

A Matter of Life or Death

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INTRODUCTION

Songs, art, poetry, viewpoints, life experiences, history, and philosophy are the petals of the whirlwind, the spiral and thread of this life. They express the essential symbols or mental elements of mankind. They provide us with a view of our world and give us many of our ideals and loves. If we do not have these intellectual tools to guide us and provide us with aspirations, we may lose our way or feel alienated from our surroundings.

I come from another country, where the view of the world is not identical to what I experience here. I am Hispanic, as are the majority of my students. When I was young, I walked through life as though I had the world in my hands. However, due to the solitude and the fear in my life, I lacked the guidance that is so necessary for a young person's proper development. Only through my continued persistence and tenacity was I able to develop on my own guide and find my own destiny in life: teaching.

Today, I want to be those guiding hands for my students. Many of them have no one at home to help educate them about discipline, reflective listening, problem solving, respect for sacrifice and/or authority, character development, and development of a winning attitude. Even if the students have someone at home who teaches these traits, we as teachers, need to reinforce these values for the benefit of our society.

Now I am an HISD teacher with the great opportunity and responsibility to learn how to say this in a curriculum unit that will include as pillar lessons: life, death, and character education, with the purpose of making the youth feel their responsibility of earning with honesty the conduct that is going to give them joy: Commitment and Loyalty, Justice, Time to Rise and Shine, Climbing Higher, and, if necessary, to increase, change, or reinforce a noticed aspect, I will teach a bit of other valuable themes. (*Signposts* 66-68, 83, 86-87, 91-92).

"When was I born?" "I don't know when I am going to die." "I know that if I do well, it will go well?" "It is beautiful to have calm in the heart." Those are some of our inside voices. These questions and thoughts have been asked and answered for generations in Hispanic culture. I want my students to experience these answers with pride as well as knowledge. At some point, the students should think about expressing how empowering it is to be able to articulate the worldview from which they come. If you understand and appreciate that worldview, you can also experience other worldviews more confidently and productively.

The Hispanic culture has many traditions. Two of these are: "The Dead" and "The Symbol of Spring." Teaching about these two traditions in the classroom is the perfect excuse to reach the topics of origin (spring), and end (dead), giving the students an opportunity to analyze what they can do to accomplish a great destiny.

The Hispanic population needs "values," as everyone does. As teachers, we need to help the students to connect their lives with a purpose, with opportunities or options to succeed even if their environment is full of poverty. They can get a scholarship just by accomplishing their job as students, but we need to

encourage them with poetry, with values, with information, with lessons that help them to correlate reality versus disaster (failure). This will ensure greater success academically and in life.

Impoverished students are especially vulnerable to economic pressures that may or may not reinforce their values and the values of society (Payne 4-32). Poverty creates an environment with very little adult supervision and thus fewer opportunities for adults to introduce and reinforce values. Las Americas Middle School is one of these environments in which children spend too much time without supervision.

The middle school years are an opportune time to reinforce good habits. Being a good person should be viewed as a good habit. This unit, besides being informative, is going to carry a message of “Life” in which each one of us is responsible for our acts. Each of us has a desire for good things to count between birth and death, not tragedies. The failure of a student could be counted as a tragedy. I understand the struggle my students face, though, because it is not easy for an individual who does not have the language skills, the opportunities for achievement, or the proper role models to enhance and advance in his or her life. I worry often because many children appear to be more disoriented than I was at their age.

The other day, after I was coming from a teachers’ workshop, I offered my help to one of the teachers. She was carrying, among many other items, a small, green chalkboard. While speaking to the other three teachers, an American teenager dressed in a green t-shirt and a beige pair of pants came walking toward us. As I looked at him, he raised his white face and spit at me. Rapidly I covered myself with the chalkboard while the teenager continued to walk away. I overheard a female voice calling from a Mercedes with a broken front window. The woman was calling to the teenager and begging him to return to the car. Since it was apparent that something was wrong, I called 911 to report the incident to the authorities.

This situation made a great impression on me. It made me think deeply about the importance of this unit for my students. I want to make the students cognizant about what can happen in the life of an individual who has not defined his or her goals and who does not make wise decisions, like that boy I saw in the parking lot. Students need to know that mistakes can become positive experiences if they view them as learning experiences. One must learn to fight against negative temptations, but be aware that when a person succumbs to them there will be negative repercussions. This unit has the beautiful challenge of planting the seed of aspiration.

I will divide the project into three units, as stated above. In the first unit, fall represents death. The Day of the Dead altar is a pre-Hispanic tradition that has lasted throughout the years. It has become an integrated part of the Catholic religion in Mexico. Every year it becomes a bigger and bigger event, with school classes, government employees and artists throughout Mexico competing for the most creative and interesting altar. Halloween is not a tradition in Mexico, and every year the Catholic Church fights against the celebration and promotes the Day of the Dead Altars – November 1, (for dead little children - *santos inocentes*) and November 2, for adults.

