

A Population Without Borders – Migration of Both the Mexican and the Monarch Butterfly

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Overview

This unit connects the monarch butterfly and the native human population from the Southwest. It is geared for the middle school student, but may be further developed for an older age or modified for the younger student. The insect focus of the lesson is more hands on while the study of border issues and immigration is text based. It is multidisciplinary in focus, presenting a broad spectrum of learning opportunities:

Science – the study of the butterfly; body parts, stages of development and what is needed to sustain each, plus unique characteristics of the monarch like the magnetic compass that somehow directs it thousands of miles to an overwintering area far away in a place it has never been.

Ecology – the study of the environment and what is needed on behalf of humankind to maintain the delicate ecosystem of the monarch.

Foreign Language – the opportunity to communicate in Spanish with schoolchildren in Mexico.

Technology – use of computers to retrieve science lessons, activities, and weekly updates during the migration of the monarch.

Citizenship – studying current issues, the plight of the monarch and its threatened existence plus the dilemma of people searching for a better life. Learning to value nature and humanity, despite the culture.

Politics – The workings of a government and the interconnection with big business and influential corporate magnets.

Sociology – This unit focuses on the plight of the Mexican-American and the migrant: human and legal rights and concerns of prejudice.

History – U.S. settlements into the Southwest, displacing the native population, or restructuring their lifestyles.

Geography – charting the monarch’s migratory patterns to overwintering locations is a meaningful way to learn all the states between where a student lives and Mexico. The migration issue will bring an awareness of which states grapple with the influx of immigrants.

What are the rights to survival? The beautiful monarch butterfly for the moment is co-existing in a world of dwindling resources, deforestation, toxic environment and threatened habitat. The premise is no one would contest the right of the monarch to fly freely over migratory routes that span three countries in search of the necessary ecosystem for survival. Therefore, might this same liberty be expanded to the human population? Should modern man not also have the right to wander freely across nations according to his needs? It is, after all, an ancient custom of nomadic people and one which originally brought Man to this continent to begin with. A recent report on NPR’s Morning Edition (June 12, 2003) gave the figure that one out of every thirty-five persons is nomadic – moving here, moving there. Thinking of ourselves as migrants puts a different slant on the term. This unit is based on the plight of the monarch butterfly and of the Hispanic population in southwestern United States where geographic boundaries changed by virtue of politics. Thousands of Mexicans found their ranches and homes suddenly in another country. It has been a struggle to preserve their language and culture among people who consider them the “intruders”.

A teacher may present students with the opportunity to connect with Mexican classrooms also involved with the preservation of the monarch. Interesting ties can develop among students concerned with the same issues. Spanish may then be incorporated, no matter how limited, in an exciting effort to communicate with another youngster. This dimension, however, is not necessary to participate in the exchange offered by Journey North in its Symbolic Butterfly activity, since Mexican school children learn a basic use of English. Language and the sharing of culture would be a bonus for classrooms interested in pursuing them.

Rationale

Childhood fascination

Children are intrigued with butterflies. The bold colors and markings catch the eye and they follow its casual fluttering from one flower to another, watching as it sticks its proboscis into the nectar source. What wonder and grace! Next he retracts the proboscis that serves as a long tongue and flits off repeating the

process again. It seems like a happy creature, bouncing from one stalk of beauty to another – itself a beautiful specimen of nature. It doesn't dart in bee-line swiftness, but rather seems to dance through the air lifting here, turning there, taking its time to literally “smell the roses” along the way.

Such fragile looking creatures are kept aloft with delicate, paper-thin wings. For some, these wings must carry them on journeys of two thousand miles or more. A truly amazing feat! As a child, I especially remember the monarch butterfly. It was easy to spot with its size and striking color contrasts of black and orange. This expert flier teased my friends and me until we hopped down from our playtime perches squealing with childish delight all the while in fast pursuit. We zig-zagged through the yards and fields of my northern Ohio neighborhood. It was not until adulthood, however, that I learned the incredible life story of the monarch. Unlike most other butterflies whose end-of-season eggs become caterpillars that spin silk cocoons to ensure winter survival, the last generation of monarchs prepares for a long migratory journey to the state of Michoacán, just northwest of Mexico City. So, were my monarchs American, Mexican, or Canadian? For just as they flew far, far south for the perfect over-wintering conditions, some of the spring monarchs born across Ohio's fields joined others still in the journey north, crossing yet another border. In Canada more eggs would be deposited on the undersides of tender, young milkweed plants, the only food source for the larval stage.

It was not until the mid 1970's that scientists discovered just what happens to the monarch. Fred Uruqhart, a Canadian zoologist, had been studying the monarchs since 1937 and spent years trying to solve the mystery about where they go at summer's end. After many years of research and observation he concluded that Mexico was the destination, but with the terrain and the mountains, tracking them seemed impossible, until he teamed up with another zoologist, American Kenneth Brugger who had been working in Mexico. Brugger found traces of several lying dead along a roadside, more than likely victims of predators. He believed that the butterfly colonies had to be close, in the remote area of the oyamel forests. He contacted Uruqhart and offered his information. It took a year of searching but together, along with their wives, they climbed high up a mountain and discovered the first colony, including tagged monarchs, a project of Uruqhart. His experiences are featured in the August, 1976 issue of National Geographic. On the cover is a fascinating scene of what seems like thousands of monarchs clustering on the oyamel trees. I would recommend a classroom procuring a copy of this magazine. The photos are great quality and cover various aspects of the butterfly inside the colonies.

There are thirteen remaining sanctuaries. Several were lost due to economic, political, and commercial intrusions. The trend is continuing and scientists warn

that unless an ambitious effort for preservation is enacted, the monarch may be extinct within twenty years. The grimmest of predictions cut that in half! Is it possible that this childhood wonder may not live beyond my lifetime? The thought is incomprehensible. I felt an urgency to educate my students to this peril. As a teacher I thought about how best to create the opportunity. I ran across information on the internet that seemed a perfect solution. I taught Spanish to 9th graders, but through educational sites like Monarch Watch and Journey North, I found ideas for a multidisciplinary lesson, plugging in Spanish language, geography and culture along the way.

The Monarch Butterfly

The unit on the butterfly should begin with a basic understanding of the biology and lifestyle of the monarch. Through Monarch Watch there is much information available describing the four stages of development including pictures. I use a checklist for the students to know what information they should be looking for. I also found outlines of the insect in both the caterpillar and adult stage that the students colored to show an awareness of the bright colorations of both stages. These are on the web courtesy of Monarchs in the Classroom of the University of Minnesota who maintains Monarch Watch.

When talking about the migratory habits of the butterfly, students are able to monitor the progress through Journey North a co-venture of the University of Minnesota and the University of Kansas. These weekly updates are shown on a map of the continent (Canada, the U. S., and Mexico) using different colored dots each week to differentiate that week's travels. In addition, notes are given about affecting conditions like cold, damp, blustery weather that grounds them or wind patterns they take advantage of to fly higher with less expended energy. This weekly information is timely to sustain an awareness without overloading students with the subject matter.

Migration

It makes sense that the butterflies cannot exist through winters that in most of the country are far too harsh. For that reason, they may guess that it is the temperature that gauges when the butterflies should "take off". But if that alone were true, it would indicate changeable dates on which this would occur, as fall temperatures may fluctuate considerably from year to year. Yet the exodus is not a hard and fast date, because impending weather (rain, strong winds) can delay the progress. The prime factor, however, is not temperature nor weather but daylight. This constant is due to the tilt of the earth to the sun. After the summer solstice, the daylight hours shorten, triggering chemical reactions in the monarch, until in early fall, it begins the longest migratory journey of any insect. The

butterfly is piloted by a magnetic compass. Scientists studying this phenomenon tell us that the sun also has a major influence in guiding the monarch to their destination.

