School Community Engaging With Immigrant Youth: Incorporating Personal/Social Development and Ethnic Identity Development

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Abstract

It has been projected that 33% of all school children will be from immigrant households by the year 2040 (Suarez-Orozco et al., 2010). For school personnel (e.g., administrators, counselors, teachers) working with immigrant youth and adolescents, understanding ethnic identity development is an essential cultural competency. In this essay, the authors outline how the family, peer, and school contexts can influence a student's ethnic identity, along with suggested activities that utilize ethnic identity development to enhance student personal/social development. Greater personal/social development of individual students and greater integration of marginalized ethnic groups can contribute to a healthier school community. Informal methods of evaluating outcomes are also identified.

Key Words: immigrants, youth, ethnic identity development, ethnicity, personal, social, cultural competency, family, parents, peers, schools, students

Introduction

School staff members in all areas of the U.S. are now more likely to work with students from immigrant families. There were 13,716,000 children (age 17 and under) of immigrant parents in the U.S. in 2008–2009 (Urban Institute, 2012). From 1970 to 1997, the percentage of children of immigrants

in U.S. school systems rose from 6.3% to nearly 20% (Ruiz de Velasco & Fix, 2000), and it is projected that one third of all children will be from immigrant households by 2040 (Suarez-Orozco et al., 2010). According to the U.S. Department of Education, in 2007 almost 69% of Latino and 64% of Asian-origin school age students (or 7.2 million students across the country) used a language other than English with their families at home (Aud, Fox, & KewalRamani, 2010). Traditional settlement areas like New York and Los Angeles will continue to receive newcomers to the U.S., while newer immigrant communities are emerging in less urban areas from North Carolina to Nevada (Hakimzadeh & Cohn, 2007).

Thus, adults employed at schools (i.e., administrators, counselors, teachers, staff) will need to be familiar with the characteristics and concerns of these students, whether the receiving schools and communities are accustomed to working with immigrant families or are relatively new to the process. Williams and Butler (2003) listed concerns of immigrant students when arriving in U.S. schools, including typical adolescent developmental concerns, learning English, finding social support or networks of acceptance, confronting U.S. norms for racial labeling, acquiring new styles of learning, coping with posttraumatic stress, and understanding different cultural scripts. These stressors have implications for academic persistence (Perreira, Harris, & Lee, 2006; Rumberger, 1995; Suarez-Orozco et al., 2010) and social and interpersonal adaptation, as well (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006). Support for these tasks is essential for building a healthy school environment where students can feel accepted and appreciated in all aspects of their identity and can put their energy and focus on academic and personal growth.

However, some school personnel may not have acquired expertise with immigrant families in their training programs or prior work experiences (Williams & Butler, 2003). Multicultural courses in counselor, teacher, and administrator preparation may not address issues specific to immigrants, such as the acculturation process or ethnic identity development of children and adolescents. In addition, student personal/social outcomes may be emphasized to different degrees in counselor, teacher, and administrator training programs. Conscientious school staff members may be seeking new ways to improve their effectiveness in integrating students from immigrant families into the school community at large.

The purpose of this essay is to help the school community improve its ability to work with students from immigrant families to enhance students' personal/social outcomes. We will refer to personal/social outcomes identified by the counseling profession, as individual development and wellness are central concepts in the field (American School Counselor Association [ASCA], 2004).

These ASCA outcomes will serve as a practical framework for organizing the essay and for directing interventions in the school community. We acknowledge that counselors are more effective in promoting a healthy school community when working in concert with teachers and administrators; everyone in the system has a role to play. The school community is understood to be "found in the relationships among the people intimately attached to a school…[who] constantly seek better ways to insure that each child meets standards of learning" (Redding, cited in Thomas, 2011, p. 7). Specifically, we will use this essay to describe how ethnic identity can be a positive resource for immigrant students, address contexts where ethnic identity develops, and suggest ways that school personnel can work toward positive personal/social development of immigrant students by facilitating ethnic identity development. We hope to provide a practical set of tools and activities that can be used by counselors, administrators, and teachers to promote community within a school. We offer activities that can be implemented as classroom modules, as part of responsive services from the counseling office, or as part of the administrative structure. Whether the activities would be implemented once as an assessment or several times in an effort to promote and sustain ethnic identity development would depend on the goals of the particular school.

Defining Ethnic Identity

Ethnic identity has been defined in various ways, depending on the academic discipline represented (Phinney, 1990). An individual view focuses on the values, behaviors, traditions, and cultural knowledge that a person holds and how that changes over time as part of identity. A social view of ethnic identity focuses on the conscious reactions, attitudes, and feelings individuals have regarding their group membership, with implications for social harmony or conflict within the school community. Ethnic identity is also viewed as a developmental process, with adolescence being an important time for moving from an unexamined ethnic identity to an active search and exploration process (Phinney, 1993). Exploration includes talking to others in one's cultural group, learning about the group's history and customs, and thinking about what ethnic group membership means in one's life. Commitment to ethnic identity includes feelings of attachment and pride in one's group as well as affirmation of cultural behaviors or traditions.

