

Finding Our Voices: Telling the Stories of Immigration

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“To say the name is to begin the story...” (Christensen 10).

“At school they say my name funny as if the syllables were made out of tin and hurt the roof of your mouth” (Cisneros 11).

INTRODUCTION

Each of us has a story to tell—our personal history, our life experiences, how we came to be the person we are. An important part of this unit will be allowing students to tell their stories, to bring their stories to the classroom community. It is in sharing their stories that students can begin to understand and respect one another, to focus on their similarities and accept their differences.

The *Program Handbook* for the Houston Teachers Institute elaborates requirements and suggestions for the curriculum unit. The handbook states, “Fellows discuss at length what they have learned about the subject and how they will share it with their students. They also may explain who their students are, their own inspiration for the unit...” (29). As I was reviewing these guidelines, I stopped reading mid-sentence. It occurred to me that who my students are *is* my inspiration for this unit. The ideas, the knowledge, and the final product of the unit all come directly from my students and their experiences.

I am a teacher in my school’s Newcomers Cluster, working with 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students who have recently immigrated to the United States. Students come to Jane Long Middle School from different countries around the globe—Mexico, Sudan, Lebanon, El Salvador, Honduras, Pakistan, Afghanistan. These students speak a variety of different languages—Spanish, Urdu, Farsi, Arabic, French. They range in age from 11 to 16 years old. At this sensitive age, they have been put into a very difficult situation. They have recently arrived in a new country (often against their own wishes) and enrolled in a new school (which in many cases is structured differently from schools in their home countries). Further, they are expected to master age-appropriate content in a language they are just beginning to learn (English), while simultaneously mastering that language in just over seven hours per week (the amount of time they spend in their English language arts classes).

Jane Long Middle School is located in the southwest part of Houston, a diverse area inhabited by immigrants and refugees from all over the world. Even a short drive through the area immediately surrounding the school reveals the diversity of this community. Stores and restaurants advertise in a variety of languages—to the west you will find Vietnamese and Chinese, to the east Spanish.

Another characteristic of this part of Houston is the prevalence of large apartment complexes. Although there are some single-family homes around the school, the vast majority of students live in apartment homes. During the economic downturn in Houston in the 1980s, apartment complexes on the west-side began catering to immigrant and other low-income families (particularly Latinos). This resulted in an ethnic heterogeneity that can still be seen today. As Rodriguez noted several years ago, “In contrast to residential conditions in the old barrios, in the west side, a Mexican or Central American tenant could have an Iranian, Ethiopian, Nigerian, Indian, or some other non-Latino immigrant nationality for a neighbor” (119). The diversity of the neighborhood and its characteristic large apartment complexes is reflected in the school and especially in the Newcomers Cluster.

Thinking about my students, I am often reminded of my study-abroad experience during college. I went to Santiago, Chile, for a semester. I spent five months in a new country, taking classes in a language that I had not yet fully mastered (Spanish), in a university with different policies and procedures from my own university in the United States. This was definitely a challenging time in my life. But I was much older than my students are now, and I had made the decision to go to Chile on my own.

This experience played a large role in shaping my future personal and career goals. As my Spanish language skills improved, I became determined to continue studying Spanish and to find a career where I could utilize it. I eventually settled on a career in education, and my own experiences as a second-language learner influenced me to work with students who were learning English as a second language.

Reflecting on my own experiences reminds me that my students are doing something amazing. On a daily basis they come to school, struggle to do their best, and (for the most part) do so cheerfully and eagerly. I have an enormous amount of respect for my students. This respect and my desire to learn from my students is the inspiration for this curriculum unit.

The general topic of this unit will be the experiences of teenage immigrants in Houston. Sub-topics will address such questions as: how and why did these students (and their families) come to Houston?; why Houston as opposed to another city?; what were their initial impressions of the city?; what types of social interactions do they have in the school and community?; and what are their plans for the future—staying in Houston, moving to another city, or going back to their native countries? My overarching goal is to place the students’ experiences within a broader social context and encourage them to reflect critically on these experiences. I want students to take an active role in analyzing their own histories and determining a course for the future.

