

**“Llévame al partido”
”Take Me Out to the Ballgame”**

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Overview

Baseball has always been called “America’s pastime.” The expression “as American as baseball, hotdogs and apple pie,” has been used to describe things typically American, specifically from the United States. Baseball is still America’s pastime, but not only in North America. In some Central, South American and Caribbean countries, America’s pastime is alive and well. Baseball has been played in many Spanish-speaking countries almost as long as in the United States, but it has only been over the past two or three decades that the numbers of Latin American players and those of Latino descent have increased *considerably* in Major League Baseball. This curriculum unit will consist of three interrelated components:

1. a brief and general look at the history of baseball in the United States
2. a parallel history of baseball in the Spanish-speaking countries where it is played: Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Venezuela, Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic
3. the Latino and Latin American presence in Major League Baseball today and how it has evolved.

The curriculum unit is designed for high school students taking Spanish I or Spanish II. It can be adapted for students in more advanced levels or even elementary/middle school students who are learning Spanish, depending upon the types of activities planned.

Rationale

The five components of World Language curricula are: listening, speaking, reading, writing and culture. Most recently, the emphasis has been on speaking proficiency ideally assessed by an Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI). Pittsburgh Public Schools has one specific standard for World Languages. It states that “all students converse, at a minimum level of ‘Intermediate Low,’ as defined in the oral proficiency guidelines developed by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), in at least one language other than English, including the native language if other than English.” Pittsburgh Public Schools students are not required to pass a World Language oral proficiency test in order to graduate. The only World Language requirement is that a student must pass two levels (four semesters) of the same language in order to graduate with an academic diploma. Nonetheless, all

students taking level III of a World Language (and selected 8th grade middle school students) in the Pittsburgh Public Schools have been assessed since the 1997 - 1998 school year. One on one interviews are the best way to test speaking proficiency, but given time restraints and other logistical problems, Pittsburgh Public Schools has developed its own assessment for speaking proficiency. The test consists of a series of "survival" situations that a student might encounter when spending an extended period of time with a non-English speaking foreign exchange student. Along with a tape-recorded explanation of each situation, students look at transparencies on an overhead projector to give them ideas for possible answers. Students speak into tape recorders and are tested individually or in small or large groups which is decided by individual teacher preference, time constraints and/or school administrators. The test has recently been upgraded and beginning next year, students will be tested individually at computer stations equipped with special recording equipment. Students will have the picture prompts on the computer screen in front of them and talk about the situations as before. An oral proficiency test students in levels IV and/or V is also being developed.

Although World Language instruction today stresses the speaking component, listening, reading and writing activities are very much a part of daily instruction. Ideally, daily classroom activities should include all four skills, although the amount of time spent on each skill will vary - not only from level to level, but from day to day. Activities may be related to a particular grammatical structure or vocabulary section that is part of a unit, or the activities may be based on "culture," the fifth component of World Language learning. Teaching culture in Spanish classes can range from a teacher explanation in English of how women change their last names after marriage to reading a short article in Spanish about a famous person, a popular television program or a current event. There is no curriculum for teaching culture in the Pittsburgh Public Schools (as there is for grammar) but it is an important component of the language classroom that most teachers incorporate into lesson plans either daily, weekly or whenever they feel appropriate. Given the large number of people who speak Spanish in the world (*including* the United States), it is even more important to teach culture. Not only does it impart valuable information about other countries, it helps us understand the Latinos in the United States. A Spanish class would be incomplete without it. Most of the textbooks published recently have added a significant amount of cultural information that teachers can use as it is in the book, or they can add to the topic using more of their own materials. Teachers supplement the curriculum by teaching culture either as a separate unit or along with a concept students are studying. Very often, the teachers take advantage of their own experiences and create their own materials to teach culture.

What exactly is meant by the term *culture*? It may bring to mind a variety of meanings, but for this curriculum unit *culture* is best defined as "the ideas, customs, skills, arts, etc. of a given people in a given period; civilization" according to the Second College Edition of Webster's New World Dictionary. In their book Every Day, Everywhere, Stuart and Terry Hirschberg define *culture* as "the patterns of living that are learned and shared by a social group and passed down from one generation to the next . . . language; knowledge; beliefs; customs;

traditions; and all the social, economic, and political forms that human beings have developed to survive in their environment.”(1) The term *culture* is used to describe all of the above, but it is important to distinguish between *high culture* and *popular culture*. The Hirschbergs define *high culture* as “the refined creative products of a people, their highest artistic and intellectual expressions.” They go on to explain that “*high culture* includes creative works whose value is considered to have stood the test of time . . .”(2) On the other hand, the Hirschbergs define *popular (or pop) culture* as “the material goods, activities, and forms of communication that are part of most people’s everyday lives: music, food, movies, sports, websites, ads, books, magazines, TV shows, videos, clothes . . .”(3)

With these definitions in mind, if teachers were asked to define *culture* and *popular culture* in the context of the World Language classroom, most would agree with the aforementioned definitions and most would probably agree that it is virtually impossible to teach a language without including various cultural activities. Truth be told, simply learning another language’s spelling rules, complex grammatical structures, and an enormous amount of vocabulary is not very exciting to most high school students. By adding cultural lessons (related or not related) to the existing curriculum when appropriate, the language, the people who speak the language and the places where the language is spoken become “alive.”

Most of my students would be more interested in learning about *popular culture* rather than *high culture*. Although any cultural activity (popular or high) that digresses from the required vocabulary, grammar, etc . . . is appealing, my students would probably prefer learning about what is currently popular in Spanish-speaking countries. I say this because high school students consider themselves to be experts on popular culture in the United States. They want to know what life is like for their contemporaries in other countries. Every year we have had the opportunity to host several exchange students from different countries at Allderdice High School. If the students are from a Spanish-speaking country, I invite them to speak to the students in my classes for a question/answer session. All of the questions that my students ask are related to popular culture. For example, they ask about the music they listen to, leisure time activities, food, clothing, sports, school, etc . . . They do not ask questions about what would be considered as *high culture*. Some of the questions I hear year after year pertaining to popular culture are:

- What foods are eaten? Why?
- What kind of music is popular?
- What holidays are important and why are they celebrated?
- Where do people work and how much money do they earn?
- What are the schools like?

--What are their homes like?