Ethnic identity has also been defined in terms of ethnic centrality, private regard, and public regard (Sellers, Smith, Shelton, Rowley, & Chavous, 1998). Ethnic centrality reflects how important ethnic group membership is to one's sense of identity. Private regard shows how positively individuals view their own group's attributes, while public regard describes one's perceptions of how

others view one's ethnic group, including both negative biases and positive attributions. If immigrant students value their cultural traditions and feel pride in their family and their group, but simultaneously recognize that the group is disparaged in other social contexts, cognitive dissonance could arise (Hughes, Way, & Rivas-Drake, 2011). Reflecting on the work of both Phinney (1993) and Sellers et al. (1998), school counselors and teachers could assist immigrant students in exploring and affirming their individual identity, determining how central that identity is for them, and identifying conflicts between their view of self and feedback from others. Evaluating public regard, in particular, could be useful in a school community where several ethnic/racial groups coexist and may not have fully accurate perceptions of each other. In this way, ethnic identity development can raise awareness as well and be valuable for both the disenfranchised groups (e.g., immigrants, students of color) and for the socially empowered groups (e.g., U.S. citizens, White students).

Most studies of ethnic identity have been conducted with nonimmigrant participants, so there is a gap in the literature. Researchers view ethnic identity as a significant developmental outcome for ethnic minority adolescents, one that has been linked with other positive outcomes such as improved coping skills, self-esteem, academic adaptation, and school adjustment (Fuligni, Witkow, & Garcia, 2005; Kiang, Yip, Gonzales-Backen, Witkow, & Fuligni, 2006; Umana-Taylor, Diversi, & Fine, 2002). Ethnic identity commitment also has been related to decreased drug use (Kulis, Napoli, & Marsiglia, 2002), greater emotional and social adjustment (Yasui, Dorham, & Dishion, 2004), and fewer aggressive behaviors (McMahon & Watts, 2002) among various ethnic groups. The more positive outcomes would be likely to contribute to a constructive sense of community among students in the school. Moreover, researchers found that teachers rated Latino students scoring high in ethnic identity as more cooperative and doing better work (Supple, Ghazarian, Frabutt, Plunkett, & Sands, 2006). Conversely, ethnic discrimination may decrease students' ability to succeed in school (DeGarmo & Martinez, 2006; Stone & Han, 2005). However, support from peers, parents, and teachers (DeGarmo & Martinez, 2006) as well as a highly positive ethnic orientation (Pahl & Way, 2006) could diminish the effects of this discrimination. School counselors, teachers, and administrators need to consider how this cultural variable may be operating in the lives of both immigrant and nonimmigrant youth due to the important implications ethnic identity development has for academic and personal/social outcomes. Ethnic identity may have a protective function for minority group members who are under stress, but it also may be a positive aspect of self-concept for majority group members who can benefit from greater self-understanding and awareness of other cultural groups.

Ethnic identity is related to but distinct from acculturation, which describes the multidimensional changes that can occur when two or more cultural groups come into contact (Berry et al., 2006). Many immigrant youth feel that they have one foot in the culture represented by family and home and another foot in the culture represented by peers and school. This could result in students feeling comfortable in each of those worlds (bicultural) or feeling some degree of isolation from each of those worlds. Being bicultural can be a tremendous strength as it allows for cognitive flexibility and expanded cultural competence and well being (Phinney, Horenczyk, Liebkind, & Vedder, 2001). However, the possibility of bicultural stress also exists when students feel too "Americanized" to be fully accepted by their home culture, yet too "foreign" to be accepted by their peers at school (Romero & Roberts, 2003).

Park-Taylor, Walsh, and Ventura (2007) noted that school counselors could serve as cultural brokers in order to promote adjustment of immigrant youth to their school context. Their theoretical lens was developmental systems theory, and their recommendations were to work with the systems in the schools in order to support developmental tasks. Thus, Park-Taylor et al. focused more on helping immigrant students acculturate to the school and less on the process of exploring an ethnic identity that could help bridge the school and family worlds. The current article will fill a gap by addressing ethnic identity development as a resource for enhancing the personal/social development of individual students from immigrant families. Holcomb-McCoy (2005) offered an excellent overview of Phinney's (1993) ethnic identity research with recommendations for middle school counselors. However, her work did not address immigrant youth, did not suggest roles for other members of the school community, and did not include the perspective of Sellers et al. (1998), which helps to illuminate intergroup perceptions. The Sellers model of ethnic identity has been applied to immigrants in other studies addressing psychological well being, academic adjustment, and self-esteem (Fuligni et al., 2005; Kiang, Perreira, & Fuligni, 2011; Kiang et al., 2006). Therefore, we extend the conversation by including Sellers' model and focusing on promoting ethnic identity for immigrant students within the school community.

