

Curriculum Unit Title: “Following in the Footsteps of Diego Rivera”

Author: Patrick Wininger
Short Pump Middle School
Richmond VA

Subject Area(s): Spanish, Social Studies, Art

Topic: Diego Rivera and his work, particularly murals

Grade Levels: 5–8

Time Frame: Eight lessons, with variable time frames

Summary of Unit:

Students will learn:

- who Diego Rivera was.
- how he used muralism to communicate the story of his country to his people and the rest of the world.
- about muralism as an international art form, and particularly Mexican muralism.
- how to plan and create their own murals depicting a day in the life of their school, in the manner of Diego Rivera.

Objectives:

By the end of this unit, students will be able to:

1. Discover and recount the life of Diego Rivera, identifying the key events of his life.
2. Discuss the nature and importance of art as a means of communication, education, and preserving history.
3. Demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of muralism as an art form and how it was used by Rivera to communicate his feelings for Mexico and the people/events in its history and culture.
4. Identify content for student murals regarding a day in the life of their school and their own places in it.
5. Create their own murals, using the characteristics of Rivera’s work as a model and guide.

Introduction:

In a world of constant visual bombardment and stimulation, students frequently lose the opportunity to spend time with art, to consider it, and to respond to it. When art is perceived to be a form of communication, it takes on a whole new meaning and purpose. Students need to understand that all art is an expression of reality as uniquely seen through the eyes of the artist, and that responding to those perceptions expands our own experience of the world in which we live.

This curriculum unit, “Following in the Footsteps of Diego Rivera,” teaches students not only about the artist, his life, and his works, but how to appropriate that approach to art to make it their own expressions of reality. Rivera’s work demonstrates how art can be educational, inspirational, a source of meaning and identity, and an expression of pride and esteem. The students who participate in this unit will not only learn how Rivera came to create such art, but will themselves have the chance to apply what they have learned in the creation of their own murals, hopefully to the same ends.

There is a lot of content in this unit! I want to encourage you to adapt it to your needs and objectives, and not to feel bound by the structure you find here. Lesson plans, much like works of art, are the unique expression of their creator, and you must use these as you see fit to create what is unique to you and your students. I encourage you to apply boldly your own broad brushstrokes and create your own masterpiece!

Diego Rivera was a man of great passion, talent, and pride, and I hope that your students will see that. It is evident in his work, should we but allow ourselves to feel what we see. It is my hope that your students will not only learn this about him, but see it in themselves as well.

Unit Overview:

This unit is complete and ready to use. Accompanying PowerPoint and rubrics can be downloaded from this Web site:

<http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/etext/llilas/outreach/fulbright09/>

NOTE: The following is a suggested number and order of lessons for this project. Depending on the length of class and level/ability of students, teachers may want to expand or contract the lessons of this unit.

Lesson 1: Discovering the Life of Diego Rivera: Part 1

Students will identify who Diego Rivera is, as well as the key events, accomplishments, and disappointments of his life, and will demonstrate that knowledge by the creation of a timeline of Rivera's life and the significant events therein.

Lesson 2: Discovering the Life of Diego Rivera: Part 2

Students will identify the unique characteristics of Rivera's murals and apply those characteristics to the analysis of his work.

Lesson 3: Muralism as a Form of Storytelling

Students will, based upon the discussion in class, create their own definition of what "art" is, identify the unique characteristics of muralism as an art form, and explain how it acts as a means of communication from the artist to those who view the mural.

Lesson 4: What is Mexican Muralism?

Students will identify the key characteristics of Mexican muralism and the three main contributors to the movement; compare and contrast the three; and express, by means of a short essay, their own reactions to the works.

Lesson 5: Telling Your Story

Students will identify the events that they think are important to their lives, as well as how those events have affected their lives, and arrange them in chronological order in the form of a personal timeline.

Lesson 6: A Day in the Life of Your School

Students will identify the key research areas for inclusion on their murals and the sources to where/whom they must go to address the key research areas. They will also begin the research process by documenting their own answers to the research questions.

Lesson 7: Planning the Group Mural

Students will collaborate in small project groups in identifying the theme for the mural as well as the resources needed for successful completion of the project. Students will also identify the specific content of the mural, the medium to be used in its execution, and the applicable skills and abilities that each partner will contribute to the project.

Lesson 8: Creating the Group Mural

Students will collaborate in small project groups to create a mural consistent with the theme and content chosen in the prior unit. Students will also complete a self-evaluation of performance on the project, as well as peer evaluations of group project partners and their contributions to the project.

Post-unit:

Murals may be displayed in a public place in school for enjoyment and education of fellow students. Students may vote for:

- Best of show
- Most artistic
- Best use of media
- Most like Diego Rivera

These are only suggestions, and other categories may certainly be used as best fits the local environment.

Sources:

All PowerPoint script content and images regarding Diego Rivera, Orozco, and Siqueiros can be found in:

Kettenmann, Andrea, Diego Rivera 1886–1957, A Revolutionary Spirit in Modern Art, México D.F., TASCHEN GmbH, 2003

All script content regarding muralism can be found in:

Braun-Reinitz, Janet and Rochelle Shicoff, The Mural Book: A Practical Guide for Educators, Hong Kong, Crystal Productions Co., 2001

All other images are found online, and their URLs are listed in each lesson.

