMARKS

Name ____________________________

Write and draw the non-English words and expressions from your book that you think are the most interesting.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-English Word or Expression</th>
<th>English Definition</th>
<th>Illustration or Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Write questions to ask or ideas to tell your group. Also write the page or a picture reminder.

Questions–Ideas                                                                 Page–Picture Reminder

1. ___________________________________                                    

2. ___________________________________                                    

3. ___________________________________                                    

4. ___________________________________                                    

Moen, Christine Boardman, 20 Reproducible Literature Circle Role Sheets for Grades 1-3 (Carthage, IL: Teaching & Learning Company, 2000) 34

34 TLC10219 Copyright © Christine Boardman Moen
How to Plan a Successful Fiesta
Sample Sign-Up Letter for Fiesta

Dear Parents or Guardians,

The year has flown, and we are quickly approaching the holiday season! Throughout the year, we have studied other cultures, and the children have enjoyed comparing and contrasting our American culture with those around the world. In order to continue this celebration of culture, we will be having a Spanish fiesta on designated date of the party. We will be decorating our room with authentic decorations, singing Spanish songs, learning new Spanish words, creating Spanish crafts, and eating a variety of Spanish foods. The children have been looking forward to the fiesta for some time now. We will need your help to prepare food for this celebration. Therefore, I have included a collection of recipes from Mexico, Puerto Rico, and Cuba. These recipes are simply to help you with ideas. If you have a certain Spanish dish that you usually fix, please feel free to make it!

Please return the bottom portion of this to me by a date approximately a week or two before the event. Thank you for your help and support!

Sincerely,

Teacher’s Signature

Teacher’s Typed Name

Check the Statement that Applies to You

_____ I will make a dish for the fiesta. Type of dish ________________

_____ I will not be able to make a dish, but I will be able to donate the taco shells, condiments, napkins, tortilla chips, cheese, salsa, or silverware for the fiesta.

Item being donated __________________

_____ I will not be able to make or donate anything for the fiesta.

Parent’s Signature____________________
Sample Follow-Up Letter for Fiesta

Dear Parent’s/Guardian’s Name,

Thank you for your willingness to help with our classroom fiesta! You offered to bring (a specific dish/item). You may either send this item/dish with your child in the morning on designated date of the party, or you can bring the dish in sometime before designated time of the party. We will be having our fiesta at exactly the child’s lunch hour!

Thanks again, and if you have any questions, feel free to contact me! My email is include personal or school email address, and my phone number is include number at which you desire to be reached.

Sincerely,

Teacher’s Signature

Teacher’s Typed Name
Decorations for Your Fiesta

Question: How do I decorate room inexpensively yet authentically?

Answer: Make Papel Picado (Pierced Paper) Banners and Paper Marigolds, flowers that are native to Mexico!

Resource:

Materials for Banners
- Assorted colors of Tissue Paper
- Scissors
- Glue
- String

Steps for Making Banners
1. To make one banner, cut a rectangle from tissue paper. Fold down a 1-inch flap along the length of the paper.
2. Now, fold the paper in half crosswise so that the flap is on the outside. Fold the paper in half two more times, just up to the flap.
3. Shape the outer edge with scissors; then, snip designs along the folded edge. Unfold the paper once and snip at the bottom folded edge. Carefully, open the paper, leaving the flap folded down.
4. Fold and snip as many banners as you need to span the space you're decorating. To hang the banners, cut a piece of string slightly longer than your space.
5. Open the hanging flap of each banner and place over the string; glue the flap down.
6. Once all the banners are glued on, pin or tape the string in place.
Materials for Paper Marigolds

- Crepe paper streamers, in yellow and green
- Scissors
- Green pipe cleaners
- Glue

Step for Making Paper Marigolds

1. Cut a 4-foot piece of yellow crepe paper streamer. Fold over about 2 ½ inches at one end, and continue folding the paper over on itself until you read the end of the streamer. Snip through the folded edges on both sides to make a fringe. The cuts should reach almost to the center!

2. For the stem of the flower, pinch the paper in the middle. Twist one end of a pipe cleaner around the center of the paper. Fluff and shape the paper to form a rounded flower.

