

New Faces: Latinos in North Carolina

A curriculum-based media project about the Latino community's cultural & economic contributions to North Carolina.

UNIT 4 **Immigration**

Module 2: The Personal Impact of Immigration Policy

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Unit 4 / Module 2 Objectives:

1. Learn more about people's motivation to come to the United States even if they cannot do it legally.
2. Dismantle myths and stereotypes about undocumented immigrants already in the United States.

Unit 4 / Module 2 Framing Questions:

1. What can we learn from individuals' personal immigration stories?
2. How does our current U.S. immigration system function?
3. What effects have immigration enforcement policies had on North Carolina families in recent years?

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Unit 4 / Module 2 / Lesson 1 Immigration: Myths vs. Facts

Objective

Learners will explore myths and facts about undocumented immigrants and will learn media literacy skills that help them analyze future claims about immigrants with which they might be confronted.

Framing Questions

1. What are common stereotypes and ideas held about immigrants, documented or undocumented? What are the origins of many of these stereotypes?
2. Where can we look for factual information on subjects such as immigration rather than depending on word-of-mouth or other sources of information that may be incorrect?

Backgrounder

Common myths and stereotypes persist about immigrant communities and should be addressed. Many of these myths are connected to questions of economics. For example, one common myth is that undocumented immigrants don't pay taxes. In fact all immigrants pay sales taxes when they purchase goods and services and many pay payroll taxes at their workplaces. This lesson explores several myths and facts about immigration and immigrants and encourages students to seek out factual information.

Discussing some of these myths about immigration may arouse strong sentiments from some learners. It is therefore important to discuss ground rules for discussing sensitive issues before beginning a lesson. The opening activity in this lesson is the setting of ground rules for the rest of the discussion.

Materials and Preparation Needed

1. ACLU, "Immigration Myths and Facts"
<http://www.aclu.org/immigrants-rights/immigration-myths-and-facts>
2. Anti Defamation League, "Myths and Facts About Immigrants and Immigration"
http://www.adl.org/education/curriculum_connections/spring_2009/supplements/Myths_and_Facts.pdf
3. Immigrants' List, "The Immigration Debate: Myths vs. Facts"
http://www.immigrantslist.org/myths_vs_facts
4. One America, "Myths and Facts on Immigration"
<http://www.hatefreezone.org/article.php?id=203>

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5. Additional web resources for fact checking include: <http://www.politifact.com/> and <http://www.factcheck.org/>
6. Prepare 5 small pieces of paper or index cards. Each card should have one of the following myths about undocumented immigrants written on it.
 - Undocumented Immigrants don't pay taxes.
 - Crime has increased as the numbers of immigrants have increased.
 - Immigrants have an overall negative effect on the economy.
 - Immigrants are a drain on social services.
 - Immigrants don't want to learn English.

Lesson Outline

Generate Ground Rules

1. Explain to participants that you would like to set guidelines for the day's discussion because it is about a controversial topic. If you have general guidelines for your classroom or group you may want to revisit them to make sure they are still appropriate.
2. If you do not have a previous set of conversation ground rules, allow participants to make suggestions, popcorn style.
3. After you have created a list of several ground rules, revisit each one and confirm that it is acceptable to all participants. Ask all learners if they can agree to all of the guidelines.

Immigration Myths and Facts

1. Divide the class into 5 small groups. Explain that each group is going to be asked to debunk one myth about undocumented immigrants. Learners may use the provided immigration fact sheets, websites of news organizations, or other reference material to provide factual information that disproves the myth that they have been assigned.
2. Ask one person from each group to draw a piece of paper from the basket that you have prepared. Each piece of paper contains one myth about undocumented immigrants.
3. Give groups about 10 to 15 minutes (depending on your assessment of the learners' needs and abilities) to read the myth and discuss their initial reactions to it. Then ask them to review the fact sheets listed in the materials section and to do additional research. The group will also need to prepare a short presentation including visual aids to share their information with the group.
4. Each group will report back to the class on the factual information that they learned that contradicts the myth they were assigned. Allow a few minutes for discussion of the information after their presentation.

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Media Literacy Extension Activity

1. Ask students to watch the nightly news, cable news, or to read the newspaper for a set number of days.
2. Learners should record statements made by commentators and reporters about immigration issues.
3. Learners should then work to fact-check the statements using some of the sources identified in this lesson or through other sources of information. Learners should research the affiliations of the commentators, their general political stances, and should evaluate the accuracy of the information reported. Additional web resources for fact checking include: <http://www.politifact.com/> and <http://www.factcheck.org/>
4. Learners will then submit a report or essay that outlines their observations.
5. Alternatively, this lesson could be done as a group, with the facilitator bringing in clips from news shows, articles, or other pieces of media.