Behavioral biologist Henrik Mouritsen and neurobiologist Barrie Frost published such findings in the summer of 2002. This “study shows that monarchs use the relative position of the sun at a particular time of day to set their course.”ⁱ Another study proposed that the insect uses “patterns of polarized light visible through the clouds”ⁱⁱ to guide them. These little creatures then travel up to three thousand miles to a sanctuary in the mountains of central Mexico. The odds are against their arrival as all conditions have to be favorable. They may have to battle storms and winds can blow them off course (over the ocean a downed butterfly will drown). A recent edition of Science Magazine (May 23, 2003) carried a report from excited scientists that have found more clues of how the monarch migrates. Although they have known for many years that the butterfly uses the sun as a guide, it is together with an internal clock that allows this to happen. Since the amount of daylight hours is lessening daily when the north American monarchs prepare for flight, there has to be an ability to adapt to the sun’s changes in positioning (or so it appears). According to Steven Reppert, a neurobiologist at the University of Massachusetts Medical School in Worcester, “Without a clock, the sun would prove an unreliable landmark as it moves across the horizon. A clock allows animals to compensate for this apparent motion and maintain a direct course.”ⁱⁱⁱ They have discovered that the monarch has genes that allow the internal clock, set by daylight, to follow “circadian rhythms.” Ultraviolet light is also necessary for migrating. Studies have traced the light-input pathways into the brain and charted the affects on the clock-compass. Another neurobiologist, Gene Robinson, from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, adds that this shows “links between the circadian machinery and the compass mechanism required for seasonal migration.”

To prepare for the colossal challenge of migrating, the adult butterfly stores up energy by feeding on the sweet nectar of the late-blooming flowers. These reserves will have to sustain them through the strenuous journey. Only the last generation of the summer will migrate. Earlier generations lay their eggs upon reaching maturity, then die, but the migrants undergo metabolic changes that delay sexual maturity until the following spring. This conserves energy for survival on the journey rather than for reproduction. All this is an effect of the lessening daylight hours.

In the fall the migration allows students to chart the course of the eastern population through the country heading ever southward and angling westward to skirt around the Gulf of Mexico. This is a great teaching tool for geography as it suddenly gives meaning to the location of the states. The time of departure from

the northern states is crucial. They have a long journey to complete before the onset of inclement weather. The time of arrival is interesting. It coincides with the popular folk festival Día de Los Muertos (Day of the Dead), a celebration that honors the memory of departed loved ones. Springing from ancient Indian lore is the belief that their spirits return for one day and night on November 2. They are guided back to their homes by animals and the full force arrival of the monarchs at this time, they become the appropriate host to fulfill this duty. Any class who wishes to investigate culture a little more could include a subunit on this holiday. Two are included in the Pittsburgh Teachers Institute (2002) offering more information on Day of the Dead including useful websites (www.chatham.edu/PTI). These units are under Latin American and U.S. Popular Culture. The first unit is by Bethany Sage on “Latin American Festivals and Popular Culture”. The second, by Mary Eileen Swazuk, is “Food and Fiestas.”

Mother Monarch

The monarch lays an egg that is no bigger than a pinhead on the underside of a milkweed leaf. She may lay up to four hundred eggs, usually choosing different plants. This is the only food source the caterpillar will have when it breaks out of the shell, so new monarchs will not be seen until the milkweeds push out of the ground. Thus the return migration is dependent on the weather and the growing season. Once the tiny caterpillar cracks open the shell, it begins to devour it, receiving instant nutrition. And just like the shell, it gobbles up its skin every time it grows large enough to split it open, which happens four times during its twelve day existence in the pupa. However, the tender leaves of the milkweed are the constant diet for the entire duration in this stage of development.

Caterpillars are known as munching machines. After about twelve days of a voracious appetite for milkweed leaves, the caterpillar has stored enough energy to undergo the amazing change into the adult butterfly. It spins a silk anchor that it attaches to a twig or stalk, then hangs downward from the back legs. Soon it curls the head up and now has formed a “J” as it splits open its outgrown skin for the fifth and last time. It then spins a beautiful emerald green chrysalis with gold dots around the top. For the next two weeks it hangs suspended in this cocoon while the body of the caterpillar seems to disintegrate and re-form into a butterfly with wings. A day or so before breaking out, the cocoon turns a transparent black exposing the colorful wings inside. As the butterfly emerges, its wings are bent under it. It has to pump blood through the veins of the wings to inflate them; then must dry before flight.

Monarch Alarm – Natural and Environmental Issues

The winter of 2002 received a lot of world-wide press with the devastation of the overwintering monarch population. The toll of 173 million dead butterflies during a January storm is so staggering because it represents a figure larger than the entire estimated overwintering population.^{iv} Deforestation both from peasant firewood needs and commercial logging has considerably reduced the oyamel forests and thus the area for habitat. According to Lincoln Brower, an authority on the monarch, in the past 30 years, 40 per cent of their habitat has been lost. The result of this reduction is gaping holes in forests that should protect from winter elements. The forests of Michoacán, Mexico are the perfect ecological environment for the preservation of the monarch. Treetop umbrella canopies protect against rain and snow and the density of the trees shields from bitter winds. The altitude maintains cool temperatures and the cloud cover provides the required moisture.

Poisonous Milkweed

The milkweed plant belongs to a family that produces a white milky substance by which the plant gets its name. It is toxic to most animals and is, therefore, the monarch's best defense. Caterpillars are careful to eat only the leaves, which have a lower content of the cardenolides. With ingestion the toxin is absorbed into its body and is poisonous to most of their predators. This is carried on to the adult stage even through metamorphosis. Young birds that have not learned that the bright colors of the monarch announce danger will suffer the consequences and will regurgitate the insect immediately. Black grosbeaks and orioles, however, can consume the insect without serious effects, making them menacing predators in the sanctuaries where much of the time the butterflies hang on trees in a stupor due to the cold temperatures.

The irony is that the plant that represents danger to other animals is now posing the same problem for monarchs in the corn belt due to new hybrids of genetically engineered corn. This Bt corn, as it is called, is a blessing for farmers who can save on expenses by buying corn that can protect itself against pests. However, its pollen can be blown by the wind up to 60 yards, landing on milkweed plants growing in the periphery of the fields. Studies on the affects of the bt corn to the monarch caterpillar showed catastrophic results for those poisoned caterpillars. Grain companies, however, countered that the laboratory studies used higher concentrations than would naturally be found with wind-dispersed pollen. It is an ongoing battle fiercely argued on each side.

The Border Problem

At one time the Rio Grande was a river that ran through the country of Mexico rather than serving as the northern border with the politically and militarily strong

nation of the United States. It isn't that the river changed its course, rather that a country whose citizens were eager for open territories and more land found support from a government who also craved expansion through the policy of Manifest Destiny. Students can imagine what it would be like to one day be told the farm you live on is no longer in Mexico and that the language you speak is not understood by the government who now claims your land. Learning a foreign language is fun, unless it is forced on you and your native one is now forbidden, like Spanish was for thousands of school-age children for the past century and a half.

