

TEACHING ELL AND IMMIGRANT STUDENTS

Tips for creating safe and welcoming spaces

- Seeing our students as people is also further enforced when we don't refer to them as "our kids" but as community members, advocates, peers, etc. (Dr. Cynthia Carvajal)
- In Framingham we have many families not show up to school because they associate the school building as a government building. Hard to get them to come for parent mtgs or even answer the phone when calling from the building.... if I call from my cell they answer right away.. it helps being fluent in Spanish- safe space for a lot of our immigrant families
- Having a resource officer had our school helped students learn not to be afraid of police and that they can be helpful
- I think letting newcomers express themselves through drawing or writing in their home language is beneficial
- We worked with a community college to have a student create the artwork for a poster announcing that this is a safe space
- We have students from the local college come into our school to be tutors for our students.
- Microaffirmations
- My Latinx students are part of a student "focus" group to inform educators and staff at my high school. I organized the group because the teachers & admin just don't know anything about these students. It has been very successful for sharing stories within a small group (10 students & 3-4 adults).
- My experience has been that the connections we maintain with students now have become much more meaningful to our learner communities and they are more eager to - and more in need of - reaching out.
- A common thread throughout all of these very important conversations - relationships. As educators, being so mindful of our relationships with our students so we truly know and understand their issues and needs. Intentional and inclusive relationships...so so important.
- Agree with Amy, perspective is important and avoiding stereotypes. Chimamanda Ngozi's TED Talk "The Danger of a Single Story" is a great resource for teachers and students to explore stereotypes. Many African middle-class students who move to USA to study have never felt their skin colour in the same way as other POC, simply because they were a majority back home. It is obvious that they do not identify with the same struggles that black Americans face and yet a lot of people perceive them all in the same group and expect them to fight for the same struggles.
- Yes, if folks aren't aware, there's often a good amount of tension between African immigrants and African-Americans. Lots to think about and unpack there. Again, the book *How to be an Antiracist* gets into that. Also, the book *Americanah* gets into that. Probably loads more books too.

- There is a HUGE mis-identification of ELs in Special Education.
- I think sometimes in the work to have "high expectations for all," the reality of students' situations is ignored. In some contexts, educators think that equity means ignoring the differences.
- I really like the essential question approach. I was a curriculum director in a school district where parents closely scrutinize everything in the curriculum. Using the essential question model allows students from all kinds of families to structure their learning in keeping with their own families' cultural values, while having an opportunity to hear from other students about their essential thinking.
- Experiential teaching. I use it even my very beginning ELL students.

Communication tools

- There are also some great translation apps via cell phone
- Talking Points is very helpful for communication. It is like Class Dojo.
- Google Translate has also been very helpful for me.
 - Beware of Google Translate -- not a fool proof tool

Resources

- [Serving ELL Students and Families](#) by Teaching Tolerance
- [5 Steps for Creating Welcoming and Inclusive Learning Environments](#) by Adam Strom and Verónica Boix-Mansilla
- Re-imagining Migration's [Culturally Responsive Guide to Fostering the Inclusion of Immigrant Origin Students](#)
- The [My Name My Identity](#) campaign has resources to help get-to-know students. My department is working on in-depth lesson plans for teacher to utilize with their students in the fall.
- [Supporting Immigrants in Schools Resource Guide](#)
- These are great resources! If anyone is interested, we also have many resources at [Immigrant Connections](#)
- [Successful Practices in Creating Safe Classrooms](#) (videos):
- [Newcomer Toolkit](#)

Social-emotional learning

- [Ten percent happier](#), a meditation app with free access for teachers and educators (Julie Bradley)
- Ruth King and Rhonda McGee are both authors that address the intersection of Mindfulness and Social Justice (Julie Bradley)
- I started a "lunch bunch" for my students, along with our guidance counselor. This helped many of the immigrant refugee students w/ their emotions
- I have started a book club at our school. It works really well, but it is held after school.
- I think mindfulness is much more individualistic, but I also remember years ago when a Buddhist group in MA organized a Pilgrimage of the Middle Passage to deal with issues of racism. I also know that the great anti-racist educator, bell hooks, is a vocal practicing Buddhist.

Refugees

- The book Emily Francis mentioned is [Refugee](#) by Alan Gratz
- My sister is an editor for TIME Magazine and she did a cool [story following refugee families](#) for a year, through childbirth etc.
- Thank you so much for bringing refugees into this conversation/training! In case anyone is interested, here at Immigrant Connections we just finished a huge national project and report related to refugees in U.S. schools. It's called "The Refugee School Impact Program: An Analysis of State and Local Practices" <https://www.immigrantsrefugeesandschools.org/resources>. I interviewed 38 state refugee coordinators for the project. It was requested by the KY refugee office and is mostly info that's useful for RSI coordinators at the state level, but I definitely think there's info in there that's useful at the local level. If anything, it'll give you perspective on where your program "fits" in the big picture.
- 79.5 million forcibly displaced. 26 million refugees via the UN definition <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/figures-at-a-glance.html>

Speaking up

- I like the intervene point, and kids need to be willing to intervene, in terms of speaking up for others, when possible too.
- Speak Up at Schools booklet: <https://www.tolerance.org/sites/default/files/2019-04/TT-Speak-Up-Guide.pdf>

Trauma and Immigrant Students

- I recommend the book "Trauma Stewardship" by Connie Burk and Laura van Dernoot Lipsky as we are in a helping position and can often get inundated with trauma stories from our kiddos
- Building trust takes time...build rapport with students and families, invite them to schools for events, translate and interpret whenever possible. Call with good and bad news.
- Bookmark [this video](#) from a past online workshop on the Psychological Effect of Immigration on Students.