

Immigration and Teacher Resources: Movies

- *Under The Same Moon*: The filmmakers emphasize the emotions and experience of immigrants. Do we find joy in leaving our families behind and work everyday for a low wage? article: <http://movies.nytimes.com/2008/03/19/movies/19moon.html>
- *Terminal*: Tom Hanks playing an Eastern European man with no country because when he arrives at the Kennedy Airport, his homeland is overthrown in a coup, so he has no valid passport. Stuck in the terminal for days, he makes friends with the employees there and becomes their go-to man. What I really like about this movie is not only Tom's great performance, but its emphasis on how we should celebrate differences and learn from each other's unique culture and personality. Everybody is a potential friend.
- *Spanglish*: A story about a Mexican mother and her daughter who enters the U.S. in search of a better life. She becomes a maid for an American family. She soon realizes that it becomes more difficult to maintain her privacy and distance. And the perfect American family are not so perfect after all.
- *The Visitor*: Director Tom McCarthy's recent film THE VISITOR reminds us of how the concept of liberty has been made disadvantageous for the good immigrants who are not terrorists but are here just to make a decent, honest living.
- *The Kite Runner*: tells a tale of a father and son who had to leave a home country that was ridden by war. In America, the son grew up to be a successful novelist.
- *It Gets Better*: For Carlos (Demián Bichir), an undocumented Mexican day laborer who arrived in Los Angeles six years earlier, work is all-consuming. Rising at dawn in his ramshackle South Central rental, he spends long days tending to the well-fed lawns of the affluent, barely seeing his 14-year-old son, Luis (José Julián). Uncommunicative and a little hotheaded, Luis is teetering on the brink of expulsion from school and initiation into a local gang with family ties to his feisty girlfriend (Chelsea Rendon), but it's clear he's more a thoughtful loner than a mindless joiner.
<http://www.npr.org/2011/06/24/137317620/among-illegals-a-poignant-struggle-for-life>
- *Which Way Home*: a feature documentary film that follows unaccompanied child migrants, on their journey through Mexico, as they try to reach the United States. These are stories of hope and courage, disappointment and sorrow. They are the children you never hear about; the invisible ones.
- *Walkout*: based on a true story, student activist and Mexican-American Paula Crisostomo (Vega), tired of being treated unequally, decides to take action and stage a walkout at five East Los Angeles high schools in 1968, to protest

educational conditions and complain of anti-Mexican educational bias along with some 10,000 students.

- *El Norte*: Mayan Indian peasants, tired of being thought of as nothing more than "brazos fuertes" ("strong arms", i.e., manual laborers) and organizing in an effort to improve their lot in life, are discovered by the Guatemalan army. After the army destroys their village and family, a brother and sister, teenagers who just barely escaped the massacre, decide they must flee to "El Norte" ("the North", i.e., the USA). After receiving clandestine help from friends and humorous advice from a veteran immigrant on strategies for traveling through Mexico, they make their way by truck, bus and other means to Los Angeles, where they try to make a new life as young, uneducated, and illegal immigrants.
- *Teo's Journey (El Viaje de Teo)*: a child's reunion with his father is cut short in the midst of a dangerous journey in this drama from Mexico. Teo (Erick Caneta Guerrero) is a boy who was born and raised in Oaxaca, Mexico. Teo's father Wenceslao (Damian Alacazar) has been little more than a stranger to him; often on the wrong side of the law, Wenceslao has spent most of Teo's life in jail, and the boy has been raised primarily by his uncle. When Wenceslao is finally released from behind bars, it doesn't take him long to run afoul of the law again, and he decides to flee to the United States. *El Viaje de Teo* (aka *Teo's Journey*) was an official selection at the 2008 Guadalajara Film Festival.