The Psychological, Behavioral, and Educational Impact of Immigration: Helping Recent Immigrant Students to Succeed in North American Schools

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Abstract

Educators' lack of knowledge of the cultural and immigration overlays on behaviors presents a quandary. It makes it difficult, given the present state of assessment in this area, to determine whether an emotional or behavioral disorder exists, or whether the behavior is acceptable to the newcomer's culture and therefore reflects a cultural marker. This article addresses factors to be considered in making this differentiation, and provides information and guidance in meeting the psychological, emotional, and social needs of recent immigrant students.

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Taking up residence in Canada or the United States is a dream that has come true for millions upon millions of immigrants since the inception of these two nations. Today, as in the past, new arrivals must cope with multiple issues of personal adjustment as they come into contact with a new language or dialect, peculiar laws and regulations, unfamiliar value systems and social customs, and myriad lifestyle changes (Barowsky & McIntyre, 2010; Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006; Grossman, 2004; Inose & Yeh, 2002; Organista, Organista, & Kurasaki, 2003; Tong, 2002).

For immigrant children and youth, entry into North America brings to the forefront immediate and important decisions regarding who they are now, culturally and ethnically speaking, and who they will become (Cartledge & Milburn, 1996; Tong, Huang, & McIntyre, 2006). Each newcomer must make decisions, regarding the degree to which they will sustain the social conformities and personal values of the home culture that are essential to one's present self-identity, and the extent to which the ways of the new culture will be adopted (Berry & Sam, 2003; Phinney, 2003; Yeh, Okubo, Ma, Shea, Ou, & Pituc, 2008).

Young immigrants may or may not recognize the necessity of revising their personal identity now that they reside on the North American continent. They do endeavor to gain the "intercultural competence" that will allow them to function well in the majority society, while maintaining and strengthening their psychological, social, and linguistic ties to their ethnic groups, and families (Yeh,, et al, 2008). During this time, every incomer must determine whether the use of the North American dialect of English (or the Quebec version of French) and incorporation of mainstream North American behaviors and values, requires an overwhelming psychic and cognitive cost, or whether the cost of the surrendering part of one's present sense of self is worth the benefits to be accrued.

While they will undoubtedly incorporate many of the host culture's ways, they will experience uncertainty as to the extent that each culture should comprise the new sense of self (Barowsky & McIntyre, 2010; Tong, 2002; Tong & McIntyre, 1998). Newcomers are forced by emerging circumstances to make frequent, and often-times difficult choices regarding their personal identity. Some are successful in making this transition to a new and positive sense of self while others may be unable to clear all of the new linguistic and social hurdles. As a result, they may withdraw from making the effort to incorporate new cultural components with their older and more established first culture.

The resultant self-identity for each individual will contain different characteristics. Each will vary in degree, encompassing both the original and newfound   cultures. The degree to which each composite is represented in the new inter-cultural identity depends on their social and educational experiences, cognitive abilities, skills, needs, and support systems. The one common element in the successful formation of an optimal "cross-cultural identity" (Lupi & Tong, 2001) is that the two cultures are viewed   to be symbiotic and complimentary, rather than competitive and combative (Tong, 1998; Tong, 2002; Tong, Huang, & McIntyre, 2006).

This transition of entry into the new educational setting creates multiple cognitive, linguistic, social, and psychological challenges for immigrant learners. For these children, immigration has often entailed losing close friendships and social support networks, while having to create new relationships in unfamiliar and often threatening surroundings (Hernandez & McGoldrick, 1999: Yeh, et al., 2008). The manner in which school personnel interact and intervene with immigrant pupils has an enormous impact on their motivation, achievement, self-image, and behavior (Ma, 2008; Tong, Huang, & McIntyre, 2006), and can make the difference in the establishment of a healthy intercultural identity. It can also serve as a protective factor in the development of psychopathology (Barowsky &, McIntyre, 2010; Gangi & Barowsky, 2009).

This article addresses the intra-personal and inter-personal implications for recent immigrant students. It provides guidance in understanding and addressing psychological, emotional, social, and educational issues related to language use, and culturally-based learning and behavioral patterns.