Lesson 1: Discovering the Life of Diego Rivera: Part 1

Learning Objective:

By the end of the lesson, students will have identified who is Diego Rivera as well as the key events, accomplishments, disappointments of his life, and will have demonstrated that knowledge by the creation of a timeline of Rivera's life and the significant events therein.

Essential Questions:

Who was Diego Rivera?

What were the significant events of Rivera's life?

Content:

Script and PowerPoint presentation of biography of Diego Rivera (ppt downloadable from: <http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/etext/llilas/outreach/fulbright09/>)

Learning Activities:

Create a timeline of the life of Diego Rivera. Include key life events, works of art (images), travel, successes, failures, people (pictures), places (pictures).

Assessment:

Diego Rivera timeline rubric

“Who was Diego Rivera?” PowerPoint Presentation

Script/bullet points:

Introduction/Overview

- He was a world-famous Mexican whose large wall works in fresco helped establish the *Mexican Mural Renaissance*. Between 1922 and 1953, Rivera painted murals in Mexico City, Chapingo, Cuernavaca, San Francisco, Detroit, and New York City. In 1931, a retrospective exhibition of his works was displayed at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City.

What were the significant events of Rivera’s life?

Early life

- Diego Rivera (December 8, 1886 – November 24, 1957) was born Diego María de la Concepción Juan Nepomuceno Estanislao de la Rivera y Barrientos Acosta y Rodríguez (*show “1886: Birth”*) in Guanajuato, Gto, Mexico (*show “Guanajato, Mexico”*) His twin brother died at the age of 18 months.
- Even as a four year-old child, Diego showed great artistic talent (*show “Talent at an Early Age”*).
- From the age of ten, Rivera studied art at the Academy of San Carlos in Mexico City (*show “1902: Early Training”*). He was sponsored to continue study in Europe by the governor of the State of Veracruz.
- After arrival in Europe in 1907, Rivera initially went to study in Madrid, Spain, (*show “1907: Madrid, Spain”*) and from there went to Paris, France (*show “1909: Off to Paris, France”*) to live and work with the great gathering of artists there.
- From 1913 to 1917, Rivera enthusiastically embraced the new school of art called “Cubism” (*show “1913: Exploring Cubism”*) .

Career in Mexico

- In 1920 Rivera left France and traveled through Italy studying its art, including Renaissance frescoes (*show “1920: Italy and Renaissance Art”*). It was during this trip that Rivera reacquainted himself with classic Renaissance art forms, content, and style, which would have a significant impact on his future work.
- At the request of the Mexican government, Rivera returned to Mexico in 1921 to become involved in the government-sponsored Mexican mural program.
- From 1922 to 1923, Rivera painted his first significant mural, *Creation*, in the

Bolívar Auditorium of the National Preparatory School in Mexico (*show “1921: Return to Mexico: First Mural”*).

- From 1922 forward, Rivera’s murals in Mexico, subsequently painted in fresco only, dealt with Mexican society and reflected the country’s 1910 Revolution.
- Rivera developed his own native style based on large, simplified figures and bold colors with an Aztec influence clearly present in murals at the Secretariat of Public Education in Mexico City (*show “Cultural and Historical Influences in Future Works”*) begun in September 1922, intended to consist of one hundred and twenty-four frescoes, and finished in 1928.
- Rivera married Frida Kahlo in August 1929 (*show “1929: Marriage to Frida Kahlo”*). Kahlo was the preeminent woman artist in Mexico, and continues to have great popularity around the world today. Her works are personal, passionate, and pain-filled, all characteristics of her marriage to Rivera. Over time they were married, divorced, and remarried, remaining married until her death in 1954.

Later work abroad

- In September 1930, Rivera painted a mural for the City Club of the San Francisco Stock Exchange and a fresco for the California School of Fine Art, which is now in the San Francisco Art Institute (*show “1931: California”*).
- In November 1931, Rivera had a retrospective exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City.
- Between 1932 and 1933, he completed a famous series of twenty-seven fresco panels entitled *Detroit Industry* on the walls of an inner court at the Detroit Institute of Arts (*show “1932: Detroit”*).
- His mural *Man at the Crossroads*, begun in 1933 for the Rockefeller Center in New York City, was removed after a furor erupted in the press over a portrait of Vladimir Lenin it contained (*show “1933: Rejected in New York”*). The partly completed work was painted over, a cause of great sadness to Rivera. As a result of the negative publicity, a further commission was cancelled to paint a mural for an exhibition at the Chicago World's Fair.
- In December 1933, Rivera returned to Mexico, and he repainted *Man at the Crossroads* in 1934 in the Palacio de Bellas Artes in Mexico City. This surviving version was called *Man, Controller of the Universe* (*show “1933: Return to Mexico”*).
- On June 5, 1940, Rivera returned for the last time to the United States to paint a ten-panel mural for the Golden Gate International Exposition in San Francisco. *Pan American Unity* was completed November 29, 1940 (*show “1940: Return to U.S.”*). The mural and its archives reside at City College of San Francisco.
- He divorced Frida Kahlo in 1939, but they remarried December 8, 1940 in San Francisco. She died in 1954.

- Rivera's final murals included *Water, Origin of Life* in Mexico City (1951), as well as *History of the Theatre in Mexico* (1953), and the mosaic mural *Tlaloc, the Rain God* (1951) (*show "1951–1957: Final Years—Murals"*).
- Rivera's work on portraits, especially of those who were close to him, friends and acquaintances, increased during this period of his life (*show "1951-1957: Final Years—Portraits"*).
- Rivera married Emma Hurtado, his agent since 1946, on July 29, 1955.
- Rivera died of heart attack on November 24, 1957 (*show "1957: Rivera Dies"*).