3. Cut several simple leaf shapes from green crepe paper. Glue the leaflets to the ends of another green pipe cleaner. When the glue is dried, wrap the leaf stems to the main stem, bending the leaves to appear more natural.
Hispanic Recipes

Appetizers

- **Fiesta Cheese Bread**
  2/3 c milk
  2 c biscuit mix
  2 Tbsp butter, melted
  3 to 4 tomatoes, sliced
  Salt and seasoned pepper

  Heat oven to 325°F. Combine milk with biscuit mix, and stir to form a soft dough. Knead a few times on a floured breadboard. Roll into a rectangle and fit into greased 9 x 13 x 2 inch pan. Push dough up sides of pan until it forms a slight rim. Brush with butter. Arrange tomato slices in rows over dough, salt and pepper. Combine sour cream with mayonnaise, cheese, and onion. Spoon evenly over tomatoes. Sprinkle with paprika. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes. Serves 6 to 8.

*Compliments of Senora McIntyre*

- **Guacamole**
  1 avocado
  1 Tbsp mayonnaise
  ½ small onion
  1 tomato
  1 tsp bacon bits
  1 tsp hot sauce

  Remove the seeds from the avocado, and smash together with tomato pieces. Add mayonnaise. Mix. Add small chopped onion pieces, bacon bits, and hot sauce. Mix and refrigerate.

*Compliments of Senora McIntyre*

- **Buenos Nachos**
  1 8 oz pkg Philadelphia ® Cream cheese (softened)
  Tortilla chips
  2 Tbsp green onion slices
  3 Tbsp milk
  ½ c pitted ripe olives
  ¼ c guacamole
  ½ c sour cream
  ½ lb Velveeta ® Mexican Pasteurized Cheese spread with jalapeno pepper
  ¼ c chopped tomato
Combine cream cheese, guacamole, and sour cream, mixing until well blended. Spread cream cheese mixture onto serving platter; top with chips. Combine Velveeta cheese spread, milk and onions in saucepan over low heat until cheese is melted. Cover chips with tomatoes and olives. 6 servings.

*Compliments of Senora McIntyre

- **Chili Con Queso**
  
  1 lb Velveeta ® cheese
  2 medium-size jalapeno peppers
  1 can diced Rotel tomatoes
  ½ to ¾ lb Monterey Jack cheese
  1 small bunch green onions
  milk

Cut cheeses into small chunks. Melt in microwave, watching carefully and stirring frequently. Wash and de-seed peppers. Dice peppers and green onions and sauté briefly in tiny amount of margarine. Stir Rotel tomatoes and sautéed vegetables into the melted cheeses. Add enough to make the consistency you desire. Chili con queso can be served over steamed broccoli, cauliflower, with baked potatoes, or as a dip for chips. Amounts of peppers, onions, and tomatoes can be adjusted to your own taste. Nacho peppers can also be used with, or in place of, fresh jalapenos.


- **Pico de Gallo (a vegetable mixture)**
  
  10 yellow chili peppers
  10 jalapeno peppers
  5 large tomatoes or
  10 roma tomatoes
  1 medium onion
  2 Tbsp fresh cilantro or parsley
  Fresh garlic or garlic salt
  Small can tomato sauce
  Sprinkle of sugar

Wash all vegetable, being sure to wear disposable gloves when handling the peppers. Remove seeds from peppers. Chop all vegetables, finely or medium as desired. Mix together. If using roma tomatoes, add a small can of tomato sauce. Season with salt to taste. Store in covered container. Refrigerate and allow flavors to blend before using.


- **Chili Cheddar Cream Cheese Spread**
  
  1 package cream cheese (3 oz)
  1/3 c shredded Cheddar cheese
  2 Tbsp Milk
  1/4 c whole kernel corn
  1/2 tsp chili powder
  1 sliced green onion
Mix cream cheese and milk until blended. Stir in ingredients for flavor until the ingredients are evenly distributed throughout the spread.


- **Quick Mexican Corn**

  1 large can whole kernel corn, drained well (approx. 1 lb)  
  1 Tbsp of finely chopped onion  
  3 Tbsp finely chopped green pepper  
  1 Tbsp of finely chopped pimentos  
  2 Tbsp butter or margarine

  In a 1 quart casserole, combine corn, green pepper, onion, and pimentos. Stir and blend. Cut butter into pieces and distribute over corn mixture. Cover with a lid or plastic wrap. Microwave on High for 2 minutes or until dish is heated thoroughly. Stir after 1 minute.

