Public Opinion on Immigration

***Video Viewing:* “**Why is immigration such a contested issue in the United States?” (2:36) - <https://video.choices.edu/media/why-immigration-such-contested-issue-united-states>

***Activity - Debunking the Myths of Immigration*** - (Note: All schools operate with different stakeholders and in different political climates. Although I think this is worthy of teaching in any public high school, please modify and adapt if this part of the lesson is too political for your classroom). This part of the lesson is adapted from an activity from Teaching Tolerance.

*Workstations*: Prepare six workstations around the room. Each workstation should have a large piece of paper (butcher paper, poster board). Write one of these immigration myths on each piece of paper. The students do not need to know that these are myths. Just write thes statements on the paper as statements. Use each myth only once and use all six myths:

* *Workstation 1: Most immigrants are here illegally.*
* *Workstation 2: It’s easy to enter the country legally. My ancestors did; why can’t immigrants today?*
* *Workstation 3: Immigrants take good jobs from U.S. citizens.*
* *Workstation 4: “The worst” people from other countries are coming to the United States and bringing crime and violence.*
* *Workstation 5: Undocumented immigrants don’t pay taxes and burden the national economy.*
* *Workstation 6: Banning immigrants and refugees from majority-Muslim countries will protect our country from terrorists.*

Divide the class into six groups. Each group is assigned a number (1-6) that corresponds with one of the workstations. Tell students this is their primary workstation. Groups should go to their primary workstation and have students hypothesize about the statement on their poster. Do you believe this statement is true? If it is a myth, where does it come from? Who benefits from this myth? Have students jot some thoughts down on the butcher paper.

In carousel style, have each group then move to different workstations briefly to add thoughts to the statement at the workstation they are now in front of. Groups should carousel until they return back to their primary workstation.

Have students read the feedback of the statement at their primary workstation from other groups. Do you agree with the feedback? Why or why not?

While still in their groups at their primary workstations, give each student a copy of “Ten Myths about Immigration” - <https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/spring-2011/ten-myths-about-immigration>. Hopefully, the students have figured out that all of the statements are myths and untrue. You can reveal this officially now. As a group have students read the information from the article about their particular myth. In addition to what’s listed, why is the group’s workstation myth inaccurate? Have each group present their immigration myth chart to the rest of the class along with what they’ve learned. Have each group take an informal poll of the class by asking them if they have ever heard of the immigration myth before. Then, discuss the reasons why that myth is untrue, using the feedback gathered from the collective experience and from "Ten Myths About Immigration."

***Article Reading*** - Have students read the article “The Human Face of Immigration” by Maureen Costello (2011). <https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/spring-2011/the-human-face-of-immigration> After students have read the article, have the students discuss whether the lesson today allowed them to challenge any existing stereotypes that they have. What problems may arise when we relate to people as members of a group, rather than unique individuals?