BACKGROUND

The focus of this unit will be twofold. The first two sections of the unit will concentrate on the history of immigration and the experiences of immigrants. The immigrant's experience encompasses the actual immigration event, as well as the process of adjusting to a new physical, social, and cultural environment (in this case, Houston). During this part of the unit students will study the various waves of immigration to the United States. They will also have a chance to read personal narratives of past immigrants, as well as share their own personal stories. The third section of the unit will be a critical look at what the future holds for recent immigrants. This portion of the unit will include looking carefully at relationships and other social dynamics, as well as planning for the future. Relationships within the school environment will be a starting point, leading to an examination of group relations within the larger context of the city. Students will reflect on these relationships as they set positive goals for the future.

Past and Present—The Immigrant's Experience

As previously stated, the central topic of the unit is the experiences of teenage immigrants in Houston. These experiences will be grounded in the larger context of immigration trends within the country and the city. The United States is currently experiencing the largest immigration wave in its history. A considerable number of immigrants began arriving in the 1980s, and by 1990 7.9% of the U.S. population was foreign born. Of these, 42.5% were Latin American, 25.2% were Asian, 22% European, and 10.3% from other countries (Mobasher and Sadri 134). In the year 2000 about 10% of the U.S. population was foreign born, and the city of Houston had over 530,000 foreign born residents from countries all over the world. These shifts in population and ethnic group numbers have important implications for social relations within the United States and the city of Houston.

The unit will begin with a brief overview of immigration in the United States. This will be done in order to ground students' thinking within a larger historical reality and contextualize the unit as a whole. First, we will look at the four waves of U.S. immigration. Each of these waves is unique, characterized by immigrants of different nationalities who came to the United States for different reasons. The first wave (which lasted from the 1820s until the 1850s) was composed mainly of Irish and German immigrants, as well as other immigrants from northwestern Europe. The second wave, beginning in the 1860s and lasting through the 1880s, included more immigrants from northwestern Europe. This second wave also included immigrants from China and southern Europe. Starting in the 1890s and continuing through the 1920s, the third wave of immigration was mainly from southern and eastern Europe. Specifically, this wave was characterized by immigrants from eastern and southern Europe. The fourth (and current) wave of immigration began after World War II and is composed predominantly of Latin Americans (especially Mexicans) and Asians.

Examining these waves in detail will provide opportunities to compare and contrast the experiences of past immigrants with the experiences of recent immigrants (including, of course, the students themselves). Students will study the different immigration waves and compare countries of origin, motivations of immigrants, and the role of immigrants in the larger society. As students begin to see that their own experiences are not entirely unique, but rather fit into a larger history of immigration, I hope they will be prompted to reflect on and clarify their own experiences. They will see what is unique as well as what is shared or common in their histories.

Following this broad overview of immigration in the United States, we will move to a more narrow focus on the city of Houston. Here we will attempt to define how immigration has affected and changed this city. We will examine the countries of origin of immigrants in Houston, look at recent shifts in population, and try to understand why Houston is an attractive destination for many immigrants.

This historical overview and analysis will not be the heart of the unit, but rather the building blocks. We will not devote a large amount of time to reading texts, analyzing charts and data, and memorizing facts. This is only an introduction to our unit. Through this introduction, students will be exposed to immigration trends and begin to define some of the issues related to immigration. The main focus of this unit will come from the students and their stories—each student will have the chance to share his own story and share in the stories of other students.

Having already heard pieces of these stories from the students and their families, I am able to anticipate the power that these narratives will have. There are the stories of students and their families who came to this country in search of the ‘American Dream.’ There are the stories of students who came here under more trying circumstances—those who came on foot, under cover of night, separated from family and loved ones. There are the stories of those who came seeking asylum, refugees who have seen war and murder and pain in their native countries. It is these stories which will shape the course of this unit. It is these stories which will inform students’ thinking and broaden their ideas more than any book or chart or statistic could.

Future—The Power of Relationships

Teenage immigrants are in a unique position to affect changing social relations. The choices they make, the people they come into contact with, and the relationships they develop (with other immigrants and with native born residents) will all affect the changing landscape of the city. Through this unit, I hope to encourage students to think critically about what their role can and will be in this dynamic future.

Race, language, and ethnicity are central questions for the issue of social dynamics. As Mobasher and Sadri state, “Racial and ethnic categories are social constructions rather than natural entities” (134). While this may be true, students’ actions are influenced by

these constructs. I am able to recognize patterns of interaction among my students, and these patterns are often defined by such constructs. Students tend to interact with other students who they perceive to be similar to themselves—usually students who share the same racial and linguistic background.