Difficulties in Adaptation

Upon arrival to North America, children and youth rarely experience a fluid and unhindered acculturation process (Yakushko, Watson, & Thompson, 2008). For the vast majority, movement along the intercultural path produces tension and doubt, requiring continual adjustment to one's new country. This adaptation requires the negotiation of obstacles encountered and brings stress at different times during the intrapersonal transformation to some aspect of "cross-cultural identity" (Grossman, 2004; Lupi & Tong, 2001; Tong 2002).

 In running this gauntlet, they must learn to interact with the dominant culture (and others) as part of the adjustment process (Yeh, et.al, 2008),   often resulting in "acculturation stress"; the anxiety and confusion arising from less-than-successful attempts to adapt to their new surroundings (Berry, et.al, 2006; Grossman, 2004; Pumariega, Pumariega, & Rothe, 2005).

Optimally, acculturation, the complicated and progressive process of intertwining cultures and languages, results in a positive cross cultural identity (Barowsky & McIntyre, 2010; Tong, et.al, 2006) in which they will become "bicultural" or "integrated" (Berry, et.al, 2006; Cartledge & Milburn, 1996), taking pride in their ability to cross back and forth over cultural, linguistic, and social thresholds.

 Successful achievement of a well-formed cross cultural identity involves the intricate and delicate blending and mixing of the values, behaviors, and languages of the old country with those of the new one (Berry, et.al, 2006). This is no easy task when they frequently hear contrasting messages from various socially significant people about which culture's mores' are "best".

Children of school age are particularly susceptible to an emotional disequilibrium and internal distress that results from the frequently contrasting demands of the home and non-acculturated peers and adults on one hand, and North American schools and acculturated peers and adults on the other (Banks, 2002; Cartledge & Milburn, 1996; Dillon & Suarez-Morales, 2007; Grossman, 2004; Nieto, 2004; Tiedt & Tiedt, 2005). For immigrant, asylum seeker, and refugee students, this intercultural tug-of-war can manifest itself in the formation of psychological and behavioral problems (Barowsky & McIntyre, 2010; Berry, et.al, 2006; Gangi & Barowsky, 2009; Grossman, 2004; McBrien, 2005; Pumariega, et.al, 2005; Suarez-Orosco, 1989; Zheng & Berry, 1991) or impairments in academic achievement (Grossman, 2004). Failure to provide timely treatment measures, due to the belief that immigrant children normally experience great anxiety in the early days of immigration, may bring serious psycho-social consequences such as aggression, depression, or delinquency (Ma, 2009).

How educators address cross-cultural issues has an enormous impact on their students' emotional and educational outcomes (Barowsky & McIntyre, 2010; Tong, et.al, 2006). Imposing mainstream North American school culture on immigrant students can cause them to undergo even greater degrees of culture shock (Grossman, 2004). Failure to consider and incorporate students' cultural characteristics contributes to the creation of unintentionally alienating

environments that promote estrangement, disinterest, conflict, and rebellion (McIntyre, 1995, 1996a; Nieto, 2004).

Language Differences

In addition to encountering and having to learn the social mores of the host country, immigrants are also exposed to a new language and must learn English (or its North American dialect) in order to better meet life challenges and take full advantage of their host culture's opportunities. Language and culture are inextricably intertwined in the process of acculturation and can thus not be overstated   (Brown, 2000; McBrien, 2005; Sheets, 2005; Tong, 2000). English language ability is often seen as the most crucial indicator of cultural adjustment/acculturation level (Schumann, 1990; Mouw & Xie, 1999; Yeh, 2003, Yeh & Inose, 2002; Yeh, et al., 2008) and psycho-social adjustment of immigrants (Ying, 1996). Linguistic proficiency mitigates communication difficulties and allows fuller access to the dominant culture, enhances interpersonal interactions, and boosts self-esteem (Yeh, et al., 2008). The successful acquisition of English depends on the synchronization of the linguistic and cultural aspects of acculturation (Hernandez, 1997; Tong, 2000).

Communication is directly involved in the development of play, peer relations, and classroom behavior. Lack of English language fluency is a source of stress in terms of performance and experiences among immigrant adolescents (Yeh, et al., 2008). Difficulty in communicating needs and desires, intentions, concerns, and feelings in the form that others are able to comprehend can contribute to problematic behavior (or the perception of it by others) as well (Grossman, 2004; Lasky, 1994; Rueda & Forness, 1994). Consequently, language differences can contribute to disorders in social, emotional, or behavioral development (Grossman, 2004; Lasky, 1994; Rueda & Forness, 1994, Tong, 1999b).

