

# 2020 Immigrant Student Success

Strategies and Tools for K-12 and Adult Educators  
Online Workshop Toolkit



## Five Things Teachers Can Do

### plus Distance Learning Tips!

### 1. Embrace students' immigrant identities

About one out of every four public school students comes from an immigrant family, and every student has been shaped by their own history of migration.

**Xenophobic language and discrimination** are prevalent in schools, and many students fear revealing or embracing their immigrant identity.

**Teachers who embrace their students' identity and their own immigration history** can create a space for students to explore and express.

**By giving a platform to immigrant voices** you can encourage other students to understand the many factors that create a diverse community.

[Addressing Xenophobia with Culturally Responsive Schools](#)

### 3. Teach migration across the curriculum

**Beyond literature and social studies**, migration has also affected our scientific understanding, our artistic styles, and the history and development of many other disciplines.

**By teaching immigration as a theme in non-traditional classes**, teachers can normalize migration, help students of all background understand their history and give a more nuanced understanding of every discipline.

[How to Teach the Story of Human Migration Without Bias](#)

### 2. Address trauma and fear in the classroom

**Immigrants have many potential sources of trauma:** the effects of leaving home countries, difficulty arriving in the U.S., and anti-immigrant sentiment from classmates and neighbors. The COVID-19 pandemic carries a disproportionate risk to immigrants.

**Schools can help in many ways:**

1. Hire diverse staff and train teachers in implicit bias and cultural responsiveness.
2. Include a wide variety of viewpoints and voices in curricula.
3. Have activities or clubs that support immigrant students.
4. Put resources into counseling and language integration to help immigrant students thrive.

**Immigrant students specifically benefit** by seeing their experience as valuable and broadly applicable in many areas of life and study.

**Educators may not realize their own biases** in teaching migration, such as the tokenization of immigrant students, seeing immigration as a current event versus an ongoing theme, and using immigration in special projects rather than integrating immigration into a curriculum.

[Immigration Lesson Plans and Resources](#)

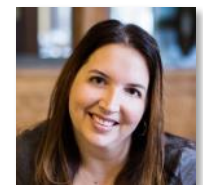
[I Teach Science. Can I be a Multicultural Educator?](#)



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## 4. Tell stories to build knowledge

**Emily Francis, an English as a Second Language teacher in Concord, NC,** spends time helping her English Language Learner students to come to grips with their own histories. Francis, who came to the U.S. from Guatemala as a child, says that one of the hardest parts of integrating to her new school was that she never had the chance to share her family's story. Today, she gives her students and their families a way to express themselves using their newfound English language skills and their own experiences as tools.



Emily Francis  
Concord High School, NC

the cultures that their ancestors came from. Prepare your class by acknowledging that some immigration stories are harder to tell than others, set guidelines for respectful conversation, and be available to talk to students who need extra help.

**Students who were born in the U.S. also have an immigration story to tell!** Ask students to interview their parents and grandparents, or research

▶ [New Immigrant and Refugee Visions film collection](#)

📖 [Welcome to the New World graphic narrative](#)



Jake Halpern  
*Welcome to the New World*



Dr. Candace Black  
Boston College School of Social Work



Federico Salas-Isnardi  
Houston Mayor's Office for Adult Literacy

## 5. Speak up!

What should you do if you witness anti-immigrant bias from a student or teacher at your school? Use Teaching Tolerance's guide on strategies to **interrupt, question, educate and echo** to help address bias in a way that encourages understanding and growth. These four strategies can assist in addressing potential conflict quickly, while de-escalating and creating space for a conversation, the exchange of information, and affirmation of new and more informed opinions.

📖 [Speak up at School](#)



### Distance learning with immigrant students

**Immigrants** are at a higher risk when it comes to educational losses related to the COVID-19 outbreak. As immigrants are more likely to work in essential jobs, parents are more vulnerable to the virus and may be less likely to be able to help with distance learning. Here are some ways you can help:

1. Phone calls
2. One-on-one socially distanced visits with students
3. Checking in to see if students basic needs, such as food and healthcare, are being met
4. Making hard-copy materials available
5. Using interactive online tools, such as video conferencing, rather than more passive means of engagement

**Supporting Immigrant and Refugee Students: Considerations for School Teachers in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic**



Julie Bradley  
Teaching Tolerance



Michael Sheridan  
Community Supported Film



Dr. Cynthia Carvajal  
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