These same dynamics are also visible outside of the school community. A poignant passage from Sandra Cisneros' *The House on Mango Street* illustrates the importance of these imposed identities: "Those who don't know any better come into our neighborhood scared...But we aren't afraid...All brown all around, we are safe" (28). Once students are aware of these patterns, we will move toward questioning and challenging them. Students must be pushed to understand and examine these ideas, and then to determine how to move beyond them.

RATIONALE

I once heard the statement that the school curriculum should provide both mirrors and windows for all students. The idea behind this analogy is that students need mirrors in which to see themselves and their own experiences reflected in the school culture, and windows through which to gain insight and understanding into the lives and experiences of others who are in some way different. I believe this applies to my classroom and this curriculum unit in two important ways. First, and perhaps most importantly, "for children who are bilingual or from non-mainstream cultural backgrounds, the ability to relate new school knowledge to family ways of knowing is crucial so that learners don't end up having to deny their own backgrounds...in order to be a part of the school culture" (Kutz and Roskelly 115). If students see themselves within the school culture, they will not have to choose between two disparate worlds. Second, this type of sharing can help create a community of learners in which both similarities and differences are not only recognized but also celebrated. A primary goal of this unit is to help students validate their experiences, stories, and knowledge.

As previously mentioned, I work with middle school students. I feel that this unit is very appropriate for adolescent learners. These students are at an age and developmental stage where they are mainly focused on themselves and on the present moment. The three sections of this unit are designed to gradually help move students beyond that self-centered, short-sighted focus. In the first section of the unit, students will be asked to compare and contrast self (including knowledge, experiences, perceptions) and others. By the third section of the unit, students will be asked to think about their relationships with others.

The third section will also require students to focus on what the future holds. As immigrants entering United States schools at a late age, my students are considered high-risk for dropping out before completing high school. By prompting students to consider the future--to imagine where they will be in a year, in 5 years, in 10 years—I am

attempting to reduce that risk. I am encouraging students to plan for the future, to set goals, and to map out a concrete way to reach those goals.

Academically, this unit is a compilation of different aspects of the middle school social studies curriculum in the Houston Independent School District. The unit is correlated to TEKS objectives for all of the grade levels I teach (6th, 7th, and 8th). The primary focus will be on the TEKS culture strand, but other strands such as geography and citizenship will also be addressed. For 6th grade, the unit will address the following TEKS objectives: SS.6.15 The student understands the similarities and differences within and among cultures; SS.6.17 The student understands relationships that exist among world cultures; SS.6.3 The student uses maps, globes, graphs, charts, models, and databases to answer geographic questions; and others. For 7th grade, the unit will cover these objectives: SS.7.19 The student understands the concept of diversity within unity in Texas; SS.7.9 The student understands the location and characteristics of places and regions in Texas; SS.7.11 The student understands the characteristics, distribution, and migration of population in Texas in the 19th and 20th centuries; and others. For 8th grade, the following TEKS objectives will be met: SS.8.10 The student uses geographic tools to collect, analyze, and interpret data; SS.8.11 The student understands the location and characteristics of places and regions of the United States, past and present; and others. Because most of my students are in United States schools for the first time, I feel it will be extremely beneficial for them to have exposure to many different objectives across grade levels.

The content of this unit is particularly important for my students. Because of their background, these students are uniquely positioned to think about immigration issues. I believe it is extremely important for these students to have a chance to share and reflect on their experiences, as well as to hear the experiences of other students. Through this exchange I hope to promote comparisons and critical thinking, as well as understanding and tolerance.

PEDAGOGY

I plan to teach this unit in three sections, focusing on what the past, the present, and the future hold for recent teenage immigrants. The unit will last throughout the second semester (about 18 weeks), but I do not anticipate working on the unit every day during that time. I plan to teach one lesson per week and use Fridays as writers' workshop days. The different sections of the unit will not be given equal time—the first and second sections will take less time than the third section. The unit is also designed to be flexible and fluid—changes may be made in response to students' needs and/or interests.

The first part of the unit will span about five lessons. A two-lesson unit introduction will focus on the history of immigration in the United States. The next lesson will be devoted to immigration trends in the city of Houston. The final two lessons will focus on the personal immigration stories of the students.

