***\*Project Annotation:***

In reviewing my original Unit Plan on the Music of the Spanish-Speaking World, I realized that there was a piece missing. That piece was Brazil. Granted, Brazil isn’t a Spanish-speaking country, but it is a vibrant part of Latin American culture and a conduit of many African influences that are rooted in different genres of Spanish language music in South America. Much of our study in Latin America, and South America in particular often skips over Brazil simply because it is not a “Spanish-speaking country.” The truth remains however, that though linguistically different, there are many similarities. Music is a topic that I think can be explored richly in Latin America as it runs deep in the history and culture of the region, including Brazil. While in Brazil, I realized what an important piece Brazil is to the Latin American cultural landscape and how much we neglect to talk about it in our Spanish classrooms. Again, Brazil is often swept aside due to its linguistic differences, but it is a cultural gem worth exploring, even if just at the introductory level.

To tie the Spanish-speaking and Portuguese-speaking worlds together, I tried to find a common denominator. That common denominator was music, more specifically Afro musical influences from African slaves who were brought to the continent to work the fields in the 17 and 1800’s. In looking at this influential topic in Spanish and Portuguese colonial history, I thought it would be an interesting cultural topic for students to explore historically, culturally, and musically. My initial unit plan focused exclusively on the music of the Spanish-speaking world, now the plan encompasses Brazil and the investigation of Afro-Latino musical influences. Much of my inspiration to explore the topic came from my visit to Salvador, in the state of Bahia where there still lives a vibrant Afro-Brazilian culture and community with a rich, colorful, and energetic music tradition. A tradition I’d like to include in my unit plan.

Changes to note specifically in my unit plan include a series of updates to infuse African musical influence into the study of Latin American music. I have added a class and student group exploration of African influence on Brazilian and Spanish-language music of Latin America as well as given students the chance to compare and contrast the African influences found in Latin American music. Based on their findings and area of interest on the topic, students will then develop research questions to learn about the topic further. Students then will engage with their research questions in a cross-cultural dialogue via Skype with Brazilian Spanish students to explore the topic of music together in Spanish (a second language for both groups of students). Brazilian students could also investigate more traditional forms of American music like Country or Bluegrass in the United States. This unique opportunity provides a joint learning activity to explore a common topic and gain cultural perspectives across continents.