



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
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Esperanza Rising: Connecting Latino Students to Literature

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Imagine walking into your new classroom on the first day of school, looking at the beautiful posters, pictures and books displayed around the room. Envision yourself watching as your peers stare at these objects, imagining themselves in the places of these characters. Still, as your imagination is trying to place you in these fictional settings, your subconscious just will not allow it. You sit down at your desk and listen to the teacher introduce you to her classroom library. You are overjoyed to hear that you are able to borrow and take home any book you want as long as you promise to take care of it. Still, as your new teacher gives you a glimpse into some of her favorite picture and chapter books, you can't help but wonder why none of these seem all that appealing to you. You soon realize after losing yourself in your thoughts that this classroom reflects some of the students who will spend the year learning here, but not you. There are no pictures of students like you, no books that contain characters like you, and no representations of you anywhere in the room.

You are a Latino student, in America, where you just don't feel at home. You have no connection to the books you are reading, and you feel completely isolated from your peers. Because of this, you shut down academically and decide that you were not meant to be a high-achiever. From this day forward, you will do only the bare minimum necessary to get by. The days of pushing yourself forward and striving for excellence were left behind the day you realized that your school does not reflect all of its members. You will finish your academic career without showing the world what you can do. Maybe you will go on to college, but sadly, you may assume that you aren't meant to be there either, so you immediately begin working. Still in your work environment you do only what you need to do to get by, because by this time, that moral has been instilled in you. It is too late for you to realize that your work ethic does not allow your full potential to shine through.

The past description is a frightening reality for many Latino students in schools today. I can remember being in elementary school, struggling to take on all the changes and learning of an academic life. I cannot imagine adding a feeling of isolation, and the struggle with battling two languages onto that list. Still, many students are confronted with these challenges daily. As educators, it is our responsibility to show the students that every ethnicity, language, gender and personality is an essential part of our classroom. Feeling safe and loved in a classroom can allow each student to reach higher goals, and achieve greatness.

I currently teach fourth grade in a building that is on its way to becoming a kindergarten through eighth grade Dual Language Program. In this program, the goal is for the students to become equally fluent in English as in Spanish as well as to learn the greatness that each individual brings to a classroom. This program has made

phenomenal gains in the arguments about and solutions to the struggles of English Language Learners. Still, this learning environment cannot succeed without the support of materials that allow the students to "see themselves" in the literature they are reading.

New Haven has recently created and implemented Keys to Comprehension, a shared reading curriculum designed to use with whole-class instruction, and to carry into your literacy centers and guided reading groups. The program teaches the importance of fluency, and comprehension, while tying in the skills necessary to succeed on the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT). Although I feel that this program is a phenomenal model, I noticed that it contained only one book that told the story of a Latino character. Because my classroom is over ninety percent Hispanic, I immediately realized the necessity of finding literature that allows students to connect with the characters on a deep, personal, even cultural level.

I chose to teach the book *Esperanza Rising* by Pam Muñoz Ryan to allow students to see and understand the struggles of a family moving into a new country. I expect that many of my students will understand and recognize those struggles, and also connect with them. I believe that many of my Latino students will have a better insight into these struggles and adjustments than I ever could. Many of my other students also come from families that arrived to New Haven within the last generation or two, so will be able to connect to these experiences. In this unit, I plan to help the families of my students to share and write down their experiences in adjusting to life in a new city. I feel that this will be extremely beneficial to my students, but also to their children, and the generations to come. The experience is not one to be taken lightly, and I believe that it is beneficial for children to see the struggles their family has overcome to better their life.

Although this unit is designed for Latino students, it can be used with, and benefit students of all ethnicities. It is intended to expose all students to the struggles of families who have come to America, and the adaptations they must make to a new culture and environment. By the end of this unit, I hope that the students have understood the pain and the reward involved in moving from one area to another. I also hope to spark interest in those students who may be withdrawn from their own culture, and where their family originated from.

