

Immigration and Identity

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Migration.... tears families apart and reunites them. It destroys an ancient language and creates a new one. It makes what is far away near, and what is near far away.

-Rubén Martínez, *Crossing Over*

INTRODUCTION

It was not until after I graduated from high school that I began to develop a love for different cultures and foreign languages. In elementary school, I suppose I just wanted to be like everyone else. I dreaded the moments when I was made to feel different. This happened on occasion because my father's side of the family is from Hawaii. My classmates made fun of me by calling me by my middle name Keoni, which they knew I found embarrassing. I also remember them laughing at me when I showed the class a picture of my extended family and someone mentioned that my grandmother looked Chinese. I certainly did not learn as a boy to celebrate diversity or appreciate my unique cultural heritage. I was always willing to reject the unique bits of my cultural identity to fit in. I also believe my teachers were at fault for rarely teaching us about other cultures or to respect people's differences.

Ironically, after graduating from high school I applied to become a Rotary Exchange student and was accepted. I spent a year living in Germany with a host family and attending high school there. This was a wonderful time in my life. I discovered I had a knack for learning foreign languages quickly, traveled around Germany with other exchange students from all over the world, and learned to appreciate the differences and similarities between German culture and my own.

I returned to the U.S. and began to study foreign languages and Iberian and Latin American cultures at the University of Scranton in Pennsylvania. I traveled again to Europe, this time to Santiago, Spain to study at the city's university for one year. This experience proved to be as exciting and enriching as my time in Germany. After university, I received a Fulbright scholarship to investigate educational reform in the country of Guatemala. I lived for almost two years in a Mayan village in the country's highland region. There I worked as a consultant on a project funded by USAID to provide professional development to bilingual teachers in the region.

My experiences with other cultures form a fundamental part of my identity. I am proud of the fact that I am fluent in three languages. I have lived in places where life is very different from the one I grew up knowing, and I believe this has made me more tolerant and accepting of others. I became a bilingual teacher partly because I enjoy daily contact with people who speak other languages and whose cultural identity differs from

my own. As an educator, I believe it is my responsibility to teach my students to appreciate and be proud of their own personal identities and family histories, and it is with this in mind that this curriculum unit was created.

ACADEMIC SETTING

Houston is an ethnically diverse city that attracts immigrants from all over the world. I am a bilingual fourth grade teacher at Lantrip Elementary located in the East District of the Houston Independent School District (HISD). Our campus is located approximately two miles southeast of the center of Houston. The population who lives in the community that our school serves is predominantly Hispanic, and for many people Spanish is either their first language or the only language they speak. All of my students are native Spanish speakers. Some are recent immigrants to the U.S. with fresh memories of the journey from Mexico or El Salvador to the U.S.; others are children of immigrants and were born in the U.S. shortly after their parents arrived. Many of the parents and children in the community are legal residents; others are undocumented aliens.

As English Language Learners (ELL), my students struggle to comprehend the complex and abstract concepts that make up the fourth grade social studies curriculum. For this reason I select subjects that the students have background knowledge of and that interest them. This increases the likelihood that students will invest themselves in the subjects of study and will successfully accomplish the learning objectives of the unit (Chamot and O'Malley 256-279).

I have believed for a long time that the subject of immigration will make an excellent subject for a unit of study with my students, but I have avoided it in the past as I thought it would make my undocumented students uncomfortable and, therefore, unwilling to share in class discussions. This year, though, I realized this was an incorrect assumption.

In March of this year we read a text in class that briefly mentioned the Rio Grande – the river that forms part of the border between the U.S. and Mexico. When I asked if the students had heard of the river before, they immediately shifted the conversation to discuss immigration. Several students recalled crossing the river when going to Mexico to visit relatives, one described how his uncle crossed the river by swimming to avoid the border patrol, and then another explained how her father had crossed over in the trunk of a car. The students were very forthcoming with stories of personal experiences of immigration and were respectful of each other during the discussion.

