Undocumented Immigration: Using the Visual Arts as a Tool to Teach Elementary And Students Understanding and Empathy

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Thesis Statement/Main Question:

In what ways might the visual arts be used to educate the broader population about the inequities undocumented immigrants face in this country?

Abstract

This study examines how the visual arts may be used to educate young learners about the inequities undocumented immigrants face in this country. The purpose was to teach empathy and understanding for difference using the issue of undocumented immigration as a lens. Two sets of participants took part in the study. Thirty-six second through fifth grade students were taught a lesson on the issue and created art works based on their ideas about the issue. Three Mexican adults living and working in Mexico were interviewed about their personal experiences with the issue. Results indicated that engagement in the visual arts does help children develop empathy and think critically about real life, socio-political issues that affect others and/or themselves. Additionally both the adults and children who participated in the study viewed engagement in the arts as a healing process.

Teach Elementary Students Understanding and Empathy

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The issue that has been crossing my mind is that of undocumented immigrants living in this country illegally seeking a better living for themselves and for their children. The United States is viewed as the land of opportunity, which makes people from all around the world want to live here. Citizens enjoy more freedoms than any other society; as a result, many come here, even illegally. Unfortunately, many American citizens view these "illegal" immigrants as the cause of overcrowding in our cities, fewer jobs for "legal" citizens, and a drain on already over-burdened social services. As a result, there is very little compassion for the plight of undocumented immigrants, and many advocate for deportation. But is this viewpoint truly fair? After all, most Americans are in this country because their ancestors immigrated here to seek a better life, or were shipped here as slaves or prisoners.

What happens to the American born children of these undocumented immigrants when their parents are deported? Without their parents, how will they survive and thrive? In addition, should these children be denied access to a quality education because their parents immigrated here illegally? And how can they possibly focus on their education when they are constantly fearful of a loved one being deported, never to return?

This is a mind-boggling subject and one that takes a toll on the most

vulnerable of our population-- children. I believe it is impossible to even imagine what these children go through. I also began to wonder if art education could play a role in helping children express their fears and develop coping mechanisms that would help them to focus and to be successful in school. I thought about the healing power of artistic expression, in particular visual art as a vehicle to confront fears, doubts and frustrations, to express both joy and sorrow, and to confide their deepest secrets.

I also began to wonder if the art that these children create could teach others to empathize and find workable solutions to the undocumented immigrant "problem." Many in this country will never understand the torment undocumented immigrants face. It is such a traumatic experience and one that no one, especially a child, should have to face. I myself have experienced losing my uncle due to deportation, but it had nothing to do with my relative being undocumented. It was due to other issues, but the pain from that experience still plays a part in my everyday life. I can only imagine what his own son my cousin, has gone through growing up without a father. I hear and see these heart breaking stories everyday. I am profoundly affected by these stories-family members deported and treated like hardened criminals solely because they sought a better life.

I believe that art created by undocumented immigrant children and socially conscious artists can bring awareness to this issue, bring compassion towards these people, and bring legislation that positively addresses the

problem. I want to research the possibility of visual art as a means of confronting and overcoming fears, and developing a positive sense of identity, a "border" identity- that takes pride in two cultures and heritages. The research question I address is:

In what ways might visual arts be used to help the children of undocumented immigrants and deportees cope with situations that they must keep silent about?

My plan is to talk to teachers about it, teachers with sizable populations of immigrant children, and ask them to conduct a visual journal assignment that would give these students a clear opportunity to visually express their thoughts and fears regarding what it means to be an undocumented immigrant. The children would be given prompts related to every day life to respond to the issue both in a visual way and in their writing. These exercises would provide a creative outlet for them to release their emotions and pain into something that is expressive, but at the same time therapeutic for them. Their artistic expression would be used as a tool for them to express visual symbolism. The artwork would be a way for instructors to understand what their students are going through because what happens in the students personal lives affects their educational goals. Equal access to a quality education should be the right of every American, including the undocumented. All children and their families living in the United States of America should be afforded the opportunity to realize their aspirations, hopes, and dreams of a brighter future.

Living under the threat of deportation may have a negative effect on a child's ability to concentrate on their education. Activist art is a powerful and effective means of bringing attention to social injustices. This issue could be solvable to say the least because the undocumented are human beings who have a right to live their lives. They are not all hardened criminals who have harmed or affected anyone's life in a negative or life-threatening way. Is living in the land of opportunity a crime? I certainly do not see it that way. Why handle this allusive issue so harshly? Everyone has been given the opportunity to live here in different ways whether it's through ancestry, slavery, marriage, etc. The issue of undocumented immigration has been elevated to a point where many Americans, themselves descendants of immigrants, are unsympathetic toward the plight of people with histories similar to their own. They see these "Illegals" as a threat and a drain on the social services and job opportunities they enjoy as "legal" citizens. There are psychological ramifications that can negatively affect lives. Many children daily fear the break-up of their families should their "secret" of being undocumented get out.

Art could also be used as a tool to build confidence and empower undocumented youth to take pride in their origins, because we all come from somewhere else and we all have roots. Everyone should learn to be proud of themselves and be happy with who they are. Through my research, I hope to uncover the similarities and common concerns, identities, and stories that undocumented immigrants share with legal citizens. Exposing these similarities

may build understanding, acceptance, and empathy, and lead toward the positive resolution of the "immigrant problem."

The term “Illegal”, is defined in Webster’s Dictionary as “ not according to or authorized by law: unlawful, illicit, Synonyms: criminal, felonious, illegitimate, illicit. Lawless, unlawful, and wrongful **(Webster’s Dictionary).** Why would this term be used to refer to someone who wants to live a better life in the United States of America? Is it wrong to want to live in freedom? The terms "illegal" and "alien" have negative connotations that may have an adverse psychological affect on undocumented students.

The term “Illegal immigration” commonly used by the media and society is politically incorrect. “Undocumented” is the proper and more polite word to use to define basically the same topic. Undocumented immigrants are people who have come to live and work in this country without legal permission. Being labeled as something unnatural or as someone who has done something wrong is probably the worst feeling in the world, especially to children who has no control over how they enter this country.

I want to find out if art-making activities can help empower children to see themselves and their situation in a more hopeful light. Through my thesis research, my goal is to discover whether or not art making can have a positive, therapeutic impact on youth who are tremendously affected by the issue of undocumented immigration. The visual arts will be used as a form of therapy for them to creatively

express themselves. Some viewers, who maybe undocumented, can relate to the issue by understanding what the artists have gone through. Other viewers, who do not understand the issue and do not know what the undocumented are going through, should have a better understanding of the artists' experiences. The idea to research whether or not art can be used to heal and bring awareness to this issue came about when I taught art to fourth grade students at a local charter school. I asked students to draw a picture of their family. Several students mentioned they included family members who "went away" and could not come back. I plan to return to the school and teach a series of lessons that will hopefully have a therapeutic effect on those children who have lost family members to deportation or who live in constant fear of the threat of deportation.

Art is a way to make a statement about such a heated issue that is tearing this country apart. I can help others understand the issue with my thesis is by examining four primary areas that relate to the undocumented and art as healing. First, I will examine the primary issue, which, is the issue of "undocumented immigration" in this country. Second, I will examine how the issue of undocumented immigration affects the state of education in several different ways. Third, I will focus on art education as a tool to come up with ways to educate others about the issue; the issue is known, but still misunderstood. Fourth, I will use art as a tool for healing children as a way to and get past, the negative associations of being "undocumented".

My research will consist of data, current events, stories from individuals who are affected, articles, artworks, films, and scholarly writings on the issue of undocumented immigration. Learning and understanding other's points of view would be a key factor in helping me uncover more thoughtful resolutions.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the issue of undocumented immigration in the United States. I summarize undocumented immigration and move to a discussion on education and undocumented immigration, immigration reform, and its impact on education. Next, I discuss the benefits of visual communication through art. Art is a way of expressing emotions as well as awareness of socio-political issues. Finally, I end with a summary of how art education may assist with understanding, coping with, and combating ignorance regarding the issue of undocumented immigration.

This topic impacts all citizens, legal or undocumented; we are all affected no matter what our status. Undocumented immigrants are the victims of prejudice; just as other minority groups are, and they are discriminated against for being atypical and un-American.

Education now and always seems to be the key to providing freedom and justice for all who seek it. If these issues are resolved in a peaceful manner at an early age they learn to respect differences and to discover creative and more positive methods of expressing fear and doubt. “Every child in America, undocumented or ‘legal’ should have access to a free, quality education. This is one of the cornerstones of the ‘Dream Act’. The educated are less then likely to be

illiterate, live in poverty, have health issues, and be involved in a crime. It costs taxpayers a lot less to provide a quality education than it does to send a person to jail, or provide long-term social and medical services" (Carabelli, 2010, p.117-118). An educated citizen is much more likely to have a positive impact on the nation's economy. Plyler vs. Doe (1982) is a public education act that ensures that children who are undocumented have the right to a free public education without the pressure of proving they are legal citizens.

When it comes to free public education for everyone, no matter what their status, everyone has the right to receive a free education. Plyler vs. Doe guarantees that everyone is treated equally when it come to education, especially for young children and their families who may be undocumented.

Is there a way to assist undocumented immigrants in attaining crucial Benefits, such as education and health care? The signing of a new immigration reform policy on June 15th, 2012, called "Deferred Action for childhood arrivals/young Immigrants" is one positive step. This policy provides protection from deportation for undocumented immigrants who grew up and arrived here before the age of 16 and who are now aged 30 or younger, have no criminal background or security risk, and were especially good students or served in the U.S. military (www.uscis.gov/childhoodarrivals.com, 2012).

Communication can be difficult when there are language barriers. The visual arts can act as a form of communication to reach others as well as a tool for therapy

and progress, particularly with children. Even if we don't speak the same language, we can still communicate visually. Understanding where children are emotionally as well as cognitively, despite language barriers, is key to making a positive impact on their lives and learning. Visual communication through art can be an effective means for the instructor to learn about each and every student as a person. Through art, children can feel free to express themselves in ways they cannot with speech and writing—"who is wrong or right" conventions can make young learners feel inadequate. Art can be about anything, and there are no particular rules. As a form of expression, art can be very freeing to students feeling threatened by their status.

A Summary of Undocumented Immigration in the United States

There are twelve million undocumented immigrants currently living in this country. Over two million undocumented immigrants will never be counted because so many are invisible and hidden that all accurate number will never come to surface. Because many undocumented come to this country so young, they do not realize they are undocumented (Galisky, A., 2010).

The United States of America is a country comprised mostly of immigrants. They come to this country out of desperation mainly due to poor living conditions in their home countries: They come for the safety of their families and themselves. Unfortunately, most immigrants are unaware of how the immigration and naturalization system works here and how complicated it is. According to Drachman (2006): "Most of the immigrants currently living in the United States

come from Mexico, Central America, South America, the Caribbean, and South Asia" (p.91).

The majority of undocumented immigrants enter this country by crossing the Mexican border on foot. Many others have entered this country with a stolen or fraudulent visa or overstaying their legal visa by ignoring its expiration date. A lot of immigrants that are undocumented will live in the United States legally. Immigrant visas are granted each year but are very limited by statute. The process of applying and waiting for legal status is too long and too drawn out and would produce a huge backlog of applicants, few of whom would be approved for legal status here (Drachman, 2006).

