

HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY IMMIGRATION CURRICULUM

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ABSTRACT

With changes occurring in our current immigration laws, schools are becoming increasingly more affected by immigration as a whole. This leads to a need for both teachers and students to remain educated on immigration. However, current immigration curricula do not address immigration from a contemporary perspective. Immigration is presented as a historical event through the superficial “Ellis Island Perspective,” and does not address current laws and policies. This curriculum was created with a goal to integrate both historical immigration and current immigration in order to provide a complete curriculum that addresses all aspects of immigration no matter how controversial, or uncomfortable they may be.

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Introduction

“Immigration is not an event. It does not begin with the act of crossing national borders, nor does it end there” (Rubenstein-Avila, 2012). Immigration is a complex, difficult topic to teach. Many teachers feel so uncomfortable, unprepared, and intimidated by this multicultural subject they eliminate it from curricula completely. K-12 students are rarely exposed to coverage of US History that includes topics such as genocide, displacement of Native Americans, differing immigration policies, and involuntary enslavement of African Americans, simply because they are not easy topics to discuss (Cain, 2012). However, as Bersh (2013) noted, “avoiding a curriculum leading to critical inquiry such as multicultural perspectives, is as much a political act as taking action. The neglect or superficial coverage of complicated social affairs, such as the contemporary immigration phenomenon, only perpetuates misunderstandings and biased perspectives” (p. 47). It is up to educators, to fully and completely teach topics such as immigration no matter how challenging they may be. The purpose of this essay is to discuss the issues related to teaching about immigration, as well as my personal interest and purpose for a proposed curriculum project on the topic.

Current Immigration Curricula

Many educators feel that the immigration curricula being taught today are not up to par such as Kazi I. Hossain. Kazi I. Hossain is an educator and immigrant himself who is troubled by the approach to immigration in classrooms (2014). He feels all current immigration curricula simply focus on “The Ellis Island Perspective.” Key elements of “The Ellis Island Perspective” focus on immigration into the Ellis Island immigration post in New York City harbor and immigrant life after the experience of passing through it. Typical activities within this curriculum

include a virtual tour of Ellis Island or students interviewing their grandparents' on life in America when they grew up. This can be seen directly in Scholastic's immigration curriculum (n.d.). The first activity featured is a virtual tour of Ellis Island. Students are provided with text, audio, video, and photos guiding them through Ellis Island. Students then read about a young girl's experience traveling from China to the United States, followed by a review of immigration statistics. The curriculum ends with students conducting an interview of an immigrant of their choosing and completing an essay based upon the interview. Similarly, the Immigration Curriculum found on the National Park Service website (2018), follows the same trend of a virtual tour of Ellis Island. This curriculum provides students with information and visual representation of what it was like checking in and arriving in Ellis Island, immigrants' reasons for coming to America, and diseases they faced on their journey to America. While these are engaging activities and essential facts to mention, this method or model lacks any discussion or reference to current day immigration issues. Educators must go beyond Ellis Island and discuss topics such as current government procedures and political debates. Present day immigration problems are just as much a part of history as is Ellis Island (Hossain, 2014). Without being educated on present day immigration many students will continue believing myths such as "Most immigrants are here illegally." "Today's immigrants don't want to blend in and become Americanized." "Immigrants take the good jobs from Americans." "Undocumented immigrants don't pay taxes but still get benefits." "Anyone who enters the country illegally is a criminal" (Costello, 2011, p. 27). This lack of education and knowledge can lead to bias and discrimination and needs to be addressed.

Immigration in the School Setting

The current presidential administration has implemented immigration policies including changes such as high-profile separation of families at the border, a travel ban for those from several Muslim-majority countries, and attempts to end the Obama-era DACA program that offered deportation protections (Barajas, 2019). Due to these changes in U.S. immigration policies, immigration has become an issue that is increasingly impacting schools. According to Caroline Scown, “The Trump administration’s immigration policies have created widespread and stress that interfere with students’ learning” (p. 1). Unauthorized students and students from mixed-status families showed an increase in absenteeism, academic achievement, and mental health issues due to their fear of themselves or their family being deported. 33% of unauthorized parents reported that their child was withdrawn from school while 84% of educators reported that students expressed worries about the effects of immigration, and 60% of educators observed a decrease in academic performance for students affected by immigration enforcement (Scown, 2018). A Maryland teacher reported, “We have one student who had attempted to slit her wrists because her family has been separated and she wants to be with her mother. She literally didn’t know how to live without her mother” (Gamboa, 2018. p. 1). Another student was reported not eating or talking, due to coping with her mother being deported and her not getting a chance to say goodbye. (Gamboa, 2018). Students are being impacted by immigration in more ways than one in today’s society.