For immigrant students with limited English proficiency, trying to integrate two languages and backgrounds can create cultural tension and conflict stemming from their new experiences in an unfamiliar environment (Grossman, 2004; Simoes, 1991; Tong, 2000). This may be true as becoming proficient in a second language may come at the expense of losing comfort in one's identity and culture (Brilliant, Lovich, & Markson, 1995). Social adaptation of new immigrants to America is a complex phenomenon. It requires attention not only to the social and psychological adjustments that individuals experience, but also how they use their languages to signal their degree of acculturation to the host culture (Tong, 2000). A central point in the discussion on biculturalism further encompasses   how the home and English languages are used. Mayher (1990) indicates, their usages reveal the thinking of individuals regarding their ethnic and cultural preferences and values.

Assessment Issue

 Unfortunately educational systems have demonstrated a long term inability to accurately assess the cognitive, behavioral, social, and learning needs of culturally different and immigrant students (Grossman, 2004; Inose & Yeh, 2002: McIntyre, 1996a, Organista, Organista, & Kurasaki, 2003). Recent immigrant children and youth are at especially high risk for having

their culturally-based behavior identified as being abnormal (Grossman, 1995; McBrien, 2005; McIntyre, 1996a). Conversely, many culturally different youngsters in need of help for their emotional and/or behavior distress do not receive needed services (Grossman, 2004; Inose & Yeh, 2002; Kandula, Kersey, & Lurie, 2004). These factors make accommodation for cultural differences essential in accurate assessment of culturally diverse children (Council for Exceptional Children, 1989).

In particular, children of undocumented immigrant families, and youngsters from war-torn and politically repressive countries, are especially vulnerable to psychological damage, yet are unlikely to have their needs recognized or addressed by professionals (Barowsky & McIntyre, 2010; McBrien, 2005; Pumariega, et.al, 2005). Additionally, due to cultural variations in how mental health issues are viewed and addressed, immigrant parents may not recognize, or acknowledge, the need for their children to receive mental health services (Alegria, et al., 2004).

The manifestations of over-and-under identification phenomena of emotional/behavioral issues underlines the pressing need for the development and implementation of more accurate methods of assessment for culturally different youngsters, a long unfulfilled "mandate" made over two decades ago (Argulewicz & Sanchez, 1983; Duran, 1989; Figueroa, 1989; McIntyre, 1995; Ortiz & Polyzoi ,1986).

More recent assessment and intervention models such as Response to Intervention (RtI), Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA), and Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS) may offer more effective assessment procedures. However, their effectiveness may be undermined if stressors associated with acculturation are not brought in for consideration prior to making a determination of mental health status. Inaccurate assessment of acculturation stress and culturally based reaction patterns are likely to interfere with accurate assessment when based only on current Western nosology and administered by mental health professionals trained in that orientation (Barowsky & McIntyre, 2010; Organista, Organista, & Kurasaki, 2003). An example of this oversight can be seen in the use of a commonly used measure of behavior. The Behavior Assessment System for Children (BASC) may be culturally biased against some ethnic groups (Cho, Hudley, & Back, 2003) Even the practice of comparing children to cultural norm tables, rather than eliminating cultural bias, may actually amplify the problem (McIntyre, 1995). In other words, there is no such thing as an unbiased assessment (Shepherd & Stephens, 2010).

This phenomenon has also shown to hold true in the evaluation of achievement. Many of the widely used achievement and intelligence measures fail to accurately measure ability in culturally different students (Hagie, Gallipo, & Svien, 2003; Shepherd, 2010).

In an attempt to acknowledge the problems inherent in differentiating cultural traits from disabilities, the New York City Board of Education has cautioned its schools "not to refer new immigrant students to special education in their first 3 years in the U.S. to prevent inappropriate placement" (Advocates for Children, 2005).