I realized then that in a classroom, where the concept of respect for others is a rule that is accepted and practiced by the students, there are very few subjects that cannot be discussed. For this reason I plan to begin this unit after working with the students for a couple of months, which will give them the opportunity to become comfortable working and sharing with each other and with me.

UNIT OBJECTIVES

This unit is designed around two central objectives. First, the students will analyze four historical events: The Annexation of U.S. Southwest, The Mexican Revolution, The Great Depression, and World War II. The students will determine how each event affected immigration to the U.S. from Mexico and Central America or led to a change in immigration policies of the U.S. government. Second, the students will investigate how immigration and subsequent contact with two or more cultures shape an individual's identity.

Texas Essential Knowledge Objectives

The historical analysis section of the unit will focus on several fourth grade Social Studies curriculum objectives established by the Texas Education Agency (TEA). The students will analyze the impact of important issues and events on Texas, the U.S, and the ethnic groups that live in the U.S. southwest. The students will also construct and interpret maps from different periods in U.S. history. They will also analyze how limited resources such as land and jobs impact immigration, international relations, and relations between ethnic groups.

Activating Prior Knowledge

Before we begin this investigation, I will engage my students in several discussions about immigration to determine what they know, what they think they know, and what they would like to learn about the issue. We will create a KWL chart as a group to determine what we already know about immigration and what we would like to learn. I expect my students, for example, to already know that there are some people who immigrate to the U.S. legally and others who come here illegally, and that one reason these people come to the U.S. is to earn money.

I will then assist my students to ask appropriate questions to help guide our investigation. For example: What are other reasons for which people immigrate? Why doesn't the government set limits on the number of people who can come to the U.S.? As students share what they know, they will activate their prior knowledge of immigration. This work will also serve as an opportunity for me to peak their curiosity about the issue and thus interest them in completing the investigation. We will return periodically to the chart during the development of the unit to write down new knowledge we have gained in the L section of the chart.

Vocabulary

Most of the specific vocabulary words that my students will have to understand will be for the social studies section of this unit which will be conducted in English. Therefore, I

will develop the vocabulary section of the unit in that language. The following is an incomplete list of the vocabulary words the students will learn:

Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS), Immigration, Immigrant, Undocumented immigrant, Illegal immigrant, Documented immigrant, Migrant worker, Temporary worker, Labor, Policy, Shortage, Surplus, Demand, Deport, Civil war, Refugee, Culture, Identity, Tradition, Values, Holidays, Customs

In order to familiarize my students with these words and their definitions, I will employ a variety of strategies. To introduce my students to new words, I often write short stories that include several vocabulary words and their definitions within the context. I begin by writing the words I want the students to learn on the chalk board – usually between four and six words. Then, as I read the story, I stop periodically to ask students if they have heard any of the words on the board and if they can explain what they mean in their own words.

For example, I will write on the board the words immigrant, INS, and undocumented and then I will read to the class “Juan just moved from Guatemala to the U.S. with his mom so that she could find work. At school he has met immigrant children from all over the world like his new friend Esteban who is from Mexico. Esteban tells Juan that he is nervous because his family is undocumented and he worries that if the INS catches his father he and his family will be sent back to Mexico. Juan tells him not to worry because his neighbor is also undocumented, but they have lived here in the U.S. for over 10 years.” At this point I will stop reading and ask students to tell me if they heard any of the words written on the board, how the word was used in the story, and finally what they think the word means. We will then write down the word and their definitions.

On other occasions, the students will underline vocabulary words in the stories we will read and use context clues or dictionaries to define them. To familiarize themselves with these vocabulary words and their correct use, the students will also complete matching activities, cross-word puzzles, and be expected to use the words correctly during class discussions and in their writing.

SECTION I: HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

Timeline

As previously explained, the students will interpret four events in U.S. history to determine how each one affected immigration to the U.S and Mexican American populations in the U.S. Before we begin our readings we will create a large timeline across one of the walls of the class with the title “History of the United States.” The first date on the timeline will be 1776 and will be titled, “U.S. wins independence from England.” The timeline will end with the date 2004. As we conclude our investigation of each event the students will add the date of the event to the timeline along with a

sentence long summary of what is the event and one or two important consequences of the event. This timeline will assist students in placing these events into historical context, and we will periodically use the timeline to review the events we have already studied and what we have learned from them. Later, I will use the information gathered for the timeline to create an end of unit assessment to determine what my students have learned from our investigation.

