



IMAGEN e IDENTIDAD / IMAGE and IDENTITY: MULTIPLE VOICES, VIOLATIONS and VICTORIES

Level: high school
Course: humanities, bilingual

Project Overview

The West Mesa High School (Albuquerque, New Mexico) PEGASUS (Programs in Exploration and Growth in the Arts and Social Sciences in Us) team's curriculum project will span a period of two years. It will culminate in an exhibition on display at the South Broadway Cultural Center for the month of April, 1997. As a pilot for the 4/97 exhibit, PEGASUS teachers will plan a program/exhibit in our Performing Arts Center theatre and gallery for parents and other members of the westside community interested in the 4/96 exhibit. Evaluation forms will help PEGASUS teachers and students better consider the community's needs and interests for development of the 4/97 exhibit.

The leit motifs of movement, mirrors, maiz, masks, "mestizaje", and natural connections to our universe will reoccur in the 10th grade Communication Skills/English, 11th grade U.S. History / American Literature, and 12th grade World History / World Literature programs. These will appear in the form of artistic strands, weaving the themes of community, encounters, and global responsibility throughout the curriculum in an expressive, hands-on manner.

As was stated so succinctly in the 1993 movie produced by Annenberg/CPB which highlighted current trends in the Dominican Republic, "identity is evolving unpredictably; always absorbing the new with the old." The broad learning objectives

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of our PEGASUS students will be to arrive at their own answers to the following essential questions posed at each grade level through discovery:

10th: Why do we move and how does it affect our identity? (I)

11th: How did encounters between diverse cultures impact images and identities? (We)

12th: In what ways am I personally responsible to and a member of a global society? (All)

The intent is for the students to move from a greater understanding of self and community to an appreciation of the potential for conflict resolution when encounters with people of different cultures, ethnicity, and belief systems occur.

Some major ideas to be stressed throughout the curriculum are:

10th: The influence of community on one's own image of self through the passing down of traditions through folklore, mythology, customs, etc. The role individuals undertake in their communities and how that role relates to their own evolving identity.

11th: The focus of the beginning of the year will be the diversity of Native Americans and how the richness of their history and cultures is reflected in literature, research, and art. We will then explore, in later lessons, the idea that encounters with diverse communities can result in xenophobia, racism, sexism, and many types of prejudice. This does not mean that conflict resolution can't take place. Movements for change (ie. civil rights, labor, environmental) can make a difference and don't necessarily need to polarize the *we* and the *they*.

12th: The exploration of other perspectives and voices of the world will allow students to compare/contrast rituals with revolutions, which do form a large part of our changing individual and global identity. The study of utopias and sanctuaries will offer students an alternative to the idea of escaping or finding refuge in drugs, violence, sex, etc. Students will create their own havens before then venturing out to realize a place for themselves as responsible members of community.

At all grade levels the students will develop the following learning skills: Visual, auditory, kinesthetic, verbal communication skills in English and in Spanish, acting, analytical, research, interpretive, evaluative, organizational, socially interactive, synthesis, reading comprehension in English, Spanish, and in other languages, vocabulary expansion, predicting, writing skills in English/ Spanish, observational, and geographical/chronological.

Overview of Project Implementation

Just as the indigenous people of New Mexico created beautiful objects of tin to allow more light into their homes, the students in PEGASUS will be "mirroring" their peers across the curriculum and grades in order to emphasize reoccurring themes in our histories. Before proceeding on to a description of a sample unit in one PEGASUS classroom, the logistics of the pedagogy which we will implement needs to be explained.

Through a two-year FLAA grant (Foreign Language Assistance Act), we are now on-line with a partner school in Argentina and are exploring the possibility of hooking up with another school in Mexico. Two phone lines were placed in the 10th grade classroom and two more were installed between the 11th and 12th

grade rooms. The remaining two were put in the Bilingual /Multicultural Program office. The 11th grade classroom will also serve as an Advanced Spanish classroom third period. This will provide 12th grade (third/fourth period) students peer Spanish and Internet mentors. We hope to achieve 80% active bilingual proficiency among our passive bilinguals through this heterogeneous pairing of language experts with computer experts. (About 65% of West Mesa's students are passive bilinguals, meaning, they understand what is said in Spanish but don't actively use the language to communicate.)

