An Instructional Approach to Explore Poverty and Immigration: Using Three Children's Books That Pack a Punch

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Abstract
Contemporary children's literature can be used as an instructional approach to examine a variety of critical issues that are presented in multicultural education and culturally responsive teaching college courses. The author discusses the benefits of using children's literature to examine poverty and immigration; his recommendations for selecting the right books and stories; and his experiences using three children's books: Walk with Me (2017), Two White Rabbits (2015), and Jimmy the Greatest! (2015), all created by the same author and illustrator, Jairo Buitrago and Rafael Yockteng. Each book is carefully reviewed, and followed by a sample of critical thinking questions used to raise college students' awareness of matters that impact the lives of children they will serve.

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total of 18.7 million children — have an immigrant parent. U.S. poverty rate was 14.8% of the population (Pew. We use case study methodology to explore the question: How does one adolescent Mexican-American immigrant EL, Mario, construct his identity, as he invokes different subject positions in relation to diverse social contexts? Using examples encountered from our multi-year study of students encountered in Mexican schools with prior experience in US schools, we look at transnationally-tied families’ decision-making regarding where to send their children to school and ask whether parents should ‘parent from afar’. With the majority of research studies focused on women and their children, a tremendous gap exists for male refugees and immigrants. Immigrants and second-generation students who are children of immigrants confront a number of unique academic challenges, including limited proficiency in the host-country language and greater barriers in preparing for college and careers. Research here focuses on student educational attainment and in particular on English Language Learners (ELLs), who have persistent and wide achievement gaps with native English speakers. Adolescent ELLs face a greater workload, learning English at the same time they are studying core content areas in English—with resulting challenges in passing tests and com