

Anáhuac

School and Community
Engagement Program



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PARTICIPANT'S MANUAL

Anáhuac School and Community Engagement Program

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Ollin

In Nahuatl, the Mexica referred to “movement” as Ollin. The 17th glyph on the Aztec calendar represents the Ollin, which means movement and energy, earth-shaking or change. The Mexica believed that the center or balance lies in the sign of the Ollin; it represents a change towards purification of the earth, the human search for unity and the restoration of a personal balance. The symbolic representation of Ollin contains four flanges, which are Four Jaguar, Four Wind, Four Rain and Four Water. Next to the flanges are the four cardinal points of the Universe—North, South, East and West.

Popocatepetl and Iztaccíhuatl

The volcanoes Popocatepetl (Smoking Mountain) and Iztaccíhuatl (“snow woman” in Nahuatl) refer to mythical and folkloric legends of the volcanoes that overlook the Valley of Mexico. The most common legend relates to the romance of the princess Iztaccíhuatl and the warrior Popocatepetl. The volcano, Iztaccíhuatl's was also called “La Mujer Dormida,” which means the “Sleeping Woman” because it resembles a woman sleeping on her back.

Olmec Head

The Olmec civilization, one of the earliest known indigenous civilizations on the American continent, is primarily recognized by the carvings of enormous helmeted heads. The heads are said to be portraits of rulers or famous ballplayers. Almost all of these colossal heads bear the same features, flattened nose, wide lips and capping headpiece, possible features of the Olmec warrior-kings. These carvings are heavy sculptures, which were made from single blocks or boulders of volcanic basalt. There are some historians that link these heads to an early African Culture.

Quetzal

To the Aztecs and the Mayans, the Quetzal is the “god of the air.” It is a symbol of goodness, light and that which is precious. The word “quetzal” came from Nahuatl word quetzalli, which means “large brilliant tail feather.” In Guatemalan legends, the quetzal was Tecún Umán's (a prince and warrior of Quiché Maya) spirit guide. When Tecún Umán was struck by conquistador Pedro de Alvarado, the quetzal flew down and landed on Tecún Umán, dipping its chest in the warrior prince's blood. It is there that the bird acquired its distinctive red chest feathers and iridescent green tail feathers. The tail feathers are symbols for spring plant growth.

Emiliano Zapata

Emiliano Zapata was a leading indigenous figure in the Mexican Revolution of 1910 against the dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz. He became the General for the Southern Revolutionary Forces. He is considered to be one of the national heroes of Mexico. For many years, he campaigned steadily for the rights of the villagers, first establishing via ancient title deeds the claims of the villagers to disputed land, and then pressing the recalcitrant governor of Morelos into action. On April 9, 1919, a General Guajardo invited Zapata for a meeting, pretending to be friendly towards him. When Zapata arrived, Guajardo's soldier's riddled him with bullets and turned his body in for the bounty. His famous quote is "It is better to die on your feet than live on your knees." His rallying cry was "Land and Freedom."

Benito Juárez

Benito Juárez was born on March 21, 1806, the child of Zapoteco Indians. He is considered one of Mexico's greatest and most beloved leaders. During the French occupation of Mexico, Juárez refused to accept the rule of the Monarchy or any other foreign nation, and helped to establish Mexico as a constitutional democracy. In January 1861, Benito Juárez became the President of Mexico. He won the presidential election again in 1871, but died on July 18, 1872, of a heart attack.

The Old Fire God and Corn

The Old Fire God, a symbol of the sacredness of fire. Representing the Sun, one of the four sacred elements of life and spiritual enlightenment. Corn became the main source of physical nutrition to the Mexicas. Science tells us that indigenous Mexicans developed corn from a plant called Teosinte or Teocentli, meaning "sacred grain." To the Aztecs, the traditional way of eating corn was to mash the kernels into dough to make tortillas. In addition, one of the core values of the Mexicas was respect and appreciation for all life-giving entities.

Female Aztec Dancer

Aztec dance is considered to be a prayer and ritual. It also expresses social, political and cultural issues. The Aztec culture and religion linked music and dance into daily life; personally and as a community, it as an educational and spiritual medium. Each step, every movement has a specific meaning, today these dances continue to enrich and educate our communities.

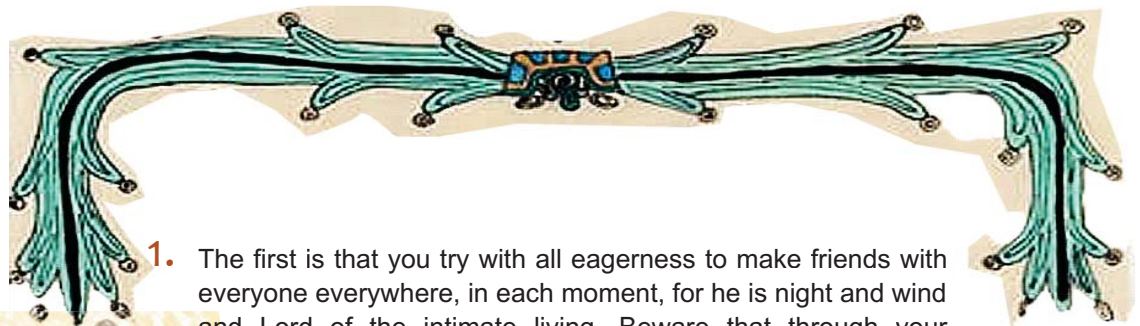
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Information Sheet

Mesoamerican Indigenous Values

Frank Diaz (2002), in his book, *The Gospel of the Toltecs: The life and teachings of Quetzacoatl*, proposes that Quetzalcoatl left his followers three “commandments.” They are:



1. The first is that you try with all eagerness to make friends with everyone everywhere, in each moment, for he is night and wind and Lord of the intimate living. Beware that through your engagement in this task you do not become arrogant, anxious or cowardly, but rather remain humble at heart, laying all your hopes in Omteotl (Lord of Duality who is male and female) and daring to sustain his prescriptions.



2. The second thing that you must remember is to be at peace with all people; do not offend anyone; respect everyone. Do not shame any another being for any reason. Be calm; let others say of you whatever they will. Be quiet and do not respond, even if they attack you. That is how you will show your virile condition and your nobility and everyone will know that you are a trustworthy representative of me. All of this is accomplished by actively training yourself in the practice of peace.

3. And the third thing I ask of you is this; don't waste the time that Omteotl has given you on Earth. Busy yourselves night and day with that which is good. Do not despise time, for you do not know if you will live again or if you will recognize your own faces there. Make the best of your lives.

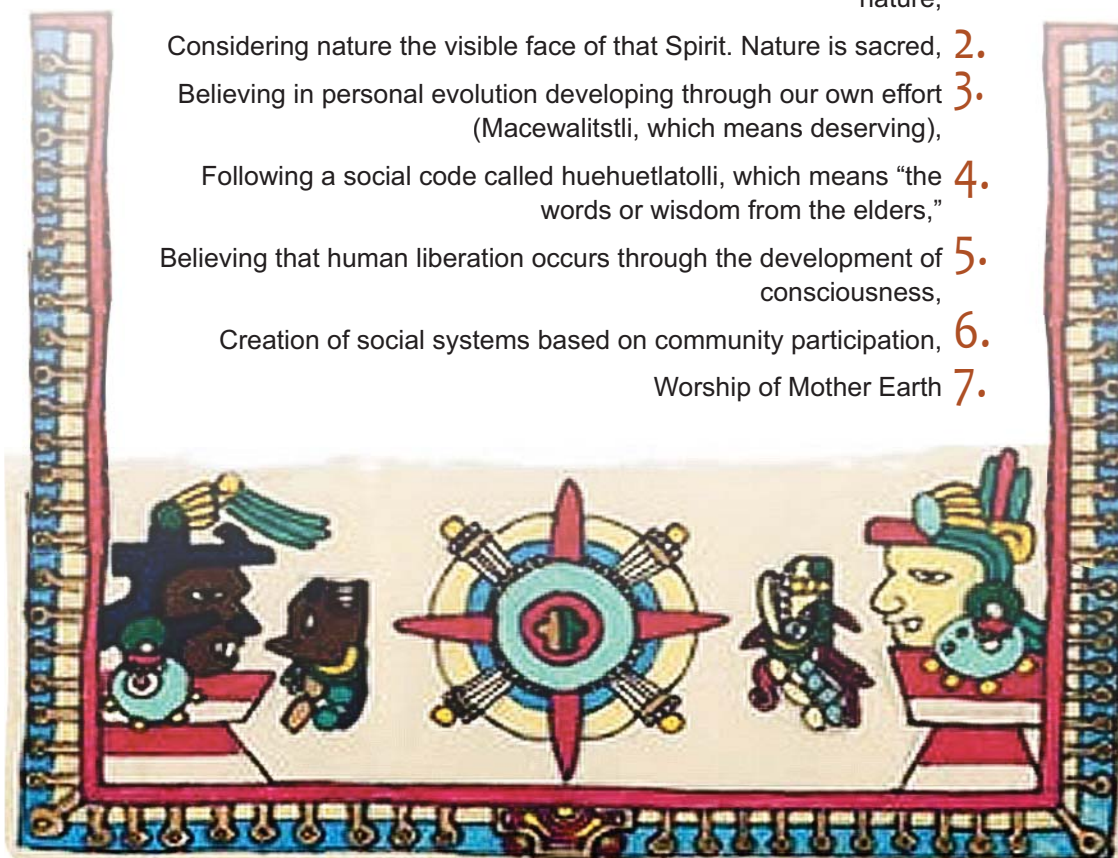


Information Sheet

Mesoamerican Indigenous Values *continued*

Sanchez (2004) in his work, *The Toltec Oracle*, asserts that the Toltecs espoused several core beliefs that have influenced Mesoamerican culture. They are:

1. Believing in one Spirit that manifests itself through the forces of nature,
2. Considering nature the visible face of that Spirit. Nature is sacred,
3. Believing in personal evolution developing through our own effort (Macewalitstli, which means deserving),
4. Following a social code called huehuetlatolli, which means “the words or wisdom from the elders,”
5. Believing that human liberation occurs through the development of consciousness,
6. Creation of social systems based on community participation,
7. Worship of Mother Earth



The Sanchez list of core values may be typical of most indigenous American cultures. These core values incorporate the concepts listed above and provide direction.

Information Sheet

1521 Mandate of Cuatemoc



For the guardians of all time...for men of the future. Our sun has gone. Our sun has gone and left us in darkness. We know that it will rise again. Once again it will come to illuminate us. It will be with us in the mansion of death. We will reunite valiantly. We must shield and hide away all those things in our hearts that we know are the treasures. We will destroy the temples, our places of meditation, our houses of song and dance, our ball courts, our schools for our children, our universities. We will close the doors and leave the streets deserted. We will stay hidden until our sun comes out. Our homes will become our temples, they will become our meditation places, they will become our houses of song and dance, our ceremonial ballcourts, our schools, our universities. We will wait until our new sun comes. Parents are obliged to teach the culture, the man with his sons, the woman with her daughters. And they will tell the children of their children of their children what our beloved culture has done. They will pass on the lamp of our destiny and our traditions which our ancestors, with love, have given us. Do not forget to tell your children of their children, with proper respect. Tell them how it was...how it will be...how we will rise again...how to gain strength and how our culture will fulfill its great destiny on Mother Earth.



Information Sheet

The *Círculo*

By Dr. Heriberto Escamilla and Alejandro Moreno, INVOCA/dignidad, Inc.

In common terminology, the *Círculo* can sometimes be called a support group. In the broadest sense, the group's purpose can be to help members gain self-awareness, the beauty we all have to share, the pain we are capable of causing and receive support as we apply this awareness toward living more harmonious lives. In this way, the *Círculo* contributes to the well-being of not only the individual, but the community as well. No one can claim ownership of the *Círculo* as people have gathered around the fire since the dawn of civilization. But like many of the traditions left to us by our ancestors, they have been largely forgotten. For Mesoamericans in the U.S., the *Círculo* has been unearthed and brought to us from Mexico by the *maestros de la tradición* (the teachers of tradition). Many see the resurgence of the *Círculo* as a response to the appeal of *Cuauhtémoc*, one of the last *Mejica* rulers – to save the teachings because the time would come when we will see again our greatness.

How it works



The *Círculos* vary in their composition, age of participants and functioning. However, there are some basic principles that distinguish it from other groups or activities. First of all, the group operates in the context of ceremony. Opening of the circle, when all have gathered and seated marks the entry into sacred time. In very practical terms, this means that participants are expected to be attentive to, and be respectful of, everyone seated with them. At the end of the session, the circle is closed and participants return to their normal way of relating; hopefully, a bit more conscious about one's ability to influence and be influenced by those in the circle/family. Secondly, movement around the group is always in one direction. The direction varies with tradition, but it should always be consistent. This is not intended as a rigid, punitive requirement, but rather as a reminder of the need for heightened attention. The uniform movement refers to walking and talking during the group. Thirdly, it is expected to always have at least one or two elders (over 52 years of age that have the ability to listen and teach) to whom participants would go to first, if in need of advice.

With regard to talking, all participants are expected to offer their greetings. Then they have an opportunity to share some words of *conocimiento* (sharing of one's identity) with their companions. The words can be minimal, simply a bit more than a greeting or a more extensive dialogue. That is followed by discussing of our current situation and our *cargas* (burdens), what we put on our backs that make our stride heavy and we end with *regalos* (gifts), what we share with others.

In the *Círculo*, there is no cross talk. In other words, the person speaking can speak without interruption from others. Some people talk a lot, others share few words, but all are expected to remain quiet and listen to the person speaking. This allows the speaker an opportunity to take responsibility for spoken words. The speaker says only what he or she intends and in his/her attentive state can see those words reflected in the companions sitting

around the circle. There is no leader to interpret, scold, suggest or encourage. So the speaker has an opportunity to be more aware of implications, as well as the intended and unintended consequences of the described actions. She or he can come to see the beauty we all have to share and the pain we are capable of causing. The speaker learns to see more clearly; to be more self-aware. Every person in the group has the same opportunity to speak without interruption. And once the group begins, the *palabra* (word) is passed from right to left.

While there is no cross talk in the group, participants can offer insights, share common experiences or words of encouragement to a person that spoke earlier. These words can be considered *regalos* (gifts), but they must always be offered with the permission of the one who spoke. Participants are encouraged to offer gifts to people that may have moved them with their words. Therefore, participants are asked to pay attention to their peers, but also to be vigilant of how others' words move them and with whom they felt a connection.



Some words about ceremony

While the circle functions in a ceremonial manner, it should not be confused with religion or any particular doctrine. Participants are not expected to profess or subscribe to any particular faith or religious denomination. All participants, including the group elder share their experiences, thoughts and ideas.

There are, in fact, many types of ceremonies, some secular and others with religious connotations. For example, virtually all religions prescribe a marriage ceremony. There are also ceremonies that mark graduation from high school or college. These are for the most part secular. On the other hand, all ceremonies have been developed to mark transitions. The transition can be major and relatively permanent such as from bachelorhood to married life, or from being a student to a fully productive member of society. Or, as is the case with the *Círculo*, they may mark temporary shifts of attention. The circle ceremony, at its most basic level, marks a transition from conventional social relationships to a time and space of increased attention to the inner world of people with whom we share our life. In time, people may come to share their dreams and disappointments, their hopes and deepest fears.

Assumptions underlying the *Círculo*

While the *Círculo*, as we intend to use it, is not associated with any particular religion; there are some assumptions underlying its structure and process. These assumptions have been drawn from Native American/Chicano culture and some may consider them part of broader spiritual tradition. The first is that life flows through everything; nature in particular is seen as a visible manifestation of this creative energy. Therefore, all life should be respected and honored. Secondly, we carry within us the words of our ancestors. This is, of course, a somewhat simple way of describing this notion, but the idea is that our current lives are a manifestation of all the life



that has gone before us. Therefore, elders are respected. In the group, they are often allotted special positions at the cardinal points. The third principal is that personal growth is through personal action. This may be self-evident, but it is truly amazing how we often blame and hold others responsible for our own behavior. In the group, the uninterrupted speech allows one to see how our actions are in fact manifestations of our own intent. The final and, perhaps, even the most self-evident principle is that our lives include transitional markers that remind us and keep us on the path, in other words, ceremony.

We should note that to date, most *Círculos* have been promoted by and have appealed to *Latinos* and people of Native American ancestry. For example, one organization that has been very successful at promoting the *Círculo de Hombres* as a means of supporting *Latino* men and their social service projects is the National *Compadres* Network (NCN), a nonprofit organization, based in California. However, the *Círculos*, as we intend to implement them, are not exclusionary. As noted earlier, while the particular style or format may vary, the concept of circles around the fire is an ancient one.



What the *Círculo* offers

While the effects of the *Círculo* have not been formally evaluated yet, at least as far as we are aware, there is plenty of anecdotal information attesting to its impact. Because *Círculos* often include a range of ages, older participants often feel more connected, appreciated and useful, while younger members benefit from modeling by older adults. Young people, who from all indications were well on their way to a hardened lifestyle, not only share fears, but also express healthy emotion in doing so. As noted earlier, the uninterrupted format also allows participants to express complete thoughts carrying them forth to a conclusion, something that is not possible in everyday social conversation. This process allows for better planning and decision-making. Behavior in mixed groups is often an attempt to gain attention from the opposite sex. While attending to this behavior may have its merit, it can be a distraction to deeper, more intimate relating; therefore, same-sex *Círculos* may work better, depending on the purpose of the *Círculo*. The *Círculo* provides a safe environment for drawing participants out. As noted earlier, the uninterrupted sharing also helps develop patience and respect for others. Participants learn to listen well. The *Círculo* is not owned by any particular cultural group. It is not the domain of any gender either. Outcomes and benefits will vary depending on the intent people bring to it.

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Information Sheet

Anáhuac History

The Aztecs still live. Remove the pure-blooded Indian from Mexico, and you lose two fifths of the population, take out those with Indian blood in their veins, and a bare twentieth of the population will remain. The face of Mexico is an Indian face. Yet travel in Mexico and read its history, and you will see as if in strata, the impress of the colonial period, the republic, the empire of Maximilian, the dictatorship of Díaz and the modern social thinking of the revolution. The Indian civilization you do not see, except for its descendants, who are everywhere, who are the Mexican people. Though their outward aspect and their material and social culture are European, the stamp of the Aztec character is on their minds, just as the masonry of broken Aztec temples is built into the walls of their churches.