Conclusion

Diego Rivera was a man and artist of extraordinary passion, idealism, and pride in his country and culture. He was one of the major creators of and contributors to the art form of Mexican muralism, an art form which, he believed, gave the common classes of society the chance to see, appreciate, and take pride in their cultural and political heritage.

Rivera will always be remembered as a man whose life and art were one and the same, and as someone who believed in the ability and potential of man to create a better and more just society for all.

Learning Activity:

Create a timeline of the life of Diego Rivera

Using large pieces of butcher paper, have small groups of students create a timeline of the life of Diego Rivera. Include key life events, works of art (images), travel, successes, failures, people (pictures), places (pictures).

Resources needed:

Packet with images for pasting/gluing on timeline, handout with biographical data, glue, markers, scissors, yardsticks/rulers (for drawing timeline—this could be the PowerPoint presentation used during teacher presentation). *If students have access to computers/printers, they can find images online and print them for inclusion on timeline.*

- Have students draw a straight line on the entire length of the butcher paper. Students will write “Diego Rivera: A Timeline of his Life and Work” at the top.
- Students will then mark the left end of the line as the birth of Rivera and the right end of the line as the death of Rivera, using dates.
- Students, using the resources of the packet or the online resources they have found, will cut and paste images of the significant events, people, works, etc. of Rivera’s life along the timeline, along with the years in which those things took place. All images of paintings must be marked with their titles and years of creation. All pictures of people must be labeled with their identities.
- After putting all content on the timeline, students may decorate their timeline charts however they want to, as long as it does not detract from the timeline.

Assessment:

Use **Rubric for Diego Rivera Timeline** (downloadable from <http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/etext/llilas/outreach/fulbright09/>)

Homework:

Complete timeline activity.

Lesson 2: Discovering the Life of Diego Rivera: Part 2

Learning Objective:

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to identify the unique characteristics of Rivera's murals and apply those characteristics to the analysis of his work.

Essential Questions:

What did Rivera believe was the best way to share his passion for his country?

How did Rivera use his art to communicate what mattered to him about Mexico?

When you look at Rivera's murals, what do you see?

What does Rivera's art reveal to you about Mexico and its history?

In your opinion, what were the three things in Rivera's life that most influenced how/what he painted?

Content:

PowerPoint presentation of Rivera's works, including murals and traditional art, with background information for each

Learning Activities:

Create your own Diego Rivera art gallery, showcasing the works of Diego Rivera that you like most. Include the titles of the works and give a brief summary of each work, as well as why they appeal to you.

Assessment:

Rubric for art gallery and essay (teacher will identify "required elements" according to grade-level and ability of students)

Overview of Rivera's Murals: Content, Style, Technique

Have students take notes on attached handout. Once completed, use the style list on the handout to evaluate the content of Rivera's murals as shown in the PowerPoint presentation.)

What were the things in Rivera's life that most influenced how/what he painted in Mexico?

- The desire to educate the Mexican people to their identity, heritage, and their potential for the future
- The history of Mexico
 - Origins—both the history and mythology of Indian civilizations prior to the arrival of Christopher Columbus
 - Conquest by the Europeans and its effect on the Indians
- The day-to-day life of the Mexican people, especially the indigenous peoples (Indians)
 - Traditional art, dress, customs
- His political beliefs and values
 - Revolutionary ideals
 - Communism/Marxism—approaches to government where all people own all material, economic, and social resources in common
 - Utopian conviction: “that man can creatively change society to achieve a better and more just future” (Ketterman, 2003)

What made Rivera's art unique?

- Used the **fresco** form (this will be discussed in a future lesson) in universities, public buildings, and publicly-accessible spaces to introduce his work into the everyday lives of the people, especially the working class.
- For him, the frescoes' size and public accessibility was the perfect canvas on which to tackle the grand themes of the history and future of humanity. A lifelong Marxist, Rivera saw in this medium an antidote to the elite walls of galleries and museums.
- Use of Mexican heritage, mythology, and pre-conquest history celebrated the Mexican peoples and their history, including the celebration of the Revolution of 1910.
- Rivera concerned himself primarily with the physical process of human development and the effects of technological progress.

For more info: <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/americanmasters/episodes/diego-rivera/about-the-artist/64/>

PowerPoint Presentation (downloadable from <http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/etext/llilas/outreach/fulbright09/>):

Mural 1: La Creación (Creation), 1922–1923 (*show “La Creación”*)

- Creation is the first mural that Rivera painted, in the Bolívar Amphitheatre at the National Preparatory School at the College on San Ildefonso in Mexico City.
- Have students come up to the screen and try to identify the different elements of the mural: religious, European, Mexican, natural, etc.
- Ask students to work together to come up with the story that they think Rivera is trying to tell with this mural. What does he want the viewer to see/know/understand/learn? Have students write down what they see in the mural.
- Rivera: the themes of Creation show “the origins of the sciences and the arts, a kind of condensed version of human history.”

Mural 2: Viernes de dolores en la canal de Santa Anita (Good Friday on the Santa Anita Canal), 1923–1924 (*show “Viernes de dolores en la canal de Santa Anita”*)

- This mural is part of the “Political Vision of the Mexican People” (1923–1928), painted in the arcaded walls of the three-story inner courtyard buildings of the Ministry of Education in Mexico City.
- Ask the following questions to the students and have them discuss:
 - What is the story that Rivera is trying to tell us in this part of the mural?
 - What is happening in the mural (i.e., what kind of activities are taking place)?
 - What different kinds of people do you see in the mural?

