



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
2006 Volume II: Latino Cultures and Communities

¿Dónde Estábamos? Where Were We: Using Oral History to Teach Immigration

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BACKGROUND

I am a seventh and eighth grade social studies teacher at Fair Haven Middle School. During the 2005-2006 school year, I taught United States history and during the upcoming 2006-2007 school year, I will teach a seventh grade world cultures class. Fair Haven is a Title I school, meaning it receives additional federal funding as a high-poverty school. For example, over ninety percent of the students at Fair Haven qualify for free or reduced lunch. Further, most of the students at the school are minorities, predominately Latino, with a remaining number comprised of African-American students. As one might imagine, teaching social studies in this environment can often be a challenge, especially when one considers the primacy given to the role of dead, white men in creating our nation's history. While most social studies textbooks have made strides in better including African Americans and women in their narratives, Latino experiences are still absent ⁽¹⁾.

Furthermore, students of middle-school age present their own particular set of problems when it comes to learning, regardless of their ethnic background or socio-economic status. Students at this age still have a healthy amount of curiosity about the outside world. Even though they often see things in a strict black and white view, where something is either completely right or completely wrong, much of their opinions and their thinking have yet to be fully formed. Many educators see this as a benefit of teaching middle school students and I would tend to agree.

Middle school students are also intensely social creatures that love to talk and are usually much more interested in interacting with their peer group than in paying attention in class. This lack of attention to task can be a particularly large obstacle when what is being taught is viewed by the students as having no real connection to their daily lives. While they still have a basic desire to learn more about the world around them, they are mostly concerned with their place in the social structure of the school, or what they largely view as their "world."

This issue of their place in the world often comes up within the context of social studies in the form of identity issues. While strides have been made in creating a history that is more inclusive, particularly of women and African Americans, there is still precious little said in their textbooks about Latinos and their contributions to the narrative. In fact, the exclusion of Latinos from the narrative of American history borders on the criminal.

There is an almost wholesale denial, for example, of the reality that Mexicans predate British settlers in the New World and that, because of this, the Spanish language has been spoken for a longer period of time in North America than English ⁽²⁾. I feel it is my responsibility as a teacher in a predominately Latino school to help my students learn more about themselves. In a neighborhood that can often seem devoid of positive role models, it is an important part of my job. I also feel that as Latinos become the largest minority group in the United States, and will become the majority in several states, that all of my students will benefit from a deeper understanding of the nuances of Latino culture. Thus, I feel that a unit for my students in which they create their own oral histories documenting the creation of the Latino community in Fair Haven, is particularly important at this moment in time.

RATIONALE

"Make it relevant" is an oft-heard cry among educators. Not only are teachers charged with the responsibility to make their lessons rigorous, aligned with state and district standards, but we must also make them relevant and engaging, as well. As an eighth grade United States history teacher, this can often seem nearly impossible, yet it is something I strive for nearly every day. Little do my students realize that their grandparents, parents, aunts, uncles, cousins, teachers, neighbors, and even themselves all have stories to tell that address one of the most central themes of American history: immigration.

I was at best naïve and at worst critically uninformed when I began my teaching career in New Haven some years ago. I assumed that the overwhelming majority of my students would be African-American. I guessed that there would be a sizeable number of Puerto Rican students, as well. However, my main focus was on how to best represent African-American history. I never considered the histories of the other students sitting in my classroom, nor had I considered the damage being done to my Latino students in my complicit cooperation with the dominant belief in mainstream America history that Latinos have little or no part in it. I also failed to realize the degree to which my Puerto Rican students, in particular, were being denied even the most basic access to information about their culture and history.