Teachers are also being impacted by current policies. NBC News reports, 64 percent of the 5,400 teachers, administrators and other school personnel surveyed said they had observed students who were concerned about immigration issues that may affect them, their families or people they know (Gamboa, 2018). Teachers also report the classroom environment becoming destabilized and learning being interrupted, and are displaying signs of trauma themselves. In

order to meet students needs, many teachers have taken on new roles as social workers and advocates (Scown, 2018). It is essential for teachers to remain educated on present day immigration in order to be able to assist all student needs.

It is evident that immigration has created an impact in schools today. It is important for both teachers and students to remain educated on current immigration in order to deepen understanding and provide clarity and support to all. Although immigration may be a controversial topic, it is a topic that will always be relevant. It is not just a historical event, or a subject of the past. Immigration must be addressed fully and completely in the school setting, both from a historical and contemporary viewpoint.

Personal Interest

My interest in the topic of immigration stems from personal experience. I personally feel that students as well as teachers are not educated enough on the subject of immigration. Although it is a complex topic to teach, it is so important and impacts all classrooms. I have taught a few immigration lessons in a public school in New York City, mainly following the textbook from “The Ellis Island Perspective.” Students would typically take turns reading a chapter in the textbook aloud and then would proceed to independently answer the review questions at the end of the chapter. There was no collaboration or discussion present. I also was shocked by the little knowledge my fourth grade students at the time, had on the topic. I was also shocked at the interest they displayed. They were genuinely interested in learning more about the people, the process, the hardships. However, this particular lesson was only a two-day unit. I feel time plays a factor in the lack of immigration lessons in today’s schools. Teachers simply do not have enough time to delve into the subject of immigration and all it has to offer. As a result, we are presented with superficial “Ellis Island Perspective” instruction.

Project Purpose

The purpose of this curriculum project is to create an immigration curriculum that integrates both historical immigration and present day immigration. I plan to begin the unit by teaching the history of Ellis Island. I plan to go into depth about the struggles immigrants faced during the 1900s, using primary sources such as photos from the book *Immigrant Kids* (Freedman, 1995). I also would like to include various engaging activities such as analyzing the My Immigration Story website (n.d.). looking for evidence of assimilation, conformity, discrimination, and poverty. Following an immigration timeline, I would lead up to present day immigration. I would present political debates and news articles such as “The Simple Reason More Immigrant Kids Are in Custody Than Ever Before” (Kopan, 2018). By presenting students with both a historical and present day perspective on immigration, they are able to gain more knowledge and expand their thinking in order to comprehend this complex topic. Immigration may be viewed as a complex, difficult, intimidating, and uncomfortable subject to teach, but is essential for both teachers and students to remain educated on the facts and impact it has on the world in the past and present.

The inquiry questions that guide this curriculum are:

- What are immigration curriculum’s today lacking?
- How can an immigration curriculum integrate both information from the past and present?

In the next chapter, I will review relevant literature regarding current immigration curricula and immigration in the school setting.

Review of the Literature

In the previous chapter, I introduced the problem of the controversial topic of immigration in the school setting and the lack of curricula that adequately teach the subject. This curriculum project will aim to integrate both historical and current immigration in order to fully and completely teach this subject matter. This chapter is intended to review the literature to see what research has already been done.

Impact of Immigration in Education

Due to President Trump's current immigration policies, immigrant students under the age of 8 displayed a multitude of emotions in the school setting (Matthews, Ulrich, & Cervantes, 2018). The researchers stated that, "Since the beginning of his term, President Trump has made immigration enforcement a heightened priority and removed protections for groups that had previously been granted leniency, including parents of citizen children and young immigrants who came to the United States as children" (p. 5). Because of this, students fear that their parents will be taken away and have shown increased signs of aggression, separation anxiety, and withdrawal from environments. A drop in enrollment, attendance, and parent participation was also evident (Matthews, Ulrich, & Cervantes, 2018). Educators faced difficulty connecting with families and felt unprepared to meet the family's needs, which has led to teachers seeking more information in order to better educate themselves on the appropriate programs available for immigrant families through community partners and other immigrant-serving organizations. One teacher stated that, "Families are coming to us as a trusted source of information and experts in something we aren't necessarily experts in" (Matthews, et. al., p. 7).

Various views on immigration can be found within an educational setting currently. Hajisoteriou, Karousiou, and Angelides (2017) interviewed both immigrant and native students

on cultural diversity and found views of cultural deficiency and cultural celebration. This study explained the importance of teaching intercultural topics in a school setting. Teaching intercultural topics allows students to become more educated and be the face of reform. The researchers stated that, “If children’s understanding is not related to the purposes of the suggested reform, they will act as inhibitors and resisters to change while aiming to maintain the current status quo” (p. 333). In this scenario, the suggested reform was based upon students viewing immigrants through a cultural celebration lens as opposed to that of cultural deficiency. The researchers believed that, “Allowing children to discuss the issue of cultural diversity can be very informative for the formation of policies, practices and teaching methodologies in culturally diverse schools” (p. 334). Students who perceived diversity and immigration in a cultural deficiency perspective overall viewed individuals from a diverse culture or background as inferior. This led to separation and difficulty in social groups and classroom environments. Immigrant students felt rejected and excluded. One student explained that, “I only have friends from Bulgaria, but I don’t like that. I would like to have more friends from my classroom, I tried to. The teacher to tells me to go play with them, but they tell me “we don’t want you to play with us” (As quoted in Hajisoteriou, et al., p. 341). Students who perceived diversity and immigration in a cultural celebration perspective welcomed and appreciated differences and contributions from other cultures. One student stated that, “I feel excited because our classmates tell us a lot of things for their lifestyles in their countries, their culture, their language, their customs and traditions. I also tell them about our customs, traditions, and different things about our society” (As quoted in Hajisoteriou, et al., (p. 341). Being a part of a culturally diverse classroom that educates and celebrates cultural diversity and immigration is beneficial to all students. It is

