

WHAT BROUGHT YOU HERE?

Level: middle school/6th grade

Course: Spanish, language arts

Rationale

Immigration has been a part of the world forever. This phenomena continues for a variety of reasons today. We border Mexico and have many immigrants from Mexico and Central America. Their reasons for immigrating are many and not always presented by the media in the best light. American students need to know the various reasons that so many Latin Americans are leaving their countries and see the need to compel it in a finished product for the world. One way to find this information is to gather it through interviews and oral history.

Lesson Overview

Students will study immigration from Latin American countries and the statistics that are known, using the Internet and written material. A foundation will be built about understanding immigration, then students will pair up and interview local immigrants or do Internet interviews to compile the data. The culminating activity will be a public evening of reading, sharing with the interviewees present or sending a hard copy of the final product.

An alternative culminating activity would be to produce a show on public access TV, using the information gathered, either as a newscast or possibly role playing repeated situations that were sited as reasons to leave a Latin American country for another country.

by
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Objectives

- * Students will become aware of the immigration situation from Latin America to the United States and other countries and why.
- * Students will use the interview techniques to gather information.
- * Students will assimilate the gathered data into a finished product.
- * Students will present the gathered data in a variety of modalities: orally, written.

Time Needed

This project will take 2 weeks to introduce the students to the topic of immigration, 3 weeks to do the interviews, 3 weeks to assimilate the data, and 2 weeks to produce a finished product—total 9-10 weeks.

Materials

- * Tape recorders
- * Computer, modem, CD-ROM player, printer
- * Research materials: Internet, CD's of encyclopedias and other sources, books, magazines
- * Maps of Latin America
- * Hand-outs: Interview questions, Key words, Letter to parents, Permission form granting usage of information from interview

Procedures

Introduction: Immigration of Latin Americans

Prior to this project, I will post on the Internet, on the IECC discussion list and at a variety of other places, the need for people who have left Latin America who would be willing to be interviewed. They need to know that this can be done anonymously. Also I will post our request in the local newspapers and on local public. In addition, I will talk to local nursing homes and senior citizen centers for volunteers. And as a backup, if I get no response because the people feel threatened to do this, I can allow my students to interview Mexican relatives and friends to fill in the gap.

Week 1, Day 1

1) Anticipatory set: I will read a scenario to the students to start the class: "Suddenly last night your whole world changed. The president has been shot and killed, and a group of militant leaders have taken over your country. You belong to the group that supported the president, and these new leaders demand that you give them your home. They send rough policemen-looking people to your house at midnight, awaken you and tell you that you have to leave. All you can take with you is what you can fit into one suitcase the size of a briefcase. You must try to choose from all the things you own. What would you take?" Answer that question in your writing journal and describe how this might make you feel. Give the students time to answer, then discuss what they wrote and thought.

- 2) Write on the blackboard the question, "Why are you here in the United States, in Albuquerque, New Mexico?" and ask them to answer it in their writing journals. We will discuss this question and then I will ask, "Why did your parents or grandparents or great-grandparents come to the United States?" We will discuss that. Then I will ask a more general question: "Why do people from any place come here? Why do people move from their homelands? We're all immigrants to America except for the Native American."
- 3) Divide into groups of 3-4 brainstorming these questions. Write answers down on newsprint, having the students divide up the sheet of newsprint into 4-5 sections for each question and put up the sheets around the room. Give students 7 minutes to do this activity.
- 4) Show students a map, identifying Latin America and ask specifically why people come here from there. Brainstorm reasons on the blackboard. (This is good opportunity to see if students have any understanding at all of why people leave a Latin American country.)
- 5) Give students hand-out of Key Words, from Why Do People Move? curriculum (by SPICE, Stanford University). Have students look up words, but discuss as you go, assigning a word to two students to look up together. Make an overhead transparency of the list and let students come to the overhead and write down the definition when they find the word. This way dictionary work doesn't have to be so laborious.
- 6) Homework: Have students take one word and draw it at home tonight. Also have an introductory letter ready for parents to sign so they know what their students will be studying in this unit.