  *Compliments of Senora McIntyre

- **Gazpacho**

  1 c diced cucumbers  
  1 c diced red onions  
  1 ½ c beef consommé  
  1 pinch of salt  
  ½ tsp Tabasco  
  ¼ c wine vinegar  
  2 c diced tomatoes  
  1 c diced bell peppers  
  ½ c olive oil  
  1 pinch of black pepper  
  1 clove crushed garlic

  Use a one-gallon pot. Dice all vegetables into approximately ¼ inch pieces and mix. Add salt, pepper, Tabasco, beef consommé, olive oil and wine vinegar, thoroughly mixing. Refrigerate before serving. Flavor will improve if prepared one day in advance. More consommé may be added if desired. A garnish of croutons is optional. Makes 5-6 servings.

  *Compliments of Senora McIntyre

- **Impossible Mexican Pie**

  1 lb ground beef  
  ½ envelope of taco seasoning mix  
  ½ chopped onion  
  ½ green chilies, chopped  
  1 c shredded cheddar cheese  
  1 ½ c milk  
  ¼ c bisquick  
  3 eggs  
  1/8 tsp red pepper sauce  
  1 can refried beans
*Compliments of Senora McIntyre

- **Quick Enchiladas**
  - 1 lb ground meat
  - 1 pkg tortillas, corn or flour
  - 2 enchilada dip cans of water
  - 1 tsp pepper
  - 2 cans (10 ½ oz) Fritos enchilada dip
  - 1 tsp salt
  - ½ lb cheddar cheese (grated)

*Compliments of Senora McIntyre

- **Tamale Pie**

  **Filling:**
  - 1½ lbs of ground beef
  - 1 c chopped onion
  - 2 (10 oz) can of ORTEGA® Enchilada Sauce with Onions
  - 1 c whole kernel corn
  - 1 (2.25 oz) can sliced ripe Olives, drained
  - 1 tsp salt
  - Shredded Mild Cheddar Cheese
  - ORTEGA® Pickled Jalapeno Slices

  **Crust:**
  - 2 ½ c ALBERS® White or Yellow Corn Meal
  - 2 c water
  - 1 (12 fl oz) can NESTLE® Carnation® Evaporated Milk
  - 1 tsp salt
  - 1 (4 oz) can ORTEGA® Diced Green Chilies
  - ½ c SARGENTO® Chef Style

  **FOR FILLING:** Cook beef, onion, and garlic in large skillet until beef is browned; drain. Stir in enchilada sauce, corn, olives, and salt. **FOR CRUST:** Preheat oven to 425° F. COMBINE cornmeal, water, evaporated milk, and sauce in medium saucepan. Cook over medium-high heat, stirring frequently, for 5 to 7 minutes or until thick. Stir in chilies. Reserve 2 cups cornmeal mixture; cover with plastic wrap. Spread remaining cornmeal mixture on bottom and up sides of greased 12 x 8-inch baking dish. Bake for 10 minutes. Cool on wire rack. **SPOON** meat filling into cornmeal crust. Spread reserved cornmeal mixture over meat filling. Bake for 15 to 20 minutes; sprinkle with cheese. Bake for additional 5 to 10 minutes or until cheese is melted. Garnish with jalapenos.
• **Spanish Rice**

2 Tbsp vegetable oil
1/8 tsp garlic powder
1 medium onion, chopped (1/2 cup)
2 1/2 cups of water
1 1/2 tsp of salt

1/4 tsp of chili powder
1 cup uncooked regular long-grain rice
1 small green bell pepper, chopped
(1/2 cup)
1 can (8 oz) tomato sauce

Heat oil in 10-inch skillet over medium heat. Cook rice and onion in oil about 5 minutes, stirring frequently, until rice is golden brown and onion is tender. Stir in remaining ingredients. Heat to boiling; reduce heat. Cover and simmer about 30 minutes, stirring occasionally, until rice is tender.

*Recipe taken from Betty Crocker's Cookbook, 2000.*

• **Taco Meat Filling**

1 lb ground beef
1 onion, chopped
1 tomato, chopped
1 tsp of seasoned salt

1 clove garlic, minced—optional
1 Tbsp chili powder
Dash of hot sauce—optional
Pinch of oregano—optional

Brown ground beef without seasonings. Drain and add all ingredients. Simmer, covered for 10 minutes.