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Unit 4 / Module 2 / Lesson 2 Immigration Law vs. Family Law

Objectives

1. Learners will gain understanding of an individual Latino immigrant's decision to come to the United States
2. Learners will be able to compare and contrast the experience of an undocumented immigrant with their own experiences or those of a family member.

Framing Questions

1. What can we learn about reasons for migration by listening to immigrants' personal stories?
2. How do our relationships with our families and loved ones influence decisions that we make?

Materials and Preparation Needed

1. New Faces DVD Film Clip, "Ramon's Family Law": We meet Ramon, who entered the United States illegally seeking work. He states in the film that although he understands that he has broken U.S. immigration law, he feels he has followed "family law," which is to provide for his family. We see images of Ramon's family back in Mexico, his wife and two daughters, who are now teenagers. He says he would much rather be with them in Mexico, but their financial reality does not permit it.
2. TV and DVD Player
3. Computer with Internet access and projector with speakers

Lesson Outline

Think. Pair. Share.

1. Ask learners to think about someone in their lives who cares about them. Maybe it is a parent or a good friend. Ask them to think about a sacrifice that this person has made for them. What was the sacrifice? Do they think the person would do it again?
2. Ask learners each to turn to the person next to them and share their answers to these questions.
3. Ask the pairs to think about what similarities and differences their stories have.

Film Clip

1. Introduce and show the video clip, "Ramon's Family Law."

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2. Lead a discussion about the film clip using the following questions:
 - Discuss the pictures of Ramon's family that you saw in the film. Why does Ramon say about his family, "We need to be strong and see the reality of life?"
 - What are Ramon's hopes and dreams for his wife and family?
 - What challenges must he overcome to realize his hopes and dreams?
 - What does Ramon mean by "family law?" What do you consider your family law to be?
 - Do you think you would choose the same path as Ramon if faced with his situation?
 - How do our families' circumstances, including economics, immigration status, education, etc., shape our dreams and how we realize them?

Writing Activity or Homework Assignment

1. Ask learners to think about the hopes and dreams they have for their own families or, for younger learners, the hopes they think their parents have for them.
2. For homework or an in-class assignment, ask learners to write a one-page essay comparing their parents' hopes and dreams for their families with those that Ramon expresses.

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Unit 4 / Module 2 / Lesson 3 Undocumented: A State of Limbo

Objectives

1. Learners will better understand the situation of individuals who came to the United States as children and who are living here without documentation.
2. Learners will be able to explain the limitations and struggles facing people in these situations.

Framing Question

What might it feel like to have lived the majority of your life in this country and to know that you could be forced to return to country of your birth at any time?

Backgrounder

Many young people come to the United States as children because their parents brought them here. Some of those young people have documentation, some do not. Either way, they grow up and come to know the United States as their home. They may have come at a young enough age not even to remember the country of their birth. However, those who are undocumented live in a permanent state of limbo, unable to fully participate in the life of the country they consider their own, but unprepared to return to the country of which they are citizens.

Materials and Preparation Needed

1. Computer with Internet access and projector with speakers
2. TV and DVD player
3. New Faces DVD Film Clip: "Living Between Borders" Isabel has learned to live with fear. That is what she must do to remain with her family. She came to the U.S. at the age of 13. Today, she is 29. Her whole family — including her daughter — is documented, but she is not. She has considered returning to Mexico, but her life and her world are here. She does not know her birth country well enough to survive there. With the current laws, she has no option of becoming documented. Even applying for residency would bring a penalty of 10 years in Mexico for having entered illegally. So, Isabel waits for the laws to change and prays that she is not unmasked in the interim.
4. Colored pencils, crayons, or markers
5. Blank paper
6. Student journals or paper for writing and drawing

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Lesson Outline

Between Two Worlds

1. Ask learners to think about the ways in which their lives straddle different worlds or different arenas of life that are very different. Perhaps for some it is the world of school and home life; for some it might be their roles as professionals versus their roles as parents; for others it might be living between two cultures (e.g. a person whose parents come from different cultural or ethnic backgrounds).
2. Ask learners to take 10 to 15 minutes to create a simple drawing of these two worlds, showing themselves in the middle.
3. As a class discuss the learners' feelings raised by straddling these two worlds, or living in limbo between them. How do the learners navigate their two worlds?

Film Clip and Response

1. Introduce and watch the clip, "Living Between Borders."
2. Ask learners to free-write for 5 minutes, exploring their initial responses to the clip.
3. Ask a few learners who feel comfortable doing so to share their responses or to summarize what they wrote.
4. Use these responses as the jumping-off point for a group dialogue about Isabel's situation. The following are suggested discussion questions:
 - Why did Isabel come to the United States?
 - What are Isabel's biggest fears?
 - Isabel talks about the possibility of being separated from her daughter. Do you think that keeping families together should be a factor when immigration policy is created or changed?
 - What can we learn about the U.S. Immigration system from Isabel's story?