Mural 3: El arsenal–Frida Kahlo repartiendo armas (The Arsenal–Frida Kahlo Distributes Arms), 1928 (*show “El arsenal—Frida Kahlo repartiendo armas”*)

- This mural is another part of the “Political Vision of the Mexican People” (1923–1928), painted in the arcaded walls of the three-story inner courtyard buildings of the Ministry of Education in Mexico City.
- Ask the following questions to the students and have them discuss:
 - What is the story that Rivera is trying to tell us in this part of the mural?
 - What is happening in the mural (i.e., what kind of activities are taking place)?
 - What different kinds of people do you see in the mural? Who was Frida Kahlo?
 - What is a “revolution”? Why might people feel the need to revolt against their government and its leaders?

Mural 4: El hombre controlador del universo (Man, Controller of the Universe), 1934 (show “*El hombre controlador del universo*”)

- Rivera painted this mural after returning from the United States. It is very similar to the one that was destroyed in New York because its content was too controversial.
- Ask the following questions to the students and have them discuss:
 - What is the story that Rivera is trying to tell us in this part of the mural?
 - What is happening in the mural (i.e., what kind of activities are taking place)?
 - What characteristics of Rivera’s style do you see in this mural? Give specific examples.
 - Why would Americans of the time not like this mural?

Mural 5: La colonización o llegada de Hernán Cortés (The Conquest or Arrival of Hernán Cortés), 1951 (show “*La colonización o llegada de Hernán Cortés*”)

- This is part of the series of murals known as “México prehispánico y colonial”(Pre-Hispanic and Colonial Mexico), in the Palacio Nacional in Mexico City. The entire set of murals was painted over a period of nine years. The subject matter deals with the history of Mexico as seen in its different civilizations, culminating with the arrival of Hernán Cortés, show in this panel.
- Ask the following questions to the students and have them discuss:
 - What is the story that Rivera is trying to tell us in this part of the mural?
 - What is happening in this mural?
 - How do you think Rivera felt about his country being conquered Cortés? How can you tell? (Hint: Cortés is the character in the upper left corner of the mural, standing in front of the monk next to the cross.)

Conclusion:

In these five murals, we have seen many examples of the things that make Diego Rivera’s murals unique and meaningful. He was a man who took great pride in his country and its history, and who had a passionate pride for his people.

Rivera’s murals brought Mexico’s history and this pride to normal people who might never have gone into a museum or art gallery to see his work. He did this by painting murals in large, open, public spaces, making his art not only entertaining, but stimulating and educational. He truly is the father of Mexican muralism.

Learning Activities:

1. Write a one-page opinion essay identifying what you believe to be the most influential to Rivera's life and art (*may be more appropriate for older students*).

Assessment:

Use **Rubric for Diego Rivera Style Essay** (downloadable from <http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/etext/llilas/outreach/fulbright09/>)

2. Create your own art gallery, showcasing the works of Diego Rivera that you like most. Include the titles/dates of the works.

Resources needed:., construction paper (for gallery background), Rivera handout (for images), scissors, glue/paste/tape, markers/crayons, example for demonstration, images of art galleries for inspiration

1. Have students cut out the Rivera murals from the handout that they want to put on their construction paper art gallery.
2. Students will paste/glue/tape their pictures on to the construction paper.
3. Students will write the title/date of the mural on the construction paper below the murals.
4. Students will write a short paragraph for each mural explaining why they chose it, with at least two reasons for each mural.
5. Teacher will post all galleries on wall so that all can see and read student work.

Assessment:

Use **Rubric: Creating a Diego Rivera Gallery** (downloadable from <http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/etext/llilas/outreach/fulbright09/>)

Homework:

Complete gallery and summary.

Worksheet for taking notes on “Discovering the Life of Diego Rivera: Part 2”

What were the things in Rivera’s life that most influenced how/what he painted in Mexico?

- The desire to educate the Mexican people to their _____, _____, _____, and _____.

- The history of Mexico
 - Origins—both the _____ and _____ of Indian civilizations prior to the arrival of _____

 - _____ by the _____ and its effect on the _____.

- The _____ of the Mexican people, especially the _____ peoples (Indians)
 - Traditional _____, _____, and _____.

- His _____ beliefs and values
 - _____ ideals

 - _____ approaches to _____ where all people own all _____, _____, and _____ in common.

What made Rivera's art unique?

- Rivera used the _____ form in _____, _____, and _____ spaces to introduce his work into the everyday lives of the people, especially the _____ class.
- For him, the frescoes' size and public accessibility was the _____ on which to tackle the grand themes of the _____ and the _____.
- Rivera also used the Mexican _____, _____, and _____ to celebrate the Mexican peoples and their history, including the celebration of the _____.
- Rivera concerned himself primarily with the physical process of _____ and the effects of _____.

Rivera style list:

Pre-conquest history
Mexican history (after the European conquest)
Mexican culture
Indian mythology
Technology
Day-to-day Mexican life experiences
Political values
The development of humanity

Lesson 3: Muralism as a Form of Storytelling

Learning Objective:

By the end of the lesson, students will, based upon the discussion in class, create their own definition of what “art” is, identify the unique characteristics of muralism as an art form, and explain how it acts as a means of communication from the artist to those who view the mural.