Most undocumented immigrants come to the United States in search of better paying jobs to support themselves and their families here and back home. They come here to pursue the American dream of living a better life than the one they left behind. Due to staggering demographics on the immigrant population, it is historically clear that immigrants come here primarily for economic opportunity and the promise of receiving higher wages than they would ever get paid where they came from. To immigrate here legally, Immigrants must be in need of absolute asylum from danger in their home country, or receive a visa through an employer. However only highly skilled individuals are granted these work visas. Carabelli (2006) posits, :

The typical immigrant, illegal as well as legal, is a 'target-earner' who intends

to stay in the United States only long enough to amass a certain amount of capitol and then return home. So preoccupied are immigrants with earning and saving money, that they endure highly undesirable living conditions, work two or three shifts a day, and reserve little or no time for socializing or recreation.(p.116)

The National Research Council (NRC) has estimated that about 800,000 immigrants come to the United States annually, but only one third of them return to their native homes. Those who remain in the United States do become a very critical part of the U.S. work force and also contribute significantly to its growing productivity and technological advancement. Immigrants make up the largest percentage of certain occupations, such as construction, food services, custodial services, and healthcare. Immigrants are more likely to become entrepreneurs here rather than in their native countries (Carabelli, 2010). In addition, undocumented immigrants are more likely to pay out more in taxes and social security payments then they would ever receive in state services. The Social Security Administration (SSA) estimates that about half of all undocumented immigrants do pay social security taxes: "About 6 million unauthorized immigrants file individual tax returns each year [thus confirming] estimate [s] that between 50 percent to 75 percent of unauthorized immigrants pay federal, state, and local taxes" (Carabelli, 2010, p.117).

The National Immigration Law Center finds that, "Undocumented immigrants contribute approximately $8.5 billion to Social Security and Medicare funds annually while the [IRS] has determined that undocumented immigrants paid

almost $50 billion in federal taxes from 1996 to 2003" (Carabelli, 2010, p.117). The decline of the U.S. economy in recent years has been blamed on undocumented immigrants because so many have been given job, and educational opportunities that leads most Americans to believe that those opportunities have been taken away from them. But as long as there are jobs available especially for undocumented immigrants, they will continue to enter the Untied States no matter what the risks are. Business owners out for increased profits encourage immigration through solicitation of cheap labor and a willingness to hire undocumented immigrants, no matter what the law states (Carabelli, 2010).

There is too much for business owners to gain from having a cheap labor force. Business owners drive the US economy, and contribute to political campaigns, which is one reason politicians have no incentive to sponsor legislation that would affect hiring undocumented immigrant workers. "Since immigration has benefited business owners and the federal government, it would be rational for politicians to promote legislation that would accommodate the challenges that state governments face in trying to deal with excessive immigration rather than attempt to change immigration policy" (Carabelli, 2010, p.128).

That is why the U.S. economy could weigh heavily on how the nation relates immigration to economic and social policy. The NRC recognizes that the current population of immigrants in the United States will only continue to grow further due to job and educational opportunities (p.116).

Many Americans believe that undocumented immigrants are the prime reason why the country's financial resources are draining away. That is why there is so much debate on whether immigrants, no matter what their status, should be entitled to the same rights and privileges as U.S. citizens. The federal government entitles everyone residing in the United States to a K-12 education, such as the equal protection clause of the fourteenth Amendment, which is "to protect the rights of all individuals on American soil" (Carabelli, 2010, p.117). Undocumented immigrants have no constitutional right to enter the United States, but once they have made it here, they are protected under due process of law and equal protection. But undocumented immigrants are not at fault for the strain on the U.S. economy. The National Immigration Law Center reports that immigrants are the net contributors to the economy at the federal level: "Undocumented immigrants are, by law, subject to all existing taxes including sales, excise, property, income and payroll taxes" (Carabelli ,2010, p.116). Undocumented immigrants pay income taxes by using a false social security number to satisfy employment requirements. (Comprehensive reform), there has to be a reminder that we all come from different places and this country was mainly built by immigrants, (Galisky, 2009).

Borderlands Theory

When we do think of immigrants and immigration now, the topic of the border comes to mind. It's meaning is physical, psychological, and metaphorical. For example, immigrants physically cross the border as a means of illegally immigrating

into the United States, but these immigrants should be referred to as "undocumented" instead of "illegal". Undocumented immigrant is a more politically correct term to reference these people, meaning those who immigrated here without documentation. Psychologically, undocumented immigrants "may find themselves caught between cultural borders, in a kind of no man's land" (Jeffers, 2002, p.163). Metaphorically the border represents the socio-political and economic barriers imposed upon the "other/alien" by native born citizens. The border is also seen as; one side is normal and the other side as abnormal, regarding the Mexican-U.S. border, which is really a division of two countries.

In the U.S. there has never been a clear indication of who a foreigner is. Foreigners are viewed as people who are supposed to be kept safely behind the border, or as low-wage, low skilled, and as exploited labor. "A U.S. version of hospitality politics would at least address the immediate need to ensure that undocumented Mexican workers and their families are granted basic human rights, including educational rights, and that they are treated with respect and hospitality rather than policing, surveillance, scapegoat-ing, and economic exploitation" (Carlson, 2009, p.260).

Bernardo Gallegos who wrote "Remember the Alamo: Imperialism, Memory, and Postcolonial Educational Studies", referred to a phrase chanted by young Latino protesters in Los Angeles who were chanting, " We didn't cross the border, the border crossed us" (As cited in Carlson, 2009, p.269). Gallegos also said, "Have they

forgotten that just over one hundred and fifty years ago the United States, invaded and occupied the northern half of Mexico? Can they not see the Indian faces of those they are naming illegal aliens?" (As cited in Carlson, 2009, p.275).

It seems that the border encourages more resentment and fear among those who are affected by the issue of illegal immigration and are also oppressed and marginalized within the American Social and economic order. " We didn't cross the border, the border crossed us"(Carlson, 2009, p.275), refers to whose identity has been so dependent on binary oppositional borders such as the divide of the United States and Mexico.

Jacques Derrida said in Carlson's writing, "Allows one to think the process of differentiation beyond every kind of limit: whether it is a matter of cultural, national, linguistic, or even human limits." (Carlson, 2009, p.276). Derrida related his views on the border to his personal history, his theory, and cultural politics because it could never separate him as a man, nor the borders he crossed, or the borders he was not permitted to cross as a Jew from France living in Algeria during World War II.

The concept of both physical and metaphorical borders is expressed by many artists and writers, such as Gloria Anzaldua who was a Chicana feminist writer, poet, theroist, and activist. She wrote *Borderland's/ La Frontera,* her most recognized work based on her experiences of growing up on both sides of the border. In her writing she refers to herself by saying, " I am a border woman"

(Anzaldua, 1987, preface). She implies seeing the border as an ever-changing space that is based on resistance and liberation. Anzaldua argued that the border is seen as a social, geographical, and political construction that could be shaped and reshaped. Her views on the concept of borderlands were physical and ideological. Looking at the Mexico-U.S. borderlands from Anzaldua's perspective as a site where ideological borderlands could materialize and produce racism, discrimination, economic exploitation, exclusion, etc. Anzaldua quoted Cadaval, (1996) as saying, "Borders are artifacts of history and are subject to change over time. When borders shift, lands and people are subjected to different sets of rules; this creates opportunities for exploitation, conditions of hardship"(n.p.).

The U.S.- Mexican border region is not only a borderland, but also a composite of many borders looking back to history and the Spanish colonization of northern Mexico. Mexico had few settlements at the time the government opened up the border to the American colonies, experiencing growth and expansion that required additional land. Thus the Anglos migrated on to Texas illegally. This later resulted in the U.S.-Mexican War in the 1840's. U.S. troops invaded and took over Mexico forcing them to give up half of their territory, now known as New Mexico. Arizona, Colorado, and California (Anzaldua, 1987). The outcome of the war provided to be a time of triumph, glory, and success for the United States, meanwhile for the Mexico it was a sign of shame, failure, anger, humiliation, and ultimate defeat.

Anzaldua's references to the Mexican-American War reflect on the issue of immigration, the border's history, and also her background. She expressed, "being a Mexican is a state of the soul-not one of mind, not of citizenship"(Anzaldua, 1987, p.62). The borderland is a place of competing cultures and racial identities.

Mexican-Americans and Chicanos who do live here live with one foot on each side of the border because they contribute to the economy and the culture of both nations. In Anzaldua's view, "Borders are set up to define the places that are safe and unsafe, to distinguish us from them. A border is a dividing line, a narrow strip along a steep edge. A Borderland is a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary. It is in a constant state of transition. The prohibited and forbidden are it's inhabitants "(Anzaldúa, 1987, pg.7). "This land was Mexican once, was Indian always, and is. And will be again" (Orozco-Mendoza, 2008, p.31).

Part of Gloria Anzaldua's poem tells a story of a Mexican immigrant who attempts to cross over to U.S. territory through the border that looks more like a war site. Mexicans primarily search every spot of the border to find some possible way of getting through to land that once belonged to Mexico.

When Mexicans (who are undocumented) flee to this nation they are charged with doing wrong for entering the U.S. illegally in search of jobs to take care of their families back home. Orozco-Mendoza, who studied Gloria Anzaldua's theory, stated, in "President Bush's proposed amnesty bill, illegal immigrants who want to

be considered for amnesty have, as a first step, to pay with jail time and money the price for being in this country illegally "(Orozco-Medoza, 2008, p. 33).

The geographical border between the two nations still reflects America's dominance. The ideology that came to mind when referring back to Anzaldua's writing is that of the borderlands as a way of overcoming the physical and geographical Boundaries. From Anzaldua's perspective, the border could be perceived in a geographical, emotional, or a spiritual way. "The borderlands are physically present wherever two or more cultures edge each other, where people of different races occupy the same territory, where the lower, middle and upper classes touch" (Anzaldúa, 1987, preface).

Anzaldua's borderlands theory helped her redefine who she is and also the world we live in. The borderland concept may be viewed as a tool that opens up a world of culture, people, goods, government, and influence over one another through encounters and interactions viewed as a place that symbolically embraces different points of view, Anzaldua (1987).

Education and Immigration

The issue of "undocumented Immigration" affects this country, the economy, the world and especially young children. Many students who are undocumented immigrants may be fearful of any authority figure due to their families fear of deportation. That means children specifically would fear their own teachers and that would make a relationship with their own teacher very difficult.

Teach Elementary Students Understanding and Empathy

The Supreme Court's Plyler vs. Doe act guarantees all undocumented students a free public school education, but that free education applies to K-12 only. For undocumented students the ability to receive a post-secondary education is an ongoing issue that is constrained by many federal laws. Those laws do not allow undocumented students to receive financial benefits to go to college. A college education is very costly and legal citizens come first when it comes to financial support.

The question now is what happens to those who fulfilled a K-12 education and are ready to go on to receive a higher education. What happens to the undocumented? They lose hope for their futures. Many undocumented students in this country do not realize that they are undocumented until they complete their K-12 education and want to go to college.

Looking back on 1975 when Plyler vs. Doe was signed into law, Texas was the first U.S. state to refuse a free education to undocumented immigrant students. In 1982 the U.S. Supreme Court struck down Texas law denying undocumented youth or any youth from receiving a public K-12 education (Drachman, 2003).

The Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment guarantees that all youths no matter what their citizen status, are fully entitled to a free public education from public schools. "Held that denying undocumented children access to free public education imposes a lifetime hardship on a discrete class of children not accountable for their disabling status, [and that] the stigma of illiteracy will mark

them for the rest of their lives "(Drachman, 2003, p. 92).

The undocumented come to the U.S. mainly for better work opportunities and do not intend to receive public services or benefits. Not educating an undocumented student will end up costing the country later on, costs of jobs, welfare, health care, and especially crime. Undocumented immigrant children should not be punished for being undocumented because it was not their decision to enter this country illegally. Chief Justice Warren Burger stated that, "it is senseless to deprive any children . . . of an elementary education....[and that]it would be folly—and wrong—to tolerate creation of a segment of society made up of illiterate persons"(Drachman, 2003, p. 93). This made the policy clear that Plyler vs. Doe guarantees a free K-12 education to every student, especially to the undocumented. Many undocumented children do end up dropping out of high school or do not even dream about college because of the belief that they could never afford a college education.