I did not realize, either, that I would wind up teaching at Fair Haven Middle School. As I mentioned previously, Fair Haven is a high-poverty school with a nearly one hundred percent minority student population. Of that population, nearly eighty percent is Latino. Of those that are Latino the majority remains Puerto Rican, but there are a growing number of Mexicans, Central Americans, and Dominican students represented in that number, as well. Fair Haven Middle School is an iconic building nearly halfway down Grand Avenue. Not only does the building physically serve as a focal point of the neighborhood, its student population reflects the changing demographics of the neighborhood, as well. Its imposing clock tower stands tall over the building and our school principal is often fond of saying that it is our job as educators to let everyone in the community know what time it is. The only problem with that, of course, is that when I began teaching in Fair Haven, I had only a limited knowledge of exactly whom that community represented.

Unfortunately, many of my students seem to have a limited understanding of that community, too. According to recent census data, Connecticut is home to the sixth-largest Puerto Rican community in the United States ⁽³⁾. A significant number of these live in New Haven, where it is estimated that 21.4% of the total population is Latino. Nowhere is this more evident than in the Fair Haven neighborhood. However, that population is far from homogenous. Among Fair Haven's Latino community, one finds Mexicans, Cubans, Dominicans, and a

rising number of Central and South Americans. In fact, in the ten years between the 1990 and 2000 census, New Haven's Mexican population exploded by 364% ⁽⁴⁾. The changing demographics of the Latino community in Fair Haven has created new businesses along Grand Avenue and enhanced the vibrancy of the community. However, it has also created tensions, as well. My Puerto Rican and African-American students are quick to view their Mexican students negatively, to the point where the words immigrant and Mexican are used as "put downs."

The issues of immigration, migration, and ethnic identity are difficult to ignore in the middle of a community such as Fair Haven. The Puerto Rican students, in particular, are fiercely proud of their heritage, even if many of them know very little about it. Their United States history textbook mentions Puerto Rico on four pages in the entire book, completely ignoring the fact that the island is the oldest and most profitable colony the United States has ever possessed ⁽⁵⁾. Because of this, all too many times when my classes have been studying various aspects of United States history, one of my Latino students will inevitably ask: "Where were we?" The question means, of course, where is our story? How are we included in this narrative? If we aren't included in this story, then why not? What was happening in Puerto Rico or Mexico at the time?

In short, each and every one of my students, regardless of their racial or ethnic background, wants to be included in the sweeping story that is United States history. One cannot downplay the importance of seeing one's culture reflected in their learning in school. While some districts, New Haven being one, now prize their Latino students' bilingualism, there is still little time given to Latino culture and history, yet much attention is given to ensuring African-American history is highlighted throughout the school year. While it is important that all groups be given representation, it is troubling that Latinos are still viewed as second-class citizens, if they are even viewed at all.

Thus, there are numerous issues at play in my seemingly humble eighth grade classroom. My students thirst to know about their own history and it is becoming increasingly imperative that they begin to understand more about each other's, as well. It is only education that will teach my students not to fear each other and their differences, but rather to cherish them. All of my students, regardless of their racial or ethnic background, represent the twenty-first century reality of the Fair Haven community, as well as the reality all over the United States. Therein lies the motivation for an oral history project documenting the twenty-first century face of the Fair Haven neighborhood.

GOALS AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The overall objective for the unit is for the students to gain a better understanding of contemporary migratory patterns both into the United States, and within it, as well. Furthermore, I want my students to understand that they live in a vibrant, diverse community whose relevance and importance reaches far beyond Grand Avenue. I believe that it is also important for all of my students to better understand the contributions that Latinos have made to their immediate community, as well as to the United States at large. Finally, my students will leave the class with a greater understanding of the wide range of people and experiences that actually make history.

There is clearly much that students can learn by examining the immigration stories that surround them everyday. An example of this can be found without even leaving the Fair Haven building itself. One of the two

assistant principals at Fair Haven Middle School is Maritza Rosa. Ms. Rosa was born in Puerto Rico and moved to the mainland United States while she was in high school. She will very proudly point out that her grandfather was involved in the writing of the constitution of Puerto Rico. In fact, the pride she feels in her heritage is evident in nearly everything she does, from organizing Fair Haven's annual Hispanic Heritage Month activities to her role as a translator and general liaison to the Latino community in Fair Haven. She attended college and went on to become a teacher, beginning her education career in New York as a bilingual education teacher. Her family subsequently moved to the New Haven area and her younger siblings followed her into education careers. In fact, her younger sister and brother both teach in the New Haven Public Schools.

