Helping newcomer youth navigate the process of school integration

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The webinar will begin at 6:35 pm (mst)

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CES presentations are meant to provide general information about child and youth health and wellness and are for educational purposes only. The information provided is not intended to be a substitute for seeking medical advice. Please contact your Family Physician and/or licensed healthcare professional/team for   follow-up on appropriate diagnoses, and or treatment for the child/youth in your care.

Here are some useful resources within Alberta:

Emergency	911	Addiction Helpline	1-866-332-2322
Health Link	811	Kids Help Phone	1-800-668-6868
211 Alberta	211	Distress Centre	1-403-266-4357
Access Mental Health	1-844-943-1500	Suicide Line	1-888-787-2880
Mental Health Helpline	1-877-303-2642	Togetherall	https://togetherall.com/en-ca/

MORE

Quick starts and deep dives into school & student wellness

more.hmhc.ca

MORE offers free, online courses and information on mental health & substance use for the K-12 education community

(SITE & COURSES BEST VIEWED ON NON-MOBILE DEVICES)

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The University of Calgary is located on the traditional, unceded, territories of the people of the Treaty 7 region in Southern Alberta. The City of Calgary is also home to Métis Nation of Alberta, Region III.

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Helping newcomer youth navigate the process of school integration

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UNIVERSITY OF
CALGARY

Anusha

Alissa

Overview

- Background
- Framework
- Factors impacting school integration
  - The stress of cultural transitioning
  - Language acquisition
  - Making connections
  - Navigating academics
  - Personal life
  - Mental health concerns
- Implications
- Questions

Framework

Factors inside & outside the school impact youths' experiences as they integrate into new educational system

- Factors Within the School:
  - Orientation, grade placement, academic motivation, English as an additional language
  - Peer relations, discrimination, bullying

- Factors Outside the School:
  - Pre-migration experiences and trauma
  - Challenges in Canada (e.g., home life, family transitions, financial stress)

Framework

- School Integration:
  - The adjustment of newcomer youth across all aspects of student life, including English language acquisition, academic performance, classroom behaviour, social networking, emotional well-being, involvement in school life (e.g., after-school clubs, events), understanding of the school system, and identity development.

What are your assumptions, biases, preconceptions, values, and beliefs regarding newcomer youth and their integration into high school in Canada?

Factors Impacting School Integration

- The stress of cultural transitioning
- Language acquisition
- Making connections
- Navigating academics
- Personal life
- Mental health concerns

The Stress of Cultural Transitioning

Everything is Different	Mixed Emotions

Loneliness and Isolation

The Stress of Cultural Transitioning

Everything is Difference

Facing new, different, and unexpected norms and style of living within Canada

- Weather
- Cultural differences
- Values and beliefs

"I wasn't really happy because I don't like chance . . . I didn't know what was right or what was wrong 'cause like everything is just different like the culture and everything so that was just hard."

The Stress of Cultural Transitioning

Experiencing Mixed Emotions

The complex emotions experienced throughout the journey of migrating to Canada

- Nervous
- Excited
- Sad
- Overwhelmed
- Afraid
- Grateful

"I'm so exciting because I'm going to see the Canadians and other cultures here and I'm afraid in bullying. I'm so freaking out because I don't know how to do stuff. Because I'm new here. And I'm homesick because I miss the Philippines, I love the culture there so much."

The Stress of Cultural Transitioning

Loneliness and Isolation

Feelings of loneliness and exclusion compared to feelings of inclusion and belonging

- Not enough support during initial transition
- Frustration due to lack of language supports
- Unsure or too shy to ask for help
- Teaches may not be aware of their status or struggles

"When I arrived, I started to hate the country because sometimes, like people don't accept the kind of people that doesn't know the language or that they're not Canadian."

"[I] felt disappointed because I thought they would help me, [but] Miss, no one will be helping me."

Language Acquisition

What do you think is the best way for newcomer youth to learn English?
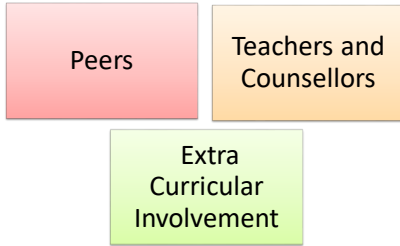
Language Acquisition

Biggest Barrier

Supports

Language Acquisition

Biggest Barrier

Expectation to use English across social and academic situations

- Struggle to understand/ communicate with peers or teachers
- Fear of being made fun of or being made fun of
- Implicit biases of English only strategies
- Internalize deficit narratives

"Learning it was so hard, like all my like classmates talked to me, I didn't understand … I didn't do anything, like I didn't speak any English like I only say 'yes' like only 'yes'."

"You just feel like that angry right … then you know you'll be like 'why I'm not getting that, I'm stupid now.' I should just give up and live like where I came from."