When discussing the issue of secondary education, the Dream Act came to mind because it would grant conditional permanent resident status for six years to undocumented students if they arrived in the United States before the age of sixteen, have good morals, no criminal records, have lived in this country more than five years, graduated from high school, and are accepted into a two or four year college. The Dream Act would provide access to higher education for undocumented youth to obtain legal status. It would also provide some undocumented youth with a path

to citizenship if they attend college or join the military (Drachman, 2006).

The documentary "Papers, Stories of Undocumented Youth?", put all my thoughts on the issue of undocumented immigration into a new perspective. It was refreshing to hear undocumented youth speak from their hearts, especially since all the youths in the film want to attend college, but cannot because of their status. Many never knew that they were undocumented and it comes as a surprise to them and discourages them from finishing high school or doing well in school, because they feel like there is no future for them.

Many undocumented youths especially in the film grew up in the U.S. and were educated here; they have American values and only ever viewed the United States as their home. Graduation is not a happy time for undocumented youth because it signifies an end to their potential through further education. These young people become preoccupied with what life holds for them after high school. After viewing this documentary I wondered how to help youth in a way that would make them feel like things in life are possible?

Economic Impact of Uneducated, Undocumented Immigrants

Undocumented immigration in the United States grows every day and so does the number of undocumented students. "There is an estimate of about two million undocumented students in the United States and about three million who are born to undocumented parents" (Carabelli, 2010, p.116). The exact number of undocumented students is unknown because of the risks involved. Education is

primarily funded by local taxes, but the issue of how that money should be spent often arises. Some believe that educating undocumented students is unfair due to the belief that their parents do not contribute to local taxes. The problem is figuring out how to determine the educational costs of undocumented immigrants. As well as figuring out everyone's benefits from an educated society, which is why it is crucial to educate immigrants because educated immigrants contribute more to the U.S. economy.

The growing number of immigrants in this country will never seem to decrease that is why it is essential to have policies that cater to the undocumented. Otherwise poverty levels will increase and create further strain on the U.S. economy. According to Former Secretary of Labor Ray Marshall, "Immigrants are particularly important in the U.S. economy, accounting for over half of the workforce growth during the 1990s and 86 percent of the increase in employment between 2000 and 2005. The strength of the U.S. economy could depend heavily on how the nation relates immigration to economic and social policy" (As cited in Carabelli, 2010, p.129). Data collection would be the best way for local and state governments to determine the exact financial benefits that the educational system would need. Still without exact numbers there should be a way to financially support education and educate undocumented immigrant students.

Art Education and Social Justice

Art education is another way of communicating and developing cultural

understanding. Art seems to be the safest way for undocumented children to reveal their concerns. The art class could be an empowering place for children to be free to create and view art as a survival tool. Art could be used as a way of developing students problem solving skills too. Graham's (2009) research revealed that "students dramatically illustrated how cultural journalism that includes the study and making of art can be a powerful way to engender empathy, compassion, and intercultural dialogue, and engage students and teachers in critical thinking about cultural assumptions and diversity" (p.155).

In today's schools, art is often cut out or taken away from the curriculum, considered a fringe or special benefit, not a core subject, thus financial resources are spent elsewhere. As poet Gwendolyn Brooks said, " not an old shoe, soft and comfortable. Art hurts. Art urges voyages"(As cited in Quinn, 2012, p.4). Excluding the arts as core to education creates devastating consequences on the creative, critical thinking and problem solving abilities of children. There are so many art educators who do fight for the arts to remain in school curriculums (Quinn, 2012).

Art educators like Beto Sepulveda in Chicago prove how the power of art can impact civic engagement and education. He worked primarily with Latino students affected by the issue of immigration. He created a political poster art project for his students to study social realism art through the poster movement. Since the topic of immigration affects them all they chose to stick with the topic of immigration. Sepulveda had the idea of displaying their printed posters at Chicago's first

immigrants rights march so that it would visually express how his class felt about the issue and the role art plays in communicating and effecting socio-political change. He taught his students how to enlarge images as well as create their own prints. He also infused the concept of justice into his lesson. Sepulveda's class was able to participate in the march, but he managed to bring the march back to the school to allow staff and parents to see them march and express their thoughts on the subject. Sepulveda wanted to set an example for all art educators about how to incorporate art lessons and activism into a learning lesson for students. "This project is an example of the way that teachers can combine lessons from contemporary art and activism, and good pedagogy- that art and action can happen anywhere and context is everything"(As cited in Quinn, 2011, p.6). Art and education both combined has the enduring power to either advocate for something either positive or negative, there are many different ways of implicating social justice in education and Sepulveda is an educator that made it possible.

The arts have the social power to make a change, which is why art education is a big part of educating students. "Social justice art education does not have to be based on controversial or overtly political issues (i.e. race, violence, discrimination, etc.). Rather, as long as the process of making art offers participants a way to construct knowledge, critically analyze an idea, and take action in the world, then they are engaged in the practice of social justice art making"(Quinn, 2012, p.7).

Arts-Based Research Methods and Social Justice

Teach Elementary Students Understanding and Empathy

Ethnography by definition is the study and documentation of human cultures and visual ethnography encompasses the principles and methods of visual representation of experience (Powell, 2010, p.45). Art educator Kimberly Powell (2010), discusses how ethnography can be incorporated into the arts and social justice. Ethnography can encourage students to learn more about the social and cultural dimensions of art. Ethnography is a form of mapping that can provide learners with a true grasp of where they are and where they come from, through photography, maps, architecture, landscapes, and the many visual approaches (Powell, 2010).

Visual Ethnography is a way of documenting, studying, learning, creating, and displaying to others a visual experience. It incorporates data research visually through sketching, visual journaling, photography, mapping, discovery, elicitation, history analyzing, interpreting, representing, and educating, (Powell, 2010, p.45-47).

Through visual ethnographic methods students view places that are unknown or misunderstood and become open minded about how these places relate to all cultures. Some educators who have experimented with Ethnography would refer to their students as "artist ethnographers" Powell (2010), interpreting Ethnography as a way of studio practice.

Another form of Ethnography, cultural journalism, involves students interacting with their communities to document the experiences and stories of the

people in them that they do not know, but who live in the same place as they do. Art is a way to teach students the importance of different cultures, a way to reveal feelings, and developing critical thinking. "By linking art-making to student experiences that are personally meaningful, learning becomes a process that is active, purposeful, and critical"(Graham, 2009, p.156). Art is a form of documentation of culture and uncovering stories in the case of this research, the stories of immigration.

Cultural differences play a part in understanding immigration and working toward social justice. How does art connect to social justice? According to Donahue, Stuart, Elkin, and Mistry (2010), "Some define human rights as what we need to live with dignity. Did you list education? The arts? Both are fundamental human rights and part of a life of dignity"(p.32). This question and answer best defends what human rights is all about.

"Everyone has the right to education " and "education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms" (Donahue, Stuart, et al, 2010, p.32). Article 27 guarantees that "everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community and to enjoy the arts" (Donahue, Stuart, et al, 2010, p.32-33). No government or person could take away education, because it's everyone's right. Art education allows for freedom of expression and a way to communicate and teach others.

Social justice artists, Spehler and Slattery (2010) posit that, " as educators concerned about making a difference in the world, we seek to create a different kind of space for the young to learn and grow." (p. 3). Through art education students primarily in elementary and middle school discover their own identities. They discover themselves, but also they discover that they are members of a community that may be defined by race, gender, culture, and language.

A Chicana artist, Margaret Garcia is quoted as saying, " I have been documenting my community one [person] at a time… to reveal the individual within the community. To see us one at a time, without clichés or stereotypes" (As cited in Donahue, et. al, 2010, p.33). This statement implies that we are all one and a part of a community at the same level.

Diego Rivera once said, "I do not think that the capacity for artistic expression has anything to do with race or heredity. Opportunity, merely"(As cited in Donahue et al, 2010, p.36). Looking through the many works by Diego Rivera, his paintings demonstrate unity between two very different obstacles or subject matter. It displays that art can be a subject that is a meaningful part of everyone's lives because it is important (Donahue, et al, 2010).

"If we want freedom, we must promote free expression ourselves. If we want equity, we must have equal access and support in expressing ourselves. If we want respect and love and beauty among us all our many communities, we must actively and systematically promote it through our art and through our teaching of

others" (Donahue, et al, 2010, p.40). DeNobriga and Schwarzman made this statement, they spent time with community artists who strongly believe in their art as a way to promote social justice. Art has the power to advocate a cause for a community and to display strength.

That type of approach could open up the minds of students and others to get a better sense of immigration and what it stands for because it is a part of the American culture and art educators have the ability to provide these types of learning opportunities to all students.

Communication through Visual Art

Art is a visual language that inspires, but also encourages learning, confidence, and creativity. Students, who are dealing with difficult situations such as being in an undocumented immigration situation, could use art as a form of self-healing.

McArdle and Spria (2007), conducted research in an Australian school based on art therapy and how it could assist refugee students experiencing difficulty adjusting to Australian life. The researchers worked with an artist providing students with an art enriched program to support children's ongoing development, particularly for students who were not from Australia, may have been undocumented, and had minimal English speaking skills. The program took place once a week. The artist guided the children in a mixed media portrait project referencing artists such as Frida Kahlo and Pablo Picasso. The children drew their portraits, transferred them to canvas, and then added 3-D collage elements to their

portraits. The task was mainly for the students to have an artistic experience using creative expression. The instructor exposed the children to the language of art, other artists' artwork, new skills, and techniques in making art. The task was revealing in understanding the students to a new degree, (p.6).

"During times of great stress, the arts can provide a buffer between us and reality, and an outlet for emotional expression — sometimes a means of expressing that for which we may not have words. There is a growing number of instances where children of refugee families have been encouraged to use art making as a means of expression" (McArdle, 2007, pg.6).

Students, particularly young students who have gone through traumatizing events in their lives find it less stressful to portray their disturbing memories through art as a positive and safe way of expression.

"Since children are not able to communicate in English and I am not able to speak their native languages, we utilize a lot of playful, hands-on activities. These activities utilize the universal languages such as art and music, and enable children to start sharing their experiences. The activities also enable us to provide children with strategies for coping with their experiences" (Szente, Hoot & Taylor, 2006, p.17).

This type of teaching and learning provide great lesson plan ideas for art teachers to work with students who have a language barrier to contend with. Utilizing hands on activities relating to the arts is a useful resource to incorporate a

combination of diversity into a student's (like an undocumented student) new environment where they are able to freely express themselves through art. "Art as language is a way of knowing that can be experienced with the mind, heart, body, and soul" (Wright, 2003 as cited in McArdle, 2007, p. 10), it's a useful tool that has to be provided by an encouraging teacher to not only teach, but guide students visually through the arts to help them cope with difficult experiences that could be looked over so that a student can focus on the future, (McArdle, 2007, p.10).

Mark A. Graham (2009) looks at how an art class explored cultural journalism. Their projects were entitled "One port, many faces: A project in documentary photography." The project required students to interview and photograph someone who immigrated to the United States. Students used cameras to photograph their interviewees in their environments, along with a film for the project in it's entirety. Each image specifically told a story about immigration and showcased the students' journey in researching, learning, and representing what they were exposed to. The project was a reflection of their experience in documentation and art making.

