PSL Student Exemplar
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Perry Service Learning Program
6 March 2013

*Enrique’s Journey* – Summative Assignment

 Sonia Nazario states in her novel *Enrique’s Journey* that immigration, “Is a powerful stream, one that can only be addressed at is source” (Nazario xxv). Nazario spent months on end researching and recreating the journey of an immigrant boy, Enrique, to understand the dangers and emotional hardships of coming to America. She has talked to and learned that the children coming here to be reconnected with their parents are not going to stop, and has determined that in order to stop the current illegal immigrant crisis we must fix what is going on in their countries. I agree with this statement. Yes, immigration is an increasingly popular problem in the United States and there are many different tactics to lessen the problem but we must look at why they are coming here in the first place in order to see what exactly needs resolved. Many immigrants are coming for jobs and a better opportunity then they could achieve in their country. So, instead of trying a million different strategies like building fences or never ending deportations we need to improve the situations where they live so that they don’t need to leave and come to our country.

 Two of the main problems facing Latin American’s today are “the increase in divorce rate and family disintegration” as well as low paying jobs that leave families without enough money to survive (Nazario xiii). Although the divorce rates will not really be affected by outside help, since they are a personal decision, the working situation can improve. As Sonia Nazario continued on her journey she “learned the depths of desperation women face” trying to provide for their children. Most are only earning “$40 to $120 a month” working long hours “in factories, cleaning houses, or providing childcare” (Nazario xxiii). This money is not enough to even feed their families everyday or give their children “a chance to attend schools beyond the sixth grade” (Nazario x). By not having jobs that pay enough to survive the economy parents are forced to tell their children there is no food when they are hungry, and can only console them but never be able to get rid of the grueling stomach pains. The lack of money coming into families is what is driving them to America, because no mother wants to admit that they cannot support their family and leaves as the only chance she has to keep them from starving. If the low wages are fixed in these countries then parents can better provide for themselves and their families and will not have to cross our borders and will help to fix the immigration problem.

 Parent’s leaving their children behind is their best means to provide for them and keep them alive, but on the other hand creates a huge spike in illegal immigrants crossing the borders. By leaving the parents are creating a burning desire and longing for reconnection by their children. A child needs the interaction with their parent and will always feel that something is missing until they can be reunited or even meet for the first time. In *Enrique’s Journey* we see an example of this with Enrique’s sister Belky.

 “For Belky, their mother’s disappearance is just as distressing. She lives with Aunt Rosa, one of her mother’s sisters. On Mother’s Day, Belky struggles through a celebration at school. That night she cries quietly, alone in her room. Then she scolds herself. She should thank her mother for leaving; without the money she sends for books and uniforms, Belky could not even attend school.” (Nazario 10)

Even though her mother is sending back money and providing her daughter with the opportunity to go to school she still continues to miss her and longs to be in her company. This need lives in the hearts of the children that get left behind and drives many of them on the life threatening journey to America to fill that hole and reconnect with their missing parents. Nazario explains that “one Honduran teenager [she] met in south Mexico had been deported to Guatemala twenty seven times. He said he wouldn’t give up until he reached his mother in the United States” (Nazario xxv). A lot of children have the same passion and determination of this boy and will continue to sneak into the U.S. to be with their parents. To stop this large group of children from illegally immigrating we must cut off their reasoning, which are their parents. The parents are leaving because they need better jobs to get a better income.

 So all in all it comes back to the root of the problem that, things needs to be fixed in immigrants home countries to keep them for searching for a better life in ours. If we can help to make their lives more fulfilling and possible in their own country they won’t have any need to leave. Most of the parents leaving do not want to go and leave their families behind. They are given no choice though by the lack of opportunities they have where they live. If we can open up more opportunities for them they won’t want to leave and can stay with their families. This will then lead to less children immigrating because they will not have to go find their parents since they wouldn’t have left in the first place. By fixing problems on the home front of immigrants we can make their lives better in their own country along with fixing the immigration problem in ours.

Nazario, Sonia. *Enrique's Journey*. New York: Random House, 2006. Print.