essential to educate students and to encourage them to be accepting and welcoming to other cultures as opposed to perceiving differences in a negative manner.

Immigrant students are continually being impacted in the school setting. McCartney, Harris, and Farrow (2012) stated that, “Although, historically the United States has been a nation of immigrants, immigration continues to be a controversial national concern” (p. 26). This study interviewed 10 Hispanic immigrant high school students in Texas, about their thoughts and concerns about being immigrants in the United States. All of the students felt there was a respect for their homeland, family, and friends in the school setting. One student commented on the importance of giving respect and help to others: “One community with people united is strong. Those who need help, I can help. When I need help, they can help. The world needs help, and everybody needs to help the world, because everybody is important” (As quoted in McCartney, et. al., p. 41). At home, the students felt a sense of responsibility. The students viewed the United States with a sense of hope, a sense that this was their chance at a new life.

In conclusion, the research shows that immigration is something that is still currently occurring and creating an impact in present day, as well as a topic that should be understood and accepted by all educators. In order to effectively teach the subject of immigration and to address concerns immigrant students may have in classrooms, it is imperative for teachers themselves to remain educated on this topic in order to ensure a welcoming and accepting classroom environment. In order to provide students with the necessary knowledge, it is essential to understand controversial subjects from both a historical perspective and also from a cultural and personal level (Cain, 2012).

Conclusions

Therefore, the purpose of this curriculum project is to create an immigration curriculum that blends both historical and present day perspectives. By teaching both perspectives, a complete curriculum will be developed in order to provide both students and educators with the necessary knowledge in order to fully comprehend the challenging, controversial, topic of immigration. In the next chapter, I will detail the methods used in order to create this curriculum project.

Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this curriculum project is to create a curriculum that discusses immigration in a new way. Many teachers feel uncomfortable, unprepared, and intimidated by multicultural topics such as immigration leading to these topics being eliminated from curricula completely (Cain, 2012). When students are not educated on these issues, they are left unaware, confused, and may create biased perspectives. Immigration is a topic that is relevant throughout history. From the first immigrants coming to America in the early 1800s and early 1900s to President Trump's immigration laws today, immigration remains current and of importance. Immigration is a subject matter that educators, students, and all citizens, should remain educated on no matter how complex it may be. In order to achieve this, immigration must be presented not only as a historical event but also as a present day issue. Creating a curriculum that follows a timeline of immigration in America will allow students to become better informed and to feel comfortable discussing multicultural topics. The author hopes that through this curriculum project immigration will be incorporated in a complete way for both students and educators. The following chapter will examine the necessary steps to be taken in order to create a curriculum project that incorporates immigration in a complete way for both students and educators.

Conceptual Frameworks

I will be producing an immigration curriculum project based upon the conceptual frameworks of ethnographic case study as an approach. Ethnographic research is a qualitative method that requires the researcher to interpret the real world from the perspective of the informers. It is concerned with the meaning of actions and events, to the people the researcher is trying to understand and always implies an understanding of culture. It is believed that, through

the use of ethnographic case studies, we learn about culture based upon what people say, how people act, and the artifacts people use (Fairhurst, 2017). This is a curriculum that could be implemented in a multitude of classrooms. Observations could be made throughout the curriculum as a form of informal assessment, based on students' perspectives and thoughts, participation, and achievement. Also, teacher perspectives on the curriculum, such as whether they feel comfortable teaching the material, effectiveness, and their view on impact of the curriculum on both students and teachers. I would also be interested in a case study comparing the effectiveness of curricula and classrooms that briefly discuss immigration, only discuss historical immigration, or discuss both historical and present day immigration. This would assist educators in their decisions of the content to include in social studies curricula moving forward. Producing this curriculum based upon the conceptual frameworks of ethnographic case study will allow for better insight on the curriculum itself.

Audience

The curriculum created for this project is intended for use in a fifth or sixth grade classroom specific to New York State. This curriculum could be used in a general education classroom during a social studies block or exclusively in a social studies classroom. Students within these grade levels are generally 11-13 years of age. At this age, grade, and maturity level, students will be able to fully and completely comprehend the presented material without feeling overwhelmed or uncomfortable. This curriculum is also aimed towards teachers of these grade levels in order to provide them with a curriculum that includes both historical and present day immigration and to assist them in covering controversial material.