An Introduction to the Book

For this unit, I chose the award-winning book, *Esperanza Rising* by Pam Muñoz Ryan. To start the story, Esperanza, a twelve year old girl, whose name in English means hope, is living with her family on El Rancho de las Rosas in Aguascalientes, Mexico during the 1920's. Esperanza's family is well off, with servants, field workers, and little concerns about finances. She wears beautiful dresses, has wonderful birthday gifts and parties, and is surrounded by her tight-knit family of Mama, Papa and Abuelita. Esperanza has no way of foreseeing her future, in which things take a drastic turn.

When Esperanza's father is killed by bandits, his brother, Tío Luis, gives Mama an unfair proposition. She is either to give them the farm and all of their property, or marry him so that he may run the farm. Tío Luis is a very powerful man in Aguascalientes, and promised to make their lives miserable if they did not agree to his terms. When Mama tried to deny his requests, Tío Luis set their house on fire while they were sleeping. Finally, Mama realized there was no escaping his proposition, and something needed to be done. That evening, Esperanza and Mama decide to flee to California with a family of their servants, who graciously offered to help them find work. Unfortunately, most of their belongings had been burned, and Abuelita was too

ill to make the journey. She would stay in hiding until she was well enough to join them in California. When the characters get to California, they live and work on a farm for Mexican workers. This proves to be a great adjustment for Esperanza, who is now doing jobs that her servants would have done before. Still, they are safe, and together, and are thankful to have escaped their unfortunate situation in Mexico. Sadly, things go from bad to worse, when Mama gets sick, and Esperanza, only a young child, is forced to work the job that Mama has committed to doing.

As Esperanza grows both physically and mentally, she comes to realize that the life she lived in Mexico was only great because of the family that surrounded her. The reader accompanies Esperanza, as she learns to keep track of time by following the crop seasons. Through Esperanza's growth, we learn what it really means to be happy in life. Esperanza has grown even stronger than ever as she lives through tragedies most could never dream of. This book is a great spiritual journey through the life of a young girl who journeys from riches to rags.

Pam Muñoz Ryan is an author of many children's books, many of which revolve around Latino characters. Ryan wrote *Esperanza Rising* based on stories she used to hear from her grandmother when she was a child. Although she has changed many of the details, the story parallels her grandmother's life in many ways.

An Overview of the History

Esperanza Rising begins in 1924, right before the Great Depression, caused by the Stock Market Crash of 1929, otherwise known as Black Tuesday. In 1910 Mexico had experienced the beginning of a major Revolution that lasted into the following decade, and created conditions of violence, uncertainty, and economic hardship in many regions of the country. During this time, unemployment was high, and times were extremely difficult for most families. Mexican migrant workers were finding jobs in the United States that would pay them more money than they were able to make in Mexico's struggling economy. The American farm owners were happy to hire the Mexican workers because it was considerably cheaper to pay them than other American workers. Although they had been present in the fields and orchards of the United States for decades, Mexican immigrant workers became a major segment of the California labor force for the first time in the 1920's. Between 1921 and 1930, there were nearly half a million legal immigrants from Mexico recorded coming into the United States. In the San Joaquin Valley (where *Esperanza Rising* takes place), Mexicans accounted for 56 percent of California's agricultural labor force (Starr, p. 61-65). While working in California, these Mexican families were very secluded for reasons such as language, social status, race, and religion. In many areas, the children were sent to separate schools, and many dropped out by high school (Starr, p. 65). Because of the situation with the Great Depression, everyone was fighting for jobs, money, and a comfortable financial situation. Many of the "white" farm workers were often uncomfortable around the immigrant workers, and were hostile towards them because they felt they were taking away their jobs. Again, the migrant workers would work for much lower pay, so employers would much rather hire them. There was also much tension between the migrant workers on the fields. Some felt that their conditions were unlivable, and they deserved much better, so they began to protest and fight for what they believed. Still, others refused to join the protests in fear that they would be fired. In the 1930's (about the time this story takes place) California remained about 88 percent white. Most of these people were those who owned the land, while the 368,000 workers, many of whom were Mexicans, were doing the work on these farms.