During spring, the second unit, new life begins the natural circle of everything. Two times a month we will dedicate our class to discussion of youth and old age, the periods of life in a human being, weaving in this common thread that they will want to stitch in this world. The students will reflect on the purpose of their existence and the contributions they make in sharing their own destinies, and the battles they fight when confronting their own demons (frustrations, anger, etc.). I think that it is a unique cultural perspective that I must share with my students.

The final unit will be a synthesis of the ideas and questions explored in the first two, as well as a call to productive action for the student. As a Hispanic woman of Mexican heritage, I see firsthand the journey of the immigrant. I don’t want to see my students in the “barrio,” doing nothing, forgetting about their enthusiastic weaving in this common thread that they want to stitch

in this world with actions; instead, they would be spitting the wonderful mat of life in any way that society defines a failure.

Between death and life, there are choices for reflection and projection of us into the future, maintaining positive energy to reinforce vitality while they accomplish the scholar year. At the end, they will harvest the produce of dedication, and they will climb each time higher, and that is A Matter of Life or Death. (See appendix A.)

DESCRIPTION OF THE SCHOOL'S ENVIROMENT AND PROJECT

Las Americas Middle School is a school for children who are recent immigrants, and some are illegal. Class XIII, Leadership 20/20 (Great Southwest Chamber of Commerce), included Las Americas M.S. as part of their learning tour, because the school has a unique perspective on community. That is why the building is located inside of a complex called "Las Americas," where most of the students walk from the apartments where they are living. They have been in the USA from one day to two years. The students have different backgrounds. Some have lived in refugee camps. Some have never been to school. Others are from dysfunctional families. Some were left in their original countries by their parents with a relative or with a friend for 3, 5, 7, or more years, and now they are meeting their parent or parents after a very long time. Despite their hardships, they possess the determination and heart to adapt to their new country and do what is required to succeed.

My students are usually poor. 95% of the students get free lunch. Nobody has talked to them about the word "philosophy," or they have forgotten it; they are unaware of how to express themselves through art, poetry, songs, or writing as tools of life. They should be made aware by teachers that each person is capable of discovering the beauty of his or her own life during the development, the blooming through education.

I have to study their culture, observe them, and interact with them in a positive way. More specifically, I want to inspire them to utilize the art and experiences of their old country so that they can combine these cultural bonds with the art and experiences of their new country. Eventually this combination will create a distinct art that reflects both of these individual cultures.

My goal is to assist them in expressing their American experiences in a constructive, safe, and healthy way. They can create their own personal art that exemplifies the experiences of their lives with the possible contribution in society, community or family.

As an example of this representation, they can be creative by building their own "Death Altar" (<http://viking.coe.uh.edu/~cmarkell/dod/spdodhmpg.htm>). In Hispanic culture, people celebrate the dead by setting the basic items they would need for their return to Hades on platforms during the day of the dead celebration in October and November. Such items are: a photograph of the deceased, water, salt, a favorite food, etc. (Read materials on Lesson Two.)

Let me expand on this:

On November the second, Mexicans prepare the reception for the dead. Women start very early making "tamales," "mole de guajolote" (turkey on species), rice, coffee, chocolate, and corn. They then proceed with the offering with candles, fruits, chicken, and tamales. After this work, they place at the front of the Altar a big banana stem in the shape of an arc, and around the photograph of the deceased, big thick candles. Outside the house of the deceased, a cross made with decorated logs is placed. Beside the cross they put an offering for the elderly that don't have family.

Later on, the people go to the cemetery to clean the tombs and place the arc adorned with flowers as part of the offering. On the tomb, the relatives arrange a tablecloth, food, incense (copal), and four lit candles. The relatives of the deceased wait for twenty minutes, giving time to

the souls to consume the offering – it is believed that deceased only take the scent of the food – then everyone else eats. They hire groups to play music that the deceased used to enjoy. They stay there until dark when every candle is lit, and that is when they go to the home of their godparents offering in a sack or in baskets the other parts of the offering from the Altar.

Another ceremony conducted during the Day of the Dead is the elderly dance, carried out between October 31 and November the 2nd. Only males participate. Some dress in rags; others dress very elegantly or in disguise with masks or walking sticks. The intention of this dance is to represent the vital circle of birth-reproduction-death. It is believed that in the past, men were disguised with the purpose of avoiding having the Dead to recognize them and to make fun of Her (Hispanics think death is female) going out to dance, because if she recognizes the man that she is looking for, he has to accompany her to her dwelling.