Procedure:

During the course of developing this curriculum, I took the following steps:

Step One: Authors Background

I was born and raised in suburban Hamburg, New York. I attended and graduated from the Frontier Central School District, where I am currently substitute teaching. I also completed my student teaching at the public elementary school Richard Rogers School for Arts & Technology on the Upper West Side of Manhattan in New York City. During this experience, I was exposed to a diverse group of students, teachers, and curricula.

Step Two: Choosing a Topic

Throughout the time I spent teaching in elementary schools, and specifically, during my time spent in New York City, I noticed a lack of social studies curricula being implemented. Within the four months I spent teaching there, less than five social studies lessons were taught, due to time constraints and strict guidelines from the schools' required curriculum, as well as administration. With immigration becoming a more prevalent and discussed topic each day, I felt it would be a great social studies subject area to expand upon in a school setting.

Step Three: Conduct Literature

I began my research with the use of the SUNY Fredonia library's online databases. The Educational Resources Informational Center (ERIC) database was the primary source for obtaining information. I began by searching terms such as *immigration, curriculum, elementary*, making sure all articles and resources came from reputable sources and were peer reviewed. Through this search, I found examples of current immigration curricula as well as research stating the reasons that current immigration curricula was not up to par. I then searched terms such as *teachers, feelings, immigration*, which lead me to sources stating the degree to which teachers feel uncomfortable while teaching immigration due to its complexity. I then did a search with the terms *immigration, feelings, elementary*, which lead me to sources stating the ways that

immigration impacts both students and teachers. Based upon my research, I was able to reflect on case studies conducted on the importance and effectiveness of immigration curricula in order to enhance my own curriculum. Through analyzing case studies and current research on this topic, I was able to establish the aspects of current immigration curricula that are lacking and the most important elements to incorporate in my own curriculum. I recognized that there was a gap in the immigration curricula being taught today and that immigration has an impact on the school setting. I aimed to create a curriculum project that was complete in every aspect that current curricula was lacking while being cognizant of the feelings of all stakeholders in the educational community.

Step Four: Identify the Audience

Based upon my research on current curricula, the pieces that I wanted to include in this curriculum project, and my background in elementary education, I came to the conclusion of designing a curriculum for a fifth to sixth grade classroom to be incorporated during social studies blocks. I felt that this age range was the most appropriate and would allow the curriculum to be presented in a manner that would not be overwhelming or uncomfortable for students and teachers.

Step Five: Review and Identify Relevant State Standards

I first began with reviewing and identifying the New York State Social Studies Learning (National Governors Association Center for Best Practice, 2010) that applied to my curriculum project. The applicable standards include:

- 1.) The study of New York State and United States history requires an analysis of the development of American culture, its diversity and multicultural context, and the ways people are unified by many values, practices, and traditions (pg 4).

- 2.) Important ideas, social and cultural values, beliefs, and traditions from New York State and United States history illustrate the connections and interactions of people and events across time and from a variety of perspectives (pg 3).
- 3.) Study about the major social, political, economic, cultural, and religious developments in New York State and United States history involves learning about the important roles and contributions of individuals and groups (pg. 5).

I then took the same steps when analyzing the Common Core Reading and Writing Standards for Literacy in Social Studies (National Governors Association Center for Best Practice, 2010), and found the following standards were applicable:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.7

Draw on information from multiple print or digital sources, demonstrating the ability to locate an answer to a question quickly or to solve a problem efficiently (pg. 1).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.9

Integrate information from several texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably (pg. 1).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.9

Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research (pg. 1).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.1.A

Come to discussions prepared, having read or studied required material; explicitly draw on that preparation and other information known about the topic to explore ideas under discussion (pg. 1).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.4

Report on a topic or text or present an opinion, sequencing ideas logically and using appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details to support main ideas or themes; speak clearly at an understandable pace (pg. 1).

All of the given standards played a crucial role in designing and creating this curriculum.

Step Six: Design Curriculum

This curriculum was based upon state standards and the principle of remaining grade level appropriate in order to adhere to state regulations. The extensive research on current immigration curricula also played a role in creating a basis for this curriculum project. Through analyzing case studies and current research on this topic, I was able to establish the elements that current immigration curricula are lacking and those that are most important to incorporate in my own curriculum. The most alarming issue with current immigration curricula is that, as I have addressed previously in Chapter 1, the curricula only address and view immigration as solely an historical event and that there is no mention of the ways that immigration is impacting our world today. I used this information in order to create lessons that are engaging and effective in teaching this material on both historical and current immigration issues and trends.