Essential questions:

What is art to you?

Who are your favorite artists and why?

What is muralism?

Where have murals been found around the world?

What are the characteristics of murals that make it a unique art form?

What kinds of things do we find in murals that help them tell a story?

Why would an artist paint a mural to tell a story?

Content:

Multimedia presentation, to include: different styles of art and examples of murals throughout time and from around the world

Learning Activities:

Partner brainstorming activity to discuss “what is art?”

Write a short paragraph expressing preference of art style, explaining why it is preferred, and then share that with partners.

Brainstorm to create a list of various elements of murals.

Write a short paragraph describing why murals are a form of communication.

Assessment:

Rubric for participation and collaboration

Learning Activities:

1. What is art to you?

Have students work in groups of two or three for this lesson. Ask them to discuss the above question for 30–45 seconds, and then write a list on the board/overhead of students' perception of what art is. Guide the discussion to help them come to a definition of what art is. (There is no one right answer.)

Script:

For the purposes of this unit, we will assign a definition to “art” as **that which is an expression of how the artist uniquely perceives reality, and how the artist wants to communicate that perception.** Art then becomes **a means of communication between the artist and the viewer.**

Show presentation on “What is Art?” by using images from the links below. As you go through the slides, ask students to share with their group mates what they think they see in the art. What is the artist communicating to them with his/her work? *(Use as many or as few as you wish—this can be a quick overview, or a more in-depth processing of each image. The goal is to get students considering how art communicates to them.)*

Have students identify their favorite from the slides shown in the PowerPoint presentation, and why it is their favorite. Focus on elements of the work, feelings they evoke, stories they tell, colors, etc. Have them write a short paragraph expressing their preference, which they will then read to their partners.

Links for “What is art?”:

Greek: <http://www.ancientsculpturegallery.com/images/222.jpg>

Chinese: <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/ans/languagectr/siteart/chinese-art.jpg>

Prehistoric Thai:

http://www.thailandsworld.com/img/art_architecture/prehistoricart2hands.jpg

Van Eyck:

<http://www.binbin.net/photos/generic/the/the-arnolfini-portrait-by-jan-van-eyck.jpg>

Mona Lisa: <http://www.greetings.ca/Mona%20Lisa.jpg>

Van Gogh:

http://spiralzoom.com/Science/spiralgalaxies/751px-VanGogh-starry_night_edit.jpg

Warhol: <http://www2.kenyon.edu/Depts/IPHS/Projects/pop.up/marilyn2.JPG>

2. What is muralism?

Script:

We are now going to look at one art form in particular: murals.

What is a “mural”?

A mural is any piece of artwork painted directly on a wall, ceiling, or other large, permanent surface.

Murals are one of the earliest art forms and have been found in pretty much all cultures and from all times of history. Here is a sample of types of murals found around the world (*show images of murals from around the world using the links below*).

As you look at the murals, tell your partners what you see in them—what do you think the murals are telling us?

Links to murals from around the world:

<http://www.wishwallmural.com/learn/mural-furtherthedream-med.jpg>

http://z.about.com/d/gomexico/1/0/r/5/-/-/murals_palacio_nacional.jpg

http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/8/8e/Michelangelo_-_Fresco_of_the_Last_Judgement.jpg

<http://languages.siuc.edu/classics/Johnson/Greeks/pics/spring.jpg>

<http://www.lifeinitaly.com/files/ancient-southern-italian-fresco.jpg>

<http://www.lib-art.com/imgpainting/5/6/10465-apse-fresco-domenico-ghirlandaio.jpg>

http://www.alifetimeofcolor.com/study/images/cave_painting_1.jpg

<http://www.saigan.com/heritage/painting/ajanta/mvmt5.jpg>

<http://media-cdn.tripadvisor.com/media/photo-s/01/16/d3/89/aboriginal-mural-on-eveleigh.jpg>

<http://media-cdn.tripadvisor.com/media/photo-s/01/16/d3/8a/original-aboriginal-art.jpg>

<http://www.cicsworld.org/blogs/jngant/909-Last-Supper-Large.jpg>

3. What kinds of things do we find in murals that help them tell a story?

Brainstorm a list of elements seen in the murals shown: people, animals, events, situations, interactions, graphic elements, symbols, colors, shapes, etc.

4. Why would an artist paint a mural to tell a story?

Script:

If art is communication of how the artist sees reality, what makes murals a good way of communicating?

Brainstorm as a class:

- Where do we find murals? (walls, ceilings, hallways, caves, buildings, etc.)
- What makes murals different from other forms of art? (public, more people can see them at once, outside spaces vs. inside spaces, size, etc.)

5. What kinds of stories do murals tell?

Have students discuss this question with partners for one minute, and then compile a list of student input. Have them write a short paragraph about murals and then read to partners.

Assessment:

Use **Rubric for Participation/Collaborations** (downloadable from <http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/etext/llilas/outreach/fulbright09/>)

Homework:

None

Lesson 4: What is Mexican Muralism?

Learning Objective:

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to identify the key characteristics of Mexican muralism and the three main contributors to the movement; compare and contrast the three; and express, by means of a short essay, their own reactions to the works.

Essential Questions:

What is “Mexican muralism” and how did it come to be?

Who are the key contributors to the art form?

What are primary examples of Mexican muralism?

Why was Mexican muralism so appropriate for Mexico and its people?

