

Immigrant Children (Legal & Illegal) in Public Schools

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Course Information

This course is targeted towards liberal studies majors and/or political science majors. This course covers how this very relevant issue is and was handled today and throughout history. As this becomes a more relevant issue, future educators, policy makers, and citizens in general can develop their own strategies with a more educated mind. Understanding the history, successes, failures, personal stories, and everything in between is key to the development of a strong argument.

Course Description

Immigrant Children (legal & illegal) in Public Schools aims to discuss the problems and benefits of undocumented and legal immigrant children to the school systems, the government, and citizens inside and outside of the classroom.

Course Schedule

*required scholarly texts

Unit 1: Supreme Court cases on educating immigrant children*

BIG Question: What court cases were involved in educating immigrant children? How did they help? How did they hinder?

Argument of the Unit: Plyler V. Doe created access to immigrant children in the US, changing the public school system and the immigration system.

Key Words: *Plyler V. Doe, undocumented immigrant, Texas Education Code, Hernandez V. Houston Independent School District, MALDEF*

Link to Reading:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1olMe0dyDeF2R4PP7jS5EBdc90H_IhQcx/view?usp=sharing

Annotation of Reading: This chapter on Plyler V. Doe is from No Undocumented Child Left Behind. The book as a whole celebrates and discusses the monumental Supreme Court decision of Plyler V. Doe and its effects. This chapter specifically however, highlights how the case got to the Supreme Court. The chapter begins with a personal reflection from a recipient of the benefits of the case ruling, Laura Alvarez. The chapter goes on to discuss the problem: Texas Independent School Districts have enacted on section 21.013 of the Texas Education Code to charge undocumented children tuition to attend their schools. The first case to challenge this was Hernandez V. Houston ISD. The chapter discusses the national platform the challengers gained against the section and the Texas Education Codes. The roles of MALDEF and Plyler are intricately explained for a majority of the chapter. Later, the author goes into detail on the results of the case and the results of the ruling. Going into detail on society's reactions is key to allowing students to see all sides of the ruling to form an educated argument.

Unit 2: DREAM act*

BIG Question: What is the DREAM act? How did it move through politics and the legislative process? Did it solve college education problems for immigrants? How big of a deal is the act to the national, complex effort to immigrant reform?

Argument of the Unit: Understanding the DREAM act, how its moved through our government, and why it has failed is crucial to the importance of creating an open door to education for immigrant children in America. Although the act cannot stand alone, it is a major component to a national effort to immigration reform.

Key Words: *DREAM act, DREAMer, IIRIRA, PRWORA, Department of Homeland Security*

Link to Reading:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1RoVkVSUfd9AUn1yJbOVx1bCRBYtADSq/view?usp=sharing>

Annotation of Reading: This chapter of No Undocumented Child Left Behind focuses on the DREAM act in immense detail. In the introduction to the chapter, the author lays his plan out for the chapter, making his arguments clear and straight to the point, strategic some may say. The first focus of the chapter discusses the litigations and legal developments across the nation to bring this act to congress in 2001. The second focus is revealed to be the federal DREAM act and why it failed in both the 2007 and 2010 senate votes. Furthermore, the third focus is the authors strongest point to make his argument clear. This section considers the politics of immigration reform and whether or not the the legislation is worthy of its own statute, considers the grand scheme of the legislation, and makes it obvious that this act is, in fact, a crucial component of immigration reform for the nation.

Unit 3: *Numbers behind the “free” access*

BIG Question: Should the US limit the amount of immigrants flooding the US each year? Is this too much of a burden on educators and school budgets?

Argument of the Unit: If the government can reduce/control immigration/refugee numbers, school districts and teachers can actually afford to be teaching students economically and mentally. The financial burden goes onto independent districts, not the education budget for the nation. The mental stress and burden on accommodating an overcrowded school and the barriers that come with each students needs are overwhelming to educators.

Key Words: *Second Session of congress, Department of Education, Illegal Immigrant, Bilingual, “Native flight”*

Link to Reading:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1bRAD30RnZqg8yzA_IpPBxsiSKNEuUB73/view?usp=sharing

Annotation of Reading: This article from the Negative Population Growth, inc. suggests that modern immigration is “broken” and our system no longer “works.” The article begins with a brief overview, setting a very clear and straightforward agenda. The problem with today's immigration, versus the welcomed immigration we accepted in the early 20th century, is that it is done illegally, in masses, and our school systems simply cannot handle that. It is suggested that the last 10 years have created the most problems for our public schools, due to court cases that have encouraged the education of undocumented immigrants. The article makes a very well stated point that just because the court case made it legal, doesn't mean society can automatically handle it. Society must immediately be able to handle the influx of immigrants who most likely

do not speak english, requiring teachers to be bilingual and/or hire more teachers, which schools cannot afford. Schools must be prepared to teach students who may have never learned before, also requiring more, better equipped educators. The schools must also face “native flight” of citizen children being pulled from schools that are flooded with immigrants. These arguments pose a very strong case that it may not be in our public school systems *best* interest to encourage rapid growth from undocumented immigrants by the government, unless, they wish to provide all the necessary money and necessities.

