

Big Idea(s): *I want my students to understand that.....despite many obvious differences between cultures, many cultures have similarities between them, and all cultures have value—one is not better than another.*

State Standards: Social Studies 6-W3.1.3 Describe similarities and differences among Mayan, Aztec, and Incan societies, including economy, religion, and role and class structure

Language of Instruction: English (if materials can be found for these activities, or time allows for translation, it will be taught in Spanish)

Grade Level: 6th grade

Focus on the same big idea throughout each phase of the lesson cycle.

<p>Stage of Lesson Cycle</p> <p>Preview Stage – preparing students for success</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preview ideas, concepts, and strategies in a non-verbal, physical or pictorial manner. • Practice academic oral language in target language. • Use highly comprehensible yet cognitively challenging activities. • Provide survival language via the curriculum. • Put students in heterogeneous groups. 	<p>Content Objectives – Students will: identify and categorize key vocabulary pertaining to the Mayan, Aztec, and Incan cultures, particularly words associated with the economy, religion, and daily life</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy: closed word sort • Student grouping: planned partnerships • Differentiation: use of illustrations for defining key terms <p><u>Description:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will be partnered by the teacher based on language skills (L1 with L2). Each partner group will receive an envelope with color coded pieces of paper, each one with a key vocabulary term on it. Categories (economy, religion, society) will be provided for them . • Students will use their prior knowledge (from previous lessons this years and other readings) to categorize the terms in the correct categories. This activity is not intended to elicit the correct answer this first time—its purpose is to expose the students to the terms, help them realize that some words they do already know, and to pique their interest in the different terms. The sheets are color-coded according to the civilization they represent, so this is an added layer for them to classify as well. • As a class, using the Elmo technology, we will discuss where students put words by having individuals come to the Elmo to place them in a category. As they do, I will pronounce the word and then the class will say it. The person placing it on the Elmo will say it again as it is placed. • After we have discussed them, I will guide them into placing the terms in the correct categories. We will then explore the color-coding of the paper, to see if any students can figure out what the colors signify. Meanings of new terms will be discussed, with students including them in their word bank inside their folder. <p>Language Objectives: - <i>Students will: become familiar with words that are from the indigenous languages found in these 3 cultures.</i> L1 students will write descriptions in complete sentences for the key</p>
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	<p>vocabulary. L2 students will define key vocabulary using illustrations The key vocabulary for the word sort includes the following words</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aztec, 1250 to 1521 AD, Stone of the Sun, Tenochtitlán, huey tlatoni, Quetzacoatl, Moctezuma II • Inca, 1438 to 1532 AD, Cuzco, Machu Picchu, Tapa Inca, terraces, allyu, emperor, quipu • Maya, 250 BC to 900 AD, Yucatán peninsula, Sacred Calendar, pyramids, hieroglyphics, Solar Calendar, base 20 mathematical system, Uxmal, Chichén Itzá, stelae
<p><u>Focused Learning Stage</u> – making the connection between oral language and literacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce literacy. • Readings available at many different levels in the target language. • Continued practice of oral academic and survival language, as well as literacy. • Use graphic organizers with text. • Guided reading or writing activities. 	<p><u>Content Objectives</u> – <i>Students will:</i> be able to identify the main components of the Incan, Mayan, and Aztec government and economic systems, role and class structure, as well as the time period in which each group was dominant, their religion, and important cities</p> <p><u>Strategy</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partners (same pairings as used in previous phase) • Compare/Contrast matrix • Read-Pause-Say Something <p><u>Student grouping</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planned partnerships based on language (L1 with L2) <p><u>Differentiation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While all students will read the same articles, there is a table of contents available for the online articles that will allow L2 students to go directly to the sections that correspond to the headings on the matrix, while L1 students or L2 students with stronger language skills can simply read through the articles. Headings for the matrix correspond to the article section headings.

Language Objectives: - *Students will:* continue to develop familiarity with and use of vocabulary from the word sort. This applies to L1 and L2 students, since much of the vocabulary includes words in the groups' indigenous language.

- Both L1 and L2 students will increase reading fluency through repeated readings of the shorter reading passage.

Description :

- After reviewing the vocabulary from the word sort, students will begin constructing the compare/contrast matrix with a partner (each person does their own). Using the Elmo, the teacher will guide students in labeling the category headings on the matrix. The headings along the left side (vertical) are Aztec, Inca, and Maya. The headings along the top of the matrix (horizontal) are Time Period, Ruler/Government, Economy/Commerce, Social Classes, Religion, Important Cities
- Using the laptop connected to the Elmo while each student pair has one laptop, the teacher will guide the students to the first article on the Aztecs located at Grolier.com. As students follow along on their laptops, the teacher will read the article through one time. After that reading, the partners will read through it. Each person will read one paragraph and when finished with it, will pause and say what they understood to be applicable to the matrix (students have used this strategy before). Using this first article on the Aztecs, students will fill in as much as possible of the matrix.
- Students will read a second, shorter article on the Aztecs, which the teacher will once again read through first as the students follow along. The same Read-Pause-Say Something strategy will be used. Students will complete the matrix with new information found in this article.
- The same procedure will be followed for the Inca and Maya groups of