Day 2

Continue the discussion from yesterday about immigration. Make a collage of the drawings done the night before. Search the Internet and resources for statistics.

Day 3

Discuss statistics and search more for statistics. Post all findings up on newsprint around the room, classifying it somehow—by country or by reason for leaving.

Day 4

Introduce students to magazines, Internet, books about people who have immigrated to the US from Latin America, example—I, Rigoberta Mench'u: An Indian Woman in Guatemala. Tell students they will receive extra credit for bringing in resources identifying immigrants.

Day 5

Watch film "We Are Guatemalans" and discuss the reasons these people were forced to leave Guatemala for Mexico and why they went back.

Week 2

Continue gathering data using the Internet and other research sources. Start discussing interview methods. Use as a model the Migration History Questionnaire from *Why Do People Move?* curriculum.

Watch film "If the Mango Tree Could Speak" and discuss the problems these children face. Have students note the interviewers' techniques used in this film.

Have students practice interviewing each other, staff in school, and family members. Finish up finalizing who will interview whom. Have two students per interviewee. Also have extra people lined up to interview.

Train students how to do the interviews on the Internet. (There are two possibilities: 1) Upload a questionnaire so the interviewee can answer it and then the students will have a hard copy of the interview, but no interaction between them and the interviewee and 2) a phone conference with the interviewee and the two students. The hard part of this is that the students will have to be able to type.

Weeks 3, 4, 5

Conduct the interviews, allowing students to use classroom time. This part will be successful only if your students have people to interview and they are prepared to do the interviews. Always have back-up people to interview. Interviews on Internet will be a great way to go, but the students need to be trained.

Weeks 6, 7, 8

Students will assimilate the data. Decide as a class how the data should be organized: by country or by reason for moving. Students will type up their data on computers and save as ASCII or text files so the information can be used in a variety of ways when finally produced.

Weeks 9, 10

Students will produce a finished product. Provide them a variety of ways to do the culminating activity.

Follow-Up Activities

These culminating activities will allow students to synthesize the information gathered and respond to a critical issue in our world today.

- * A book containing facts, stories, interviews, poetry, drawings, songs.
- * A play or skits depicting the reasons for moving.
- * Oral presentations of speeches, poetry, stories.
- * A production for the public access TV in the form of a newscast or skits or a play.
- * An evening presentation for the community, parents, and interviewees.
- * Do a display at a local museum or library.
- * Parents will be encouraged to be involved in this project by participating if they are immigrants from a

Latin American country. Also parents will be invited to participate in the preparation of the book and to help out in rehearsing the speeches, plays or skits.

Interdisciplinary Approach

- * Social studies teacher studying Latin America at the same time, emphasizing the immigration issue from Latin American countries. Students will become familiar with the geography of Latin American countries and how that impacts the immigration issue.
- * Literature teacher reading Latin American literature with students about immigration and problems that lead to immigration.
- * Art teacher have students do artistic interpretation of the struggle that goes on prior to leaving a homeland in response to readings or interviews.
- * Physical Education teacher demonstrates some of the Latin American dances and music and teaches some of the dances, comparing and contrasting individual country's styles. The teacher could talk about the influence of Latin American dance and music in America today because of immigrants bringing them to the United States with them. Also the teacher could discuss the importance of music and dance to the Latin American cultures.
- * Home economics teacher discusses the differences in clothing and style for Latin Americans coming to the United States. Students could examine why Guatemalan women wear huipiles and what the colors and decoration signify. Students could also look at the influx of Latin American food on the American market.
- * Industrial Arts teacher makes folk art crafts from Latin America, comparing and contrasting individual country's styles.
- * Math teacher shares the challenges immigrants face in coming to a new country. For example, the teacher could show the value of the peso and quetzal compared to the dollar and figure living expenses for a month. Students could figure the mileage for how far it is from certain Latin American countries to Mexico or the United States and figure how many days it takes to walk, drive, or fly. Students could discuss which of these means of transportation is more realistic to the immigrant.
- * Science teacher shows the population density of the Latin American countries, also the natural resources available there and what impact exploitation of resources is having on immigration.

