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Yale Peabody Museum-PIER-CLASS 2013 Summer Institute for High School Teachers

Curricular Unit: Spanish Culture: Native Tainos and Europeans in the Caribbean Islands

Introduction

Title: Early Encounters: Native Tainos and Europeans Explorers

Teacher: Angela Dominguez-Newball

Subject Area: Spanish

Grade Level(s): Intermediate

Number of Lessons in the Unit: Two

Time Frame to Allow for Unit: Three weeks (pacing of lesson will be taken into consideration)

“The people of this Island have such a generosity that they would give away their own hearts.”

- Christopher Columbus, 1492

Introduction:

The slaughter of the Tainos/Arawak people began with this statement. When Columbus arrived on the islands of the Caribbean in 1492, he encountered a civilization of people that had existed for thousands of years. These people are called Arawak/Taino and they greeted Columbus and his men in a friendly fashion. Columbus and his counterparts nearly destroyed a culture of over two million people. More than 1,500 years ago, the Arawak people of South America began to migrate northwards, eventually navigating the Orinoco River and exploring what are now the Caribbean and the Antilles. This migration would continue for hundreds of years, until there was a presence of Arawak/Taino on most Caribbean islands, including Cuba, Jamaica, Hispaniola and Puerto Rico.

Although the tribes descended from the Arawak went under different names like Lokono, Lucayan, Carib or Ciboney, the Taino, which stood for “for the good people” in Arawak, was the largest indigenous group under the umbrella of Arawak Indians, and would be the first group of indigenous people to make contact with European settlers.
Overview of the Unit

On December 6th, 1492 Christopher Columbus landed at Mole St. Nicholas in northern Haiti. Thus began a totally new phase of life on the island of Hispaniola (name given by Columbus on arrival). Most people are aware that Christopher Columbus landed at San Salvador on October 12th, 1492, thus “discovering” the “New World” for Spain. Less known is that his second land fall was at Mole St. Nicholas, Haiti on December 1492, or that the first settlement in the “New World” was La Navidad, on Haiti’s north coast. This settlement, which houses sailors from the Santa Maria, which sank off Haiti’s coast, was founded on December 24th, 1492.

The Taino

The Taino had dark golden-brown skin, and were average in stature with dark, flowing, coarse hair, and large, slightly oblique eyes. The Taino were, in fact, highly skilled at weaving cotton and clothing. Clothing, or lack thereof, was used as an identifier of class and rank within the society. Men generally went naked or wore loincloth, called a nagua. Single women walk around naked, and married women covered their genitals with aprons made of cotton or palm fibers, the length of which was a sign of rank. Both sexes painted their bodies on special occasions, and wore earrings, nose rings and necklaces, which were sometimes made of gold.

Taino Kingdoms in Quisquella (Hispaniola)

The Taino people lived in organized, hierarchically arranged kingdoms. Communities were divided into three social classes: the noborian, who were the working class, the nitainos or sub-chiefs and noblemen, which included the bohiques or priests and medicine men, and the Caciques or chiefs. Each Taino kingdom was ruled by a Taino Cacique, or chieftain, and at the time of Columbus’s arrival there were five Taino kingdoms in Quisquella (Hispaniola).

Cacique Guacanagarix’s kingdom was in the province of Marien, which is now known as Samana. Cacique Caonabo, one of the most famous Taino chieftains, ruled the province of Ciguayos. Cacique Guarionex, leader of a Taino revolt, ruled the province of Magua Huhabo. Cacique Behechio held dominion over the province of Xaragua, which was in the southwestern peninsula, and Cacique Cotubanama or Cayacoa ruled the province of Higuey.

Though the Taino kingdoms were ruled by Taino chieftains, it is a little-known fact that Taino societies were matriarchal in nature. The reasoning behind this fact is that though men wield a considerable
amount of power in the communities; it was the Taino women who actually chose the Caciques in the particular kingdoms. In this regard women were important because unlike men, the Tainos could trace royal lineage through women. It was only after Columbus’s arrival that the family structure was change drastically. The Taino people practiced polygamy. Most men had 2 or 3 wives, but the Caciques had as many as 30. It was a great honor for a woman to be married to a Cacique. She would enjoy a materially superior lifestyle, and her children were held in high esteem.

Housing

The Caciques lived in rectangular huts called caneyes, located in the center of the village, facing the batey. It’s believed that the size of Taino settlements ranged from single families to groups of 3,000 people. The general population lived in circular buildings with poles providing the primary support and these were covered with woven straw and palm leaves. They were somewhat like North American teepees except rather than being covered with skins they needed to reflect the warmth of the climate and simply used straw and palm leaves. Despite the difference in shape, and the considerably larger buildings, the same materials were used. When the Africans came beginning in 1507 they introduced mud and wattle as primary building materials. However, there is no record of the Arawak/Tainos having used these materials.

