

Juana West

## **Cápsula Cultural**

### **Las creencias y prácticas de la vida campesina de la República Dominicana**

#### **Purpose**

To familiarize the students with some of the daily practices dealing with going to sleep and beliefs (superstitions/myths) of the people living in the “campos” in the Dominican Republic.

#### **Level of Students**

This lesson is for a first year Spanish class in secondary schools.

#### **Teaching Objectives**

Students will gain a wider understanding of the beliefs and practices for going to sleep of the Dominican people and will see examples of these things through showing objects used. They will be able to appreciate the Dominican way of life in comparison to the American way of life. They will come to understand that in the United States we also have superstitious beliefs.

#### **Possible Evaluation Approaches**

Ask the students first about some daily practices and beliefs that may seem superstitious in the United States culture. If they can't think of any, give examples: setting their alarm clock to wake up, the belief about “getting up on the wrong side of the bed”, etc. What things do we keep by the side of our bed just in case of a problem? For example, alarm clock, flash light, extra pair of shoes. Then ask what they think a Dominican campesino might keep at the side of their bed and what superstitions they might have.

#### **Basic Information and Sources**

Dominican campo life requires having candles and matches on hand because of the constant blackouts. It is more common to live by candle light than by electricity because of the lack of electricity. The weather in the D.R. is very hot and humid and very inviting to mosquitoes. Most people sleep in mosquito nets or own a fan to keep the mosquitoes away and keep cool while they sleep. Of course, fans aren't very effective when there's no electricity.

In the campo many myths or superstitions are highly believed and passed on. Some of these superstitions are: If one eats out of the same pot you cook in, then it will rain on your wedding day; Lemon is the cure-all for all ailments and it purifies everything; If you shake hands crossed over two people shaking hands then it means that you'll marry the person you're shaking hands with; It is not healthy to eat fruit that has been sitting in the sun.

## **Class Presentation**

### *1. Activities:*

Find out about some of the U.S. myths or superstitions and daily practices in a typical day concerning waking up and going to bed. Get many answers to these questions and list them on the board. Teach the class about the daily practices for going to bed of the Dominicans and of their different myths and superstitions. Show them examples and model their different practices and myths. Compare the U.S. and Dominican cultures.

### *2. Vocabulary:*

Limón, té de limón, mitos, mosquito, mosquitero, abanico, dar la mano, fruta caliente, llover, casarse, fósforo, vela, luz, no hay luz, se fue la luz, olla

### *3. Materials:*

Objects: lemon juice, fan, bug repellent, pot, candle, matches, fruit

## **Evaluation**

Students will then prepare mini dramas in groups of five comparing Dominican and U.S. myths and practices to present in front of the class. (I will demonstrate a model of how the mini dramas should be.)