George Vaillant (1970, p. 152)

The intent of this module is to initiate the process of Mesoamerican students to reconnect with their severed indigenous roots and to elaborate on the positive aspects of the *Mexica* way of life. Ethnic identity and the essence of our being are of great importance. This is especially true for Mesoamericans whose ancestors experienced the harsh realities of ethnocide and de-Indianization at the hands of the Spanish invaders. As a result, many Mesoamericans are hungry for knowledge and continuously searching for answers to common questions such as: Who am I? Where do I come from? Where am I going? (Rodriguez, n.d.).

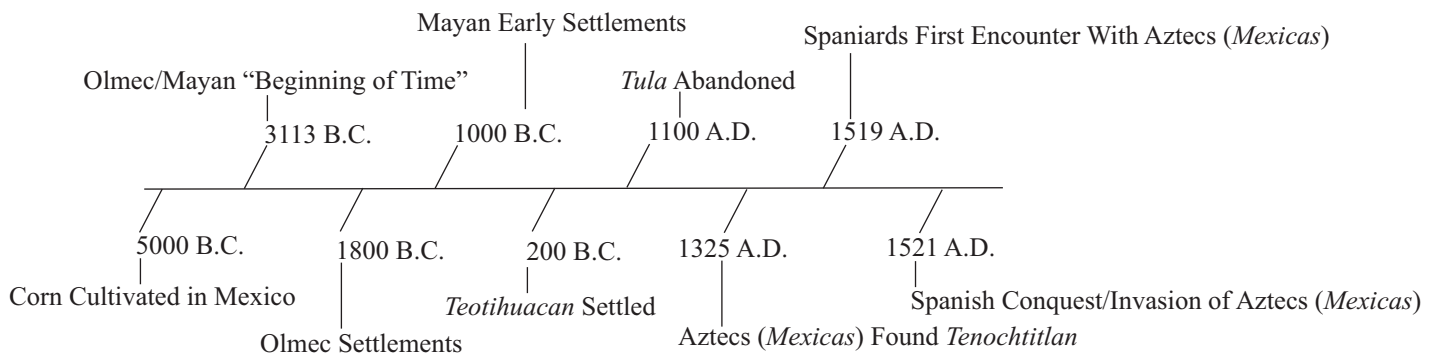
This curriculum attempts to help young Mexican students begin to find answers to some of the aforementioned questions. The curriculum is also in keeping with *Cuauhtémoc*'s last mandate of 1521, asking Mesoamericans to take their treasures and hide them in their hearts (referring to their culture, spirituality, medicine and philosophy) and to teach their children precisely how great the *Anáhuac* nation was and to let them know that their revered sun, in spite of having been hidden for hundreds of years, is destined to reappear and shine on them once again. Our hope is to shed some light on Mesoamerican students by making you proud of who you are and where you came from. Hopefully it will inspire you to become productive citizens and contribute to the world at large just like your ancestors (Rodriguez, n.d.).

According to Forbes (1999), the term Chicano is a derivative from the *Náhuatl* word *Mexicano*. During the colonial period, the term *Mexicano* referred to the people who spoke the *Náhuatl* language. In other words, it was used in reference to American indigenous people. Forbes further states that when the Mexican republic was established in the early 1800's, the term *Anáhuac*, which is also a native term, meaning the land between the waters, was considered for adoption. However, the republic decided to adopt the terms *Mexicano* and *México*. Forbes concludes by stating that the republic consciously adopted indigenous terms because they consciously identified themselves as indigenous people. *Anáhuac* refers to the area now called *Mesoamérica* by most scholars. It includes the region of *México* and Central America; although some consider *Anáhuac* to be the region spanning from Canada to Central America.

Major Groups Who Influenced the Anáhuac Civilization

Historically speaking, people have been farming in Mexico for the past 7,000 years. Early records also indicate that people in Mexico began cultivating corn about 7,000 years ago or 5,000 B.C. Current evidence also indicates that the Olmecs laid the groundwork for the first civilization in *Anáhuac*. The Olmecs lived in eastern coast of Mexico. Their civilization covered the current states of *Veracruz* and *Tabasco*. There were many major groups who contributed to the development of the beautiful civilization of *Anáhuac*. However, the scope of this curriculum does not lend itself to discuss all of them. Therefore, no disrespect was intended to indigenous groups which were part of the *Anáhuac* civilization not mentioned in this module.

The following timeline gives you a small glimpse into the precolonial civilized history of Mexico.



Olmecs

All known *Anáhuac* civilizations and cultures developed from the Olmec civilization. This ancient civilization existed during the time period between 1800 and 1200 B.C. The Olmecs were known for their unique style of art which can be found in pottery bowls, figurines, wood, preserved masks and of course the magnificent sculptured monuments carved from gigantic boulders. They miraculously sculpted colossal monuments without the benefit of metal tools (Coe & Koontz, 2002). Some of these gigantic heads were over nine feet tall and several tons in weight. The Olmecs also introduced the calendar system to the *Anáhuac* civilizations. The calendar was later refined by future generations. The Olmecs were responsible for the oldest form of writing in the Americas. The development of writing was a significant contribution to Mesoamerica.



Maya



The Mayan civilization dates back to approximately 1000 B.C. Their civilization was founded on the Mexican gulf coast lowlands and on the *Yucatán* Peninsula. The *Maya* were expert mathematicians, had advanced knowledge of astronomy and a sophisticated writing system. They introduced the mathematical concept of zero, which was unknown to the ancient Greeks. This discovery was not known to Europeans until many centuries afterwards. The *Maya* also refined the calendar systems, introduced by the Olmecs, who worked tirelessly to achieve with precision.

The **Popol Vuh** is one major document through which the Spanish along with the Mayan informants documented and preserved much of the history of the Mayan people. The **Popol Vuh** story explains that “True people” were created by constructing people with maize. This is a very reasonable explanation since, in essence, it was the cultivation of maize that gave the early Maya culture the means to change from hunters gatherers to their highly advanced civilization.

Teotihuacan



Teotihuacan was considered the greatest city of its time in America, rivaled only in size and reach by *Tenochtitlan*, which was built by the *Mexica* many years afterwards. *Teotihuacan* was a beautifully planned city, divided into quarters and laid out on a strict grid orientation. The city planners were, without question, sophisticated architects and surveyors. *Teotihuacan* was a sacred city and a beautiful paradise. During its peak, *Teotihuacan* had a population of 200,000. It was approximately 12 square miles in size and larger than any contemporary city in Europe.



Tolteca

It is believed that the Toltecs were probably the original speakers of the *Náhuatl* language, the language spoken by the *Mexica* and many indigenous groups throughout *Anáhuac*. They constructed the city of *Tula*, which included several magnificent Atlantean statues. During their height, the Toltecs were very prosperous. They were excellent potters and craftsman reaching heights of great artistry. The city of *Tula* covered a little over 5 square miles and its estimated population was between 30,000 and 40,000 (Coe & Koontz, 2002). It is said that the Toltecs were responsible for inventing most of the *Anáhuac* culture (Smith, 2002). “Nothing was too difficult for them and no state was too distant” (Coe & Koontz, 2002). In those days and even today, it is an honor to be of Toltec tradition and heritage.

The Toltecs are perhaps the most mysterious groups in Ancient Mexico. Very little about the Tolteca survived the European conquest. In fact, we do not even know for sure what they called themselves. The word “Tolteca”, which loosely translates from the Nahuatl as “admirable, noble or accomplished” (Townsend, 2006) was a term created by the Azteca when referring to their ancestors. They like anyone else must have felt proud of their heritage and when answering Spanish questions about the origins of their culture referred to their ancestors the Toltecas. The term *Toltecatoytl*, which translates as having a “Toltec Heart” means to be excellent, be worthy, (deserving) and to have extraordinary qualities. While there is still some debate, some historians and archeologists contend that the “Tolteca” were responsible for building Teotihuacan and later Tula or Tollan (Vaillant, 1938). The range and breadth of Toltec influence was also significant. There is mention of their role in the development of Mayan culture in the *Popol Vu*, which documents Mayan history in the area of the Yucatan. There is also archeological evidence that the Tolteca people traded with indigenous people in the North American southwest.

Any account of the Tolteca ought to mention Quetzalcoatl, the plumed serpent. The term Quetzalcoatl most likely referred to a title, signifying a learned person who had integrated the dual nature of life (bird representing sky and the serpent symbolizing the earth). But historians generally agree that the title also or perhaps originally referred to the historical “leader” of the Toltecas, Ce Atl Topiltzin (Davies, 1987). The historical figure most likely lived sometime between 900 and 1,000 A.D. Ce Atl Topiltzin's influence on Mesoamerican culture may be likened to the influence of Moses in Judeo-Christian tradition. As Frank Diaz (2002) contends, he was a ruler-priest that developed a set of commandments for his followers and tried to abolish the practice of human sacrifice. Unlike Moses, whose life and work were to some extent preserved and promoted by the written word (the Bible, Koran and Talmud), indigenous cultures relied on oral tradition and any written records that existed were thoroughly destroyed by the Spanish conquistadores. However, as just one indication of that influence, it is a commonly held belief that the Spanish conquest of Mexico was made possible because the indigenous people of Mexico mistook Hernan Cortez for the returning Quetzalcoatl (Townsend, 2006).

Mexica

Since thousands of books on *Mexica* history, poetry, philosophy, way of life, etc., were burned by the Spaniards during the conquest of 1521, we often have to rely on oral traditions to add to the information in the 16 manuscripts which were salvaged (Ramírez, 2000). According to most accounts, the Aztecs (*Mexica*) were one of seven clans who migrated from *Aztlán* to the valley of Mexico in the year *ce acatl* (one flint, probably 1064). *Mexica* is an honorable title which was earned through hard work and merit. A *Mexica* is considered to be a wise person or someone who is truly mature. All current-day Mexicans have a right to the name *Mexica* since it was earned by the ancestors who sacrificed and suffered on their difficult pilgrimage to the valley of Mexico. According to Ortiz (1999), calling an individual a “wise person” will make him feel honored and should inspire him/her to make an effort to deserve the name.

The exact location of *Aztlán* is not known, but many scholars believe it was located in the northern part of Mexico or the southwestern part of the United States. *Aztlán* was located in the middle of a lake where crops, hunting and fishing were abundant. In short, it was a place anybody could hope for. *Aztlán* was also immersed with love, happiness and joy. It is important to note that *Aztlán* is a physical place, but it can also exist in a person's heart.

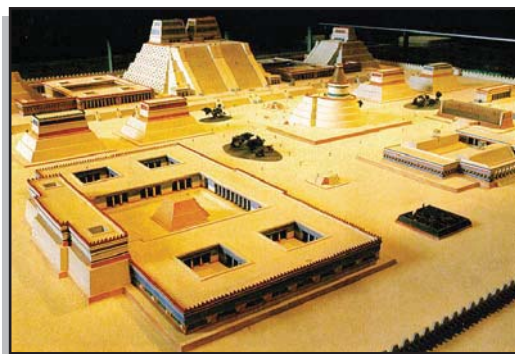
The *Mexicas* left their beautiful homeland of *Aztlán* to fulfill an important mission in life. Their aim was to find a great city in the navel or center of the earth where they could find personal freedom. This place was also called the fifth direction, the point where the world was divided into four parts or paths; east, north, west and south. In this magical place the energies would be centered and new ways of consciousness and communication would be available to them. In essence, they were searching for *Aztlán*'s twin place. To find this location, certain symbols and signs had to be evident.

This great and promised land would eventually be found, but a large number of ordeals and hardships were experienced during their 260-year trek. Those who started the pilgrimage, including many generations that followed never saw the new *Aztlán*. All who ventured on this journey were of strong faith, which is what helped them endure hunger, fatigue, pain, unfriendly people, etc. They were willing to take these risks without regret so that future generations could benefit from their sacrifice and accomplishments. Their determination propelled by their will power is what kept their hope and dreams alive. The *Mexicas* were guided by the hummingbird; which is a metaphor for the force of *Huitzilopochtli* or willpower. Their willpower protected them and kept them alive. In light of the above, the *Mexica* were visionary, courageous, adaptive and creative individuals driven by their strong sense of willpower.

When they arrived in the Valley of Mexico, the whole basin was heavily populated. The *Mexicas* were not welcome and were seen by many as outsiders, invaders, enemies and uncultured. The population in the valley was highly civilized and advanced in astronomy, math, agriculture, education, medicine, philosophy, literature, art, architecture, etc. The civilization in the Valley of Mexico was grounded on the work started by the Olmecs around 1800 B.C. Advances to the original civilization were made by the *Teotihuacanos*, *Zapotecas*, *Mayas*, *Toltecas* and others during a long period of time spanning more than 2,000 years.

Since the Valley of Mexico was heavily populated, the only place available to inhabit was a small, barren and swampy island in Lake *Texcoco* infested with snakes. Most inhabitants living near the lake did not care about the island and considered it dingy and uninhabitable. They thought the *Mexicas* would be doomed among the snakes. The *Mexicas*, on the other hand, ate the snakes in order to survive. According to Ramírez (2000), this is metaphorically important because the *coatl* (snake) marked a person's way when he journeyed. Individuals like the *pochtecatl* (traders), who traveled long distances, always made sure to start their travel date on the day of *coatl* as per the calendar. By eating the snakes, the *Mexicas* discovered that the snake was one of the symbols representing what they were looking for. Seeing an eagle perched on a *nopal* (cactus) with lots of *tunas* was another sign that the island was the navel or center of the mother earth.

Tenochtitlan



A Model of Tenochtitlan

In spite of the daunting obstacles faced by the *Mexica* to build their new homeland, they set their minds and will power to construct a magnificent city mirroring the beauty, freedom, harmony, happiness and abundance of their original home in *Aztlán*. Their new home was called *Tenochtitlan* and they started breaking ground around 1325. They became heirs to the long traditions and civilizations established by the earlier groups of indigenous people from central Mexico such as the *Olmecas*, *Mayas*, *Teothuacanos*, *Toltecas*, etc.

The *Mexica* were very clever, creative, ingenious, observant, intelligent and wise driven by their strong will to succeed. They were powerful warriors of the battles taking place in the internal world; therefore, they were extremely positive and optimistic in their ventures regardless of circumstances. With aforementioned in mind, they built what was considered the most beautiful city in the world on marshy and uninhabitable land. When the Spaniards first arrived in *Tenochtitlan* in the year 1519, many of the Spanish soldiers who had traveled extensively throughout the world commented that *Tenochtitlan* was the most beautiful city they had ever seen.

The city grew to a population of approximately 250,000 inhabitants when the Spaniards arrived in 1519. *Tenochtitlan* was very well-organized into quadrants with wide boulevards and canals similar to those in Venice, Italy. The city was very clean and included a large open market in the neighboring island of *Tlatelolco*. The Spaniards said they could see thousands of merchants and customers buying, selling and trading in a very organized and orderly fashion. The city's inhabitants were respectful and were also known for their cleanliness, bathing everyday and sometimes twice. This was at a time when Europeans didn't bathe very often.

The *Mexicas* incorporated the great knowledge and wisdom learned from the advanced civilization in the Valley of Mexico into their lives. They learned the techniques of agriculture from their neighbors and incorporated these ideas in a very ingenious way. Since the island was small, they needed room for development as the city grew. They cleverly built *chinampas* (floating gardens, similar to starter plants; however, they floated like small islands in the water that surrounded the island). Here they grew numerous crops, plants and flowers. In other instances, they built *chinampas* which were sturdy enough for houses to be built on them.

Tenochtitlan continued



Graeber and Jimenez (2001) best describe the magnificence of city of Tenochtitlan built by the Mexicas in the following script:

Long ago there was an enchanted land where deer frolicked on rolling meadows with manicured flowerbeds under graceful willow trees. Birds of many sizes and bright plumage soared from the branches where squirrels played. All of the animals were tame. The climate was always mild. The sweet scent of flowers and varieties of ripe fruit hanging from carefully attended trees, perfumed the air. Butterflies filled the sky. Waterfalls and streams fed fountains and ponds with brightly colored fish. Handsome brick houses, smooth tile streets and dramatic carved temples of solid stone mingled with the sweeping vistas of lush beauty.

Devoutly religious, the people were humbled before the eyes of their spiritual powers...Missionaries would go out and convert the unenlightened. They gave thanks for their bounty. Theft was unknown. True wealth was measured by a person's charity. The poor, the old, the crippled were provided for. Hospitals were available to everyone at no charge. Citizens were the model of cleanliness, bathing daily, sometimes twice. For leisure pleasures they read books, listened to musical orchestras or marveled at jugglers and acrobats. Birdmen soared above the heads of amazed spectators at the festivals.

Intellectuals and philosophers bested each other in poetry and natural sciences. The universities turned out architects, engineers, artists, sculptures, accountants, scribes as well as the finest of the breed to manage their grand cities. The Chief Spokesman was chosen, based on ability by a council of experienced leaders. A full compliment of civil services kept the bustling metropolises running smoothly. A medical profession, far advanced in herbal medicine, tended to the needs of the population that had swelled to fifty million citizens.

At the markets, the quality and quantity of goods was so vast, to shop took days. Lumber, concrete, plaster, glass lenses, bronze bells, fine linen, emeralds, gold, and jade could be purchased along with roast turkey, broiled swordfish, tomatoes, avocados, hot chocolate or flavored ice.

The people lived and governed for the good will of all. They were considerate of the Earth, most everything was recycled, and there was little waste. The well-constructed roads had rest stations for passerby's to relieve themselves. The bridges, dams and dwellings were built with precision and definitive quality. They understood that the Sun was another star (p. i).

Summary

In summary, one could say that the Mexicas were intelligent, wise, creative, ingenious, perceptive, positive and strong willed. They also had faith, hope, consciousness, intuition and vision. One could argue that the Mexica built the most beautiful city in the world during their time. They created beauty wherever they went and accomplished immensely regardless of the challenges and obstacles they faced. The Mexica could do anything they wanted in life when they set their hearts and minds to the task.

Activity Worksheet

Anáhuac History Questions

Directions: This is a group project. Each group should have three or four students. Appoint a facilitator, timekeeper, recorder and spokesperson for your group. Next, discuss the following *Anáhuac* History questions.