For Altar of Dead, we will investigate the essential components of the feast day, the meaning of the objects, and the importance of setting an “Altar de Muertos”(see Lesson Two/materials). We will analyze the life work done (actions) by important people in the word, such as artists, politicians, and past and present leaders. We will think about the possibility of one day being selected for a group, to be honored for good contributions to society, community, school or family, as we will because the students have not had the opportunity to be selected yet; they are treating, I mean: living.

Our class selects the person who has impressed us the most, and we honor this person with a magnificent Altar de Muertos made with regional resources or accessible materials.

For Día de la Primavera (Spring Day), we learn different songs written specifically for this holiday. As a group, we will compose our own song, translate it and sing it in a performance amidst a backdrop full of color and flowers. We will try to reflect after reading old “Azteca” (Aztec) poems about the brief light of a human in this world: “Cantos de Primavera” (“Songs of Spring”) or “Como una pintura nos iremos borrando” (“like a drawing we will be erased”) by *Acolmiztli Nezahualcoyotl*, whose name means, arm, lion’s force, and fasting coyote, nicknamed *Yoyontzin* as a poet. Nezahualcoyotl was born on April 28, 1402, a year that was named Ce tochtli or 1 Conejo. (Martinez 77-85).

Spring has multiple meanings for the Hispanics. For example: each of the years of the young individual, and when it is their fifteen birthday, we say, “Quince Primaveras” (his/her “fifteen spring”), the time in which someone or something is in the splendor of life and beauty. The elements to identify spring are the sun, light, the growth of birds and butterflies, and the blooming of flowers.

With the beginning of spring, many cities in Mexico accomplish cultural and social events. Their “queen” is selected, and the parades promoted in every school are organized with allegoric vehicles. In fact, pre-k schools organized parades in which imagination overflows when the parents dress their small babies with different customs: bees, flowers, wild animals, etc.

The students in my class will benefit greatly from these lessons and from my participation in the Houston Teachers Institute. As an Institute Fellow, I have the opportunity to create a unit that captures my students’ interest and helps to educate them about pre-Colombian art, life, and death. I will help them to develop as artists, poets, or simply as young people who are capable of finding their paths in life toward their individual destinies. Because of the experiences in the seminar with the professor and my fellow students, along with the reading and the study material, I know that I will become a better teacher.

ACTIVITIES THROUGH THE MONTHS

Observing calendars from anywhere in the world, which can be so similar, yet so different at the same time, we can insert the spot where the flowers bloom, but not the spot where living beings will stop breathing. Often times these children cannot see the beauty of their blowing lives, their spring's life, the opportunity that every being has of choosing for first time the base of his or her personal history, his or her own destiny. I want my students to appreciate their lives, and that life can be a beautiful bouquet of gorgeous flowers in a variety of arrangements.

Life is made of threading mysteries and one of them is youth, the "teenage" years, where life seems to come from the tail of a comet and looks like it is impossible to see the reflection of our behavior in an uncertain future we cannot imagine. This period, I feel, is critical to their development. If they can succeed in these difficult years, it will serve as a formula for success later in life.

I would like, under these conditions, to feel free to talk to my middle school students about the beauty of poetry. Poetry is an expression of the spirit, and in most instances this spirit is still sleeping. I want to awaken them to the hope that there is a better life, and I can show them this. On this occasion, I would like to introduce them to the poetry of our/my ancestors, the poetry of the great Nahua civilization, better known as the Aztecs.

The Nahua, is one of the most important civilizations of Mesoamerica. The Nahuas knew the calendar and numeration; they had hieroglyphical handwriting; they made astronomical observations and oriented their monuments according to a guessing systems; they had a clear notion of planning and engineered urbanization; they knew about properties and uses of several medicinal plants; their ceramics have a powerful expressivity and religious symbolism; but they disappeared as an effect of an eruption, a natural disaster.

Everything is correlated to weave the ways the students feel about life and death. Maybe some students will want to research articulations with symbols, numbers, colors, calendars, and the myth of the courses of the universe: that's what is called **Cosmic Vision** by the Nahua. (See **Appendix B** for a graphic visualization.)

I would like to search with them for symbols in poetry and have the students select them for the future creation of our "Altar de Muertos" and our "Celebration of Spring".

In **September**, with the introduction to the goals for the scholastic year, my students will receive a copy of its **AZTEC calendar** and the meaning of the symbols. Though the Aztec calendar site on the Internet (www.azteccalendar.com), we will search out the year in which each student was born. Then, they will be aware that they are searching for their birthdays on line, the origin of their own lives, and those ancestors who came before us.

I will teach this subject every other Thursday, and this favors the design of this curriculum. On two Thursdays I will talk about the origin of our own lives by reading and discussing Nahuas' poets voices *Ancient America* by Jose Luis Martinez: Nezahualcoyotl (77-85), Tochiuhuitzin Coyolchiuqui (91), Tecayehuatzin de Huexotzinco (93-94). I will also use anonymous poems translated by Miguel Leon Portilla, "Fugacious from which Exists" (59) and "Give Course to the Heart" (58).