--What do people do in their free time—do they go to movies, theater, sporting events, shopping, etc . . . ?

It has become very clear to me after over twenty years of teaching that students really want to know about everyday life in Spanish-speaking countries and how it compares to ours. In order to be able to present that information to students, teachers must have current information that can be accessed easily. Fortunately, teachers are now able to find supplementary materials on just about any popular culture topic via the Internet. With computers in every classroom, we are sometimes able to connect to radio stations in other countries.

In addition to presenting information about life in Spanish-speaking countries, it is also important for students to be aware of the vast and expanding influence of Latino culture in the United States. I have found that most students are familiar with the areas in the United States where there are large Latino populations (e.g., Los Angeles, Miami), but they are generally unaware that the Latinos living in Los Angeles and Miami may have a common ancestral language, but the cultures may differ from city to city depending upon where the majority of the Latinos living in an area are from and how long they have lived in a particular area.

There have been Latinos living in the western and southwestern states of California, New Mexico, Texas, Colorado, Nevada and Arizona since shortly after 1519, when Cortés arrived in Mexico. Of course before Cortes' arrival, Mexico was inhabited by different groups of indigenous peoples and was not called Mexico. Eventually, after the Spaniards had completely conquered Mexico, they renamed it "New Spain." The people who crossed the ocean and moved to New Spain were not Latinos, but Spaniards. After nearly 300 years of colonial rule, Mexico declared its independence from Spain in 1810, but did not win its independence until 1821. Its borders stretched from California to the Yucatán Peninsula. The country became known as Mexico, taken from the name of one of the indigenous tribes (the Mexica) who had previously inhabited part of the country. Around this time, the young United States of America had decided that it was only a matter of time (Manifest Destiny) until all of the territory between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans would become part of their nation. Only 30 years or so had passed since the Americans had fought their Revolutionary War, but Mexico's war of independence was much more difficult than the war we waged against England. (There are many reasons why it was so difficult for Mexico once they won their independence from Spain, but it is not necessary to discuss those reasons for this curriculum unit.)

Thirty years was a sufficient amount of time for the United States to regroup even after fighting off the English again in 1812. Realizing that Mexico had not yet recovered from its long struggle for independence from Spain, the United States sent troops into Mexico in 1846 and declared war after over a decade of small battles between the two countries. The disputes centered around Texas and California, territories that the United States wanted to acquire. The

Mexican-American War ended 1848. Mexico ceded the territory that includes California, New Mexico, Texas, Arizona, and parts of Nevada, Colorado and Utah to the United States. The people who had been living in those territories, some for over 200 years, were forced to make a choice: live in a territory belonging to the United States or move within the new Mexican borders. Many people stayed and became Americans. As a result, their names may be Spanish, but they speak English or are bilingual and have been in the United States longer than the families who arrived in the United States during the great immigration at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries. Now, as we begin the 21st century, the Latino population has become the largest minority in the United States. ***It is important to stress that the Latino population in the United States includes those who were here in 1800 up to and including the most recent immigrants.***

There are both similarities and differences among the Latinos living in the United States and among the people from the different Spanish-speaking countries of the world. Unfortunately, as intelligent and sophisticated as many of my students are, the majority are unaware that differences exist. For example, students may think that the same foods are eaten throughout the Spanish-speaking world. They are surprised to learn that tacos are Mexican and ceviche is a dish more commonly served in Central America. Students also assume that the holiday *Cinco de Mayo* is celebrated in all Spanish-speaking countries when it is a Mexican holiday. (In the United States, *Cinco de mayo* has become the holiday that all Latinos call their own regardless of their nationalities.) Likewise, Mexicans or any of the Central, South American or Caribbean nations would not celebrate the birthday of Bernardo O'Higgins since he was an important figure in Chile's fight for independence from Spain. Music is also different although elements of a variety of genres may overlap. There are also different sports that are played, depending on the country or the region of the United States where a particular Latino population lives. This curriculum unit will address how baseball, our national pastime, came to be played in several Spanish-speaking countries, the hardships, struggles and successes that Latino baseball players went through to play in the Major Leagues during the first half of the 20th century, and the recent increase in the number of Latin Americans playing Major League Baseball in the United States.

It is safe to say that soccer is not only the most popular sport in all Spanish-speaking countries, but it is the most popular sport in the world. Most people are aware of the rivalries that exist between countries and the exuberance of the fans attending the games. It has been said that wars have started between countries because of soccer games won and lost. Baseball is different. There is a passion for baseball (or *béisbol* as it is called in Spanish) in several Spanish-speaking countries (Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Panama, Nicaragua, Mexico, and Venezuela) that is nearly equal to that of soccer. Baseball rivalries do not exist between countries, generally because each country has leagues, similar to Major League Baseball in the United States. The rivalries (if they exist) are between cities, towns and communities rather than nations. The one exception could be during Olympic competition, but even at the Olympics, national fervor does not reach the same level as World Cup Soccer. Baseball does not generally

evoke the same boisterous reactions during a game as in other sports such as soccer, American football or hockey. Perhaps it is because of the calm (some people would call it boring) nature of the game that has no time limit. Perhaps it is because baseball has been a part of American popular culture since the 1860s and has hardly changed at all since then. The *National Baseball Hall of Fame* has put together an exhibition entitled *Baseball as America* that will travel to ten different cities in the United States over a four-year period. This is the first time that artifacts will leave the museum which is located in Cooperstown, New York. On its website, an introduction to the exhibition explains, “*Baseball As America* represents the richness of baseball as the American pastime and celebrates enduring American values: freedom, patriotism, opportunity and ingenuity. It appeals to a broad spectrum of the public--from children just learning to throw a ball to the lifelong fan--and, like the game itself, draws people of all ages and across all cultural heritages. It provides a revealing, inspiring, humorous and dramatic perspective on America’s Game and, in so doing, fosters a new appreciation not only of baseball, but of our national character.”