Ms. Rosa has gone on to become one of the most active members of the burgeoning Puerto Rican community in the greater New Haven area. She has played a vital role in creating the Puerto Rican parade in New Haven and has helped to bring the Areyto festival to the annual Arts and Ideas festival in New Haven. She also helped to found an annual Puerto Rican scholarship pageant. She provides mentoring to younger women throughout the Latino community in New Haven, as well.

I recently had the opportunity to discuss with Ms. Rosa her feelings about the lack of Latino voices in mainstream American education. Her disgust was palpable. Not only is she frustrated by the lack of information about Puerto Rican history, she is also frustrated by the lack of information about the emerging Latino groups in New Haven. She said, "I had a speaker come in from Los Angeles to talk to our bilingual students this year. He runs a very successful community program in L.A. You cannot believe how proud the kids were to see this man speak to them. He looks like them and he could speak to them in Spanish and English." She was very excited at the prospect of the New Haven social studies curriculum adding more explicit information about Latinos ⁽⁶⁾. My conversation with Ms. Rosa made the need for this curriculum unit even more clear to me.

It seems that immigration is one of the leading stories of the day. Furthermore, it is one of the central themes of American history. I begin my eighth grade United States history course with a brief lesson on prehistoric human migration. Very simply, students place flags all over the world map, tracing their role in the human migration out of Africa and across the world. We talk about the Bering land bridge and the subsequent population of the North and South American continents with waves of wandering people pushing south from Asia. We then talk about Columbus and the "discovery" of the New World. We discuss Spanish colonization and it is often difficult for my students to grasp the idea that, yes, they speak Spanish in Puerto Rico because it was a Spanish colony. Ultimately, we turn our attention to the British colonies, following their growth into the United States of America. In short, at nearly every point, we are discussing immigration, migration, or forced migration. There is simply no reason why we cannot, or should not, turn our focus to the migration stories that are all around them here in Fair Haven.

If this unit were to be taught in the context of the seventh grade curriculum, it can fit into the unit which addresses Latin America. While the focus of this unit is on the geography and culture of the region, it can certainly encompass emigration from the region into the United States. Furthermore, the entire focus of the seventh grade world cultures curriculum is on the emerging global community and the central place of the United States in that community. This unit can easily fit within that context, either as a short four week unit or as a more sustained year-long project.

When I began writing this unit, it was my intention that this unit would be taught near the end of the school year, placing the migration stories the students will tell in the context of the late twentieth and early twenty first century migration. The unit would also encompass a number of critical and historical thinking skills the

students should have acquired by the end of the year. Considering that the focus of the unit is on the students and their community, this will hopefully increase students' facility with reading, writing, and historical inquiry in general. I also hope that a unit focused on Latino experiences will serve to empower the struggling readers and writers I have in many of my classes.

However, there is another way to look at this unit. This unit could be taught throughout the course of an entire school year, which would give students the greatest amount of time possible to select, make contact with, and interview their subjects. It would also provide the opportunity for students to document the ways in which their attitudes and ideas about contemporary immigration have changed throughout the course of the year.

As I have stated above, many of my students, particularly those who are one or two generations removed from any sort of migration themselves, need to have some background information about general trends in U.S. immigration. To begin, students need to know how and why Puerto Rico became part of the United States, thus making movement from the island to the mainland not a question of immigration, but rather one of migration within one country.