All these voices together make you feel the invalid pain of an instant that is gone, "A civilization, a conquest, a feeling, a moment, and we on/in, without it." (Nahua poems in Spanish appear on **Appendix C**).

In **October**, the second Thursday, we will talk about our thoughts on the birthday date that we put in the Aztec calendar the previous month. A few minutes will be spent on this refresher.

What is an “Altar de Muertos”? I’ll ask openly to the class. One by one, each student writes a different element or symbol on the board. I’ll be the first participant so they can see an example.

Everyone writes the words that appear on the board and starts translating their own contribution – translating because Las Americas Middle School is an ESL (English as the Second Language) school for students that are recent immigrants to United States. These students have the right to enroll in the school and stay through a period of two years. They have to manage to fit into society with their elementary vocabulary in English, until they accomplish the new language, and language in a country is the main door to success for aliens.

The fourth Thursday of the month, I will give them a list of the items that are necessary in the representation of an “Altar de Muertos,” explaining the symbolic meanings. The students will spend the rest of the hour making notes about the ideas on building an “**Altars de Muertos**” and will consider each other’s contributions. As homework, for the next session hosted in **November**, they will select (using the “democratic system of voting”) the name of the person they will honor on the Altar de Muertos.

In **November**, students will complete the list of items necessary to adapt an **Altar de Muertos** (http://www.mexconnect.com/mex_/feature/daydeadindex.html) with the sources we have in this, our new country. The students will invite the other class groups, teachers, and administrators to admire their **Altar**.

December will be our reflection and evaluation month. We will reflect about the end of the year in which we didn’t or did do brilliant things for our future. This month is going to embrace the beginning of the year where it’s necessary to insert into the curriculum little bits of **Character Education** from *Signposts*, taking advance of the Hispanic voices, I mean, traditions, culture, and memories.

Character Education/*Signposts* is a call for all schools since 1989 by the HISD Board of Education to support the children’s involvement or focus on character traits and civic values needed in diverse communities. I will talk about *Commitment* and *Loyalty* (66-68), *Justice* (83), *Time to Rise and Shine* (86, 87), *Climbing Higher* (91, 92), and if is necessary to improve with unexpected topics, I will use a lesson to switch or reinforce the noticed aspect. I will get a bit of those values in this flexible curriculum which I consider as **A Matter of Life or Death**, as a Hispanic, as a teacher, as an ethical person.

In **January**, with optimism, we will discuss the thoughts of each student and his/her way to celebrate the holidays during vacation. We will remember what we did during the last semester and renew or reinforce our hope in the school, for a better society, in the world, where the illusion of happiness is important. Every teacher can talk and mix Character Education as needed among the regular lesson plans during the year. My purpose is to talk with my students about the good and bad choices that a human being can make, how difficult it may be to direct one’s life, and how it is possible to break the poor circumstances in the family just by taking seriously what a profession means – a long or a short professional career – because even a short career is a good thing to do. The students will take an inventory of their life – what they have and what they want.

In **February** there’s always an excuse for a beginning, a hope because the approximation of spring when the students will find out about the Mayans. The students will admire this Mayan civilization for their knowledge and respect for the equinox. What is the equinox? Why do the ancestors believe that their deceased return to the land during the equinox? Exactly when did the Kukulkans’ shadow descend on one of the biggest and most important pyramids in Chichén Itzá? The teacher must focus the students’ attention to the beginning of the spring, to the beginning of the circle of life, and explain about the magic character called Kukulcan, for the Mayas, and called Quetzalcoatl for the Aztecs. The students are going to use their own thoughts in their

native language and then translate, or they will write in English and then correct, however they feel more comfortable. The goal is to express in writing what they understand about beginning. We will start this month and leave the question of Equinox for next month.

March is the month when spring starts, and everything blooms, and where the students have to conclude what is the phenomena Equinox. Love, art, science, nature, and mystery surround the phenomena: EQUINOX. They are going to match with songs, art, poetry, viewpoints, life experiences, history and philosophy as the petals of the whirlwind, the spiral and thread of this life which were mentioned at the introduction of this curriculum. The students will investigate the equinox and are going to visit the website <http://www.sunearthday.nasa.gov> where NASA presents a video for everyone to get an idea about the shadow with the shape of a snake, Kukulcan, reflected the day when the equinox happened – the descent of KUKULCAN, known as a Quetzalcoatl for the Aztecs (Lindermans).

In **April** with ideas, materials of the region, songs and poems selected by the students, the class is going to prepare for their own performance that will say “good bye” to the staff; to the school year in May; to a period of the students’ lives that has made them ready to go to high school; to some of the friends they have made, and to family members.

