

Chapter 5

Transforming the Education of Immigrant Youth: Program Implementation and Instructional Planning

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ABSTRACT

Educational programs for immigrant students must be guided by multidisciplinary research that centralizes the voices of the “other.” The authors re-conceptualizes what is meant by integration and meaningful inclusion in order to address opportunity gaps experienced by many immigrant students. The data gathered through quantitative, qualitative, and auto-ethnographic research resulted in the Roots and Wings Transformative Model. This model can be adapted by schools to implement a transcultural and transformative program for immigrant students built on equity and teaching towards freedom in varied contexts across the globe. Included are concrete examples of ways to implement this model in the classroom and a collaborative needs-assessment tool. Students’ ways of knowing and their communities’ contributions become the pillars upon which learning the standards and educational experiences are built. A brief standards-based lesson plan for content and concept mastery and English language development is also presented.

INTRODUCTION

Transcultural education for children of immigrants must be met with urgency at a global level. Based on the most current reports, about 258 million people have migrated around the world - an increase of 49% in just under two decades (United Nations, 2017). Whether they were forced to move or moved voluntarily, the significant impact on them, their native country and the receiving country cannot be

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ignored. This chapter invites educational program administrators, specialists, and practitioners to move beyond the contentious debates around immigration to stress the importance of educational research that places the voices of “the other” at the core of its inquiries. Using this paradigm, this chapter shares how multidisciplinary quantitative and qualitative research methodologies that honor the counterstories of “the other” can uncover practices that promote transformative educational outcomes for immigrant students. Consequently, this mindset requires researchers to re-conceptualize what is meant by integration and meaningful inclusion no matter the diversity of a school to address opportunity gaps that many culturally and linguistically diverse students experience. The urgency of cultivating this mindset is supported by our understanding of neuroscience and learning (Willis, J. and McTighe, J., 2019; Z. Hammond, 2015). Taking all of these factors into account, the current analysis presents the *Roots and Wings Transformative Model* (Duval, 2018), a practical tool for educational programs and educators. The Roots and Wings Transformative Model is constructed as a case study from an autoethnographic approach using both quantitative and qualitative data. This model can be adapted to support schools in implementing transcultural programs for immigrant students that get at the core of equity to prepare them to become global citizens through educational achievement. Promoting culturally relevant practices at the student, teacher and school environment levels advance the promise of this model.

The chapter also presents concrete examples that guide the implementation of the model in school settings. More specifically, how student-centered assessments can inform curricular supports based on the realities of students’ lives. Thus students’ ways of knowing and their communities’ contributions become the pillars upon which learning the standards and educational experiences are built. While doing this, educators can identify authentic topics, linguistic and dialogic pedagogical opportunities, as well as various ways of demonstrating mastery of the objectives (L. Dodson, A. Foerster Luu, 2018). By linking this type of research and practice, educators can further broaden their critically reflective lens on the education of immigrant students. As influenced by critical pedagogy, it thus becomes evident that implementing transcultural education models teaches towards freedom and transformative education for audiences within varied contexts across the globe.

BACKGROUND

Five years ago, we celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 (Chisthi et al, 2015). This policy propelled changes that increased the ability of people of color (as far as China and as close as the Caribbean) to interact with the American world in a way that was not possible before. This immigration act, also known as the Hart-Cellar Act, linked with political instability in many countries pulled or pushed many parents to seek a better future for their families in the United States (U.S. House of Representatives, n.d.). In addition, the new era of mass air travel increased the ability of the average individual to interact with their two worlds. But this access to navigate multiple worlds for economic and academic advantages was not available to all and came at a cost to many. As stated in *Sacrificing Families*, “students shared stories of painful separations and challenging reunifications with their biological parents (L. Abrego, 2014).” Facing their situation, students naturally have no choice but to live transnational, transcultural, and translingual lives. This co-mingling of cultures becomes part of their identity. Although some enjoy “living in between”, others are broken by it. Thus, educators cannot ignore the importance of the affective domain in the quest to improve cognition. Mod-

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