Content:

PowerPoint presentation that include examples of Mexican muralism

Learning Activities:

Based on prior knowledge, students will try to predict what “Mexican muralism” could be.

Using worksheet provided, students will take notes during presentation. At end of presentation, students will see three examples of Mexican muralism and write a short essay that compares and contrasts the three. At the end of the essay, students will express their responses to the three works and the impact of the works on them.

Assessment:

Rubric for reaction essay

Pre-learning Activity:

Questions to be discussed with partners:

Based on what we have already learned about Diego Rivera and murals, in your opinion, what could the term “Mexican muralism” mean?

Quick review of Rivera

Quick review of muralism

Distribute worksheet for taking notes and doing comparison of Rivera, Orozco, and Siqueiros.

Script:

What is “Mexican muralism” and how did it come to be?

Mexican muralism is a Mexican art movement that took place primarily in the 1930s.

The movement stands out historically because of its political undertones related to the social and political situation of post-revolutionary Mexico.

At the request of Mexican government leaders, a number of like-minded artists in Mexico turned to their own **history and artistic heritage, namely Mexico’s pre-Columbian cultures and indigenous peoples**, contributing to a renaissance of Mexican painting.

Thus, much of the content of Mexican muralism focuses on **demonstrating the richness of pre-Columbian culture and its importance to modern-day Mexican citizens and culture**. It also **emphasized the importance of the common man and his place in the Mexican world**.

This style was a way of teaching Mexicans about their heritage, and it was **expressed in public places** where all people could have access to it regardless of race and social class.

Who are the key contributors to the art form?

The leading muralists were Diego Rivera, José Orozco and David Siqueiros. Muralists worked over a concrete surface or on the façade of a building. The **themes involved events from the political climate of the time and a reaction to the Mexican Revolution, which took place in 1910**. The events of that time were still fresh in the minds of Mexico’s new leaders, who wanted the Mexican people to remember and learn from the Revolution so as not to repeat the errors of the former leaders.

Beginning in the 1920s and continuing to mid century, artists were commissioned by the local government to cover **the walls of official institutions such as Mexico’s schools, ministerial buildings, churches, and museums**.

What are primary examples of Mexican muralism?

Murals from this movement can be found on the majority of the public buildings in Mexico City and throughout other cities in Mexico, such as Guadalajara, that played important roles in Mexico’s history. We’ve already seen examples of Rivera’s works. Here are several examples of Orozco and Siqueiros (*show “Mexican Muralism” from PowerPoint, available for download from*

<http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/etext/llilas/outreach/fulbright09/>)

Why was Mexican muralism so appropriate for Mexico and its people?

Because muralism, by its nature, requires large viewing spaces, it is perfect for public areas where many people can see it. It is particularly appropriate for countries like Mexico, where traditional art galleries and exhibits were usually only available to members of the upper classes. Its **accessibility** by the average citizen gives it a presence unlike most other art forms.

Muralism is also appropriate to Mexico because its **pre-Columbian civilizations have a long tradition of public art** that illustrates/communicates the various aspects of each culture and day-to-day life. In particular, the Mayan culture, instead of writing with words, used pictures to document its history and culture.

Finally, Mexican muralism is powerful and meaningful to the Mexican people because it highlights their history prior to the Spanish conquest, **giving them a sense of identity and history apart from their conquerors**. It is a powerful reminder that Mexico has much to offer the world apart from what the Spaniards accomplished in Mexico, and keeps alive a culture that so many have tried to reduce by assimilation with Spanish culture and traditions.

Learning Activity:

Using attached handout, have students view final slide of “Mexican Muralism” that contains examples of murals done by Rivera, Orozco, and Siqueiros, and write a short essay that compares and contrasts what they seen in the three works. They should focus on:

- Content
- Images
- Colors
- Realism (how real does it look)
- Mood or emotional tone (hopeful, sad, powerful, happy, etc.)

Final part of essay is for students to identify their own reactions to the three. If Mexican muralism is designed to be a means of communication and education to those who view the murals, what are the students getting from these works?

Assessment:

Use **Rubric for Compare/Contrast Essay** (downloadable from <http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/etext/llilas/outreach/fulbright09/>)

Homework:

Complete essay to submit next class.

Worksheet for “Mexican Muralism” **Name** _____

Mexican muralism is a _____ movement that took place primarily _____ . The movement stands out historically because of its political undertones related to the social and political situation of post-revolutionary Mexico.

At the request of Mexican government leaders, a number of like-minded artists in Mexico turned to their own _____, namely _____ and _____, contributing to a renaissance of Mexican painting.

Thus, much of the content of Mexican muralism focuses on demonstrating the _____ of pre-Columbian culture and its importance to _____. It also emphasized the importance of the _____ and his place in the Mexican world.

This style was a way of teaching Mexicans about their heritage, and it was expressed in _____ where all people could have access to it regardless of race and social class.

Who are the key contributors to the art form?

The leading muralists were _____, _____, and _____. Muralists worked over a concrete surface or on the façade of a building. The themes involved events from the political climate of the time and a reaction to the _____, which took place in _____. The events of that time were still fresh in the minds of Mexico’s new leaders, who wanted the Mexican people to remember and learn from the Revolution so as not to repeat the errors of the former leaders.

Beginning in the 1920s and continuing to mid century, artists were commissioned by the local government to cover the _____ of official institutions such as

Mexico's _____, _____,
_____, and _____.

Why was Mexican muralism so appropriate for Mexico and its people?