In an effort to absorb Chicano students (U.S. born of Mexican parentage), it was the policy of many schools to discipline children who reverted to Spanish during school hours, whether it was in the classroom, hallway, or playground. Luis Rodriguez, author of the book Always Running: La Vida Loca: Gang Days in L.A., tells of difficult personal experiences growing up in the Anglican society. During one episode he remembers being punished for speaking to the janitor who was his neighbor and knew very limited English. As the chosen language of this imposing government, adherence to English was oft times ruthlessly enforced. Juan Gonzalez, an American author of Puerto Rican descent, depicts the helpless situation of latinos in his book Harvest of Empire.

With the new sovereignty came a host of new laws, especially for land registration, tax and inheritance. The new codes were promulgated and administered in English – a language the *mexicano* majority did not understand – and by lawyers, sheriffs, and judges who could always count on the U.S. Army to enforce an Anglo's interpretation whenever a dispute arose (99).

With so much research on the monarch, its life stages, habitat, migrations and predatory and environmental dangers, the older student is ready to push to a more abstract connection. They are by now, developing empathetic feelings for the beautiful monarch butterfly. They realize that when they see them flitting freely on one sweet flower then another, that journey for food will take them out of their own backyard, into one nearby, or across the street, traversing counties, states and even country borders. By now they have learned that their efforts can improve the fortunes of the monarch, but that they can never own it. The freedom of the butterfly to come and go is paramount for survival. Extending this idea of freedom to humans is a leap, but a concept worth exploring for the inquisitive student.

In the early years of the 19th century, Spain, who still held onto colonies in the New World, was interested in establishing settlements in the Texas area of Mexico. At the time most of the land was owned and worked communally by Indians, but there were also about 3,000 Tejanos, as the Mexican people who

lived in this area were called. Spain was fearful that uprisings from either of these two groups or that the expansion policy of the United States might push for control. Settlements would make it easier to maintain influence and so land was offered to empresarios to establish them. But in the end, Spain had to concentrate on issues at home and lost all Mexico in the War of Independence (1821). This sped up the process of the U. S. claim to Texas under their push for manifest destiny, a policy claiming the right to expand to its natural borders -one coast to the other.

Contracts for the American settlements were renegotiated by the young nation of Mexico similar to what had existed with Spain. Empresario, Stephen Austin, brought 300 families to the area on the Brazos and Colorado Rivers under the Spanish offer. Mexico offered large grants of land, but in return demanded that settlers 1) become Mexican citizens, 2) obey the Mexican laws, 3) and practice the Roman Catholic faith. In addition, for his particular settlement that grew increasingly larger, Austin required abstinence of alcohol, no lying and no cursing. In ten years, five and a half thousand people lived in his settlement, more than 5 times the Tejano population.

Mexico relied on empresarios to control their settlements and expected them to maintain loyalty to the government. But, in fact, the enticements were so well received that hundreds of settlers moved into the area outside of the auspices of the Mexican government. These people paid no homage to Mexico, made no promises, and instead felt a strong loyalty to the U. S. and their own cultural traditions. A situation of conflict arose when colonists brought slaves to plant and harvest the cotton crop. This was in direct violation of Mexican law prohibiting the institution of slavery. Mexican government couldn't control the settler backlash and finally relented, permitting slaves in Texas only. Relinquishing their stand fueled the demands of the settlers, who wanted to regain the freedoms they had known under the U. S. government.

Mexico nervously recognized the danger and closed the area to further immigrants and built army posts to enforce the Mexican law. The settlers responded angrily to this imposition and began to rally about ceding from Mexico. To ward off an uprising, Austin traveled to Mexico City to present a list of reforms to satisfy the colonists and the Tejanos. Among these demands were repeal of the ban on immigration and the creation of Texas as a separate state. The Mexicans refused both and Austin wrote back to the colonists that he would support the movement for statehood. The letter was intercepted by the Mexican government and Austin was imprisoned as a traitor. In 1835 Mexican troops entered the Texas towns of Gonzales and San Antonio to put down uprisings, but the residents staged a strong defense and the Mexicans withdrew.

With their successes, Texans began taking on the battle cry of a revolution. Three months later The Texans declared a Republic while at the same time the Battle of the Alamo was taking place in San Antonio. Two hundred Texas soldiers and volunteers, including frontiersmen Davie Crockett and Jim Bowie, set up their defense from a mission called the Alamo. Among the force were native Tejanos whose lives were now inextricably mixed with the fate and desires of the settlers. Together they fought bravely for fourteen days against overwhelming odds – the best of the Mexican Army, but in the end the victory was Mexico’s under its commander Santa Ana. There was now hope that the settlers would mold themselves into citizens deserving of the Mexican territory they had colonized. But instead the Alamo became a battle cry and inspired the Texans to better organize and defy Mexican law. One month later they surprised Mexican forces camped on the San Jacinto River. It was a decisive victory for the Texans. General Santa Ana was captured and forced to sign a peace treaty that formally recognized the independence of Texas. The next year the U. S. also granted recognition of the new republic and soon accepted it as a state into the union.

Relations with Mexico were tenuous as there was constant bickering about the location of the border. There was a considerable portion of land just south of San Antonio down to the Rio Bravo, as the river is called in Mexico, which was prime chaparral grazing land, good for the Mexican ranches. Texans had pushed the state border all the way to the Rio Grande, claiming this land as their own. Seizures of land on either side were common until Texas made a bold move to push westward and seize all the land clear to California. The United States offered Mexico \$25 million for California and \$5 million for New Mexico, but such low figures were an insult to the Mexican government. In April of 1846, soldiers attacked an American cavalry troop on patrol in the disputed borderland, killing 11 men. Americans were incensed, believing it an invasion of their territory. President Polk used this opportunity to push through a Declaration of War. In May, Zachary Taylor pushed his troops into Mexico, capturing the city of Monterrey and a year later audaciously stormed into the capital battling at the Palace of Chapultepec. Meanwhile Mexican and American troops clashed in various border skirmishes. Ulysses S. Grant was a general in the Mexican War and stated that this was truly an engagement where a strong nation unduly bullied a weaker one. Students are likely to be aghast at the history lesson that portrays America not as a protector of freedom but as greedily snatching up what does not belong to her. Just eighty years after fighting for their own liberty, they were claiming the right to take it away from others.

Similar rumblings for a republic were expressed by the Americans who had settled in California and New Mexico. Some were openly rallying for revolt from the ruling Mexican government. In January of 1847, the Mexicans were

finally expelled from their last great stronghold and the United States claimed the territory. The cessation of the lands of New Mexico and California were formally surrendered in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. Along with it the United States gained lands that became the states of Nevada, Utah, Colorado, Wyoming, and Arizona. Now the U. S. offered only \$15 million for far more land, and received acceptance of the Rio Grande as the border between the two countries. Mexico was a nation too young and unstable to be a match against U.S. economic development or military strength. In defeat, she lost half of all her territory and was worried about her citizens whose lands were now suddenly in America. 100,000 Mexicans and 200,000 Native Americans were being turned over to the U.S. The United States agreed to allow any who chose to relocate to Mexico and to offer full citizenship rights under the constitution to those who remained. Problems for these residents compounded as new settlers now identified the land as American and expected their claim for ownership to be stronger.

