

Lesson Overview

How many days are needed to teach this lesson?	three 90-minute sessions
Grade Level(s)	10-12
Subject(s)	Vocal Justice and Creative Writing
Lesson Summary	Students will analyze the work of photojournalist Anthony Vazquez, focusing on his ability to empathize with and humanize the stories of migrants and immigrants. Students will juxtapose Vazquez's work with that of local journalists covering stories about our community. Finally, students will take action by telling counternarratives about our community through photojournalism.
Standards	Common Core Standards: CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.6 Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness or beauty of the text. CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.7 Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem. Learning for Justice Standards: Anchor standard: Students will respond to diversity by building empathy, respect, understanding and connection. Anchor standard: Students will examine diversity in social, cultural, political, and historical contexts rather than in ways that are superficial or oversimplified. DI.9-12.7 I have the language and knowledge to accurately and respectfully describe how people (including myself) are both similar to and different from each other and others in their identity groups.

	DI.9-12.8 I respectfully express curiosity about the history and lived experiences of others and exchange ideas and beliefs in an open-minded way. AC.9-12.16 I express empathy when people are excluded or mistreated because of their identities and concern when I personally experience bias.
Focus Pulitzer Center news story and news outlet	“Walking to the United States” by Reporter Chip Mitchell and Photographer Anthony Vazquez, Lead Editor Kate Grossman Design and Development Jesse Howe for the Chicago Sun Times (Chicago Sun Times Version) “What Columbia Can Teach Chicago About Managing a Migrant Wave” by Chip Mitchell and Anthony Vazquez Background Knowledge for Instructor “The Long, Dangerous Road Through the Darien Gap and a Chance Encounter in Brooklyn” by Nadja Drost and Bruno Federico Extension–“Behind the Story: Why a Pulitzer Center Grantee Reached Out to Migrants Walking to the U.S.” by Morgan Varnado (This is an interview with the journalist not Anthony Vazquez, the photojournalist.)
Theme/idea/issue connecting the Pulitzer Center article to your community	immigration and migration, dehumanization and humanization, empathy, xenophobia, using photojournalism to tell fuller stories of people who are often dehumanized and marginalized
What additional news outlet(s) in your city/state/region will students learn about in the learning experience?	Oregon Public Broadcasting “Woodburn School Board rejects ‘Safe and Welcoming Schools’ resolution that would have reaffirmed support for immigrant students” by Natalie Pate “Fear, confusion in Woodburn as Trump takes office” by Alejandro Figueroa

Notes on Context

88% of my students are Latinx. We are a rural community and the agricultural hub of the Willamette Valley. Local news coverage of our community often highlights fear and negativity.

Lesson Plan**Essential Questions**

- How can photojournalism be used as a tool to humanize those who are often dehumanized?
- How can photojournalism tell a more complete story of people impacted by migration?
- How can we use photojournalism to push back against false or incomplete narratives of our community?

Focus Pulitzer Center News Story/Stories

“[Walking to the United States](#)” by Reporter Chip Mitchell and Photographer Anthony Vazquez, Lead Editor Kate Grossman Design and Development Jesse Howe for the Chicago Sun Times ([Chicago Sun Times](#) Version)

“[What Columbia Can Teach Chicago About Managing a Migrant Wave](#)” by Chip Mitchell and Anthony Vazquez

Lesson StepsGraphic Organizer

1. Review lesson objectives, vocabulary, and map of Venezuela and Columbia. Have students consider how their ancestors have moved across the globe.
2. Begin with “[Walking to the United States](#)” by Reporter Chip Mitchell and Photographer Anthony Vazquez, Lead Editor Kate Grossman Design and Development Jesse Howe for the Chicago Sun Times ([Chicago Sun Times](#) Version)
 - Click on the link [Walking to the United States](#).
 - Turn the volume on in the upper right corner.
 - Click anywhere on the screen to start.
 - Look at the images. Read the text. Listen to the voices.