Any kind of introductory lesson must begin by briefly examining the Spanish American War. Students should know that Puerto Rico was one of Spain's last colonial holdings and that Spain had mismanaged the island horribly for years. The U.S., for its part, was eager to eject any and all European influence from the Western hemisphere and very nearly leapt at the chance to do so. In the end, of course, Puerto Rico became a territory of the United States, never becoming its own country. Passage of the Jones Act in 1917 made all Puerto Ricans United States citizens, clearing the way for the migration from the island to the mainland that would follow later in the twentieth century.

Following this thread, it is important to note at what point Puerto Ricans began migrating to the Northeast in large numbers. The United States took control of most of Puerto Rico's sugar industry, making it increasingly more difficult for Puerto Ricans to make money farming, something they had done for centuries prior. The dire implications this had for Puerto Ricans living in rural areas must be addressed, as U.S. interests left rural dwellers in a desperate state of extreme poverty. In fact, the first half of the twentieth century, many Puerto Ricans found that life under U.S. colonial rule was far worse than what they had experienced under Spanish control

As American companies began to set up factories in Puerto Rico's cities during the post-war era, Puerto Ricans from the country side flocked to the cities for better paying jobs. The only problem, of course, that there were far more workers than there were jobs. To ease unrest in the cities, Puerto Ricans were encouraged to come to the mainland for better opportunities, and to provide a new supply of cheap labor for growing agricultural and industrial concerns. This migration was further aided by the availability of cheap airfare from the island to the mainland in the last fifty years of the twentieth century. While the overwhelming majority of these Puerto Ricans settled in New York City, they also moved through the Northeast and, to a lesser degree, into the Rust Belt areas of the Midwest ⁽⁷⁾.

Puerto Ricans were also actively recruited to come to Connecticut, as well. Beginning in the 1940's, they were brought to Connecticut to work in the tobacco fields of the Connecticut Valley. As that industry fell apart throughout the 1960's and 1970's, they began to work in Connecticut's factories. Because of this, Puerto Ricans established large communities in Connecticut's cities ⁽⁸⁾.

Whereas the story of Puerto Rican migration into New Haven has a much longer history, it does have something in common with the story of Mexican immigration into the city. It has been noted that many of the

Puerto Ricans who have settled in New Haven can be traced back to one or two small areas of the island. This chain migration has also been quite prevalent among the Mexican community. Mexican immigrants have also been attracted to New Haven for its cheap housing stock and a perception that many jobs were available.

Just as the students must have a clear understanding of the reasons surrounding Puerto Rican migration to the mainland, they should also understand the driving forces behind the rapid growth of Mexican immigration to this country. The Mexican population of this country predates the British colonial period; a fact that should be underscored in the context of this unit, as it establishes the important place Mexican history should take within any balanced understanding of U.S. history. Following that, students should understand something about the annexation of Texas from Mexico and the ensuing Mexican-American War, as it too relates to the United States policy of Manifest Destiny. In particular, students should be made aware of the land that was stolen from Mexican, now Mexican-American, families during this time period. It is also interesting to note that the boundary between the United States and Mexico was something the United States government created, making some Mexicans Americans almost overnight.

Explaining the reasons behind contemporary Mexican immigration is more problematic, as it has a great deal to do with United States government policies governing the economies of both the U.S. and Mexico. Yet, again, a comparison can be made between those policies and those of the U.S. in Puerto Rico. This is an important fact to note, as it further strengthens the ties between the two communities. For at least the past century, American agricultural industries have actively recruited Mexican labor into the United States. This became more formalized with the Bracero program in the 1940's. Thus, it has become a well-established reality that Mexican laborers are willing to come to the United States and work in low-paid sectors of the economy, including agriculture and the hospitality and service industries.