The second section will cover about four lessons. During the first lesson, students will share their initial impressions of the city. The second lesson will include either a field trip (a tour of the city) or video clips and photographs of present-day Houston. The third lesson will focus on the different neighborhoods or barrios in the city, and the last lesson will offer students a chance to express their opinions and conceptions of the city.

The final section will encompass eight class periods. Students will spend two class periods examining patterns of interaction within the school, and two more class periods examining patterns of interaction in the surrounding community. The final three lessons will be dedicated to planning for the future, keeping in mind the importance of relationships and social interactions. This unit plan includes a total of sixteen lessons, leaving two class periods open in order to allow for changes and flexibility as the unit progresses.

As a whole, the unit will draw on students' personal experiences as background knowledge and then build on this knowledge as the unit progresses. I feel it is extremely important to both validate and critically examine the knowledge that students bring to the classroom. This can help all students, especially immigrant students who may not be familiar with the school structures and environment in the United States, to be successful. As Kutz and Roskelly point out:

Teachers need to understand the cultural environment they're asking students to enter. With this understanding, teachers can help students ease their way into the school environment, connect what they know from the world outside the classroom to what they find within it, and bring their various ways of knowing into the classroom and enrich the classroom world. (15)

Within this diverse, multicultural, multilingual class, there is a vast amount of knowledge waiting to be accessed.

Unit Overview

The first section of the unit will provide students with background information on the topic of U.S. immigration and present an opportunity for students' own stories to be introduced. The first lessons will be dedicated to exploring immigration in both the United States and the city of Houston. In later lessons students will tell their own stories and hear the stories of others. The importance of this sharing is highlighted by Christensen:

To develop, students need to learn about each other's lives as well as reflect on their own. When they hear personal stories, classmates become real instead of cardboard stereotypes. (7)

Breaking down these stereotypes will be especially important in later portions of the unit. I anticipate that this sharing will be done through writing, illustrations, and photographs. I would also like students to write poems about their native countries.

One idea for this section is to do a read aloud of Eve Bunting's *How Many Days to America?: A Thanksgiving Story*. I have used this book with students before, and find that it serves as a springboard from which students are inspired to tell their own stories. Students will also be introduced to the George Ella Lyon poem "Where I'm From." The poem uses the repeating pattern "I am from," which I feel could be used to help students write specific, detailed poems about their own backgrounds. This poem will serve as a model for students to write these poems and other poems later in the unit.

The second section of the unit will focus on the city of Houston. Students will share their impressions of Houston from the immigrant perspective, including first impressions and ways in which these initial ideas may (or may not) have changed. A possible field trip including a bus tour of Houston (which we have done with students in the past) could provide inspiration for this section of the unit. If a field trip is not a possibility, this portion of the unit may involve some research on the city. We will also look at the different neighborhoods around the city. Students will be asked to examine their own neighborhoods, thinking about who lives there, where they are from, what language or languages are spoken, what types of stores and restaurants are found there, etc. With this background information, students will share their views of the city. I anticipate that this will be done primarily through discussions and writing.

An idea for this section is for students to write poems (similar to those they will write about their native countries). The first poem was centered around the phrase "I am from;" this pattern will be changed to "now I live in." The two poems can then be juxtaposed to show similarities and differences between where students have been and where they are currently living.

The third section of the unit will be the longest and most challenging. This part of the unit is designed to encourage students to think about what the future may hold for them. As part of this section, we will focus on the interactions and relationships that students have within the school and the larger community. By analyzing these dynamics, students will be prompted to consider how they might change these interactions in order to make them more productive.

To begin this section, students will be given a questionnaire. This questionnaire will be designed to identify students' patterns of interaction within the school community. Questions may include: who are your 5 closest friends at school?; how many of these close friends are within our cluster group?; how many of these friends speak the same first language as you? By looking at the results of these questionnaires, we will be able to identify certain social dynamics within the school community. We will then look to the larger community to see whether these patterns hold constant. Once patterns have

been recognized, we will move to a more critical analysis. We will again start with the school community, brainstorming ways to facilitate positive interactions among diverse students. Finally, we will look towards the future. Students will be asked to define their plans for the future, and analyze these plans in terms of the impact they will have on community social interactions. I hope to facilitate critical thinking and encourage students to map out a path to follow in order to meet future goals. I imagine that this will be done through writing as well as through graphic organizers such as webs and flow charts.