Examples of what students and interviewees said about their experience in visual ethnography:

> A Student from the "One Port, Many Faces: A Project in Documentary Photography" project said: "Photographing immigrants and interviewing them opened our eyes, and took away a little of our ignorance."
>
> Interviewee 1: "I don't mind being different. I just mind that some

> people don't like me because I'm different" (Meri Silva from El Salvador).
>
> Interviewee 2: "I came here with my brother as a young boy, leaving everything I knew to fulfill a new life" (Phil Matinale from Italy). (Graham, 2009, p. 157)

This project provided immigrant children with an opportunity to voice their experiences, and be heard—something that seldom happens.

The photography and art created for this project conveyed not only imagery and interviews, but also employed visual story telling. The key to representing these immigrant's stories was using visual symbolism to portray a powerful representation of each immigrant's life.

Example of what a student said about their Ethnography Project:

" Jackie painted her friend Kate on cardboard to convey the sense of impermanence in her life. The cardboard symbolized the many moves she has made. Boxes are the only factor that remains constant in her life" (Graham, 2009, p. 159).

Through engagement in the visual arts students learn both about the world around them and their place within it. Effective art educators design curriculum that is learner-centered, relevant to living in contemporary society, and encourages learners to construct their own knowledge. Participation in the visual arts under the guidance of a knowledgeable art educator may assist undocumented learners in coping with their situation, better understanding themselves and others, and using visual expression for self-empowerment. Some of the methods an art educator might employ are the study of activist art and artists, ethnographic research, and

cultural journalism. In this way students would learn how artists from the past through present day have used visual communication to effect socio-political change. " The process of making art offers participants a way to construct knowledge, critically analyze an idea, and take action in the world, then they are engaged in the practice of social justice art-making"(Quinn, 2012, p. 7).

Chapter 3

Methodology

After thoroughly reviewing the literature on undocumented immigrants, education, and the visual arts as a therapeutic means of confronting difficult issues, I decided that a qualitative methodology would be the best approach in answering my research questions.

My research questions have narrowed as follows:

How might the visual arts be used as a resource to educate children about equity and justice surrounding issues related to undocumented immigrants? How might engaging in the visual arts provide a positive emotional outlet for children of undocumented immigrant families? In what ways might the visual arts be used to educate the broader population about the inequities undocumented immigrants face in this country?

I chose to research these questions using a narrative inquiry method. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) define narrative inquiry as research into lived experience. That research takes the form of narratives. The authors base their narrative inquiry theory in John Dewey's philosophy---"education, experience and life are inextricably intertwined" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p.xxiii). Examining narratives is one way of understanding experience (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

> Experience is the stories people live. People live stories, and in the telling of these stories, reaffirm them, modify them, and

> create new ones. Stories lived and told educate the self and others, including the young…(Clandinin & Connelley, 2000, p. xxvi)

Narrative takes many forms, oral, visual, written and performed. The data I collected took the form of visual artworks and oral interviews.

Context for the Study

I initially decided to research this issue after working with fourth grade students at a local charter school. Several of the students' artworks addressed issues experienced by undocumented immigrant families—in particular deportation and it's negative effects. These young artists were unaware of the immigration laws, but were experiencing first-hand it's effects. Their questions and stories about beloved family members who "disappeared" triggered my interest in the issue and the possibility of utilizing art as both a therapeutic and educational tool to address the emotions connected to the issue of undocumented immigration.

The fourth graders were asked to draw a family portrait. Many included family members who had gone away never to be seen again. Creating the artworks gave them an outlet for expressing their sorrow and for remembering beloved family members.

Sometime later as I began my student teaching experience at an arts center for P-5 public school students I noticed how often these mostly minority students looked down upon those different from themselves, making stereotypical comments about different ethnicities and cultures. Students even asked me inappropriate

questions about my ethnic background. I did not take offense, but used this opportunity as a teaching moment. I told them what countries my parents came from and that I was born and raised in the U.S. After being asked all these questions it made me wonder how children ask each other questions about race and status? As an adult they accord me a certain level of respect, but how do they discuss these issues with their peers?

At this point I decided to design an art assignment to help them learn to respect and appreciate differences while educating them about undocumented immigrant families.

Shortly after completing my student teaching I traveled to Mexico to work with abandoned girls for an art education class. While there I had an opportunity to interview young adults about their experiences with family members who had been deported back to Mexico. Obtaining the perspective of young people living outside of the U.S. added another dimension to my research.

Participants

Participants in the art making narrative inquiry research ranged in age from 7-11 and spanned approximately seven different ethnic/racial groups. The young adults I interviewed in Mexico ranged in age from 19 to 30.

Due to the negative implications of identifying as an undocumented immigrant, none of the children I worked with were asked questions that might endanger their families.

Table 1. Adult Participants

Code	Gender	Age	Personal Experience with U.I.
I1	Female	19	Yes
I2	Male	28	Yes
I3	Male	30	Yes

Data Collection

Of the four methods of collecting data in a qualitative research study, participation, observation, in-depth interviewing, and document analysis (Marshall & Rossman, 1990), this thesis utilizes observation, interviewing, and document or artifact (art work) analysis. Both primary and secondary data collection methods were used. Primary data collection methods included in this study are my observation notes, interview notes, audio recordings, and reflection journal entries. All provide narrative evidence of perceptions and understandings of the issue of undocumented immigration.

The questionnaires that I distributed to students are considered secondary data in that they are "self-reporting" documents and may or may not provide an accurate and honest account of students' perceptions and understanding. This narrative evidence (visual, oral and written) can be analyzed to make inferences about what participants believe about undocumented immigrants and what influences their attitudes, beliefs, and thinking about this socio-political and socio-

cultural issue.

The student questionnaire and questionnaire responses, art work artifacts, the interview protocol and transcripts of the interviews with Mexican adults may be found in Appendices –- and in Chapter 4 of this thesis respectively.

Procedure

My research plan began with the elementary school students at the public arts school in a major metropolitan city on the East Coast. The demographics of the school encompasses students from ethnic and racial backgrounds representing more than 85 distinct cultures.

I worked with students in pre-kindergarten to fifth grade. For the past school year I was one of their art teachers who not only taught these students, but also had the chance to get to know them and their personalities through conversations and examining their artwork. Working at the arts center was a beneficial experience not only for my teaching, but also to observe these students for the past year while they socialized with their classmates as they worked on their art.

From what I have observed these students disrespected one another, but in a playful manner. They were misinformed and misunderstood the ethnic backgrounds of their peers and held stereotypical ideas about ethnic and cultural differences. I wanted to use these experiences as a teaching moment for them that I hope will have enduring effects.

From these observations I prepared a few lessons for the students connected to the issue of undocumented immigration and social justice. The art lesson integrated current events/social studies and art.

My plan for this unit is to get a clearer understanding of how these children viewed the issue of undocumented immigration and if they understand what is going on in this country now as well as placing the issue in a historical context.

I thought the first lesson should be a simple discussion with the students by asking them questions (pre-assessment) about the issue and just have a simple conversation with them.

Toward the end of the class period I will hand out a simple questionnaire about the issue. The first question asks them to define the word "Immigration", what they think it means. The second question asks, what do you think life is like for someone who immigrated to the U.S. from another place? The third question asks, why do you think people want to come to the U.S.? The fourth question asks, how do you feel about people from other countries? The fifth and final question asks students, " How do you treat people who are from another country?" These five questions are simple, but give me a clear understanding of how today's students feel about their interactions with peers from different backgrounds and social status. The reason for this task is to have a better perspective of how they view the issues because children do see and hear things differently from adults. Their responses would provide insight into how they treat each other and how they see

each other.

During the lesson clear instructions will be given to them, and they will be told that there are no right or wrong answers because it is not a test. They will not be required to write their names on the questionnaire as some might feel uncomfortable about their answers.

The art lesson will be based on the artwork of Norman Rockwell because he related his art to current events as a way of visual communication through imagery. Rockwell was primarily an illustrator, but his work, mostly paintings depicted populist themes from everyday contemporary and historical American life. Because he was an illustrator for mainstream news magazines, his work was widely distributed and familiar. Text seldom appeared in his work, just the title of the magazine.

I will prepare an art lesson based on Norman Rockwell's artwork and current events. The task will require students to create an art poster based on the issue of undocumented immigration in this country now and express how they feel about it using their own visual imagery and symbols. They will be given one class session to create their posters based on the topic using pencils, markers, and pens.

Students will be given a sheet of paper with "The Saturday Evening Post" as a masthead and create their image below the masthead. Students will be asked, "If Norman Rockwell was creating a Saturday Evening Post cover in the year 2012, what would it look like? What subjects, themes, or current events would he use to

capture the public's imagination?" The goal for this lesson is for the students to combine their imagination with their beliefs and opinions into a visual piece.

The classroom will be set up with two large tables facing the board where I would have instructions based on the art lesson that would be prepared for the students on immigration in this country. I will write the five questions for the students on the board. These questions make up the questionnaire. The class will begin with a time-based discussion on the topic of immigration. Next I will handout plain white paper for the students to write down their answers and they will be given the rest of the period to do this. At the end of the class period we will briefly discuss their answers, what they understood, what they are confused by and what their perspectives are. This will end the first lesson of my unit and give me a sense of what they know about immigration and what their attitudes are.

For the second lesson in the unit students will create a "Saturday Evening Post" cover. The lesson will start with images of Norman Rockwell's work displayed for them to get a sense of visual symbolism and being able to read visually through symbols instead of words all the time. We will have a short discussion based on the images displayed and we will talk about what they think the message of the work is.

After the mini discussion about Rockwell I will bring up the topic of immigration again to remind them of the topic of the art lesson. I will set up a section of the room as their supply station with all the materials needed to complete the assignment.

Teach Elementary Students Understanding and Empathy

This lesson will be given to two different classes. Each class has about eighteen students ranging in age from seven to eleven—second to fifth grade. The racial, cultural, and ethnic mix of the classes includes:
African American, Australian, Asian, Caucasian, Latino,
Mediterranean, and Middle Eastern.

I believe this combination of students will give me a broad perspective of the attitudes of today's children on the issue of undocumented immigration in the United States. I will ask them to hand me their artwork at the end of the work period when they are lined up ready to either go to their next class or to be dismissed for the day. Before dismissal we will have a five to ten minute discussion on undocumented immigration, asking students about what they thought of the lesson and what they understood. This lesson concludes the unit on how the visual arts may be used to bring attention and understanding to the issue of undocumented immigration, educating for respect, equity, and fairness and providing an expressive outlet for those who might be dealing with the issue in their own families.

The discussions, art works, and questionnaires will provide a benchmark for what students at this age know and understand about the issue and how art can bring attention to a socio-political, socio-cultural concern.

<u>Interviews</u>

I plan to make a second trip to Mexico to interview young adults I met on my first trip about their experiences with undocumented immigration. This will give me

the perspective of the other side of the issue.

Our conversations will target the issue of undocumented immigration, education, children, and the arts. The interview process will start off with basic questions about their thoughts on how they view illegal immigration in the U.S. along with deportation, their views on education, the arts, their experiences, and perhaps lead to a story they might want to share with me. This approach would lead me in a direction of exploration and discovery of how those in Mexico affected directly or indirectly by the issue perceive its impact. This unstructured nature of these interviews leaves room for broader and more detailed perspectives to emerge, and the possibility of improved understanding of the issue from all sides.

Limitations

The most significant limitation to this study is lack of knowledge of student participants' personal connection to the issue of undocumented immigration. I was also limited in that I conducted the study at one school and my time frame was relatively short, leaving no time for follow-up to the unit and understanding of a complex issue. Adult interviews were limited to a select group of Mexican adults living in a relatively affluent Mexican city in which a large portion of the population consists of American and Canadian ex-patriots.