Methodology

The method for studying each historical event will be essentially the same. First, I will introduce the event to students by asking a question or giving some background information. Then we will investigate the events using expository text to determine what the important event is, what caused the event to take place, and what the important effects of the event were. The students will organize this information using various cause and effect graphic organizers to assist their understanding of the event and its importance. Finally, we will place the event on our timeline before proceeding with the next event.

The First Mexican Americans

A Brief History

The first Mexican Americans did not to move to the United States – rather the U.S. came to them. Much of the land that makes up the U.S. southwest originally belonged to Mexico and when the U.S. annexed this territory, it also acquired the region’s inhabitants. In 1821, when Mexico won its independence from Spain, its territory included the region that is today Texas, New Mexico, Utah, Nevada, Arizona, California, and part of Colorado. During the 1820s and 1830s many white settlers moved from the north to Texas and in doing so became Mexican citizens. As more and more whites began to move to the region, tension began to mount between the settlers and the Mexican government. Disagreement over issues such as slavery (the settlers supported it and the Mexican government had outlawed it) did not help ease this tension. In 1836, the white settlers formed a militia and fought the Mexican Army for control of the region. With support from the U.S. government, the settlers won and declared the region an independent republic. Then, in 1845, the territory was annexed by the U.S. and became the state of Texas.

In 1846 sporadic fighting between Mexican and U.S. soldiers along a disputed border region of south Texas served as a justification for the U.S. to declare war on Mexico. After two years of bloodshed, U.S. forces entered Mexico City and Mexico surrendered shortly after. The treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo, signed between the governments of the U.S. and Mexico in February 1848, cost Mexico approximately half of its territory (Zinn 150-69).

A consequence of this conquest was that the Mexican citizens who inhabited the region that was lost by Mexico, approximately 75,000 people living mostly in Arizona and New Mexico, became the first Mexican-Americans (Brandon 8-10). They migrated to the region long before white settlers began to arrive and before the territory became a part of the U.S. Once Texas was annexed by the United States, more and more white settlers moved to the state slowly forcing Spanish speaking inhabitants off the fertile regions of the northern part of the state to the desert-like areas of the south.

Student Investigation

To begin this investigation the students will create a U.S. map from 1830 marking the territory that belonged to the U.S. and to Mexico. The students will then compare the map they have created to a recent map of the U.S. and Mexico to determine which current U.S. states originally belonged to Mexico. I will then ask students to predict what caused this change to take place.

The students will then read historical expository text to determine what caused Mexico to lose so much of its territory to the U.S. and what effect this event had on the people of this region. The students will begin by reading the sections of the fourth grade Social Studies adoption regarding the event. They will also read sections of Lila Perl's book *North Across the Border: The Story of the Mexican Americans* that chronicles these events (21-25).

After completing our reading, the students will be expected to identify the growing number of white settlers in the region and tension between settlers and the Mexican government and the U.S. government's desire for more territory as causes of wars that led to the annexation of the region. Students will also determine the effects of this event: the Mexican citizens of the region become U.S. citizens and more and more whites move to the southwest.

The Mexican Revolution

A Brief History

At the turn of the century, life in Mexico had become unbearable for the majority of the country's population. By 1910, over 90 percent of the peasantry had been dispossessed of its land and forced to live in a system of debt peonage working on plantations owned by a small very wealthy elite (Rochfort 11-15). Political control was in the hands of the despotic dictator Porfirio Díaz, who had dominated Mexico's political life and influenced every facet of Mexican society since his rise to power 30 years earlier.

This extreme social injustice led to revolution. Under the charismatic leadership of men like Emiliano Zapata and Francisco "Pancho" Villa, revolutionary armies fought government troops for control of the country. In 1911, Porfirio Díaz, sensing that his rule was over, abandoned the country and set sail for Europe where he lived the rest of his life

in exile. Meanwhile competing armies fought the government and each other for control of the country in an ever increasingly fierce conflict. Over one million people had been killed by the end of the revolution in 1917.