Writers' Workshops

For the duration of this unit, I plan to hold writers' workshops each Friday. I intend for these workshops to be an integral part of the unit. Many of the planned lessons will consume a full class period (90 minutes), leaving little time for students to work independently on the various products and assignments. Therefore the writers' workshops will give students a chance to write, revise, draw, reflect, and engage in the creative process. For the teacher, this workshop time will be an opportunity to touch base with students. During this time, I may conference with students, offer suggestions about their work, and dedicate time to work individually with students requiring extra assistance. Over the course of the unit, each of my classes will have approximately nine writers' workshops—a significant block of time devoted to their work.

Final Product

Tentatively, I plan to culminate this unit by creating a class book for each of my different class periods. Because I anticipate students will produce several different pieces—including drawings/illustrations, poems, essays, webs, maps, etc.—throughout the unit, I will not include each and every work sample. Rather, I will help students reflect on the work they have done and select two or three pieces to include in the book. We will then compile the book into three different sections, with an introductory piece for each section (written by either myself or one of the students). The three sections of the class books will correspond to the three sections of the unit—where I've been, where I am, and where I'm going. By combining the stories and experiences of different students, I hope to create an accurate representation of the story of immigration. I intend to publish these books so that they can be shared with other students and teachers in the school.

CONCLUSION

This unit has been designed for implementation in a middle school social studies classroom in Houston, Texas. Lessons have been planned following an alternating block schedule, meaning that students have each class for 90 minutes every other day. The unit is tailored to the needs of recent immigrants who are simultaneously engaged in English as a second language classes. Although this is a very specific population, I imagine that this unit could easily be adapted for an elementary school ESL classroom or modified for

middle school students with a higher level of English proficiency. I also believe this unit could be beneficial if modified and used with non-immigrant students, or with a mixed group of immigrant and non-immigrant students.

The creation of this unit has been an intensely challenging, rewarding, and personal experience for me. Reflecting on my students, their specific needs, and my responsibilities to them has served to rejuvenate me and re-energize my teaching. I feel uniquely privileged to work with this group of students, and I hope that this unit—which has truly come from these students and my immense regard for them—will be useful and beneficial to other students and teachers.

LESSON PLANS

Lesson Plan One

This lesson will provide a brief historical overview of immigration trends in the United States. The primary goal of this lesson is to provide students with essential background knowledge which will serve as the foundation of the unit. Students will use this information to think critically about immigration issues.

TEKS Objectives

- SS.6.15 The student understands the similarities and differences within and among cultures.
- SS.6.3 The student uses maps, globes, graphs, charts, models, and databases to answer geographic questions.
- SS.8.11 The student understands the location and characteristics of places and regions of the United States, past and present.

Materials

- Graph showing the four waves of immigration, preferably on a transparency
- Computers with internet access
- Large sheets of white butcher paper
- Colored pencils, markers, crayons

Activities

The teacher will begin by showing students a transparency of the graph showing the four waves of immigration to the United States. (The graph can be created by the teacher according to the four waves of immigration mentioned in the narrative.) The teacher will lead a brief class discussion of this graph, prompting students to notice the four distinct periods of high immigration. During this discussion students will brainstorm countries of origin of immigrants in the various waves and list possible motivations for coming to the United States.

Following this introduction, students will be broken up into four groups. Each group will be given a computer with internet access and will be assigned to briefly research one of the four waves of immigration. Students will be directed to summarize the particular wave they are studying by answering questions related to the ‘5Ws’ (who, what, when, where, why, and how).

Each group will use the information they find to create a poster. The posters will include answers to the questions posed, as well as illustrations and maps. The groups will then share out, teaching their classmates about the wave of immigration which they have just researched.

The teacher will conclude the lesson by prompting students to make some basic comparisons about the different waves of immigration. This exercise will be a preview to the next lesson in which students will look at personal stories of immigrants from each of the four waves, and compare those experiences to their own.

Lesson Plan Two

This lesson is centered on the students’ personal stories and narratives. The primary goal of this lesson is to encourage students to reflect on their immigration experiences. Students will also hear the stories of their classmates.

TEKS Objectives

- SS.6.15 The student understands the similarities and differences within and among cultures.
- SS.6.3 The student uses maps, globes, graphs, charts, models, and databases to answer geographic questions.