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Unit 4 / Module 2 / Lesson 4

The Personal Impact of Immigration Enforcement on Families

Objective

Learners will be able to analyze and think critically about the ways in which immigration policy affects individuals.

Framing Questions

1. How does deportation affect the families of those individuals who have been deported or could be deported?
2. How does immigration detention affect the families of the person being detained?
3. Do alternatives to deportation and detention exist that would be just and beneficial to all members of our communities?

Backgrounder

Immigration Detention Centers are located across the country. Review this interactive map to find out about immigration detention centers.

<http://www.detentionwatchnetwork.org/dwnmap>

Materials and Preparation Needed

1. "New Faces" DVD Clip, "Phone Calls from Papi" Linzi, a U.S. citizen, fell in love with Domingo, a Mexican immigrant, when she was 13 years old. They married in 2006. They have three daughters together. Domingo was detained in June 2008 during an appearance at the Wake County Courthouse. He was questioned about his citizenship after law enforcement officers noticed his tattoos. He was taken into immigration custody. Linzi was left to care for their children on her own. Unable to support her family alone, she moved in with her mother. In February, Domingo was released. Linzi's story — one of not knowing if Domingo would ever be released — reflects the uncertainty that thousands face.
2. "New Faces" DVD Clip, "A Father's Sacrifice" In this clip viewers meet John, who came to North Carolina from Acapulco three years ago. He was 15. He enrolled in high school and excelled. He learned English quickly and made his father proud. In September 2008, John was arrested for a petty theft that his friends say he didn't commit. Instead of attending high school, John sat in jail, headed for deportation. Posting bail in immigration proceedings is complicated and expensive. John's father struggled to raise the \$3,500 needed for bail in addition to lawyer fees. Although the family's lawyer knew that the charge would be dropped, he had the criminal trial delayed to give John's father more time to raise the money before John was to be transferred to federal custody and deported.
3. Computer with Internet access and projector

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4. TV and DVD player
5. <http://www.detentionwatchnetwork.org/dwnmap>
6. www.facingdeportation.org
7. "I Am in Immigration Detention," handout (PDF) available from the New Faces website and from http://www.nationalimmigrationproject.org/ImmRightsRes/crkit_files/KYRDetention.pdf
8. Additional resource: "Torn Apart by Deportation," *ColorLines* magazine <http://colorlines.com/article.php?ID=618>

Lesson Outline

Freewriting Exercise

1. Ask learners to free-write for 10 minutes about a time in their lives when they were in the wrong place at the wrong time, a scenario in which they might not have been doing anything wrong but were in a sticky and perhaps problematic situation.
2. Ask learners to write about how they felt at the time and about any consequences that resulted from the incident.

Film Clips

1. Transition to the film clip by noting that students are also going to view a short video about a young man who was in the wrong place at the wrong time and for whom this resulted in incredibly difficult circumstances for him and his family.
2. If viewing the clip on the website, have a student read the summary of the video. Otherwise consider having one person read the summary in the materials section above.
3. Show the clip, "A Father's Sacrifice"
4. Follow up with a free-writing exercise. Ask students to take 5 minutes to write down their initial responses to the clip.
5. Discuss the clip using the following questions:
 - What sacrifices did Ignacio have to make for his son?
 - What are the possible outcomes for the family if John is deported?
 - Why might the immigration bail be so high?
 - Could you think of alternatives to incarcerating the young man? What might these be?

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- How might this family's experience affect the wider community in which they live?
 - How does immigration detention affect the wider community, not just immigrants themselves?
6. Transition to the film clip, "Phone Calls from Papi"
 7. Watch the clip and then discuss the following questions:
 - Why wouldn't ICE release Domingo?
 - How does his absence and unknown future affect his family?
 - How might have Domingo's background affected his experience?
 - What can you learn about the rights that Domingo has while in detention from this clip?

Learning About What Happens When People Are Detained by ICE

1. Transition to a discussion and information session on what happens when a person is in immigration detention. Start by asking the class what they think happens when someone is detained by immigration and customs enforcement.
2. Ask learners to review the handout, "I Am in Immigration Detention," and to answer the following questions in pairs:
 - What rights do people in immigration detention have?
 - How can their family find out where they are?
 - What is the difference between being detained by a immigration officer or a local law enforcement officer?
 - Where will the person be detained?
3. As a group create a summary list of the rights that a person in immigration detention has.