*Recipe taken from Oliver Family Cookbook, 1998.*

• **Frito Pie**

1 lb lean ground beef
1 package dry taco seasoning
Water
Salt, pepper, garlic powder
1 medium onion
Chopped or shredded lettuce

Diced tomato
Chopped avocado, optional
Chopped onion
Cheddar cheese, grated
Frito corn chips
Picante or Tabasco sauce (optional)

Brown ground beef and onions until cooked well. Drain off fat. Add taco seasoning and enough water to make it of a chili consistency. Make the Frito pies individually in soup bowls. Put in a layer of Fritos, cover with a dipper full of the chili. Sprinkle with cheese, and top with lettuce, onion, and avocado.

*Recipe taken from Oliver Family Cookbook, 1998.*
**Bunuelos**

- 2 c flour
- 2 Tbsp sugar
- ½ tsp baking soda
- 3 Eggs
- 4 Tbsp milk
- 2 Tbsp butter or margarine
- Shortening or oil for deep frying

In medium bowl, combine flour, sugar, and salt. In small bowl, beat eggs, milk, and melted butter. Add egg mixture to dry ingredients. Stir with fork until mixture holds together. Turn dough onto lightly floured board or surface, and knead gently until smooth, about 3 to 5 minutes. In deep fryer, heat oil shortening 1 ½ to 2 inches deep, to about 375°F on deep fryer thermometer. Divide into about 24 pieces. Roll out each onto the floured surface. Roll paper thin. Drop rounds into hot oil. Brown on each side. Drain on paper towels. Drizzle with cinnamon-sugar syrup or sprinkle with cinnamon and sugar.

*Cinnamon-Sugar Syrup for Buenuelos*

- 1 ½ c sugar
- 1 c water
- 2 Tbsp corn syrup
- ½ tsp cinnamon

In small saucepan, combine ingredients. Boil 15 minutes until slightly thickened or 220°F on candy thermometer. Drizzle on buenuelos while they are still warm. Makes about 1 ½ c of syrup.

*Coco Quemado (Coconut Pudding)*

- 4 c of sugar
- 2 c of water
- 8 egg yolks, lightly beaten
- 2 tsp ground cinnamon
- 8 c of grated coconut

Cook the sugar and water together to form a syrup at the thread stage. Add the coconut, and stir in the egg yolks. Add the cinnamon and cook over low heat, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon until the mixture in thick. Pour into a flameproof serving dish. Run under a broiler to brown the top. Serve plain or with whipped cream.

*Compliments of Senora McIntyre*
• **Cream Cheese Flan**

2/3 c sugar  
4 eggs  
2 (3 oz) packages of cream cheese, at room temperature  
1 (14 oz) can sweetened condensed milk  
1 1/4 c milk  
1/2 tsp vanilla extract

Heat sugar in a medium skillet over medium to high heat until melted, clear and light brown. Stir occasionally so that sugar will melt evenly. Spoon syrup over bottom and around sides of a 1/2 quart baking dish. Set aside to cool. Preheat oven to 325°F (165°C). Combine eggs and cream cheese in a blender; blend until smooth. Add remaining ingredients, and blend until combined. Pour into prepared baking dish. Place in a larger pan, and add boiling water until it comes halfway up sides of the dish. Bake 1 hour, until knife inserted in flan comes out clean. Flan may still quiver in the center. Remove from water; cool on rack 1 hour. Cover and refrigerate. To serve, invert onto a platter.

*Compliments of Senora McIntyre

• **Empanadas (Turnovers)**

3 c flour  
1 tsp baking powder  
1 tsp shortening  
1 Tbsp butter  
1 tsp sugar  
1/2 tsp salt  
1/2 c cooking oil  
1/2 c cinnamon syrup  
2 eggs

Filling: Your choice of marmalade

Mix flour and baking powder. Cut in shortening and butter. Add sugar, salt, and cinnamon syrup. Add eggs and mix well. Let dough rest for 1 hour. Roll into thin oblongs. Cut to form diamond shape. Spoon in the filling, which will be your choice of marmalade. Fold over to form triangle. Press border firmly with fork to seal. Fry in oil until golden brown.

*Compliments of Senora McIntyre

• **Dulce de Leche (Sweet Milk)**

Buy a can of condensed milk. Take the label off. Do not open the can. Put can in slowly boiling for 3 to 4 hours, on medium heat. Make sure that there are 1 to 2 inches of water showing at all times. Fill in any water that evaporates during the boiling process. Let can cool. Open the can, and you will have a nice, creamy color fruit dip.

*Compliments of Senora McIntyre
Teacher Resources for Planning a Successful Fiesta

"Teachers know that the best way to teach a subject is to make it interesting and fun!"
~Valerie Menard, author of The Latino Holiday Book.