Materials

- *How Many Days to America?: A Thanksgiving Story* by Eve Bunting
- “Where I’m From” by George Ella Lyon
- White Paper
- Colored Pencils, Markers, Crayons

Activities

The teacher will begin by doing a read-aloud of Eve Bunting’s picture book, *How Many Days to America?: A Thanksgiving Story*. This book tells the story of a group of people from the Caribbean who flee their home country and eventually arrive in the United States on Thanksgiving Day. After reading this story, the teacher will lead a discussion about student’s own experiences of immigrating to the United States. Possible topics for this discussion will be: how students arrived in the United States, when they arrived, how they felt at this time, etc.

Following this discussion, students will be asked to draw a picture to represent their initial journey from their native country to the United States. Accompanying this picture will be: a map showing the path taken, and a writing sample. The writing sample may vary in length (from a few sentences to a fully developed paragraph) depending upon individual student ability. To conclude the lesson, students will share the illustrations and writing they have done. Students will be encouraged to compare the experiences of their classmates with their own experiences, focusing on both similarities and differences. These ideas will be explored further in the next lesson.

Lesson Plan Three

This lesson focuses on the immigrants' destination or new environment, in this case Houston. The primary goal of this lesson is to prompt students to think about their current surroundings, and to reflect on their own impressions of the city. Students will also think about their particular neighborhood within the city.

TEKS Objectives

- SS.7.19 The student understands the concept of diversity within unity in Texas.
- SS.7.9 The student understands the location and characteristics of places and regions in Texas.
- SS.7.11 The student understands the characteristics, distribution, and migration of population in Texas in the 19th and 20th centuries.
- SS.8.11 The student understands the location and characteristics of places and regions of the United States, past and present.

Materials

- Map of Houston
- Pictures, Slides, and/or Video Clips of present-day Houston

Activities

The teacher will begin by showing students pictures, slides, or video clips of the city of Houston. The students will brainstorm a list of words to describe these pictures. The teacher will then lead a discussion about students' impressions of the city. This will be done through two brainstorming sessions: first, students will discuss their impressions of Houston upon their arrival; secondly, students will discuss their current impressions of the city.

The teacher will then give each student a copy of the poem he has previously (Lesson Plan Two) written about his native country. The teacher will explain that today students will be working on a similar poem about Houston. This poem will use the pattern "now I live," and students will complete the poem with words and phrases to describe the city of Houston. The teacher will model this with the whole class, and students will then begin work on their individual poems. To conclude the lesson, the teacher will ask for

volunteers to share the work they done so far on their poems. These poems may be completed as part of the next writers' workshop day.

Lesson Plan Four

This lesson represents the beginning of the third section of the unit (where I'm going). The primary goal is for students to begin to recognize and analyze patterns of interaction among students in the school community. Students should begin to question these patterns and think of ways to create more positive interactions in a diverse setting.

TEKS Objectives

- SS.6.17 The student understands relationships that exist among world cultures.
- SS.7.19 The student understands the concept of diversity within unity in Texas.

Materials

- Student questionnaire

Activities

The teacher will give all students a questionnaire. This questionnaire will be designed to highlight patterns of interaction among students in the school. Questions may include: who are your 5 closest friends at school?; how many of these close friends are within our cluster group?; how many of these friends speak the same first language as you?. Students should complete the questionnaire independently.

Once students have completed the questionnaire, the teacher will lead a class discussion. The idea is to prompt students to recognize their own patterns of interaction. To conclude the lesson, students will be asked to brainstorm at least three ways to improve interactions among the diverse students in the school. These ideas will form the basis for the next lesson.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Works Cited

Christensen, Linda. *Reading, Writing, and Rising Up*. Milwaukee, WI: Rethinking Schools, Ltd., 2000.

This book discusses use of a critical pedagogy in the English classroom. There are many references and teaching ideas in this book.

Cisneros, Sandra. *The House on Mango Street*. New York: Vintage Books (Random House), 1984.

Through a series of vignettes, this books tells the story of a Hispanic girl growing up in Chicago. I believe students will be able to identify with several sections of this book, including “My Name” and “Those Who Don’t.”

Houston Teachers Institute. *Program Handbook for 2004*. <<http://www.uh.edu/hti>>

Kutz, Eleanor and H. Roskelly. *An Unquiet Pedagogy: Transforming Practice in the English Classroom*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook Publishers (Heinemann), 1991.

