

**Center-Based Learning Using *Realia*
and the Traveling Suitcases**

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OBJECTIVE:

How to create student learning centers that are engaging, standards-based, appeal to all learning styles, are cross-curricular and cross-cultural as well as sharpen FCAT skills!

MATERIALS NEEDED:

A Traveling Suitcase from the Center for Latin American Studies at the University of Florida OR any other *Realia* from a Spanish-speaking country (that is, authentic materials from the Spanish-speaking country of origin).

The Outreach Program at UF has many resources and can be checked out at:

<http://www.latam.ufl.edu/outreach/outreachlib.html>

Spanish-speaking countries include: Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Honduras, Mexico, Venezuela, “Caribbean” (*working on Cuba, Puerto Rico)

HOW TO CREATE A LEARNING CENTER:

First, choose a piece of *Realia* from the Traveling Suitcase. Next, using Bloom’s Taxonomy sheet as your guide, develop questions in English or preferably in the target language of Spanish. These questions will have students move from the most simple levels of *Knowledge* and *Comprehension* through *Application* and *Analysis* to the highest levels of *Synthesis* and *Evaluation*. Then, you can put the *Realia* in a numbered envelope along with the set of questions to use for a “center” day. Note you must have enough different “centers” for all students to participate. This is usually around 12-15 centers.

STUDENTS IN ACTION:

Finally, put students in pairs and give them an envelope. Ask them to use all five of their senses to evaluate the *Realia* and answer the questions you have given them. Students explore the *Realia* together, discuss their findings and agree upon an acceptable answer to the questions you have posed to them. At the end of the activity, students turn in a paper with the results of their investigation and cultural experiences as well as the answers to the questions. You can ask them to use graphic organizers to record their reactions, discoveries, impressions, cultural and personal knowledge gained from the experience.

SAMPLE LEARNING CENTERS USING THE TRAVELING SUITCASES

Traveling Suitcase from Mexico:

- 1. Maps – puzzle map, road map of Mexico, Florida road map**

Question for *Knowledge*:

Look at the different pieces and try to put them together. Make a list of states and their capitals.

Question for *Comprehension*:

Compare how many states and capitals Mexico has with those of the United States. Do you notice any differences or similarities? Find three capitals and tell the following: the state it is in and the grid # where it can be found.

Question for *Application*:

Look at the Compass Rose. What is it called in Spanish? What directions are listed on it? In what direction from the Capital of Mexico City are the following cities?: Veracruz, Guanajuato, Acapulco and Guadalajara.

Question for *Analysis*:

Look at the “Tabla de Distancias”. What is the unit of measure? How many kilometers is it between the following cities? Veracruz to Guanajuato; Acapulco to Guadalajara.

Question for *Synthesis*:

Convert the distances above from kilometers to miles. 1 kilometer = .6 miles Using the map of Florida, find cities that have comparable distances to those mentioned above.

Question for *Evaluation*:

What is your overall impression of the geography of Mexico as compared to that of the United States? Which is bigger? Are there more or fewer cities? Are they farther apart or closer together? Are there more large cities or small cities in Mexico? ...in the USA? Which cities are more popular tourist spots in Mexico? Are they inland or along the coast? What conclusions can you draw from this data? There is a French word on the front of the map. What is it and what word is it like in English and Spanish? Why do you think that is?

2. Money – bills and coins from Mexico and from the United States, calculator, items for purchase with prices in pesos, Mexican flag, brief summary of the story of the Legend of the Aztecs.

Question for *Knowledge*:

Make a list of all the coins and bills from Mexico and the United States. Also, find the following information on each: denomination, color, symbols, size

Question for *Comprehension*:

Interpret the following words on the Mexican bills and coins:

“pagará a la vista”; “al portador”; “S.A.”; “consejero”; “cajero”
“cincuenta”; “mil”; “quinientos”

Question for *Application*:

Match the symbols with the bills:

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. cincuenta pesos | a. Juana de Asbaje |
| 2. mil pesos | b. calendario azteca |
| 3. one dollar | c. Dios azteca |
| 4. quinientos pesos | d. George Washington |
| 5. dos mil pesos | e. Museo de antropología |

Question for *Analysis*:

There are now new pesos and the conversion value has changed drastically. It used to be that there were approximately 4000 pesos to one US dollar. Today, there are approximately 10 pesos to a dollar. Choose 5 bills and/or coins from Mexico and tell how much they would be worth in dollars based on the old conversion rate and then, the new one.

Question for *Synthesis*:

There are several products for sale with prices in Mexican pesos. List the products by similar prices and convert to dollars. What would the price be in the USA? Are the prices of the products more, less or about the same in Mexico and the USA?

Question for *Evaluation*:

What differences and similarities are there between Mexican money and US money? Do you think things cost more or less in Mexico than in the USA? Why? Look at the Mexican flag and the US dollar bill. What do you notice is the same about the symbol found on each of them? What is different? Read the Legend of the Aztecs and then, come to a conclusion about the similarities and differences you found in the symbols on the flag and dollar bill.