¡VIAJAMOS (Let’s Take a Trip!)

The project is effective and of value because students get to hear Spanish speakers other than their immediate teacher and are prompted to engage in appropriate dialogue in response.

Curriculum/State Standard
Students: gain cultural knowledge and understanding; communicate in Spanish; interact appropriately within the cultural framework of the language.

Overview
Teacher and students take armchair visits to the different countries covered by the text and its accompanying CD’s.

Objectives
- The student will develop an everyday awareness of the lives of his/her teenage counterparts in several Spanish-speaking countries.
- The student will engage in conversation, exchanging culturally appropriate etiquette to express ideas and emotions.
- The student will gain a greater appreciation of the U.S. Latino population and consequently interact more effectively with their Latino neighbors.

Materials
CD’s and a CD player/boom box; a listening station with individual headphones is also helpful.

Readiness Activity
Discuss in English the country to be “visited.” Have students research additional information on the Internet, in travel guides, and encyclopedia. (Possible assignments are: pick out some interesting facts about Mexico and write them down in English; write down 10 Spanish words you might use to talk about Mexico; name some ways in which a teenager’s life in Mexico is different from and similar to your life in the United States; design a poster to advertise Mexico to a teenager like yourself.) Be aware of Gardner’s “multiple intelligences” as you and students decide on assignments. Point out Spanish expressions and customs peculiar to the country involved, e.g., the difference in meaning of “torta” (cake/sandwich), depending on the country; the fact that “plaza” does not mean “mall,” but rather is indicative of a particular social and cultural practice, to quote the text, “la plaza es el corazón de la vida mexicana . . . Para conocer a los mexicanos, hay que ir a una plaza. La plaza es un poema.”

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“¡VIAJAMOS (Let’s Take a Trip!)” project continued . . .

**Strategies/Activities**
Play CD that corresponds to text lesson. Students listen attentively in order to imitate native speakers as closely as possible. Teacher provides quick translation, aided by students, to ensure understanding. (In some classes, students may be able to translate on their own, either as a group or individually. The main point is that the translation should be quick, not onerous.) Then play CD again. Have students read conversations, assigning parts so that each student has a turn.

Students will, therefore, read more fluently in meaningful phrases rather than word by word. They will also recognize words and derive meaning when native Spanish speakers are speaking at a reasonable pace. Students will adopt a Spanish “accent” based on the conversations they hear.

**Culminating Activity**
Ideally, the culminating activity will be a short skit, written by the students themselves, that they will perform for the rest of the school. Each class may provide one scene. The skit will involve interaction between American teens and teens of all the countries “visited” around some common area of interest.

**Evaluation**
class participation; written reports in English/Spanish; performance of homemade conversations/skit in Spanish