They have produced and memorized samples of songs and poems of life, of positive attitude. Everything is going to be ready for the next month, where the ESL students are going to sing in their own scenario, proud of expressing their happiness and hope in their new language, on stage. (SAT RC. 13).

Because spring is the season that follows winter, it represents a change of weather, and this is reflected not only in the vegetables and flowers, but also in the students that are very happy.

May is the time of graduation and performance of the students that will reflect satisfaction and hope for the new period of the next scholar year, full of surprises and choices and progress to make. We have to find the time and prepare the space where we will present the show during the party for the last day of school. The students have to design the invitation by looking at different designs and complete the necessary information for our guests.

LESSON PLANS

Lesson Plan One: The Aztec Calendar

Objective

The students are going to correlate the “Aztec Calendar” dates with the Gregorian calendar dates, traveling through imagination to Ancient Central Mexico, until they reach the time when they received the name of the date on which they were born. Technology is the main tool to develop the lesson. The students will be able to name dates applied by the Nahua Indians, or Aztecs that are the same.

Activities and Assignments

The teacher is going to introduce a **10**-minute explanation on the day signs, the 260-day count and the fifty-two year circles of the Aztec Calendar.

Working in pairs, the students will search with Google on line: “Aztec Calendar” and guided by the teacher, they will go through the images of the pyramids of Tenochtitlán, the Aztec culture and agriculture, little history in Federal District, capital of Mexico before XVI century, and other aspects of the students’ interest. This activity will take **15** minutes, time for the students to build an idea in their minds about this old civilization.

The students are going to express those thoughts and questions that came to their minds, and the teacher is going to stop the conversation: “Everyone has an origin, a birth. We are already here, making a great future.” 8 minutes.

The teacher is going to ask the students to observe the date on the monitor of the <http://www.azteccalendar.com>, and will read it aloud: “This is today’s date. Now, enter your birthday date and write the information on the notebook to comment during the next class.” 12 minutes.

The students clear the area and go to their next class.

Lesson Plan Two: Altar de Muertos

Objectives

The students are going to prepare their design of the Altar de Muertos, comprehending the importance of the items utilized on the base where they are going to set it.

The students will capture their Altar de Muertos in a photograph and expose it on the website of the school.

The students will compare their Altar de Muertos with the pictures on the Internet:

http://www.mexconnect.com/mex_/feature/daydeadindex.html

<http://viking.coe.uh.edu/~cmarkell/dod/spdodhmpg.htm>

Materials

The most important thing to put on your Day of the Dead altar is a photograph of the person to whom you are dedicating the altar. The three-tier altar is covered in “papel picado” – which is bright colored tissue paper with cut out designs. The paper can be either handmade or purchased. Three important colors are purple (for pain) white (for hope) and pink (for the celebration).

Candles are also placed all over the altar. Purple candles again are used to signify pain. On the top level of the altar, four candles need to be placed – signifying the four cardinal points. The light of the candle will illuminate the way for the dead upon their return.

Three candy skulls are placed on the second level. These represent the Holy Trinity. On the center of the third level a large skull is placed – this represents the Giver of Life.

All bad spirits must be whisked away and leave a clear path for the dead soul by burning in a *bracero*, a small burner used to cook outside. Or one can use a *sahumerio* to burn *copal* or incense. A small cross of ash is made so that the ghost will expel all its guilt when it is stepped on.

The Day of the Dead bread, *pan de muerto*, should be accompanied by fruit and candy placed on the altar. Pan de Muerto is plain round sweet bread sprinkled with white sugar and a crisscrossed bone shape on top. You can also add the person’s favorite food.

A towel, soap and small bowl are put on the altar so that the returning ghosts can wash their hands after their long trip. There is a pitcher of fresh water to quench their thirst and a bottle of liquor to remember the good times of their life.

To decorate and leave a fragrance on the altar, the traditional *cempasuchil* flower is placed around the other figures. Cempasuchil comes from Nahuatl *cempoalxochitl* that means the flower with four hundred lives. The flower petals form a path for the spirits to bring them to their banquet.

Activities and Assignments

At this time the students will have had selected the person to honor with an Altar de Muertos, thinking of having, in the future, the same honor, if they contribute to society.

The students will recall the elements and symbols necessary for the Altar de Muertos. The students won't be allowed to bring real candles, so we have to create with paper as much as we can. **10** minutes.

Students are going to be checking on the internet about different ways to set an Altar and at the same time are going to give ideas to the rest of the group about how to give a better appearance to their design. **15** minutes

At the end of the class each of the students is going to know the elements they have to bring or create to develop the sketch they designed during the time class. (**15** minutes)

The teacher has to monitor the advance of the project reflected on their sketch.

Five minutes before the class ends, the students will clean their area and go to the next period.

Lesson Plan Three: A Bit of Character Education – Climbing Higher

Objective

The students will understand the importance of making wise decisions. Often decisions made by teens affect them for a lifetime.