As trade regulations between the United States and Mexico have steadily eased throughout the twentieth century, and were entirely eliminated with the passage of the North American Free Trade agreement in 1994, agricultural and industrial businesses have increasingly established themselves in Mexico. Large agribusinesses have taken land from Mexican farmers, while manufacturing industries have set up factories all along the Mexican border. This policy has had a similar effect on the population of Mexico as it had on the population of Puerto Rico. While a few Mexicans have profited from the arrangement, most Mexicans have become increasingly impoverished. The jobs created by the establishment of U.S. factories in Mexico are far greater in number than the workers available to fill those jobs, creating a grave labor surplus. Understanding the basic economic forces driving Mexican immigration why so many Mexicans are willing to risk their lives to come to the United States illegally ⁽⁹⁾.

Again, another important point to raise to students concerns the most recent debates in the national media over illegal immigration from Mexico and Central America. As I stated earlier, many of my students see the term immigrant as a put-down. What they often fail to realize is that the current debate often attacks all Latinos. Certainly, the push on the part of white conservatives to make English the country's official language is a point sure to inspire common anger among all Spanish-speaking students in my classroom and will help to further illustrate the commonalities among various Latino ethnic groups. The immigration debate, with its overtly racist overtones, should provide an opportunity to establish common ground with African-American students, as well.

Students should also have some knowledge, however limited, about the history of the Fair Haven neighborhood itself. The neighborhood began as the hub of a bustling oyster and fishing business and evolved over time into an immigrant community. By the 1920's, Fair Haven was regarded as a largely Italian

neighborhood. By the 1970's, the transformation of Fair Haven from a predominately Italian neighborhood into a Latino neighborhood was already well underway. This transformation was expedited by the construction of Interstate 91 and 95, which virtually cut the Fair Haven neighborhood off from the rest of New Haven. In fact, it is quite possible to be well acquainted with other neighborhoods in New Haven and have virtually no knowledge of Fair Haven at all. Today, Fair Haven is predominately Latino. Certainly, the largest ethnic group is Puerto Rican with the percentage of Mexican and Central American residents steadily increasing. Yet a sizeable African-American community remains, as do many white families. Fair Haven exists as the most racially and socio-economically diverse neighborhood in all of New Haven ⁽¹⁰⁾. One will also find a number of locally owned businesses and restaraunts that cater to the diverse Latino community along Grand Avenue.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Students will describe the major forces shaping contemporary immigration.
2. Students will compare the uses facing early twentieth century European immigrants with those affecting Latino immigrants today.
3. Students will describe the evolution of Fair Haven as an urban, ethnic community.
3. Students will write oral histories detailing the migratory experiences of members of their community.

PERFORMANCE ASSESMENT

Students will complete individual oral histories of their chosen subjects and the classes will compile a single book of these histories. This book will offer a cohesive view of various aspects of the Fair Haven community. Further, it will give students the opportunity to further hone their expository writing skills, as well as their nonfiction reading skills.

LEARNING STRATEGIES

The first step in the project will be to build students' background knowledge of immigration in general and migratory patterns into the Fair Haven neighborhood, in particular. First, students should be given the opportunity to access their own prior knowledge. This can be achieved rather simply in two different ways: One, a KWL chart, which can remain posted throughout the duration of the unit. A KWL chart is simply a listing of what students already know, want to know, and have learned about a given topic. While this strategy may seem quite basic to some, in truth, it empowers all learners in a classroom, as the culminating classroom list makes everyone feel as though they have something to contribute to the class discourse(11).

Second, I would have students complete an Anticipation Guide. Anticipation guides give students the opportunity to think and write about their own closely held opinions. A series of statements are made, in this case about immigration and their own community, and students must state if they agree or disagree and why. I have found that with struggling readers and writers, the quickness of the assignment, as well as the fact that there are no "right" or "wrong" answers, really empowers them to stretch their thinking and their writing. Some of the best writing I get from my struggling readers and writers comes with anticipation guides. The anticipation guide would be an attempt to encourage discussion within the classroom about various forms of prejudice, as well. It has been my experience that students, particularly at the middle school level, need some help in starting a meaningful class discussion, and an anticipation guide is one such way of achieving that. Also, when topics are particularly "juicy," beginning a new unit of study with such a conversation is way of really peaking student interest in the subject.