Data Analysis

In qualitative research, data collection, and analysis occurs simultaneously. As I taught the unit on undocumented immigration I reflected upon the

observations, discussions, and art works being created and made in-process adjustments to my teaching and research method as needed. These in-process reflections in tandem with my reflection journal and observation notes completed later, shaped the units of analysis created to interpret the findings: participant response [interviews and questionnaires], direct observation [in-class discussion], and visual narrative [art works]. This ongoing analysis also provided opportunity for new and more well defined research questions to develop. Questions such as, in what ways does the act of narrative art making impact empathy and perspective understanding? Data will be analyzed using three of the six modes of understanding as outlined in the Understanding by Design curriculum framework created by Wiggins and McTighe (2005). Specifically, empathy, perspective, and interpretation.

Understanding by Design Framework

Understanding by Design (UbD) is based upon the notion of "backwards curriculum planning," or beginning with the end goal in mind. What do we want learners to understand? How do we plan, in this case, art-based activities to help them gain this understanding? The UbD framework unfolds in three stages: identify desired results--learning outcomes; determine acceptable evidence of understanding--authentic assessment; and designing learning activities that will lead learners to the desired understanding (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005).

Wiggins and McTighe (2005) identify six facets of understanding in their framework:

- Explain—provide thorough, supported, and justifiable accounts of phenomena, facts and data;
- Interpret--tell meaningful stories; offer apt translations; provide a revealing or historical or personal or accessible through images, anecdotes, analogies and models.
- Apply--effectively use and adapt what we know in diverse contexts.
- Perspective--see and hear points of view through critical eyes and ears; see the big picture.
- Empathy--find value in what others might find odd, alien or implausible—perceive sensitively on the basis of prior knowledge.
- Self-Knowledge--perceive the personal style, prejudices, projections and habits of mind that shape and impede our own understanding. (p. 82-102)

The purpose of conducting this research with young learners is to uncover what they "know" and "understand" about the issue of undocumented immigration and how art might aid in developing empathetic and perspective understanding of socio-political and socio-cultural issues facing contemporary society. If it were possible to conduct this research with student participants identified as members of undocumented immigrant families, an additional goal would be to develop "self-knowledge" and self-empowerment through art activities designed to address the angst and feelings of low self-esteem that secrecy imposes upon this population.

Through narrative inquiry I hope to collect and analyze data that provides insight into the feelings and understandings upper elementary students have regarding socio-political issues, in particular that of undocumented immigration.

Conclusion

In the article "It's a movement, so start moving Art Education for social justice" by Therese Quinn, John Ploof, and Lisa Hochtritt (2012) discuss the work of Beto

Sepulveda an art educator who taught an art lesson relating to social justice and Immigration. Sepulveda asked his students to create an art poster expressing their feelings toward the issue---making a strong visual statement for the march. My plan for the local public elementary school is to incorporate a poster art lesson inspired by Sepulveda and also reference a lesson from The Smithsonian American Art Museum Teacher's guide "Telling Stories: Norman Rockwell from the collections of George Lucas and Steven Spielberg" based on Norman Rockwell's artwork to visually tell a story or expression of what the issue means to these students.

The goal of the lesson is to uncover their knowledge and opinions and develop empathetic and perspective understanding of the plight of the undocumented in this country through the lens of art education. Working with students I had previously developed a rapport with through one year of student teaching, provides an atmosphere of trust in discussing sensitive issues such as this and hopefully encourages the participants to be open and honest in their responses.

Through interviewing Mexican adults I developed a rapport with previously, I hope to gain access to the secrecy surrounding undocumented immigration and gain clearer insight into its effects on both sides of the border.

Chapter 4

Results and Discussion

I approached my research question, how might the visual arts be used as a resource to educate children about equity and justice surrounding issues related to undocumented immigrants? Connected secondary questions: How might engaging in the visual arts provide a positive emotional outlet for children of undocumented immigrant families? In what ways might the visual arts be used to educate the broader population about the inequities undocumented immigrants face in this country?

Through interviews with adults intimately connected to the undocumented immigration issue and through teaching an art unit on the topic with elementary school students aged 7 to 11.

Given that my study took place in very specific settings, one school in a mid-sized city with a diverse, international population, and a Mexican city with a high expatriate population, the findings reflect this, therefore it cannot be expected that a replication of this study would yield similar results.

Data for this research takes the form of interviews, observational and reflective journal notes, questionnaires, and artifacts (artworks). A narrative inquiry methodology was used to analyze data, with the following units of analysis: participant responses [PR], direct observation [DO], and visual narrative [VN].

The findings for both the children and adult participants were examined

using the Understanding by Design (UbD) curricular framework for developing understanding and to determine the data's meaning and significance in empathetic, interpretive, and perspective understanding of socio-political issues like undocumented immigration.

The narrative memories of adults through their interviews and the visual narratives and questionnaire responses of elementary students comprised the data examined. My goal in conducting this study was to bring awareness to, empathy for, and perspective understanding of the plight of undocumented immigrants and their families through the lens of those living in and around it.

The results are presented by group of participants.

Results: Elementary Unit on Undocumented Immigration

After conducting my research with elementary school children in second through fifth grade, I collected a good amount of data. I taught two lessons to the students, the first one was mainly discussion and a pre-assessment, and the second lesson focused on creating poster art based on the issue of Undocumented Immigration.

I asked them questions such as:

What does the word "undocumented immigration" mean to you? What do you know about what is going on in this country relating to the issue? What would it be like if someone you cared about was suddenly taken away from you? What is symbolism?

The following verbal directions were given:

There are no right or wrong answers. Really focus and think about the issue. It is okay if you cannot complete the whole assignment because it's something that needs focus.

Some of the children I worked with had an understanding or idea of what undocumented immigration is, but there was some confusion, and their understanding was not clear.

I began by giving the students a questionnaire to complete (see Appendix A). The questionnaire was designed to help me get a sense of how these elementary school students would react to the issue. The questions made a lot of them nervous, but not because of the controversy of the issue, but because it seemed like it was a test to them. They were worried about right or wrong answers, but my instructions were clear to them about correct answers and that they would not be graded. Writing names was only optional. The students wanted to make sure that they were following instructions by asking questions repetitively. I was glad they asked as many questions as possible so that the lesson would go smoothly with them because it is a very delicate subject to focus on, but something that should be discussed. Someone in the classroom could be concealing something that could truly be bothering them in their personal life and perhaps my lesson could be a way for them to just let it all out in a visual way.

I came in to teach these students in the last two weeks of the school year, that schedule worked out perfectly for my student teaching mentor teacher who

agreed that those lessons should be taught at that time. It worked perfectly because the students are much more relaxed due to being done with most of their schoolwork. Their minds are clearer and maybe more focused on the lesson. I believe the timing was perfect because the students were enthusiastic about the art making assignment especially. Before the art lesson I introduced them to the subject matter through discussion and a pre-assessment questionnaire the following week.

The purpose of the two lessons was to gather data comprising a small sample of what elementary school students in the U.S. today know about current socio-political events such as undocumented immigration.

Lesson 1:

The first lesson started with the topic written at the front board of the classroom so that students could get an idea of what would happen in class on May 30th 2012. The students in both Sculpture and Architecture were all done with their assignments for the school year so they were wondering what was going to happen in class when they saw me again because I was their student teacher the whole year, but I was back to teach them once again, but with a different reason. I reintroduced myself and introduced the topic " Undocumented Immigration in the United States", I told them that I am conducting research for my schoolwork and I wanted to know their thoughts. Some students looked surprised and a bit nervous, I know that was because the questions appeared to them as a quiz. I explained to them that in no

way there was going to be a quiz or anything graded and they all showed a sigh of relief. I asked them what would it be like if someone in their family perhaps a parent or grandparent were suddenly taken away from them by force only because they were living in the United States? Many of the students had expressions of sadness because they thought of their families and what it would be like not to have them in their lives anymore. One student said, "They would be taken away from their families because they are not American?" I said yes, but also asked the class what other reason would they be taken away other then not being American? A student replied because they are illegal and I said because they are undocumented meaning they do not have papers or documents to stay in this country, yes they are living here illegally, but we call them undocumented immigrants because they are not hardened criminals, usually. One student said "But this country is a free one and that is what this country is all about isn't it?" I said yes that is true, just about all of our ancestors or someone in our family emigrated here from another place. One student asked me if I was an immigrant and I said my parents immigrated to this country before I was born and that I was born and raised here as most of them were.

Next, I passed out a blank sheet of paper and instructed them to answer the following questions, reiterating that this was not a test and they did not have to write their names unless they wanted to.

Table 3. Select Responses from Questionnaire Results

1. Define the Word Immigration-What do you think it means?	
65% of students said:	People who move to the U.S. from another country
12% said:	It's a free country
8% said:	Traveling from place to another
15% had no response/ unclear:	

2. **What do you think life is like for someone who immigrates to the U.S. from another place?**	
32% of the students said:	Life would be difficult due to language barriers. [Perspective]
16% Some said:	That life would be new, different, and fun. [Perspective]
12% said:	That it's scary. [Empathy]
40% had no response/ unclear	

3. Why do you think people want to come to the U.S.?	
24% of the students said:	They come to live better lives freely. [Perspective]
16% Some said:	It's more interesting and safer. [Perspective]
12% said:	Something bad may have happened to their countries. [Perspective]
48% had no response/ unclear	

4. How do you feel about people from other countries?	
19% of the students said:	Good, fine, okay [empathy]
15%said:	Different but you can learn from them. [Empathy]
4% said:	Sad [empathy]
62% had no response/ unclear	

5. How do you treat them?	
35% of the students said:	Good, with respect, and equally [empathy]
65% had no response/ unclear	

This questionnaire was just the data collection I needed to get elementary school students thoughts and opinions on the subject. From reviewing their answers I get the very strong sense of empathetic understanding and compassion for the undocumented in this country, and surprisingly respect for one another, surprising because of some of the comments and actions I observed earlier in their interactions with one another. It could be that the discussion provided an opportunity for students to develop empathetic understanding, or it could be they wanted teacher affirmation. This data raises more questions about the student teacher relationship. Are the students just trying to please their teacher and are they only telling me what I want to hear? With this type of lesson you cannot tell if children are truthful with their feelings or not, this is one of the limitations of a study like this.

Their responses were insightful, and innocent and portray their interest in fair play; typical of students at this developmental stage who are aware that there are societal rules that good citizens must follow.

Lesson Two:

The following art lesson took place on June 6th 2012, which was a continuation of the previous lesson about undocumented immigration in this country. This lesson involved visualizing their personal conception of immigration using markers, crayons, and colored pencils to create a poster. Using teacher resource materials from the Smithsonian American Art Museum's exhibition of Norman Rockwell works, I conducted a lesson connecting art and social

studies/current events/news media. I had works of art by artist Norman Rockwell displayed around the classroom because his work related to social justice and getting a point of view across to viewers. Norman Rockwell was a good example for the students to look at because his work was a reflection of American culture and current events. I talked about a particular oil painting for a Look magazine illustration called "Moving In" (1967). I asked the class what they thought was going on in this piece? Could anyone tell me? And one student talked about racism and seeing others who are different from you in an uncomfortable way or the idea of immigrants moving into a neighborhood [interpretive]. The piece was about segregation, but the title suggests a completely different meaning to students today.

After talking about that particular piece I handed out a sheet of paper to each student and the paper was entitled " The Saturday Evening Post" just the way Rockwell's work was displayed in a poster form. I asked them to try their best in creating a visual image of their views on the issue of undocumented immigration in the United States. Many students asked me what to draw? My response was to ask them motivating questions such as what comes to mind when you think of immigration? Many said maps and the world [interpretation].

For this class session I had to cut our discussion time short because they needed as much class time as possible to draw and figure out what to create for this assignment.

Exhibit A

Results of Poster Art:

Reflection on this unit reveals how difficult it is to discuss and explain a complex socio-political topic such as undocumented immigration with elementary students not personally connected to the issue. I do think that if I had more time to devote to the unit, I would have observed greater empathetic, interpretive and perspective understanding of the issue.