I grew up in Pittsburgh, with the Pirates and Roberto Clemente. There has never been a significant Latino population here, but the “Great One” (a name coined by the well-known, former Pirates’ broadcaster Bob Prince) introduced us to a little bit of his Puerto Rican culture during seventeen seasons as the right fielder for the Pirates. The Pirates, Roberto Clemente and baseball are indelibly etched into my memory beginning with the Pirates winning the 1960 World Series against the Yankees; going to games at Forbes Field which was two miles from my house; going to my first game at Three Rivers Stadium; winning the 1971 and 1979 World Series; traveling across the United States to go to different baseball stadiums; winning the National League East pennants in 1990, 1991, 1992 but never getting to the World Series; the 1994 all-star game in Pittsburgh--my youngest son was born the morning after a National League victory (I was *not* there!); taking my three sons to baseball games; watching my three sons play baseball; the opening of PNC Park. My family has had season tickets for over 15 years.

I currently teach Spanish I PSP or Spanish I mainstream, Spanish II CAS and Spanish III CAS. The students I teach are primarily in grades nine and ten although I always have a few students in each class who are juniors and seniors. The students in CAS (Curriculum for Advanced Study) are gifted. The PSP (Pittsburgh Scholars Program) students are considered to be average or above average. The mainstream students are a mixture of students who may be average or above or below average, generally underachieving students or students who lack the confidence and/or desire to enroll in a higher level class. This curriculum unit is designed to be used as a supplement for students in Spanish I or II. The unit could easily be adapted for students in Spanish III or above.

The textbook currently used in Spanish II CAS is Spanish for Mastery 2 (D.C. Heath). The same series is used for Spanish III CAS. We usually cover a little more than half

the chapters in each of the levels based on the vocabulary and grammar required for the curriculum. The texts are designed so that they recycle vocabulary and grammar while also introducing new concepts. Students get a more in depth presentation of material from the previous level and figure out how to analyze and synthesize the new material to use with the old. At the end of each unit in the level II CAS text there are several pages with cultural information on topics including history, recipes and poetry. One section highlights several well-known Latinos. Roberto Clemente is one of them.

The mainstream and PSP classes use the Heinle and Heinle series ¡Ya verás! The Heinle and Heinle series presents cultural information throughout the text on a variety of topics such as: answering the phone in a Spanish-speaking country, meals, cafés, family, etc . . . In the Level I ¡Ya verás! text, Chapter 15 is called “*Los deportes populares*” (*Popular Sports*). The chapter highlights tennis and baseball with pictures of Latino and Spanish athletes. At the end of the chapter there is a reading activity called “*Roberto Clemente: Un héroe nacional de Puerto Rico.*” (*Roberto Clemente: A National Hero from Puerto Rico*) Although the chapter is not covered in Spanish I PSP or Spanish I mainstream, (Spanish I PSP and Spanish I mainstream cover ten to twelve of the eighteen chapters in the text), it is covered in Spanish II PSP and Spanish II mainstream. This reading activity taken from the Heinle and Heinle textbook is a ready made cultural lesson on baseball for Spanish I or II mainstream, PSP or CAS students which could easily include the four language skills of listening, reading, writing and speaking. Additional teacher made materials could also be used in conjunction with ancillary materials that accompany the textbook series.

Objectives

“Pop culture holds up a mirror to society. And when Americans gaze into that mirror . . . the reflection we see is very likely wearing a baseball cap.”

--from the traveling exhibition

Baseball as America

National Baseball Hall of Fame

Cooperstown, New York

On the first day of this year's seminar *Popular Culture in the U.S. and Latin America*, our instructor brought some examples of popular cultural materials to class along with some definitions and a reading list. One of the first things she did was put a baseball cap on backwards. She asked us to think about and comment on the style, about baseball caps in general and the relationship to popular culture. I didn't think much about her example until I began writing this unit and came upon the above quote, but if there is one item of clothing that symbolizes late 20th century popular culture in the United States, it is the baseball cap. It is larger than just a part of a baseball player's uniform; it has become a defining part of America's uniform along with a t-shirt, blue jeans and sneakers. And, like many things American, the baseball cap has found its way into other countries around the world. So, how does the baseball cap connect the United States and Latin America? It isn't merely the baseball cap, rather the game of baseball.

Before being able to understand the relationship between baseball in the United States and in Latin America, it is important that students know some basic information about the history of America's pastime. After listening and reading about baseball's beginnings in the United States (preferably in Spanish, but if necessary, in English), students will be able to:

1. Explain how the game evolved from other games that were played in England.
2. List the names and dates of important people and events in the history of early baseball.
3. Say in Spanish, selected "baseball" terminology, for example: *pitcher=lanzador; shortstop=campocorto; homerun=jonrón*, etc . . .

Background

Since 1856 we have called baseball our national pastime. There are many legends and myths surrounding the beginnings of baseball in the United States. One of the most widely proclaimed myths is that baseball was created by the Civil War general Abner Doubleday. However, research has shown that Mr. Doubleday did not invent the game, but that baseball actually evolved in stages from earlier bat and ball games that were brought to the United States from England. One of those games is cricket which is still played in England. Another was called *Rounders*, which became known as *Townball* in the United States. In New England, varieties of *Townball* came to be known as *Roundball* (a combination of *Rounders* and *Townball*) or *Base*. The game was a crude version of modern baseball played on a square field with four base-like objects, a ball (made of yarn tightly wound around a piece of

cork or rubber and covered with calfskin), a bat (usually three feet long and made from the handle of a rake or pitchfork) and rules loosely comparable to today's that involved pitching, running bases, outs and strike outs. Perhaps the modern day American League rivalry between the Boston Red Sox and New York Yankees is deeply rooted from the very beginnings of modern baseball. The game described above was the version of baseball played in Massachusetts through the 1850s, but in the mid-1840s a game more like modern baseball was created by Alexander J. Cartwright and the New York Knickerbocker Base Ball Club. Mr. Cartwright suggested that the bases be aligned along a diamond (90 feet apart) instead of a square and to place the batter at home plate instead of between home and first. He also devised the following rules: there were to be nine players on each team at the positions that still exist today; the ball was to be pitched underhand; a ball hit outside the first and third base boundaries was foul; a player was out if the ball he hit was caught on the fly, on the first bounce or if a fielder touched him with the ball as he ran between bases; three outs retired a side; and 21 runs decided the game, provided that each side had the opportunity for equal outs.

