

Summer Fellowship - Successful Application
Project - Mesoamerica in the Classroom
Project Director – Suzanne Melo, Bowman School

The purpose of this Fellowship is to attend a 3 week study program, “Mesoamerica in the Classroom”, offered by Cemanahuac Education Community located in Cuernavaca, Mexico. I will gain firsthand knowledge of the subject matter as well as develop curriculum and a materials kit for the grade 4 Mesoamerica unit.

Through direct exposure to Mesoamerican historical sites and immersion in Mexican culture, I will gain a understanding of the subject matter required in the Massachusetts Social Studies Curriculum Frameworks. Frameworks 4.23-4.26 and 5.2 (attached) encompass pre-Columbian, colonial and modern Mexican history as well as economy, demographics, geography, religion and language of Mexico. The objectives of “Mesoamerica in the Classroom” directly address these content frameworks. By living with a host family, studying the language and visiting major archeological sites, I will broaden my knowledge. The location of Cuernavaca provides access to ancient sites of Teotihuacan, Xochicalco, and the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlan, as well as the modernity and museums of Mexico City. The study is scheduled to coincide with the 4 day Guelaguetza Festival in Oaxaca, providing exposure to yet another region of Mexico.

The fellowship will improve my teaching practice, enhance my students’ learning, and benefit Bowman school as well as the Lexington district. Currently, I can only relay to my students what I have learned about Mexico through reading. Through my own experiential learning, I will be able to create interdisciplinary lessons which address the frameworks and utilize multiple intelligences, moving beyond text based lessons. As Lexington no longer has an Elementary Social Studies Curriculum Department, I aim to refine the existing lessons and create new learning experiences for students. I will share the results of the fellowship by posting the lessons which I develop on the curriculum server, accessible to Grade 4 teachers throughout the district.

I will also develop a materials kit of artifacts gathered in Mexico that can be circulated to classrooms. (This kit model works effectively with our science units. For teacher training, a Canada kit for teachers deepened our own understanding of the content we would teach.) Student learning is activated through the senses when interacting with realia such as painting, weaving, papel picado, musical instruments, toys, clothing, cooking implements and flags. Actual objects stimulate discussion, increase vocabulary learning, and reach students through their multiple intelligences.

Budget

Registration fee	\$ 95	
Intensive Spanish (4 hours per day) @ \$240/wk x 3 weeks	720	
Textbook and Book of Readings for Mesoamerica in the Classroom		63
Field Study Trips, includes transportation guidance, entrance fees:		
- Teotihuacan	45	

- Templo Mayor	45	
- Museum of Anthropology	45	
- Tenochtitlan	45	
- Xochicalco	45	
The Guelaguetza Festival and the Valley of Oaxaca (4 days)		400
Materials for Kit and to support Curriculum Development	300	
Homestay Accommodation (incl. 3 meals per day) @ \$32 x 23 days		736
Flight	550	
Van transfer from/to airport	<u>70</u>	
 TOTAL	 \$ 3069	

**Summer Fellowship – Successful Application
Fellow – Douglas Tran, Jonas Clarke Middle School
Project – Spanish Course in Allende, Mexico**

What is the purpose of your fellowship?

I strongly believe that to be an effective teacher one needs to continue to learn and grow in the teaching methodology and the academic content. This is particularly true in the area of languages and culture, which certainly do evolve over time. The purpose for this fellowship is to review the high-level grammar and to practice speaking with native speakers to regain and maintain the high level of proficiency, which I once had, and to gain more insight of the Mexican culture and its people. Along with Mr. John Hunt, a colleague of mine at Jonas Clarke middle school, I will enroll in a one-week intensive Spanish program for teachers in the summer of 2007 at the Academia Hispano Americano in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico. As part of this program, I will be taking an advanced conversation course and attend a workshop on pronunciation and diction, and a seminar titled Mexican Themes, which include topics of Mexican law, religion, education, politics and sociology, and the impact of its history on the modern Mexican. This type of total immersion program has been proven to be the best learning environment for language learners.

How will the fellowship improve my teaching practice, enhance my students' learning, and benefit our school?

As a middle school Spanish teacher, I have very few opportunities to utilize my Spanish at a level beyond middle school Spanish. The conversation course at Academia Hispano Americano will help me regain my proficiency and give me more confidence in conducting my classes in the target language. As the only source of the target language to my students, it is necessary that I be competent in the language. The more proficient I am, the more proficient my students will be as a result.

The Mexican Themes seminar, which I plan to attend, will expound on the Mexican law, religions, education system, and government. These are among many issues that I must teach as part of our middle school curriculum. Because these and other cultural issues change with time, I am confident that this seminar will help me stay current with the Mexican society and culture. The new materials I learn from this seminar will be shared with my students in the classroom. The knowledge that I will share with my students will help them understand and appreciate Mexico and its people, and will dispel common stereotypes associated with them.

In the workshop on pronunciation and diction, not only will my pronunciation and diction improve, but I will gain some knowledge on how to teach my students to minimize their American accent and speak more like the natives. Since the window of opportunity for foreign language learners to be able to speak like the natives typically closes at between the ages of 12-14, it is important to the students the proper pronunciation and diction.

As an 8th grade Honors Spanish teacher, each year I prepare my students to participate in the National Spanish Exam, an exam which tests the students on their knowledge of the Spanish language and the various cultures related to that language. Each year, some of our students have placed well nationally on this exam, which has earned us some notable recognition. The knowledge that I will acquire from the emersion experience in Mexico, which I will share with my students, will prepare my students to perform even better on this national exam.

How will I share this information with my principal, coordinator, and colleagues?

In collaboration with Mr. John Hunt, I will share my experiences, the knowledge and teaching methods with the foreign language department and our building principal at one of our department meetings. I will also share with my colleagues the teaching materials, which I plan to purchase for use in the classroom.

How much money am I requesting?

\$1,522.00

How will I be spending this money?

Course: Intensive Spanish + Seminars	\$146.00
Registration	\$50.00
Lodging	\$420.00
Flight from Boston to Leon, Mexico	\$650.00
Meals	\$ 200.00
Transportation from Leon to San Miguel round trip	\$ 56.00
Grand Total	\$ 1,522.00

Background information:

Mr. John Hunt has traveled extensively in Mexico on his own time and has explored many schools where he and other colleagues can take courses in Spanish to continue their education or prepare for re-certification. Mr. John Hunt has explored the program at Academia Hispano Americano and found it to be adequate to help him meet his goals. The school was established forty years ago and has a lot of experience in training children, teachers, and other professionals.