My questionnaire results point to more perspective understanding- probably related to previous learning in history and social studies. In reviewing their artwork [visual narrative] some students expressed immigration and the undocumented as a form of a mapping and few even created their own maps to help others find a way to cross the border to a better life. Some maps looked like actual maps of the world, continents, or would also provide pathways such as boats to lead immigrants to their destination.

Exhibit B

Looking at the second question results, most students would say life would be hard for immigrants naturally because they are in a new environment and that it maybe scary at first until they would get use to living here and to get accustomed to language and culture [empathy]. One student envisioned the immigration process as a "Maze of Hope" creating a visual metaphor that demonstrates both empathetic and interpretive understanding.

Exhibit C

This leads me to question four: How do you feel about people from other countries? Most of the students did not answer this question, but the ones who did said that they felt good about them because we could learn from them [empathy]. Their artwork depicted empathetic symbols such as hearts, and positive sayings that all go in one direction. One student drew colorful characters getting documented easily without problems and with smiles on their faces. This made me think of the third question: Why do they think people want to come to the U.S.? Many drew out the word freedom in a decorative way with lots of colors as their interpretive understanding of the appeal of living in the U.S.

And this leads me to the last question: how do you treat people from other countries? From what I observed many students did not make it to that answer but thirty five percent of the class replied good, with respect, and the way you would want to be treated [empathy]. This made me think about one student in particular who created a narrative comic poster that would show how not to treat people different from you with that image being crossed out like a no smoking sign and the other image next to that would be an example of how to treat them even if they say "Hello" in a different way, it should not matter because we should all know better [interpretive].

The two art lessons demonstrated to me that students do have empathetic and perspective understanding of the issue and that the majority would see immigrants in a positive light who should be given the same opportunities as those

who are citizens to make this country a better place. Even though many students did not get to answer every question I asked orally or in writing, I believe they answered my questions in their own artwork visual narratives that depicted empathetic, perspective, and interpretive understanding of the issue.

Research In Mexico:

For the next phase of my data collection I chose to go to Mexico with my school to continue my research on the issue of the undocumented, but this time I wanted to get the perspective from the other side of the border. I went to Mexico for three weeks again this year in the month of June to reconnect with people I met in January and to get their views on the current issue.

We all hear so much about how the issue takes a toll in the United States, but we rarely hear perspectives from the other side of the border such as a country like Mexico that seems to be the most affected because it shares a physical border with the United States. That is why I chose to travel back to Mexico and find a few people to speak to who have been affected and who have their own perspectives on immigration, education, and the role of cultural arts.

Examples of the Unstructured Interviews

Interviewees:

Interviewee #1

Gloria: The Undocumented suffer way too much.

Interviewee #1: Illegal's send back money and leave children behind (Life is hard).

Interviewee #2

Gloria: Do you know anyone who was deported?

Interviewee #2: I knew five people who were deported because they just couldn't cross the border. Few People who get deported were placed in prison then later deported back to Mexico. Some people do come back to Mexico or try to cross again some make it and some don't make it and some even die trying.

Gloria: Why do so many people want to come to the U.S.?

Interviewee #2: Because in Mexico many believe there are better chances in the U.S., so I wouldn't blame them for wanting to come. In Mexico it is hard to make money unless you have a business.

Interviewee #3

Gloria: Why did you leave Mexico?

Interviewee #3: My mom left Mexico because she was a single parent; I was spoiled so she had to give me what I wanted. My real father sometimes sends my mom money. I had an older brother too both of us needed support and that's why she left Mexico.

Gloria: How hard was it for her to get to the U.S.? And for you too?

Interviewee #3: When my mom tried to cross the border she was spent back to Mexico twenty times in a row just trying to cross. An Immigration guy recognized her saying " You again". He was from Mexico and told my mom " Just go this way and one will find you".

Gloria: How exactly did you and your family make it there?

Interviewee #3: When I came with my mom to the States we took a bus from there and then walked during the nighttime. Crossed the river in boats. We got caught so they sent us back.

Interviewee #3: My mother crossed the river the second time. My little brother was born in the U.S. These white people took me in their car and told me and my brother to pretend we were asleep.

Interviewee #3: I wanted to stay because I was doing good in school, I was an honor

student, I was in middle school at the time. I finally settled down and had friends. And that was a reason why I didn't want to leave the U.S. But I was happy with my life the way it was in the states. My older brother moved to the states later on and lived in the states for about a year but three years ago he was deported back to Mexico. Immigration put him in jail for a month then sent him back to Mexico.

Gloria: What's it like being back in Mexico?

Interviewee #3: Well I prefer to be in the U.S. still

Gloria: What are teachers like in Mexico? Do they do a good job?

Interviewee #3: Depends on teachers, in the U.S. things are more advanced and there are different approaches to teaching like fun activities for students to get the students to learn but in Mexico teachers just tell students to do their work without encouragement.

Gloria: Do you think you would try to return to the U.S.?

Interviewee #3: I want to come but I would not try to knowing I can't. Wouldn't want to risk my life because I see on the news and legally I doesn't know is I would have a chance to get a visa. But I do miss it a lot.

Interviewee #3: I have cousins in Houston Texas they think they are all that because they have papers. Don't talk to me or my family here in Mexico. They would say "You were illegal so don't talk to me", that's what my cousin would say to me. We have no communication with them anymore.

Gloria: What's it like being back here?

Interviewee #3: It's not so bad in Mexico, its just coming from the U.S. you naturally miss it of course you don't want to leave where you live cause your use to it.

Gloria: What do you think of the American culture and it's values from your perspective?

Interviewee #3: I think the U.S. has poor culture because it's so multicultural.

Interviewee #3: The states have the most Mexicans and they are mostly in California and Texas because they believe that those lands are still theirs. Even if the country says it's the U.S. they still feel like its Mexico, it's still their land.

Gloria: In San Miguel it's called an artist's district?

Interviewee #3: Art is rich in San Miguel because of its history. Because of the Architecture very detailed. Mexico is very poor with textiles because Mexico brings its from other places but Mexico is known for its architecture and art like making things with clay and painters come to San Miguel to make paintings of the church and have galleries.

Interviewee #3: Undocumented youth also help with art, San Miguel has a strong appreciation for art and its used for others like to speak to others visually like kids artwork.

Gloria: Could art be used as a strong tool?

Interviewee #3: That's why a lot of Caucasians come to San Miguel because art is such an attraction like art made by children that's what they like, such as paintings or dolls. Other stores have dolls made by children of Guatemala. Americans love that stuff.

Interviewee #3: Kids are not guilty. Kids don't see anyone as racist or with a bad eye. They see a person as a person. Kids are very innocent because they see the world as their drawings. Like families, flowers, tress, the sun, etc. Kids in Mexico see the world as very pretty and that's what tourists love their artwork. Children's culture infused in their artwork.

Gloria: What do you think about youth today around the globe when it comes to art and education?

Interviewee #3: Youth is preserved. Like China kids are stressed they are under a lot of pressure and have no time for playing or drawing. I think in Latin America and the U.S. kids don't have so much stress and still have their childhood and have fun.

Interviewee #3: For example handmade stuff with paper took time to make but it was not stressed, you can make what you like, Like paintings for example beaded necklace still has creativity to it.

Interviewee #3: People in San Miguel or Mexico over all never say they are stressed or have no time to make art or have pressure with studying. Kids still can have fun and be creative. In Mexico it might not have the intelligence to make machines but keeps their things and conserve them and their traditions.

Interviewee #3: That's why artist in Mexico doesn't lose their skills and in other

countries they may lose their talents.

Gloria: Ahhh now I understand better the value of Mexican art to it's culture, society, living, value, especially in education and how it's a way to teach and preserve tradition and appreciation for simply living life. Thank you so much.

These adult interviews provided insight into the topic of undocumented immigration and it's relation to children and the arts. I believe I connected with the right people who provided me with perspective understanding based on what they have been influenced by or have experienced.

This information would have been difficult for me to gather in the United States. The interviewees' interpretive understanding demonstrates how art has made such a difference to countries such as Mexico, by providing a positive outlet to express cultural pride in heritage through unique art and craft traditions, and historical narratives that tourists, artists, and visitors appreciate.

My candid conversations with the interviewees lead to my interpretive understanding of the importance of the visual arts in educating for youth about global understanding, respect, and civic responsibility.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

Through this research, I have learned that elementary students can develop empathy, respect, and understanding for cultures outside of their own, through art interpretation and art making. In addition, while they may not have been familiar with the term undocumented immigration, they do have an understanding of what it is and it's effects on their peers. I believe that art education is a useful tool in the development of critical consciousness in young learners. It also helps educators better understand the challenges their students face in their personal lives.

The data collected for my research on young elementary students shows that undocumented immigration is a sensitive topic for young learners as well as adults in this country. However, when explained in terms that they could understand, this diverse group of young learners provided a broad spectrum of responses and possible solutions to the issue of undocumented immigration, in both visual and verbal form.

In addition to art making, in-depth dialog with learners about their opinions regarding undocumented immigration revealed their sensitivity toward others who are in an uncontrollable situation and also their views on difficult topics. In terms of "Undocumented Immigration in this country" the students really stopped and thought about it. It was not an easy assignment to execute because students at this age are so concerned about providing the "correct" answer or visual response in an

attempt to receive the best possible grade, that it is difficult to get genuine reactions to questions and prompts. At this stage students are more concerned about obtaining the teacher's approval. This imposed a limitation on my study, because it is difficult to determine whether or not students' responses were genuine expression or what they thought the teacher wanted or to ensure that they receive a good grade in their class.

The results from both of the lessons given to the students generated for me a wider variety of conclusions based on my research, such as using the visual arts as a way to educate youth about justice and providing a positive outlet for them to create what they feel, know, and what they have learned. They visually expressed their opinions about the issue and were less concerned about creating a picture perfect work of art. This enabled them to focus on content rather than art skills. Given the short time frame, they concentrated on the point they wanted to make.

The purpose of this research was to examine the ways in which the visual arts can be used to generate understanding, empathy, and respect for something new or different and to bring awareness to a socio-political issue.

If I were to conduct similar research again I would target students in middle school or high school. Students at the high school level will be more attuned to socio-political issues and as budding voters need to have critical discourse on a variety of socio-political topics. In addition their ability to think abstractly and to use visual metaphor is increased at this age. I would also look into a different

population of students to work with, perhaps work with students who could relate to the topic a little more. The ultimate goal will always be to focus on helping children develop empathy through visual expression and to think critically in visual terms about socio-political and socio-cultural subjects that affect others and this country. I felt that through my research I accomplished that goal of focusing on the development of young children's sensitivity toward others. However, what I would have done differently is create a blind survey for students with more than five questions, but make each question as simple as possible and maybe include multiple-choice answers that would be rated one through ten based on how they felt about each question.

Reflecting upon my research questions, the following need further research to answer fully:

In what ways might visual arts be used to help the children of undocumented immigrants and deportees cope with situations that they must keep silent about?

How might engaging in the visual arts provide a positive emotional outlet for children of undocumented immigrant families?

I do feel that my data provided some answers such as the visual arts can be a resourceful tool in educating students about difficult issues that may or may not affect them personally. Engaging in this lesson helped participants become more aware. The children that I worked with were knowledgeable about immigration and perhaps learned something they did not know before based on their responses. If I

continue with this research I plan to work with a larger population and perhaps teach an entire unit rather than one lesson that would include interpreting works of activist art, collaborative lessons such as a social issues collage, and a debate to demonstrate how people make their decisions about socio-political issue and the importance of information gathering and critical discourse to decision-making. Finally, I would conduct the unit at a site with a higher population of immigrants, some of whom would have personal connections to the undocumented.