During these years of fighting, thousands of Mexicans fled to the U.S. side of the border. Many of these refugees returned to their homeland once the conflict ended; others remained in the U.S. Similar events took place in Central America. During the 1970s and 1980s extreme social inequalities gave rise to guerrilla armies, civil war, dictatorships, government repression, death squads, and civilian massacres in Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Honduras. The violence suffered by the populations of these countries reached staggering levels. For example, in Guatemala, during 1982, just one year of that country's thirty year civil war, the government's counterinsurgency campaign killed 75,000 people mostly civilians, completely destroyed over 440 villages in the Highlands, and displaced over one million refugees (Schirmer 1). Hundreds of thousands fled these countries and many ended up as refugees, asylum seekers, or illegal immigrants in the U.S.

Student Investigation

To begin this investigation, I will ask students why they think people immigrate to the U.S. The students should identify the search for jobs as one factor and may or may not be able to identify other factors. After our discussion, I will direct students that one of our objectives from now on is to search for other impetuses of immigration while we continue our investigation.

To learn about the Mexican Revolution, the students will again read from the social studies textbook and also the relevant passages in *North Across the Border*. Students will also read "El Largo Camino," a story in our reading adoption. This work of historical fiction chronicles the life of a young boy who is forced to immigrate to the U.S. from Nicaragua with his mother when his village is destroyed and his father is killed by the army. This story will also provide background information for the identity section of this unit as it will help my students understand how immigration and contact with different cultures changes an individual's identity.

After completing our readings, the students will describe events that led to the Mexican Revolution and identify the immigration of thousands of people to the U.S. from Mexico as one of its effects. The students will explain the difference between an immigrant and a refugee. Paul Rutledge defines immigrants as people who migrate from one geographical location to another because of a personal choice (9). Refugees, however, are forced to migrate to an unknown destination. (Rutledge 10).

The Great Depression

In 1929 the U.S. Stock Market crashed and took the nation's economy with it. Over 5,000 banks closed and industrial production fell by 50 percent. In the subsequent years

millions of Americans lost their jobs, and by 1933 the number of unemployed citizens was estimated at 15 million – approximately one-fourth to one-third of the labor force (Zinn 386).

The result of this was a huge labor surplus. People became less selective in the kind of work they were willing to do. Even underpaid work such as seasonal farm labor, previously held by migrant workers from Mexico, became highly sought after by U.S. citizens. The government determined that the migrant workers from Mexico were no longer needed and so they were rounded up and deported. Thousands of Mexicans were collected, placed on truck beds, and simply deposited over the border. Many of those deported were not even from Mexico, but were descendants of the Spanish speaking inhabitants of the Southwest who had been living there since the region had been a part of Mexico a century ago.

Student Investigation

Students will read pages 53-57 of *North Across the Border* to learn about the Great Depression and its consequences for immigrants. This section includes a photo of a flatbed truck loaded with deportees bound for Mexico. The words “Houston, Texas” are clearly visible on the side of the vehicle. Students will then determine what caused the vast amount of economic hardship in the U.S. at this time and that the effect of this hardship was the forced deportation of Mexican immigrants and Mexican Americans living in U.S. territory.

World War II

Less than a decade after thousands of Mexicans and Mexican Americans were deported from the U.S., they were once again needed when the U.S. entered the Second World War. As thousands of American men and women were sent to fight in Europe and Asia, thousands of vacancies were created in the agricultural and industrial sectors. Workers were also needed for newly created factories producing war time goods.

The U.S. Congress began to pass laws that allowed workers from Mexico to enter the U.S. temporarily to harvest crops and to work in factories for the duration of the war. Over two million Mexicans entered the U.S. during the mid 1940s to meet the labor demands of the U.S. wartime economy (Press 22-26). After the war, many of these seasonal workers continued to enter the U.S. annually to work on farms. Others, especially those who worked in the industrial sectors of the U.S. economy, returned to Mexico after the war.