Scope and Sequence

This curriculum will last approximately two school weeks with each lesson lasting one class period. This time frame may be adjusted in order to meet the needs of all students if the teacher feels that some subjects need to be expanded upon or more time needs to spent in order to increase student comprehension. Students will be completely engaged in each lesson through the use of resources such as primary sources, photographs, monologues, and videos. Students will use these sources in order to ask questions, provide evidence in arguments, explain events in chronological order, recognize change over time, and facilitate discussion. These concepts fully

align with the New York State Learning Standards for Social Studies Education (National Governors Association Center for Best Practice, 2010). This curriculum will follow the following sequence:

Day One: Introduction to Immigration

Day Two: Refugees, Asylees, Undocumented Immigrants

Day Three: Family Histories

Day Four: Life in America

Day Five: Contributions of Immigrants

Day Six: Examine A Timeline of Immigration Policies

Day Seven: Review of Current News Articles on Current Immigration Laws

Day Eight: Pro's & Con's of Current Immigration Laws

Day Nine & Ten: Class Debate on Current Immigration Laws and Practices

Validity

One limitation of this curriculum is that it is based upon New York State Standards and is specific to the United States. This curriculum was specifically designed in order to adhere to the standards set specifically by New York State. This curriculum is also based upon the history of the United States, which may lead to it only being used in a school within the United States. However, this curriculum could be modified in order to meet the specific state standards for any state within the United States, and the curriculum that school follows. Teachers could also adjust the curriculum to focus more on their specific geographic region. As time goes on, this curriculum could also be modified to include more information on present immigration laws and events. This curriculum could serve as a framework for any immigration unit and any teacher that struggles with teaching this subject.

Conclusion

Immigration is a topic that will always be relevant in the world. Many teachers feel uncomfortable, unprepared, and intimidated by teaching this multicultural subject (Cain, 2012). Although educators may fear teaching this subject matter, it is important to include immigration both through a historical and present day perspective in social studies curricula in order to make students more culturally aware and less biased and confused. I hope to provide teachers and students with a curriculum that assists in educating all and ensuring a culturally diverse, welcoming, and accepting classroom environment. In the following chapter, I will present the results of my immigration curriculum.

Results

Current immigration curricula are often consider incomplete due to the lack of content focusing on present day immigration. My immigration curriculum aims to integrate both historical and current immigration. The following section contains an overview of my Immigration Curriculum. Included are lesson plans for each day within the time frame for the unit, as well as supplementary materials used within the unit.

Unit: Immigration

Students will gain a deeper understanding of immigration as a whole. They will engage in various activities addressing both historical and current immigration. Students will acquire this knowledge through the use of various primary and secondary sources, writing assignments, as well as discussion and debate. This course is based upon student engagement and interaction through the use of discussion in order to gain a deeper understanding of the presented information.

Prerequisite

Students will need a basic knowledge of immigration, as many will have gained in previous social studies courses and lessons.

Intended Learning Outcomes:

Students will be able analyze a variety of resources in order to gain a deeper knowledge on immigration as a whole.

Students will be able to demonstrate knowledge on immigration from a historical perspective.

Students will be able to demonstrate knowledge on immigration from a current perspective.

Learning Standards:

New York State Social Studies Learning Standards (National Governors Association Center for Best Practice, 2010)

The study of New York State and United States history requires an analysis of the development of American culture, its diversity and multicultural context, and the ways people are unified by many values, practices, and traditions.

Important ideas, social and cultural values, beliefs, and traditions from New York State and United States history illustrate the connections and interactions of people and events across time and from a variety of perspectives.

Study about the major social, political, economic, cultural, and religious developments in New York State and United States history involves learning about the important roles and contributions of individuals and groups.

**Common Core Reading and Writing Standards for Literacy in Social Studies
(National Governors Association Center for Best Practice, 2010)**

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.7

Draw on information from multiple print or digital sources, demonstrating the ability to locate an answer to a question quickly or to solve a problem efficiently

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.9

Integrate information from several texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.9

Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.1.A

Come to discussions prepared, having read or studied required material; explicitly draw on that preparation and other information known about the topic to explore ideas under discussion

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.4

Report on a topic or text or present an opinion, sequencing ideas logically and using appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details to support main ideas or themes; speak clearly at an understandable pace.

Outline:

Day One: Introduction to Immigration

Vocabulary Word: immigrant

Activity: KWLS Chart

Day Two: Family Histories

Vocabulary Word: ancestry

Activity: My Immigration Story

Day Three: Life in America

Vocabulary Word: assimilation

Activity: Carousel

Day Four: Contributions of Immigrants

Vocabulary Word: contribution

Activity: Famous immigrant autobiographies

Day Five: Examine A Timeline of Immigration Policies

Vocabulary Word: citizen ship

Activity: US Immigration Timeline

Day Six: Refugees & Asylees

Vocabulary Word: refugee, asylee

Activity: Refugee Crisis video and discussion

Day Seven: Review of Current News Articles on Current Immigration Laws

Vocabulary Word: port of entry

Activity: News articles

Day Eight: Pro's & Con's of Current Immigration Laws

Vocabulary Word: exploitation

Activity: Pros & Cons investigation

Day Nine & Ten: Class Debate on Current Immigration Laws and Practices

Vocabulary Word: security

Activity: Research and debate

Grading Policy

Students will be graded based upon completion, effort, and accuracy of facts for all assignments.

