

Comments on teaching this lesson – Julie Kilcullen

I taught the Mayan Math lesson right before we let out for Thanksgiving. I loved this lesson and the students really seemed to get into it as well. I created a power point slideshow, that I shared with the class, from several pictures brought back from [Donna Bass' trip to the Yucatan](#). This was the opening of my lesson.

We used rocks and sticks (Toothpicks) for manipulatives. I introduced the written and spoken language for each number, as well as the symbol. We practiced speaking and writing the number several times. The students really enjoyed using the rocks and sticks to create the symbols.

One thing I think it would be great to be able to add to this lesson is a native Mayan speaker who could be seen on video actually speaking the language my students are learning. This was a great jumping off place for the students; they got hungry for more information about Mayan culture. I found, in working with my students, that they wanted to know about everyday life for the Mayans. Why, as a people, were they so interested in math, astronomy, and architecture? I hope that as the TIDES site continues to grow that we can include many segments on this subject.

The next time I teach this lesson I would love to do it over a period of several days and include information on culture, math, science, language...and on and on. My students loved looking at the TIDES site and definitely wanted more. I would love to see this lesson develop into an interdisciplinary unit among all the subjects. The best outcome of this particular lesson was that it allowed my kids to step outside the ordinary, take what they learned and apply it to their current-day number system.