Student Investigation

To introduce this event, I will remind students that we learned in our last investigation that labor shortages led to the U.S. government’s decision to deport thousands of

Mexican immigrants and Mexican Americans during the Great Depression. I will then ask them to hypothesize what factors or events would cause the government to ask for those workers to return.

To investigate the effect of the Second World War on U.S. immigration policy from Mexico the students will again read from *North Across the Border*. The short passage contained on pages 58 and 59 briefly describes this event and contains a picture of approximately twenty female Mexican laborers posing next to a locomotive they had built. The students will identify labor shortages brought about due to U.S. involvement in World War II as the main event. They will also be able to explain how this led to the government's decision to allow Mexican workers to enter the U.S.

Role Play Assessment

As we conclude our investigation of each event the students will participate in role play activities in which they assume the identities of people who represent the different groups involved in the event we have completed studying and act out what happened. For example, to dramatize the Mexican Revolution student volunteers will impersonate Emiliano Zapata, a revolutionary soldier, a federal soldier, Mexican peasants, and a U.S. border guard. The other students will help the volunteers out by determining what events should be portrayed and in what order as well as what the actors should say. Once the students are done guiding the volunteers through the events, the actors will try to act out the events without their help. This experience will allow students to retell the events we are investigating and for me to determine how well the students comprehend what they have read and analyzed.

SECTION II: IDENTITY

Background

While the students are investigating the four historical events in English during social studies class, they will also read about or investigate the relationship between cultural and personal experiences and identity.

As immigrants or children of recent immigrants, my students will develop a unique cultural identity that draws from the two cultures to which they are exposed. Unfortunately, very often these students are pressured to form a negative opinion of their home culture. This pressure can be applied by peers, teachers, and even parents who may view cultural traditions, values and languages as commodities that should be transferred to more useful ones rather than as parts of one's identity that can coexist (Igoa 44). Often, as in my case, a child is afraid of being labeled as different and therefore "uncool" and will therefore discontinue speaking his native language and become embarrassed by his home culture.

A bilingual child must learn to overcome this pressure to conform and maintain his acceptance and understanding of his home culture as he learns to live and function within another. Only this way can the child benefit from the personal enrichment of speaking two languages and intimately understanding two cultures. But my students, in general, are not yet strong enough to disregard the opinions of their peers. They still depend on the acceptance of their peers, family, and friends. For this reason it is necessary that as a group we explore the subject of identity and as a group discuss feelings and opinions on the issue, slowly developing and evolving a healthy and respectful understanding of it.

Unit Objectives for Identity Study

The identity section of this unit will consist of reading texts in both Spanish and English and writing assignments in both languages. This section of the unit will focus on three objectives established for the fourth grade by TEA. The students will share readings and participate in discussions in a respectful manner and will accept and appreciate other points of view. The students will compare text events with his or her own experiences. The students will also write for personal expression selecting the appropriate voice and style to make writing effective and meaningful.

Methodology

As we begin to explore different events in U.S. history that affected immigration during our social studies block, the students will start to read the novel *Esperanza Renace* in our reading class. This work of historical fiction tells the story of Esperanza, who begins her life as a privileged member of Mexico's land-owning elite of the early 20th century. When her father is murdered, Esperanza and her mother are forced to immigrate to the U.S. to work in a migrant camp in California. Through its rich narrative, the story brings to life historical events such as the Mexican Revolution and the deportation of Mexicans and Mexican Americans during the Great Depression as well as the experiences of Mexican migrants in the U.S.

Once students have immersed themselves in *Esperanza Renace*, we will begin to read other fictional and non-fictional texts about the experiences of immigrant children who have come to the U.S. from Mexico and other countries and regions of Latin America. The texts we will read include: *My Diary from Here to There. Mi diario de aquí hasta allá*, by Amada Irma Pérez; *Hector Lives in the United States Now*, by Joan Hewett; sections of *Voices From the Fields: Children of Migrant Farm Workers Tell Their Stories*, by Beth Atkin; and passages from Esmerelda Santiago's autobiography *When I was Puerto Rican*.