The *Baseball As America* exhibition tells us that "Baseball was a part of popular culture as early as the 1860s, celebrated in song, story and art." The game spread slowly in the 1850s, but by the time the Civil War began, soldiers mainly from the north were playing both the New York and Massachusetts versions of the game. As the Union troops moved deeper into the south, they took baseball along with them. There is also documentation of baseball being played as far west as Colorado in 1862. After the Civil War baseball grew even more popular. Amateur teams from various mid-Atlantic states traveled to play against one another. It is said that baseball helped to reunite our country that had been torn apart by the war. Of course baseball alone could not heal all the wounds, but the sport was promoted as "a democratic game that offered all classes and ethnic groups an opportunity to play, if not in a stadium, then at least on a sandlot."(4)

In 1869, the Cincinnati Red Stockings became the first professional baseball team with salaried players. After unsuccessfully trying to maintain a professional team, they returned to amateur status the following year. Subsequently, there were two associations formed, one in 1871 (National Association of Professional Base Ball Players) and another in 1876 (National League of Professional Base Ball Clubs). The first league folded because they had no control over the players and their actions. The second league struggled but was able to survive and eventually grew to become what we know today as the National League. The American Association was formed in 1883 and in 1884 the first World Series between the National League and the American Association was played. And, "the rest is history." There have been expansions, a few adjustments and some changes, but the leagues that were formed at the end of the 19th century still exist.

By the time baseball became widely played in the United States, our country had already begun to start its westward expansion. As I mentioned earlier, in 1848 Mexico ceded a large part of its territory to the United States at the end of the war. The myth regarding Mr. Doubleday and baseball in the United States has a parallel myth in Mexico. It has been said, but not documented that American soldiers fighting in the Mexican-American War played the first game of baseball in Jalapa, Mexico in 1847. True or false, baseball found its way into Mexico, the Caribbean and Central and South America. Once again, in order for students to understand the relationship between baseball in the United States and Latin America, they need to know basic historical information. After listening and reading (in English or Spanish) about the history of baseball (up to 1950) in the Spanish-speaking countries of the Caribbean, Central and South America and Mexico, students will be able to:

1. Name the countries where baseball is played in Latin America.
2. Explain how baseball came to be played in Latin America.
3. Name the first players from Latin America who came to the United States to play baseball, the countries they came from and the teams they played on.
4. Explain the obstacles that prevented some Latin Americans from playing baseball in the United States.

Background

Most of us in the United States have heard of Sammy Sosa, the Dominican right fielder who plays for the Chicago Cubs who, in 1998 along with Mark McGwire who played for the St. Louis Cardinals, broke the single season home run record set by Roger Maris of the New York Yankees in 1961. Before Sammy Sosa and other well known Latino baseball players who have had successful careers in the major leagues, there were some lesser known players who laid the ground work for the current players.

Baseball came to Latin America via Cuba. Although a few details of the story differ, it is generally believed that a Cuban student who had attended school in the United States learned the game from his classmates and upon his return home, introduced baseball to Cuba in 1864. Two years later (1866), the game quickly grew in popularity because American sailors were stationed in Havana and they played with the locals. The first player from Latin America on record to have played in the major leagues was a Cuban, Esteban Bellán. He played from 1869-1871 for a semipro team, and then for a professional team in the soon-to-be defunct National Association. (Baseball historians disagree as to whether or not he was actually the first Latin American player since the league folded several years later.)

The first organized baseball game outside the United States was played between two Cuban teams in 1874. Shortly thereafter, baseball spread to the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico by Cubans who were fleeing their country because of the ten-year war, 1868-1878. By the turn of the century baseball was being played in Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Venezuela and Mexico. Several years later, baseball arrived in Nicaragua and Panama where today, it surpasses soccer in popularity. Why would baseball gain popularity in a region where soccer was king? Some think that the sports played in Latin American countries reflect the dominant colonial influences of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. For example, Great Britain brought soccer to the southern and Andean nations with the railroad and trading interests. On the other hand, baseball became more popular in Cuba, Nicaragua, the Dominican Republic, Panama, Venezuela and Colombia (also called the Caribbean Basin) where the United States' influence was strongest both militarily and economically during this time. Baseball arrived in Mexico from the north (the U.S.) and from the east (Cuba) and is played throughout the country, but remains most popular today in the north, northwestern and eastern regions. In all cases the United States was directly involved in industry or politics in each of these countries when baseball was expanding at home, which also explained its growth abroad. Nonetheless, although baseball is known as America's pastime, it is also the national sport in these countries since the tradition dates back to nearly the same time as in the United States. The Latin American players developed their own brand of baseball which was in many ways the same, but at the same time different from ours.

Another theory as to why baseball became more popular in these countries is that the cities where baseball was first played in all of these countries were all near sea level. The heat, humidity and proximity to the equator made playing soccer very difficult because of the constant running that was necessary over long periods of time. The climate of this region favored baseball, a less strenuous sport. As baseball continued to evolve in the United States during the first half of the 20th century, it also continued to evolve in those Latin American countries previously mentioned but a bit differently than in the United States. In Latin America leagues were formed, disbanded and formed again. The Latin American countries eventually became the venues for American players to hone and refine their skills during the off season. More recently, in Mexico for example, some of the teams in the Mexican leagues have business relationships with Major League Baseball teams. They work directly with Major League Baseball as part of their minor league systems.

Baseball players became one of the major exports to the United States from these countries beginning in 1911 when Clark Griffith, owner of the Cincinnati Reds offered contracts to two Cuban players, Rafael Almeida and Armando Marsans. The Reds had been in Cuba in 1908 (when Cuba was governed by the United States after the end of the Spanish-American War) to play in a tournament. Griffith offered contracts to Almeida and Marsans on the advice of his staff though he had never seen them. Worried that the league would not permit them to play because of their skin color (integration did not take place in baseball until 1947), he personally went to the train station to meet them when they arrived. It has been said that Griffith was so

upset when he saw the skin color of the two Cubans that he almost suffered a heart attack. He didn't and after some controversy (the players were forced to sign documents stating they were of European, not African descent), it was decided that their skin was light enough for white baseball. Almeida played for three seasons and Marsans eight. They made it possible for other light-skinned Latinos to play in the majors like Dolf Luque who pitched for the Cincinnati Reds and New York Giants from 1914 until 1935. He was considered to be the first Latin American superstar in the major leagues. When he retired from pitching in the majors, "the pride of Havana" returned home to Cuba and pitched until he was 55. The first light skinned Mexican to play in the majors was Baldomero Almada who played from 1933-1939. Those whose skin was darker had no choice but to sign with the Negro Leagues if they wanted to play baseball in the United States. As a result, many Latino superstars such as José Méndez (1908-1927), Cristóbal Torriente (1913-1928), Martín Dihigo (1923-1947) and Pancho Coímbre (1926-1946) played only in the Negro Leagues or for teams from Mexico, Cuba, the Dominican Republic or Puerto Rico.