An Introduction to the Unit

Because *Esperanza Rising* is a lengthy book of over 250 pages, it will take an extensive amount of time to complete this unit. Still, there are many important events and discussion opportunities inside the story that should not be overlooked. This plan approximates that the unit will take about thirty days, about forty-five minutes to an hour, each period. This is ideal to use during a shared reading or guided reading unit.

This unit will involve many family-related activities and discussions, along with a culminating project that requires making a book about your family's journey. This unit also requires students to delve deep into the emotions of the characters and themselves, to have a better understanding of what it is like to be in someone else's situation. This book can tie in nicely with many social development strands and topics.

Since migration to the United States has frequently involved considerable hardship, you should keep in mind that this unit may bring to the surface many sensitive issues and situations that parents and children in your class may have suffered through. I recommend notifying all parents of this unit before implementing it in the classroom. In notifying them, it should be mentioned that students will be asked to share their family history with his or her classmates. (If a student is uncomfortable sharing the journey with the class, you may still encourage him or her to share the journey with the teacher). You may also recommend that parents sit with their children and discuss some of the things that happened during their move from their native country to New Haven. If these precautions are used, the students and parents will be better prepared for some of the conversation that will occur throughout this unit.

Lesson Plan #1

Objectives :

- Students will discover and discuss the emotions that occur within the relocation of a family.
- Students will correctly use a graphic organizer (T-Chart) to organize the emotions felt during relocation.
- Students will work cooperatively to create a list of reasons why a family might decide to relocate.

Materials :

- Chart paper / T-Chart
- T-Chart for the students (optional)
- Markers

The Lesson

I plan to begin this unit with a brief conversation about immigration, and what it means to be an immigrant. I expect that in this conversation the moving of people from Puerto Rico to America will be brought up as well. Through these conversations, the students and I will complete a graphic organizer (T-Chart) that will list each emotion, and why it might occur. For example:

Emotion | Reason

Sadness | They are leaving all of their family and belongings behind.

Again, I believe that there will be some students in the room that will have experienced these emotions first hand, and some student will use only their imagination skills to discover these emotions. The previous night, for homework, the students will have had to discuss immigration and these emotions with their family. Although not all the students are immigrants, some of them may have moved from a different state, town or even neighborhood. The emotions of these moves should be discussed, and added to the graphic organizer as well. They are relevant to the discussion, because although maybe not as severe, they are still real, and applicable to families on the move.

Today's lesson is a wonderful opportunity for students to share their stories with their peers. I would use a think-pair-share, in which each student will be partnered with a peer. They will share their story with their peer. Each student is then required to share their partner's story with the class. Although a think-pair-share will encourage interaction between the students, and allow them to become more connected with each other, this sharing can be done in many other ways, even a whole class discussion.

After discussing the emotions that a family might feel during relocation, we will look at the chart, and decide why a family would want to move when there are many negative feelings that accompany the decision. The students will then work in groups to create a list of reasons why a family might relocate. These reasons will be discussed as a class, and can lead into a conversation on how a family might decide if relocating is the right decision for them.

Lesson Plan #2

Objectives:

- Students will find two locations on a map, and track the journey from one to the other
- Students will compare journeys, and discover differences and similarities between them.

Materials:

- Map of the world (Display Size)
- Map of the world (Student Copy)
- 4 different color strings

The Lesson

In today's lesson, we will track the journeys of all the students in the class. We will track only from the place the students were born, to New Haven, where they currently reside. For homework the previous night, the students will have had to ask parents or grandparents about their journey to New Haven. It will be necessary to know at least the general area, if not the exact town or city. (If the majority of students were born in New Haven, this activity can be done tracking other family members such as grandparents, parents, or as far back as necessary to track the person who made the original journey to New Haven). Students will be given one of four colors of string depending on the type of journey they made. For example, if the students moved to New Haven from another country, they may receive blue string, from another state, red string, from another town, yellow string, and within New Haven, green string. As a class, we will put the strings on the display map, and label the string with the students' initials. The students will also put their journey on the copy of their map, and keep this in a folder for future use. We will later return to these maps to add the journey of Esperanza and Mama.