It is necessary for the students to understand that ignorance and fear of another people can turn them into villains. After Mexican territory switched ownership, situations began to take their toll on the Mexican-American people like the one described by Chicana author Gloria Anzaldúa concerning the fate of her grandmother. In her book Borderlands/La Frontera, she writes of the 1915 event of some Mexican-American activists resisting U. S. authority who robbed a train in Brownsville. This occurrence was not going to win sympathizers to their cause, but the reaction of the American people was swift and excessive. The locals formed vigilante groups who corralled the Mexican-Americans, lynching many, sometimes entire families. Even the government arm of law and order got into the act. The Texas Rangers responded by arresting the Mexicans, taking them into the brush and shooting them. In the end, the death count hit one hundred. The reaction of many of the Chicanos to this second round of violence was to flee for their lives. Seven thousand forsook their ranches and farms and headed south to Mexico. For those who remained, they had to contend with the influx of 20,000 army troops brought to protect the Anglo segment of U. S. citizens, many of whom were fearful that the Mexicans were getting too powerful. Students may be appalled at this fact of history and may want to discuss mob hysteria and how such behavior could be avoided.

In Anzaldúa's grandmother's case, this was followed by another disaster. Drought hit South Texas three years in a row. Her grandfather died of a heart attack leaving his wife with eight children and a ninth expected. Cattle began dying off and what survived became infected with hoof and mouth disease. By the third year, only thirty percent of the herd survived. A clever lawyer filed forms to repossess the land because the taxes on the land had not been paid. Because she didn't speak English, she didn't realize she could ask for an extension. This was the avenue through which many Mexican-owned lands

traveled to become American possessions. An ironic twist, many of these lands became part of agri-business corporations who turned around and hired the former owners or hands who had worked the land, to clear the brush and vegetation and install irrigation systems for the dry terrain. A Mexican custom of communal ownership to till the land for the good of all was now turned into a “for profit” approach owned and controlled by only a few and those few were not Mexicans. The experienced Mexicans were often employed as sharecroppers, tilling and harvesting the land and then repaying the loan to the corporation by promising 40% of their earnings from the crops. There seemed no way to get ahead. And worse, they could see others profiting from their disenfranchised status.

Mexicans are the largest group not only of Latinos but of any ethnic group of immigrants. For the most part these immigrants came from extreme poverty. Their search for a better life brings the young looking for a future, the middle aged hoping to provide for their children, and the elderly finally chancing the dream or convinced to move as members of the extended family. Ironically, they are also the oldest group of immigrants, some belonging to families that resided in lands prior to colonization. In other words, it is our country that migrated, or in less politically correct terms, invaded and conquered.

In true fashion the patterns of the subjugated were realized. In The Cultural Conquest of Ireland, Kevin Collins writes about the social behaviors of societies that are dominated and controlled by another, stronger civilization. There are five stages to the conquest. In the first, the stronger invades the lesser in a *military conquest* which overpowers the second creating the second stage, *inhibition*. They exhibit a different manner of conduct and culture that flows in the face of the native traditions. It creates the conditions for the next stage, which is *dualism*. This is the existence of superiority of the invader and inferiority of anything native. After this is well established, the fourth stage develops. *Mimicry* is the attempt of the dominated people to recreate themselves into something valuable by becoming like the invader. They begin to doubt the validity of their own beliefs and traditions in language, religion, and other cultural observances. The final stage is *alienation*. Collins calls this the “psychological and spiritual rupture with one’s inherited way of life.” (p. 12) They are severed from what was authentic in their lives and superficially cling to something new that they are convinced is intrinsically more valuable. It comes at great inner conflict. Since culture is basically transmitted through language, “then the death of a language means that the death of a culture is not very far behind. When a culture dies a nation dies.” In this case, the remnants of the old linger in the memory and can be resurrected by focusing south of the border.

An interesting hypothesis is presented by Juan Gonzalez, the Puerto Rican author of Harvest of Empire. America is sowing what she has reaped. For too

many decades her big corporations plundered the neighbors to the south for capitalistic profit, unconcerned about what was happening to the peoples of these countries. As long as the profits rolled in, CEO's and stockholders were happy to ignore the repercussions. And as long as Americans had jobs to support their families, they chose not to think on the Mexican, Caribbean, or Central American who slaved all day for a pittance salary while he picked our bananas, fruit or sugar cane. American businesses extracted the resources from Hispanic companies, sent the profits back to the States rather than reinvesting it into the country's economy. As in Mexico, "A disturbing portion of its national wealth flows outside its borders each day and into the pockets of Wall Street shareholders." (p.96) This makes for an unhealthy economy and it should not be surprising that destitute Mexican families make desperate attempts to relocate to the land in the north where opportunities abound, jobs more plentiful and salaries worth working for. For some it is only a stone's throw away. For others, even a couple days' drive would be worth it.

Luis Villaseñor, another Hispanic author writes of the tales of his family in the book Rain of Gold. His ancestors lived in a small village in a mining area of the Mexican mountains. During the War of Independence, the village was routinely sacked by soldiers of the state. Young girls were hidden in the chicken and goat dung heaps to avoid detection when the horses charged across the mountainside. Rampaging, raping and setting fire to the shacks was expected. The peasants did what they could to survive. This is an internal problem. But exacerbating it was the American company that owned the nearby mine (Mexican prospectors who communally worked the mines lost their claims when the Americans moved in). To keep on the good graces of the soldiers, the company treated them to a feast every time they came through. In addition, they were offered weapons, a bribe that saved the mines from destruction and the disruption of business, but one that also found reason for the soldiers to "visit" the area more often.

It occurs to me through what fate of life is one child born into a financially stable family living in a thriving community, while another is one of several competing for the food on the table, playing shoeless in the dusty streets and drinking from water sources that are polluted from American-owned industry. Of course there are the hardship cases all over the world and maybe as a country our financial greed and politics can tie us to those as well, but to have so much with which to raise our families comfortably, would make one of these families south of the border rich. Yes, our fortitude, ingenuity and capitalistic drive have created an industrial and manufacturing giant, but along the way we lost the compassion to care just how this evolved. Could we not have offered the inhabitants of these exploited islands and countries a piece of the pie along the way? Now we find them begging at our door, sometimes belligerently telling us they could have done

it themselves if we had shared a little of the knowledge and a lot of the resources that were by rights theirs.

The attitude toward illegal aliens is skewed depending on the origin of the alien. Despite entering legally on a tourist visa but staying for two years illegally, writer John Derbyshire from England says he never had any trouble finding work nor threats of being deported even when the INS was informed of his presence. At nineteen he chose to stay longer in the country and sought a dishwashing job as a low visibility way to earn his keep. After six months he confided to his boss that he was there illegally. Arrangements were made to keep him employed. After two years he brazenly sought work through an employment agency. No one was the wiser and he worked for two years in an office before the boss discovered his secret. He was escorted to the INS office to discuss how to remedy the situation. He was “put on hold” and assured he could continue working, which he did for another three years until he returned to England. He recounts “In spite of having committed gross and willful violation of US immigration laws, I had paid no penalty, done no time, suffered no inconvenience...They didn’t associate the phenomenon with well-spoken, middle-class types with office-worker skill sets.”

In the Foreword to Joseph Nevins’ book Operation Gatekeeper, Mike Davis mentions the analogy of the U. S.-Mexican border to a dam, “...defending the fat suburbs of the American Dream from a deluge of Third World misery. This, of course, misunderstands the role of a dam, which is not to prevent the flow of water but to control and ration its supply.”(x). He mentions that on one side there is an affluence that exists on migrants to preen their lawns and gardens, clean their houses, and care for their children. The irony is that the effort is made to keep the very people out that provide the needed services to the rich. Migration is “controlled by an economic demand” That’s what many count on according to Dr. Luis Pineda, Visiting Professor of Computer Sciences at Ohio State University. In an interview he then asked me if I thought immigrants fit the stereotype. Are they brave or lazy? He asked me to consider that they forsake everything; loved ones, traditions and lifestyle. “Who but a brave man would sacrifice this?” Workers come for jobs seeking dignity. They are hired because they are willing to work cheaply. But they might not come so cheaply if the fear were removed in crossing the border. Another irony... NAFTA, economic globalization, free trade, but not free borders. During our country’s period of Manifest Destiny, the borders were elastic and relaxed allowing for economic penetration. They were not formally closed until the Mexican Revolution of 1910 began to threaten the safety of U.S. citizens from marauders.