The final objectives for this curriculum unit will pertain to what I call the modern era of baseball, beginning in 1945. This will be the main part of the unit and the one that will include most of the activities. After learning about the Latino players who entered the major leagues after 1945, students will be able to:

1. Name at least five players who were among the first Latinos to play in the major leagues and discuss their accomplishments.
2. Name the cities in the United States where there is a Major League Baseball team as well as a significant Latino population and discuss the relationship between the Latino community and the team.
3. Name the Latinos who played for the Pittsburgh Pirates and compare the number of Latino players on the Pirates in each decade.
4. State their opinions regarding the future of Latinos playing Major League Baseball.
5. Name at least five current Latino players, where they play and discuss their impact on baseball and American society.

Background

The modern era of baseball in the United States began shortly after the end of World War II in 1945. Baseball began to change significantly as the second half of the 20th century

approached, due in large part to the conditions during World War II. Professional baseball was forced to adjust to a country at war. War took its toll on baseball as it did with most everything during those years. Many of baseball's stars including Joe DiMaggio, Stan Musial and Ted Williams took military leave to serve in the war. To fill the void, some teams hired players from Latin America to replace them temporarily. Rubber and wood which were needed to make baseballs and bats were in short supply as were other raw materials. Night games were restricted because of the shortage of electricity. But without a doubt, the most historic event in Major League Baseball occurred in 1945 when Branch Rickey, a scout for the Brooklyn Dodgers, signed Jackie Robinson, an African-American, to a minor league contract. This event shook the foundation of baseball as never before. Not only did this milestone open the door (ever so slightly at first) for African-Americans to play in the major leagues, but it opened the door for dark-skinned Latinos as well. Prior to 1945 African-American and dark-skinned Latino baseball players could only play in the Negro Leagues or for a team in one of the Caribbean countries or Mexico. As a result of integration, many of the Latino players who were playing in the Negro Leagues because of their dark skin color, were able to play in the major leagues. For many players this happened too late, but there was hope for those younger players just beginning their careers.

Signing a major league contract was by no means a guarantee that a player would play in the majors. It was difficult for Latinos to make the adjustment. In addition to the language and color barriers, it was an entirely different way of life. For many players it was their first venture out of their homeland. The Latino players were talented and ready to show off their skills, but they were not mentally prepared for the daily struggles of living in the United States. Many players were unable or chose not to continue playing in the major leagues.

Saturnino Orestes Arrieta Miñoso Armas (commonly known as Minnie Minoso) was the first black Latino to play in the major leagues after Jackie Robinson had paved the way. Miñoso had played professional ball in Cuba and Mexico before joining the Chicago White Sox in 1949 at the age of 26. He had a long and successful career before retiring in 1973. He actually came out of retirement to play again in 1976 and 1980. Beginning in the 1950s, major league teams offered Latino players contracts although they were not equal to the amounts that white players received. Being able to play in the major leagues was obviously only one hurdle. Like African-American players, Latino players also suffered from racism and discrimination all over the United States, especially when traveling in the south where segregation had not yet disappeared. Nonetheless, more Latino players began to enter the major leagues. The first Mexican player was Roberto "Bobby" Avila González, who like Miñoso joined the major leagues in 1949 although he began his career in Mexico in 1941. Again, he had to wait to play in the majors because of his skin color. Avila was an incredible player who became the first Latino batting champion in 1954 (beating out the legendary Ted Williams), and the same year he was voted Player of the Year by *The Sporting News*. He was selected to the All-Star team three times.

The names of Latino baseball players begin to appear in the record books after 1950. Through the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s and 1990s more and more Latino players than ever before were recognized by Major League Baseball for their accomplishments. After Minoso came Roberto Clemente, Orlando Cepeda and Chico Carrasquel. After them Juan Marichal, Camilo Pascual and Luis Tiant. After them Mike Cuellar, Rod Carew, and Fernando Valenzuela. After them George Bell, José Canseco and Joaquín Andujar. The list of Latino players has been increasing proportionate to the number of Latinos living in the United States, both famous and not so well known. And, in spite of the difficulties encountered by Latino players, since Roberto Avila's batting championship in 1954, there have been 23 other Latino champions. Add to that list 13 Latino "Most Valuable Players" since 1965 and 17 "Rookies of the Year" since 1956. The numbers are impressive and will continue to rise as more Latinos enter professional baseball. Clearly, much has changed over the last 50 years. Of the 849 players listed on major league rosters at the beginning of the 2002 season, 222 were born abroad, equaling one-quarter of the league. The numbers do not take into account those players who were born in the United States but are of Latino descent, like Alex Rodriguez, Tino Martinez and Luis Gonzalez. The Latinos on the rosters include 65 from the Dominican Republic, 38 from both Puerto Rico and Venezuela and 18 from Mexico. As we await the All-Star Game to be played in Milwaukee on July 9, 2002, it is interesting to look at the number of Latinos voted or selected to be on the team; the National League roster includes nine Latinos on the 30-man roster, almost one-third, and the American League roster includes 12, nearly half!

To say that Latinos have greatly influenced Major League Baseball in the United States is an understatement. To say that baseball is only "America's pastime" is inaccurate. From this curriculum unit I hope that my students learn about the relationship between baseball in the United States and in the Caribbean Basin. I also hope that they understand the changes that have taken place in Major League Baseball throughout the last century with respect to Latino players and that they understand and appreciate their efforts and contributions, and the impact that they have had on *Americas'* pastime.

Strategies

Students will be able to achieve the objectives for this curriculum unit through a variety of teaching methods. Strategies for teaching and learning include, but are not limited to: inductive and deductive methods, higher order thinking skills, independent research, small and large cooperative learning groups, classroom discussion, teacher centered instruction and use of technology. Classroom instruction and assessments will include the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. It is important for the teacher to be aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the students in a particular class so that the strategies used maximize learning and accommodate different learning styles.