Unit 4: *Natives vs. Immigrants in public schools*

BIG Question: *What things in the public school system do immigrant children have better/worse, more/less, free/costly access to? How do these accesses compare to citizen children?*

Argument of the Unit: Some see the “free” access to two meals a day, free education, free childcare, etc. as an incredible taxpayer burden. Others, argue that most immigrant families must have these programs in place to feed their children and family.

Key Words: *Title 1 school, entitlements, section 8 housing, eligibility, food insecurity, SNAP*

Link to Reading: https://www.emiimaging.com/content/File/free_lunch.pdf (against meal programs)

<http://www.cunyurbanfoodpolicy.org/news/2016/11/9/policy-brief-immigrants-and-food-access> (for meal programs)

Annotation of Reading: While there is a variety of programs to provide access to support for immigrants, these readings focus on the meal access. There are many programs set in place, in and out of the school system, to provide immigrants with free meals on a daily basis. The first article is a teacher who had first hand experience in a school with mostly illegal immigrants. Her argument clearly states that the meals are highly taken advantage of by the immigrants, making the programs a total waste of taxpayer money. Meanwhile, the second article suggests that in the streets of NY, most immigrants depend on these programs to feed their families, even though they have jobs and homes. While this is not directly regarding schools, it still gives students an idea of why the programs might be needed. Providing both sides of this argument gives students an example of what “free” access immigrants are provided with, allowing them to conduct research on how it compares to citizen children and what is or isn't quite fair.

Unit 5: *Historical ideas of educating immigrant children**

Next two units used for comparison

BIG Question: How were immigrants (of any status) educated in history? *How does it compare to modern ways? (next unit)*

Argument of the Unit: Immigrants were educated on a basis of assimilation.

Key Words: *Assimilation, “American life”, subordinated, Americanization, Emigration vs. Immigration*

Link to Reading:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/142yacwkz4mLQLf9NdQV_uCQsaNWvcTKC/view?usp=sharing

Annotation of Reading: This chapter from *Schooling America: How the Public Schools Meet the Nations Changing Needs*, focuses on an 8 year old boys experience in an assimilation/americanization learning environment. The only language spoken in his family was Danish and the only preparation he had for school was to say his name, making the American Public School system a culture shock to this young immigrant. He recalls his first day and how his teacher immediately recognized that the year would be centered around learning how to speak english. This chapter brings details to light about the curriculum in an immigrant and native school, stating that while the curriculum was about the same, the emphasis laid heavy on HOW english was taught. Was it to a native or learning tongue? The chapter also reflects on his time at home and the ways schooling was viewed upon both immigrants and native people.

Unit 6: Modern ideas behind educating immigrant children

BIG Question: What is the main strategy of education young immigrants today? How has this changed from the early 20th century? Has it changed for better or worse?

Argument of the Unit: Educating immigrants today poses many challenges to the student, teachers, and school districts. In the past, education was based on assimilation. However, today, the students are forced to learn several languages, they are expected to be caught up on the same level they are “supposed” to be on, and teachers simply do not have the means to focus on individual needs. In the past it is clear that assimilation was the strategy, but today, there seems to be no strategy, just complications.

Key Words: race relations, *deportation*, *cultural competency*, *bicultural*, *socio-emotional*

Link to Reading:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1zNaNdTWkNA5o8xFoxUkGbUPa_61rMavN/view?usp=sharing

Annotation of Reading: This excerpt from the Harvard Graduate School of Ed., provides an interesting and simple take on the complications of today's means of educating immigrants. First, the question of HOW schools can be changing to meet demographic needs is proposed to readers (a specific audience to educators). The article then goes into seven different topic ranging from the challenges faced by immigrants and teachers to how the school district can fix the problems. The article poses very relevant and understandable challenges, such as language barriers and standardized testing being the burden on the students. This article makes the challenges clear and the fact that there is little strategy behind educating the immigrant community even clearer. This topic can allow students to explore solutions and strategies to the issues, by providing a less political source on what the immigrants and schools are facing.

Unit 7: Performance of Immigrant Children in school

BIG Question: How well do immigrant students perform in foreign schools? Who performs better?

Argument of the Unit: Being an immigrant does not have (but can) to effect your performance in school. Most immigrant students perform better than the native students.

Key Words: pathway to citizenship, culturally grounded, bilingual, social mobility, socioeconomically disadvantaged

Link to Reading:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1dStNgcqxHGSoiMOUKBVKb227kK8FVwMh/view?usp=sharing>

Annotation of Reading: This journal is from research from two sociology professors who heavily researched the performance of immigrant children in foreign school systems. The article discusses how well the immigrants perform, why, and where they are from. The research shows explicitly that immigrants of Asian and African cultures typically outperform their native peers on standardized tests. The article acknowledges that this is because these cultures usually have close family ties and are “used to” an education. However, those of latin american backgrounds perform well below average. This is most likely because education is not a normal, free thing in these countries, they are typically not bilingual, and the family relationships could be broken. The socioeconomic and family relations, according to this article, are the biggest factors in how an immigrant child can and will perform in a new, foreign school system. This contrast between immigrant cultures and status’ allow students in this course to take into consideration all possible factors and what they mean to each ethnicity.