Immigration Narrative Assignments

Immigration Narrative Discussion

Students will participate in a fishbowl discussion of their immigration narrative. Prior to class, students will reflect on their or their family's immigration/migration story. This might be the story of their or their family/ancestor's immigration to their most recent country of residence or the story of their/their family's migration within their country of residence. For example, a student whose parents immigrated to the US from Mexico may choose to focus on that story. Or a student may want to focus on the story of their family-of-origin moving from California to Texas or of their personal migration from Miami to Abilene. Students should choose the story that feels most poignant to them. As students are preparing for the discussion, they should identify: 1) the hopes and fears (and other factors) that drove immigration/migration, 2) the benefits and challenges of being somewhere new, 3) the things (people, objects, values…) brought and left behind, and 4) things that made it easy or difficult to access resources, including mental and family health support. Students may need to interview family members to tell a deep, rich narrative. Examples of immigration narratives can be found here: https://eportfolios.macaulay.cuny.edu/siegel2014/2014/05/22/immigration-narrative-2/

In class, students will form two concentric circles. The inside circle will discuss the hopes/fears, benefits/hardships, and things brought/left while the outside circle listens. The outside circle will then reflect the experience of the inside circle and identify common themes. Students will then switch places and the new inside circle will discuss how their own narrative connects/disconnects with the previous stories and boons/barriers to resources. The new outside circle will then reflect the inside circle's experience and identify themes. Grades will be based on the student's demonstration of the following competencies: ability to identify the four elements of the immigration narrative (hopes/fears, benefits/hardships, brought/left, and boons/barriers); ability to accurately and empathetically reflect experience; ability to identify common themes in experience.

Immigration Narrative Interview

Students will have a conversation with someone (not each other) about their immigration/migration story. The someone can (and ideally would) be a client. Students will practice the collaborative skills of listening to understand and curiosity while gathering the following information: 1) the hopes and fears (and other factors) that drove immigration/migration, 2) the benefits and challenges of being somewhere new, 3) the things (people, objects, values…) brought and left behind, and 4) things that made it easy or difficult to access resources. Students will then write a 3- to 5-page summary of the interview, create a 5- to 7-minute video, or submit a transcript of the conversation. Students should reflect on how well they practiced collaborative skills either in the paper/video or as comments on the transcript.