This book discusses practices designed to promote critical literacy in the English classroom. This will be helpful for me as I seek to facilitate students’ exploration of their role in the future of our community and society.

Mobasher, Mohsen and Mahmoud Sadri. *Migration, Globalization, and Ethic Relations*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2004.

This book discusses in detail immigration theories, current research, trends in immigration, and implications for group relations. It has provided valuable background information for my unit.

Rodriguez, Nestor. “Economic Restructuring and Latino Growth in Houston.” In *In the Barrios*. Ed. Joan Moore and Raquel Pinderhughes. New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation, 1993.

The fifth chapter of this book, entitled “Economic Restructuring and Latino Growth in Houston,” discusses different neighborhoods within the city.

Teacher Resources

Rumbaut, R.G. and A. Portes. *Ethnicities: Children of Immigrants in America*. Berkeley, CA: U of California P, 2001.

This book contains sections on the “1.5 generation,” or children who immigrated to the United States along with their parents. These sections will help me to consider the unique position of my students.

Toohey, Kelleen. *Learning English at School: Identity, Social Relations, and Classroom Practice*. Buffalo: Multilingual Matters, 2000.

This book describes a longitudinal study of a group of children learning English in a Canadian school. This book will be particularly helpful in considering matters of identity construction as they relate to different pedagogical practices which may be employed when teaching this unit.

Resources for Students

Alarcon, Francisco. *Angels Ride Bikes and Other Poems*. San Francisco: Children's Book Press, 1999.

This is a collection of bilingual poems about the author's experiences growing up in Los Angeles. These poems will serve as references and examples for students.

Blum, Joshua, Bob Holman, and Mark Pellington. *The United States of Poetry*. New York: Harry N. Adams, 1996.

This book includes poems by authors from diverse racial and social backgrounds, including George Ella Lyon's poem "Where I'm From," which I plan to use as a model for students.

Bunting, Eve. *How Many Days to America?: A Thanksgiving Story*. New York: Clarion Books (Houghton Mifflin), 1998.

This is the story of a family from the Caribbean who immigrates to the United States, arriving on Thanksgiving Day. I will use this text with students as they prepare to tell their own stories.

Cohen, Barbara. *Molly's Pilgrim*. New York: William Morrow & Co., 1998.

This is the story of a young girl who emigrates from Russia and struggles to fit in. Students may be able to identify with the hardships this character faces.

Garza, Carmen. *Family Pictures: Cuadros de Familia*. San Francisco: Children's Book Press, 1993.

This book details the author's memories of growing up in a Hispanic community in Texas. Students may use this book to get ideas for telling their own families' stories.

Hoberman, Mary Ann. *My Song is Beautiful: Poems and Pictures in Many Voices, Vol. 1*. New York: Little, Brown, & Company, 1994.

This book is a multicultural anthology. It will be useful for students as they reflect on their own cultural experiences as well as the experiences of others.

In Their Own Voices: Teenage Refugees Speak Out. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Globe Fearon (Simon & Schuster).

This is a series of books telling the stories of teenage refugees from a variety of places, including Eastern Europe, Vietnam, Russia, and many others. I believe these books will be especially helpful for my refugee students as they write their stories.

Kuklin, Susan. *How My Family Lives in America*. New York: Simon & Schuster Children's, 1998.

This book tells about families' different cultural traditions. It may help students to reflect on the experiences of their own families, as well as to make comparisons with others from different backgrounds.

Leighton, Maxinne. *Ellis Island Christmas*. New York: Puffin, 1994.

This book tells the story of a young Polish girl who arrives at Ellis Island on Christmas Eve. I believe this book will help students place their immigration experiences in a larger social and historical context.

Levinson, Riki. *Soon, Annala*. New York: Orchard Books, 1993.

This is the story of a girl who has recently immigrated to the United States. She is waiting for her brothers to arrive, and learning English in the meantime. Many of my students are in similar situations, and may be able to relate to this character.

McGowan, Joe. "Coming to America." *Time For Kids, World Report Edition*, Vol. 9, No. 15: 2004.

This brief article relates the current wave of immigration to past trends. I think this will help students to understand the history of immigration in this country.

Williams, Karen. *When Africa Was Home*. New York: Orchard Books, 1994.

This is the story of an American family who lives in Africa for an extended time. Upon returning to the United States, they miss Africa and decide to move back. I believe this book will help students to see migration and immigration from another perspective.