The recorder's job is to write the group answers to the questions. The spokesperson will be responsible for sharing the group's answers with the class. The

facilitator will make sure that the group stays focused on the assignment and the timekeeper will need to make sure that he/she lets the group know how much time is left.

All group members are required to participate in answering the following questions. You will have a total of 20 minutes to complete this assignment.

1. *Who were some of the major groups who influenced the beautiful civilization which originated in Mexico?*

2. *Who were the Mexica?*

3. *Where did Mexica come from?*

4. *What did they find in the Valley of Mexico?*

Anáhuac History Questions continued

5. What were some of their major accomplishments and innovations of the indigenous people in the Valley of Mexico?

6. List some of the significant qualities and/or values of your culture. List some of the significant qualities of the Mexica. Why are these qualities and/or values important? How could you incorporate some of these characteristics in your everyday life?

7. What experiences did the Mexica encounter that are similar to events you have faced in life?

8. What did you learn about the Indigenous ancestors of Anáhuac that gives you appreciation for the culture?

9. What did you learn about the city of Tenochtitlan that impressed you the most?

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Information Sheet

History of Leadership Among Indigenous People in Anáhuac

Anáhuac includes Mexico and northern Central America. *Anáhuac* is the term used by the indigenous inhabitants; later scholars have called it Mesoamerica. Over 200 languages were spoken in ancient *Anáhuac*, but the cultures of this area shared some common cultural traits. Cultural traits included a reliance on certain crops such as maize (corn), beans and squash (known as the three sisters because they were planted together); religion involving worship at monumental centers, respect for natural forces, a common ritual calendar and economics based on market-place exchange.

Anáhuac was the place of some of the most spectacular developments of the ancient world. For

example, the ancient Mayans developed an advanced glyphic writing system, an extremely accurate calendar and the mathematical concept of zero. The Aztecs built *Tenochtitlan*, one of the largest cities in the world. The thousands of inhabitants of *Tenochtitlan* were supported by some of the most productive agricultural methods ever devised. Our Aztec and Mayan ancestors invented a technique for making the sharpest edges known to science with obsidian (volcanic glass). Also, the two original civilizations in America (*México* and *Perú*) domesticated the majority of the food crops known throughout the world today. These are just a few of the many great developments by the Indigenous People of *Anáhuac* (Smith & Masson, 2000).

Teotihuacan

Most importantly, the ancient people of *Anáhuac* also developed complex societies with cities and centralized state government. There were many large cities characterized by various forms of government at different time periods. We will examine one city, *Teotihuacan*, “place where gods were born” in the northeastern part of the basin of Mexico. The name was given by the Aztecs centuries after the fall of the city. By the 200s A.D., *Teotihuacan* had the largest integrated structures in *Anáhuac*: the gigantic Sun *Teocalli* (spirit house of energy—known as temple or pyramid), the Moon *Teocalli*, the *Ciudadela* enclosure with its Feathered Serpent Pyramid, and the broad Avenue of the Dead, along whose northern 2 kilometers these and many other pyramids, platforms and elite residences are arranged. It was the largest city in the world outside of China during the fifth through seventh centuries.

Surviving documents about *Teotihuacan* are few and hard to read. Experts often disagree on conclusions; therefore, there is little solid and concrete knowledge about *Teotihuacan*. Inferences are all that can be made from archeological evidence. It is estimated that the city had between 100,000 to 200,000 inhabitants and the population seemed to be stable for several centuries. *Teotihuacan* was the capital of an important state, but little is known about it. Relations between *Teotihuacan* and other nearby cities, like *Cholula* and the Zapotec state in *Oaxaca* are unclear although it seems they maintained diplomatic relations, but were independent. The city was carefully and precisely constructed using a grid pattern arranged around a long north-south ceremonial avenue lined with temples and other civic buildings. Inhabitants lived in single-story housing complexes.

*Not with envy,
not with a twisted heart,
shall you feel superior,
shall you go about
boasting.
Rather in goodness shall
you make true
your song and your word.
And thus you shall be
highly regarded,
and you shall be able to
live with the others.
Miguel León-Portilla
(1963, p.153)*



Teotihuacan *continued*



Originally, political power may not have been concentrated in one single person or lineage. It appears that *Teotihuacan* was an oligarchic republic. Oligarchy is a form of government where political power rests on an elite few. It means “rule by few.” Undoubtedly, force, religion, civic consciousness and “good citizenship” were used by the *Teotihuacan* “politicians” to enforce their beliefs about what was best. By the way, these concepts are still used today. Civic pride and a sense of citizenship may explain much of the stability in *Teotihuacan*.

As *Teotihuacan* grew, the political system changed as well. It never emphasized inheritance rulerships as did the Mayans. The great surge of buildings suggests strong leadership. The immense structures had no inscriptions and no statutes to reinforce the messages of the buildings. One plan for almost the whole city is another sign of early strength authority at *Teotihuacan*. The evidence is conclusive that extensive planning was utilized. This type of longitudinal planning argues for some type of educational system, as well to allow for continuity in the execution of the urban plan. The extensive nature of the city also argues for comprehensive education in that numerous disciplines, such as hydraulic engineering, civil engineering, geometry and other math were necessary for its execution. We can conclude that the successful execution of this type and scale of plan must have allowed for considerable discussions. Whether we can infer a democratic form of governance, it seems highly unlikely, in a culture that appears to have had little in the way of written language, that one person or a limited few, could have drawn up the plan for such a daring task. Also, the amount of time over which it was executed would have required planning over many generations.

*They would begin to teach them;
how they should live,
how they should respect others,
how they were to dedicate themselves to
what was good and righteous;
how they were to avoid evil;
fleeing unrighteousness with strength,
Refraining from perversion and greed.
Miguel León-Portilla (1963, p.145)*

There is not much that is known about the decline and ultimate collapse of *Teotihuacan*. It is possible that some combination of bureaucracy, failure to adapt to new styles of government, commerce and religion that were developing elsewhere; and possibly environmental problems led to the collapse of *Teotihuacan*. It was eventually physically destroyed by the burning of temples and residences and smashing of idols. Some believe it was by the inhabitants themselves or unhappy insiders; others believe it was by surrounding societies that gained power of a weakened, poorly led city. It is believed that the Toltecs and later the Aztecs found the city and preserved it. Some believe they left and built *Tula* and others went South to the Mayans.



Information Sheet

Toltec Four Agreements

BE IMPECCABLE WITH YOUR WORD

Your words are a force; they can create something beautiful or destroy and hurt. If you say mean things to another person or about another person, that person will get angry with you, which is like poison for you. Therefore, if you use words against someone else, you are really using words against yourself. Love yourself, and you will express that love to others who in turn will love you. If you insult, you will be insulted; if you show gratitude, you will be shown gratitude. If you are selfish with others, they will be selfish with you. When you are impeccable with your word, you feel good, you feel happy and at peace. Tell yourself how wonderful you are, how great you are, and how much you love yourself.

DON'T TAKE ANYTHING PERSONALLY

If someone says something negative about you, and you believe it, you are poisoned. Nothing other people do is because of you. It is because of themselves. If you take what others say personally then the poison becomes yours. When you take things personally, you feel offended, react by trying to defend your beliefs, and try hard to be right, by giving them your opinions which can create conflict. Don't take anything personally because you set yourself up to suffer for nothing. You are never responsible for the actions of others; you are only responsible for yours.

DON'T MAKE ASSUMPTIONS

It is better to ask questions than to make assumptions. Be courageous and ask questions until you are clear and even then do not assume you know all there is to know. Real love is accepting other people the way they are without trying to change them. Choose friends and partners whom you don't have to change at all. Also, that person must love you the way you are. Find your voice to ask for what you want. With clear communication, all of your relationships will be healthy.

ALWAYS DO YOUR BEST

Under any circumstance, always do your best! You are going to be productive; you are going to be good to yourself because you will be giving yourself to your family, to your community, to everything. Rewards will come, but don't be attached to the reward—you will get even more than what you could have imagined for yourself. When you do your best, you accept yourself. By doing your best, you become a master.

If you fall, do not judge. Stand up, and make the agreement again. Everyday say, "Today I will be impeccable with my word, today I will not take anything personally, today I will not make any assumptions, and today I will do my best." If you break an agreement, begin again tomorrow, and again, the next day.

*The information comes from the Toltec Four Agreements,
by Don Miguel Ruíz (1997).*



Activity Worksheet

Teotihuacan Leadership Questions

Directions: Discuss the following questions in small groups. Select a facilitator, a timekeeper, a recorder and spokesperson to share a brief summary of your discussion.

What type of leadership would have 1.
been needed to complete the task of
building this enormous city?

What kind of issues or problems did the 2.
Teotihuacanos encounter during the
building of the city? How did they
overcome the problems?

What do you think is the purpose of the 3.
teocallis (temples or pyramids) in
Teotihuacan; why were they built?

Teotihuacan is the most visited of 4.
Mexico's archeological sites. Why do
you think this is?

How do you think *Teotihuacanos* were 5.
able to build such large structures?

Which of the indigenous concepts or 6.
principals are most evident in
Teotihuacan (refer to the list if
needed)?

Activity Worksheet

Toltec Four Agreements in Real Life

Directions: Think back to an argument, disagreement or problem you have had with someone about school. It could be a parent, brother or sister, teacher, friend or anyone else. Briefly describe what happened and how you handled the issue. How was it resolved? Now, think about how the Four Agreements could

you in that situation. Write down what you would have done differently if you were using the Four Agreements to resolve the problem. Write down how the outcome may have been different. Prepare to share a short summary with the class.

Information Sheet

Famous Mesoamerican Figures



Cuauhtémoc

Cuauhtémoc was the Aztec ruler of *Tenochtitlan* from 1520 to 1521. The name *Cuauhtémoc* means "One That Has Descended Like an Eagle" in *Náhuatl*.

Cuauhtémoc took power in 1520 and was a nephew of the emperor *Moctezuma II*. His young wife was one of *Moctezuma's* daughters. He ascended to the throne when he was 18 years of age, as his city was being besieged by the Spanish and devastated by an epidemic of smallpox.

In 1521, *Cuauhtémoc* went to call for reinforcements from the countryside to aid the falling *Tenochtitlan*, after 80 days straight of urban warfare against the Spanish. Of all the *Nahuas*, only *Tlatelolcas* remained loyal, and the surviving *Tenochcas* looked for refuge in *Tlatelolco*, where even women took part in the battle. *Cuauhtémoc* was captured while crossing Lake *Texcoco* in disguise. He surrendered to Hernan Cortéz along with the surviving *pipiltin* (nobles) and offered him his knife and asked to be killed.

At first, Cortéz treated his foe chivalrously. "A Spaniard knows how to respect valor even in an enemy," he declared. However, he allowed the royal treasurer to have *Cuauhtémoc* tortured to make him reveal the whereabouts of a hidden treasure. *Cuauhtémoc*, insisting that there was no hidden treasure, stood up under the ordeal.

Cuauhtémoc was tortured by having his feet put to a fire, but even so he refused to divulge information about the treasures the Spanish coveted. Eventually Cortéz recovered some gold from a noble's house, but most of the tales about "Aztec gold" is a myth. For the Aztecs, gold had no intrinsic value. They did not have big solid pieces of gold, instead they preferred wood covered with gold. After those pieces were melted, they only gave a fraction of the gold that Cortéz and his men expected.

Cortéz had *Cuauhtémoc* executed for allegedly conspiring to kill him and the other Spaniards. According to a conquistador under Cortéz who recorded his experiences, the supposed plot was revealed by two men named Tapia and Juan Velásquez. Díaz portrays the executions as unjust and based on no evidence, and admits to having liked *Cuauhtémoc* personally. He also records *Cuauhtémoc* giving the following speech to Cortéz, through his interpreter *Malinche*: "Now I understand your false promises and the kind of death you have had in store for me. For you are killing me unjustly. May God demand justice from you, as it was taken from me when I entrusted myself to you in my city of Mexico!" (Wikipedia Contributors, 2009)

Benito Juárez

Benito Juárez is considered one of Mexico's greatest and most beloved leaders. During his political career, he helped to institute a series of reforms that were embodied in the new constitution of 1857. During the French occupation of Mexico, *Juárez* refused to accept the rule of the monarchy or any other foreign nation and helped to establish Mexico as a constitutional democracy. He also promoted equal rights for the Indian population, better access to health care and education, lessening the political and financial power of the Roman Catholic Church, and championed the raising of the living standards for the rural poor. *Benito Juárez* was born on March 21, 1806, the child of *Zapoteco* Indians. After they died when he was three, he went to live with his uncle, but when he was 12, he joined his sister in *Oaxaca*. He began studying for the priesthood, but in 1829 changed to studying for a law degree, which he received in 1831. That year, he also began his political career, with a seat on the municipal council. In 1841, he became a judge and the governor of *Oaxaca*.

In 1853, the conservatives took power in Mexico and many liberals were exiled, including *Juárez*, who spent his time of exile in New Orleans. In 1855, the liberals won the election, and *Benito Juárez* returned from his exile as the Minister of Justice. In 1857, he was elevated to preside over the Supreme Court. In 1858, the conservatives rebelled, and again *Juárez* had to leave Mexico City, this time fleeing to *Veracruz*, where he created a government in exile.

In January 1861, *Benito Juárez* became the President of Mexico. As the treasury was practically empty, *Juárez* made the decision to suspend payment on all foreign debts for a two-year period. After the Mexican congress rejected an agreement *Juárez* had made with the British Prime Minister to protect the interests of European countries, Spanish, British and French troops landed in *Veracruz*. Spain and Britain were there to protect their financial interests, and left in April, after it became clear that France had conquest in mind. The French troops fought for two years, and although they suffered a serious defeat on May 5, 1862, they eventually captured Mexico City in June 1863, and placed Archduke Maximilian of Austria on the Mexican throne.

Benito Juárez and the government of Mexico were forced to retreat right back to *Ciudad Juárez*, on the border with the United States. After four years—with growing pressure from America, continuing resistance from Mexicans and criticism from the French government and people—the Napoleonic forces finally withdrew. Maximilian himself was captured and executed on June 19, 1867.

Juárez returned to Mexico City and the presidency, even after suffering a stroke in October 1870 and the loss of his wife in 1871. He won the presidential election in 1871, but died on July 18, 1872 of a heart attack.

Juárez's famous quotation continues to be well-remembered in Mexico:

Entre los individuos, como entre las naciones, el respeto al derecho ajeno es la paz, meaning "Among individuals, as among nations, respect for the rights of others is peace." It is inscribed on the coat of arms of *Oaxaca*. (mexonline, n.d.)



Famous Mesoamerican Figures *continued*



Moctezuma I

Moctezuma I (c. 1398 – 1469), was the fifth Aztec emperor. During his reign he oversaw the consolidation of the Aztec Empire, the undertaking of the major expansion and the start of *Tenochtitlan* becoming the dominant partner of the Aztec Triple Alliance. His first name means "he frowns like a lord" in *Náhuatl*. Some historians have suggested that his actual name, while alive, was not *Moctezuma* but *Ilhuicamina*, and that he was later renamed *Moctezuma* by the postconquest chroniclers in order to describe him as a parallel to the later *Moctezuma*.

Moctezuma took power in 1440 after the death of his uncle. As *tlatoani*, *Moctezuma* solidified the alliance with two neighboring peoples, *Tlacopan* and *Texcoco*. In this skillfully crafted Triple Alliance, four-fifths of a newly conquered territory would be divided between *Texcoco* and the Aztecs, with the remaining fifth given to *Tlacopan*.

Among the Aztecs' greatest achievements, *Moctezuma I* and *Nezahualcoyotl* of *Texcoco* organized the construction and completion of a double aqueduct pipe system, supplying the city of *Tenochtitlan* with fresh water (Wikipedia Contributors, 2009).

Nezahualcoyotl

Nezahualcoyotl (1402-1472) was ruler (*tlatoani*) of the city-state of *Texcoco* in Mexico. Unlike other high-profile Mexican figures from the century preceding the Spanish Conquest, *Nezahualcoyotl* was not a Mexica. His people were the *Acolhua* another *Nahuan* people settled in the eastern part of the Valley of Mexico settling on the eastern side of Lake *Texcoco*.

Revered as a sage and poet-king, *Nezahualcoyotl* drew a group of followers called the *tlamatini*, generally translated as "wise men." These men were philosophers, artists, musicians and sculptors who pursued their art in the court of *Texcoco*.

Nezahualcoyotl is credited with cultivating what came to be known as *Texcoco's* Golden Age, which brought the rule of law, scholarship and artistry to the city and set high standards that influenced other cultures. *Nezahualcoyotl* designed a code of law based on the division of power, which created the councils of finance, war, justice and culture (the last actually called the council of music). Under his rule, *Texcoco* flourished as the intellectual center of the Triple Alliance, and it possessed an extensive library that, tragically, did not survive the Spanish conquest. He also established an academy of music and welcomed worthy entrants from all regions of Mesoamerica.

Texcoco had hilltop gardens, sculptures and a massive aqueduct system, which showed the impressive engineering skills and aesthetic appreciation of his reign. Many believe, however, that of all the creative intellects nurtured by this Texcocan "Athens," by far the greatest belonged to the king himself. He is considered one of the great designers and architects of the pre-Hispanic era. He is said to have personally designed the "*albarrada de Nezahualcoyotl*" ("dike of *Nezahualcoyotl*") to separate the fresh and brackish waters of Lake *Texcoco*, a system that was still in use over a century after his death (Wikipedia Contributors, 2009).



Malintzin/La Malinche/Doña Maria

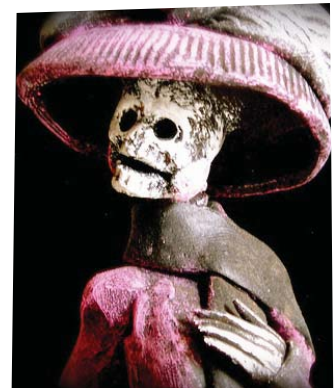
She was born in the Aztec province of *Coatzacoalcos* to a wealthy noble family who sold her into slavery when she was a child. On March 15, 1519, *La Malinche* was given to Cortéz along with 19 other women as a peace offering. The Spaniards immediately baptized her Marina. During this time, she became the translator and mistress to *Hernán Cortéz* as he was on a mission to conquer the *Mexica* Empire for Spain. She was fluent in *Náhuatl*, the language of the *Mexica* ruling class, and *Chontal Maya*, which was a dialect understood by Cortéz' Spanish translator. It was during this time (1522) that she gave birth to Cortéz' son, *Martín*; however, during the *Honduras* expedition of 1524-1526, Cortéz married her to one of his Spanish soldiers, *Juan Jaramillo*.