Border Patrols come upon dire situations when desperate Mexicans enter the United States. A trailer stuffed with illegal aliens was abandoned in the steaming heat of the arid land just over the border. When discovered, some of the

occupants from Mexico, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Guatemala had already died. There were fifty-five survivors but nineteen dead, including children. Human smuggling is a routine practice in crossing the border. Parties interested in immigrating at all costs pay \$1800 on the average to a “coyote” to arrange safe passage into U.S. territory. It is neither safe nor comfortable. Despite past practices, the story of “...horrific conditions people experience at the hands of smugglers”^v plays out over and over on the border. The U.S. Border Patrol broadcasts announcements on both sides of the border using English and Spanish to warn the people of the hazards of entering illegally and especially in using a coyote. In this episode, a 24-year-old woman recruited drivers and used her home as a drop house to gather the human cargo.

The route from Sonora, Mexico north into Arizona has been dubbed the “corridor of death” because of the high probability that the traveler will not survive. It is an area of desert and mountains with no water or protection from the extreme sun and heat. There were 100 deaths in the single year 2002. In addition, rescuers save an average of three to five persons per day. To deter these occurrences, the government is providing 150 additional agents, new equipment, and modernized technology including twenty search-and-rescue beacons to alert border patrol communication centers and dispatch agents to the scene by helicopter. The program also includes the training of one hundred Mexican personnel to prevent crossing from their side. Approaching the problem from a very sensible perspective is the organization Partnership for Prosperity. By improving economic opportunities for Mexican nationals, there would be less need to risk illegal entry. This group is supported by both the government and the private sector working for economic growth.

As mentioned, illegal crossings can be hazardous both physically and emotionally. The greatest risks are prone to injury; jumping off walls, broken bones, dehydration in the desert or near suffocation in crowded vehicles. Border towns abhor the expenses of caring for such situations. Ambulance services estimate they have lost \$620,000 over the last six years due to uncompensated services provided to illegal immigrants. In the year 2000, border hospitals lost \$200 million and doctors \$100 million. Federal law requires that all emergency patients be treated regardless of their ability to pay or legal status. This places a tremendous financial burden on these businesses and institutions. Some are closing down or eliminating departments, like the trauma unit at Tucson Medical Center. The University Medical Center expects to lose \$5 million due to non-payment by foreign nationals. Last year (2002) they lost \$4 million.

Such losses and reactive decisions affect the care available for the locals, creating a public health hazard. Some medical patients are illegal immigrants, but others slip into the country hoping for care they cannot receive in their own areas

of residence. An interesting observation by John J. Miller of the National Review, “If the 24 counties touching Mexico formed a 51st state stretching from Brownsville in south Texas all the way to San Diego, it would be the poorest in the country and the one with the highest level of unemployment.” The average income in this area would be \$12,000 yearly with unemployment at 12%. An ambulance owner interviewed by the author shifts partial responsibility to the border patrolmen. “The Border Patrol is supposed to keep illegal aliens out of the country, but its agents actually worsen the problem.” They drop them off at hospitals that release them after treatment, free to go wherever unsupervised.

In addition to border concerns about one-way crossings, and American jobs to lower paid alien workers, another wrinkle in the smoothing of U.S.-Mexican border issues is the 2003 proposed agreement of social security benefits to 37,000 Mexican workers. The idea presented to President Bush by Mexico’s President Vicente Fox was a way to partially resolve immigration problems between the two countries. Fox had hoped for better reforms on U.S. immigration leading to legalization of Mexican nationals now living north of the border. He approached the problem of improving the lives of Mexican workers and to end the discrimination by proposing in October 2002 that Mexico join the list of favored countries with Totalization Agreements. Bush listened and stated that there was merit to the request. Since the 70’s agreement have been established with twenty other nations. Why not with Mexico?

These agreements benefit workers who have been employed in the United States and one other country. By combining or “totaling” the years of service and what one has paid into the social security systems of both countries, one more easily completes the required minimal years of service to be eligible for benefits. Chairman E. Clay Shaw, Jr., of the Ways and Means Social Security Subcommittee believes “Totalization agreements protect American workers from losing their Social Security benefits if they divide their career between two countries.” Many American companies have international locations.

If a person has paid into a system, upon reaching the age of maturity, he or she should be entitled to benefits. However, due to immigration reforms in 1996, the stipulation was added that only workers who are citizens or legal residents and whose second country where they have been employed has a Totalization Agreement with the United States, may receive payments from social security. That removed 13,000 Mexicans legally working in this country from the eligibility list another 37,000 that were expected to enter as new claims. In 1998 the Mexican government figured these people were already owed \$50 million. Maria Blanco as national senior counsel for the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, supports their claims saying “This is money these workers paid into the Social Security system. This is their money.”^{vi}

A House Republican aide dealing with social security issues said 94,000 persons living outside of the U.S. have benefited through this accord with the twenty nations. His concern was that within five years, the SS system could expect 162,000 Mexican claims for benefits, far more than had previously been honored with all the other countries. The rush for seeking benefits is taken seriously enough to prompt talk about building a new structure in the Embassy building in Mexico City just to process applications. Fears about expanding the agreement to include Mexico are heating debates on Capitol Hill. Due to the gloomy predictions about Social Security's ability to cover the retirement needs of the Baby Boomers in the next decade, representatives are conflicted over the additional burden of claims. Between U.S. and Mexican statistics, benefits could reach \$720 million a year within five years of operation. Currently \$372 billion is paid out to 46.4 million recipients, \$183 million of which goes out of the country to cover persons honoring the twenty agreements.

The State Department and the Social Security Administration appear to favor the proposal. Problems, however, are compounded by Mexicans who illegally entered and worked in the country but paid into the system using untraceable, phony social security numbers. The Department of Immigration and Naturalization estimates that there are currently seven million illegal aliens residing in the U.S., half of them Mexican. Under the proposal, these workers would also be eligible for benefits by providing the phony number, if available, or producing pay stubs and w2's. This would open the system to fraud. No records have been maintained regarding money awarded to Mexican nationals in the U.S. for retirement or disability. Social security numbers could therefore be recycled, used over and over by other unqualified individuals, since there is no tracking.

Another wrinkle is the disability benefit. An injured worker of at least six months may claim 2/3 or more of his average salary. "Law firms and others out to make a quick buck place ads, particularly in towns near the Mexican border, urging people to seek social security benefits."^{vii} By producing the w2 or pay stubs along with an agreeable doctor's statement of the incapacity to work, an unscrupulous individual may successfully commit fraud on the new system. A hypothetical situation cited in the National Review presents a 24-year-old Mexican national working for three years with an annual income of \$12,000 is eligible for \$8,000 plus the adjustment for inflation up to the age of 65 when his retirement would kick in. If he had children he would receive more. Should he die at age 60, his wife would receive the benefits to the age of 85. This totals 1/2 million dollars from the system for just one worker and only three years of labor. Scammers could then continue a full-time job in Mexico. This hypothetical situation shows the potential for fraud and there seems to be plenty of authentic

examples. Government figures state that \$300 billion in false claims have been paid out since 1990.