I would also travel to Mexico again and perhaps other countries and speak to more deportees specifically those who grew up in the U.S. I do feel that my interviewees provided different viewpoints on the topic of undocumented immigration, how it affected their lives, and also the importance of art in relation to their cultural heritage. Listening to their stories brought awareness to me personally as well as my research. If I returned to Mexico I would interview more people and travel to a different part of Mexico, perhaps a border town and find artists who have been affected by the issue.

All the interviews gave me a deeper understanding of what life is like in Mexico on the other side of the border and why so many want to come to the United States of America. Talking with people who had been deported back home provided insight into the issue that would not occur in the U.S. because secrecy is a non-issue. What they revealed to me during our interviews was expressed in a carefree way because there were no risks involved for them.

Teach Elementary Students Understanding and Empathy

My experience teaching visual arts at local elementary schools in the U.S. proved to me that engagement in the arts is a way of better understanding students. This all started with an assignment that I gave to a fourth grade class on family portraits. One student was confused because she could not figure out who to include in her family portrait because family members kept mysteriously disappearing—and this all came out in her artwork.

As an art teacher and an artist it is my goal to bring awareness to my students about socio-political issues that they will or have faced and to figure out ways to problem-solve and make decisions using art as a vehicle. As a teacher I want to inspire students to create art as means of healing themselves and others.

My research and data collection point to the effectiveness of visual art as a means of teaching empathy and respect for difficult socio-political, socio-cultural practices and communication, regarding these issues. As a teacher I cannot eliminate the fact that students are influenced by grades and that it may affect the way they create, but I can accept that children do try their best to fulfill an assignment in some way showcasing their knowledge and understanding of difficult subject matter such as undocumented immigration in this country. Visually reading my students artwork taught me about them and also how influential their own artwork could be to others on their journey of self-discovery. This would apply to each and every student no matter their status as they are all equally a part of this country through art and freedom of expression.

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Appendix A: Pre-Assessment Questionnaire

Undocumented Immigration in the U.S.

1. Define the word "Immigration"- What do you think it means?

2. What do you think life is like for someone who immigrated to the U.S. from another place?

3. Why do you think people want to come to the U.S.?

4. How do you feel about people from countries, cultures, and races different from your own?

5. How do you treat them?

Appendix B: Art Lesson

Create a Cover

If Norman Rockwell was creating a Saturday Evening Post cover in the year 2010, what would it look like? What subjects, themes, or current events would he use to capture the public's imagination?

THE SATURDAY EVENING POST

Appendix C: Student Art Work Samples

Exhibit A

Exhibit B

Exhibit C

Sample D

Appendix D: Interviewee #1

June 14, 2012

Gloria: How do people cross the border?

Interviewee #1: They find a group called the Coyotes to help cross the border.

Gloria: How much does it cost to get help from a Coyotes?

Interviewee #1: Too much money to pay to get guided across the border about $4000 only.

Interviewee #1: I have a Nephew who is working in Texas with no papers now he wants to come back to Mexico (San Miguel) because Someone in Mexico can give him a Visa to work. And If he returns to Mexico he couldn't possibly pay $4,000 again to cross the border.

Gloria: How long would your nephew's visa last?

Interviewee #1: With a visa to work 8 to 10 months and then comeback to Mexico. Visas are for 2 years only good for working now in construction.

Gloria: Does he know English?

Interviewee #1: Learned English very well so that he could become a translator (good for work). Learned English in the United States so he had a lot of practice and lived close to his boss. A lot of people live in San Miguel and practice with Americans

Gloria: How hard was it for him to get a work visa?

Interviewee #1: Visa was easy for my nephew so that he could return again for his visa in the future to work. He is guaranteed a job. But my nephew has to leave the U.S. to get his visa to work.

Gloria: Who are these people who are begging for money when were are crossing different parts of Guanajato?

Interviewee #1: Many El Salvadorians are currently living all over Mexico illegally trying to make a living and then try to cross the border to the U.S.

Interviewee #1: Everyone just wants to come to the U.S.

Gloria: That is a big issue because everyone thinks it's easy to live in the U.S.

Interviewee #1: The big problem in Mexico with the young especially when they reach the age of 16 to 18 years old now is that they do not want to study anymore because they want to come to the U.S. because their relatives who currently reside in the U.S influence them.

Interviewee #1: Yes everyone thinks its easy in the United States, Life is easy there. Too much people come to the U.S. to live almost the same as they did back home. Having a profession in home countries doesn't count for anything really in the U.S.

Gloria: I noticed children are still going to school in June, when does the school year end of students in Mexico?

Interviewee #1: July is the end of the school year for children in Mexico.

Gloria: The Undocumented suffer way too much.

Interviewee #1: Illegal's send back money and leave children behind (Life is hard).

Appendix E: Interviewee #2

June 28, 2012

Gloria: How did you come to the U.S.?

Interviewee #2: My uncle was a Spanish teacher and the people who my uncle lived with suggested that I could to stay with them (they were doctors).

Gloria: How did you do in school? And how long did you live in the U.S.?

Interviewee #2: I had good grades in school and I took a chance. I lived in the U.S. for one year and lived in Michigan.

Gloria: How did you learn English?

Interviewee #2: I learned English by talking with friends who knew both English and Spanish.

Gloria: Do you know anyone who was deported?

Interviewee #2: I knew five people who were deported because they just couldn't cross the border. Few People who get deported were placed in prison then later deported back to Mexico. Some people do come back to Mexico or try to cross again some make it and some don't make it and some even die trying.

Gloria: I noticed so many EL Salvadorians are living here illegally could you tell me what you know about that issue?

Interviewee #2: So many illegal's here are El Salvadorians come on trains or by trail but they are all around Mexico begging for money to live. El Salvadorians do get deported back out of Mexico.

Gloria: How are the undocumented treated in the U.S. from what you know of?

Interviewee #2: They feed illegal's well but place them in cold cells in the United States.

Gloria: Why do so many people want to come to the U.S.?

Interviewee #2: Because in Mexico many believe there are better chances in the U.S., so I wouldn't blame them for wanting to come. In Mexico it is hard to make money unless you have a business. And our government electors only care about

themselves and not the people. Philippe Calderon President of Mexico for example has no knowledge of how much a Kilo of beans would cost. He doesn't even know that the minimum wage is about 58 to 59 pesos, which is nothing to live off of. It's even worst for very poor people because they don't know any better. But things in Mexico is a whole lot better then all the other countries in Latin America.

Interviewee #2: To buy a car you have to work very hard for years, there is no credit like there is in the States. In the States you could buy a car in three months. Loans in Mexico you have own property like a house to even get a loan.No one here has credit cards in Mexico, you have to make 12,000 or more pesos a month and people realistically are not going to make that much. They usually make 1,000 pesos a month, which is like one hundred dollars; it's just so hard.

Gloria: What is the Mexican Government like right now? It's influences?

Interviewee #2: Mexico's government is so corrupt because there is so much bribing going on, there is no respect in the government. They do not give good examples to be a descent person but only corrupt.

Interviewee #2: If you are wealthy you have everything on your side like the police. In the U.S. cops make good money and in Mexico cops make about 4,000 pesos for two weeks of work. That's why they take money from people.

Interviewee #2: I went to law school to purposely defend poor people who are in jail; so many people are put in jail because someone with money would pay off cops. Lawyers help poor people in jail for no reason because they are so many stuck in jail. The government blames lots of people here. Elections here are full of lies when they are elected they don't care about the people they say they are going to help.

Gloria: What is the job market like here in Mexico? I believe it's very hard.

Interviewee #2: No jobs in Mexico can really support families because they do not get paid much. Like the Artisans Market for example here. Everyone here talk about the U.S. as the greatest.

Gloria: What was it like to live in Michigan?

Interviewee #2: People in Michigan do not like to travel, they all have problems they are not happy with their lives and complain a lot. It's not a happy life there in Michigan. I live now a relaxed life in Mexico and enjoy my life here. I think the States are good for Mexican Americans dreams.

Part two of Interviewee #2 on June 28, 2012

Gloria: What are your views on education in Mexico?

Interviewee #2: Education here like a college education is not free and neither is high school. You have to pay 1,900 pesos for high school a year, but Middle and elementary school here is free.

Gloria: How are the costs for Education in Mexico?

Interviewee #2: University is expensive, I think college costs are expensive in the U.S., in Mexico university would cost about 10,000 pesos for a month which is about $1,000 which is not affordable in Mexico.

Interviewee #2: The education system in Mexico is not ahead of other countries. When I went to the Sates I did not know anything about computers like emails or nothing, no knowledge of technology. It was hard for me to adjust. Mexico is way behind when it come to technology. The States has everything and kids have everything so different how things work. Education system is bad because they do not care if students learn; it depends on money really on how to educate.

Gloria: What is it like for teachers in Mexico?

Interviewee #2: Don't get paid by hour just by day for example teachers would get paid one hundred pesos for working hard which is like $7 that's how it is here.

Gloria: How do you think Mexico is doing compared to other countries in Latin America?

Interviewee #2: Mexico is a little better then other Latin countries, it has the strongest economy then all the other Latin countries.

Interviewee #2: I wish the government would do more. A lot of kids and people in Mexico are obese because they drink and eat so much soda, bread, tortillas, etc. They don't care and don't educate them on health, its just wrong. People and especially kids eat this stuff every single day.

Gloria: The food to me is way more natural then the food in the U.S. is it?

Interviewee #2: Mexico's food is more natural then in the U.S. yes. I wish the government would educate more on health issues such as that. U.S. has education for nutrition.

Gloria: yes the U.S. is obsessed with nutrition and health. What is the food like here that has you so concerned?

Interviewee #2: Everywhere like if you go to a bar they serve enchiladas and I just wish the government would do something like promote people to go to gym or something involving sports like soccer. The obesity level is high especially with children. I work with children to encourage them to play sports. Food is comforting to people and it just depends on culture.

Appendix G: Interviewee #3

June 30, 2012

Gloria: Could you tell me your story on how you came to live in the U.S. and how did you end back in Mexico?

Interviewee #3: I use to live in the States but I was raised in Mexico, my mom left Mexico when I was 3 years old. My mother came back to take my older brother and me with her. But he didn't want to leave our grandparents because they took care of us. But I wanted to go to the U.S. I started school in the States, I started the first grade in Mexico but I finished 1st grade in the U.S. My mother wanted me to start from the beginning so I repeated the 1st grade again.

Gloria: Where did you live?

Interviewee #3: I use to live in Atlanta Georgia, we moved there to live with my step-dad because my mother had a little boy with him who was a year old.

Gloria: Why did you leave Mexico?

Interviewee #3: My mom left Mexico because she was a single parent; I was spoiled so she had to give me what I wanted. My real father sometimes sends my mom money. I had an older brother too both of us needed support and that's why she left Mexico.

Gloria: How hard was it for her to get to the U.S.? and for you too?

Interviewee #3: When my mom tried to cross the border she was spent back to Mexico twenty times in a row just trying to cross. An Immigration guy recognized her saying " You again". He was from Mexico and told my mom " Just go this way and one will find you".

Gloria: How long were you and your mother in the U.S.?

Interviewee #3: She was in the states for five years and in 1995 She took me with her. I lived with my mother in the U.S. for 6 years.

Gloria: How exactly did you and your family make it there?

Interviewee #3: When I came with my mom to the States we took a bus from there and then walked during the nighttime. Crossed the river in boats. We got caught so they sent us back.

Interviewee #3: My mother crossed the river the second time. My little brother was born in the U.S. These white people took me in their car and told me and my brother to pretend we were asleep. In Texas 2 days after my mother made it through the border, my aunt, baby brother waited for her. In Texas my step dad went to pick us all up from a hotel. I was scared because I did not know him. My step dad was nice and took us all to Atlanta from Texas. I went to the U.S. when I was seven years old.