Her deeds made it easier for Spaniards to christianize the people of Mexico. To the conquistadors, she was *Doña Marina*. The term "*malinchista*" evolved from "*Malinche*" which means "one who is corrupted by foreign influences" (Mackeracher, 2006).



La llorona

La llorona, which means "the weeping woman" or "the howling woman," is an ancient legend that has been traced to the preColumbian times in Mexico. Many Chicanos have grown up hearing and learning about this lady represented as an Indian woman, an ugly old witch or a beautiful woman who wears white and has long flowing hair. Her story is as such: she only appears at night, crying and weeping "*Ayyy, mis hijos!*" -Oh, my children! Her story is tragic. She was once in love with her husband, who abandoned her and left her with two or three children. She became so angry and as a result sought revenge by killing her children and throwing them in the river. When she came to her senses and realized what she had done, she went insane and spent eternity searching for her dead children. Contemporary texts suggest that *La Llorona* was *La Malinche*, the mistress of *Hernán Cortéz*. When he abandoned her to return to Spain, she killed her only son with a knife. To this day, Chicano parents use her name to scare their little children to behave.



Tonantzin/Mother Earth/La Virgen de Guadalupe

La Virgen de Guadalupe was a vision that appeared to an Indian convert, named *Juan Diego* in the 16th century. During her first appearance, *La Virgen de Guadalupe* told *Juan Diego* that he must gather his community to build a church for her on *Tepeyac* Hill. When *Juan* told the Catholic Church of Mexico about his vision of the lady, the church refused to believe him and asked him to present physical proof. Therefore, *La Virgen de Guadalupe* appeared again, this time asking *Juan* to gather roses in his *tilma* (peasant cloak) and to take it to the bishop as physical evidence. When he appeared in front of the bishop, he unwrapped his *tilma* to show the flowers, and the *Virgen's* image appeared on the fabric.

Since her appearance, she has become a symbol of Mexican national identity and pride. She has been celebrated as a loving mother and as a symbol of faith, hope, leadership, nationalism, justice, unity, family, home, belonging, union, forgiveness and peace. Throughout the world, *La Virgen de Guadalupe* is celebrated on December 12th of every year with prayers, songs, dances, etc. To the Catholic authorities, *La Virgen de Guadalupe* is a representation of the Virgin Mary. To the people of Mexico, she first was a representation of *Tonantzin*-Mother Earth.



Nun Juana Ines de La Cruz (1651-1695)

Juana Inés de la Cruz was born on November 12, 1651, to a Spanish father and a creole mother. Her place of birth was a *hacienda* at San Miguel Nepantla, today in the state of Mexico. She was raised mainly by Pedro Ramírez, her paternal grandfather.

She could read and write at the age of three and at age eight she composed a *loa*, or short dramatic poem, in honor of the Blessed Sacrament. By that time she had already been enrolled for five years in a primary school at Amecameca. Having by then read every volume in her grandfather's extensive library, she begged her family to send her to the University of Mexico. They refused on grounds of her tender age but did send her to Mexico City to be further educated by a scholarly priest named Martín de Olivar. To the good father's astonishment, Juana mastered Latin in 20 lessons. Throughout this period of instruction, Juana's severest critic was herself. She adhered to such a strict regimen of self-discipline that she cut her hair short as punishment when she felt she wasn't learning fast enough.

By now Juana's fame as a youthful prodigy had grown to the extent that the Spanish viceroy, Marqués de Mancera, took her into his court as a maid of honor to his wife. It amused the viceregal couple to invite professors from the university and doctors of the arts and sciences to question the gifted young woman on almost any subject. Juana invariably held her own with these learned interlocutors.

Juana took the veil at 16 and entered the convent of Santa Teresa la Antigua. She left it six months later because of illness but on February 24, 1669, she joined the convent of San Jerónimo where she remained the rest of her life.

At the convent, Sor Juana served as an accountant and librarian. Though several times nominated for prioress, she repeatedly declined the honor. But the real marvel was her literary output. She wrote both poetry and prose, and on worldly as well as religious themes. Exploring different forms, she wrote *loas*, plays, comedies, historical vignettes and imaginative tales of mythology. A long poem, written in 1680 and translated into English as *First Dream*, is considered her leading work. Three other major works were published in Spain - *Inundación Castálida* (Madrid 1689), *Segundo Volumen de las Obras de Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz* (Seville 1992) and *Fama y Obras Póstumas* (Madrid 1700).

Sor Juana also displayed an independence of spirit unusual for a woman- to say nothing of a nun- living in such a male-dominated society as 17th century colonial Mexico. After criticizing a sermon by a well-known pulpit orator named Padre Vieyra, she received a stern rebuke from Manuel Fernández de Santa Cruz, Bishop of Puebla. Curiously, the bishop issued his philippic under the pseudonym of Sor Filotea de la Cruz. But there was nothing "sisterly" about the message, which urged Sor Juana to give up writing and devote herself entirely to religion. Sor Juana responded with a remarkable letter in which she gave a complete resumé of her life, character, literary preferences and of a program of self-mortification that she had been practicing. More significantly, the letter also contained statements in favor of "the culture of Mexican women" and "the right to dissent." This document, titled *Respuesta a Sor Filotea*, was dated March 1, 1691.

Shortly afterwards, however, she prepared two affirmations to the effect that she planned to get rid of all her books, maps and instruments and henceforth dedicate herself entirely to the poor. These affirmations were signed with her own blood.

For the four years that remained of her life, she remained faithful to this commitment of sacrificing intellectual activity to purely religious duties. How well she kept her word is evinced by the manner of her death. While nursing infected sister nuns during an epidemic, she herself died on April 17, 1695.

On April 17, 1995, three hundred years after her death, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz received a tribute from a more contemporary creative spirit when Nobel Prize-winning writer Octavio Paz read a funeral prayer in her honor.



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Information Sheet

Setting Educational Goals

*Your beliefs become your thoughts,
Your thoughts become your words,
Your words become your actions,
Your actions become your habits,
Your habits become your values,
Your values become your destiny.*

-Mahatma Gandhi, as cited in Dodd, 2006.

The information on this module can also be found in Rodriguez (n.d.). It has been included on this module with permission from the author.

The ancestors believed that everybody was born with certain gifts and talents and a specific destiny in life. One of their primary goals was to nurture their gifts and talents and to live their lives with purpose. Their intent was to gain personal freedom and to consciously live their lives with love and passion.

The desire to find personal happiness, success, meaning and value in life is of utmost importance to most of us. It's not about who we are and the things we do in life but how we do them. It has to do with always doing our best. It's about living and doing everything with our heart, love, passion, exuberance and vitality. Some of our greatest gifts in life are our self-acceptance, self-respect and self-love.

To be successful as an adult, it will be important to identify a profession where your identity, integrity and gifts are engaged and valued in the work you do. This means identifying a career where you, along with others, have the freedom to be engaged as subjects in carving your own destinies. Personal freedom is extremely important. Culture and history could not exist without our right to be innovative, creative and curious (Freire, 2004).

Our ancestors understood that the fulfillment of dreams involved struggle, which required a persevering will and courage to confront obstacles and fears which get in the way. According to Freire (2004), dreams are visions for which one fights, and he also states that their realization does not take place easily and without difficulties. This also implies advances, reversals and at times, long marches forward.

For our ancestors, identifying their purpose in life meant discovering their navel/core or inner-self. Your core is what centers you. It is what gives you consistence and, according to Freire (2004), consistency is what creates wholeness. Without your core you have no direction and as an adult, this could mean a disconnection between your innermost happiness and your profession.



Setting Educational Goals continued

By Your True Faces We Will Know You

Gloria Anzalduá

I am visible- see this Indian face- yet I am invisible. I both blind them with my beak nose and am their blind spot. But I exist, we exist. They'd like to think I have melted in the pot. But I haven't, we haven't.

By Your True Faces We Will Know You

Gloria Anzalduá

Awareness of our situation must come before inner changes, which in turn come before changes in society. Nothing happens in the "real" world unless it first happens in the images in our heads.



A Model of *Tenochtitlan* From a Distance

The *Mexicas* considered *Tenochtitlan* the navel or core of the mother earth.

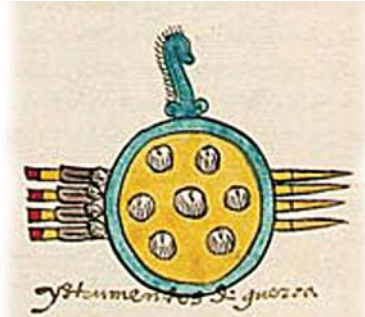
Discovering your center is an invitation to peace, freedom and happiness. To discover your center entails an internal search to recognize the things you do in life that give you the greatest sense of joy and happiness. This could be helping older people, being around animals, spending time in the outdoors, taking care of children, etc. The idea is to pursue career choices that align or are closely related to your core. You may discover that several careers align with your center. That is wonderful and acceptable. The important thing is that you become fully aware of your core, and recognize that it is what brings you balance in life.

Once you identify your center, cherish it and become faithful to it. Knowing your core gives you purpose. It is what motivates a person to live. Your center will bring you peace and happiness throughout your life. Lastly, the ancestors believed that your core mirrored your personal mission in life.

The aforementioned script on this module can also be found in Rodriguez (n.d.).

Activity Worksheet

Identifying Your Core



The purpose of this assignment is to help identify with your core (inner-self). This is an individual assignment that you will be sharing with members of the class. Your teacher will be giving you specific instructions on the following exercise.

According to the ancestors, your core represents those things you do in life which bring you the greatest sense of joy and happiness. Knowing your core and connecting it to the things you do in life are of utmost importance in living your lives in balance, harmony, peace and freedom.

The following describes an exercise you are going to participate in to get you in touch with your core. Your teacher will be providing you with the following instructions.

Your teacher is going to ask you to take a few minutes to think about the things you enjoy doing that bring you the most joy and happiness. You are going to be instructed to close your eyes and to visualize yourself doing the things that bring you the MOST HAPPINESS in life. You are going to be asked to describe your feelings when you are most happy in life. Your teacher is also going to ask you to pay attention to the surroundings in your visual and to describe the things you see and how you feel. Your teacher is also going to ask you to take a few moments to listen to sounds. He/she is also going to ask you to describe the sounds and how they make you feel. Lastly, you will be asked to pay attention to specific scents or fragrances, or what you see and to get in touch with your feelings.

After you complete the above exercise, which will be directed by your teacher, he/she will ask you to open your eyes and respond to the following questions. You will be given approximately 15 minutes to answer the following questions.

Describe what you saw in your visual that brought you the greatest sense of freedom, joy and happiness. What were you doing? How did you feel?

Describe the peace and beauty in your visual. What did you see?

Describe the beautiful and joyful sounds. How did they make you feel?

Describe the scents and soothing fragrances that were part of your visual. How did they make you feel?

Did you know?

You have the power to achieve your goals if you set your mind to it!

School can be hard, but life will be harder if you drop out

People who leave high school before graduating are more likely to be:

Unemployed, work in very tiring jobs and make very little money

Incarcerated.

Seek government help for things such as healthcare, housing and food.

What can you do now?

Practice good study habits. Good study habits help you develop a routine to studying and knowing what resources are available to you.

Talk to a counselor about your goals and interests. Counselors are there to help you become successful.

Make an appointment with your counselor.

Tell him/her your goals.

Ask him/her what classes will be beneficial to you.

Check in with him/her frequently.

Explore careers: It is never too early to explore what you like to do and what steps are necessary to achieve your intended career.

Visit your school or local library, and read about what careers appeal to you and what your interests are.

Get involved in your school and community. Getting involved in school and community activities is fun and can help you learn more about your interests and strengths.

You may also meet a future business partner or employer.

Prepare to Succeed

Why stay in school?

Finishing school gives you:

Greater self-respect and the ability to help others and your family.

Pride. We all like to feel good about ourselves and what we do. Staying in school makes you and your family proud.

Independence opens up opportunities for a more satisfying life.

Financial stability. The more education you have, the more money you are likely to make.

A greater advantage in the workforce. Today, jobs are more complex and employers are seeking people with more than a high school education, including strong math, language and problem-solving skills.



Activity Worksheet

Reflect on Career Choices Which Align with Your Core

This assignment has two purposes: to make a list of the career choices which align with your core; and to identify the types of educational requirements and/or special skills required for each career choice on your list. You are encouraged to complete this assignment with the assistance of your parents and/or older brothers and sisters. Results from this assignment will be shared in class next week.

1. Make a list of the career choices that most closely align with your core.

As you think about your core (the things you enjoy doing which bring you the most joy and happiness), try to identify as many career choices that align with your core. For example, let's say you're most happy when around animals. Career choices that align with this core could include the following: veterinarian, pet trainer, pet shop owner, zookeeper, etc. All of these careers have to do with caring for animals.

2. Make a list of the types of education or special skills required for each career choice. *For example: to become a teacher, you will need to go to college for a minimum of four years. To become a veterinarian, you will need to go to college and veterinary school for a total of seven or eight years.*

Check the Internet and research the education requirements needed for each career on your list. Do they require a high school diploma, vocational school, two-year college degree, four-year college degree, etc.? If college is not required, find out what types of special skills are needed. For example, if you want to start a business, you need to know something about finances, bookkeeping, sales, etc.

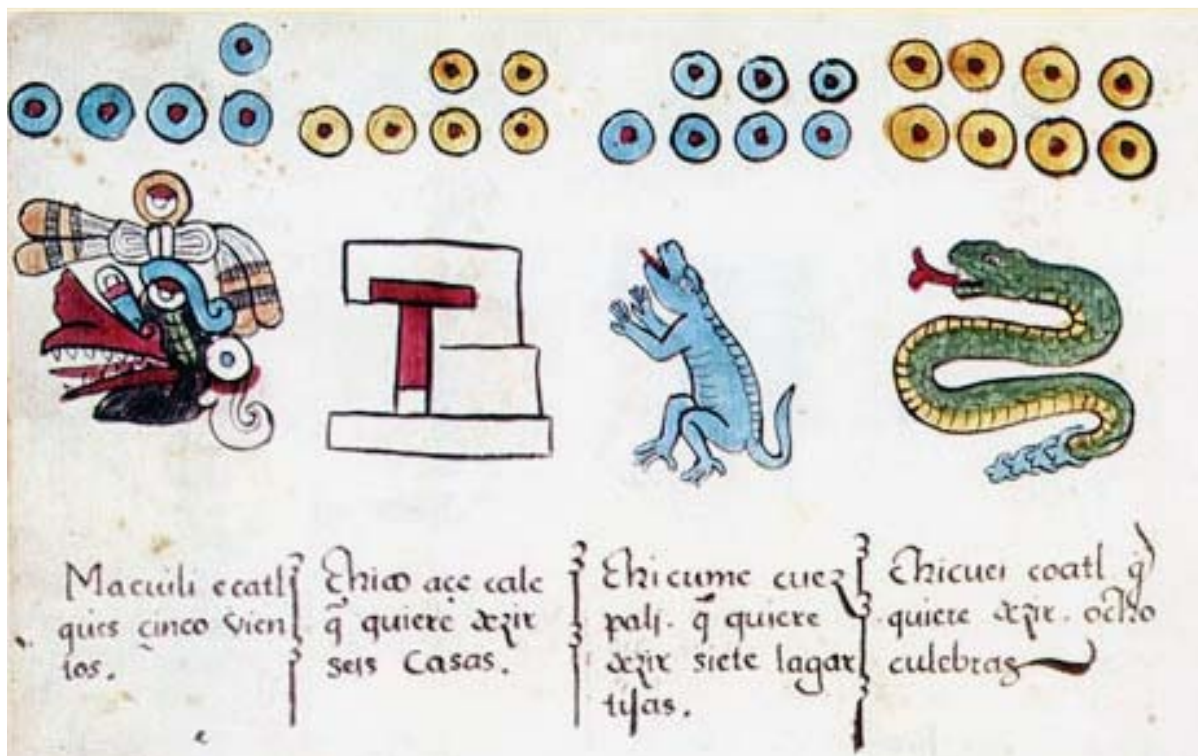
When you complete your assignment, you will recognize that most careers on your list require some type of formal education or special skills. In other words, the jobs which are more apt to bring you the greatest sense of satisfaction, joy, happiness, success and money will require a certain level of education and special skills. The question is what does this mean to you with respect to getting good grades and getting a good education? School is your ticket to your success and happiness. School is also a powerful vehicle that can help you secure your dreams in life.

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Information Sheet

Mesoamerican Values

*Act! Cut wood, work the land,
plant cactus, sow maguey;
You shall have drink, food, clothing.*

*With this you will stand straight.
With this you shall live.
For this you shall be spoken of,
praised;
In this manner you will show yourself
to your parents and relatives.*

*Someday you shall tie yourself to a skirt
and blouse.*

*What will she drink? What will she eat?
Is she going to live off of the air?*

You are the support, the remedy;

You are the eagle, the jaguar.