Students will receive an overall grade based upon a 150-point scale at the completion of the unit based upon their submitted writing assignments, group discussions, and debate participation.

Writing assignments will be graded upon a two point scale. Students will receive a score of “0” for not submitting an assignment or incomplete work, a score of “1” for partially completed work, and a score of “2” for work completed fully and to the best of their ability. Students will receive 10 points each day for participation in discussion. Students will receive a score of “30”

points total for their work on their debate based upon their research and facts presented, their participation in the debate, and their included free write.

Participation

Participation is a crucial part of this unit. All students are expected to participate in all activities to the best of their ability.

Immigration Curriculum

Day One: Introduction to Immigration

Teacher will introduce the unit by presenting the brainpop video “Immigration”

The class will then complete a KWLS chart together. In the first column, we will write what we already know about immigration, and in the second column we will write what we want to know about immigration as a class. The teacher will write down responses on a piece of chart paper while students copy in their own notebooks.

The teacher will then introduce the vocabulary word of the day and place upon a word wall.

Teacher would then introduce vocabulary words for the unit and the word wall. A new vocabulary word will be placed on the world wall.

Teacher will then present each student with their vocabulary notebook.

As a class, we will complete the first page with our first vocabulary term: Immigrant.

On one side of the page, the teacher will write the vocabulary term.

The teacher will then ask students to provide oral responses to questions facilitating a discussion by asking such as “What is an immigrant? “What’s it like being an immigrant? What are other examples? What other concepts fall into this category?”.

The teacher will write the students responses down on a smartboard or whiteboard. Students will be following along writing down the information in their own vocabulary notebooks. Students also may draw an image to help them remember the word.

Students will then return to their seats and independently complete the L & S sections on their KWLS chart filling in what they learned and are still learning about immigration.

Day Two: Family Histories

Introduce and add the vocabulary word “ancestry” to the word wall.

Split the class into groups and have each group analyze one of the immigrant stories from the website “My Immigration Story.”

Each group will then share their story with the class. The class as a whole will then identify similarities and differences between each story.

Facilitate a class discussion about the students family history and where each of their families emigrated from.

For homework students will be required to ask their families the following questions:

How did our ancestors settle in the United States?

If our ancestors are immigrants, what do you think would have happened if our ancestors never emigrated to the United States?

Allow students time to work on their vocabulary notebooks.

Day Three: Life in America

Introduce and add the new vocabulary word “assimilation” to the word wall.

Explain to students they will be participating in a carousel today.

Students will be split into groups of three. There will be three stations set around the room and students will spend ten minutes at each station.

The first station will have iPads or laptops set up for students to explore the website “Immigration: Stories of Yesterday and Today”. This website contains an interactive tour of Ellis Island, immigration data, and stories of young immigrants.

The next station will contain copies of the book “Immigrant Kids”. Students will view photographs of how immigrant kids assimilated in America such as their living situation and place of employment.

The final station will include copies of entries from “A Bintel Brief” a paper in which Jewish immigrants would write letters to the editor about adjusting to life in America.

At the end of the lesson, students will complete a free write answering the question, “How were immigrants treated during this time in the United States?”

Day Four: Contributions of Immigrants

Introduce and add the vocabulary word “contribution” to the vocabulary word wall.

Each student will be assigned a famous immigrant from a list compiled by the teacher, examples could include Albert Einstein, Joseph Pulitzer, Levi Strauss, and Arianna Huffington.

Students will use the RAFT writing strategy and take on the role of their assigned immigrant and write an autobiography about this individual.

Students will read their autobiographies aloud at the end of the class period.

Day Five: Examine A Timeline of Immigration Policies

Introduce and add the vocabulary word “citizenship” to the word wall.

Using “U.S. Immigration Timeline” from History.com as a reference, the teacher will provide each student with a card with a specific date and immigration event.

The students will work collaboratively in order to arrange themselves in order in the front of the class, creating their own immigration timeline. Each student will read their event card aloud.

A class discussion will then take place based upon the following questions: Name one change in immigration policies throughout the years, using a specific example from the timeline. Do you think immigration policies were always up to par? Why or why not?

Day Six: Refugees & Asylees

Introduce new vocabulary terms “refugee” and “asylee” to the word wall.

Allow students to brainstorm their ideas on these topics and then review the definitions during a class discussion.

Briefly review the article “UNHCR: Viewpoint: Refugee or Migrant - Which is Right?” in order to give students clarity on the difference between the terms.

Present the video “An Overview of the Refugee Crisis”

Allow students to jot down their ideas and then discuss with a partner how the refugee crisis would impact current immigration. Have groups share their thoughts with the whole class.

Allow students time to finish filling out the vocabulary terms in their vocabulary notebooks.