Because muralism, by its nature, requires large viewing spaces, it is perfect for public areas where many people can see it. It is particularly appropriate for countries like Mexico, where traditional art galleries and exhibits were usually only available to members of the upper classes. Its _____ by the average citizen gives it a presence unlike most other art forms.

Muralism is also appropriate to Mexico because its pre-Columbian _____ have a long tradition of public art that illustrates/communicates the various aspects of each culture and day-to-day life. In particular, the _____ culture, instead of writing with words, used pictures to document its history and culture.

Finally, Mexican muralism is powerful and meaningful to the Mexican people because it highlights their history prior to the Spanish conquest, giving them a sense of _____ and _____ apart from their _____. It is a powerful reminder that Mexico has much to offer the world apart from what the Spaniards accomplished in Mexico, and keeps alive a culture that so many have tried to reduce by assimilation with Spanish culture and traditions.

Sources for Mexican mural images:

Orozco

<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~dartlife/archives/18-3/images/orozco-epic.jpg>

http://www.delivery.superstock.com/WI/223/900/PreviewComp/SuperStock_900-102006.jpg

http://www.micoverde.com/images/mexico/inland%20trip/Guad_Orozco2.jpg

Siqueiros

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:CU-Mexico-rectoria-1.jpg>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Mural_David_Alfaro_Siqueiros_en_el_Tecpan_Tlatelolco.jpg

<http://www.chroniclebooks.com/Chronicle/excerpt/0811819280-19280e5.jpg>

Lesson 5: Telling Your Story

Learning Objective:

By the end of the lesson, students will have identified the events that they think are important to their lives, as well as how those events have affected their lives, and arranged them in chronological order in the form of a personal timeline.

Essential Questions:

What are the key events of a person's life, and why do they matter?

What are the key events of your life and why?

How have these events affected your life?

What have you learned about life as a result of them?

Content:

Teacher will use the previously created Diego Rivera timeline as model for students to create their own personal timelines. Students will use a checklist to help them identify the kinds of things they might want to include on their timeline.

Teacher should prepare their own timeline to share with class as a model/example of the process and product, using discretion as to appropriateness of personal events to students.

Learning Activities:

Use timeline to identify important events in student's life.

Create a personal timeline. Include key life events, works of art (images), travel, successes, failures, people (pictures), places (pictures). Student will do brief presentation to the class about their lives using personal timeline.

Assessment:

Rubric for personal timeline and presentation

Learning Activity:**Script:**

Today's lesson is not so much about what I teach you as much as it is about what you can learn from yourself.

Today, you are going to have a chance to create your own personal timeline, like the ones we created for Diego Rivera. We are doing this to help us understand how to tell the story of our lives, and the lives of others. This will give us experience with a process that we will use when we create murals of the life of our school, much in the same way that Diego Rivera used his murals to tell of the life of his country.

Distribute personal timeline checklist

Use this checklist to remember and identify the important things that you have experienced in your life. Once you have done that, you are going to create your own timeline. You can include on it what you want, and you can decorate it with pictures, drawings, or any other graphic element you want. When we look at your timeline, we want to be able to know more about you!

Remainder of session is for students to use checklist to begin process of creating timeline, and then to work on creating their timeline. Periodically, have students share, in small groups, some of the things they are using for their timelines and why those are important to them and their lives. Students should continue working on timelines at home and submit at next class.

Teacher can identify timeline format, but all templates or models should have a beginning and end.

If desired, students can present their timelines to class or small groups and explain them.

Assessment:

Use **Rubric for Personal Timeline** (downloadable from <http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/etext/llilas/outreach/fulbright09/>)

Homework:

Complete personal timeline.

Checklist for Creating My Own Personal Timeline

Use this checklist of life events to help you create your own personal timeline. It is a way of organizing your thinking to help you identify the events that have helped you become who you are.

Beginnings:

When I was born

Where I grew up (so far!)

Where/When I started school

Lessons I began

Groups I joined

Activities I started doing

Things I started believing

Things I've done:

Goals I've accomplished

Things I've overcome

Contributions I have made to others

Recognition I've received

Successes I've had

Failures I've experienced and learned from

Endings:

Places I've moved from

Relationships that have ended

Things/activities that I've stopped doing

Lesson 6: A Day in the Life of Your School

Learning Objective:

By the end of the lesson, students will have identified the key research areas for inclusion on their murals and the sources to where/whom they must go to address the key research areas. They will have also begun the research process by documenting their own answers to the research questions.

Essential Questions:

What does a typical day at your school look like?
What is the social structure like at your school?
What do different groups contribute to the life of your school?
What kinds of activities go on at your school on a regular basis?
Who are the key people at your school?

Content:

Teacher will provide survey sheet of questions to be used by students to answer, as well as to use when interviewing key people at school. Students will interview others, explaining why these people were seen as “key,” and create brief summaries of their responses.

Learning Activities:

Students will use research handout to conduct research from themselves and from different sources within their school community. Students will then submit a summary of their research for use on mural project to the teacher and to their mural project partners.

Assessment:

Rubric for summary of research

Learning Activities:**Script:**

Today, you will begin the research part of your mural project.

Before you can begin creating your mural about a day in the life of our school, you have to determine what you want to include in your mural. To do that, you will first answer the questions on the handout based on your own opinion. Your opinions will form the basis of your art and what you want to communicate about our school, but they will only be YOUR opinions. To learn more about our school, you will need to go to other sources for what they have to say. There are two main sources of information: **other people** and **records**.

