Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1990 Volume I: The Autobiographical Mode in Latin American Literature

Spain and France: Influence in Europe and in the New World

Guide for Curriculum Unit 90.01.08
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The present unit is addressed to Foreign Language teachers, but I feel that it might be used by Social Studies teachers too. The curriculum was developed to satisfy the need of the 7-8 grade students to know more about the foreign language they are studying, and it can be adapted or changed by the teacher according to his or her needs, class and grade.

Students, especially in the foreign language classes, are puzzled by the fact that in the U.S.A. and in the American continent there are areas where different languages are spoken. This unit begins therefore with a basic history of France and Spain and then it expands to review the extent and the reason of their power after the discovery of America. It mentions the great past civilizations in the American continent and the role that the Latin-American nations play today in the world.

This unit also presents the possibility of discussing many moral issues such as: taking over of territories, treatment of the natives, division of the land, freedom of speech, political awareness and political persecution, different treatment given to people coming from different backgrounds, and so on.

I have always believed that teaching a foreign language not only helps to overcome cultural barriers, but also it helps to understand and to appreciate the differences and customs of the many nations. Maybe, by reviewing the past and by understanding the origins we can help the students to be better citizens of the world.

(Recommended for French I, grade 7; French II, grade 8; Introductory French-Reading, grades 7-8)

Key Words

History France French Spanish