Videos, movies, recordings, reading selections (in both Spanish and English), current information about Major League Baseball from its web site (www.mlb.com) and student and teacher made materials will all be included in this curriculum unit to achieve the objectives. Since the main objective for students in World Language classes is to speak in the target language, many activities will focus on students talking about baseball in Spanish--the players, game vocabulary, etc . . . In order to learn about the history of baseball in both the United States and Latin America, students will read articles that they have found or that the teacher has assigned. Students will also do individual research on Latino baseball players. Assessments will be in the form of oral presentations, oral and written question/answer tests and written projects.

Classroom Activities

This curriculum unit is designed to be flexible enough so that teachers can use its components sequentially over an extended period of time, or separately at different times during the school year.

A Brief History of Baseball's Beginnings in the United States (two or three class periods @ 40 minutes each)

Standards: WL; CO #3, #4, #6, #7; CI #1, #7

Since this part of the unit deals with baseball's early history in the United States, I do not want to spend a long time going over very detailed information. My students will have to be familiar with some of the history so that they will be able to compare it with baseball in Latin America. In order to keep this part of the unit related to learning the Spanish language, as part of the introduction, students will learn baseball terminology in Spanish.

The materials needed are: teacher-made outline of baseball's beginnings in the United States with important time periods, events and people. For example, vocabulary could include: rounders, townball, roundball, cricket; people: Abner Doubleday, Alexander Cartwright; time periods: 1850s --games played that were forerunners to modern baseball; 1860s--post civil war growth of baseball, first professional baseball team. Other materials would include: video of the Ken Burns film, *Baseball*, TV/VCR; list of baseball vocabulary in Spanish.

I would begin this unit by reviewing some words and asking questions in Spanish that level I students should know by midyear and Spanish II students should know at the beginning of the school year: el béisbol, los deportes, ¿Te gusta (jugar) (a)el béisbol?, ¿Juegas al béisbol?, ¿Quiénes son unos jugadores (de béisbol) famosos de los Estados Unidos?, ¿Vas a muchos partidos de béisbol?, ¿Cómo se llaman unos equipos de béisbol y las ciudades donde juegan? Then, I would introduce the unit by showing parts of the Ken Burns film *Baseball*. The video is divided into nine “innings” and is eleven hours long. Obviously the entire video could not be shown, particularly given the time constraints of 40 minute class periods. Because showing a video in English is not a particularly effective strategy in a language class, I would only show the parts about baseball in the United States from its inception until the end of the 19th century. (If the film were available on a DVD format and our school would purchase a DVD player, it is possible that the film could be shown in Spanish.)

After watching the video, Spanish II CAS students would be able to answer questions in Spanish, either aloud or in writing. They would complete the outline in pairs or groups of three and discuss the information afterward, preferably in Spanish. The teacher would be able to provide the students with any information that was not included in the video. Spanish I students would work in pairs or small groups as well, but they would complete the outline in English. An additional article written in English and reinforcing the video might be helpful for clarification. The discussion in Spanish I classes would almost have to be in English, although there is the possibility that they would know enough Spanish by the third quarter to do some of the work in Spanish. I would not necessarily assess the students on these activities since most of the material is in English and will only be used to prepare students for the Latin American baseball section of the unit.

After learning about the roots of baseball in the United States, I would transition into learning about the roots of baseball in Latin America by teaching vocabulary related to the actual game. Sometimes there are different vocabulary words in Spanish for one word in English. This applies to baseball vocabulary as well because of the many Spanish-speaking countries where baseball is played. It is important to choose one word (maybe two if they are both used equally) for each term, in order to avoid confusion. Students would be given a list of Spanish baseball vocabulary words and a picture of a baseball field with numbers on it. Working in teams of three or four, students will write the term in Spanish for the numbered position, place or person on the baseball field. Many of the words are cognates while others may be a bit more difficult to figure out. Depending on the age or maturity of the students, actual names of major league teams (in Spanish) or Latin American league teams could be assigned to each group. After all groups finish, the class will review the vocabulary and make sure that all the answers are correct. The teacher can make a large baseball field on a felt board or poster board and attach the correct word to the correct position so that the students can see the answers. Or, the teacher can use a transparency to review the correct positions for the vocabulary words. Assessment can be in the form of a speaking, listening or written vocabulary quiz.

A Brief History of Baseball's Beginnings in the Caribbean Basin (two or three class periods @ 40 minutes each)

Standards: WL; CO #2, #3, #4, #6, #7; CI #1, #2, #7, #9

This section of the curriculum unit will examine the early history of baseball in Latin America--when, where, why, how and who, from its beginnings through the early decades of the 20th century.

The materials needed are: a map of the United States, Mexico, Caribbean islands, Central America, South America; overhead projector and transparencies; articles in both Spanish and English about how baseball arrived in Spanish-speaking America; Internet resources available in a computer lab or library; print resources available in a library; an outline of key people and events during the early history of baseball in Latin America; TV/VCR and video of the Ken Burns film, *Baseball*.

One of the first activities that *all* of my students do at the beginning of each school year, regardless of the level of Spanish they are taking, is learn or review all of the countries where Spanish is spoken. Spanish I students may be familiar with a few countries, but they are required to learn them all. Spanish II students may have learned the countries the previous year, but I review them anyway. All levels are given a blank map and we go over the countries in class. After a sufficient amount of time to learn the names of the countries and where they are located, they are assessed. I usually give them a similar blank map to complete. I do this, not only because I believe it is important to know where people speak Spanish in the world, but as students beginning to learn the language, they really need to know the correct pronunciations of those countries. I find that high school students are reluctant to speak Spanish with anything other than their "American" accent and as early in the year as possible I try to encourage them to pronounce words the way they are meant to be pronounced.

Using the map of Spanish-speaking countries we would discuss those countries where baseball is played. I usually use transparencies on an overhead projector to show where the countries are located. After locating the countries, I would give them a reading selection about the history of baseball in Latin America that would include when, how and why baseball came to be played in Latin America, who the first Latino baseball players were and where they were from. For more advanced students, the reading might include information into the political situations and the American "occupation" of several Latin American countries where baseball was played at the beginning of the 20th century. The reading selection should also include information about the obstacles that prevented some Latinos from playing in the major leagues

and the choices they made to continue to play baseball. There are *many* articles that can be found on reliable web sites on the Internet. I would choose one in English for the Spanish I students and one in Spanish for the Spanish II students. The article could be assigned as a classroom reading activity or a homework activity. After reading the article, students would work individually or in pairs to complete an activity related to the reading material, that would include written and/or discussion questions. After completing the assignment, the entire class would have the opportunity to ask/answer questions and discuss the material. I would assess this section of the curriculum unit by giving my students a short written quiz about the reading selections and include a map as part of the assessment.