The students will read about these characters and people and will compare and contrast their experiences to those of Esperanza using summaries and graphic organizers such as Venn diagrams. We will also discuss and write about how these characters and people change as they move from their home countries to begin a new life in the U.S.

Culture and Identity

The students will also develop their understanding of the terms culture and identity. We will use the Webster's College Dictionary definition of culture: the ideas, customs, skills, and arts of a people or group that are passed along to succeeding generations. The students will give examples of what they consider components of culture such as foods, holiday traditions, language, and music and compare and contrast qualities of two different cultures to gain a better idea of what culture entails.

To help my students comprehend identity, I will bring in different kinds of music (hip hop, ranchero, classical, pop rock, etc.) and ask students to tell me who they think would listen to each kind. I will especially focus on the fact that anyone may listen to and enjoy each type of music although we may associate it with a particular group of people. Finally, I will explain to the students that the components of culture that we associate with or like make up our identity. These include language, religion, foods, music, art, traditions, skills, customs, and beliefs. I will also explain that as a person immigrates, his identity also changes over time as he is exposed to a new culture. We will use this new concept to describe the characters and people we have read about in class.

Writing Assignments

After students have analyzed several immigrant stories, they will begin to compare and contrast themselves and their own families' stories of immigration to the stories we have read in class. The students will begin this work by writing a series of short response essays to questions based on the readings. To avoid making a student feel uncomfortable by having to share something they do not want to or because they may have nothing to say about a particular prompt, I will give them at least two choices for each essay. For example, after reading a story about a young boy who recently immigrated to the U.S., the students may choose to write about what they believe are typical changes a person goes through when moving from one country to another or if they may make a more personal connection to the story by writing about a time they felt like the boy and describe the circumstances of this personal experience.

Photo Essays

As a culmination of the reading and writing section of this unit the students will participate in a photo essay project titled "One week in our neighborhood." The students will first purchase and bring in disposable cameras. The students will use the cameras to take pictures of examples of culture from their community. Before they begin, we will discuss possible subjects for pictures such as stores, signs, church, parties, family, food, and music. True to the project's title, the students will have one week to shoot the roll and bring it back to class at which time I will develop the films.

Once the rolls have been developed, the students will work in groups to select two or three of the best pictures from the roll. These will be selected based on the quality of the picture as well as its subject. The students will then draft, revise, edit, and publish descriptive essays about each of their selected pictures. Each essay will explain what the subject of the picture is, why the subject is important or interesting to the student, and how the subject is an example of community culture.

Once the students complete their essays, we will publish them in a class book and invite parents to a class reading of the essays. This event will have several purposes. First, it will give parents an opportunity to participate in their child's learning by listening to their essays and seeing their work. Second, it will motivate the students to produce more eloquent, coherent, and meaningful compositions. Finally, it will serve as the final event of the unit.

LESSON PLANS

Lesson One

This lesson will serve as an introduction to our study of the Mexican American War. The students will create a map of the U.S. and Mexico from the year 1820 and compare it to a current map of these two countries. The goal of this lesson is to give students a clear visual impression of how the U.S. has changed during its history and to get them to begin thinking about why this change took place.

To begin this lesson, I will explain that in many ways a country is like a person. For example, a country has a birthday. We celebrate the birthday of the United States on July fourth. Like people, countries also sometimes grow. Today we will create maps of the U.S. from the year 1830 to see how it has changed from then to now.

The students will form groups of three, and one student from each group will come forward to pick up the necessary materials: a blank map of the current continental territory of the United States and Mexico with current national and state boundaries marked, an atlas containing a current political map of the U.S. and Mexico, crayons, and a worksheet with instructions and questions.

The students will follow directions to create a political map of the U.S. and Mexico from 1830 that includes a title, national boundaries, and a key. This map will appear different from the current one as the territory that now makes up the U.S. states of Texas, New Mexico, California, Colorado, Arizona, Utah, and Nevada at that time belonged to Mexico.