Assessment does not reside in a silo and can be effective only when it leads to a path to addressing the needs of an individual. This path contains many curves in which we encounter

cultural, constitutional, environmental, family, and educational influences. Consideration of acculturation stress is a key factor in addressing the needs of an increasing population of immigrants, many of whom have sustained emotional trauma in their re-location (Barowsky & McIntyre, 2010; Gangi & Barowsky, 2009). Diagnostic procedures and criteria must be scrutinized given the near always differing cultural expectations/customs found in these immigrant children under consideration, and the acculturation process with all its variations between individuals.

Educator Awareness of Cultural Differences and Immigrant Issues

There are often vast differences between the cultural mores and patterns of "appropriate" behavior that were learned and promoted in our immigrant students' previous schools and those expected in North American educational settings (Brown, 2000; Coutinho, Oswald, & Forness, 2002; McBrien, 2005). Value orientations often vary by culture, as do actions considered to be either appropriate or aberrant under various circumstances (Grossman, 2004; Light & Martin, 1985; McIntyre, 1996a; Shepherd, 2010; Toth, 1990). As a result, social and emotional problems often occur when individuals possess a repertoire of behavior appropriate to one culture, but reside in a very different culture (Shepherd & Stephens, 2010; Sue, 2003).

Teachers' self-unaware beliefs, attitudes, and priorities are reflected in their classroom behaviors and practices (Rimm-Kaufman & Sawyer, 2004). This may be demonstrated by American and Canadian educators who typically utilize teaching and behavior management styles consistent with European American mores and behavioral patterns (Grossman, 2004). For immigrants, actions considered to be "normal" in their home culture are often at risk for being misinterpreted as "abnormal" by teachers not from those groups (Grossman, 1995, 2004; Lasky, 1994; McBrien, 2005; McIntyre, 1996b; Shepherd & Stephens, 2010). As individuals, we are often self-referent. It is not uncommon for individuals from one cultural group to view the cultural markers or behavior patterns of another as being "odd" while regarding our own cultural practices, to be a standard to which others should aspire. Even well-intentioned teachers who are not consciously prejudicial can misinterpret the cause and meaning of students' behaviors when they view the actions from their own cultural perspective (Grossman, 1995; McBrien, 2005).

Educational personnel who lack cross-cultural awareness are also at risk for reacting to culturally determined behaviors in ways that are ineffective, counterproductive, or offensive (McBrien, 2005; Tong & McIntyre, 1998; Zirpoli, 2005). Indeed, educators' lack of familiarity with culturally different patterns of behavior frequently results in culturally and/or linguistically different students being misidentified as possessing a disability when none in fact exists (Anderson, 1992; Gersten & Woodward, 1994; Harry, 1992; Shepherd & Stephens, 2010; Utley & Obiakor, 2001.

Teaching Styles versus Learning Styles

The significant impact of cultural, linguistic, and social factors on student learning is now well recognized (McBrien, 2005; Rueda & Forness, 1994). However, it is only since the mid 1980s that these factors have been recognized as important contributors in conceptualizing and

fostering learning (Ford, 1992; Franklin, 1992). According to Tharp (1989), psychocultural incompatibilities between teacher and child can impede learning and social adjustment. These incompatibilities revolve around four areas: Social organization of teaching and learning; sociolinguistic factors (such as teacher wait time and instructional rhythm); participation structures, and general patterns of cognitive functioning (e.g., holistic versus sequential, visual versus verbal, and other learning style characteristics and associated participatory behaviors).

English proficient immigrant students who are aware of the behavioral expectations of the mainstream culture may still be penalized by teaching methods that conflict with their culturally determined learning and participatory styles. The way in which teachers are taught to teach, and the instructional methods typically used in North American educational settings, are often incompatible with the cognitive styles and experiences of culturally and linguistically different students (Carbo, 2009; Grossman, 2004; Ishii- Jordan & Peterson, 1994; McIntyre, 1996a, 1996b; Shepherd & Stephens, 2010). Those differences may result in learners being perceived as less competent than is truly the case (Gollnick & Chinn, 2005; McIntyre, 1996b).