The grant also allows for consultants, speakers, artists, etc. to assist us in implementing our goals. These community experts will be especially helpful when it comes to the implementation phase of the museum exhibit/programs in April of 1996 and 1997.

Lesson: *Munecas de maiz/Corn Maidens*

Rationale

Every work-in-progress poses unique challenges of translation from the original idea to reality. The application of this idea "Imagen e identidad" can best be visualized within a specific setting, employing specific techniques, and utilizing concrete rubrics to best evaluate the process, product, and performance of each student and the lesson itself. At the end of this lesson a drawing is included to better demonstrate this teacher's vision of the final museum exhibit. As an ongoing project which will comprise many units at three different grade levels, where students and community members will be providing input, we can be assured that the final museum exhibit diagram will be very different.

Carlos Navarro from the Latin American Data Base stated in his lecture on Mexico 6/1/95, "Corn is more than a staple in Latin America. It is a symbol of sovereignty." El maiz sigue siendo un simbolo de la soberania del pueblo indigena. As a symbol of sovereignty for the indigenous people of the Americas, its socioeconomic and political importance prior to, during, and after the period of conquest is essential for students to understand.

Objectives

The 11th grade PEGASUS students of U.S. History and American Literature will compare and contrast a Native American tribe of the southwestern area of the U.S. with a Native American tribe of another area. Students will also create a corn maiden with her own story to tell. The story will be based on pre-colombian mythology of the Americas and historical/archeological facts gathered. The importance of corn in all facets of Indian life throughout the Americas will be discovered by having students read selections of their choice from teacher-prepared reading packets. The issues of commonality/diversity among tribes as regards their belief systems could be a provoking on-line discussion topic with students in West Mesa's sister school in Zapala, Argentina. West Mesa's Science teacher, Hugo Chacon, (also an FLAA grant recipient) could engage his students in a project which would explore the biological/ecological aspects of "maiz." Students will work individually on the comparison/contrast research, in pairs as peer tutors on the writing of the stories (which are to include their own imaginative slant on history), and in groups in the Fine Arts building creating the actual maidens.

This unit has as its main objective a focus on the richness and diversity of native cultures existing in the Americas. In keeping with this objective, students will dispel stereotypes about Native Americans by critically reading selections from the packets provided and, through artistic expression, will re-discover the past.

Materials

The PEGASUS teachers will provide reading packets and the following materials-red clay, glazes (ceramic paints), paint brushes, and ceramic tools.

Each student will be asked to provide: a toilet paper roll, a cloth rag, a baby food jar, and a plastic bag.

Procedures

Week 1

Day 1/two hours

In both the history and English classrooms this lesson will be presented simultaneously to 30 students. Each student will be given a kernel of corn as s/he enters the room. (5 min.) (The word "maiz" is written on the board before students arrive. Pre-colombian graphics are on display as well as is a timeline of indigenous populations.)

Students web on the board the most prevalent uses of corn and its apparent significance (ie. surface culture.) (10 min.) Reading packets are distributed. Students are instructed to choose at least two of the readings included and to read until the end of the first hour.

After break, they are to explore, in writing, a question which has something to do with corn. It must reflect one specific aspect of the way of life of the people they read about. (eg. What different kinds of corn are there in the SW? How is corn symbolic? Why corn "maidens" and not corn men? Students should not be concerned so much with the answer as with the question.) (20 min.) .) The students then share their ideas in Think-Pair-Share groups of four. (Kagen) (15 min.) They are then asked to try to construct the hidden culture of corn as reflected in the various readings they sampled. This web should resemble the bottom, "hidden" part of the iceberg of culture which only further study will help to amplify. A leading question might be "Are there differences in the way corn is viewed and/or utilized by different Native Americans?" (10 min.)

The teacher then plays the tape of "The Coyote and the Milky Way" (5 min.) For homework students are to think about a story with a moral that they were taught as a child. They must be ready to share it on day three/four while they work their clay. They are also to turn in their written interpretation of the symbolic value of corn as depicted in the Cheyenne myth and are to read one more myth and one piece of research from their packet.