Miguel Leon-Portilla (1963, p.148)



*Not with envy,
not with a twisted heart,
shall you feel superior,
shall you go about boasting.
Rather in goodness shall you make
true
your song and your word.
And thus you shall be highly
regarded,
and you shall be able to live with
the others.*

Miguel León-Portilla (1963, p.153)

Frank Diaz (2002), in his book, *The Gospel of the Toltecs: The life and teachings of Quetzacoatl*, proposes that Quetzalcoatl left his followers three "commandments." They are:

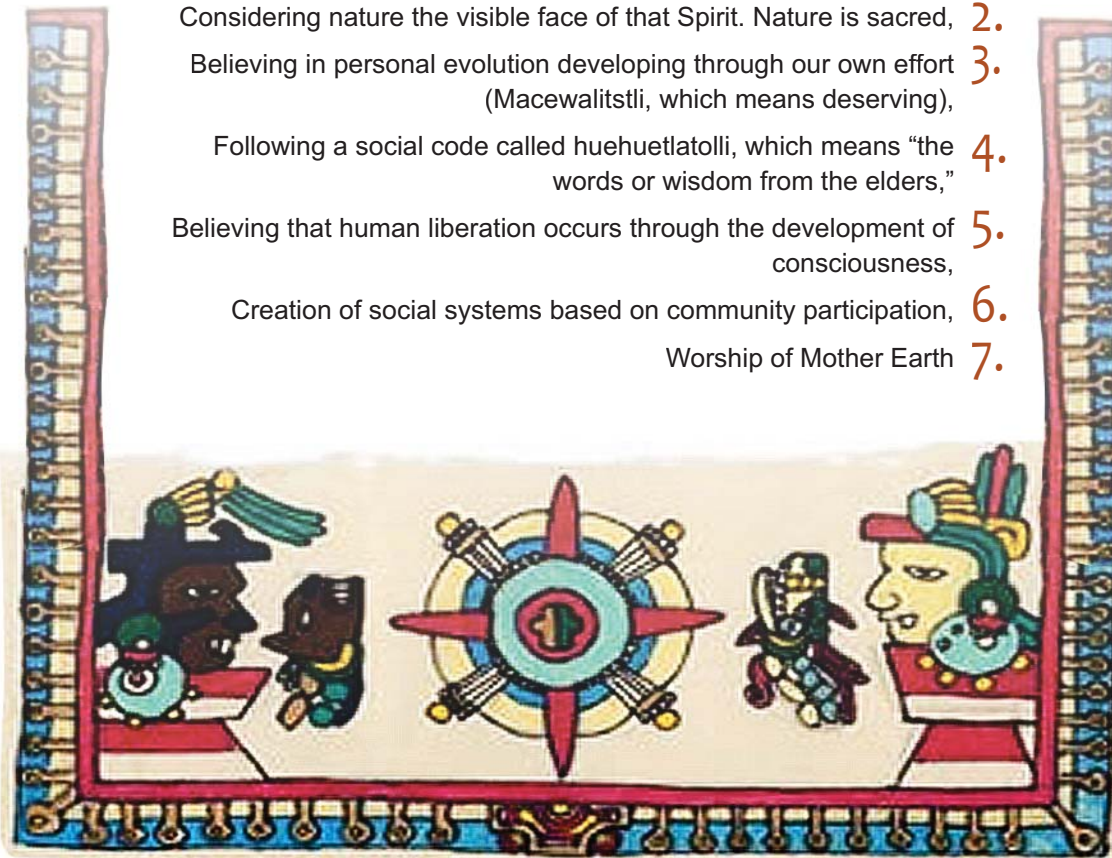
1. The first is that you try with all eagerness to make friends with everyone everywhere, in each moment, for he is night and wind and Lord of the intimate living. Beware that through your engagement in this task you do not become arrogant, anxious or cowardly, but rather remain humble at heart, laying all your hopes in Omoteotl (Lord of Duality who is male and female) and daring to sustain his prescriptions.
2. The second thing that you must remember is to be at peace with all people; do not offend anyone; respect everyone. Do not shame any another being for any reason. Be calm; let others say of you whatever they will. Be quiet and do not respond, even if they attack you. That is how you will show your virile condition and your nobility and everyone will know that you are a trustworthy representative of me. All of this is accomplished by actively training yourself in the practice of peace.
3. And the third thing I ask of you is this; don't waste the time that Omoteotl has given you on Earth. Busy yourselves night and day with that which is good. Do not despise time, for you do not know if you will live again or if you will recognize your own faces there. Make the best of your lives.

Information Sheet

Mesoamerican Values continued

Sanchez (2004) in his work, *The Toltec Oracle*, asserts that the Toltecs espoused several core beliefs that have influenced Mesoamerican culture. They are:

1. Believing in one Spirit that manifests itself through the forces of nature,
2. Considering nature the visible face of that Spirit. Nature is sacred,
3. Believing in personal evolution developing through our own effort (Macewalitsli, which means deserving),
4. Following a social code called huehuetlatolli, which means "the words or wisdom from the elders,"
5. Believing that human liberation occurs through the development of consciousness,
6. Creation of social systems based on community participation,
7. Worship of Mother Earth

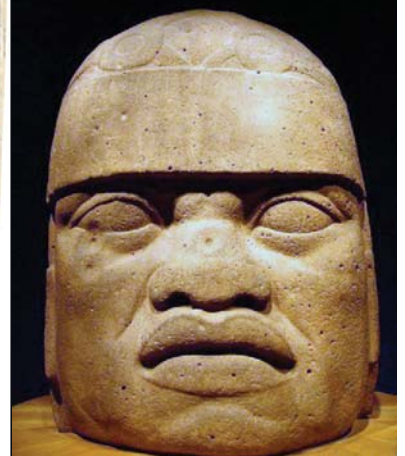


The Sanchez list of core values may be typical of most indigenous American cultures. These core values incorporate the concepts listed above and provide direction.

*They would begin to teach them;
how they should live,
how they should respect others,
how they were to dedicate themselves to what was good and righteous;
how they were to avoid evil;
fleeing unrighteousness with strength,
Refraining from perversion and greed.
Miguel León-Portilla (1963, p.145)*

Nothing caused me so much admiration and seems to me worthy of praise and remembering than the care and discipline with which the Mexicans raised their children.

(Father Acosta)



Information Sheet

Twenty Days of the *Tonalmachiotl*

It is my permanent openness to life that I give myself entirely, my critical thought, my feeling, my curiosity, my desire, all that I am. It is thus that I travel the road, knowing that I am learning to be who I am by relating to what is my opposite.
-Paulo Freire (1998, p. 119)

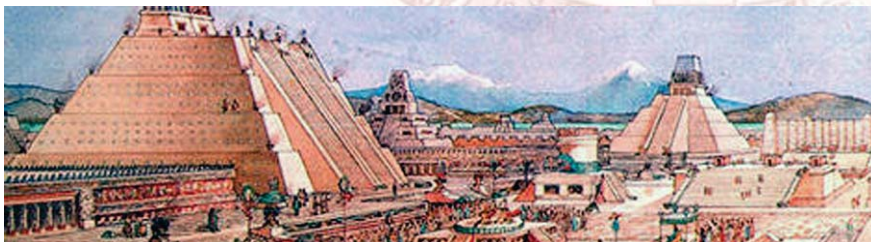
The information on this module can also be found in Rodriguez (n.d.). It has been included in this module with permission from the author.

In this module, you will be learning about the energies, attributes and values reflected on the 20 - day symbols of the *Tonalmachiotl* (Aztec calendar). These 20 symbols are located on the second circular band surrounding the center of the calendar. The face of *Tlatecutli* (masculine energy of the mother earth) is located at the center. Some sources indicate the *Tonatiuh* (Sun) is at the center. However, most indigenous accounts agree that *Tlatecutli* is at the center facing the sun and the cosmos.

The band surrounding the face of *Tlatecutli* includes four squares. These squares represent the four eras or suns which existed prior to the *Mexica*. Each sun or world was destroyed by imbalances created by its inhabitants. These four suns served as a reminder to the *Mexica* that living your lives in balance was paramount. Imbalance could result in self-destruction. Knowing this, the *Mexica* dedicated much of their energies to harmonizing their lives with nature and the cosmos to ensure that their sun would continuously shine on them.

The ancestors also recognized that all of us are born with attributes that are also present in plants, animals and the elements. They understood that some of these attributes were of utmost importance, if they were to germinate the seed of their true selves. The ancestors recognized that these qualities looked like opposites (dualities) on the surface, but at a deeper level they created and complimented each other. An important reality was that these opposites were one and the same. To harmonize the opposites, they became vigilant warriors in bringing balance to the opposing forces in the inner-self.

Thus, their purpose in life was to create balance and harmony within their inner-selves and their surroundings. This required a strong and perseverant will.



Information Sheet

Twenty Days of the *Tonalmachiotl* *continued*

Many of the attributes in plants, animals and the elements mentioned earlier can be found in the day symbols of the calendar. As previously mentioned, these characteristics are dual and of great importance to our everyday lives.

The day symbols can be found on the outer band of the above condensed version of the *Tonalmachiotl*. To start reading the symbols, you need to look at the top of the calendar. Notice the two symbols that meet at the top. You will be able to recognize them because the triangle that sits above *Tlatecuhtli* points to them. Look at the one on the left. The name of that symbol is *cipactli*. *Cipactli* is the first day symbol on the calendar. To count the days start with *cipactli* and move counterclockwise (to the left) until we reach *xochitl*, the last day symbol on the calendar. *Xochitl* is the day symbol located at the top of the calendar to the right of *cipactli*.

As you read the following script on the 20 days of the *Tonalmachiotl*, you will notice the interconnectedness of the attributes in plants, animals and the elements with values that are of great importance in our lives. Everything that exists, including the plants, animals and cosmic forces listed below, have positive and negative energies at the same time.



Tonalmachiotl



Condensed Version of the
Tonalmachiotl

Information Sheet

Twenty Days of the *Tonalmachiotl*



Cipactli: Crocodile – The first day symbol on the calendar. Some of the attributes of *cipactli* are initiation, responsibility, adaptability and strength. *Cipactli*, the energy that initiates, marks the beginning of the centuries, years and months on the calendar.



Ehecatl: Wind/Air – The second day symbol on the calendar. Communication in all its forms are attributes belonging to *ehecatl*. *Ehecatl* is the first vital element that a person receives when he/she is first born.



Calli: House – The third day symbol on the calendar. The attributes of *calli* are protection and roots. The energy of *calli* protects us from the elements and also symbolizes the foundation of our culture.



Cuetzpallin: Lizard – The fourth day symbol on the calendar. *Cuetzpallin* attributes are resistance, resilience, adaptation and fertility. The energy of *cuetzpallin* symbolizes resilience and movement with grace and agility.



Coatl: Snake – The fifth day symbol on the calendar. Some of the attributes of the *coatl* are intuition, awareness, balance and wisdom. *Coatl* symbolizes wisdom and the precious energy that emanates from all life.



Miquiztli: Skull/Death – The sixth day symbol on the calendar. *Miquiztli* attributes are renewal, regeneration, transformation, interconnectedness, reflection and rest. The energy of *miquiztli* exists because there is life, and life exists because there is death.



Mazatl: Deer – The seventh day symbol on the calendar. Some of the attributes of the *mazatl* are perceptiveness, independence, intuitiveness, attentiveness and freedom. *Mazatl* energy reflects freedom, and it also represents warmth and reflected the sun.



Tochtli: Rabbit – The eighth day symbol on the calendar. Some of the attributes of the *tochtli* are creativity, fertility and unpredictability. *Tochtli* fertility energies are also closely aligned with the energies of the moon.



Atl: Water – The ninth day symbol on the calendar. Some of the attributes of *atl* are strength, patience, perseverance and adaptability. *Atl* is a great purifying force and a vital element for life.



Itzcuintli: Dog – The 10th day symbol on the calendar. *Itzcuintli* attributes are loyalty, love, sacrifice and travel. *Itzcuintli* is a positive symbol, which also represents the energy of loyalty and guardianship.



Ozomatli: Monkey – The 11th day symbol on the calendar. *Ozomatli* attributes are happiness, sense of humor and attention seeker. *Ozomatli* is a symbol of energy, which also represents diversion.

Information Sheet

Twenty Days of the *Tonalmachiotl* continued

Malinalli: Herb or Weed – The 12th day symbol on the calendar. Some of the *malinalli* attributes are intuitiveness, resistance, renovation and herbology. *Malinalli* is also known as the energy that transforms itself through continuous rebirth.



Acatl: Reed – The 13th day symbol on the calendar. *Acatl* attributes are firmness, flexibility, leadership and intelligence. *Acatl* symbolizes the warmth emanating from the sun that is necessary for the production of our sustenance.



Ocelotl: Jaguar – The 14th day symbol on the calendar. Some of the attributes of *ocelotl* are tact, indirect and calculated. *Ocelotl* is also a powerful feminine force, known as the warrior of the night or the force within us.



Cuahtli: Eagle – The 15th day symbol on the calendar. *Cuahtli* attributes are vigilance, vision, intelligence and direct. *Cuahtli* is a powerful masculine force, known as a warrior of the daytime or our outer reality.



Cozcacuahtli: Vulture – The 16th day symbol on the calendar. Some of the attributes of *cozcacuahtli* are creativity, wisdom and ingenuity. *Cozcacuahtli* is the force that takes what has been discarded and recycles it into useful energy.



Ollin: Movement – The 17th day symbol on the calendar. *Ollin* attributes are adventure, activity, masculine and feminine forces coming together. *Ollin* also represents the constant motion that is present in all that exists.



Tecpatl: Obsidian Knife/Flint – The 18th symbol on the calendar. Some of the common attributes of the *tecpatl* are curiosity, truthfulness, discipline and directness. *Tecpatl* represents a direct force of communication, seeking the origin and truth in things.



Quihuitl: Rain – The 19th symbol on the calendar. Some of the attributes of *quihuitl* are healing powers and imagination. *Quihuitl* is the natural manifestation of rain that gives life to plants and nature.



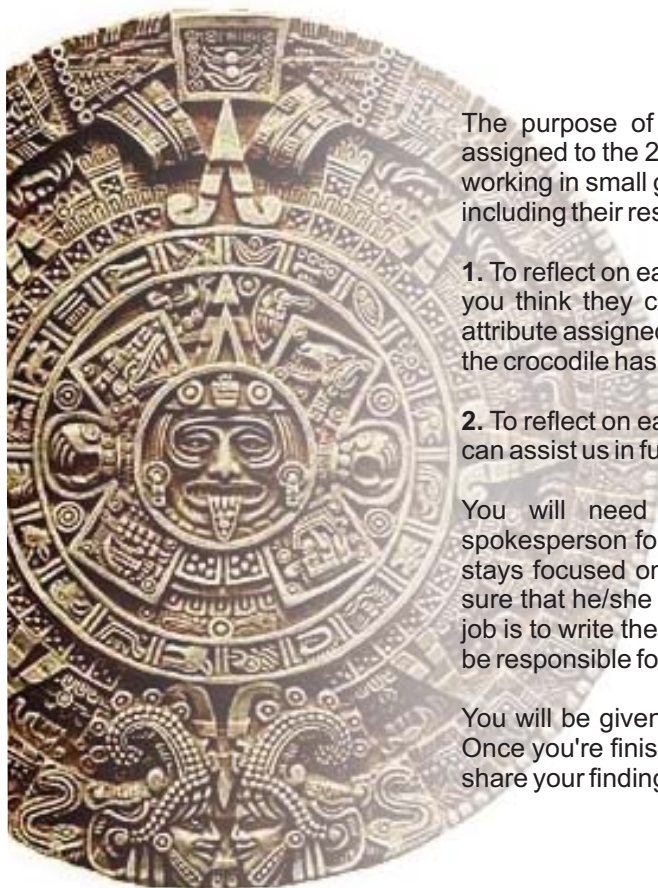
Xochitl: Flower – The 20th and last day symbol on the calendar. The attributes of *xochitl* are beauty, wisdom, maturity, harmony, strong will and warm-spiritedness. *Xochitl* represents the beautiful culmination of all the monthly cycles.



* The aforementioned script on this module can also be found in Rodriguez (n.d). This information was gathered at the Symposium conducted at the *Universidad Náhuatl* in Ocotepéc, Morelos México in 2002.

Activity Worksheet

Attributes and Values of the Twenty Days on the Calendar



The purpose of this activity is to reflect on the attributes and values assigned to the 20 days on the calendar. This is a group project. You will be working in small groups. Your teacher will assign you a list of calendar days including their respective attributes. Your responsibility will be to twofold:

1. To reflect on each attribute ascribed to each day and list the reasons why you think they correspond to each day. For example, adaptability is an attribute assigned to *cipactli* (crocodile). You may ask, why? The answer is; the crocodile has learned how to live its life both on land and in water.
2. To reflect on each attribute ascribed to each day and to list the ways they can assist us in fulfilling our dreams.

You will need to appoint a facilitator, timekeeper, recorder and spokesperson for your group. The facilitator will make sure that the group stays focused on the assignment, and the timekeeper will need to make sure that he/she lets the group know how much time is left. The recorders job is to write the group's answers to the questions. The spokesperson will be responsible for sharing the group's answers with the class.

You will be given approximately 20 minutes to complete the assignment. Once you're finished, your teacher will instruct you to return to the circle to share your findings with the rest of the class.

1.

