

Chapter 12

Globalizing Migration Dialogue: A Model for Combining Innovative Pedagogy, Community–Service Learning, and Research

Laura Talamante

California State University, Dominguez Hills, USA

Caroline Mackenzie

Aix-Marseille Université, France

ABSTRACT

In this chapter, the authors examine how working with diverse international communities to explore migration history and experiences using oral history and community-service learning pedagogy as well as research practices creates a model for transformational dialogue and understanding regarding difference and diversity. The Empowerment and Migration project focused on two activities: a two-city exhibition on “Citizenship and Migration,” involving migrants from Los Angeles and Marseilles, and the E&M Website, which offers migrants, educators, researchers, associations, and NGOs a global forum for education, dialogue, and research regarding immigrant experiences. The project included student work from California State University Dominguez Hill in Los Angeles and from the Lycée Jean-Baptiste Brochier in Marseilles and immigrant contributions from the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles. The authors qualitatively examine the project’s goals of reducing defensiveness by promoting reflective practice, collaborative multicultural skill mastery, and practices for building and sustaining positive cross-cultural rapport.

INTRODUCTION

Our chapter examines how working with diverse international communities to explore migration history and experiences via innovative pedagogical and research practices creates a framework

for transformational dialogue and understanding regarding difference and diversity. As part of this framework, we offer a non-standard approach to conceptualizing community-service learning through oral history interviews of migrants. We explore how the creation of the *Empowerment*

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& Migration (E&M) project opens avenues for globalizing migration dialogue. The *E&M* project asks migrants and non-migrants to analyze what it means to be a citizen in day-to-day situations: involvement in community activities, self-expression and education, respect for the law, and participation in the political debate. Caroline Mackenzie conceptualized the *E&M* project, and Laura Talamante developed a community-service learning component at California State University, Dominguez Hills. Together, we sought to give structure to the complexity and variability of migration in its historical, political, social, economic, and cultural specificities. We wish to extend the dialogue and conceptualization of migration experiences, citizenship practices, and human rights beyond the borders of a single nation-state.

Our goal is to model innovative collaborations that contribute to a global debate on facilitating acceptance of others in a diverse community. By encouraging students at California State University Dominguez Hills (CSUDH) to explore the complexity of today's society and to see how the lives of their families and friends are impacted by the phenomenon of international migration, we help them develop skills for their future careers as teachers and community mediators, including reducing defensiveness, reflective practices, collaborative multicultural skill mastery, practices for building and sustaining positive cross-cultural rapport, and transformative practices and approaches to difference and diversity. The *E&M* project created opportunities for young migrants and descendants of migrants in Marseilles and Los Angeles to understand, while empathizing with the difficulties faced by migrants, that it is important to maintain distance and deal with others in the entirety of their past experiences.

We also reflect on the importance of creating institutional and informal networks that offer non-threatening spaces for migrants' and other community members' self-expression. These

networks enhance cross-cultural understanding of global diversity and universality for students, teachers, community members, and researchers. Evidence continues to mount over the transformative possibilities of this project because of its innovative teaching pedagogy, community-service learning, and research practices. Gloria Arzu, a student participant from California State University, Dominguez Hills (CSUDH), reflected upon the relationship between citizenship and migration in global, national and local contexts:

1. *I have accepted my roots;*
2. *I have accepted others;*
3. *I have a new perspective on American and Global history;*
4. *I am not quick to judge without first researching;*
5. *I have learned that, as a prospective teacher, I must make available to students the knowledge to which they are entitled such as: books, literature, journals and library research.*

I have learned that the relationship between citizenship and our global, national and local context is that they are conjoined and that we as humans and future educators have an obligation to each other to make sure that we all have what is taken advantage of, which we take advantage ofKNOWLEDGE!!! (2009)

Genesis of the *E&M* Project

The *E&M* project was developed by Caroline Mackenzie with a grant from the Charles-Leopold Mayer Foundation for the Progress of Humankind (FPH), a Swiss-based philanthropic foundation (www.fph.ch). The grant helped set up two activities: a two-city exhibition in Marseilles and Los Angeles on the theme, "Citizenship and Migration," and the *E&M* website as a global forum for education, dialogue, and research on migrant experiences. The *E&M* project was inspired by a

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