The students then, for the remaining few minutes, review with the teacher the project rubrics. The main criteria for assessment are as follows:

process: preparation, attendance, cooperation

product grade: creativity, imagination, completion, historical content, quality of research, mechanics

oral presentation: poise/eye contact, language enrichment, historical focus, artistic expression, preparedness

After answering questions and sharing ideas, the students are encouraged to look through the materials on display in the room.

Day 2/two hour block

A speaker from Isleta will discuss the significance of corn in that Pueblo's belief system. S/he will focus on myths as they convey core values of life, one being that of fertility and power, as represented by the symbol of corn. (Other potential topics of discussion could be whether or not corn is seen as a unifying symbol of power only among the indigenous populations of the SW or if it also symbolizes "la raza mestiza.") The second hour will be dedicated to library research.

Day 3/two hour block

Class A of the history/English interdisciplinary team goes to the Art building and begins work on the corn maidens. They also are to tell their childhood stories with morals for participation points. Class B stays in the English classroom and begins to research on the Internet, Peacenet, and by viewing slides/videos(Anasazi and Project Crossroads: History of the Mayas), and by going with one teacher to the library to continue to use the ProQuest to search information on Native American tribes from the PEGASUS list. (attachment) Class B must be ready to focus in on their choice indigenous groups by their next meeting in the English classroom. Teachers will offer a sample comparison/ contrast of the Anasazi and the Cheyenne on the board. Students understand they will be responsible for comparing and contrasting six of the following: religion, government, family structure, housing, food sources, folklore/tradition, clothing, and language. All students must research and document the geographic location of the tribes.

Day 4/two hour block

Class B and Class A switch.

Day 5/two hour block

Class A continues working on corn maidens to ready them for firing in the kiln. Class B splits up into student-selected pairs and begins to share ideas about their readings which will help them generate corn maiden stories. Pass out PEGASUS story teller handout. (attachment)

Day 6/two hour block

Class B and Class A switch.

Week 2

Day 7/two hour block

Class A paints maidens while Class B writers write. (A brief peer tutoring session should take place at the beginning of the 2nd hour. Teachers should be careful to model the importance of writing. They should also create their own maidens.)

Day 8/two hour block

Class B and Class A switch.

Day 9/two hour block

Class A and B take their completed corn maidens to share with their writing tutors in order to brainstorm changes/additions to their stories. (Point of view should be emphasized as an important writing and storytelling technique. Whose story is it??) Tutors edit for grammatical problems the second hour and return the work to the writers for homework rewrites. Note: You might have to allow for a two hour make-up session for some individuals to finishg their corn maidens. One team member can be in charge of working with students in the art classroom.

Day 10/two hour block

Class A and B draw random numbers and pair up for a final peer editing session with someone new. (Every desk has a number taped underneath.) Students will then work on oral presentations for the remainder of the 2nd hour.

Day 11/two hour block

Students begin oral presentations in both classrooms. Rubrics for the presentations are distributed. Each student has been given a number that corresponds to another student in the classroom. In addition, s/he has been assigned a number. (Different color numbers can be assigned. Blue for evaluator, Pink for evaluee, for example.)

Week 3

Day 12/two hour block

Finish oral presentations. Comparison/contrast information on tribes are turned in. Debriefing of corn in tribe's lifestyle is discussed. Students will also debrief what aspect of the project was a success and what could be improved. Students will then vote on the best class exhibit(s) for the Spring '96 program. (Use product rubric as criteria for voting.)** To finish Day 11 as a lead in to the period of encounters, the teachers will read to the students a book entitled *The Invisible Hunters* by Rohmer and Chow. This will help them to

explore further the theme of Image and Identity. Also, research uncovered on the various tribes first encounters with "the white man" will be discussed.

Note: In the spring all students will have an opportunity to display their best work. They will choose and submit it. They will also be responsible for labeling it. Teachers as well will each choose a favorite piece (anonymously) for display. All best-of-class pieces from throughout the year will be included in the spring show.

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