This class map will be able to show how many hard decisions were made within the families just in our classroom. Whichever family member made the original move to New Haven, had to use all the positive and negative consequences discussed yesterday to make their decision. For homework this evening, the students will discuss with their family members why they decided to move, and what it was like. This will be a great way to enter into the reading in the state of mind to understand what it was like to have to move, as Esperanza and her family did.

Teaching the book *Esperanza Rising* by Pam Mu-oz Ryan

Objectives:

- Students will define important vocabulary words necessary for the comprehension of the text.
- Students will orally read a piece of text.
- Students will read with comprehension, to answer an open-ended question, using information from the text.
- Students will use inferring skills to discover information that is not directly stated in the text.
- Students will translate between English and Spanish text.
- Students will connect to characters through sympathy and or empathy.

Materials:

- The book, *Esperanza Rising* by Pam Mu-oz Ryan
- Open-ended questions
- Vocabulary words
- Translation chart

An Overview

For each chapter, there are open-ended questions, vocabulary words, and a list of all the Spanish phrases said in that particular chapter. The vocabulary words will be introduced and definitions written on the board before the reading. The students will take notes, writing the definitions for future reference. The same will be done with the phrases that are in Spanish. If there are fluent Spanish speakers in the class, allow them to translate these phrases for the students. Because of the Dual-language model, I have a great deal of fluent Spanish speakers. I plan to seat the students into groups so that those fluent Spanish speakers are divided evenly into the groups. They will in groups teach each other the translation of these phrases. The time allowed to do this should be somewhat limited, because you will still want to report back as a class, to be sure all translations are correct. Numbered heads together would work quite nicely for this task. I feel that this is an essential part of the unit, because it allows those students who are strong in Spanish, to share their expertise with the class, and teach their English-dominant peers.

As I am reading with the students, I will stop and discuss important events or quotations, and allow the students to ask questions and give their input when necessary. The open-ended questions should be read quickly before reading the text, so the students are aware of what they should be looking for while reading. I will do a Think-Aloud while reading, to show the students the thought process of picking important information out of a piece of text. I will also encourage them to share their thoughts and thought processes with the class as well. The conversation will be geared in a way that allows all students to understand the text, despite the fact that it may be above some of their reading levels.

For the reading of the text, we will do a choral read, in which all students will read aloud in unison for part of the text. Although this can be done in many ways, I prefer to ask students to read only the text in quotations, because it allows me to hear their reading, while allowing them a break during the reading of the chapter.

The following questions and vocabulary words are broken down by chapter. They may be used in whole, or part for the reading of the story. Also, many chapters are quite long, so only half of the chapter will be read in a period. Clearly, this may be adjusted to best fit your literacy block, or time allotted. The questions may be used in literacy centers, or whole class, depending on the level of the students in that class. Before sending the students to write open-ended responses, I will discuss the questions, and model what an acceptable answer might look like. (The CMT strand is written next to the question.)

Lesson # 3: Aguascalientes, Mexico Pages 1-3

Vocabulary words: Slope, Incline, Arbors, Resounding, Tendril

Translation from English to Spanish: Aguántate tantito y la fruta caerá en tu mano,

Open-ended Questions: (B3) Using information from the text, what can you tell about how Papa feels about the land that the family is living on?

Lesson # 4: Las Uvas Pages 4-12

Vocabulary: Scythe, Premonition, Capricious, Be courted, Reaping

Translation from English to Spanish: Cúidate los dedos, Campesinos, La cosecha, Campesinos, Fiest, Quincea-eras, Patronas, Vaqueros, Los Ma-anitas, Algun dia, Mi nieta

Open-ended Questions: (B3) Using information from the text, tell if you think that Esperanza had a good relationship with her parents. Why or why not?