Gloria: How long did you live in the states exactly?

Interviewee #3: I lived in the states for 6 years. My 6th year living in the U.S. was the only girl and I would always get in arguments or fights with my siblings. My step-dad would get angry with me because if his own sons. My mom would get upset with my stepdad. He threaten my mom about moving to either north or South Carolina if she did would call the police for saying that she was taking his children away from him. My mom did not want her children taken away from her and put in foster care or something.

Gloria: Could you tell me about your step-dad?

Interviewee #3: My step dad is from Honduras and he was using a different name in the U.S. if he called police, legally he isn't the parent because he was using a different name. Open up a lot of problems. So my mom was worried about having her children taken away from her. And especially about me being deported back to Mexico, so she decided to come back to Mexico instead of living in the U.S. But I wanted to stay because I was doing good in school, I was an honor student, I was in middle school at the time.

Interviewee #3: I moved around a lot with my family so I didn't have many friends because I changed schools so much. But when I got to middle school I finally settled down and had friends. And that was a reason why I didn't want to leave the U.S.

Gloria: Why did your mother want to leave the U.S.?

Interviewee #3: My mother wanted to leave because she feared for me and about drugs. And worried about no one taking care of me good so that's why she decided to return to Mexico. My mother wanted to be the one to raise me and no one else.

Interviewee #3: But I was happy with my life the way it was in the states. My older brother moved to the states later on and lived in the states for about a year but three years ago he was deported back to Mexico. Immigration put him in jail for a month then sent him back to Mexico.

Gloria: How long have you been back in Mexico now?

Interviewee #3: I've been here for 6 years

Gloria: What's it like being back in Mexico?

Interviewee #3: Well I prefer to be in the U.S. still

Gloria: What is education like in Mexico?

Interviewee #3: Education is different between Mexico and the U.S., there always a fee it's called a donation (But really isn't a donation because its something that has to be done). It's not the same. Elementary school or middle school.

Gloria: What are teachers like in Mexico? Do they do a good job?

Interviewee #3: Depends on teachers, in the U.S. things are more advanced and there are different approaches to teaching like fun activities for students to get the students to learn but in Mexico teachers just tell students to do their work without encouragement. Teachers don't really care if the students understand or not. The school system would not contact parents to tell whether students are doing bad unlike the U.S. They call parents.

Gloria: Are you studying now?

Interviewee #3: I was in school and now I'm not in school. It's expensive so I quit school to help my mother with my current job. My step dad came to Mexico but doesn't support my mother. All of the money I make from working I give it to my mom.

Gloria: How were you taken care of when parents were working?

Interviewee #3: From the first place my step dad wanted all of us in the states but then he wouldn't have anyone to take care of us.

Gloria: During the day you all would be in school but what about after school?

Interviewee #3: There would not be anyone home to really take care of us. Normally when men leave to the U.S. they go alone to work because they wouldn't have anyone for kids to stay with. Doesn't want to be responsible for them.

Gloria: Do you think you would try to return to the U.S.?

Interviewee #3: I want to come but I would not try to knowing I cant. Wouldn't want to risk my life because I see on the news and legally I doesn't know is I would have a chance to get a visa. But I do miss it a lot.

Interviewee #3: I have cousins in Houston Texas they think they are all that because they have papers. Don't talk to me or my family here in Mexico. They would say "You were illegal so don't talk to me", that's what my cousin would say to me. We have no communication with them anymore.

Interviewee #3: There are so many drug cartels around now its best just to stay where I'm at now. I Live in San Miguel de Allende with an American woman from Washington state maybe in the future she could help me get a visa. My Mom lives in another town near San Miguel. My mother believes the American woman will help us in the future to perhaps return someday.

Gloria: How did you meet this American woman?

Interviewee #3: American lady gives me bible study, She is a Jehovah's Witness, I' currently studying to be a Jehovah's Witness. The woman came to Mexico as a missionary pioneer. Few are here in San Miguel in an English congregation in Mexico.

Interviewee #3: I met this woman at another store where I use to work at because there was a pregnant girl in the store but I took her shift and that's how we met. I use to live in another town near San Miguel but this guy there where I use to rent wanted to touch me then slapped me. I called the American woman and the lady wanted me to live with her.

Gloria: Where is your mother?

Interviewee #3: My mother lived far away In that town there are a lot of people there who use to live in the U.S. The towns economy status is high because all the money being sent from the states. In that town they depend on American money.

Gloria: What's it like being back here?

Interviewee #3: It's not so bad in Mexico, its just coming from the U.S. you naturally miss it of course you don't want to leave where you live cause your use to it. I know a lot of people who want to go to the states. I have some family in the states and we talk on the phone. They tell me the economy in the states is really bad. And because I live with an American I understand what's going on in the U.S. now.

Gloria: Why would you want to go back to the U.S. when you know there are so many problems there too? Like trying to pass the border?

Interviewee #3: There are problems trying to start no one knows you no one would be willing to give jobs most likely cause a lot of states passed laws not to give jobs to illegal person. You have to go through a lot not worth it. Some people believe life would be easy there but I know it's not easy.

Interviewee #3: Schools cost too much you would be in a lifetime debt with loans you have to have a job to go to college. And If you try to get scholarship there is too much pressure to get it. In Mexico you don't have money to buy a car but you always have money to eat. And in the U.S. without money you cant eat. At least here you can eat beans cheap stuff and live but in the states beans cost.

Gloria: You speak English perfectly well, Do you speak more Spanish or English or a combination of both?

Interviewee #3: I find myself speaking Spanglish. In San Miguel I have a friend who was also deported from the U.S. when they would be around other Mexicans and when they talked and did not want others to understand their conversation they would speak English. A lot of jobs in San Miguel they need you to speak English because of the tourists, Americans, Canadians, Germans, and Europeans who visit.

Gloria: Gringos, how do you refer tot hem?

Interviewee #3: I do not call them Gringos, they are from the states I guess to me there is no for it. I heard Gringos are referred to Americans not Europeans. Call people by their nationality I never call them gringos. Example like Germans, I don't know if I'm right or wrong but I feel if I use the word gringo it would feel like as if I was being prejudice or racist. Not nice to call them that.

Interviewee #3: In the U.S. like in the news you would see them talk bad about Latinos and would automatically call them Mexican. Even if they were El Salvadorian or Bolivian people and just bad things would be referred to them as Mexican. Give Mexicans and Latinos bad reputation. People would call me Maria instead of my name. I would say my name is not Maria because people think because your Latino girls are called Maria and boys are called Jose.

Gloria: What do you think of the American culture and it's values from your perspective?

Interviewee #3: I think the U.S. has poor culture because it's so multicultural.

People who are going there from all around the world have been making it rich culture but it's not their culture alone it's everyone's culture. I believe Native Americans were treated unfairly by giving them little land. Just because they are light skinned or tan or what ever they think they have the right to own it but they are not (Caucasian People).

Interviewee #3: The states have the most Mexicans and they are mostly in California and Texas because they believe that those lands are still there's. Even if the country says it's the U.S. they still feel like its Mexico, it's still their land.

Gloria: What do you think of the U.S. Government?

Interviewee #3: I think the U.S. government to me personally is not as strong as they feel it is. For example in my store tourists would offer less money for something worth a lot more. And that's how I see it as Like the U.S. thinks they are better then you so they give less money.

Gloria: Okay this time around I can tell it's election week, could you tell me what you think of what's going on in San Miguel/ Mexico currently? And Politicians?

Interviewee #3: In Mexico during the election week several campaigns party and have events in the Jardin but the next day you would see the streets full of trash they don't even pick up trash. Big political parties especially two major ones they don't have a lot of money to support but talk a lot and give money for musicians to plat for them. Its awful how other people try to buy others off with money. Politicians would offer visas to the U.S. for people but its not true that's what they want to hear, money buys people off in Mexico and the people get hooked.

Gloria: In San Miguel it's called an artists district?

Interviewee #3: Art is rich in San Miguel because of its history. One of the oldest towns in the world. Downtown especially, the natives settled it and they try to preserve it. Because of the Architecture very detailed. Mexico is very poor with textiles because Mexico brings its from other places but Mexico is known for its architecture and art like making things with clay and painters come to San Miguel to make paintings of the church and have galleries.

Interviewee #3: A lot of people come from other countries they like the colony style people started to bring things from other states to sell to tourist because they don't have a lot. The state of Guanajuato doesn't do textiles Guanajuato was independent and its famous for its history. Undocumented youth also help with art,

San Miguel has a strong appreciation for art and its used for others like to speak to others visually like kids artwork.

Gloria: Could art be used as a strong tool?

Interviewee #3: That's why alto of Caucasian come to San Miguel because art is such an attraction like art made by children that's what they like, such as paintings or dolls. Other stores have dolls made by children of Guatemala. Americans love that stuff.

Interviewee #3: Kids are not guilty. Kids don't see anyone as racist or with a bad eye. They see a person as a person. Kids are very innocent because they see the world as their drawings. Like families, flowers, tress, the sun, etc. Kids in Mexico see the world as very pretty and that's what tourists love their artwork. Children's culture in=fused in their artwork.

Gloria: What do you think about youth today around the globe when it comes to art and education?

Interviewee #3: Youth is preserved. Like China kids are stressed they are under a lot of pressure and have no time for playing or drawing. I think in Latin America and the U.S. kids don't have so much stress and still have their childhood and have fun. For example handmade stuff with paper took time to make but it was not stressed, you can make what you like, Like paintings for example beaded necklace still has creativity to it. People in San Miguel or Mexico over all never say they are stressed or have no time to make art or have pressure with studying. Kids still can have fun and be creative.

Gloria: Talk to me about the beautiful merchandise your selling in this store? And a bit about it's cultural background?

Interviewee #3: In Mexico in stores everything is handmade except for stuff from Guatemala they use machines. Like Chinese tourist they don't allow taking pictures of merchandise because they might copy it or reproduce it with a machine. In Mexico it might not have the intelligence to make machines but keeps their things and conserve them and their traditions. That's why artist in Mexico doesn't lose their skills and in other countries they may lose their talents.

Interviewee #3: For the things sold in my store it maybe expensive because it's all-handmade and it took a lot of hard work. If I had money I would wear the handmade clothes. And I see people who are rich who have Prada or Gucci bags, those people would see a 200 peso top and think its expensive. Then I would think to myself how much did they pay for that Prada bag they have. I believe tourist see brands and not

the handwork at times. And they don't appreciate the art and the time it took someone to make. Unique designs or one of a kind things. Some people don't see the value of handmade stuff and also cause they might pay so much money from something made by a machine in China. I believe China's economy goes up with machine made stuff and Mexico's economy goes down. In the border sometimes they take things away from you if it says made in China. My mother tired to send me a gift but it did not make it to me because it was made in China.

Gloria: The quality of everything is detailed and stunning but are the artist who are making it getting what it's really worth?

Interviewee #3: It's good for Mexico handmade stuff embroidery (people finishes their eyes in making it like a blouse very tired hands that hurt to make something.) Tourists would ask "Why so expensive?" In the Market it may cost 50 pesos less but I would tell them the truth. The person who brings merchandise to the store would tell workers and ask them to sell a top for 250 pesos and to never except an offer for 200 pesos. They do not lower their prices with their merchant provider. If items are sold for less then what was asked his going to have to tell his workers he has to pay them less, People don't see hard work they just want a cheaper price and don't think that people eat from their art or handmade things. They would get paid less if merchandise is not being sold with original price or what its worth.

Gloria: Ahhh now I understand better the value of Mexican art is to it's culture, society, living, value, especially in education and how it's a way to teach and preserve tradition and appreciation for simply living life. Thank you so much.