

UNC-DUKE CONSORTIUM IN
LATIN AMERICAN &
CARIBBEAN STUDIES



Latin American Immigrants and the American Dream

Overview: Through this lesson, students will gain a greater understanding of the various challenges that Latin Americans face. Students will read excerpts from interviews from the New Roots/Nuevas Raíces Oral History Digital Archive. Students will learn about immigrant experiences in both the native country and in the new host country. By using oral histories in the classroom, distant events will become more real and relevant to students. Oral histories were collected by students in an APPLS service learning course at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and are part of the New Roots/Nuevas Raíces digital archive: <https://newroots.lib.unc.edu/>.

Grade Level: American History, Grades 9-12

Time: 80-90 minutes

NCDPI/Common Core Learning Standard(s):

AH2.H.8.3: Evaluate the extent to which a variety of groups and individuals have had opportunity to attain their perception of the “American Dream” since Reconstruction (e.g., immigrants, blue collar workers, white collar worker, etc.).

AH2.H.8.4: Analyze multiple perceptions of the “American Dream” in times of prosperity and crisis since Reconstruction.

Focus “I Can” Statement/Question: I can describe how an American immigrant or migrant endured passage to/within the U.S. to better themselves, their families, and their communities.

Materials Needed:

New Roots/Nuevas Raíces website (<https://newroots.lib.unc.edu/>)

Technology for students to access New Roots/Nuevas Raíces website (computer, tablet, smart phone)

Interview worksheets

THE LESSON/LEARNING TASKS/SEQUENCE/ORGANIZATION:

Introduction/Before (:00 - :05): Free write: What is the “American Dream”?

What do you know about Latin American immigration? What is your opinion? Do you have personal experience with migration from Latin America or know anyone who does?

Instruction for Learning and Engagement/During (:05 - :25): Listen to a short excerpt from *Emilio*’s oral history. Teacher asks whole class questions about the oral history to ensure comprehension.



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Emilio Vicente graduated from UNC Chapel Hill, worked on the national United We Dream campaign in Washington, D.C, and started the One State One Rate campaign to fight for higher education in-state tuition for undocumented and DACAmented students.

Play first 05:16 of [Emilio's interview](#) for the class. Or use QR code.

Discussion questions:

Where is Emilio from?

San Vicente, Guatemala - small agricultural village. He was 6 years old when his family moved to the US.

What was life like in Guatemala?

Education was not very accessible - certainly not to women. Dad finished 7th grade. Mom had no schooling. Dad travelled all over country to try to make money, but could not make enough to support family. He is from an indigenous village where K'iche is spoken.

Why did his dad initially move to the US in 1992?

He could not make enough money in Guatemala - "he decided to come to the US in 1992 because he thought he would have a better opportunity of sending money back to provide for my family."

What kind of work did his dad do in the US?

A variety of agricultural farm-working jobs - he moved around a lot. Eventually settled in Siler City, NC. Opportunities to work in poultry and agriculture there.

Why was Emilio's dad/family seeking political asylum? Did they get it?

Civil War in Guatemala. His uncle was drafted into the national army. He wanted to avoid being drafted and get his family to a safer place with more opportunities. They were not granted political asylum. They crossed the border.

Engagement and Practice/During: (:25 - :50): Divide class into groups of four. Have each group listen to an oral history individually with headphones. Complete worksheet about person as a group.

Interview worksheets with interview links attached:

1. [Interview #1](#)
2. [Interview #2](#)
3. [Interview #3](#)
4. [Interview #4](#)
5. [Interview #5](#)
6. [Interview #6](#)
7. [Interview #7](#)
8. [Interview #8](#)
9. [Interview #9](#)
10. [Interview #10](#)

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****Interviews 8-10 are recorded in Spanish, but English transcriptions are provided. Consider giving these interviews to students who speak Spanish, but all students should be able to learn and benefit from them.**

Closure/After: (:55 - :10): Create new groups with one member from each original group. Students pretend to be the person from their interview. Group discussion pretending to be that person about their life and experience.

Group members take turns asking and answering questions on the worksheet. Members pretend to be their interviewee when answering questions.

ASSESSMENT(S) (include formative and summative assessments where applicable):

Formative: monitoring of student comprehension of oral history; group worksheet about person

Summative: Answer the following questions (either in small groups/whole group/for homework/online discussion board/as journal assignment):

What similarities did you see across experiences? What were some major differences?

What commonalities did you see among interviewee perceptions of the “American Dream”?

How does this impact your opinion of Latin American immigrants?