One citizens group mobilizing against the accord is CAIR (Colorado Alliance for Immigration Reform). They supported Representative Ron Paul (R Tx) who believes that the SSA is not capable of financially handling such a huge increase in beneficiaries. “How many more would break the law to come to this country if promised U.S. government paychecks for life?” He is the author of the Social Security Preservation Act (H.R. 219), introduced in the 107th Congress. It guaranteed that all money in the trust fund would be spent entirely on Social Security, since its future is in question. Payments “...should be limited to United States citizens and nationals who have paid into the system. It should not be a global giveaway.”

Writer, Joel Mobraey of The National Review believes that the agreement could be in effect by the end of 2003. The SSA needs to approve the language and send it to the State Department for endorsement. If this happens, the White House is likely to rubber stamp it and send it on to the Congress. In his opinion “A Totalization Agreement with Mexico could, in fact, be a good deal for the U.S. (like with other nationals) – but only if structured properly.”

There are conflicting viewpoints about whether a border with patrolling guards really works. Fixed boundaries for countries are a somewhat modern idea, being only a couple centuries old. The one with the United States has already been shown to be rather porous when it suits economic, political or social interests. Despite the advantageous areas, there is no doubt that there are issues that weigh heavily on border communities in particular. Public outcries born of fear led to maneuvers like California’s 1994 Proposition 187 that denied public education, social services, and health care (except for emergencies) to all illegal aliens. For these reasons President Bill Clinton enacted the “Operation Gatekeeper.”

A border fence 19 miles long with gaping holes where migrants and smugglers crossed over at nightfall, was repaired and lengthened to 45 miles. Stories were told of up to 3,000 arrests of illegals caught crossing over the border on one Sunday alone. Border bandits accosting crossing migrants were a concern as were stories of border patrol abuse. The job of securing the border was sometimes accompanied with the Anglo-Saxon air of superiority, the same arrogance demonstrated by politicians supporting Manifest Destiny back in the 1800’s. Respected poet Walt Whitman was typical of the attitude when he wrote “Miserable, inefficient Mexico – what has she to do with the great mission of peopling the New World with a noble race? Be it ours to achieve this mission!”^{viii}

Gatekeeper became the best solution increasing underground sensors from 448 to 1214 and infrared scopes from a mere dozen to 59. But even with this, how does one monitor a border area of 12 million people that is expected to double by the year 2020? There are currently 300,000 Mexicans legally working in the U.S. Financial transactions reach \$6 billion annually and industrialization has mushroomed in the area since the 1960's. Since NAFTA, commercial truck traffic has nearly doubled reaching 2 million vehicles in 1999. 40,000 workers cross over from Tijuana every day. San Diego-Tijuana is considered the fastest growing population center in North America. It does make the border almost sound superfluous.

Objectives

I am specifically focusing on Mexican-Americans to draw the parallel with the monarch butterfly that also migrates. People of Mexican descent living in this country often find themselves subjected to discrimination and prejudice by a people who ironically are the newcomers. Historically speaking, this land not too long ago was Mexico. And Mexicans could freely travel all the way to what is now Utah and still be in their own country. Should they not now be entitled entry to come and go as the monarch also does for survival?

This is an interesting question that could spawn much discussion, perhaps as a Socratic seminar. There are many factors to consider as citizens of one country or the other. There would need to be minimal understanding of just what a government offers its people in the way of services and benefits and how they are funded, and also an understanding of how colonization in our Southwest was achieved. Discussing the rights depending on one's living north or south of the border will open the students mind to the plights of others.

Strategies

The objectives will be met by various manners of student participation. The link between the Mexican migrant and the butterfly is migration, so the student must understand this term and the importance it has to both entities. Beginning in the fall with hands-on activities about the monarch before migration will allow the students to study them and see them first hand. The computer science sessions will add to their understanding and the craft activities will add a personal touch to this knowledge. A history lesson will introduce them to questions of ethics, and movies will enlighten and stimulate the students further about both the butterfly and the Mexican migrant. Through discussions, critical thinking skills will be stretched, pondering the dilemma of human migration. The students will have to consider how the needs of one individual, community, or government affects their

own lives. Armed with this expanded consciousness, it is expected that the students will be more compassionate caretakers of the earth and society.

Classroom Activities

Symbolic Butterfly

I encourage beginning with a creative project. Butterflies are familiar to everyone. Participation in the Journey North “Symbolic Butterfly” is one of the links on their website (www.learner.org/jnorth). The teacher is given all the directions about this international activity. The idea behind the butterfly project is exciting. Students design and decorate a paper butterfly to send to the Symbolic Monarch Project. In late fall, butterflies from school children of all ages are bundled up and sent to Mexico. This is their “migration”. Once they arrive, they are delivered to Mexican classrooms and dispersed to the students. Teachers will help the students write letters back to the American children, since each butterfly sent was “tagged” with the sender’s name and school, and usually a short note about him and his school glued to the underside of the wing. These butterflies now spend the winter in the homes of the little Mexican ambassadors who promise to care for them during the next 5 months. True to form, they return in the spring looking a little faded and tattered after their long winter. No one knows where their butterfly will end up, just as it is unclear exactly where returning monarchs go. Where did the butterflies originate that return in the spring? The process is stimulating and makes new friends. The students not only can establish correspondence with Mexican children, but if they choose, may contact the original North American creators, completing the cycle of tracking the monarch. My students received butterflies that had been designed in schools from Illinois, Wisconsin, and New Jersey, sent to Mexico and finally were reaching our northern state.

One must register the class with the organization to have the butterflies accepted in the Symbolic program. This can easily be done on line by entering the address given. After that, you receive weekly updates about the changes in fall and spring in the animal and plant world. There is a wide variety of information but it is easy to limit the activities to only the reports about the monarch unless the teacher wishes to broaden the students’ experience into earth studies by connecting to the field studies which include links for sightings, tagging, and charts for tracking spring’s progress.

Origami Butterfly

Some students will take great care to make intricate designs and decorate their butterflies. Others will be done much faster and may choose to do the origami

activity to keep busy. I like to use these to decorate our own classroom. The various steps in folding must be done with care and usually keeps them busy allowing the other artists to finish at their own pace. The students who catch on quickly to the origami design enjoy helping other children to fold the paper. The design I like to use is Ahira Yoshizawa's butterfly that is used as the logo for the International Origami Center that he founded. It can be found in many origami books. This is a good way to introduce them to the ancient Japanese craft of paper-folding. Most students will want to do the origami, even those laboring intensely with the symbolic butterfly because these remain in the classroom to be enjoyed for many weeks. If time is short, send the students home with printed directions and eagerly await the creativity that returns.

In Journey North updates there are links that provide color pictures of the various stages of the butterfly and even short little "videos" that will show activity in development that is fascinating for the students. Another valuable site for students is Monarch Watch. The web address is www.MonarchWatch.org. This repeats some of the same information, but it includes drawings of the four stages and offers many photos that by clicking on them, will enlarge pictures of the insect at various points of development. This site also offers lesson and activity ideas for the teacher. Another interesting site, created by Midge Frazel, has a cute butterfly story called "Monarch Butterfly Magic". It is found at the site www.midgefrazel.net/monarchtheme.html and also includes a link that can be a good resource. This is Monarch Lab which has a show of the entire process from egg to adult that is worth the students' viewing. The address for that is www.Monarchlab.umn.edu. It can be especially useful if you want your students to take a computer-generated assessment over the monarch because it includes a quiz in three levels of difficulty.