Again, schools typically promote a style of cognition consistent with that of the European American cultural group (Brislin, 1999; Grossman, 2004; Hilliard, 1988; McIntyre, 1993, 1996a; Tharp, 1989, 1995) and neglect the "distinctive traits" of minority students (Vasquez, 1990). This remains a faulty approach as student performance has been shown to be in part, a function of the match between cognitive style of teacher and that of student (Cafferty,1980). Further, failure to match teaching style to students' culturally determined ways of learning, knowing, and expressing information, can contribute to the development of emotional and/or behavioral problems (Grossman, 2004; McIntyre, 1996a, 1996b; Park, Pullis, Reilly, & Townsend, 1994; Rueda & Forness, 1994). The academic failure that results from this mismatch between teaching practices and culturally based cognitive styles can cause emotional distress in students and may create much of the "misbehavior" about which teachers complain (Grossman, 2004; McIntyre, 1996a, 1996b).

For the immigrant student, this mismatch leading to academic failure will also have a negative effect on self-esteem (Grossman, 2004). As a result, it would not be uncommon for these students to exhibit: "Defensive behaviors" (e.g., refusing to engage in academic tasks, destroying products) as a result of the frustration experienced in their attempts to learn, and in order to prevent continued failure and the resultant further lowering of their self esteem (McIntyre, 1996b); "reactionary" behaviors (e.g., throwing a workbook onto the floor, cursing) due to overwhelming frustration or secondary feelings related to it; and onset of depression (Rueda & Forness, 1994). Once again, modifications to a Western ethnocentric pedagogy are often necessary in order to promote achievement and social/psychological adjustment for immigrant students, with a clear understanding that stress can exacerbate their problems (Coburn, 1992).

Recommendations

Understanding the importance of the school in the life of a resettled child or immigrant and adolescent is vitally important. Looking at a group of 76 Somali adolescents who had been re-located in the United States, Kia-Keating and Ellis (2007) found that "adolescents who

experienced more attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief in their school had attained higher levels of self-efficacy" (p.37). This strongly supports the   positive role the school maintains in the development of resilience in this at-risk population. The degree to which the school can provide support by bolstering the feelings of competence will play a strong role in the academic, social, and emotional adjustment of the most vulnerable. We can enhance this connection in ways that reinforce self-esteem and do not undermine the fragile psychological foundation upon which they managed to survive and function in a venue with which they have limited familiarity. The primary agents of support within this milieu are the teachers and the manner in which they accommodate the possible discrepancies between how they have learned to teach and how their "charges" have learned to learn is.

Given the often found teacher-student mismatches in culturally-based behavior and cognitive styles, and the problems inherent in assessing the academic and behavioral needs of immigrant youth, schools in geographic areas receiving immigrants have a need, perhaps unrecognized, for specially trained teachers. In this vein, the Parliamentary Assembly for the Education of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (2004) recommended that "In addition to basic education, refugees and IDPs require specific psychological care, cultural orientation and language training. This calls for specially trained teachers and specific material." The Assembly identified the need to: "train teachers for the specific education of refugees and IDPs." (sub-point 9, viii).

Teacher Training

These recommendations of the Parliamentary Assembly, pertain to refugees, the most psychologically traumatized and fragile group of immigrants (Barowsky & McIntyre, 2010). It should be cautioned however, that there is marked heterogeneity within this nominal group and a "one-size" fits all paradigm fails to reflect the mosaic of needs specific to different individuals. It is prudent for teacher training programs and professional development of pronounced or emerging immigrant presence to incorporate both culture and individual- specific differences in program design. Courses and learning modules/units should address not only adjustment issues related to acculturation, but also optimal educational practices for the culturally different behavioral and learning patterns often present in this group of learners. Many districts fail to recognize the connection between culturally competent classroom management and instruction. In grave error, they address the presently popular focus on raising scores on standardized achievement testing.

Even when pupils are not demonstrating objectively problematic behavior, they may be perceived as doing so (McIntyre, 1997; Sbarra & Planta, 2001; Shepherd & Stephens, 2010) and will result in the teachers' response that may be regarded as punitive or at the very least insensitive. Becoming a culturally competent educator requires one to examine the effects of one's own cultural identity, biases, and pre-formed stereotypes on children's behaviors (Zirpoli, 2005). Teachers' own self-referent cultural notions denoting how young people should "behave" have effects on the education provided to their charges (Anderson, 1992; McIntyre, 1996a, 1996b; Shepherd & Stephens, 2010; Tucker, et al., 2002).

