

# Creating Welcoming Classrooms for Immigrant Students

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# Introduce Yourself!

- \* **Please type in the chat box**
  - \* **what subject(s) you teach**
  - \* **grade level(s)**
  - \* **something someone has done that made you feel welcomed.**

# Postcards from My Country



How do you create welcoming  
classrooms for immigrant  
students?

# Key Points in Theory

1. Establish a safe, welcoming space
2. Encourage self-expression to build confidence and a sense of belonging
3. Provide opportunities to collaborate and learn together
4. Have flexible and creative lessons and programs to support students and families

# Key Points in Practice

1. Use low-risk freewrites
2. Get names right
3. Collaborate on poems or story sketching with word clusters in one or two languages
4. Display a map of immigration journeys
5. Have diverse books in your classroom library
6. Use diverse media to tell stories
7. Make time for storytelling\*

# Freewrites

- \* This is a short span of non-stop, pen-on-page writing (I recommend 7 minutes, at least to start).
- \* Prompts can be sentence starters or images: “I am the one who...,” “I Wish...,” “I’m From...”
- \* Encourage read-alouds and read-backs

# Student Sample “I’m From”

I am from where everybody runs for the presidency  
where the capital is dry like the Sahara desert  
the houses are made of dirt  
the schools are covered by trash and grasses  
students wear the same clothes from the beginning of the year to the end  
I am from where rebellions and robbery are a part of the government job  
where when it is deep dark at night it is lighter in the president’s palace  
where water is able for six hours in a day  
I am from the land of misery: we call it Bangui “la coquette” the beautiful

# Get Names Right

- \* Names have a story often about how a person got his or her name or what it means.
- \* Pronunciation can have a huge impact on a child even if they don't appear to be bothered by it.
  - \* Ask a student to say their name. (If it's a student you've known for a while, it's still ok to ask them – it shows your human and you can make mistakes too).
  - \* Become purposeful about it. Have a pronunciation key you develop on your attendance chart.

Great reference! Gonzalez, Jessica. “How We Pronounce a Student’s Name and Why It Matters” <https://www.cultofpedagogy.com/gift-of-pronunciation/>

# Poem or Story Sketch

- \* It's based on the idea that words are materials
- \* You take a group of words (usually 4) and develop them into combinations that “feel” like poems or become stories.
- \* Word images can allow us to say things that sometimes are difficult to express.

# Student Sample Poem Sketch

Fish  
Cheap  
Street  
Time

I'm so famous in Cameroon,  
You can find me everywhere.  
You can buy me at the seashore,  
Anywhere you can find fresh fish, remember I'm near  
there.  
Straight out of the sea,  
I can be cooked right in front of you.  
I'm also available at the side of the street,  
Where you can hear people talking about the last soccer  
game,  
Smell a mixture of oil, charcoal, and fish.  
Any social class can afford me, I can be cheap or  
expensive if I want to be.  
I'm usually eaten by the single person,  
A man with no wife to cook for him.  
I think because it doesn't take much time to cook me.  
But for me to be very good,  
...

# Map of Immigration Journeys



# Diverse Books Library

## BUILD A DIVERSE BOOKSHELF

ABOUT EVERYONE + FOR EVERYONE  
LEE & LOW BOOKS & THE EDUCATORS' SPIN ON IT



Ask yourself:

*If I were a student in your school, would I be able to find multiple texts with reflections of myself and multiple texts that serve as windows into the worlds of others?*

If the answer is no, or it can be improved, consider this checklist and start looking for books to add.

CHECKLIST: 8 STEPS TO CREATING A DIVERSE BOOK COLLECTION by LEE & LOW BOOKS

<http://blog.leeandlow.com/2014/05/22/checklist-8-steps-to-creating-a-diverse-book-collection/>

Consider online funding methods and don't be afraid to reach out to your librarians!

# Diverse Storytelling Mediums

- \* Interviews and Recording
- \* Podcasting
- \* Digital Storytelling
- \* Handmade Drawings

Lessons: “Podcasting the Immigrant Experience”, “Crossing Borders with Digital Storytelling”, “Telling the Family Story” on [ShareMyLesson.com](https://www.sharemylesson.com)

# Make time for storytelling

- \* “Stories can conquer fear you know. They can make the heart bigger” – Ben Okri
- \* “I’ve learned that people will forget what you said, forget what you did, but they will never forget how you made them feel.” – Dr. Maya Angelou

# Chat Room Reflection

- \* **How might you adapt one of the practical welcoming strategies for immigrant students in your classroom? What outcome(s) do you intend to achieve? What challenges do you foresee?**
- \* *Please respond in your respective chat boxes for K-5, 6-12, Adult ELL or Other.*
- \* *(Strategies recap: freewrite, names, poem/story sketch, immigration map, diverse books, diverse story mediums)*