Teaching Immigration in the Classroom - An American Experience!

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Abstract

Like the United States, Europe has become an increasingly multicultural society, due to the influx of refugees, asylum, and job seekers. One of the main reasons for the increase in immigrants in European societies is the prosperous and attractive economy of the various European countries. In addition to job opportunity, the positive attitude toward immigrants by most European countries plays an important factor in the increase of immigrants. However, due to the recent financial and labor market crisis, the positive attitude toward immigrants has started to erode. The influence of this change in attitude can impact the classroom atmosphere, which in turn may hinder students' learning. Unfavorable perceptions about immigrants are not restricted to adults, but also apply to children of immigrants who will spend most of their time in school settings. Therefore, negative perceptions of the children belonging to the host population need to be redirected to the positive aspects of immigrants. Otherwise, these children will carry their negative views about immigrants into their adulthood where it becomes difficult to change pre-established perceptions. The negative attitudes toward immigrants cannot be eliminated without addressing this important issue in classrooms. This means placing an intentional focus on issues surrounding immigration and the contributions immigrants make at all levels of society. The intent of this presentation is to share an American experience of a college faculty who successfully implemented strategies to teach about immigration in the classroom in a positive manner.

Keywords: Immigration, Diversity, Teaching

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