Sample Letter to Parents

August 26, 1995

Dear Parents,

In our 6th grade Spanish class we will be starting, *What Brought You Here?*, a unit on immigration from Latin American countries to other countries, especially the United States and Mexico.

Your child will be interviewing people from Latin America in person and on the computer on Internet. If you have any family or friends that would like to be interviewed, please let me know. People's names will be left out of anything we do with this information.

Please call me at school at 764-2000 between 8:00 am and 8:20 am or at 11:10 am to 12:30 pm.

Sincerely,

Ms. Horner,
Teacher

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Please sign, detach, and send this part with your child to school tomorrow, August 27, 1995

_____ I read the letter and approve of my child's involvement in this project.

_____ I would prefer that my child not participate in this activity. My reason is _____

_____ I have a name of someone that can be interviewed: _____.

Parent's signature

Key Words

This is taken from the SPICE curriculum Why Do People Move?

Find the definitions for these words in a dictionary. Underneath the word, write a short phrase to help you remember the definition. We hear many words today that we only have a vague knowledge of—be ahead of the game and know what these words mean, and this unit will make more sense to you.

1) migration _____

2) immigration _____

3) migrant _____

4) immigrant _____

5) sending community _____

- 6) receiving community_____
- 7) refugee_____
- 8) political asylum_____
- 9) deport_____
- 10) visa_____
- 11) undocumented person_____
- 12) displaced person_____

Permission Form

I give my permission that the information received from this interview may be used in written or oral form in a student publication. I understand that my name will not be mentioned anywhere, and that the school and the district is not liable for anything to do with this interview. I give it freely as a part of this school project. I also give permission that the final production may be sold and a profit for the school realized.

Signature

date

Migration History Questionnaire

This is taken from the SPICE curriculum Why Do People Move?

Name_____

Find someone who has moved to your town from Latin America. This person can be a member of your family, a neighbor, a teacher from your school, or a friend. Or this person could be someone who volunteered on the Internet. Use this questionnaire to find out their migration history and some of their cultural stories.

Name_____

Place of Birth (city and country)_____

When did you leave your country/community?_____

How old were you when you left? _____

How old are you now?_____

Why did you leave your country/community?_____

What were the conditions in your country/community when you left?_____

How had the conditions changed?_____

How are the conditions different in this country/community?_____

What factors influenced your decision to leave your country/community?_____

What had you heard about this country/community that drew you here? What did you know?_____

How did you come here? Describe your trip. Did you know someone who was living here?
Did you come alone or with family or friends?_____

How has moving affected your life?_____

Have you kept up relations with friends and family in your native country/community? If so, have conditions gotten better or worse? _____

Stories are a part of every culture. Tell one of your favorite childhood stories that was a part of your life in your native country/community. _____

Bibliography

Books

Burgos, Elizabeth. Me Llamo Rigoberta Menchu y Asi Me Nacio la Conciencia. Mexico: siglo veintiuno editores, 1985.

A young Guatemalan girl's story of the pain and injustices experienced by many Indians today. This book is a result of an interview with Burgos and students could see a possible result to their interviews. It received the 1992 Nobel Peace Prize.

Burgos, Elizabeth. Translated by Ann Wright. I, Rigoberta Menchu: An Indian Woman in Guatemala. New York: Verso, 1994.

The English translation of a young Guatemalan girl's story of the pain and injustices experienced by many Indians today.

Falk, Lisa. Cultural Reporter. Watertown, MA: Tom Snyder Productions, 1995.

This book provides a curriculum-based approach to oral history and reporting on cultures to an audience.

