

Teaching About Anti-Immigrant Stereotypes: A Tip Sheet for Educators

Addressing stereotypes, even those voiced by politicians, is crucial to creating an inclusive and respectful classroom environment. When doing so, focus on the impact of discrimination on students and society, not the politics or politicians behind the statements. Acknowledging and addressing anti-immigrant rhetoric in real-time, like bullying, is essential. Ignoring it sends a signal that students' identities as immigrant-origin youth are not valued. It is crucial to understand that addressing these stereotypes is not political. Indeed, it is vital to address stereotypes while remaining non-partisan. Stereotypes are not simply another point of view. Unlike other viewpoints, stereotypes perpetuate false assumptions and biases.

Educators must explore the roots of these stereotypes and their impact, focusing on empathy, understanding, and factual information to create a supportive and equitable learning environment where all students can thrive. Below are some considerations.

1. **Address These Issues In Real Time**

- By failing to acknowledge anti-immigrant stereotypes, we give the impression that they are tolerated, acceptable, and less important than other forms of prejudice.

2. **Acknowledge Emotions**

- Recognize that conversations about stereotypes and prejudice can evoke strong emotions. Encourage students to express their feelings and provide support as needed.

3. **Foster Open Dialogue**

- Use open-ended questions to facilitate discussion and ensure all voices are heard. Encourage students to listen actively and respectfully to their peers.

4. **Provide Historical Context**

- Help students understand the historical roots of stereotypes and how they have evolved over time. Use historical examples to illustrate the impact of prejudice and the importance of challenging misinformation.

5. **Promote Critical Thinking**

- Encourage students to critically analyze sources, question assumptions, and seek out multiple perspectives. Use Project Zero thinking routines to guide their analysis.

6. **Model Empathy and Respect**

- Demonstrate empathy and respect in your interactions with students. Highlight the importance of understanding different perspectives and the human dignity of all individuals. It is important to recognize that anti-immigrant stereotypes are not just another perspective; they are harmful misconceptions rooted in misinformation and a rejection of diversity.

7. **Address Misconceptions**

- Be prepared to address and correct misconceptions or biased statements that may arise during discussions. Use these moments as teaching opportunities to promote understanding and inclusivity.

Additional Tips

1. **Educate Yourself and Others**
 - Understand the root causes and impacts of migration. Use reliable sources to debunk common myths and stereotypes about immigrants.
2. **Create a Welcoming Environment**
 - Foster a classroom culture that values diversity and inclusion. Implement activities that help students build relationships with each other.
3. **Engage in Continuous Learning**
 - Participate in professional development on cultural competency and anti-bias education. Reflect on your practices and their impact on student belonging.
4. **Involve Families and Communities**
 - Engage immigrant families in culturally meaningful ways. Partner with local organizations to support immigrant-origin youth.
5. **Support Students' Strengths**
 - Recognize and honor the strengths and assets immigrant students bring to the classroom. Avoid viewing immigrant students through a deficit lens.
6. **Implement Anti-Bullying Policies**
 - Ensure clear policies protect immigrant students from bullying and harassment. Actively enforce and review these policies.