Migration in Global Context Symposium

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What It's Like to Be a Migrant Worker

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St. Gabriel Consolidated School

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What It’s Like to be a Migrant Worker

Project-based lesson for 7-8 grade students
Jonathan Harris
St. Gabriel Consolidated School, Cincinnati, Ohio
Step 1, Reading a First Person Account


What's it like to be a migrant farmworker? One anthropologist lived and worked alongside them.
Step 2: Comprehension, explaining and looking at farm work from a migrant point of view

• 1.) What led the author to do this?
• 2.) Author quote: “Field supervisors made fun of author for doing that work but were also trying to help author keep up.” How would this make you feel.
• 3.) Explain why the author explained picking as “pure torture.”
Step 2, continued: Comprehension, explaining and looking at farm work from a migrant point of view

• 4.) In your own words, what did the author mean by “I knew at some level that my livelihood didn’t really depend on how many strawberries I picked.”

• 5.) Why does the author disagree with the classification of strawberry pickers as unskilled laborers?
Step 2, continued: Comprehension, explaining and looking at farm work from a migrant point of view

• 6.) What does the author think of having machines pick berries? Why?
• 7.) The author was asked how this research affected his grocery shopping. How has it affected yours?
Step 3: Identify fruits and vegetables currently picked by migrant workers

- How the produce aisle looks to a migrant farmworker
- Tomato, Onion, Avocado, Strawberry, explain how each is picked and the problems with picking each one.
- Which one was quoted as being the least favorite? Why?
Step 4: Memories of Farm Work

- I tried to push away memories of farm work, but shopping for food brings them back
- Author feels guilty about throwing out food because he knows how hard it is to pick it, what do you think about this statement?
Step 5: Putting it all together

- Choose a fruit or vegetable and create a poster or Powerpoint showing the following.
- Find a label or identify a farm for your fruit/vegetable
- Identify who (farm’s name) and where (city and state)
- List the steps needed to pick your fruit/vegetable
Example Powerpoint

• Example project found on next slide
Bunny Luv Carrots
Grimmway Farms
Kern County California

www.grimmway.com
Harvesting Carrots

http://www.wikihow.com/Harvest-Carrots

- Use your garden fork and dig into the ground from the side of the carrot's row. Lever the soil up.
- Get a good grip, but not a tight one, on the green tops while you pull them up.
- Inspect each carrot for holes and blemishes (color changes).
- Air dry them on the surface for about 20 minutes or so before putting them in storage. The tops will help keep them fresh, so don't cut them off.