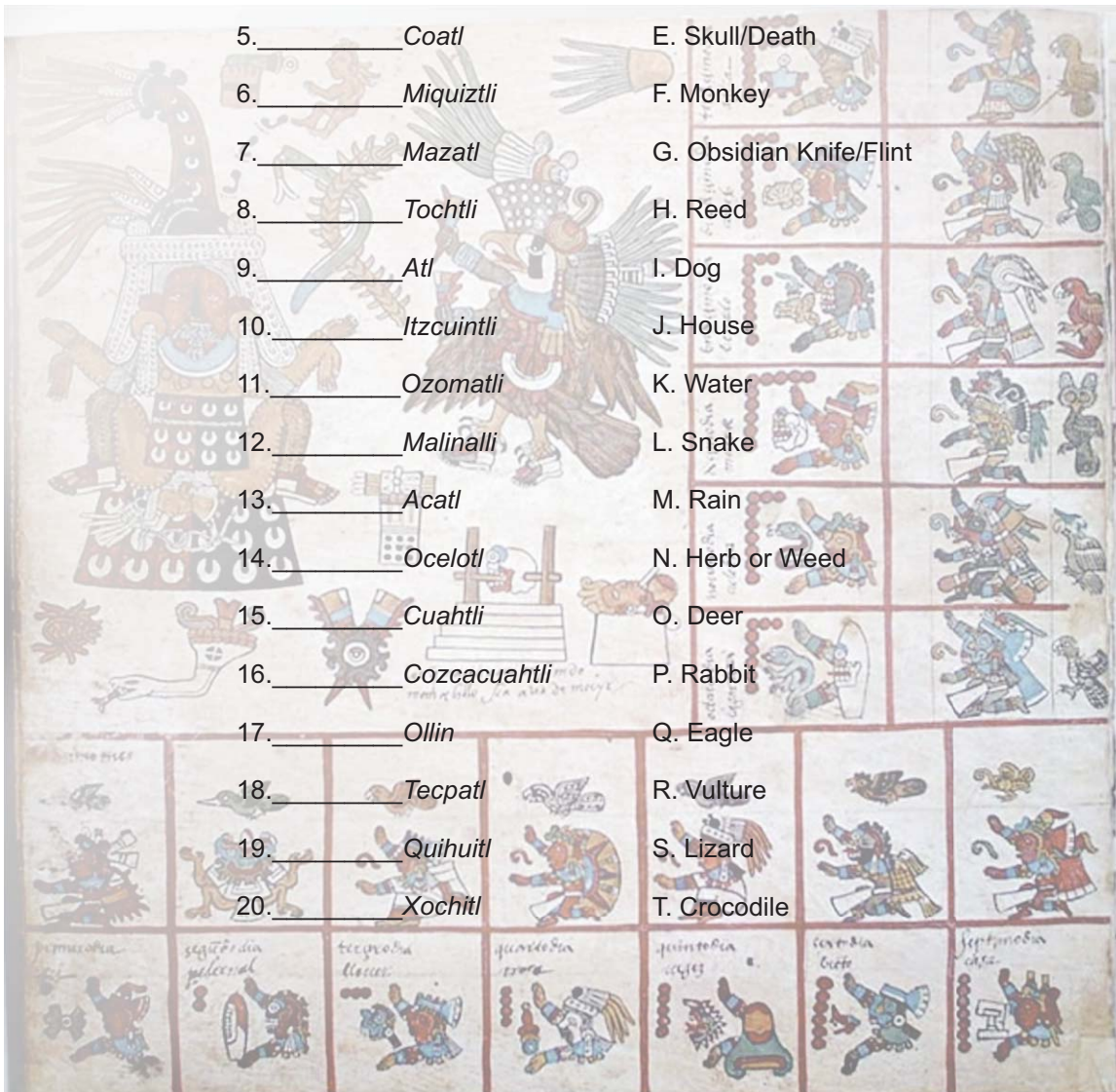
2.

Activity Worksheet

Match the Days of the Calendar

The purpose of the following activity is to help you learn the days of the calendar in the language spoken by the ancestors. Learning the *náhuatl* language will help you see your connection with your surroundings, nature and the cosmos.

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. _____ <i>Cipactli</i> | A. Flower |
| 2. _____ <i>Ehecatl</i> | B. Jaguar |
| 3. _____ <i>Calli</i> | C. Movement |
| 4. _____ <i>Cuetzpallin</i> | D. Wind/Air |
| 5. _____ <i>Coatl</i> | E. Skull/Death |
| 6. _____ <i>Miquiztli</i> | F. Monkey |
| 7. _____ <i>Mazatl</i> | G. Obsidian Knife/Flint |
| 8. _____ <i>Tochtli</i> | H. Reed |
| 9. _____ <i>Atl</i> | I. Dog |
| 10. _____ <i>Itzcuintli</i> | J. House |
| 11. _____ <i>Ozomatli</i> | K. Water |
| 12. _____ <i>Malinalli</i> | L. Snake |
| 13. _____ <i>Acatl</i> | M. Rain |
| 14. _____ <i>Ocelotl</i> | N. Herb or Weed |
| 15. _____ <i>Cuahtli</i> | O. Deer |
| 16. _____ <i>Cozcacuahitli</i> | P. Rabbit |
| 17. _____ <i>Ollin</i> | Q. Eagle |
| 18. _____ <i>Tecpatl</i> | R. Vulture |
| 19. _____ <i>Quihuitl</i> | S. Lizard |
| 20. _____ <i>Xochitl</i> | T. Crocodile |



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Information Sheet

Diet and Health

This session is designed to introduce you to the critical importance of a healthy lifestyle to your future when you reach adulthood. The first activity is designed to help you think about and discuss your attitudes to healthy diet and exercise. This provides the foundation for activity two, which introduces information on the importance of balance in indigenous philosophy and its relation to mental and physical health.

We know how important it is to have a healthy diet and to exercise daily. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), obesity in the United States has increased dramatically over the past 20 years (CDC, 2008). The CDC position is that obesity is not a benign condition, it increases the risks for: (1) hypertension (high blood pressure), (2) osteoarthritis (a degeneration of cartilage and its underlying bone within a joint), (3) dyslipidemia (for example, high total cholesterol or high levels of triglycerides), (4) Type 2 diabetes, (5) coronary heart disease, (6) stroke, (7) gallbladder disease, (8) sleep apnea and respiratory problems, (9) some cancers (endometrial, breast, and colon).

The CDC also contends that during childhood and adolescence, diet and exercise lifestyle behaviors are established (CDC, 2008). During the past 20 years obesity rates for children ages 6 to 11 has doubled, and among adolescents, obesity rates have tripled. The obesity epidemic affects Mexican American children and adolescents, especially male children between ages 6 and 11 who have the highest percentage of obesity (CDC, 2006).



Obesity in Children and Adolescents

Group	Children (ages 6-11)		Adolescent (ages 12-19)	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
African American (non-Hispanic)	26.5%	17.5%	25.4%	18.5%
Mexican American	19.4%	25.4%	14.1%	18.5%
White (non-Hispanic)	16.9%	18.9%	15.4%	19.1%

Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2006.

The data is confirmation of the fact that only 40 percent of American children and adolescents have a diet that meets the minimum requirements. The data is not surprising, considering the amount of advertising for fast foods and snacks. A Big Mac (540), medium fries (380), and medium Coke (210) total over half the daily adult diet of 2000 calories. A Pizza Hut 12 inch meat lovers pizza has a total of 2960 calories, divided into 8 slices, each slice has 370 calories. A trip to Kentucky Fried Chicken to order two pieces of chicken, mashed potatoes and gravy, biscuit, and Coke, will total 1,190 calories.

Diet and Health

The CDC research has found that:

Eighty percent of high school students do not eat the required amount of fruits and vegetables (five or more times per day).

Only 39 percent of youth ages 2-17 meet the USDA's dietary recommendation for fiber (Between 19 and 26 grams a day).

Eighty-five percent of adolescent females do not consume enough calcium (1,300 miligrams a day).

Additionally, from 1978 to 1998, average daily soft drink consumption almost doubled among adolescent females, and almost tripled among adolescent males.

A large number of high school students use unhealthy methods to lose or maintain weight (CDC 2006, 1-2).

There is also evidence that a child's diet affects their performance in school; one result of this finding is the breakfast programs in school. The type of foods a child consumes is also important. Children's diets should include fruits and vegetables as opposed to processed foods and soft drinks (Bellisle, 2004). David E. Barrett, of the Harvard Medical School Research also concludes that nutrition has lasting effect on the way the child deals with others and makes use of the environment (Greenberg, 1981).



Activity Worksheet

Stress Scale

Directions: Think about the last 12 months. Place a check mark by the items that apply to you. You will not be asked to reveal answers you do not want to discuss.

Stress

Death of a parent or close relative

Puberty

Parent or close family member in jail

Parents' divorce

New School

Trouble with other kids at school

Serious illness of a family member

Parents' new marriage

Family's financial problems

Working while going to school

New baby in the family

Fighting and arguing with parents or other family members

Not sleeping at least 8 hours a day

Fighting with boyfriend or girlfriend

Excellent grades and achievements

Home or work responsibilities

Personal illness

Parents' job loss

Change in living situation (visitors in the home, moving, remodeling, homelessness)

Trying to lose weight

Trouble with the law

Homework

Other

Personal Stress/Coping Techniques

Directions: List your top three stressors and list a coping technique you believe will help you reduce stress.

1.

2.

3.

Adapted from the Making a Group and Individual Commitment (MAGIC) Curriculum Guide, University of Nevada Cooperative Extension (2005).

Activity Worksheet

Fast Food Calories

A calorie is the measurement of the amount of energy contained in food. The United States Department of Agriculture estimates that the average adult requires 2000 calories per day. Divide into groups and estimate the number of calories contained in the following fast foods.

McDonalds

Selection	Calories	Fat (grams)
Big Mac		
Medium Fries		
Medium Coke		
Total		

KFC

Selection	Calories	Fat (grams)
Original Recipe Chicken Breast		
Original Recipe Chicken thigh		
Medium Pepsi		
Biscuit		
Mashed Potatoes and gravy		
Total		

Subway

Selection	Calories	Fat (grams)
Bottle of Water		
6" Turkey Breast on Wheat Bread		
Lays Baked Chips		
Total		

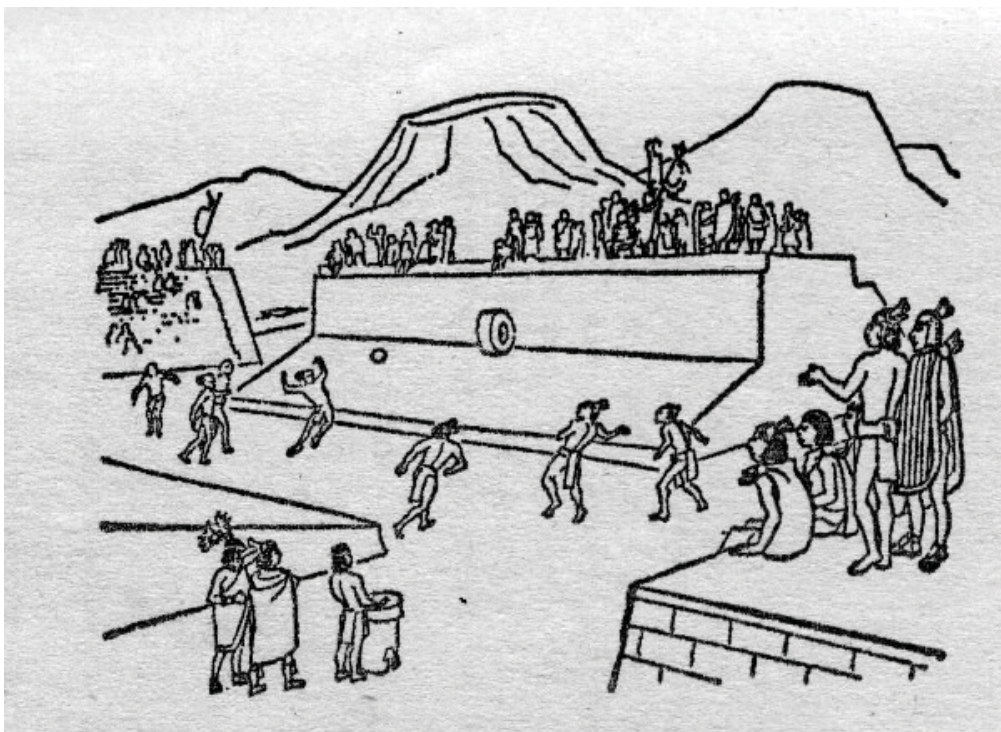
Information Sheet

Physical Activity Calorie Use Chart

The chart below shows the approximate calories spent per hour by a 100-, 150- and 200-pound person doing a particular activity.

Activity	100 lb	150 lb	200 lb
Bicycling, 6 mph	160	240	312
Bicycling, 12 mph	270	410	534
Jogging, 7 mph	610	920	1,230
Jumping rope	500	750	1,000
Running 5.5 mph	440	660	962
Running, 10 mph	850	1,280	1,664
Swimming, 25 yds/min	185	275	358
Swimming, 50 yds/min	325	500	650
Tennis singles	265	400	535
Walking, 2 mph	160	240	312
Walking, 3 mph	210	320	416
Walking, 4.5 mph	295	440	572

American Heart Association, 2009.



Activity Worksheet

Physical Activity Calorie Worksheet

Directions: Calculate how much activity a 150-pound person will need to do to burn the total calories in each of these food combinations.

Example: Fast-food double cheeseburger, large French fries and a 32-ounce regular soda

Total calories: 1,290

Physical activity: Walking 3 mph burns 320 calories per hour

Time needed to burn calories consumed: **4.03 hours**. A 150-pound person will need to walk 4.03 hours at the speed of 3mph



1. Fast-food salad with grilled chicken (9.8 ounces), with low-fat balsamic vinaigrette salad dressing (1 ounce), sliced apple with caramel dipping sauce (3.2 ounces) and small diet soda.

Total calories: 495

Physical activity: Swimming, 25 yds/min burns 275 calories an hour

Time needed to burn calories consumed: _____

2. Fast-food 6 inch sandwich on wheat bread with turkey, swiss cheese, lettuce, tomato, onion, 1 tablespoon light mayonnaise, baked potato chips and a cookie

Total calories: 757

Physical activity: Jumping rope burns 750 calories per hour

Time needed to burn calories consumed: _____

3. Whole grain cereal (1 cup) and fat-free milk (1 cup) and a banana

Total calories: 307

Physical activity: Bicycling, 6 mph burns 240 calories per hour

Time needed to burn calories consumed: _____

4. Chocolate frosted cake (1/8 slice, 18-inch cake) and vanilla ice cream (1 cup)

Total calories: 532

Physical activity: Tennis singles burns 400 calories per hour

Time needed to burn calories consumed: _____

5. Baked fish (3 ounces), green beans, steamed white rice (1 cup) and low-fat frozen yogurt (1 cup)

Total calories: 546 Physical activity: Running, 5.5 mph burns 660 calories per hour

Time needed to burn calories consumed: _____

Information Sheet

Indigenous Mexicans and Health

As we have learned in previous sessions, at the heart of the indigenous Mexican way of life is duality, balance and harmony. In the physical part of life, the food we eat and the amount of physical activities we do help bring us into balance with our environment. You may have heard the words “balanced diet” which means that you need to eat a variety of foods to balance your body. We live in what the indigenous people called the Tonal, which is the world we can see, touch and learn about. It is balanced by the Nagual, which is everything else, including the things that we do not understand. We live in the Tonal, and to live, our mind and body need food. In the Tonal, our mind and body need balance, and the type of food we eat affects our balance. When you eat healthy food, you are in harmony, because your mind and body are one. In life, the ancient Mexican developed their mind and body so they could be in balance.

Health is an important issue for everyone and one way to be healthy is to eat healthy food. When you go the grocery, many of the foods sold are not healthy. They contain too much fat, preservatives and other chemicals that people should try to avoid. Where does food come from? One important source of food is what we call domesticated plants and animals. Domesticated means a plant or animal has been developed or bred by people so that it is no longer wild. Animals such as horses, cows, chickens and pigs are domesticated.

People all over the world have domesticated plants, especially in Mexico. The Mexican contribution to the food basket of the world is important. Some of the food that we associate with the American culture is made from plants domesticated by Mexicans. When you go the movies, do you eat popcorn? Do you like to eat chocolate?

How about pizza, corn chips, nachos and tortillas? Now, many of the foods we just talked about are not the healthiest, and were originally used by Indians in Mexico in a much more healthy way. Tomatoes are used in many ways. Imagine pizza without the tomato sauce. You've seen Halloween pumpkins when you go trick or treating. Squash, tomatoes and pumpkins were domesticated by Native Americans.

Although it may sound hard to believe, corn was one of the most difficult plants to domesticate. Some scientists think that corn was the hardest to domesticate, because corn cannot exist in the wild. It requires the intervention of humans in order to grow (Beadle 1977). There are three main cereal or grain crops in the world—rice, wheat and corn. Science tells us that indigenous Mexicans developed corn from a plant called teosinte. You can see it in Picture 3.

The ear of teosinte is very small and does not look like the corn we eat. The Indians worked with teosinte over a long time to create domesticated corn. They worked as scientists to develop an important food crop. Because there are many types of corn, we know that the Mexican people who developed it must have understood the fundamentals of plant breeding (Beadle, 1977). We can see from this that the people who developed corn understood the basics of science. And the scientific knowledge was not limited to corn.



Picture 1. Tomato



Picture 2 Halloween Pumpkin



Picture 3. Teosinte

Indigenous Mexicans and Health *continued*



Picture 4. Teosintle and Corn



Picture 5. Corn Husk

Among these grains domesticated by humans, only corn requires the active intervention by woman and man. The part of corn that you eat are the seeds, and you might have seen how corn is wrapped in leaves that are called husks, so the seeds can not get out of the husk to grow unless someone removes the husk (Kempton, 1938). We also know that corn has been grown in Mexico for more than 7,000 years, and we also know corn is sacred to the *Mexica* Indians.

Among all of the plants domesticated by the indigenous people of Mexico, corn remains the most important. It is the third most important crop in the world with an annual production of more than 200 million metric tons. Corn is also used as a sweetener, and now it is mixed with gasoline and used to power cars. The meat industry relies on corn to feed cattle and pigs.

If you look at handout number 2, you'll see that Mexican Indians domesticated and used many plants. Corn is probably the most important plant domesticated by the Mexicans. It helped to provide the nutritional requirements that allowed for an ever-increasing population.

The role that agriculture, especially corn, played in the development of Indigenous Mexican astronomy and the development of the calendar is not clearly understood. We do know that indigenous Mexicans shared corn because when the Europeans arrived it was found throughout North and South America and in the islands in the Caribbean Sea. The diffusion of corn, and the necessary botanical knowledge required to develop successful local varieties, indicates the presence of regional and interregional communication. We can also see that a city was constructed near St. Louis, Missouri that looked like a Mexican City. It had many of the structures that are found in all of the large urban centers of central Mexico. Perhaps, too, corn was one of the reasons the calendar was developed.

The importance of corn to the ancestors may be argued among modern science, but the Mexicans had a clear understanding of its importance in their lives. Many of the records of ceremonies have some allusion to corn. The morning ceremony concludes with the Tlamtime saying, "My eyes are corn, my ears are corn, my heart is corn, I am corn."

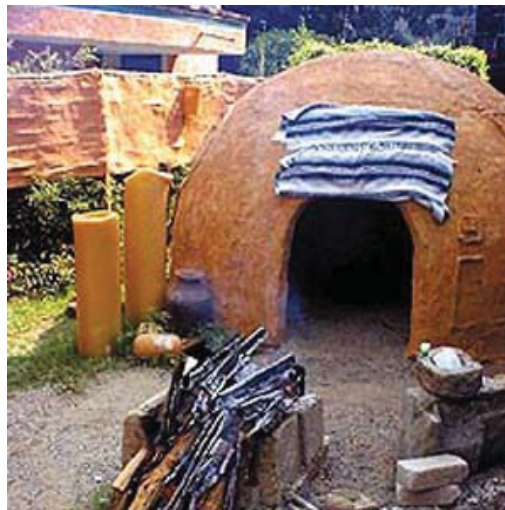
The socioeconomic system allowed cultivation on a gigantic scale. For example, Ruiz (1997) estimates that on the eve of the conquest of Mexico, the annual production of cotton was 116,000,000 pounds. The population in Central Mexico certainly must have required a large-scale agricultural economy to sustain it.