Day Seven: Review of Current News Articles on Current Immigration Laws

Introduce and add the new vocabulary word “port of entry” to the word wall.

Students will be provided with copies of various news articles including “How Trump has Already Changed Immigration Policies” (Barajas, 2019), “New Trump Policy Forces Some Asylum Seekers to Wait in Mexico. Is that Legal?” (Barajas, 2019), and “The Simple Reason More Immigrant Kids Are In Custody Than Ever Before” (Kopan, 2018). While reviewing the articles, students will be asked to take notes on pros and cons of current immigration laws based upon their readings.

Day Eight: Pro’s & Con’s of Current Immigration Laws

Introduce and add the new vocabulary word “exploitation” to the word wall. Review students responses and their pros and cons lists from the previous lesson.

Using the website “Pros & Cons” review some of the provided questions on immigration and the pros and cons responses.

Allow students time to explore the website on their own.

Day Nine: Class Debate on Current Immigration Laws and Practices

Introduce and add the new vocabulary word “security” to the word wall.

Explain to the class that we will be having a debate on current immigration laws and practices.

Students will be debating the following questions, as seen on the “Pros & Cons” website:

“Is deportation a good way to address illegal immigration?”

“Should the United States continue to build a wall along the US/Mexico border?”

“Should undocumented parents of US citizen children be allowed to remain in the United States?”

For each question, the class will be split, and assigned a viewpoint they are trying to prove in the argument, either supporting or not supporting the claim.

The class will given time to meet with their groups and conduct research in order to support their assigned claim.

Day Ten: Class Debate on Current Immigration Laws and Practices

Allow students time to finish up their research.

The teacher will act as the moderator and present each question.

Each side will present their statements supporting or not supporting the given claim.

At the end of the debate, students will be given time to free write their own personal thoughts on the issues addressed.

Conclusions

The purpose of this curriculum project was to provide an immigration curriculum that integrates both a historical and current perspective on immigration. The completed curriculum addresses this by starting the curriculum with lessons that may be included in an Ellis Island Perspective curriculum but then transitions into current immigration as well. This curriculum presents material that may be difficult or uncomfortable to teach, in a manner that is engaging and interesting for all through the use of various resources. It is my hope that through the use of this immigration, educators will be more open to teaching immigration and all that it entails. In the final chapter, I will examine the significance and limitations of this immigration curriculum.

Discussion

Introduction

This curriculum project was developed by researching and analyzing current immigration curricula. Based upon this research, it was discovered that current immigration curricula are not up to par due to a focus upon historical immigration and a failure to include content on present day immigration trends. This immigration curricula was created in order to address this gap and to provide a curriculum that addresses immigration from a historical viewpoint as well as a contemporary viewpoint. The goal of this project was to create a full, and complete immigration curriculum. In this final chapter of my thesis, I will discuss the implications and limitations of my immigration curriculum.

Significance

Many educators feel unprepared, uncomfortable, and intimidated, in regards to teaching immigration (Cain, 2012). This lack of teacher confidence leads to poor, incomplete instruction. This curriculum project does what present day immigration curricula does not: it addresses immigration from both a historical and current perspective.

The curriculum begins by providing lessons that address lessons from a historical perspective, lessons that would typically be seen within a curriculum that only focuses on The Ellis Island Perspective. For example, Scholastic's Immigration Curriculum includes lessons that expose children to a timeline of immigration, provides historical immigration statistics, and includes an interactive tour of Ellis Island. These lessons are essential to incorporate into any immigration curriculum in order to provide students with a general background and to embed the significance of immigration. My curriculum is similar in the way that these are all lessons and topics that I also include to begin my curriculum. However, the immigration curriculum I have

created also goes beyond these Ellis Island Perspective lessons and proceeds to contemporary immigration.

The curriculum starts off by using a KWLS chart in order to assess students' prior knowledge as well as reflect on any questions they may have about the upcoming content. Students will then delve into family histories through the use of the My Immigration Story website (n.d.). This allows students a first hand look at the stories of immigrants from all over the world and allows students a chance to use technology in order to further their learning. Students also will use technology during a carousel activity in order to access resources such as an interactive tour of Ellis Island, immigration data, and other stories of young immigrants. Throughout the carousel students will also view copies of *Immigrant Kids* (1995) and *A Bintel Brief*. (1906). In the next lesson, students will take on the role of a famous immigrant and produce an autobiography.

Although the overall content learned in the first lessons of this curriculum may align with a typical Ellis Island Perspective curriculum, these lessons are different and engaging. For example, in an immigration curriculum found on the National Park Website (National Park Service, 2019), the main focus is on Ellis Island and immigration processing. It includes movies and photos from this time, but does not address anything deeper than that. In the curriculum I have created, students are not simply reading from a textbook, watching a movie, and writing a research paper. Students are able to explore and research on their own, interact with their peers through collaborative learning, and view immigration through the eyes of those who have experienced it first hand. As stated in Chapter 2, Hajisoteriou, Karousiou, and Angelides (2017) believe teaching intercultural topics allows students to become more educated and be the face of

reform. Hence, it is essential to continue to help students remain educated on all aspects of immigration, both historical and contemporary.