Language Acquisition

EAL Classroom (ESL/ ELL)

Additional support provided to newcomer youth in developing reading, writing, and spoken English language skills

- Helped with grammar/ writing
- Helped with speaking
- Positive environment

- Not enough support prior to high school
- Held back from academic classes

"I didn't feel any different 'cause like me there are also people who are having difficulties with the language and I felt like I belonged."

"I am planning on challenging the ESL next year I am going to ELA… Because if I am taking ESL 4 and so on then I reaching grade 13 which I cannot afford going…"

Language Acquisition

Supports

The academic and social supports that aided in the acquisition of English

- Importance of allowing home language's
- Speaking with peers
- Speaking with teachers
- Television/ reading
- Online notes
- Translation services

"I feel like I learned more English by talking to friends and like reading books by myself, or watching movies."

Making Connections

Peers

Teachers and Counsellors

Extra Curricular Involvement

_____

Making Connections

Peers

The factors directly relating to the experience of making and keeping peer relationships

- Impacted by language
- Being approached/ invited
- Shared experience of being a newcomer
- Challenges with cultural differences

"To be honest my friends right now are mostly Filipino's just like me so maybe that's part of it if we both know, we both are used to the culture we have in our country, and we both know the differences and the feelings of how to be a newcomer here."

_____

Making Connections

Teachers and Counsellors

Teacher and counsellor influences on the school atmosphere and supporting newcomer youth.

- Being approached
- Representation
- Understand their experience
- Frequent check-in's

- Make assumptions
- Do not understand experience
- Students do not feel they can turn to them for support

"She is refugee too, so she know, she know what you mean … You feel like home again, she makes you feel like you're not the only one. It just even mentally it feels good."

"Yeah like this one teacher I had was like, "I didn't think you were gonna pass." Like he didn't believe in me and like aren't teachers supposed to believe in you?"

Making Connections

Extra Curricular Involvement
The impact of joining clubs, groups, and school events to bridge connection

- Positive experience connecting with peers
- Wanting to join or participate
- Not told about
- Lack of time
- Lack of culturally appropriate spaces

"If someone asked me to go volunteer I would need to go. But life in Canada is so different from Vietnam, I mean like I volunteer by my own. I have to find information by myself, not by invite."
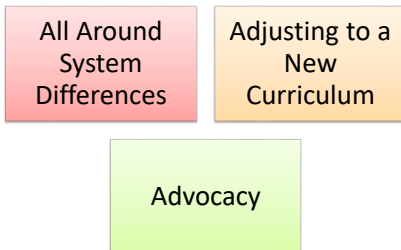
Navigating Academics

What are your assumptions or biases about academic learning within high school in Canada?

Navigating Academics

All Around System Differences

Adjusting to a New Curriculum

Advocacy

Navigating Academics

All around system differences

General system differences in how high school in Canada is structured

- Renegotiating pre-existing expectations
- Values of education
- Grading structure
- Credit based system
- Inappropriate assessments

> "In Ethiopia how the system works is, it's not like you know in Canada. . . you pass or fail, you just stay in one class right, that's how it works. . . It was a little bit challenging, ya it's cause where we came from it's a completely different thing right."

Navigating Academics

Curriculum

Experiences with the core subjects of English language arts, social studies, mathematics, science, and option classes

- Eurocentric, monolinguistic, white, middle class testing standards
- Held back due to language
- Internalize deficit narratives
- Managing tensions

> "I don't understand anything about it and I still chose and want to get a high experience, I study a lot, I am stressed now cause I am going to finish my school late . . . I feel like I am underestimated."

Navigating Academics

Awareness and Advocacy

The need to advocate for individual and systemic change.

- Parent understanding of the school system
- Often up to the student
- Individualized programs
- Transition to post-secondary education

> "This is where they come to get it, this is where they feel safe, this is their place, so more of our students I think, a higher population percentage wise, need somebody that's in their corner and need that adult that is rooting for them."
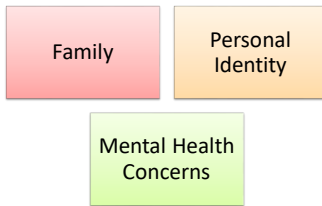
Renegotiating Life

What factors outside of school may impact newcomer youth's school integration experiences?

Renegotiating Life

Family

Personal Identity

Mental Health Concerns

Renegotiating Life

Family Factors

The systemic family factors impacting immigration experiences and school integration

- Reunification with family
- Providing/ not providing school support
- Financial stress
- Parents adjustment
- High academic expectations
- Clashing values

"My dad has been working here for 8 years and then, we lived in the Philippines for so long, and then I am not that, I am not that sure, that comfortable with my father because I don't know his attitude. . . I don't want to talk much about him. . ."

Renegotiating Life

Personal Identity

Personal characteristics and individual traits that play a role in integration

- Role as a student
- Personal outlook
- Future goals
- Multicultural identity

"Your culture is part of you, it's something you never leave behind just because you're in Canada and your culture and language, and who you are, it will also help you a lot I guess. It did help me."