From Cinco de Mayo to Dia de los Muertos, this book provides detailed information about all of the important Hispanic holidays. The author describes the cultural, historic, and religious origins of each holiday. Traditional recipes and craft ideas are also included in this book!


This book is absolutely full of facts, ideas, interesting statistics, and small segments that could easily become mini-lessons for any teacher! Children will be able to comprehend any of the material in this book because the readability is on their level!


Although this book covers many different cultures, approximately 40 pages of this book is dedicated to Hispanic art. Share the Central American worry doll with your class! Learn to do cardboard loom weaving! This book also provides factual information to support each craft idea.


This book was actually written for children, and it covers each of the important Hispanic holidays. However, it is useful for gathering a brief explanation of the important dates. This book will be a favorite because of the full-page, colorful photographs!
Photo Gallery

These photographs display the fiesta that was held at Tri Elementary School in New Castle, Indiana with the fourth grade students. (December 7, 2001)
Photographs taken by Sonya Egan and Deborah J. Neal
Silent Messages
As an elementary teacher, you have the opportunity to mold the thought patterns of your students on a daily basis. Many times the images and concepts that children form of other cultures at a young age will remain with them throughout their lives. We must take advantage of our influential positions, and make a statement that encourages cross-cultural understanding and appreciation!

Valerie Andriola Balderas writes, “Classroom walls are autobiographical in that they make statements about the teacher’s beliefs, values, and multicultural awareness (or lack there of)” (Ramirez and Gallardo 73). What a true statement! What are your walls saying to your students?

**Question:** How can I make a positive statement about various cultures?

**Answer:**

- Invest in posters that portray positive cultural images. When celebrating the Hispanic culture, post photographs of important people such as Cesar Chavez, Sandra Cisneros, or Gary Soto.
- Remember to avoid purchasing all stereotypical images. For example, it is enjoyable to look at pictures of Cinco de Mayo and Las Posadas, but we must also portray everyday life in Hispanic culture.
- If you do happen to post something stereotypical, make it a point to begin an open-ended discussion about that visual image. For example, in the United States, we think that Chihuahuas must be popular dogs in Mexico because they have been linked with selling tacos. What are some stereotypes that Mexicans might have of us?
- Create an interactive area for the children to explore different cultures. In order to do this, I created what I termed the “Cultural Corner.” In one corner of the room, I set up an interactive bulletin board as well as a display. On the board, I placed a poster of Mexico that included a diversity of photographs. I also added specific “Fact Files” about certain countries that we were studying. One student
even voluntarily brought in photographs of a family vacation to Mexico! I placed two envelopes on the board, making sure that they were in reach of the students. In one envelope, I put English words, and in the other, I placed the Spanish translations. During center time or extra class time, the children can go to the board and try to match the words correctly. When I see that the board has been completed, I simply check the child's work and correct any mistakes that may have been made. The cultural display is adjacent to the board, and it has various cultural representations, such as items purchased in Mexico, maracas, and books about the culture. The Cultural Corner can be changed periodically to celebrate a variety of ethnicities!

The Culture Corner and Display Area
Mexico's Fact File

- Mexico's capital city is called Mexico City.
- The main language in Mexico is Spanish, but there are also many other Indian languages that are spoken.
- The money in Mexico is based on the peso.
- For thousands of years, corn has been the most important crop in Mexico.
- Mexico’s flag looks like this:
Puerto Rico's Fact File

- Puerto Rico's capital is San Juan.
- The people in Puerto Rico speak English and Spanish.
- The money in Puerto Rico is called a dollar.
- Sugarcane and coffee are important crops.
- Puerto Rico's flag looks like this:
Cuba's Fact File

Cuba's capital is Havana.
The people in Cuba speak Spanish.
Cuban money is called a peso.
Sugar is Cuba's most important product, but tobacco and a metal called nickel are also sent to other countries.
Cuba's flag looks like this:
Incorporating Technology
Wonderful Websites for Multicultural Experiences

   This is a good site for fifth and sixth graders who are researching Spanish holidays. It includes a few detailed paragraphs about Cinco de Mayo, and it also has several colorful photographs portraying the holiday.

   This site addresses a very important question, and it also dispels some fears about what seemingly appears to be a morbid holiday.

   This is a tourist's haven with interactive tours and numerous links! I can imagine that this would be good for students in upper elementary. They could use this site and others to create their own tourist's pamphlet.