Educators can then be guided to the development of a better understanding of how cultural and experiential background affect the way one behaves, and conversely, how one perceives and judges the actions and reactions of those who are unlike oneself in significant ways (McBrien, 2005; McIntyre, 1996a). Gaining a more complete understanding on many levels of the poly-ethnic and complex nature of our diverse national population and how this diversity evolved, helps teachers to maximize their effectiveness (Tiedt & Tiedt, 2005). When trained to knowledgeably examine and address culturally-based cognitive styles and behaviors, professionals can better ensure that they are treating their charges in a fair, appropriate, and equitable manner (Costner, 2007; McIntyre, 1996a).

To better match instruction and interventions to the culturally-based learning and behavioral styles of their students, teachers must become skilled in modifying their traditional procedures that often penalize culturally different pupils (Grossman, 2004; Marshall, 2002, McIntyre, 1996a, 1996b). In more common special education parlance, differentiation of instruction is the key! By modifying classroom practice to work with a pupil's cultural style rather than against cultural traits, a more positive student self esteem and motivation can be built (Grossman, 1995; 2004; McIntyre, 1996b).

Making use of teaching and behavior management styles that are designed to match students' early cultural cognitive and behavioral styles would further reduce acculturation stress (Grossman, 2004) and inappropriate referrals for special education (Hoernicke, Kallam, & Tablada, 1994; McIntyre, 1996b; Shepherd & Stephens, 2010).

Up to this point, we have been looking at the learning and behavioral patterns of immigrants, refugees and newcomers through the lens of a deficit model. It is also important that educators recognize and utilize the strengths that immigrant children bring through the schoolhouse door (Grossman, 2004).

The transition from this model emphasizing the pathology of individual learning differences to one capitalizing on strengths, can be made with the assistance of educators and supportive personnel that reside within the current school infrastructure. While it is desirable to seek the direction of educators and counselors from the child's same culture, this may not always be possible (Barowsky & McIntyre, 2010). The key however, is to employ a staff that can see beyond their own culture-bound values and try to understand the context that gave rise to the pupils' behavior and learning styles. Adjustment and acculturation transcends merely developing a complementary achievement and behavioral match between individual and venue. Emotional adjustments often require the availability of mental health services.

While the provision of culturally relevant mental health services is important to promoting optimal psychological adjustment for this population in transition (Yakushko, Watson, & Thompson, 2008), it is not always called upon. Given the underutilization of mental health services by immigrants (Alegria, et al., 2004), and mandatory school attendance, it falls to educators to help newcomers in their classrooms to more adeptly acculturate, and move toward a positive cross-cultural identity. While basic approaches and practices may need cultural tuning, proficiency in these basic procedures provides the foundation upon which cross-cultural skills

can be built. Aside from the biological family, the classroom teacher is in a position to have greatest continuity in the acculturation process and develop a trusting relationship with the student. More specifically, teachers with specialized training in the education of individuals with emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD) are already knowledgeable regarding specialized academic and social-emotional educational interventions, and are often skilled in addressing psychological and behavioral concerns. Their effectiveness with EBD youth, is validation to their ability to build trusting interpersonal relationships with troubled individuals. With regard to linguistic issues, teachers with certification in teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL) hold specialized knowledge and skill in providing supports to English language learners.

This building of trust bonds is especially important when attempting to counsel and/or teach refugee youngsters (Barowsky & McIntyre, 2010) who have experienced a history of betrayal and threat perpetrated by "authority figures" in their original countries as well as other places along the indeterminate path of migration. To re-establish a sense of trust within a strange venue not yet associated with safety, the focus should emphasize an openness to dialogue between child and peer as well as child and teacher" Counseling" procedures such as active listening, "classroom counseling" (McIntyre, 1987) and "life space crisis intervention" (Long, 2001) are good examples of strategies that can be effective. The need to reduce conflict and resolve differences without the threat of repudiation should be an essential component. These might include:

- Peer mediation and conflict resolution systems
- Social skills and anger management curricula
- Anti-bullying programs
- Cognitive behavior therapy and interventions
- Problem solving
- Bibliotherapy, art therapy, movement therapy and play therapy
- Cooperative learning practices
- School safety programs
- Response to intervention (RtI)
- Positive behavior interventions and supports (PBIS), among others.