Lesson # 5: Las Uvas Pages 13-22

Vocabulary: Forlorn, Resurrected, Taunting, Dwindled

Translation from English to Spanish: No hay rosa sin espinas, El jefe, Compa-ero, Mi reina, Un burro

Open-ended Questions: (A2) Why can Esperanza and Miguel never get married? Use information from the text to support your answer.

Lesson #6: Las Papayas Pages 23-38

Vocabulary: Aguish, Condolences, Indignation, Pretentious, Cordial

Translation from English to Spanish: La sala, Qué pasó, La calabaza

Open-ended Questions: (A4) Everyone is warning Mama that Tío Luis can make their life very miserable. What do you think will happen to the family, and why? Use information from the text to help with your prediction.

Lesson #7: Los Higos Pages 39-50

Vocabulary: Smothering, Silhouetted, Salvage, Discreetly

Translation from English to Spanish: Un milagro, Mija

Open-ended Questions: (C1) If you were Mama, what would you decide to do? Why? Use information from the text to support why you would make that decision for the family.

Lesson # 8: Los Higos Pages 51-57

Vocabulary: Indebted, Plentiful, Smirk, Venom

Open-ended Questions: (A1) The title of this chapter is "Los Higos" or "Figs." If you were going to rename this chapter, what would you call it, and why?

Lesson # 9: Las Guayabas Pages 58-72

Vocabulary: Emerged, Reluctantly, Renegades, Mesmerized, Jostled

Translation from English to Spanish: Ratón, Rebozo, Lámparas, Gracias, De nada

Open-ended Questions: (C1) Think of a time you didn't want to do something, but you knew you had to. How is this like and different from how Esperanza's family is feeling in this chapter?

Lesson # 10: Las Guayabas Pages 73-80

Vocabulary: Monotonous, Hesitantly, Confiding

Translation from English to Spanish: Pepinos, Una palanca, Dulces, Carpetas, Buena suerte

Open-ended Questions: 1. (B3) What were Mama and Esperanza probably thinking when Carmen told them, "I am poor, but I am rich. I have my children, I have a garden with roses, and I have my faith and the memories of those who have gone before me. What more is there?" (on page 76). Why were they thinking this?

2.(B2) Why does the author introduce us to the woman, Carmen, on the train? Why is she important in this chapter?

Lesson # 11: Los Melones Pages 81-93

Vocabulary: Disembarked, Stagnant, Prodded, Hauling, Jalopy

Translation from English to Spanish: Arroyo

Open-ended Questions: (C1) Why did Esperanza think it was so strange that Isabel was excited about school? Use information from the text and your own life to support your answer.

Lesson # 12: Los Melones Pages 94-99

Vocabulary: Bulging, Hillock, Decent

Translation from English to Spanish: Entiendes

Open-ended Questions: 1.(B3) How is Esperanza feeling when Marta said those things about Papa, and the way she lived in Mexico? What in the text shows you this is how she is feeling? 2.(B1) How are Esperanza and Marta alike? How are the two girls different? Use information from the text to support your answer.

Lesson # 13: Las Cebollas Pages 100-113

Vocabulary: Loomed, Bestowed, Debris, Simmering

Translation from English to Spanish: De versa, café, chorizo, mi sobrina

Open-ended Questions: (C1) Esperanza is in a new place, and meeting new people. Think about a time you felt this way. How is the situation in your life like and different from the experience in Esperanza's life? Use information from the text to support your answer.

On this day, Esperanza arrives at her new "home." As a class, we will return back to the map created in lesson two, and track Esperanza's journey. The students will also put her journey on their map, where they have

traced their own. It is then easy to see the distance that was traveled by Esperanza. About a week before this lesson, the students would have been given the assignment to research, through their families, the amount of time it took for them to arrive in New Haven. This lends nicely to a whole class discussion about the comparison of time and distance from Esperanza to the students. The experience of the travel should be discussed as well. A Venn Diagram will be created to compare Esperanza's emotions during her journey, to the emotions felt by the students, or their families during their journey. The Venn Diagram can then be used to formulate the answer to the question stated above.