Information Sheet

Medicine

According to Avila (2002), current day *Mexica* utilize different levels of medicine. On one level, a healer makes sure that the patient takes responsibility for their own health, such as eating healthy, staying properly hydrated, resting as needed and learning to breathe properly. On a second level, a healer may do body work or massage on the patient. According to the *Mexica*, the body is vital as it opens the door to the spirit and soul. On a third level, medicine is administered in the form of herbs. Lastly, medicine also takes the form of special tools such as feathers, crystals, flowers or plants, which are used to remove unwanted energies from a patient's body by gently sweeping the body with the aforementioned tools.

The *temazcal* is similar to a sweat lodge. However, it was often used for healing purposes. For hundreds of years before the arrival of the Spaniards, it was used to improve health and to cure numerous physical and spiritual ills. The *temazcal* is still used in contemporary Mexico and can also be found in *calpullis* throughout the United States. *Calpulli* members often use the *temazcal* for healing and ceremonial purposes.



Temazcal

Plants Domesticated by Indigenous People of Mesoamerica

Name	Name	Name
1 <i>Ahuehuete</i> , Cypress	29 <i>Cuajilote</i> (fruit)	57 <i>Matasano</i>
2 Amaranth	30 Dahlia	58 <i>Nance</i> fruit Pumpkin
3 Anona	31 Elderberry	59 <i>Quelite</i>
4 Apazote grain	32 Guava	60 Ramon
5 Arrowroot	33 Guayabilla, guava	61 <i>Sansilla</i>
6 Avocado	34 <i>Henequen</i>	62 Sapodilla
7 Black <i>sapote</i>	35 Hog plum	63 Sapodilla fruit, chicle
8 Bottle gourd	36 Husk tomato	64 <i>sapote</i> fruit
9 Cacao, chocolate	37 Llama	65 Scarlet runner bean
10 Calabash, tree gourd	38 Indigo añil dye	66 Sisal
11 <i>Capulin</i> , cherry	39 Jack bean	67 Soursop (guanabana)
12 Cashew squash	40 <i>Jicama</i> (vegetable)	68 Squash
13 <i>Chayote</i> fruit roots)	41 Jimson or loco weed	69 Sweetsop
14 Chays herb	42 Jocote(fruit)	70 <i>Tejocote</i>
15 Cherimova	43 Lima bean	71 Tepary bean
16 <i>Chia</i> grande seeds	44 <i>Maguey</i>	72 <i>Tepejilote</i> palm
17 <i>Chia</i> seeds	45 <i>Mamey</i> fruit	73 Tequil maguey
18 <i>Chile</i> pepper	46 Manioc	74 Tiger flower
19 <i>Chile</i> pepper	47 Marygold medicine	75 Tobacco
20 <i>Chipilin</i> (herb)	48 Pitahaya fruit	76 Tomato
21 <i>Chupandilla</i>	49 Pacays	77 Tuberose
22 Cochineal cactus	50 Panic grass cereal	78 Vanilla
23 Common bean	51 <i>Papaya</i>	79 Walnut squash
24 <i>Copal</i> (resin)	52 Peyote	80 White sapote
25 Corn	53 <i>Piñoncillo</i> (medicine)	81 Yellow <i>sapote</i> (fruit)
26 Cosahuico	54 Pitayo (fruit)	82 Yucca (vegetable)
27 Cotton	55 Prickly pear	
28 <i>Coyol</i>	56 Marigold	

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Activity Worksheet

Income and Education Level

Directions: Match the income to the education or degree by drawing a line from the Education level to the annual salary you believe go together.

EDUCATION LEVEL/DEGREE	ANNUAL SALARY
1. Associate Degree (2 years of college)	\$37,000
2 .Doctorate/PhD	\$49,900
3. Master's (approximately 6 years at a university)	\$95,700
4. Not a High School Graduate	\$59,500
5. Professional Degree (medical doctor, lawyer)	\$21,600
6. Some College – no degree	\$30,800
7. High School Graduate	\$79,400
8. Bachelors (4 years of university)	\$35,700



The Monetary Impact of Higher Education

Although most people understand the importance of having an education, it may not be clear how much of a difference an education can have on earnings and quality of life.

How much do you think the average person without a high school degree earns per hour? On average, a person who:

- did not graduate from high school makes \$8.65 per hour
- graduates from high school makes \$12.50 per hour
- graduates with a bachelor's degree makes \$25.00 per hour
- graduates with a master's degree makes \$30.25 per hour
- graduates with a doctorate degree makes \$41.35 per hour

(Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population, Survey 2009)

Based on these figures, the more academically educated you become, the higher your earning potential will be!

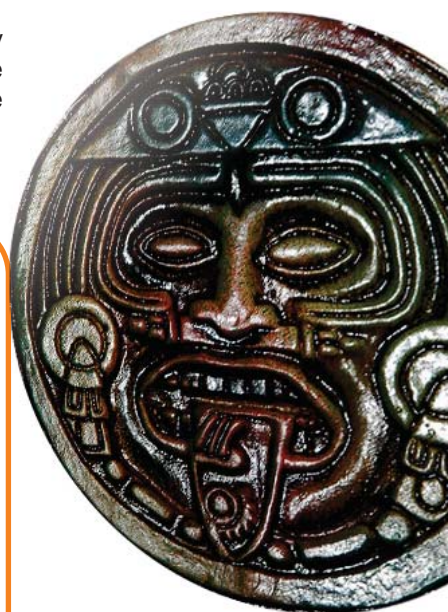
Information Sheet

Indigenous Mexicans and Education, Learning and School

Education is considered a basic human right, and nearly all the countries in the world have free and compulsory primary education. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, recognized education as a basic human right. "Compulsory" means parents do not have a choice in sending their children to school. This is true all around the world. Although free and compulsory education began about 200 years ago. In Mexico it seems that the Indians were practicing this before the Spanish invasion. In his preface to the, *The Broken Spears*, Leon-Portilla states, "For over a hundred years before the conquest, [1519-1521] education in *Tenochtitlan* was compulsory for all children" (xxvi).

Two types of schools existed within *Mexica* culture, the *Calmecac*, which were spiritual schools and the *Telpochcalli* (house of youth), which may be considered as a type of general school (Leon-Portilla, 1963 and Viallant, 1970). All children needed to attend one of these types of schools. When a child was born, their parents enrolled them in the local school. Education, learning and school were at the heart of the indigenous culture. This is why children had to attend school. The *Mexica* recognized that learning was the foundation of their society. The following *Mexica* poem talks about the importance of teachers and learning.

*The wise man: a light, a torch, a stout torch that does not smoke.
A perforated mirror, a mirror pierced on both sides.
His are the black and red ink, his are the illustrated manuscripts, he studies
the illustrated manuscripts.
He himself is writing and wisdom.
He is the path, the true way for others.
He directs people and things; he is a guide in human affairs.
The wise man is careful (like a physician) and preserves tradition.
His is the handed-down wisdom; he teaches it; he follows the path of truth.
Teacher of the truth, he never ceases to admonish.
He makes wise the countenances of others; to them he gives a face (a
personality); he leads them to develop it.
He opens their ears; he enlightens them.
He is the teacher of guides; he shows them their path.
One depends upon him.
He puts a mirror before others; he makes them prudent, cautious; he causes a
face (a personality) to appear in them.
He attends to things; he regulates their path, he arranges and commands.
He applies his light to the world.
He knows what is above us (and) in the region of the dead.
He is a serious man.
Everyone is comforted by him, corrected, taught.
Thanks to him people humanize their will and receive a strict education.
He comforts the heart, he comforts the people, he helps, gives remedies, heals
everyone. -León-Portilla (1963, p. 10)*



Indigenous Mexicans and Education, Learning and School



- Initial education for the children was provided at home by the parents, which was supervised by the leaders of the *calpulli*. It consisted of providing children with good advice and showing them how to do domestic tasks. Their parents taught them basic life skills and raised them to learn fundamental responsibilities. Part of this education also involved the learning of a collection of sayings, called *huēhuetlàtoli* ("sayings of the old"). These sayings or words of wisdom embodied a compilation of ideals predating the *Mexica*.
- When the children got older they were either enrolled in the *calmecac* or the *telpochcalli* schools. The *calmecac* was primarily for noble children and the *telpochcalli* was a school attended by the great majority. Most of the children attending the *calmecac* were the sons of nobles or priests. There is evidence that children of humble origin were also admitted if they showed exceptional aptitude. These two types of education existed for many years prior to the *Mexica*.
- The *calmecac* was a school that focused on intellectual teachings. In this school, the children learned to read and interpret the codices and calendars. The children were also taught astronomy, geometry, songs, poetry, literacy, history, statesmanship, theology and rituals. They memorized sacred hymns and were taught to govern, live prudently and to understand the history and ways of their elders via very strict teachings. So much emphasis was placed on accurate memorization that after the conquest it was possible to record many poems and traditions that otherwise would have been lost forever. The *calmecac* was focused on turning out leaders, priests, scholars/teachers, healers, codex painters, etc. Learning in the *calmecac* was essential for advancement within the government (Leon-Portilla, 2003).
- In the *telpochcalli*, students were taught the fundamentals of religion and ethics, and were also trained in the area of the arts of war and the civic duties of everyday good citizenship. The *telpochcalli* or house of the young, focused on teaching children history, religion and basic occupational skills. The children were provided with a trade or craft practiced in their specific *calpulli* such as agriculture, handicrafts, etc. Some of the *telpochcalli* students were chosen for the army, but most of them returned to their homes. The children worked hard on their family's land and in the home. In comparison with the *calmecac*, the *telpochcalli* offered a more basic and practical education (Leon-Portilla, 2003).
- *Mexica* teachers or *tlamatimine*, carried out a strict and disciplined regime in their teachings. For example, children would take cold baths in the morning, work and study hard during the day and late into the evening. When deemed appropriate; physical punishment was exercised when children needed to be corrected. Endurance tests for children were also common. The purpose of the strict education employed by the *tlamatimine* was to educate children to become wise and intelligent, coupled with an unwavering heart, solid like a stone.

Knowledge Predating the Mexica

The *Mexica* had inherited a large amount of knowledge from the civilizations that had preceded them. One of the important pieces of information was the calendar, which was used by people throughout Central Mexico and south into Guatemala. The *Mexica* did not develop the calendar, it was handed down from previous civilizations, and it was developed at least a thousand years before they came to the Valley of Mexico. Today, we don't think much about the calendar except to plan our lives and understand history. The movement of the earth around the sun and its rotation creates night and day, which still controls our lives. The calendar was formed on the basis of a huge amount of scientific knowledge. In the Mexican calendar, each day with its unique name and number cannot repeat for 18,980 days (Aveni 1980; Morley 1970).

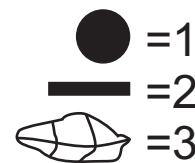
We have evidence that an education system was operating by the vast amount of scientific knowledge the indigenous people acquired. At the time the Spanish invaded Mexico, they found a well-developed and sophisticated civilization throughout Mexico, but especially in the Valley of Mexico (Aveni, 1980).

“When the Spaniards first entered Central Mexico, they were not fully prepared for what they were to see. Here were no simple tribesmen such they had encountered in the islands of the West Indies, but sophisticated civilizations with developed and flourishing urban traditions. Repeatedly the Conquistadors marveled at the cities they found, comparing them favorably with those of their Spanish homeland and the other great centers of sixteenth century Europe”
-Ross Hassig (1985, p. 3)

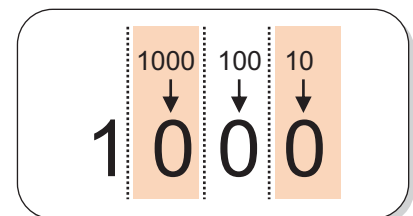
The first civilization in Mexico, is known as the Olmecs, although we don't know what they called themselves. They lived in an area southeast of Mexico City by the Gulf of Mexico. We think that they are the people who invented the calendar; they are the first to have carved date names on stones that are called *stele*. They probably also began the development of the Mexican number system. They lived in the lowlands by the sea and grew corn, beans, squash and the other crops domesticated in Mexico.



The Mexican number system developed by the Indian people evolved over time. The *Maya* created a number system that used zero and consisted of only three symbols. Using these three symbols, you can create the large numbers. The numbers system is called a base 20 system, because it is based on 20, not the base 10 system you have learned in school (Morley, 1970).

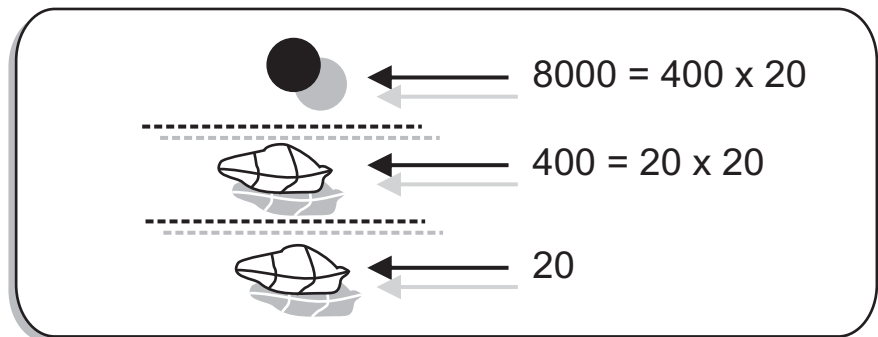


The numbers that are used today originated in India, although the Europeans learned about them from the Arab people and called it the Arabic numbers. The Romans and the Greeks did not have zero and their numerical systems are very complicated. As numbers get larger, new symbols are needed. In the base 10 system, each place is times 10, so the 100 place is 10 times 10, and the 1000 place is 100 times 10. If you look at the handout for this section, you can see all of the numbers up to 19; remember this is a base 20 system. You will also find the numbers from 1 to 20 and for 40, 60, 80, and 100 on the handout. Although this system looks difficult, once you understand its basic principals, it's easier to work with.



Knowledge Predating the Mexica

In the base 20 system, each place is 20, so for the second place we have 20 times 20 or 400. Then third place is 20 times 400 or 8,000. The next place is 8,000 times 20, or 160,000. Each successive place is times 20.



The *Mexica* people lived in a large Valley (basin) in Central Mexico, in the place where Mexico City is. There were five lakes. *Texcoco*, *Zumpango*, and *Xaltocan* were salt lakes, and *Xochimilco* and *Chalco* were fresh water lakes. Lake *Chalco*, for example, had an area of 110 square kilometers (Sanders, Parsons & Santley, 1979). The lakes had a combined surface area of approximately 1,000 square kilometers, and the depth varied between 1 and 4 meters. This was a city built on an island, which the *Mexica* enlarged. On the map, you can see the straight lines that are roads and dikes. There were four roads leading to *Tenochtitlan*. You can also see the dike, which they built to separate the salt lakes of *Texcoco*, *Zumpango* and *Xaltocan* from the fresh water lakes of *Xochimilco* and *Chalco*. A dike or levee is a barrier or wall designed to hold back lake or river water. The building of this dike was a very important engineering achievement, especially when you consider they had no machinery to move the stones and fill the dike. More important is the knowledge necessary to plan and build the dike.

Knowledge Predating the Mexica

The problem of maintaining a large city on the lake required an educational system that could produce the group of highly skilled engineers and architects needed to build and maintain the city. And there were other large cities in the valley, but when the Spanish defeated the *Mexica*, they began to fill in the lake; all that remains of the lake today are small sections near the city of *Texcoco*. There are no photographs of the city, but the great Mexican artist Diego Rivera painted the picture you see here, which gives his impression of the city.

You have learned about the *Mexica* calendar and know that a large amount of knowledge was contained in it. This was one of the important duties of the *Calmecac* to train young people in the movements of the stars and their relation to the other sciences. In his book, *Skywatchers of Ancient Mexico*, Aveni observes, “The ancient American [Mexican] calendric documents reveal that mathematics and astronomy were among their intellectual hallmarks, in fact, they were fanatically devoted to these disciplines” (5). There are several areas in which the amount of knowledge the indigenous Mexicans possessed, lead us to conclude that knowledge and learning were very important to them.



In the field of botany, indigenous Mexicans domesticated a large number and variety of crops. Their knowledge of agronomy was extensive. They developed a system of classifying soil and land utilization (Hassig, 1985). In order to grow the food to support the large population in the Valley of Mexico, they developed a large system to irrigate their crops. In addition to the large-scale cities, there was an extensive system of canals, dikes and dams. The nine largest of these required the equivalent of 25 million days to build.



Knowledge Predating the Mexica



Teosintle

The indigenous people in Mexico domesticated corn; they developed it from a small grass-like plant called *teosintle*. By the time the Spanish arrived, corn had spread through North and South America. The native people shared their crops; and in Mexico, their diet was primarily fruits and vegetables, although they did hunt and fish to supplement their diet (Beadle, 1977).