The houses did not contain much furniture. People slept in cotton hammocks or simply on mats of banana leaves. They also made wooden chairs with woven seats, couches and built cradles for their children.

In this unit students will be given the opportunity to practice different style of writing, student informal and formal writing assessing it at least once a week. They will have 10 minutes to read a question and write a short response. Students will explore and identify concepts of ethnicity, race, and class in both Taino’s and colonial Spanish societies.

Spanish vocabulary will be emphasize in addition, Taino vocabulary will be introduced to help students understand how and why many of these word are use in today’s Spanish language.
Lesson 1 How contact with the Spanish Explorers changed the lives of the Taino people in the Caribbean.

From Columbus diary: “On this voyage I observe that the will of God hath miraculously been set forth (as may be seen from this journal) by the many signal miracles that He hath shown on the voyage and for myself, who for so great a time was in the court of Your Highnesses, with the opposition and against the opinion of so many high personages of you household, who were all against me, alleging this undertaking to be folly, which I hope in Our Lord will be to the greater glory of Christianity, which to some slight extent has already occurred.”

Essential Question (s)

1. What was the impact of contact on the Taino’s World?
2. How did the Taino/Arawak people react to the cultural religious changes in their society?
3. What were some of the methods used to convert the Taino/Arawak people to this new religion?
4. After 500 hundred plus years of contact, where are the Taino/Arawak people now?

Teaching Objectives:

- Students will develop an understanding of:
  - The collision of the two cultures which was transmitted through contact.
  - Historian’s myth and narrative used as a way to create an identity of people.
  - Works of art can be created and used to validate dominant group historical role.
  - Effective communication in Arawak-Spanish depends on the accurate use of language.

Activity:

Excerpts from Christopher Columbus’ Diario de a bordo will be given to students as reading material in order to gain an understanding of how a historical narrative is created. Students will discuss the text with a partner to infer what cultural and marketing values and beliefs are express by the author. The teacher will have flexibilities to adjust the lesson and time according to the level of the students. Students will practice subject-verb agreement to complete a narrative based on entries from Columbus diary.
Method of Assessment:

Graphic Organizer

Responses to questions

Homework assignments

Presentation and essay/report

Discussions
Lesión 1: Actividad: “Diario de a bordo de Cristóbal Colon”

Lee y contesta las preguntas que siguen.

1. ¿Cuáles acontecimientos relata Colon en la selección?

2. ¿Cómo describe Colon las tierras de las islas?

3. ¿De qué manera describe Colon a la gente Taina/Arawaka, en cuanto a apariencia física y manera de vestir?

4. ¿Cuál es la actitud de Colon hacia los Tainos? Dar ejemplos.

5. ¿Cuáles fueron los motivos originales de la exploración?

6. Colon escribió dos diarios. ¿Por qué?

7. ¿Para quién o quienes escribió Colon?

8. ¿Cuál es tu reacción luego de leer lo que escribió Colon?
Materials/Resources:

When Worlds Collide: The People
http://www.pbs.org/keet/when-worlds-collided/people

When Worlds Collide: The Story – Chapter 4: How Contact Changed the New World

When Worlds Collide: Video – Contact Changes the New World


http://www.biografias.com/monografia.colon/

http://www.biografiasyvidas.com/biografia/1/las_casas.htm

When Worlds Collide People: Bartolomé de las Casas (1884-1566)
http://www.pbs.org/keet/when-worlds-collide/people/bartolome-de-las-casas.html

What Became of the Taino? People and Places
Http://www.smithsonianmag.com/people-places/what-became-of-the ta...

Bob Corbett, Pre-Columbian Hispaniola-Arawak/Taino Indians

The Slaughter that came with the Arrival of Chris…
http://www.indio.net/aymaco/slaughter.htm

Tainos of Puerto Rico, a cultural site
http://.elboricua.com/history.html

Cuban Tainos in 1492 A History of Cuba
http://www.historyofcuba.com/history/oriente/tainos.htm

The Tainos Indians of Cuba – Indigenous projects at The Onaway Trust
http://www.onaway.org/indig/taino2htm
Taino Indians: Caribbean Native American Indian Tribes. The Taino Indians

http://www.healing-arts.org/spider/tainoindians.htm

Spanish Influence on the Tainos-Essay-Rac031393

http://www.studymode.com/essays/Spanish-influence-On-The Taino..

The Indigenous People of the Caribbean and Florida: Introduction an…

http://members.dandy.net/~orocobix/faq2.html

Pre-Columbian Dominican Republic: Who were the Taino?

http://drl.com/articles/taino.shtml

King Ferdinand & Queen Isabella Spain/ Globerove

http://gloverove.com/spain/king-ferdinand-queen-isabell-spain/1012