Because this is the part in the text where Esperanza arrives in her new setting, I would also begin to show the students pictures of what the conditions were like on the farms. There are many resources at the end of this unit that are great visuals for the students. There are also resources which would allow students to read interviews and feelings from children who are working in the fields today. This would allow them to understand the emotion and hard work that goes into living a life such as this. This can be done as an entirely separate unit, possibly in a social studies block or literacy center.

Lesson # 14: Las Cebollas Pages 114-120

Vocabulary: Accosting, Propped, Vigorously, Ridicule

Translation from English to Spanish: La cenicienta

Open-ended Questions: (D1) Are the characters so far in the story believable? Why or why not? Use information from the text to support your answer.

Lesson # 15: Las Almendras Pages 121-138

Vocabulary: Shrine, Grotto, Trellis, Starched, Accustomed

Translation from English to Spanish: ¡ndale, Flan de almendra, Una tienda

Open-ended Questions: (A1) What lesson is Esperanza learning while she is spending time working and living in the camps with the rest of the workers? Use information from the text to show how she is learning this lesson.

Lesson #16: Las Ciruelas Pages 139-157:

Vocabulary: Whimpering, Wadded, Immunized, Preoccupied

Translation from English to Spanish: Rápido, Una tormenta de polve, Mi gata, Ma-ana

Open-ended Questions: 1. (B3) How did Esperanza feel when Isabel told her she did exactly the right thing to take care of the babies? What in the text showed you this is how she felt? 2.(A4) Predict what you think will happen to Mama in the next chapter. What in the story makes you think this is what will happen?

Lesson #17: Las Papas pages 158-167

Vocabulary: Nimble, Trance, Cope

Translation from English to Spanish: Claro

Open-ended Questions: (C1) Pretend you are Esperanza. What would you do to help Mama in this chapter? Why is this what you would do? Use information from your own experiences to support your answer

Lesson #18: Las Papas Pages 168-178

Vocabulary: Penetrating, Bereft, Cavernous, Repatriation, Lapel

Translation from English to Spanish: La migra, La navidad, Catedral, Atole de chocolate, Un cuento de hadas

Open-ended Questions: (A5) What does it mean when the author says, "Isabel had nothing, but she also had everything" on page 176. Give an example of how this might relate to your life.

Lesson # 19: Las Aguacates Pages 179-184

Vocabulary: Pruning, Taut, Suppleness, Regal, Susceptible

Open-ended Questions: 1. (D2) Pretend you are Esperanza, and write a paragraph in your journal after you have left Mama in the hospital. 2. (A3) Give a brief summary of this chapter.

Lesson # 20: Las Aguacates Pages 185-198

Vocabulary: Tormented, Squalor, Recuperation

Translation from English to Spanish: Que Buena suerte, Aquí, Machaca

Open-ended Questions: (B3) How do you know that Miguel is excited about his new job at the railroad? Use evidence from the story to support your text.

Lesson # 21: Los Espárragos Pages 199-213

Vocabulary: Menacing, Voluntary Deportation, Despondent, Desolate

Translation from English to Spanish: Huelga, Caldo de albóndigas

Open-ended Questions: 1. (C1) If you were Esperanza, what would you have done when Marta asked you for help? Use information from the text and your life to explain why you would do this. 2. (A2) If you could choose one word to describe Esperanza, what would it be, and why? Use information from the text to support your answer.

Lesson # 22: Los Duraznos Pages 214-224

Vocabulary: Alyssum, Devoutly, Unrelenting, Irrigation Pipes, Optimism

Translation from English to Spanish: Comal

Open-ended Questions: (A5) What does Miguel mean when he tells Esperanza, "And you still think you are still a Queen" on page 224. Use evidence from the text and your life to support your answer.