Ask:

- What details in the photographs stand out?
- What emotions are conveyed?
- What is Anthony Vazquez (the photojournalist) trying to communicate?

- What thoughts, feelings, or questions do you have? Why do these images matter?

3. Now turn to “[What Columbia Can Teach Chicago About Managing a Migrant Wave](#)” by Chip Mitchell and Anthony Vazquez. Ask:

- Through photography, how does Anthony tell a story about migrants that is different from others you often hear?
- List at least three specific details in the photos to support your thinking.

4. Focus on the story of Desiré. What is significant about her story? How does her story highlight xenophobia in Columbia? Ask:

- What are some of the strategies to combat xenophobia?
- How does Columbia’s Temporary Protection Permit work?
- How have Venezuelan migrants benefitted Columbia?

5. Return to the photography of Anthony Vazquez. Ask:

- How does Vazquez humanize his subjects? Provide specific examples.
- How does Vazquez’s work help us empathize with his subjects? Provide specific examples from the images.

6. Now, return to our community. On April 1, 2025, a Google search with the words “Woodburn immigration” delivered these stories:

- “[Woodburn School Board rejects ‘Safe and Welcoming Schools’ resolution that would have reaffirmed support for immigrant students](#)” by Natalie Pate
- “[Fear, confusion in Woodburn as Trump takes office](#)” by Alejandro Figueroa

Choose one of the stories. Ask:

- What are the emotions evoked by the story?
- What are the key points of the story?
- Now, focus on the photographs. What story/stories are told through the photographs? What is present? What is missing?
- Compare the photography of Anthony Vasquez with the photography in the stories about Woodburn. What is different about Vasquez’s work? What is the effect of this difference?
- If you were the photographer for OPB, what other photographs would you include? Explain why.

Performance Task

Now, you become a photojournalist.

1. Take lots of photographs that strive to be counternarratives to the stories that are often told about our community.

2. Choose three of your favorites.

- a. Give each a tagline.
- b. Write at least a paragraph highlighting your purpose in including this photograph.
- c. Give your collective body of work a title that matters.
- d. Combine the title, photographs, tag lines, and writing in one document.

Your goal is to use photojournalism to humanize people in our community and tell a counternarrative to push back against the way our community has been reported on historically.

Assessment

- Self Evaluation

- What do you love most about your photojournalism?
 - Ex. What I love most about my photojournalism is the way it allowed me to highlight the specific beauty, strength, and individuality in people I admire. Not only did I enjoy doing it as a way to express my appreciation for them, but there was also an intentional purpose to challenge assumptions and generalizations that are very present in this community, and show that what might seem ordinary from the outside is often layered, powerful, and deeply moving when you take the time to look closer.
- If you had more time or access to other locations or people, what else would you want to highlight?
 - Ex. I think I really love finding the beauty in things that seem ordinary, so I would like to go to small communities around different countries or even large cities in the US, and find stories there. I find the quiet ways in which people carry strength very cool and fun, uncovering those layers is not only important to honor people that may not realize the significance they have in their communities and the beauty in their stories, but I also just genuinely enjoy doing it, and I'd love to encourage others to do it too.
- Who do you most want to know about the counternarrative you are telling?
 - Ex. Although I want people outside of Woodburn to see it, I would love people within Woodburn to see this counternarrative the most. Small towns with large immigrant populations get reduced to stereotypes and a lot of times people internalize this. I'd want people from more privileged communities to understand that there is so much brilliance and beauty here. But what I want the most is people in our community to see that their stories matter and what they are already living is something extraordinary and worth talking about.
- What would you hope they learned about our community?

- I hope they learn that our community is full of depth. That we are artists, thinkers, dancers, advocates, and visionaries and that although there is struggle, we are much more than that.

- Peer Feedback

- What is the story that your peer is trying to tell?
- What emotions do their photos evoke?
- What do you learn or discover about our community that you wish others knew?