The students will comprehend the wise anonymous line, “*Ability will enable a man to go to the top, but it takes character to keep him there.*”

The students will consider the possibility to enjoying a vibrant, excited young people who are having a positive effect on our society by **Climbing Higher!** (*Signpost 91*)

The students will address these values: honesty, self-respect, self-esteem, truthfulness, commitment and loyalty.

Materials

The students need pencil or pen to write the answers to a decision-making process.

Activities and assignments:

The word “decision” has to be written on the board, with its definition at the moment when the students arrive into the classroom.

After the students have taken their places, one volunteer is going to read what is on the board. **5** minutes.

The students will be asked to close their eyes and think about the situation they are living and will try to obtain sense of direction in life. **5** minutes.

The students will feel free writing that “living.” The students will be able to write in their native language and then translate or write in their second language directly and edit if necessary. **30** minutes.

After writing for 30 minutes, one volunteer is going to distribute the sheet where they have to write:

First: Clearly define the situation you are confronted with or the problem you are facing.

Second: Consider the possible solution.

Third: List the positive and negative effects for each of the possible solutions:

Good _____ Bad _____

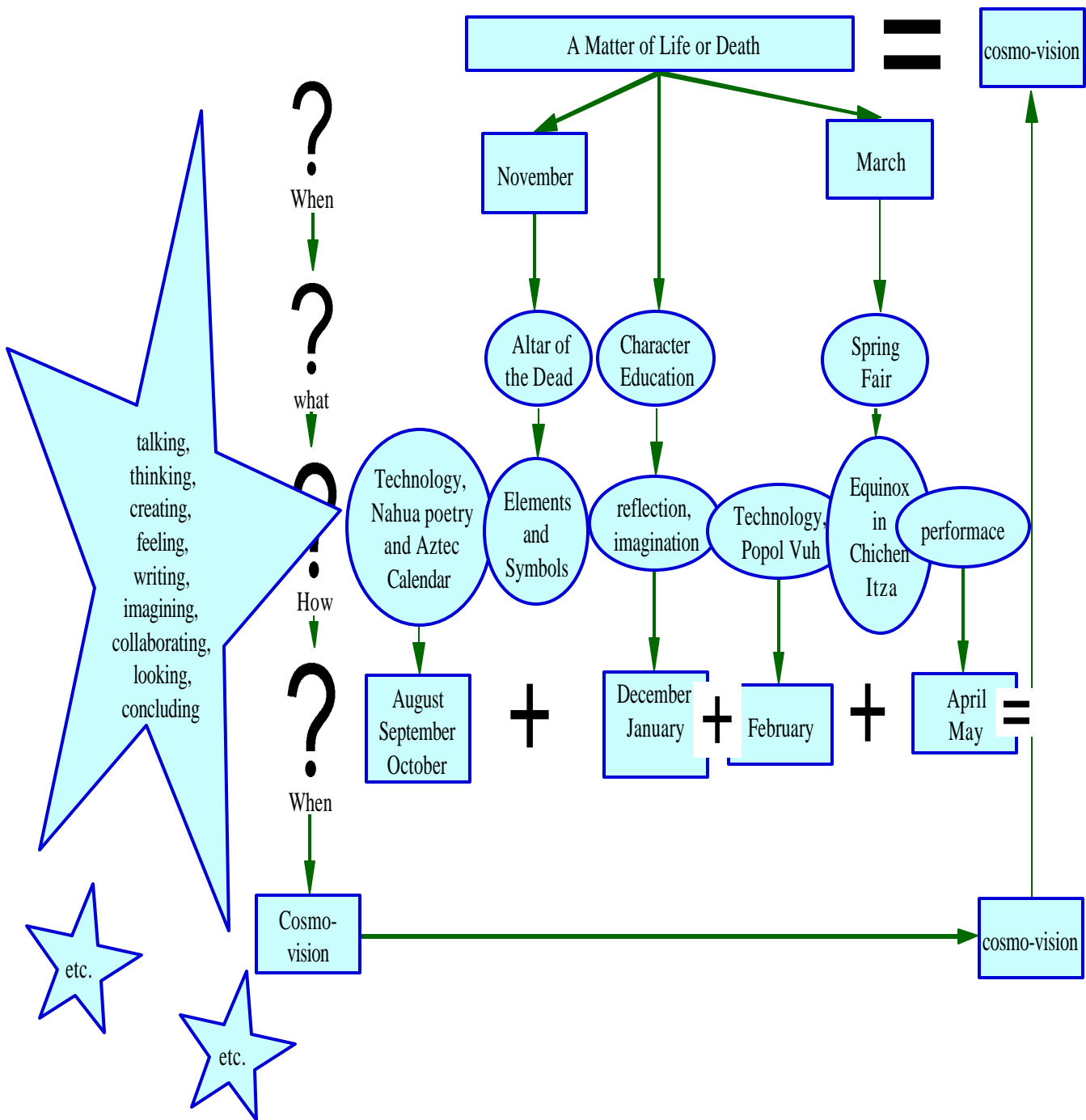
Fourth: Which is the best solution for me and why?