Lesson # 23: Los Duraznos Pages 225-233

Vocabulary: Primly, Cradled, Relapse, Antiseptic

Open-ended Questions: (A2) In this chapter, Mama told Esperanza that she is acting very mature. What in the story proves the Esperanza has changed from the girl she was in the beginning of the story? Use information from the text to support your answer.

Lesson # 24: Las Uvas pages 234-243

Vocabulary: Graciously, Deceiving, Mussed, Escorted

Translation from English to Spanish: Mira, Un fanstasma, Aquí estoy

Open-ended Questions: (A2) If you could choose one word to describe the reunion of Abuelita, Mama and Esperanza, what would it be, and why? Use information from the text to support your answer.

Lesson # 25: Las Uvas Pages 244-253

Vocabulary: Infuriated, Premonition, Amidst, Skeptically, Cacaphony

Open-ended Questions: (B2) Why did the author end the story when the men were singing outside of Esperanza's window? What did this show the reader? Use information from the text to support your answer.

Lesson # 26: The End of the Book Questions

1. (B2) Why did the author use both Spanish and English throughout the story? What did that help to show her readers? Use examples from the text to support your answer.
2. (D3) What did you learn about the Pam Mu-oz Ryan by reading this story? What details in the story told you this about the author?
3. (D2) If you wanted to show that Esperanza changed from the beginning of the story to the end, what event from the story would you choose to write about and why? Use details from the text to support your answer.

Closure to the Book

Lesson #27: Understanding the Main Character

Objectives:

- Students will use their skills of inferring to understand the changes that went on throughout the story.
- Students will find appropriate words to describe a character
- Students will express their ideas orally in front of the class
- Students will work cooperatively in groups to create a final product.

I feel at this point, the students have a great feel for who Esperanza was, and who she has now become. Following a discussion of the ways in which Esperanza has changed, the students will have this assignment, in which they will work in pairs.

There are many words to describe Esperanza, and how she has changed throughout the story. The students' job will be to express these changes artistically. Each pair of students will take a large piece of construction paper and fold it in half. One half will be labeled before, and the other half will be labeled after. The pair will search through magazines, and other materials provided to find words that will fit in both sections. There must be at least five words in each section, and the students must be able to explain why these words are an accurate portrayal of our main character.

When the posters are completed, each pair will be required to present their view of Esperanza to the class. One member will present the before section, and the other will present the after section. This is not only an activity that allows the students to show their comprehension, but also to practice the art of public speaking. For those students who are unable to speak in front of the whole group, they may present to a small group of students they choose at a different time.

A Family Project

Objectives :

- Students and parents will work together to create facts and memories about their journeys
- Students will write a paragraph summarizing the reasons they moved to New Haven
- Students will use pictures to represent their memories of their journeys

Materials:

- Paper
- Pictures
- Crayons / Markers
- Binding Machine (If possible)
- Cardstock

The Lesson:

(The length of this project will vary depending on the class, and home cooperation.)

I feel that the students by the end of this unit can feel deeply inspired by the dedication it takes to uproot a family to a new environment, whether a new country, state, town or even location within a town. Through this project, the students will create a memory book of their family's journey. Again, some students may need to go back farther into their family history to get the factual information necessary.

The students will begin by gathering information from their family members, and writing it down to create notes which they will use to form their paragraphs. I plan to require that students and parents collaborate with this project, because it is meant to represent the journey of a family, not a single child. The students and teacher will collaborate to edit and revise the paragraph when necessary. The writing should include information that can be broken down into four or five pages, using two to three sentences per page (like a picture book). After the writing is complete, the students are encouraged to get photographs from home that may represent the place their family originated from, and New Haven, where they are currently living. Because not all students will have access to photographs such as these, they will also draw in pictures to represent these memories. The art teacher is a great resource that can be asked to assist in drawing a realistic portrayal of these events. If it is difficult for the students and teachers involved to find pictures for the children to use as guidelines, the Library-Media Specialist can assist in finding accurate pictures of particular places from a particular time period.

