

LESSON PLAN

Cajas de vida: Exploring Identities Across Europe, Mexico, and the United States

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Lesson Plan Background:

- **Demographics**

- **Theme/Topic:** Spanish AP Theme: Personal and Public Identities
- **Subjects/Grade Level:** Spanish 1, High School
- **Suggested duration:** 50 minutes
- **Introduction to lesson:** A one-day lesson focusing on the art project “Cajas de Vida” by Cristian Pineda. During this lesson, students will see how various immigrants represent themselves visually, and create their own paper plate version of the caja after evaluating and comparing the art from other cultures.

- **Connection to Standards/Common Core**

- ODE World Language Standard: Interpretive Intercultural Communication: NH.1. Identify and compare typical products and practices related to familiar, everyday life in native and other cultures to help understand perspectives.

- **Essential Question**

- How does where we come from influence what we find important?

- **Learning Objectives**

- SWBAT describe similarities and differences in the cajas from Belgium and Mexico.
- SWBAT create a simple caja de vida (on a paper plate) describing themselves and what is important to them.

- **Materials Needed**

- paper plates, slides/video

Lesson Plan Details:

- **Pre-Assessment of Prior Knowledge**

- Students will be asked to think about immigration to their home city, and start to think about what is important to them. Prior knowledge of the countries represented is not expected, but students should be asked guiding questions to see what they know.

• **Teacher-Student Interaction**

1. Warm-up: Think, Pair, Share: Students are presented with 2 questions to frame their thinking for the day. Students are given at least 2 minutes to think, 2 minutes to share with a partner, and then the chance to discuss it as a class.
 - a. Who immigrates to Columbus? Where are they coming from (based on who attends our school)
 - b. If you had to describe your life in 3 symbols, what would they be?
2. Teacher introduces the art project “Cajas de vida” showing part of this video, while students complete a See, Think, Wonder chart, being directed toward what they can see, but also what languages are being spoken/countries represented.
 - a. <https://www.cristianpineda.com.mx/portfolio-item/cajas-de-vida-belgica/>
 - b. After the video, engage students in a discussion of the video, what they understood of the project. Clarify key points, like who these people are, where the project is taking place, and why it’s relevant to your class context.
 - c. Once students are familiar with the project, show the cajas from Mexico and have students compare to two projects.
3. Compare and contrast
 - a. Students will work in small groups to discuss what similarities and differences there are between the boxes, comparing two directly, and making notes to share in groups of 4.
4. Paper plate design
 - a. Students are given a worksheet with simple questions in the target language to help them think about key parts of their identity and encounter personalized vocabulary to help create their paper plates.
 - b. Questions can include: where are you from? Where do you live? What do you like to do? What’s your favorite color?
5. Paper plate creation
 - a. Students are given time to create their own paper plates, to be displayed around the classroom/school.

• **Closing Activity**

- Once paper plates are turned in, ask students to think about which caja de vida is most similar to theirs and why. This can be conducted as a group discussion, or in addition to their exit ticket.

• **Post-Assessment**

- Once paper plates are turned in, or during the last three minutes of class, students will fill out a half sheet answering the prompt: I Used to Think, Now I Think, to show new information learned throughout the lesson.

• **Reflection**

- Students will be viewing art created by people from around the world and thinking about what’s important to them. I anticipate that students will be experiencing immigration in a way where they view immigrants as individual people, and that this may be a new, and possibly challenging experience for students. As was mentioned in the seminar, this sometimes doesn’t happen until students reach college, so I am hoping to give them an experience that they will reflect on throughout their life.

Lesson Plan Resources/Next Steps:

- **Resources**

- [Cajas de vida in Belgium](#)
- [Cajas de vida in Mexico](#)
- [Paper Plate Prep Worksheet](#)
- [Slides for Teacher Use](#)
- [Slides for Student Use](#)
- Activity Idea Sources: Project Zero
 - [See, Think, Wonder](#)
 - [I Used To Think, Now I Think](#)

- **Extension Activities/Cross-Curricular Connections**

- Collaborate with other languages/ESL classes in your school, and display the paper plates, including time to do a gallery walk where students answer questions about their classmates' art.
- Focus in on students' values by completing an activity with them that makes them think about what adjectives/values are most important to them: <https://teenheroicjourney.org/book/3-core-challenges/forming-an-identity/your-identity-puzzle/your-values/>

Resource Support:

This lesson plan was developed by Sarah Avdakov, who participated in the [Global Teacher Seminar 2023: Global Movement of Goods and People](#). The seminar was a partnership with the Center for African Studies (CAS), Center for Latin American Studies (CLAS), Center for Slavic, East European and Eurasian Studies (CSEEEES), East Asian Studies Center (EASC), and Middle East Studies Center (MESC) and funded in part by U.S. Department of Education Title VI National Resource Center grants to The Ohio State University. The content of this lesson plan does not necessarily represent the policy of the U.S. Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government. Lesson plans are available online for classroom use worldwide and can be accessed at the [Global Teacher Seminar Resource page](#).



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