Fifth: The actions I must now take are...

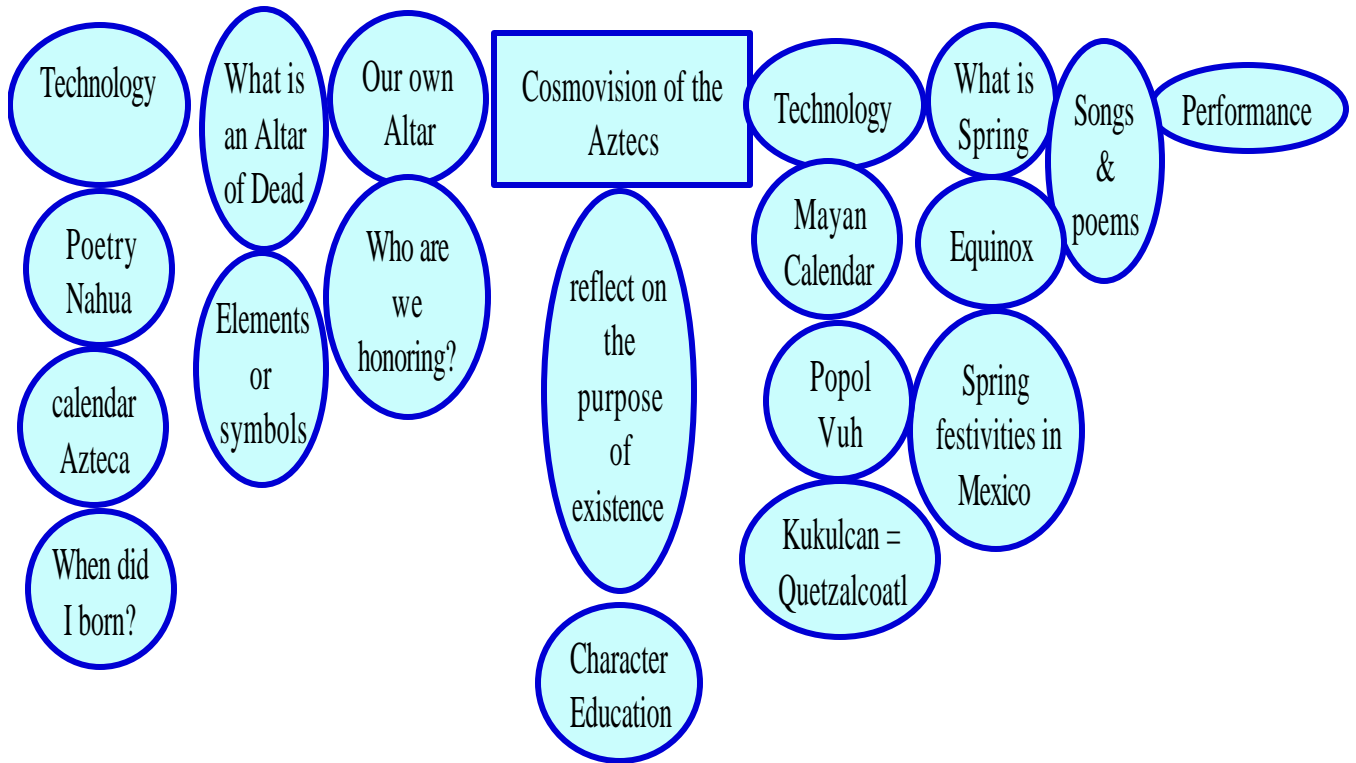
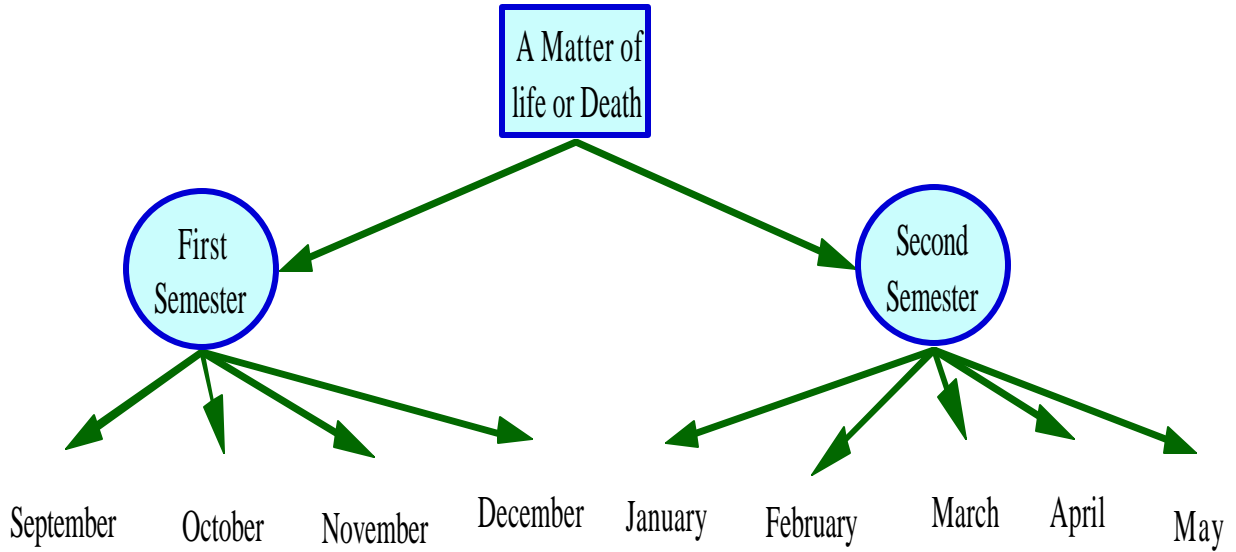
Sixth: Consider what will happen...