Once the maps have been completed, the students will compare their map of the U.S. and Mexico from 1830 to the current one found in their atlases. They will work together in groups to answer the following questions: Why does the U.S. look different today than

it did in 1830? Was Mexico bigger in 1830 or today? Make a prediction: What caused this region to change from being a part of Mexico to being a part of the U.S.?

Once students have completed making their maps and answering the explorer questions, we will review the activity as a group and discuss their answers. In the following lessons, the students will explore the causes of the Mexican American War and the War for Texas independence and what consequences these wars had on the people who lived in this region.

Lesson Two – Fitting in: Andrea Martinez

After reading to the section of *Esperanza Renace* that deals with the main character's adjustment to life in the U.S. as a migrant worker, the students will begin to read other immigrant stories. In *Voices From the Fields: Children of Migrant Farm Workers Tell Their Stories*, author Beth Atkin chronicles the experiences of several migrant worker children who moved with their families to California from Mexico. In this lesson we will read the section titled "Fitting in: Andrea Martinez" and compare her story to that of Esperanza.

Due to the level of difficulty of the text in English, we will read and discuss this story as a whole group. As we read the passage, I will ask the students to point out differences and similarities between Andrea's and Esperanza's experiences. We will also focus on the special challenges Andrea faces as a Zapotec Indian who was unable to even speak Spanish upon arriving in the U.S. and for this reason could not even make friends with other Mexicans at her school.

Once the students have finished reading Andrea's story they will work in small groups to complete a Venn diagram comparing and contrasting Andrea and Esperanza. We will then discuss their observations as a group. Finally, the students will complete a journal entry in their social studies notebooks addressing the following prompt: Imagine Andrea were a student in this class. How would she feel here? How would the other students treat her? Why? What could you do to make her feel more comfortable here? The students will be invited to share their entry with the class.

Lesson Three – Identity

In order to discuss how exposure to different cultures can shape who we are the students will need to understand the concept of identity. In the following lesson the students will establish a classroom identity.

To introduce the lesson, I will bring in several kinds of music to play for the students. This will include selections from Los Tigres del Norte (ranchero), Outkast (rap/ hip hop) Shakira (Latin pop), Mozart (Classical), Backstreet Boys (boys band/ pop music). I will ask students to tell me what kind of people they think listen to each kind of music. It will

be important to make it clear to the students that a person could enjoy only one, some, all, or none of the songs that we play. This will help them to grasp the idea that person's identity does not consist of one thing or the other. A person can speak two languages and enjoy two or more kinds of music.

I will explain to the students that the kind of music a person likes tells something about him. An individual's identity is made up of the things we like do, believe, and think; it is who we are and what makes us unique. We may share parts of our identity with others like the language we speak or the kinds of food we enjoy, but no two identities are exactly the same because no two people are exactly the same. Although we may not have the same identity as another person, it is important that we respect other peoples' ways of being just as we expect other to respect our own.

The students will discuss what other things than taste in music make up identity. Answers will likely include sports, religion, language, food, etc. The students will then work together to establish a classroom identity. They will have to agree on three things we all like, we all do, we all are, and we don't like. It will be important to precede this work with a reminder of the class rules of respectful interaction and dialogue. In subsequent lessons the students will establish their own identities and share them with the class or with a partner.

CONCLUSION

Often we teacher avoid the very topics that most need to be discussed in class, possibly because we fear embarrassing our students or because we are unsure of how to approach the subject in an appropriate and respectful manner. Although we should be mindful of these issues as we plan our lessons and teach, they should not deter us from our obligations as educators to guide our students to become good citizens of their communities, country, and world. To do this, we must explore issues such as identity, respect, acceptance, diversity, and multiculturalism with our students. We must also guide our students to become critical analysts of both current and historical events. They must learn to know more than what just happened but also why and the consequences of the event.

This unit is structured around these two important learning objectives. It is my hope that by teaching it to my students, they will learn to be more tolerant of themselves and others and to interpret the world around them in a more critical and sophisticated way.