Once the overall themes and objectives of the unit have been established, I would then be charged with providing students with the necessary background information about European and Latino immigration. I could present students with a brief lecture on the most important historical points as outlined above. It might even be appropriate to use a quick Power Point presentation to add a non-linguistic representation, thus ensuring that a greater percentage of students in the class truly comprehend the historical piece. However, if more time can be permitted for the unit, it would be preferable for students to work to find their own historical information. For example, the class could be divided up into small groups, each responsible for researching a different piece of the immigration puzzle. The class would then come together again and share their findings to form a complete version of the story.

Clearly, having students conduct their own research at this phase of the project would be preferable, as it engenders a sense of ownership in the project from the very beginning. Students, particularly at the middle school level, are much more likely to take an interest in something when they feel they are constructing their own meaning about a topic.

Now, attention must be given to the actual practice of oral history. The New Haven Oral History Project, the National Oral History Association, and the Baylor University Institute for Oral History all offer possible resources for teaching students about the actual practice of oral history. Baylor University, in particular, offers an on-line workshop about doing oral history that would be useful in this endeavor, as students respond to assignments that seem more authentic and rooted in the real world. The New Haven Oral History Project also offers the opportunity for students to work with the project and perhaps make a contribution to the archives of the Oral History Project and would certainly ensure that students would have the opportunity to interact with practitioners in the field.

I would again return to the idea of activating students' own prior knowledge, this time about what oral history actually is. Students talking about the topic with each other would probably very quickly arrive at their own definition of oral history. I would review with them the differences between primary and secondary source material so that the students would understand that they would, in essence, be creating their own primary source material that they would use to draw conclusions about their topic. Further, this might be a good time for students to read some oral histories and first-person accounts of European immigration. Not only would this give students insight into European immigration, but it would also help to familiarize them with oral history. At this point they might also begin to discuss why oral history is such an important way of learning about history, as they will likely find first-person accounts much more interesting than the dry, removed writing they encounter in their social studies textbook.

To turn the attention back to Latino immigration, I would have students read brief selections from "Aqui Me Quedo: Puerto Ricans in Connecticut" to gain experience with oral history, as well to gain a better understanding of Puerto Rican history. These selections could be reviewed in groups and discussed with the whole class. I would particularly ask the students why they think such a book was written in the first place and why it is important. Students should understand, in the end, that oral histories are an important way of documenting the lives of regular people, just like themselves.

The students would then begin thinking about their interview subjects. In every class I teach, there are students with stories to tell. Beyond that, many have family members who have stories, as well. In addition, students would be able to interview members of the school staff, as well as other members of the community, both large and small. Within our building, the students will have access to community leaders such as Martiza Rosa, as well as several teachers and paraprofessionals. All of these adults have unique stories to tell about their immigration experiences. Furthermore, they provide students with Latino role models who are right there in their community.

It would be helpful to encourage students to interview a range of subjects, as no one single type of person makes up a whole community. Within the Fair Haven community, there are business owners, alderpeople, professionals, teachers, police officers, religious leaders, and regular working people, all of whom have something unique to contribute to the total picture of the Fair Haven community. This will help students see themselves in new ways, as well, as it will encourage them to see there a multiple things they might become as adults.

Of course, students will have to secure permission from their subjects, as well as setting up times to meet with their subjects. This will give students practice in writing formal letters, as well as making phone calls, skills that should help them later in their lives.

Once subjects have been selected, now the attention of the class would turn to actual interviewing. Because this unit targets middle school age students, I feel that it would be of the utmost importance that the students be given time to practice before they went out into the community. They will also need considerable help in developing their interview questions.

One approach would be to divide the class into small, cooperative groups and give each group a set period of time to develop a list of questions they think they might ask. Once time is up, one student could act as a recorder and the class could develop a list of questions they feel would be appropriate for their interviews. Stress to students that it is important to ask open-ended questions, not questions that look for specific answers.