The students will clear their area, and prepare to go to their next assessment. **5** minutes.

Appendix A
Cosmic Vision



Appendix B
Through the Months



APPENDIX C - Poemas de la Civilización Azteca (Nahua)

“Cantos de Primavera”

By Nezahualcōyotl

En la casa de las
pinturas
comienza a cantar,
ensaya el canto,
derrama flores,
alegra el canto.

Resuena el canto,
los cascabeles se hacen
oír,
a ellos responden
nuestras sonajas
floridas.
Derrama flores,
alegra el canto.

Sobre las flores canta
el hermoso faisán,
su cato despliega
en el interior de las
aguas.
A él responden
varios pájaros rojos,
el hermoso pájaro rojo
bellamente canta.

Libro de pinturas es tu corazón,
has venido a cantar,
haces resonar tus tambores,
tú eres el cantor.

En el interior de la casa de la
primavera,
alegras a las gentes.

Tu solo repartes
flores que embriagan,
flores preciosas.
Tú eres el cantor.
en el interior de la casa de la
primavera,
alegras a las gentes.

“Sólo Venimos a Soñar”

By Tochiuhitzin Coyolchiuqui

Solo venimos a dormir, solo venimos a sonar:
no es verdad, no es verdad que venimos a vivir en la tierra.

En hierba de primavera venimos a convertirnos:
llegan a reverdecer, llegan a abrir sus corolas nuestros corazones,
es una flor nuestro cuerpo: da algunas flores y se seca.

“La Paradoja del Hombre en la Tierra”

By Tecayehuatzin de Huexotzinco

Tu, Dueño del Cerca y el Junco,
aquí te damos placer,
junto a ti nada se echa de menos,
¡oh Dador de la Vida!

Solo como una flor nos estimas,
así nos vamos marchitando, tus amigos.
Como a una esmeralda,
tú nos haces pedazos.
Como a una pintura,
tu así nos borras.

Todos se marchan a la región de los muertos,
al lugar común de perdernos.
¿Qué somos para ti, oh Dios?
así vivimos.
Así, en el lugar de nuestra pérdida,
así nos vamos perdiendo.
Nosotros los hombres,
¿a dónde tendremos que ir?

Por esto lloro,
porque tu te cansas,
¡oh Dador de la Vida!
Se quiebra el jade,
se desgarran el quetzal.
Tu te estas burlando.
Ya no existimos.
¿Acaso para ti somos nada?
Tú nos destruyes,
tú nos haces desaparecer aquí.

Pero repartes tus dones,
tus alimentos, lo que da abrigo,
¡oh Dador de la vida!
Nadie dice, estando a tu lado,
que viva en la indigencia.
Hay un brotar de piedras preciosas,
hay un florecer de plumas de quetzal
¿son acaso tu corazón, Dador de la Vida?
Nadie dice, estando a tu lado,
que viva en la indigencia.

“Fugacidad de lo que Existe”

Anónimo

¿Acaso de verdad se vive en la tierra?
No para siempre en la tierra: solo un poco aquí.
Aunque sea jade se quiebra,
Aunque sea oro se rompe,
Aunque sea plumaje de quetzal se desgarran,
No para siempre en la tierra; solo un poco aquí.

“Dar un Rumbo al Corazón”

Anónimo

¿Qué era lo que acaso tu mente hallaba?
¿Dónde andaba tu corazón?
Por esto das tu corazón a cada cosa,
Sin rumbo lo llevas: vas destruyendo tu corazón.
Sobre la tierra, ¿acaso puedes ir en pos de algo?

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