 Miller (2007) suggests that "problem oriented strategies" that manage the concern (e.g., problem solving), and "emotion oriented strategies" to deduce the level of emotional distress experienced are effective approaches and can be used with immigrants.

There are additional efforts that have been seen to be effective beyond the individual classroom but a school-wide level. These approaches are best offered as a culture of welcoming and inclusion of newcomers and can be viewed as a systems approach.

Systems Solutions

On a school-wide scale of interventions, other avenues to reach and teach immigrant youth include institutionalization of:
- "Newcomer programs" (Chang, 1990) that make the school environment more welcoming and inviting
- Anti-bias clubs (Collins, 2000) that help to create environments that provide physical, psychological, and intellectual safety.
- After school "culture clubs" (Tong, Huang, & McIntyre, 2006) in which students of all backgrounds share their ways with others via structured activities
- After school English language instruction
- Culturally competent assessment teams skilled in identifying ecological influences on behavior
- Culturally relevant mental health services (Yakushko, Watson, & Thompson, 2008)
- Hiring of members of the immigrant community in order to communicate to the students (and the immigrant community) that their group is welcomed and valued in the building
- Working with local housing agencies to assure that students' family are in safe environments, as decent housing conditions appear to promote pro-social behavior in immigrant children (Ma, 2009)
- Working with social service and mental health agencies to assure that students and their families are receiving all the societal supports to which they are entitled
- Seeking out immigrant community leaders, and former/present educators and mental health workers, to serve as "cultural informants" (New York State Department of Health, 2009), persons who can inform school personnel of cultural proclivities.

Structured approaches to making the new environment more hospitable to learning and acculturation for the newcomer do not necessarily assume the need for group training. Self-aware teachers recognize that the main responsibility rests on their shoulders as individuals and that group training may not always be available.

Self Instruction

Aside from the written archives provided by journals and reference texts, the cyberworld has opened additional and often more up to date resources for self instruction. Electronic training and materials (e.g., podcasts, readings with accompanying activities, learning modules) regarding general diversity issues and awareness; culturally-based learning styles and behavioral patterns; and culturally competent assessment, instruction, and behavior management can be found online at the ever-increasing resources of:
- http://www.behavioradvisor.com and
- http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/resources.html.

Information regarding the teaching of English Language Learners is located at:
- http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/resources.html and
- http://www.eslcafe.com

An excellent array of print resources that provide descriptions of the cultural proclivities and markers of various ethnic groups an be found at http://www.interculturalpress.com

A wide array of pamphlets regarding culturally competent educational practices for various ethnic immigrant groups can be purchased from the California State Department of Education.

Summation

For immigrant children and youth, a successful transition to one's new country is characterized by the development of a secure and emotionally comfortable "cross cultural identity" (Lupi & Tong, 2001; Tong, 2002; Tong, et.al, 2006). This identity, to be stable, and not the source of either interpersonal or intrapersonal conflict, must balance the values and practices of one's home and host cultures in a personally efficacious manner. All students attend school, a societal setting and microcosm of the new world in which they have now "chosen" to live. It is here that they will be on their way to become participating citizens. It therefore falls to educators to facilitate successful negotiation of this voyage by adding new knowledge bases and skill sets that allow them to reach and teach their changing student body. In addition to our academic focus, on the social-emotional-cultural front, it is essential that school-based professionals help immigrant youngsters recognize that they can retain their old culture and language while at the same time becoming more proficient in understanding and using the English language and mainstream North American ways. A positive interpersonal relationship with culturally competent educators assures that the positive bi-cultural message is heard by our newcomers.

The building of trusting, nurturing, and supportive relationships with adults and peers in the school setting, while important for all students, is essential for recent immigrant students (Suarez-Orozco, Pimentel, & Martin, 2009). For those immigrant students who are refugees, the school plays a major role in providing a contemporary experience that serves a protective factor with regard to social adjustment (Barowsky & McIntyre, 2010), often with the need to use innovative strategies (Gangi & Barowsky, 2009).

Immigration continues to change the "face" of North America in many interpretations of that word. Due to the discovery of pertinent information and effective instructional and interpersonal practices, now more than ever, we are situated to optimally educate our new and future citizens; not just in the academic arena, but the intrapersonal realm as well. It is incumbent upon concerned and conscientious educators to seize the opportunities made available to them.

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