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

1. Name and date of birth
2. Place of birth
3. What kinds of things do you remember about the place you were born?
4. When did you (or your immediate family) come to this country?
5. Why did your family decide to come to this country?

6. How did you (or you family) come to live in Fair Haven?
7. How were you treated once you came to America?
8. Do you think immigrants face discrimination in this country?
9. What kinds of opportunities do you think people have in America?
10. What are some of the biggest differences between their home country and America?

Once a list of questions has been generated, the teacher should review with the class a list of interview guidelines:

1. Always remember to show respect to your subject.
2. Always use your best manners and be polite; say please and thank you.
3. Be quiet while your interview subject is speaking.
4. Do not interrupt your interview subject while they are speaking.
5. Do not argue with your interview subject

When the list of guidelines has been made clear, the class should be divided up into pairs. Each pair could do a slightly longer version of a THINK PAIR SHARE activity. In this activity, each student would think about a specific set of questions. They would take turns asking each other to answer the questions, documenting their answers along the way. Once both students have had the opportunity to be the interviewer and interviewee, each pair would share their answers with the class.

At this point, it would be important for the class to attempt to analyze their answers, as well. For example, if students were asking simple where were you born kinds of questions, what might that say about the students in the class? It would be important for the teacher to model that type of analytical thinking for the class once the practice interviews have been completed.

At this point, it would be appropriate for students to go out into the community and conduct their interviews. While it would be ideal for the students to be able to tape record their interviews, this will probably be difficult due to a lack of available tape recorders. Therefore, it is important to remind students to very carefully transcribe what their subjects are telling them so that they can accurately report what their subjects said at a later date.

Once the student interviews have been completed, and this will hopefully occur within a week, students will then report back to the class. The class can then draw conclusions about contemporary immigration. It would be helpful for the class to make a list of these generalizations, prior to identifying the similarities and differences between contemporary immigration and earlier European immigration. When the class has completed this list, they can then make a list of characteristics of European immigration. Once the two lists have been created, only then should students attempt to identify the similarities and differences between the two. This can be done in a variety of ways, for example a Venn diagram, or a double bubble graphic organizer.

It would be useful to create a writing assignment here, in which they can express the similarities and

differences between European immigration and contemporary immigration. A graphic organizer would be a helpful way to facilitate this process. A simple way to further this writing assignment would be to use some basic sentence stems, as shown below(11).

IDENTIFYING SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES: SENTENCE STEMS

European immigration and contemporary immigration are different because _____,
_____, and _____.

European immigration and contemporary immigration are similar because _____,
_____, and _____.

Once they have done this, they can then begin to type up and prepare their interviews for publication. Each class should be able to create a class "book" documenting their learning, including their interviews. Each class could also work on creating an introductory essay, stating why their interviews are important and how they create a look at contemporary immigration in the Fair Haven neighborhood.

Because this project could be used throughout an entire school year, students should complete an essay at the completion of the project in which they discuss what they have learned and how their perspectives on immigration have changed since beginning the project. One way to facilitate this would be to have students return to their original Anticipation Guides from the beginning of the unit

END NOTES

1. Juan Gonzalez. *Harvest of Empire: A History of Latinos in America*. New York: Penguin Books, 2000.
2. Ruth Glasser. *Aqui Me Quedo: Puerto Ricans in Connecticut*. Hartford: Connecticut Humanities Council, 1997.
3. Jacqueline Olvera and Douglas Rae. "Mexican Immigration After Urbanism: The New Haven Case." Unpublished article.
4. Gonzalez. *Ibid.*
5. Conversation with Maritza Rosa. July 27, 2006
6. Gonzalez. *Ibid.*
7. Glasser. *Ibid.*
8. Gonzalez. *Ibid.*
9. Olvera. *Ibid.*
10. Robert J. Marzano. *Building Background Knowledge for Academic Achievement*. Alexandria: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2004.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Baylor University Institute for Oral History. Introduction to Oral History. http://www.baylor.edu/Oral_History. 2006.

