



International Conference  
The Future of Education



# **Teaching Immigration in the Classroom – An American Experience**

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# Why talk about immigration?

- **Migration is part of human experience in today's environment**
- **Immigration is an existential reality of all countries of the world**
- **Resulting in a globalized diverse/multicultural world**
- **Acknowledgment of diversity/multiculturalism fosters tolerance & empathy among the citizenry**





# Immigration is Dynamic

- **America is a land of immigrants, and the process did not stop at the Ellis Island – still going on!**
- **Since the creation of European Union in 1993, citizens of the Union have been migrating among the countries for various opportunities (economic & educational)**
- **Therefore, since 1993, Europe has also become a land of immigrants – first within the Union and later outside the Europe – especially since 2015**
- **Immigration issue is not unique to Europe or America but across the globe in all continents**





# Immigration & Curriculum

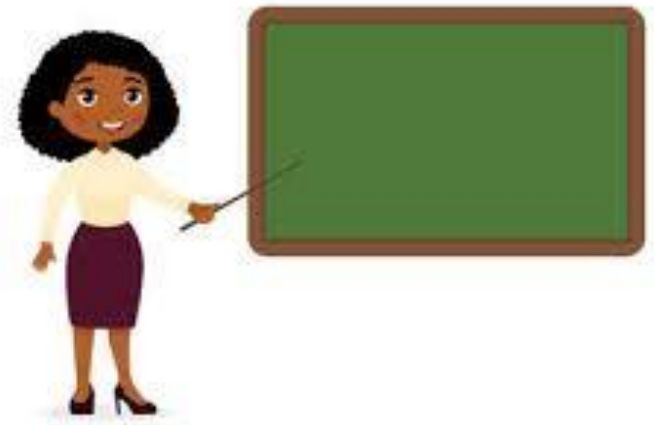
- **Immigration is a required curricular topic at all levels (elementary, middle, & high school) of education in the US.**
- **Unfortunately, not all teachers or the school districts address this topic in the US classrooms with emphasis.**
- **According to European Commission report (2018), in many European education systems including Italy, the topic of immigration is taught under the umbrella of “Intercultural Education.”**





# Pedagogy of Teaching Immigration

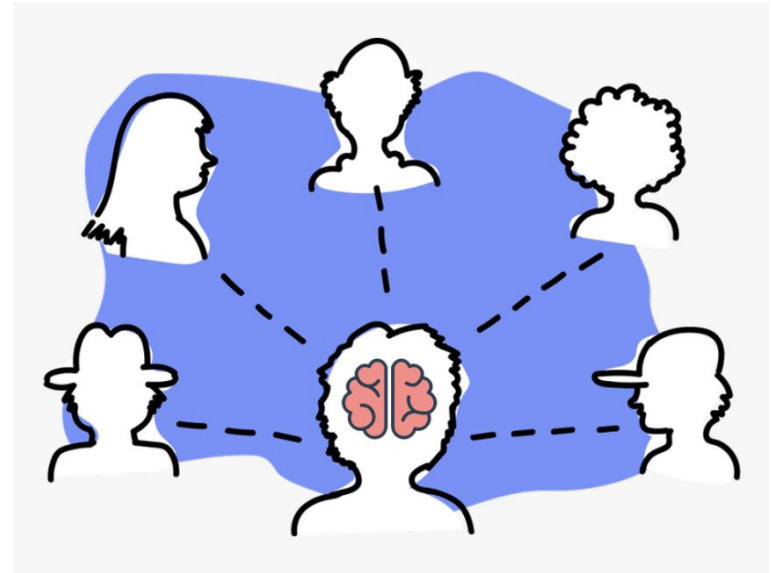
- **In my Multicultural Education course, I ask students to complete a project entitled “Cultural Heritage Presentation.”**
- **Students are required to undertake research on their ancestral roots**
- **Research helps students relate to their great-grandparents’ immigrant experiences.**
- **Thus, “Immigration” isn’t an abstract but a lived experiences story!**





# Perception of Immigrants

- **A few weeks after the Cultural Heritage Presentation, I ask students:**
- **-To list three things that comes to their mind when they see the word “Immigration.”**
- **-Almost every semester, the following words appear on their lists –**
- **-illegal, Mexican/Hispanic, border crossing at night, and taking our job**





# Discussions on the Negative Perceptions

- **Once the I gather the list, we discuss the reasons for their list of choices**
- **Again, most of them admits that these perceptions stem from what they have heard from the news media or from their friend & family!**
- **Most of them cannot recall if teachers (from Elementary to High school) have ever talked about Immigration in class.**
- **A few exception – Elis Island (1892-1954) –historical events!**





# Current Types of Immigrants

- **Illegal Immigrants**
- **Legal Immigrants**
- **Why address illegal immigrants first?**
- **Myths about Illegal Immigrants**
- **Why talk about myths of Illegal Immigrants?**
- **What contributions do Illegal Immigrants make?**







# Legal Immigrants – Types & Process

- **Family Sponsor – time frame & fees**
- **Employer Request – process & fees**
- **Refugee & Asylum Seekers – process**
- **Diversity Lottery – requirements & process**





# Citizenship

- **Process for Immigrants to become Citizen**
- **Types of Citizenship: Born & Naturalized**
- **Rights & Privileges of the two Citizens**





## Students' Reflection

- **Express surprise/amazement**
- **Develop appreciation**
- **Develop empathy**
- **Express dismay for not learning about immigration in their early schooling**
- **Determined to teach immigration as teachers to their students**



# Conclusion

- **Realizing Immigration & Immigrants are essential for economic stability for every country in today's global environment**
- **Eliminating the misconceptions about immigrants (both legal & illegal) are important for social harmony**
- **Addressing early in the school system will prevent in developing misconceptions about immigrants among the young generations.**





# Questions & Comments

- **My article on this topic:**
- **Any question, comments, or concern about this topic?**
- **<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1065433.pdf>**