	<p>people, with a longer, online article being used, followed by a shorter one.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The shorter articles will be used for repeated readings during an additional language arts time period. This fluency strategy helps both L1 and L2 readers with fluency, as well as familiarizing them with the vocabulary for this lesson.
<p><u>Application Stage</u> – students demonstrate what they have learned</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on independent use of skills and demonstration of understanding of big idea/lesson focus. • Provide differentiated activities for linguistically and academically heterogeneous groups. • Teachers can ask students to prepare an oral presentation/performance (pairs, small groups or whole class). • Students complete a real-world project or product. 	<p><u>Content Objectives</u> – <i>Students will:</i> demonstrate an understanding of the similarities and differences between the Aztec, Maya, and Inca groups, using the vocabulary that has been the focus during these lessons.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy—Three-way Venn diagram, Connect Two • Student grouping—planned partnerships from previous phases • Differentiation—use of template for completing Connect Two activity <p><u>Language Objectives:</u> - <i>Students will:</i> use the vocabulary associated with the lesson and demonstrate an understanding of the words’ meanings through the completion of the two strategies.</p> <p><u>Description:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a whole class, we will review the matrix and discuss some of the information students found. • Students will be given a Three-way Venn diagram that allows the student pairs to compare and contrast the three indigenous groups. In order to help students better understand how to use it, I will do a mock three-way Venn diagram for the students, comparing and contrasting myself with the other two six grade teachers. This will be a short modeling of it, but enough for them to understand what they need to do. • Using their matrices, student pairs will work together so that each of them has a completed Venn diagram. • Once the Venn diagram is completed, students will use their knowledge of the terms and ideas to complete the variation of

	<p>Connect Two, in which students will show a further understanding of how two concepts are connected, or are different, by explaining that connection or difference. In this activity, the L2 students will be given a template they can use to demonstrate their understanding of the connections between the concepts. L1 students will also have the template, but will be expected to add more detail in their responses (all students will be writing their connections on a sheet of paper separate from the sentence template).</p>
<p><u>Bridge Activity from English to Spanish (integrating Language Arts with Social Studies)</u></p>	<p><u>Content Objective:</u> Students will show an understanding of the similarities and differences between the Aztec, Maya, and Inca civilizations through the writing of a compare and contrast essay.</p> <p><u>Strategy:</u> Comparación-Contraste template for students to use in order to build their essay.</p> <p><u>Student Grouping:</u> Students remain in their partnerships, which were based on L1 and L2 abilities.</p> <p><u>Differentiation:</u> L2 students will be expected to complete their essays using the template, but L1 students will be expected to add more detail to their essays.</p> <p><u>Description:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While the teacher uses the ELMO to view them, each pair of students will receive a copy of three articles, while in Spanish printed from the “Aula de Español” at Grolier online. These articles are short and use basic Spanish, so the L2s will be able to recognize many of the words. Many of the highlighted words in the articles are the Spanish equivalents of the English vocabulary words. The indigenous words remain the same. The teacher will read through the articles first, then the class will read through it, and finally, the pairs of students will take turns reading it. Students will have their matrices and Venn diagrams with them to compare what they have noted earlier in English with what they are finding now in Spanish. • Using the information from the articles, students will complete the Comparación—Contraste paragraph template, in which they will need to demonstrate their understanding of the similarities and differences between the groups.

Questions for Self-Reflection

- Did the lesson cycle work out the way you thought it would?
- What worked well? What would you do differently next time you implement this lesson?
- How did the lesson address the different academic abilities of your students?
- How did the lesson address the different language proficiencies of your students?
- How effective was the lesson in bringing all students to an understanding of the big idea?
- How will implementation of this lesson cycle affect your teaching as a whole?
- What did you learn about your teaching?
- What did you learn about learning?

Well, where do I begin in describing my experience with this lesson? It was both a stimulating, yet frustrating, experience on so many levels, but also one that too often reflects teaching today. I need to preface my reflection by mentioning the realities of my classroom in the last three weeks. We had basically from April 23 until May 13 to implement this lesson plan, but as teachers know so well, plans do not always go as one intended for them to. So, at our school, we were in the process of completing our science fair for 4th-8th grade, which begins calmly, but as it nears the deadline (May 1st), becomes a frenzy of last minute typing, supply gathering for experiments that were not done at home, display board design and completion, and so much more. All of this on top of using laptop computers that have suddenly decided they are too old to move at the speed at which the students are typing. When laptops can't keep up with 6th graders pecking style of typing, you know they are slow. As if the enormous amount of time spent on science fair projects was not enough, we received word from the district that our district writing prompts had to be administered the week of April 28-May 2. Clearly the district did not care that we were plugging away at our science fair boards at this same time, while also trying to implement a three phase lesson cycle! The writing prompts for 6th grade, however, are not just *writing* prompts. No, no. They are also *typing* prompts, as our students have to write them out, then type them into Microsoft Word, and then cut and paste them onto a website where they are magically scored within 30 seconds. Remember the laptops that weren't working well for typing science fair board headings? They were also not working well for typing page-long essays. Essays were lost due to the short (15 minutes) life of some of the batteries, outlets were taken up with plugged-in laptops, but there were not enough outlets, so if students did not remember to save every paragraph they typed before the battery died, they had to retype it 15 minutes later when the laptop rebooted back up again. Needless to say, our 6th grade essays were just finished on May 12, even after spending 2 ½ hours working on them both Thursday and Friday of last week.