This website offers guidelines and suggestions for completing oral history projects, much of which has been modified and re-stated in this unit for use by middle school students.

2. Ruth Glasser. *Aqui Me Quedo: Puerto Ricans in Connecticut*. Hartford: Connecticut Humanities Council, 1997.

This book offers a look at the creation of the Puerto Rican community in Connecticut. In particular, the book offers extensive interviews with members of that community. The book looks at Puerto Ricans throughout the state and talks specifically about New Haven, as well. It traces the evolution of the community from the late nineteenth century through the late 1990's. It is the only source for such information specific to Connecticut of which I am aware.

3. Juan Gonzalez. *Harvest of Empire: A History of Latinos in America*. New York: Penguin Books, 2000.

This book is a comprehensive historical overview of Latinos in America. Particular emphasis is given to Puerto Rican and Mexican immigration. The book also provides a helpful history of United States interaction with Latin America, much of which relates to the tide of immigration into this country in the last century.

4. Robert J. Marzano. *Building Background Knowledge for Academic Achievement*. Alexandria: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2004.

5. Robert J. Marzano, Debra J. Pickering, and Jane E. Pollock. *Classroom Instruction that Works: Research-Based Strategies for Increasing Student Achievement*. Alexandria: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2001.

The two books listed above are research-based books detailing approaches to classroom instruction. The books are being used extensively in the re-writing of district curriculum.

Both books offer useable strategies for teachers interested in implementing

6. New Haven Oral History Project. www.yale.edu/

The website includes samples for oral history projects in New Haven and resources for conducting oral history projects, as well as links to other oral history groups around the country.

7. Jacqueline Olvera and Douglas Rae. "Mexican Immigration After Urbanism: The New Haven Case." Unpublished article.

This article chronicles the rapid increase in Mexican immigration in New Haven over the last ten years and also compares it with earlier waves of European immigration. The article is particularly helpful in the way it documents specific numeric data, while also providing an informative analysis of the changes in New Haven's Latino community.

APPENDIX ONE: NEW HAVEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS: IMPLEMENTING THE STANDARDS

It should be noted that as of July 31, 2006, the New Haven Public Schools was revising all of its social studies curriculum standards.

GRADE SEVEN:

Performance Standard Two: Students will understand how location, place, human/environment interaction, movement and regions are intertwined through a study of Latin America and the Caribbean.

2.4 - Students will use Cuba, Puerto Rico, Brazil and Mexico as case studies to identify aspects of their history and connect them to the present day political and social conditions of those countries.

GRADE EIGHT:

Students will evaluate the impact of immigration and the Industrial Revolution on the changing cultural landscape of the United States.

While this unit may not directly address the issues of European immigration in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, I hope that it can provide a window into that set of circumstances through a comparison of European immigration with contemporary Latino immigration. One way of doing this could be by opening up the subjects of the oral histories to African-American and European subjects who could provide a slightly different story than that of the Latino interview subjects.

APPENDIX ONE: SAMPLE ANTICIPATION GUIDE QUESTIONS

Name:

Date:

ANTICIPATION GUIDE

Directions: Read each of the following statements carefully. As you think about each statement, decide whether you agree or disagree with each statement. On the lines below, explain why you agree or disagree with each statement.

1. New immigrants in the Fair Haven community are treated fairly.

2. I often hear students use the terms "Mexican" and "immigrant" in a degrading way.

3. New immigrants are important to this community.

4. I would be eager to make friends with students in the bilingual program.

5. The country should put troops on the border with Mexico to prevent illegal immigrants from entering the country.

6. It should be illegal for a U.S. citizen to help illegal immigrants stay in the country.

7. I think bilingual education is important for students who have recently come to this country.

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