Lewis Herman, Judith. Trauma and Recovery. USA: BasicBooks, 1992.

This book tells why people who have lived through traumatic times need to tell their stories.

Novas, Himilice. Everything You Need to Know about Latino History. New York: Plume/Penguin, 1994.

This book has a generous overview of Latin history and how it has effected the world we know today. It is written in a question and answer format that is easily read. There is a chapter dedicated to "The Newest Immigrants: Dominicans and Central Americans."

Polking, Kirk. Writing Family Histories and Memoirs. Cincinnati: Betterway Books, 1995.

This book specializes in the research aspect of oral history and the interview process.

Ready, Timothy. Latino Immigrant Youth: Passages from Adolescence to Adulthood. NY: Garland, 1991.

This book has many statistics about Latino immigration to Washington, D.C.

Sosnowski, Saul and Louise B. Popkin—ed. Translated by Louise B. Popkin. Repression, Exile and Democracy. Durham: Duke University Press, 1993.

Various writers analyze how varying cultural expressions have been affected by conditions of censorship, exile, torture and death in Uruguay.

SPICE—Stanford Program on International and Cross-Cultural Education. Why Do People Move? Stanford: Leland Stanford Junior University Board of Trustees, 1993.

This excellent curriculum could be the basis for this whole unit on immigration. For a catalog of curricula, write SPICE, Institute for International Studies, Littlefield Center, room 14c, Stanford University, Stanford, CA 94305-5013 or telephone: 415-723-1114, fax 415-723-6784.

Stokes Brown, Cynthia. Like It Was: A Complete Guide to Writing Oral History. New York: Teachers & Writers Collaborative, 1988.

This book is a great how-to book to writing oral histories from the interview to the final production, especially geared for the classroom.

Internet and CD-Roms

ALAS home page. URL: <http://cec.wustl.edu/~jgm5/>

This WWW site has many useful resources about individual Latin American countries.

Brigham Young University. URL: <http://humanities.byu.edu/spanish/mundo/mundo2.html>

This WWW home page is a map of Latin America and provides strong recent data.

CIA World Factbook 1994. URL: <http://www.odci.gov>

This is a great WWW site to find facts about Latin America.

Intercultural E-mail Classroom Connections (IECC). URL: <http://www.stolaf.edu/network/iecc>

This is a great WWW connection to post projects like this or to see what other teachers are doing.

Fuchs, Lawrence. "Immigration." New Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia, Release 7.0.2. 1995.

This interactive CD provides specific information about immigration and the history of it in the United States.

KidLink. URL: <http://kids.ccit.duq.edu>

This site focuses on e-mail projects and cultural exchanges and could be a good place to post this project for possible Internet interviews with students from Latin America that have immigrated to another country.

LADB (Latin American Data Base). URL: <http://ladb.unm.edu>

This is a database site that requires a subscription. It publishes weekly commentaries compiled from international sources on Latin American political and economical news.

Latin American/Spanish Speaking Countries Page. URL: <http://edb518ea.edb.utexas.edu/html/LatinAmerica.html>

This site provides a home page for each Latin American country that is posted, providing a large amount of information.

UT-LANIC. University of Texas. Latin American Network Information Center URL: <http://lanic.utexas.edu/la/region/>

This WWW home page sites many useful resources for Latin America, like "Guide to Internet Resources for Latin American Studies."

Films

Goudvis, Patricia. *If the Mango Tree Could Speak*. 66 Winter St. Watertown, MA 02172.

A 58 minute video tape of interviews with individual children and their experiences in today's Latin America upheaval. This would be a good background source.

We Are Guatemalans. Maryknoll World Productions. P. O. Box 308, Maryknoll, NY 10545-0308, 1995.

A 28 minute video tape of the experience of one village, Pueblo Cuarto in Guatemala that fled to Mexico and lived in refugee camps there for 12 years and their triumphant return home.