Other people include teachers, principals, school staff (like custodians, cafeteria workers, secretaries, etc.) and other students. You should probably try to interview at least three sources to be found in staff or students.

Records include a lot of things! They could be yearbooks, trophies, newspaper articles, banners and awards hanging on the walls, pictures, etc. Anything that documents people or events is to be considered a record, and can be used as a source for your research.

So, to get started, answer the questions on the handout with your opinions, and then identify who/where else to explore.

Once you have completed your research, you need to create a summary of what you have learned. Your summary must include the categories found on the Rubric for Mural Research Summary.

Once your summary is complete, you will hand it in to the teacher, and give copies of it to your mural project partners, so that together you can decide what you want to include in your mural, using the same questions to guide you in deciding

Assessment:

Use **Rubric for Mural Research Summary** (downloadable from <http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/etext/llilas/outreach/fulbright09/>)

Homework:

Complete research process and write summary.

Research Handout for Mural Project Name _____

What are the key events in your school's history?

(when it opened, accomplishments, recognition, changes of leadership, ups/downs, etc.)

What does a typical day at your school look like?

(the normal things that happen on a daily basis—these could be in or outside of the classroom)

What is the social structure like at your school?

(what are the different groups or cliques at your school, and which ones matter the most/least to you)

What do different groups contribute to the life of your school?

(clubs, teams, student government, volunteers, etc.)

What kinds of activities go on at your school on a regular basis?

(sports, arts, clubs, lunch, volunteering, where kids hang out when not in class, after-school activities, etc.)

Who are the key people at your school, and why?

(leadership, faculty, staff, students, jocks, brains, popular, geeks, preps, Goths, emos, rich/poor, ethnic groups, etc.)

Lesson 7: Planning the Group Mural

Learning Objective:

By the end of the lesson, students will have collaborated in small project groups in identifying the theme for the mural as well as the resources needed for successful completion of the project. Students also will have identified the specific content of the mural, the medium to be used in its execution, and the applicable skills and abilities that each partner will contribute to the project.

Essential Questions:

What are the process steps for creating a mural?

Based on our research, what are the elements that should be included in our mural, and why?

What are our options for creating our mural? What would work best for us and why?

What skills and abilities do I bring to the project and how can I best use them?

Content:

Teacher will present the process for creating a mural, and students will then begin the project of creating their own murals, working through each stage and decision point collaboratively.

Learning Activities:

Working in trios (same as before), students will design and create **their group mural about a day in the life of their school.**

Assessment:

Groups will provide completed checklist of planning steps and decisions made (no rubric—checklist submitted or not).

Following the Steps to Creating a Mural

Planning:

Step 1: Defining the mural

- What story are you trying to tell?

Step 2: Brainstorming with partners

- Make a list of content ideas (no duplicates!) from your summaries.
- Each partner chooses three (or whatever you all decide to do!) different ideas to include in the mural.
- Make a list of the ideas that are chosen.
- Write a summary of the mural's theme and identify the content ideas that will illustrate the them.

Step 3: Build your resources

- Individual partners start compiling pictures, words, symbols, and any visual materials you would be able to use on your mural.
- Students may wish to take digital photos around the school (with teacher permission—must be appropriate to school policies).

Step 4: Collaboration

- Partners share their visual resources for inclusion in mural. Selected resources should be kept in a common folder.
- Once images are identified, make them into simple shapes and arrange them on a large sheet of paper in a way that makes them feel connected and related to each other. This gives a visual feel for what the final mural design will look like, and is the foundation for the mural.

Step 5: Choose medium

- Partners make a team decision on what medium to use for mural:
 - Photo collage
 - Paint
 - Drawing
 - Cut paper
 - Fabric
- A combination of the above is also a possibility—a “multimedia” mural. The medium should be something that students feel comfortable with—there is no one, right medium for all students to use. It could be that each partner feels comfortable with a different medium, and all can be used; however, they must be well integrated in the final mural.

Lesson 8: Creating the Group Mural

Learning Objective:

By the end of the lesson, students will have collaborated in small project groups to create a mural consistent with the theme and content chosen in the prior lesson. Students will also complete a self-evaluation of performance on the project, as well as peer evaluations of group project partners and their contributions to the project.

Essential Questions:

How can/do I collaborate with my partners to successfully complete a project?

What teaming skills lead to successful collaboration?

What criteria will I use to evaluate the mural experience for me and for my partners?

How will I know that I have accomplished what I set out to do on this project?

Content:

There is little content at this time; students are creating their murals.

Teacher will review evaluation process with students to clarify expectations for self/partner evaluations. Use rubric to identify desired levels and quality of interaction on project.

Learning Activities:

Working in groups students will create/continue to create their **group mural about a day in the life of their school**.

Assessment:

Using **Rubric for Self/Partner Evaluation** for criteria (downloadable from <http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/etext/llilas/outreach/fulbright09/>), students will write a one-page evaluation for each partner, and a one-page self-evaluation.

Final Curriculum Unit Assessments:

- Rubric for completion of mural process and project
- Group explanation of mural, its content, and how it describes life at school
- Student self-evaluation and evaluation of partners.

Post-unit:

Murals will be displayed in a public place in school for enjoyment and education of fellow students. Students may vote for:

- Best of show
- Most artistic
- Best use of media
- Most like Diego Rivera

These are only suggestions, and other categories may certainly be used as best fits the local environment.