I also included the Ken Burns film in this section. If desired, the teacher could show any segments of the film pertaining to the development of baseball in Latin America in the latter part of the 19th century.

Latinos and Major League Baseball after 1945 (three to five class periods @ 40 minutes each)

Standards: WL; CO: #1, #2, #3, #4, #6, #7, #8; CI: #1, #2, #3, #4, #7, #9

The information in this section of the curriculum unit covers baseball in the United States and Latin America from 1945 to the present. The following classroom activities can be adapted for more advanced students studying Spanish or for students in elementary or middle school. Teachers can choose some or all of the activities in any order that suits their students, curriculum or time frame. The lessons can be taught in either Spanish or English, depending upon the level and ability of the students.

I have listed *all* the materials that will be needed for the following classroom activities. Some of the materials are appropriate for more than one of the activities, while other materials would only be used for one activity. The materials needed are: TV/VCR; video of the Ken Burns film *Baseball*; video of Latino superstars; video of Roberto Clemente; access to a computer with the Internet either at home, in a library or in a computer lab; teacher generated information on Latinos and Major League Baseball, for example: the rosters of the teams playing in the LCS (League Championship Series) and World Series (a good activity for October); a list of all the teams in Major League Baseball and the names of the teams who play in Latin American leagues; biographies of the seven Latino players in the Hall of Fame; a summary of baseball statistics of the Latino players for the current season and/or lifetime statistics; general information on Latinos who have played Major League Baseball; general information on players in Latin America; lists of Latino All-Star players, Most Valuable Players, Rookies of the Year, Cy Young winners; radio broadcast or telecast of a baseball game in Spanish. (If possible--many teams such as Los Angeles, Houston, San Diego and Florida air their games in both Spanish and English.)

Activity 1: I would begin the class with a brainstorming activity--students would name as many Latino baseball players possible, both past and present. Then, I would show a video of Latino superstars and compare those mentioned in the video and our list. I would assign the students (as homework) to find out where each player was from. They could find out the information on the Internet by using the Major League Baseball website, www.mlb.com, or use any other sources that were available to them. During the same class period we would write the names of the cities where there are Major League Baseball teams. Subsequently, I would distribute a list of the team names in English and Spanish and have the students match them. From our list of cities, we would name the cities that have significant Latino populations and if possible, which countries the Latinos came from. Then, if there was enough time left, the students would read an article or listen to a teacher (or guest speaker) presentation about the relationship between the Latinos and the cities where they play baseball. I would not necessarily give a formal assessment after this activity. I would most likely develop an in class matching or Jeopardy-like game to review the names of the teams in Spanish, the cities with significant Latino populations and well-known Latino players and their countries of origin.

Activity 2: At the beginning of class I would do a warm up-activity to get students thinking about Latino baseball players. We could go over the homework assignment from the previous activity, if in fact this activity was done the day after Activity 1. In any case, after talking about Latino baseball players I would write the names of the seven Latino players in the Hall of Fame on the chalkboard: Roberto Clemente, Martín Dihigo, Juan Marichal, Luis Aparicio, Rod Carew, Orlando Cepeda, Tony Pérez. If my students had ever heard of any of the players it would most likely be Roberto Clemente because he played in Pittsburgh. I would show any segments of the Ken Burns film *Baseball* if applicable to any of these players, or show a video on Latino superstars or give them a little background on each of the players. Then, I would divide the class into six groups. Each group would have sufficient time to *individually* read a short biography of one of the six Latino Hall of Fame players. (I have not included Roberto Clemente in this lesson. See Activity 3.) After reading the biography (English for Spanish I; Spanish for Spanish II), students would break out into their groups to discuss the questions that accompany the biographies. After completing the assignment, each group would be responsible for presenting information to the class about the player they read about. Each person would have to contribute to the presentation in order to receive credit for the assignment. Advanced Spanish II students could certainly present in Spanish while Spanish I students would probably have to speak in English. I would assess the students on the quality of their presentations, but I would also give them a short written quiz in paragraph form so that they would be accountable for the information from the other groups.

Activity 3: Roberto Clemente is nothing less than a legend in Pittsburgh. A bridge that connects downtown Pittsburgh to the new ballpark on Pittsburgh's North Shore has been named for him. There is a larger-than-life statue of Clemente outside one of the park's entrances. There are other tributes to Clemente throughout the city. I think it is important for this generation of

students to learn about Clemente, not just as a player, but as a person. (For this lesson, any other Latino baseball player could be substituted for Roberto Clemente.)

I would begin the class by showing one of the many videos about Roberto Clemente's life. It is important for students to understand that not only was he a great player, he was a great humanitarian. He died as a result of a plane crash in 1972 while on a mission to Nicaragua from Puerto Rico to deliver emergency supplies to help after a devastating earthquake. It is also important for students to know that because he spoke Spanish, he was often misunderstood and therefore criticized by the press because he was unable to clearly express himself in English. His name became "Bob" or "Bobby" (not his choice) as did many other Latino names in an effort to Americanize the players. Clemente and his fellow Latinos suffered through many indignities and unfair stereotypes of their behavior and playing styles.

After the video students would receive a biographical reading selection about Clemente to be used to answer questions, give additional information and help with the assessment. There would be a class question/answer/discussion after the video. There would be several factual questions to answer as well as opinion/discussion questions. Assessment would be in the form of a short written essay of two to four paragraphs. Students would be given two days to complete the assignment.

Another activity related to the Pirates (or any other team) would be to give students the team rosters from any one season from the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s and 1990s to see how the number of Latino players has changed over the last 40 years. I would also call the Pirates to see if any of the Latino players would be available to speak to my classes since all players are involved in public service projects.