When each page contains two or three sentences, and the corresponding picture, they will be bound into a book. I am going to include all the aspects of a real book such as a dedication, cover, title page, etc. This is not only creating a realistic book for the students and families to keep, but is also giving a mini-lesson on the parts of a book.

Extensions of the Unit

This unit can be easily followed up by a study of how migrant workers' conditions have changed since the times of Esperanza. Below are many resources that give current conditions and stories of migrant families and their true feelings and stories of working the fields. Also, Cesar Chavez and his dedication to the cause can be discussed and studied. Whether or not these topics are done in length is up to the discretion of the teacher, but I believe they should at least be touched upon, so that students may compare from the 1930's to the present date.

Teacher Resources

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

2000.

This book is a great overview of the history of Latinos in America. It is informative, and is not difficult reading.

Mu-oz Ryan, Pam. *Esperanza Rising*. Scholastic Inc. 2000.

This book is a great novel that is inspiring to people both old and young. It is the inspiration for this unit in that it teaches the true meaning of "money can not buy happiness." This book does an amazing job of teaching the value of family, hope and determination.

Starr, Kevin. *Endangered Dreams: The Great Depression in California*. Oxford

University Press. 1996.

This book contains great facts and statistics about the Depression in California.

Stoll, Steven. *Fruits of Natural Advantage: Making the Industrial Countryside in California*. Berkely: University of California Press, 1998.

Information about the late nineteenth and early twentieth century farmers.

Walker, Richard A. *The Conquest of Bread: 150 Years of Agribusiness in California*. New York: Free Press, 2004.

A history of agriculture in California.

<http://www.readingrockets.org/books/interviews/ryan>

This site provides video interviews of Pam Mu-oz Ryan that you are able to watch on the computer, or transcripts of these interviews. Also contains information about her life as a child and author.

<http://teacher.scholastic.com/products/instructor/multicultural.htm>

This site contains great ideas on teaching multicultural concepts to students. Provides book lists specifically based on Native

American, Latino, African American, Jewish, and Asian American cultures and characters.

<http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/pubs/jeilms/vol15/crossing.htm>

This article Discusses reasons and strategies to make a classroom as multicultural as possible. Also includes lists of picture books, novels, and adult literature books that are ideal for celebrating a diverse classroom.

<http://www.newhorizons.org/strategies/multicultural/higgins.htm>

This site is a great tool to understand how to evaluate and choose multicultural literature for your classroom. It includes a rubric to use to evaluate literature that you may find. Also gives examples of over thirty exemplar books, and summaries for these stories.

Student Resources

Ancona, George. *Harvest*. Library of Congress Cataloging-in Publication Data. 2001

This book is the story of current migrant worker families and their every-day struggles. It gives details and descriptions of what it is like to work on the farm as a migrant worker.

Atkin, Beth. *Voices From the Fields: Children of Migrant Farmworkers Tell Their*

Stories. Little, Brown and Company Inc. 1993.

This book includes the stories of nine Mexican children and their families who live as migrant workers. Includes poetry, interviews, and phenomenal pictures. Great for students and teachers.

Kent, Deborah. *Migrant Farm Workers: Hoping for a Better Life*. The Child's World.

2005.

This book contains a great historical timeline of migrant farm workers from 1887-2004. It can be extremely helpful to allow the students to see the changes in these times.

Wadsworth, Ginger. *Cesar Chavez* . Carolrhoda Books. 2005.

An extremely easy reader which gives the history of Cesar Chavez's life and how he helped the cause of migrant workers.

<http://www.promotega.org/msc00007/index.html>

This site was created by students for students. It contains activities, research information, games, recipes, and much more! Great for students to play around with, and expand their knowledge of the story.

http://www.museumca.org/picturethis/3_2.html

This site contains pictures of the conditions that migrant workers in California lived in during the Depression. It gives details and information on what housing and conditions were like at this time.

<https://teachersinstitute.yale.edu>

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