Sarah Horwitz

Mesoamerican Studies Unit

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| Essential Questions: What were the traditions of our ancestors? Where and how did they live? In what ways did waves of European migration to Mesoamerica (including to what became “Alta California,” impact indigenous communities?What aspects of Native American/ Mesoamerican life have survived?In what ways have indigenous Mesoamerican & Native American traditions informed and “contributed to” our present day society in Oakland? (historically and contemporarily)What is the value of these contributions? Of “traditional” ways of life more generally?End of unit summary: Mesoamerican & Native American civilizations have made many “contributions” to our current culture in Oakland, in terms of food, language, mathematics, science, religion and land. Much of their heritage and many lives have been lost, but still many people and many traditions survive. Through studying their lives, we can better understand and decide how to live our own.  |
| Lesson Sequence: [Investigating Our Own Family Heritage](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Fu3BQG8oILiZ3JwWyu9nn93Ods1eKqZuSOod2pCiy1s/edit) |
| Lesson Sequence: [Comparing and Contrasting Perspectives of “First Contact”](http://drive.google.com/open?id=1l9ZYEnhZyW5TF-HkaIHn41Wt4SpxY4dWJxSp76uCOEc) Using *Encounter* by Jane Yolen and a primary source: Excerpts from Columbus’s Diary |
| Slide Presentation to be referred to throughout unit: [Waves of Migration to California: Pre-columbian to Today (California’s Changing Population, including Native Californians over time](https://docs.google.com/presentation/edit?id=1lDT-HAA2FrkgccvEu2yYK6iGsGMad0lbkABhcL9o0Ao%20)) |
| Lesson: [The Foods o](http://drive.google.com/open?id=1dnLgF2au_SXjY-O_ldlLYyHFHRyXUCQJNiCEMQW_cm0)f Our Ancestors |
| Lesson Sequence: Indigenous communities today: Resistance, adaptation, and cultural continuity. For this I won’t write up my own lesson. Instead, use materials from the following unit by Professor Gayle Olsen Raymer of Humboldt State University: (My classroom is “Humboldt State,” Humboldt County being where I grew up. <http://users.humboldt.edu/ogayle/hist383/OriginalCalifornians.html> .  |
| Lesson: [Common Core Debate Traditional vs. Industrial Candle Manufacturing](http://drive.google.com/open?id=1R_9yIzr7MBHG74Kt28HeJRmA1NTu2aLnBO-bzqWQW6g) |
| Lesson: [Gender and Sexual Roles in Juchitan, Oaxaca through the film *Blossoms of Fire*](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1KzffDgihJ9BJVdmKYdg_IbOh9XzCUi9Nyxfw_FsatDk/edit) |
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Proposal:

The Unit Summary above provides a set of lessons which fit into a larger social studies unit which occurs in September-October in the 4th grade. California Social Studies for 4th graders covers California History from the time of first human settlement until the present. Within this span, emphasis is often placed on the 18th and 19th centuries, especially Spanish colonization & the mission system, the Rancho period, California Statehood, and the Gold Rush. It is my desire to contextualize these, as well as more recent episodes in California history, within a basis of understanding of indigenous history both in California and in Mesoamerica, where the vast majority of my students originate.

Further Research:

In order to provide students with a rich understanding of their own ancestors as well as the first inhabitants of the land on which they live, I am currently developing materials to answer the essential questions:

* What were the traditions of each of our ancestors? Where and how did they live?

*This lesson will include a home survey in which students themselves will gather data on their family culture as seen through geography, language, religion and food.*

* In what ways did waves of migration to California/ Mesoamerica impact indigenous communities?

*This question will be answered throughout the year, as each period is studied. I will develop a lesson comparing and contrasting the impact of Spanish colonization on Mesoamerica vs. on California, but will continue to cover the impact of various time periods on California natives throughout the year (e.g. during the Gold Rush)*

* What aspects of Native American/ Mesoamerican life have survived?

*For these lessons, I will utilize materials on language transfer, food transfer, as well as video and images of indigenous speakers. I will also be collaborating with David Mckay in developing lessons which teach mathematics concepts of place value and multiplication as utilized through the Mesoamerican calendar system.*

* In what ways have indigenous Mesoamerican & Native American traditions informed and “contributed to” our present day society in Oakland? (historically and contemporarily)

*Likewise for these lessons, I will utilize materials on language transfer, food transfer, as well as video and images of indigenous speakers.*

* What is the value of these contributions? Of “traditional” ways of life more generally?

*This question will be interrogated in a literacy lesson requiring students to identify evidence of a specific claim within a text describing traditional and industrial candle production.*