Where does that leave my implementation of my three phase lesson cycle? Hmmm, trying my best to fit it in where I can. As a result, my reflection on it will not be what I hoped it would be. I was really excited to teach the cycle as I had planned it, but it just was not possible. On top of the science fair and writing prompt issues, the volunteer I had asked to copy my words for the word sort, my opening activity, managed to not follow the instructions I gave her and, rather than keeping each individual word sort clipped together, she decided to clip together all of the same words (!!), because she "wasn't sure if that was what I wanted or not". So, rather than being able to implement the word sort the very next day, as planned, I had to find the time to lay out all of the small pieces of paper in their paper clipped piles, and then take one from each pile to make a complete word sort pack. As if that weren't enough, some of the pieces had been cut in half and other words had six papers left in their piles while others had run out. How this happened, I have no idea, but it was not a good start and I was extremely frustrated.

As a result of these unexpected issues, I had to reassess my timeframe and what was realistic for me to get done. What I ended up doing, and what I was able to complete, worked out well, but it was not as I had planned. I did not change my written lesson plan above to reflect these changes, however, because they are not what I will do next year when I teach this unit on Mexico, Central America, and South America. However, I will explain here what I changed and how it worked out.

For the word sort, since we did not have the actual papers, I ended up writing the words on the white board (color coded) and had the students copy them down, and then put them into the categories. This worked and the students enjoyed it, but I think the manipulation of the word papers is an important part of a word sort. Next year, I will do the word sort, having made the copies myself. Students were working with their partners and I was pleasantly surprised at how well most of them did. Any problems that arose were the result of personality issues between students (they are 6th graders) and not the language issue.

Due to the laptop issues, we were not able to access the Grolier articles, but I instead incorporated the use of some old textbooks we've held onto that actually do a decent job of presenting these three civilizations. The information contained in the text was laid out in almost the same format, so the matrix worked with them, as well. All of my students were very excited during our work on this. There was a lot more spontaneous oral comparisons of the cultures than I had anticipated—students discovering similarities or differences and just announcing out loud “Hey, that’s just like the Aztecs!”. We were able to use the shorter articles from Grolier, due to the fact that I could print those out and make copies for students. Those were used for gaining more information, but also for the fluency practice. Again, students’ enthusiasm for the material was more than I had anticipated.

Unfortunately, we did not get any farther than this in the lesson cycle implementation. The three-way Venn diagram will be completed, as will the rest of the lesson, when I get back. I was able to implement enough of the lesson, however, to realize that it was a really effective plan for my students. I can honestly say that all of the students were engaged and interested in the material, and were orally sharing ideas and observations with each other. The student pairings worked out well for all levels of academic ability, because students felt supported in their work with the material—they could think through things with their partner, question, get feedback from the partner, etc. The language proficiency level differences, although obviously present throughout, did not seem as pronounced due to the fact that the learning was taking place in such varied manners. My two Spanish-dominant students were interacting with their partners and using the vocabulary to express their ideas. One form of assessment that I did incorporate into the lessons was an association illustration, in which I gave the students a blank sheet of paper and had them write the name of the civilization in the middle of it. On the rest of the paper, they had to draw and label different aspects of that culture, such as corn, temples, weavings, jade masks, solar calendars, and hieroglyphics for the Mayans—illustrating what they associated with that group. The students loved it and the illustrations showed me what they understood about the content. It was also another means by which they can compare, because they now have three of these association illustrations that they can put side by side and note the similarities and differences. My Spanish-dominant students are both great illustrators, so they really felt empowered by the opportunity to share their understanding through an area of strength for them.

Overall, despite all of the setbacks, I found this three phase lesson cycle to be very effective in organizing my instruction in such a way as to support all of my students in their learning and to ensure that the content was presented to them in a variety of ways. *Intentionally* thinking about the three phases makes my instruction more effective, I believe, because it taps into how I learn best—by being presented with the material in several different ways and then using it in a variety of formats. Over the summer, I plan to sit down and look at other units and try to incorporate the lesson cycle into those, reworking what I do so that it is more in line with that format. I also learned that while I as a teacher may know the frustrations and the stress about trying to fit things into deadlines, my students don't, nor should they. I was really anxious about not even getting to the lesson, but when I did, my students were so excited about the content and the activities we did, I realized I just needed to do what I could get done and focus on what was important—that my students were learning and they were excited to do so. If I had cut out any part of the lesson plan or just decided to do something else quickly due to time constraints, they would never have achieved the deeper understanding they have right now, and will continue to develop when I get back. That, in and of itself, was a valuable learning experience for me.