The curriculum then shifts to lessons regarding present day immigration. Students begin by creating their own U.S. Immigration Timeline and will use that timeline to review immigration policies, identify change over time, and address whether or not they feel immigration policies have always been up to par. Next, students will discover the difference between the terms “refugee” and “migrant” and watch a video on the Refugee Crisis in order to further their knowledge on this topic (Facing History, n.d.). Students will then review news articles addressing today’s immigration laws and create a Pros & Cons list based upon news articles, the immigration page on the Pro’s & Con’s website (Procon.org, n.d.), as well as any additional research they may conduct. Students will use this information in order to facilitate an in-class debate on current immigration laws and practices. These lessons address topics that are not addressed in current immigration curricula. These are the topics educators shy away from due to this material being viewed as controversial and uncomfortable. However, as stated in Hajisoteriou, Karousiou, and Angelides (2017), “Allowing children to discuss the issue of cultural diversity can be very informative for the formation of policies, practices and teaching methodologies in culturally diverse schools” (p. 334). It is essential to address all aspects of immigration. In this curriculum, these controversial subjects are tackled in a way that both educators and students may gain from.

Although this curriculum is different in the way that the material is presented and the specific lessons included, it does share similarities with present day immigration curricula (Scholastic, n.d.). Overall, the main goal of this immigration curriculum and similar curricula is to provide students with an overview of immigration. Both begin by discussing Ellis Island and

the role and impact it has created. Both also use primary resources as a tool for student comprehension and allow students to express their knowledge in a variety of ways (Scholastic, n.d.).

In reference to this curriculum, there are practical consequences. This curriculum contains lessons and materials current immigration curricula do not. It addresses immigration from both a historical and a contemporary perspective. The curriculum follows a timeline of immigration and addresses multiple laws, events, and experiences of immigrants. This immigration curriculum also provides lessons that are student centered and discussion based. Present day immigration curricula often are based upon movies or photos, and may include a writing activity such as writing a letter to an immigration as seen in the immigration curricula found on the National Parks website (2019). The curriculum I have created engages students through multiple means of presentation. Students are able to use technology, work together to align their own immigration timeline, interact with each other and the teacher through the use of a class debate. I feel that one of the main reasons today's educators shy away from teaching immigration and may feel uncomfortable or unprepared to teach immigration is that they don't know how to go about teaching this multicultural, controversial topic. The lessons I have included in this curriculum are easy both for teachers to present and for students to understand in order to encourage a deeper understanding of immigration as a whole.

Limitations

The immigration curriculum I have constructed does have limitations, however. For example, this curriculum was designed for a very specific audience. The curriculum was constructed based upon New York State Learning Standards, specifically New York Learning Standards for Social Studies Education, as well as the Common Core Standards for Speaking and

Listening, and Reading and Writing (National Governors Association Center for Best Practice, 2010). Due to this, this curriculum may not align with other states' specific standards and not be seen as an acceptable curriculum to incorporate. Additionally, this curriculum was designed specifically for fifth grade level students and teachers. The material provided would not be suitable for any grade level lower than fifth grade and may not be as intriguing to a higher grade level. This curriculum also assumes that the students enrolled have basic background knowledge on immigration as a whole, possibly making the material difficult to master for transfer students or English Language Learner (ELL) students who did receive prior instruction upon this topic. Alongside students, it is assumed that educators teaching this course are also familiar with the overall topic immigration. If the educator does not have any background knowledge on the subject, it will be difficult for them to implement.

Further Investigation

If given another attempt to approach this curriculum project, it would be in the best interests of those implementing it to include scripts for the lessons, such as New York State Common Core Modules do (National Governors Association Center for Best Practice, 2010). This curriculum is highly discussion based. When providing elementary students with an opportunity for open discussion, the conversation can become off topic or inappropriate very quickly. By providing a script as a reference for teachers to follow, they would have a better idea of the overall goal of the discussion. Teachers also would be provided with additional questions to ask if there was a lull in conversation, or if they needed to redirect the conversation among students. This curriculum could also benefit from a list of additional resources that could be used in each lesson. Immigration is a very broad topic and the resources included in this curriculum

may not work best for all classrooms. Providing examples of additional resources in order to enhance this curriculum would ensure success for all.

Conclusion

The goal of this curriculum project was to provide a Grade 5 social studies curriculum that integrated views of immigration both from a historical and present day viewpoint. Although there were limitations found within this curriculum project, the overall goal was achieved. This goal was reached by following a timeline of immigration that split the curriculum between lessons on historical and contemporary immigration. This immigration curriculum provides educators with a guide to implement a curriculum on a multicultural topic that is often viewed as uncomfortable and controversial, while allowing students opportunities to deepen their understanding of all that immigration entails. This curriculum may serve as a reference for both educators and students.

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