   This site is a great way to take a field trip in the middle of the winter...a virtual fieldtrip, that is! The students will be able to choose their tour, and they will venture through the ancient Mayan temples and living quarters.

This is a teacher-haven for lessons regarding Hispanic History Month! Hispanic Heritage Month begins September 15 and ends October 15. This particular site is full of ways to integrate this celebration into any curriculum!


After reading some of the Josefina stories from the American Girl Collection ®, students will love exploring her family photo album, her father's rancho, and the town area. I have included a sheet that I created to add to this website. This website is very child-centered, and they love the fact that they can navigate into different rooms and click on various cultural items.


This site provides many profitable links for teachers who need more ideas and factual information. After studying these sites, their classes will be able to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month in style! The site also provides links to various statistical sites about Hispanics in our nation.


This would be a great site to share with the children around Christmas time because of all of the beautiful, realistic photographs. The children can read to understand just exactly how differently they celebrate the holiday in Mexico.
Exploring Josefina’s World

Web site:
http://www.americangirl.com/homepage2.html

• Click on the second miniature photograph. Next, you need to click on "Meet the Characters." Finally, click on the large photograph of Josefina.

• Click on "Family and Friends"
Who is Josefina?

• Choose three of Josefina’s family members and describe them. (Just point and click!) What do they look like? What makes them special to Josefina?
  1.

  2.

  3.

• Click on "World"
Describe the setting in which Josefina lives.
From what is Josefina's home made?

• Click on one of the rooms (cocina means kitchen, sala means living room, or the courtyard). Do some exploring! Which room did you choose? Explain what you found.

• Move the mouse around Papa's Ranch, and click on an item that looks interesting. Describe what you learned.

• Why did Josefina like the Santa Fe Market?
Mexico
Neighbor to the South

Bordering four U.S. states to the south is Mexico. Mexico has over 69 million people. Nearly all Mexican people speak Spanish. Long ago, only Indians lived in Mexico. Then it was settled by the Spanish. The Mexican artists today keep alive many of the old ways. They make clay pots and statues, weave cloth, and craft masks from metal. In modern Mexico many people live in cities and towns. A few people still live in small villages. All Mexicans enjoy celebrations called fiestas. They eat special foods and have lots of music and dancing.

Write your answers to the questions using complete sentences.

1. What language do nearly all Mexicans speak?

2. How do artists keep alive the old ways? Name two ways.

3. How many people live in Mexico?

4. What are Mexican celebrations called?

5. How do Mexicans celebrate fiestas?

Brainwork! Many Spanish words are familiar to English-speaking people. Some familiar words are amigo, burro, chili, fiesta, mariachi, plaza, pueblo, rodeo, tamale and tortilla. Write a paragraph about celebrating Mexican Independence Day with a fiesta on September 16. Use as many words as you can from the word list of familiar words.
Map of the United States of Mexico
Los Estados Unidos Mexicanos

1. The U.S.A.'s neighbor to the south is Mexico. Write Mexico in the central part of the country.

2. The Gulf of Mexico is east of Mexico. Write Gulf of Mexico in the space east of Mexico.

3. The Pacific Ocean is west of Mexico. Write Pacific Ocean west of Mexico.

4. Mexico's neighbor to the north is the U.S.A. Write United States of America north of Mexico.

5. Mexico's neighbors to the south are Guatemala and Belize. Write Guatemala south of Mexico.

Brainwork! Mexico is bordered on the north by four states of the U.S.A. Write the correct abbreviation in each state.
Diego Rivera

Answer the questions as you read about Diego Rivera (dee EH goh ree BEHR ah), a famous Mexican artist.

Diego Rivera was born in 1886. From the time Diego was a little boy, he liked to draw. His father built him a special room covered with blackboards so that he could draw all over it.

What is something you like to do? What could you use to help you do what you like?

Diego's parents were proud of his talent in art. They sent him to art school.

Why is your family proud of you?

Diego Rivera created large murals in public places. He painted walls and ceilings in schools, palaces, and government buildings.

Do you think it would be better to have a painting on a school wall or hanging in an art museum? Why?

Diego Rivera loved the people of his country. His paintings describe the Mexican people and their history. Rivera died in 1957 while working on his art.

If you were an artist, what would you want to paint?

Brainwork! With your classmates make a mural on a school sidewalk. Use colored chalk to draw a scene that represents your classroom, school, or community.
Mexico
Works Cited