Adopt-a-Classroom

This is an exciting program to really get the kids involved in an activity where they can imagine immediate results for their efforts. By collecting donations for classrooms in the sanctuary area, they are helping students who study in crowded classrooms in cinder block schools. Schools in this area are ill-equipped – all will have textbooks but little else. Some schools may not even have electricity. The program is sponsored through Monarch Watch who gathers needed supplies into a kit, each costing \$100. Schools wishing to participate may send a donation for one or more kits and in return will receive a poster or various other appreciation gifts featuring monarchs. Donations of any amount, however, are gratefully accepted. They also request that surplus supplies (left over at the end of the year) be shipped to them for distribution in the Mexican schools.

Monarch Video

Once the classroom work has been completed, I recommend viewing the video *The Monarch: Butterfly Beyond Borders* that is a Canadian film and distributed in the States by Bullfrog Films (tel. 610-779-8226). It is also available in Spanish under the title *La Monarca: Mariposa Sin Fronteras*. It is 47 minutes long and is divided into two segments to make it easy for viewing over two days. Larger cities may have it through their public libraries or check with school lending libraries. It has become quite popular. It not only discusses the stages of the monarch, but the threats to the environment that endanger it. Most impressive are the visits into the sanctuaries in Mexico. The viewer can see thousands of butterflies clinging to trees or on sunny days flitting through the air en masse. This gives the students a better perspective about the forests where they overwinter and also the people that live in the area. There are interviews with the local residents and scenes showing area school children in preservation projects. The students will identify with the concern of these children living at the southern home of the monarch, creating a personal touch. Hopefully they will deduce that it takes involvement and employing ecologically safe practices by citizens all along the migratory route to successfully protect the monarchs' future.

Although it seems like a lot of involvement at the outset, once the students have this information the time commitment is less, requiring only a weekly update during migration. The update will keep the student informed as to the southward progression during the fall, the arrival in Mexico, and an overview of the conditions within the sanctuaries during the winter months. When days lengthen in January and get warmer in February, the reports will begin to detail the activity within the sanctuaries and the movement to the meadows before setting out northward once again.

Raising monarchs

I highly recommend raising a monarch within the classroom. Capturing a late-instar caterpillar and watching the metamorphic process is a truly memorable experience for everyone. It is nothing short of magical! Immediately when school starts in the fall, students may enjoy searching for the monarch caterpillar if they have milkweed near their homes or the teacher may order them through education laboratories. Monarch Watch has a connection for this. Monitoring the progress will create classroom interest. They will be amazed to see first hand the changes in the insect and will feel personally involved in the development. The climax will be the butterfly emerging from the chrysalis. Since it happens a few hours after daylight, it is possible that class may not yet be in session, but they will be able to observe the butterfly as it dries and pumps the blood through its wings to stiffen them. It cannot fly off until both of these steps are accomplished.

Becoming Butterflies is a delightful book by Anne Rockwell about the classroom experience. Although it is geared for very early primary school, the illustrations by Megan Halsey and the step-by-step story of the development will interest even middle-schoolers because it simply but thoroughly depicts the metamorphosis. The story is about the students and their discoveries and may prompt your students into monitoring their own experiments.

Films that Provide Background on U.S.-Latino History

For background of the situation, there are a couple movies that would present historical and present day issues for the middle school or high school student. Such a movie as *The Alamo* (with John Wayne) is a skewed view of the Texas/Mexico border problem as it creates heroes of the Texas defenders and avoids the problem of the mission actually being on Mexican soil. I would recommend *The Ballad of Gregorio Cortez*, a 1983 epic film by Robert M. Young, starring Edward James Olmos about a real life hero. Although it is a tragic story of mistaken identity, it showcases problems that the immigrants had to deal with; faulty translations of Spanish and an eagerness to accuse mistrusted Mexicans. Cortez' family emigrated from northern Mexico to Texas in 1887. As a young man of 25, he is unjustly charged with horse-stealing. During the arrest he escapes, killing the sheriff. A massive manhunt of three hundred miles ensues using dogs and horses and transport trains before he is captured. He is now charged with the murder of another sheriff and posseman. For a man who was innocent, his life is now very complicated. Mexican- Americans and Anglos rallied to his defense but he still served eight years in prison before being pardoned. This story will show students the plausibility of injustice to those minority citizens that are on the periphery of a dominant society.

Another video on the market that may well present a thorough historical synopsis to the students is *Viva La Causa, 500 Years of Chicano History*. It is an English film in two parts that presents the Indian ancestry, Spanish colonialism, and the U.S. domination of the border area. Labor and economic issues are addressed in the second part including the 1943 Zoot Suit Riots. It can be purchased on Amazon.com. *El Norte* is a very graphic video that would show the political turmoil that affects the lives of the Mayan Quiche Indians. The protagonists are two young people who capture the student viewer through the identity of age. Their village is destroyed by the state, and they flee for survival. Seeking opportunities in the "North" meaning the U.S., (El Norte) they fall into the throes of Mexican coyotes dropping them on the doorstep of the U.S. border. The film contains objectionable language and is in Spanish with English subtitles. The subject matter presents a realistic picture of the conflicts the teenagers endure, but I would not recommend it to an audience younger than 9th graders.

Imagining the daily struggle for life will be enough of a challenge without dealing with the offensive language.

The Other Side is a 2001 video that belongs to the City Life series. Emigration of Mexican young people and the dangers they encounter are affecting community life. Issues covered are the families left behind, loss of traditional values and culture, and loss of life. These dangers are forcing communities to resolve problems to find better solutions. The film is short (27 minutes) and therefore can be shown and discussed in the same class period. It is directed by Chris Walker and produced by Television Trust for the Environment. It is one in the series City Life.

Two more films worth noting for a high school audience about economic issues are Borderline Cases ,(65 min.) which highlights the problems and impact of 2,000 factories along the Mexican-U.S. border and The Emperor's New Clothes, a Cautionary Tale of Free Trade. The first is about how the mobility of multi-national corporations and NAFTA have created opportunities in Mexico but at a fraction of the wages once offered U.S. workers. They have used Mexico as a haven to avoid the expense of environmental regulations now prevalent in the States. One reporter has dubbed it “a 2,000 mile long open sewer... a vast toxic waste dump”, according to the review of the movie at the website: www.bullfrogfilms.com/bc.html Other issues are pollution and urban sprawl without increased services of the infrastructure. The second (53 min.) illuminates trouble with globalization for workers from the U.S., Canada, and Mexico. An example of insensitivity is the unconcerned practice of U. S. businesses (in Mexico) sprinkling lush green lawns while their workers return home to shacks without running water. Agreements between big business and governments affect the economic balance, giving rise to massive unemployment, cuts in social programs, environmental damage, and demoralization.

Discussion/Chalk Talk

Almost all school children learn something about the Alamo, but they do so from the American point of view. Once historical facts have been covered, have a CHALK TALK. Present a question written on the chalkboard. An example would be “Do you believe the defenders of the Alamo had the right to defy the Mexican government?” Draw a box around the question to isolate it. Then explain the rules to the class.

1. There is absolutely NO TALKING – everything is written.
2. Once the question is thrown out to the students, the teacher's active involvement is over until the issue exhausts itself.
3. There is no right or wrong, but opinions must be supported.

4. Students are to approach the board at will and express their opinion about the question by writing it then encircling it and drawing a link line either to the main question, or to another comment they are responding to.
5. No student may write a second comment before everyone has had a chance to participate.
6. Hesitant students will be encouraged by others eager for a second chance.
7. If they begin by “I agree with this” and draw their link line, be sure that they qualify it with an original reason why.