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The story of a young boy becomes a refugee and moves to the U.S. with his mother after his village is destroyed by the army.
- Igoa, Cristina. *The Inner World of the Immigrant Child*. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1995.
A teacher's resource for working with immigrant children. Describes typical stages as a child adjusts to life in new country and suggests strategies for helping students feel more comfortable and to teach them.
- Martinez, Ruben: *Crossing Over: A Mexican Family on the Migrant Trail*. New York: Metropolitan Books, 2001.
A story of migrant families from a village in Mexico told from both sides of the border. Provides excellent background information for educators on the challenges and experiences of migrants from Mexico and Central America.
- Perl, Lila. *North Across the Border: The Story of Mexican Americans*. New York: Benchmark Books, 2002.
Historical text describing the experiences of Mexican immigrants from 1900 to present.
- Rochfort, Desmond. *Mexican Muralists: Orozco, Rivera, and Siquieros*. Hong Kong: Chronicle Books, 1993.

The story of the Mexican muralist movement of the early twentieth century. Includes information about Mexican Revolution and other sources of inspiration for the muralists. Useful for teachers to gain background information of Mexican artistic movements, culture, and history.

Rutledge, Paul. *The Vietnamese Experience in America*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992.

Schirmer, Jennifer. *The Guatemalan Military Project: A Violence Called Democracy*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998.
Analysis of the structure of the Guatemalan military, its relationship with the country's government and its people.

Zinn, Howard. *A People's History of the United States 1492- Present*. New York: Harper Collins, 2003.
Detailed analysis of major events in U.S. history. Useful source of background information for educators.

Teaching Resources

Amparano, Julie. *America's Latinos: Their Rich History, Culture, and Traditions*. Minnesota: The Child's World, 2003.
Describes different Spanish speaking communities that reside in the U.S. and make up Hispanic population. Useful for explaining what the term Hispanic refers to and to give a general background the different cultures that make up the ethnic group. Also contains biographies of several famous Hispanic- Americans.

Catalano, Julie. *The Mexican Americans*. New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1996.
Describes the contributions of Mexican Americans to the United States and Canadian culture.

Garver, Susan; McGuire, Paula. *Coming to North America: from Mexico, Cuba, and Puerto Rico*. New York: Delacorte Press, 1981.
The stories of different immigrant groups that have come from Spanish speaking countries in Latin America to make their home in the U.S.

Herrera, Juan Felipe. *Laughing out Loud, I Fly: Poems in English and Spanish*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1998.
A collection of children's poems that combine Spanish and English. Provides starting point for discussion of cultural mixing

Hewett, Joan. *Hector Lives in the United States Now: The Story of a Mexican-American Child*. New York: Lippincott, 1990.

Text and photographs document the day-to-day happenings and milestones in the life of a young Mexican boy whose family moves to the U.S.

Martinez, Elizabeth Coonrod. *The Mexican-American Experience*. Brookfield, Conn.: Millbrook Press, 1995.

A collection stories describing the different experiences of Mexican Americans living in the U.S.

Pérez, Amada Irma. *My Diary from Here to There. Mi diario de aquí hasta allá*. San Francisco: Children's Book Press, 2002.

A young girl describes her feelings when as she and her family move from Mexico to the United States. This is a beautifully illustrated story and the text appears on each page in both Spanish and English.

Press, Petra. *Cultures of America: Mexican Americans*. New York: Marshall Cavendish Corporation, 1995.

A fourth or fifth grade level appropriate text that chronicles life of Mexican Americans in the U.S. covering issues such as immigration, culture and religion, and traditions.

Ryan, Pam Muñoz. *Esperanza Renace*. New York: Scholastic Press, 2000.

The story of a young Mexican girl who is forced to emigrate to the U.S. with her mother due to poverty and persecution in her homeland. Once in the U.S. she and her mother work as migrant laborers on farms in Southern California.

Santiago, Esmerelda. *Almost a Woman*. New York: Vintage Books, 1999.

The sequel of *When I was Puerto Rican*. Chronicles the author's teenage years as she graduates from High School and goes on to college.

_____. *When I was Puerto Rican*. New York: Vintage Books, 1997.

The autobiography of the experiences of a girl born in Puerto Rico who moves with her family to New York City at the age of 12.