Activity 4: Depending on how long a teacher wants to spend on this activity, s/he could spend one class period or stretch it into three. The teacher would need a supply of statistical information such as individual team rosters, All-Star team rosters, Most Valuable Player rosters, etc . . . which can all be found on the Internet or in a local newspaper. Spanish I students would receive team rosters and statistics. First they would find the Latino players and then learn/practice numbers by reviewing their personal statistics. Ordinal numbers could also be taught or reviewed by using the lists of "batting leaders," "pitching leaders," etc . . . This could be done as a class activity with one team or list, or the class could be divided into groups and each group would have one team or list to review. I would assess the students by asking them to draw conclusions and state their opinions about the influence and impact of Latino players on Major League Baseball. If students were looking for an extra credit project, they could possibly do a research project with a class presentation on a current Latino baseball player.

For Spanish II, the previous activity would be appropriate as a review or warm-up activity. After reviewing some of the current Latino players, I would make a list of players for the students to research. Each student would either choose a player or have one assigned by the teacher. One class period would be held in the library or computer lab. The students would have the time to begin their research with the help of the teacher. They would need to write an essay of four to six paragraphs on their baseball player. Certain criteria would be required such as: age, country of origin, full name, length of time playing, position and team, etc . . . All of the basic personal information could be written in Spanish. The essay would also have to include information about how this player was recruited and the type of philanthropic work he does for his country, their future, and any other information that is especially unique to this individual such as salary, awards, records, etc . . . The second part of the essay could be written in Spanish or English because not all Spanish II students have enough experience writing more than two paragraphs in Spanish. The students would have to find a picture of the player and display the picture along with basic information on a small poster board and present their information to the class. The essay, visual and presentation would all be included as the assessment.

A difficult activity to plan to reinforce listening skills would be for the students to listen to segments of a radio broadcast in Spanish over the Internet. Since Major League Baseball has strict copyright laws regarding reproduction of the games, students would listen to the game through the Internet (the teacher would assign the game and the radio station for homework), or the teacher could contact Major League Baseball to find out how to go about acquiring broadcasts for classroom usage. Telecasts are also possible over the Internet or through satellite dish television stations that air games in Spanish.

There is so much information on Latinos and baseball that students will have no trouble finding what they need. As always the teacher will have to closely scrutinize the information to make sure it is accurate. After this unit is completed, the teacher can reinforce the topic by continuing to make reference to newsworthy events about Latino baseball players.

Notes

1. Quoted in Stuart Hirschberg & Terry Hirschberg, *Every Day, Everywhere* (Boston: McGraw Hill, 2002) p. 2.

2. Quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 6.

3. Quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 5.

4. Quoted in *Baseball and the Civil War: Bats, Balls, and Bullets in Civil War Times Illustrated*, May 1998, p. 37.

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Websites and Internet Resources for Teachers and Students

www.mlb.com (Major League Baseball's site with links to all teams, records, etc...)

www.espn.com (Cable sports channel's website)

www.baseballhalloffame.org (Baseball Hall of Fame's website)

www.baseballasamerica.org (Website for traveling exhibition *Baseball As America*)

www.angelfire.com/ma/apuntes/beisbol.htm (Glossary of baseball vocabulary in Spanish)

www.latinosportslegends.com (short biographies and other articles on Latino baseball players)

www.baseball-reference.com (every baseball statistic you want--and then some!)

www.pacificpearl.com (Mexican baseball)

www.latinobaseball.com (articles by Latinos about players and baseball issues from a Latino standpoint)

www.all-sports-posters.com/history-of-baseball.html (Baseball history--United States)

www.sat.lib.tx.us/Displays/Exhibits/LatinoSports/facts.htm (Mexican baseball players)

www.thepanamanews.com (Baseball in Panama)

www.pubdim.net/baseballlibrary/ballplayers/M/Mexican_League.stm (the Mexican League)

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Wilson, Nick. El largo camino hasta las Ligas Mayores, *La Voz de Colorado*, June 27, 2001.

Appendix-Content Standards

The following standards have been addressed in this curriculum unit:

Pittsburgh Public Schools

World Language (WL--or #9 CO):

All students converse, at a minimum level of 'Intermediate Low,' as defined in the oral proficiency guidelines developed by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), in at least one language other than English, including the native language if other than English.

Communications Standards (CO):

#1: All students use effective research and information management skills, including locating primary and secondary sources of information with traditional and emerging library technologies;

#2: All students read and use a variety of methods to make sense of various kinds of complex texts.

#3: All students respond orally and in writing to information and ideas gained by reading narrative and informational texts and use the information and ideas to make decisions and solve problems;

#4: All students write for a variety of purposes, including to narrate, inform, and persuade, in all subject areas;

#6: All students exchange information orally, including understanding and giving spoken instructions, asking and answering questions appropriately, and promoting effective group communications;

#7: All students listen to and understand complex oral messages and identify the purpose, structure, and use;

#8: All students compose and make oral presentations for each academic area of study that are designed to persuade, inform, or describe;

Citizenship Standards(CI):

#1: All students demonstrate an understanding of major events, cultures, groups and individuals in the historical development of Pennsylvania, the United States and other nations, and describe themes and patterns of historical development;

#2: All students demonstrate understanding of themes and patterns of geography, know the location of major bodies of water, land masses nations, and describe the relationships between geography and historical, economic and cultural development;

#3: All students describe the development and operations of economic, political, legal and governmental systems in the United States, assess their own relationships to those systems, and compare them to those in other nations;

#4: All students examine and evaluate problems facing citizens in their communities, state, nation and world by incorporating concepts and methods of inquiry of the various social sciences;

#7: All students demonstrate their skills of communicating, negotiating and cooperating with others;

#9: All students demonstrate an understanding of the history and nature of prejudice and relate their knowledge to current issues facing communities, the United States and other nations.

Additionally, this unit has been designed to incorporate the Pennsylvania Modern Language Association (PSMLA) Standards which are:

#1: Students communicate and create in a second language;

#2: Students apply knowledge of the second language cultures;

#3: Students use world languages to connect with other subject areas and acquire information;

#4: Students use the second language to communicate beyond the classroom.

Finally, at the national level, this curriculum unit addresses the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Standard:

“Students will be able to function (read, write, understand, speak) as accurately as possible within contexts and situations they encounter with native speakers,” and the five national standards (the 5C’s): “Communication, Culture, Connections, Comparisons, Communities.”