To the above question, a student might write “No, because the mission was under the jurisdiction of the Mexican government and their actions were considered anarchy.” To which someone else might draw a link and write “The Mexican government had given them free-reign and realized that they had allowed settlements that were closely connected to American social rights.”

Chalk talks can be very motivating. Once rolling, the students do a good job covering an issue. Sighs, gasps, or interjections of agreement may liven the class but once in awhile the teacher may have to remind students not to verbalize. This form of discussion seems to be less threatening and I have found certain students more willing to participate. It has the added advantage of allowing time to think while another is writing. And the curiosity of what someone will write keeps more students on task.

Socratic Seminar

This topic will fit well into the structure of a Socratic Seminar. The method is dialectic, which means to examine opinions or ideas logically. It is a discussion as opposed to a debate, so the purpose is to explore through non-threatening expressions of ideas. Through dialogue everyone is working towards mutual enlightenment. In a debate there are sides, one is proving his side right and the other side wrong. Dialogue brings about cooperation and understanding. In Socratic Seminar the teacher’s role is active both as presenting the Question and as a participant to clarify what students are stating or to open the possibility of a new direction in thought. At the website <http://www.mcps.k12.md.us/schools/wjhs/depts/socialst/ams/Skills/SocraticSeminar/Socrati> one can find useful information for understanding this teaching style and how to implement it. This technique encourages paraphrasing what one person has said and building on it or offering a counter viewpoint. Another useful site is http://www.studyguide.org/socratic_seminar.htm. This approach takes the students’ learning out of the fact and memorization mode and forces them into critical thinking. It expands their minds and teaches them to establish habits of

forming opinions based on research but also accept that there may be many points of view beyond their own.

Closure

A close look at the relations between the two countries, as diverse as we are, also shows two nations geographically and historically contingent. We are both ever-changing - proactive and reactive with each other. The idea of a nation is a homogeneous people sharing a heritage, culture, traditions, and ideologies or attitudes about life. In the United States, touted as the “home of the free and the brave” and “give me your homeless, your tired, your poor”, the entire focus has been that diversity enriches our nation. Teaching our children tolerance and compassion for others enhances the value of their lives and the contributions they can make in society. In growing they need to look beyond the “me” and realize that they have the power and responsibility to look after the “them” as well. As the butterfly morphs, so too, does humanity. What we change into is not always physical, or behavioral with attitudes that mature into adulthood, but for some, may mean a transplant of where they might prefer to be in order to avoid the poverty of their circumstance and provide for their families. To do this they choose the ultimate sacrifice, disconnecting from their culture and heritage. They come with hope beyond hope that they can be greeted with the same smile toward a fellow human that they received when tending the gardens, cooking the dinners, or watching the children of the Americans eager for those services. Let it be said that ALL children are our greatest resource.

End Notes

- ⁱ Goldman
- ⁱⁱ *ibid.*
- ⁱⁱⁱ Pennisi (1216)
- ^{iv} Hortopan 46
- ^v Green
- ^{vi} Weisman
- ^{vii} Mowbray (23)
- ^{viii} Nevins (15)

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New discoveries using scientific instruments to prove that the monarch has a pre-determined gene monitoring migration along with an internal circadian clock.
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May 1999: 69.
How the pollen of genetically engineered corn is destroying a high percentage of monarch caterpillars that eat affected milkweed.
- The Toronto Star. 2002: "Protecting Monarchs." 23 Feb
Canadian efforts to do their part to preserve monarch habitat and food sources.

United States. House Ways and Means Committee. Lead Congressional Committees Request GAO Inquiry into Potential Security “Totalization” Agreement With Mexico.

A government document on the proposal of Social Security for non-nationals.

Uruqhart, Fred. “Found at Last: the Monarchs’ Winter Home” National Geographic Aug. , 1976:160-173.

The inspirational discovery of the overwintering sites of the monarch butterfly. The photos inside the sanctuaries are amazing and includes close-ups of various stages of monarch development.

Villaseñor, Victor. Rain of Gold. Houston: Arte Publico Press, 2001

Biographical novel that follows his ancestors through the Mexican Revolution and into U.S. resettlement. Many stories of the peril of village life, corruption of the Mexican government and powerful U.S. businesses.

Weisman, Jonathan, and Kevin Sullivan. “US Social Security May Reach to Mexico.” Washington Post 19 Dec. 2002. < <http://www.washpt.com/ac2/wp-dyn/A9342->>

Information about expanding social security to include non-nationals who have paid into the system.

Interviews

Pineda, Luis. Ohio State University Visiting Professor of Computer Engineering (2002-2003). He is a member of the faculty of UNAM (departamento de las Ciencias de Computación). The interview was conducted in Spanish regarding both the butterfly sanctuaries and the status of the Mexican-American in the United States

Other Sources

<http://www.monarchwatch@ukans.edu> Constantly updated monarch information with activities and many links.

<http://waysandmeans.house.gov/news.asp2formmode=released.id=29>
governmental reports

<http://www.midgefrazel.net/monarchtheme.html>

A friendly site, offering many sources and activities about monarchs.

Hispanicvista <http://www.hispanicvista.comhtml2/012703dm.htm> This site

presents the Hispanic point of view on current border issues.

Sonnichsen, Phillip. <http://www.sp.utexas.edu/jrn/gcorteze.html>
Background information on the American judicial system and Gregorio Cortez, a real life hero to the Mexican Americans for standing up to injustice.

<http://www.bullfrog.com/bc.html> This site offers a full line of educational and environmental films.

Sage, Bethany. "Latin American Festivals and Popular Culture", PTI unit outline
<http://www.chatham.edu/PTI>.
Information about the Mexican holiday "Day of the Dead".

Swazuk, Mary Eileen. "Food and Fiestas", PTI unit outline 2002.
<http://www.chatham.edu/PTI>. More on "Day of the Dead".

Appendix – Standards

Communication

3. All students respond orally and in writing to information and ideas gained by reading narrative and informational texts and use the information and ideas to make decisions and solve problems.
6. All students exchange information orally, including understanding and giving spoken instructions, asking and answering questions appropriately, and promoting effective group communications.
9. All students converse, at a minimum level of "Intermediate Low" as defined in the oral proficiency guidelines developed by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, in at least one language other than English, including the native language if other than English, under Sec. 5.215© (relating to languages).

Arts and Humanities

3. All students relate various works from the visual and performing arts and literature to the historical and cultural context within which they were created.

Citizenship

3. All students examine and evaluate problems facing citizens in their communities, state, nation and world by incorporating concepts and methods of inquiry of the various social sciences.

4. All students develop and defend a position on current issues, confronting the United States and other nations, conducting research, analyzing alternatives, organizing evidence and arguments, and making oral presentations.
5. All students demonstrate their skills of communicating, negotiating and cooperating with others.
7. All students demonstrate that they can work effectively with others.
8. All students demonstrate an understanding of the history and nature of Prejudice and relate their knowledge to current issues facing communities, the United States and other nations
9. All students demonstrate an understanding of the various roles they can play as citizens through participation in a community service project.

Science and Technology

1. All students explain how scientific principles of chemical, physical and biological phenomena have developed and relate them to real-world situations.
7. All students evaluate advantages, disadvantages and ethical implications associated with the impact of science and technology on current and future life.
9. All students demonstrate basic computer literacy, including word processing, software applications, and the ability to access the global information infrastructure, using current technology.

Environment and Ecology

3. All students think critically and generate potential solutions to environmental issues.
6. All students evaluate the implications of finite natural resources and the need for conservation, sustainable agricultural development and stewardship of the environment.
7. All students demonstrate an understanding of the local, national and international implications of environmental and ecological issues.