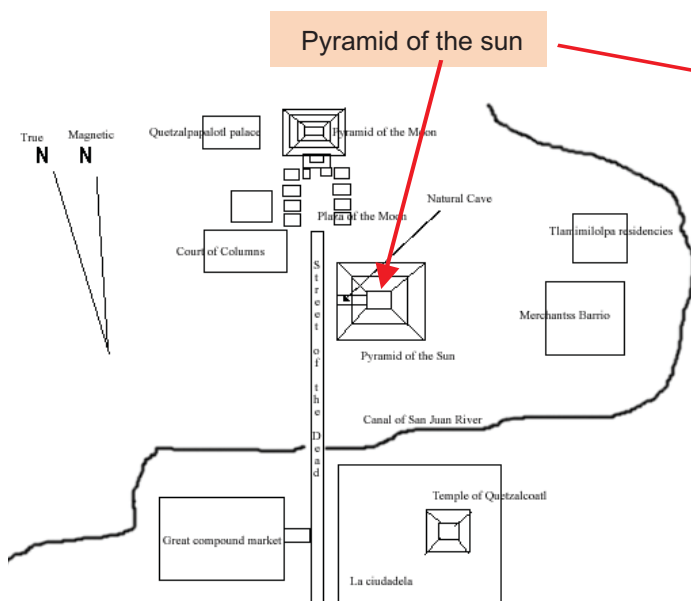
The achievements of the Indigenous Mexican people have been recognized, Kempton stated "Although modern plant breeders have greatly increased yields of Maize through the development of new varieties and hybrid lines well adapted to various maize-growing regions and resistant to diseases and insect pest, this development of maize by the American Indian [Mexican Indian] remains to this day man's most remarkable plant-breeding achievement" (Kempton, 1938). As a result of their mastery of agriculture and engineering, when the Spanish arrived in Mexico there was a very large population in Central Mexico. Some people, who study the Pre-Hispanic population, think that between 18 and 25 million people lived in this region (Cook and Borah, 1971).



Knowledge Predating the Mexica

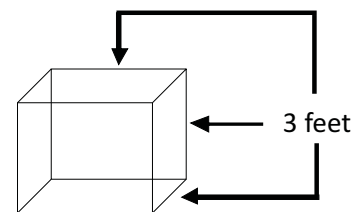
One way we can understand the importance of education is by examining the large cities that were built in ancient Mexico. One thing education does for us is that it allows us to examine a situation, collect information about it and to plan a solution. Planning is very important for a society and for an individual. One of the best examples of planning in ancient Mexico is Teotihuacan, the largest city in PreHispanic Mexico and in North and South America. From very early in its history, the leaders of the city made a plan for the city to grow from a few thousand to perhaps as many as 200,000 people (Millon, 1973). The city was planned. Many generations were needed to complete the plan so they must have had a system to educate those responsible for carrying out the plan and to train the engineers who would build the buildings (Millon, 1973).

The Pyramid of the Sun base is about 720 feet by 760 feet and it is about 216 feet tall. It contains 1,000,000 cubic yards of material. A cubic yard is 3 feet by




Think of a box that is a yardstick tall, wide and deep, and multiply it times 1 million. The picture gives an idea of how big the Pyramid of the Sun is and you can see that the Street of the Dead extends for a great distance. The city covers about 30 square kilometers and its population was between 150,000 and 250,000. It was one of the largest cities on Earth at its high point (Millon, 1973).

It should be clear to you that the indigenous people of Mexico worked very hard at mastering science and math, in order to have a better life. When you think about your education, you do it for your parents and grandparents, your community and yourself. But the decision to do well is up to you.



Information sheet

Mexica Number System

 = 1

 = 5

 = 0 (Zero)

 = 1

 = 2

 = 3

 = 4

 = 5

 = 6

 = 7

 = 8

 = 9

 = 10

 = 11

 = 12

 = 13

 = 14

 = 15

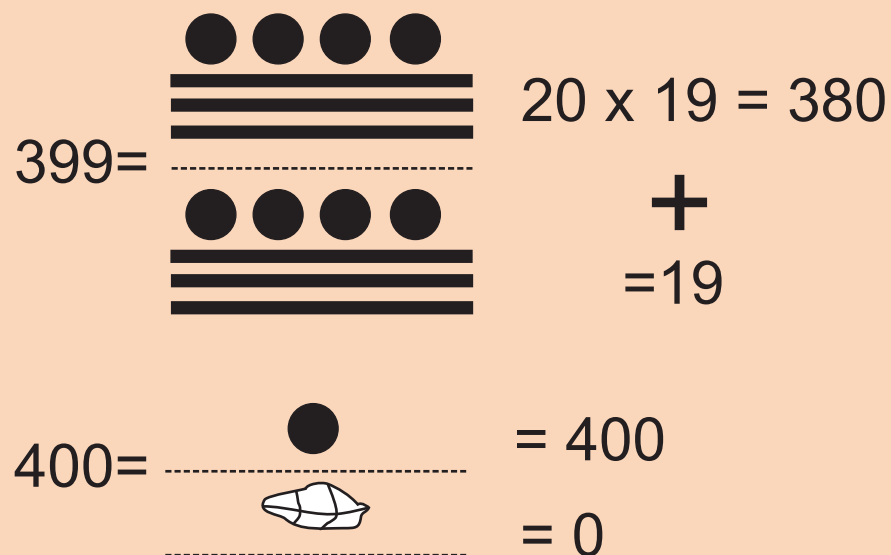
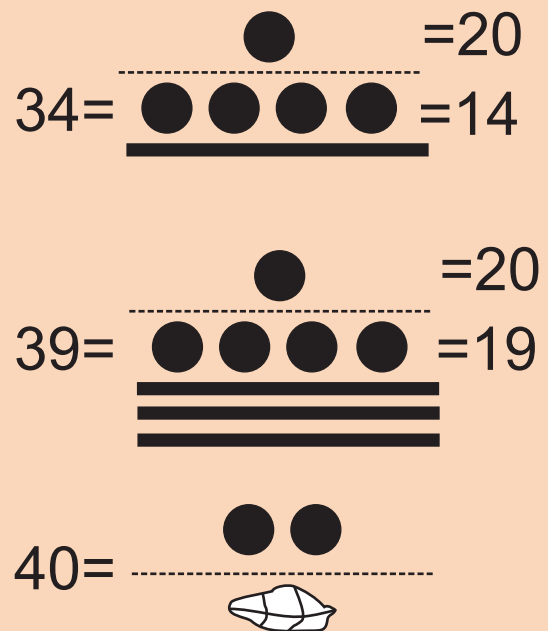
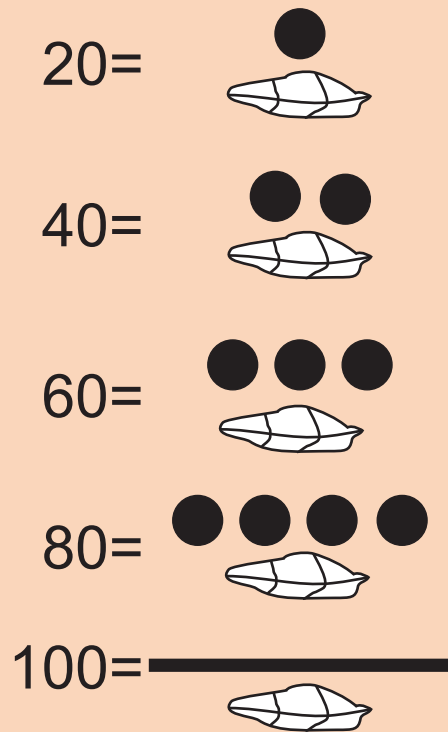
 = 16

 = 17

 = 18

 = 19

Mexica Number System continued



Homework Activity Worksheet

University Field Trip Activity

Directions: Write a one-page essay on the university field trip experience. Address the following questions:

1. Did you relate to any of the university students' experiences? How?
2. What did you learn from the experience?
3. What did you learn about the requirements to go to college?
4. What did you learn about financial aid and grants for college?
5. Did you learn about another career or education options that you had not considered in the past?
6. What did the experience mean to you in school today?
7. Explain how you know it's possible for you to live your dreams.

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Information Sheet

I Am From Poem

The “I Am From” poems are engaging, and their purpose is to make all students feel important and cared for. It's about inviting students, their homes and their cultures, into the classroom. “I Am From” poems are about students writing about their lives, including the things they like and care about. Sometimes they may include issues which are troubling or bothersome.

Directions:

All students participating in the *Anáhuac* curriculum will be required to prepare an “I Am From” poem. Your poem will be shared with the rest of the students, your parents and members of the community.

All poems will be divided into nine stanzas. Each stanza will be four lines in length. The first stanza will reflect what you learned about the *Mexica and Anáhuac* on the first session. The first line of every stanza should start with the words “I am from.” If you wish, you can also start the third line of some stanzas with the words “I am from.”

The second stanza of your poem should reflect what you learned that was important to you on the second session. Your second stanza will be four lines long. Start the first line of the second stanza with the words “I am from.” Also, the third line of your stanza could start with the words “I am from.” The last words at the end of the lines do not have to rhyme. Session No. 2 you will learn who the *Mexica* were, their history and some of their significant accomplishments and contributions to the world at large. You will also learn how the energies in the *Tonalmachiotl* (Aztec Calendar) can help you connect with your innermost self.

The third stanza of your poem should summarize what you learned during the third session. Your third stanza will be four lines long. Start the first line of the stanza with the words “I am from.” Also, the third line of your stanza could start with the words “I am from.” Words at the end of the lines do not have to rhyme. Session No.5 is dedicated to many of the significant values interwoven on the *Tonalmachiotl*. You will see how important values in life are reflected into the calendar.

The rest of your poem will be written in the above-referenced format. Your innermost feelings need to be reflected in every stanza you write.

Please be reminded that the first line of every stanza begins with the words “I am from.” If you wish, the third line of each stanza can also start with the words “I am from.” Also, the words at the end of the lines do not have to rhyme.



I Am From Poem

An example of an “I Am From” poem written by Alicia Estrada:

I am from a mysterious land that has lied in oblivion for so long

*I am from a magical place covered in prosperous gold
I am from a city where skyscrapers stand tall and proud
I am from a beautiful family that has instilled in us that determination is the key to success*

*I am from a family that is no stranger to hard work
I am from a grandfather that was a bracero
I am from a father that worked in the California fields picking fruit
I am from a family that has had a line of strong women, where we believe that “no puedo” does not exist*

*I am from a land where the light is of guidance and every sunrise offers a new beginning
I am from a magical land where I can design and build my kingdom to my liking, I am the architect
I am from a land where the darkness and nightfall allows me to reflect*

*I am from a line of blood where my ancestors had the courage to overcome obstacles
I am from a place where failing is not the obstacle responding is the key
I am from a place where there are no limits, we create them, all is attainable
I am from a place that if I listen closely the heart speaks*

*I am from where it is essential to keep your word
I am from not giving up is to feel accomplished
I am from realizing that in gaining there is pain along the way
I am from knowing every tiny step towards a goal counts*

*I am from a line that is in pursuit of happiness through self liberation
I am from ancestors that left us the greatest treasure, the richness our hearts hold
I am from an undisclosed location where time is key; it is a mystery how much of it we have been given
I am from a line that embarked on a long journey and I will continue that journey*





Ni cuican: I, the Singer

Gloria Anzalduá

For the ancient Aztecs, *tlilli, tlapalli, la tinta negra y roja de sus códices* (the black and red ink painted on codices) were the colors symbolizing *escritura y sabiduría* (writing and wisdom). They believed that through metaphor and symbol, by means of poetry and truth, communication with the Divine could be attained, and *topan* (that which is above—the gods and spirit world) could be bridged with *mictlán* (that which is below—the underworld and the region of the dead).

Poet: she pours water from the mouth of the pump, lowers the handle then lifts it, lowers, lifts. Her hands begin to feel the pull from the entrails, the live animals resisting. A sigh rises up from the depths, the handle becomes a wild thing in her hand, the cold sweet water gushes out, splashing her face, the shock of nightlight filling the bucket.

An image is a bridge between evoked emotion and conscious knowledge; words are the cables that hold up the bridge. Images are more direct, more immediate than words, and closer to the unconscious. Picture language precedes thinking in words; the metaphorical mind precedes analytical consciousness.



Poetry from Latina/o writers

I Am Joaquín

Rodolfo Corky Gonzales

Yo soy Joaquín,
perdido en un mundo de confusión:
I am Joaquín, lost in a world of confusion,
caught up in the whirl of a gringo society,
confused by the rules, scorned by attitudes,
suppressed by manipulation, and destroyed by
modern society.

My fathers have lost the economic battle
and won the struggle of cultural survival.
And now! I must choose between the paradox of
victory of the spirit, despite physical hunger,
or to exist in the grasp of American social neurosis,
sterilization of the soul and a full stomach.

Yes, I have come a long way to nowhere,
unwillingly dragged by that monstrous, technical,
industrial giant called Progress and Anglo success....

I look at myself.

I watch my brothers.

I shed tears of sorrow. I sow seeds of hate.
I withdraw to the safety within the circle of life –

MY OWN PEOPLE

I am Cuauhtémoc, proud and noble,
leader of men, king of an empire civilized
beyond the dreams of the gachupín Cortés,
who also is the blood, the image of myself.

I am the Maya prince.

I am Nezahualcóyotl, great leader of the Chichimecas.

I am the sword and flame of Cortes the despot

And I am the eagle and serpent of the Aztec
civilization.

I owned the land as far as the eye
could see under the Crown of Spain,
and I toiled on my Earth and gave my Indian sweat and
blood

for the Spanish master who ruled with tyranny over
man and

beast and all that he could trample

But...THE GROUND WAS MINE.



My Daughter, the Dove

Ana Castillo

My daughter,
precious as a golden necklace,
precious as a quetzal plume
you are my blood,
my image-

Now you have awoken;
you are of that age of reason.
Listen!
It is important
that you know well
how to live,
how to walk your path.

Look, my dear daughter,
my little dove-
The path is not
just a little hard,
it is frighteningly so.

Oh my daughter,
in this world
of such pain
and sadness
there is cold,
there are jarring winds,
heat that tires us,
that brings us hunger,
thirst.

The gods have given us
laughter,
sleep,
food,
drink,
so that the bad
does not bring too much sadness,
does not always make us cry.

Understand, my daughter
that you are of noble
and generous blood;
you are precious
as an emerald,
precious as a sapphire.
You were sculpted of relations
cultivated like jade.

Do not dishonor yourself;
do not bring yourself shame,

nor to your ancestors
who were noble and good.

You have left your toys,
childhood games.
You understand now,
you are of the age of reason.

Don't be lazy.
Rise,
sweep-
Salute the gods!

Dress quickly,
wash your face,
hands,
mouth.
Keep yourself clean
always.

Listen!
My beloved daughter,
my dove
my own:
Here is your mother
from whose womb you came
like a stone cut
from another
and who gave you life
as a plant gives life
to another.

I must teach you
what you should know
to live well
as you were meant.

When we are gone,
and you are on your own,
people will whisper
that we did well by you.

When we are gone
you will live honorably
among the dignified.

You were not meant
to sell herbs
at the market,
wood,
green chiles,
or saltpeter
on the street corners.

Poetry from a Latina writer

You are noble!
My daughter,
note well and listen to what I must tell you:
When you speak, speak
not too loud
and not too soft
but with honest words
always.
Walk-
never with a bowed head,
nor
ever raised too high.

Don't listen to gossip.
Don't repeat what is said
along the path.

Daughter of mine,
our ancestors, noblewomen,
ancient and white-haired,
told is these few words:
Listen!
Take heed!
In this world we go along
a narrow path,
very high
and very dangerous
below.

Do not stray.
Do not let yourself
fall.
Stay on the path.
Oh my daughter,
so tenderly loved-

Don't choose your life companion
like an ear of corn,
only for its golden color.
Choose your life companion with care.
You must live
all your days together.
And if you both be poor,
don't belittle your companion.
Have faith in the gods
who are all-merciful.

Be skillful,
understand,
learn what is Toltec,
what is noble.
Watch with diligence,
curiosity,
alertness

How to weave,
how to apply colors.

My daughter,
my turtledove,
this I have told you
so that you always
know your worth.

Your heart is
a sapphire,
simple and clean.

Listen,
take note
of these things.
May they be your torch,
your firebrand
to guide you
throughout all your days
on this earth.
And with this my duty is done.

May the gods give you a long
and happy life,
my beloved one!



My Son, the Eagle, the Tiger

Ana Castillo

My son,
eagle, ocelot,
wing, tail
so dear,
so beloved-
listen!

It is right
that you should take care.

They did not come
to be greedy,
to be restless.

Through their deeds,
they came to be know
as eagles,
as tigers.

Listen!
Understand!
This is the place of hardships.
The old ones
of white hair and wrinkled faces,
our ancestors
have left it said for us:

Cut wood!
Plant the maguey:
you will have to drink, eat,
wear clothes.

You will be real.
You will walk the path.

By this work
you will be known,
by your parents
and relations.

Do not give yourself
too soon
to a companion-
tho' you be lonely,
filled with desire-
until you are grown
and have learned
to give.

The maguey
yields nothing
when still green.

When you find a companion-

what will you both eat, drink?
Will you suck air perhaps?

You are the support.
You must stand straight.

You are the eagle!
You are the tiger!

You will be praised
for your acts
Not with envy
nor torn heart
will you speak,
but with honesty
and a good song
by which you will
be esteemed.

Listen and take note:
look wisely,
with good judgment
at things.
Although you be poor,
although your mother and father
were the poorest of the poor,
keep your heart pure,
keep your heart clean and real,
keep your heart firm.

Be alert!
Be swift
on your path!

Be calm and honest
in your ways.

You were not meant
to roam the mountains,
gathering weeds
to eat,
wood
to sell.
Carry yourself
well.

Do not be the
object of scorn
and ridicule.
Do not waste the days
and nights
the gods have given you.

Do not waste your body

Poetry from a Latina writer

with bad food,
bad habits,
a bad life-
You'll soon
die
a
waste!

My son
so beloved:
listen to these words
and put them
in your heart.

They were left to us
by our ancestors,
the wise old men
and old women
who lives here
on this earth.

Keep these words
like gold in a coffer.
They are like emeralds,
jade,
sapphires,
resplendent and polished.

They are wide and fine
quetzal plumes
suited for nobility,
for those who live well
and are of good heart.

May the gods
who are near and far
and know all secrets,
see all things,
watch over you always.
May you be blessed
with peace.

With this my duty is done.
My greatest treasure,
my son, my beloved one.



Activity Worksheet

I Am From Poem

Please take a few minutes to reflect quietly on everything that you have learned about these past weeks. Reflect on the newly gained knowledge that made you feel proud about your identity. Next, synthesize your thoughts prior to writing your first stanza.

The first stanza in your poem is four lines long. The first line should start with the words “I am from.” If you wish, you can also start the third line of your stanza with the words “I am from.” Please be reminded that it is very important that you reflect your innermost feelings in your writing. Also, you do not have to rhyme the words at the end of the lines.

You will have a total of 40 minutes to work on this assignment today.



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