Renegotiating Life

Mental Health Concerns

Social and emotional factors impacting school integration experiences

- Pre/ post migration trauma
- Lack of representation
- High expectations
- Anxiety and depression
- Isolation
- Intersecting concerns

"When it comes to understanding the school system, yes, that's a need, but it's nothing compared to their emotional adjustment. Again, the cultural part is traumatizing … But when you say adjustment, it's a road and it, when it manifests you would see behaviours like from cutting, skipping classes, from depression, to drug use. You may see it as an adjustment."

Needs

Language Support

Teacher/Counsellor Support

Mental Health Initiative
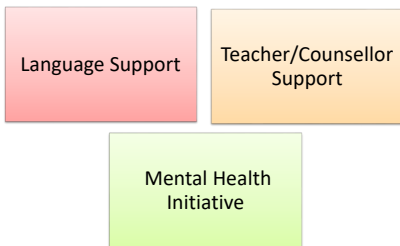
Needs

Language and Academic Support

Enhanced supports for newcomer youth to be successful across the curriculum

- Understanding their experience
- Appropriate language and academic assessments
- Whole school support
- Holistic language supports
- Culturally sustaining and social justice pedagogy
- Individualized programming

"I suggest they make something better about how not only what they do in the system in their school but understand what the feelings of the students must be to have a better English for them."

Needs

Teacher and Counsellor Support

Enhanced teacher and counsellor support and understanding of newcomer experiences

- Initiate contact
- Multicultural, social justice, and language training for all teachers
- Challenge assumption/ biases
- Connecting with parents
- Ongoing support
- Diversify population

"They make the first move and don't wait for us to ask them for help. They just give the tour and give the supplies, support to the ones coming here so they can feel at ease, and at home."
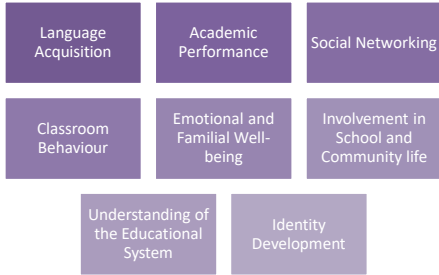

Needs

Mental Health Initiatives

Social justice and multicultural resources

- Access to multicultural resources
- Cultural insiders
- Addressing the stigma of mental health
- Addressing systemic injustice

"You can't just say it. It should be in the system, it should be in their training, because if you just say it through your meetings then that's it. It should be printed, it is important, it's in black and white, it's incorporated in their language, it's incorporated in their agenda."

School Integration

Language Acquisition	Academic Performance	Social Networking
Classroom Behaviour	Emotional and Familial Well-being	Involvement in School and Community life
Understanding of the Educational System	Identity Development	

Implications

Practice
- Educators & Administrators
- Counsellors & Psychologists
- Community Programs

Research

Policy & Curriculum

Implications for Practice

Educators & Administration:

- The importance of integrating multicultural materials in curriculum
- School personnel must learn about the experiences of newcomers
- Cultural sensitivity and awareness training for all school staff
- Modifications to examination process
- The need for translation services
- Hire diverse school personnel

Implications for Practice

Counsellors & Psychologists:

- Counsellors are encouraged to implement new ways of working with newcomer communities
- Intersectionality - Multiple systems of power that impact newcomers
- Identity negotiation - Acculturation, identity formation, cultural transition
- Teachers and counsellors are encouraged to approach newcomers

Implications for Practice

Community Supports & Programming

- Ensure newcomer youth have access to supports, strategies, and resources
- Greater social and communal support for newcomer youth - Allow for more exposure inside and outside their culture
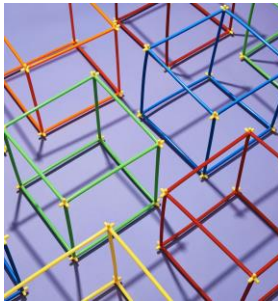
Implications for Training

Training is important to foster inclusivity while acknowledging barriers that many newcomer youth face. School counsellors and educators play an important role in newcomer students' integration.

School counsellors:

- The importance of grade placement
- The need for career planning strategies
- Recognizing the diversity among newcomer students, families, and communities

Implications for Research

It is important for researchers to be knowledgeable about various theories, their philosophical underpinnings, methodologies, frameworks, and analysis processes in order to make informed and ethical decisions on research decisions with this community.

- Flexible systems are needed within educational research
- The welfare of participants should be at the center of research
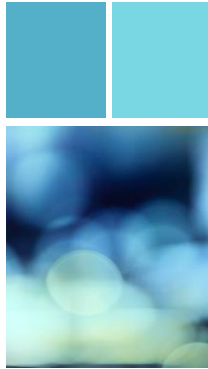- Researcher reflexivity is critical

Implications for Policies and Curricula

- Address social determinants of mental health
- Foster greater access to mental health services
- Promote collaboration between health, education, and settlement sectors
- Implement programs that focus on empowerment and community development

Questions