Contextual Influences on Ethnic Identity

Adolescence is an important time for identity development, and ethnic identity is likely to be relevant for immigrant youth who are navigating two or more cultural contexts (Rumbaut, 1994). Exploration and formation of ethnic identity is influenced by contextual factors (Rivas-Drake, Hughes, & Way, 2009; Supple et al., 2006). School staff members working with immigrant

youth should be aware of the family, peer, and school contexts, even if they can only exert direct influence on the school system. Table 1 integrates these three contexts with goals for facilitating personal/social development related to ethnic identity (ASCA, 2004), which will be discussed throughout the remainder of the article. Each section will include a description of the context, goals for addressing students' personal/social development via ethnic identity development, and suggestions for activities and informal evaluation tools related to those goals.

Table 1. Integrating Goals for Personal/Social Development With Ethnic Identity Development

Context for Ethnic Identity	ASCA (2004) Personal/ Social Competencies	Counselor Goals for Ethnic Identity Development	Evaluation of Outcomes
Family Context	PS.A1.1 PS.A1.10 PS.A1.11 PS.A1.12 PS.A2.5 PS.C1.11	1. Help students develop positive self-perceptions and identify personal strengths related to family immigrant history and ethnic identity 2. Help students identify culture-specific coping strategies related to changing family and personal/social roles	1. Class poster and presentation on cultural strengths 2. Small group processing via List of Coping Resources or discussion of images
Peer Context	A.A3.1 C.C2.2 PS.A1.5 PS.A2.3 PS.B1.7 PS.C1.10	1. Help students cultivate an accepting and respectful attitude toward the ethnic peer groups that coexist 2. Help students manage stress and conflict caused by ethnic group misunderstandings by expressing feelings and taking responsibility	1. Book discussion or optical illusion 2. Three question exit slip 3. Teacher reported student behaviors after implementing peer mediation
School Context	A.A2.3 PS.A2.4 PS.A2.6 PS.C1.6	1. With student input, create a schoolwide structure that allows for appreciation of ethnic groups and improved communication among them 2. Identify key resource people who can serve as cultural brokers for ethnic groups present in school	1. Counselor-created behavioral questionnaires 2. Online pre- and post- teacher training survey

Family Context

The cultural socialization that occurs in the family is a key contributor to ethnic identity (Hughes et al., 2008). Familial ethnic socialization (FES) includes exposing children to their culture of origin through the reading of books, talking about the family's native country, and decorating the house with cultural objects (Rumbaut, 1994). When immigrant parents provide this kind of cultural exposure and teaching, it can promote increased knowledge and positive attitudes about the home culture in their children (Quintana & Vera, 1999). However, there are also limits to what family can accomplish. Supple et al. (2006) found a relationship between FES and ethnic exploration, but not between FES and ethnic affirmation, suggesting that parents may be able to impart information about their family's culture to their children but not necessarily impact the child's internalized positive sense of self. Rivas-Drake et al. (2009) demonstrated that adolescents could experience simultaneous positive effects of FES on ethnic identity and negative effects of ethnic discrimination from peers and adults at school. Thus, the immigrant family is an important influence on an adolescent's ethnic centrality and early exploration of ethnic identity but may be working against influences from the peer and school contexts at times.

Goals for Personal/Social and Ethnic Identity Development

Although school staff members are not a part of the home environment, they can impact ethnic identity development by helping immigrant students improve their personal and social skills via self-knowledge and exploration of the home context. As stated in Table 1, one goal is to help students build positive self-perceptions and identify personal strengths related to family immigrant history and ethnic identity. This goal incorporates ASCA standards for student competencies (2004) related to developing positive attitudes toward the self (PS. A1.1), identifying personal strengths (PS. A1.10), and recognizing unique family experiences and configurations (PS.A2.5). A second goal is to help students identify culture-specific coping strategies (PS.C1.11) related to changing family roles (PS.A1.12) and personal/social roles (PS.A1.11). These goals incorporate the importance of family and culture as a foundation for the students' identity and strengths and also acknowledge that both normal development and the immigrant acculturation process will mean changes in the students' roles. School community members can build a culturally appropriate view of the students' development and promote coping and success strategies that draw on those strengths.

Suggested Activities

In terms of activities to help achieve the first goal (i.e., building positive self-perceptions and identifying personal strengths), school counselors and teachers at any level could collaborate on a classroom guidance unit encouraging all students to research their cultural traditions and norms and make presentations to their peers. The research phase of this activity could include input from families, as students would be encouraged to interview their parents and relatives about what is most important in their culture to be presented to the class. In this way, students are not just completing a class assignment; they are actively engaging with family around the idea of ethnicity and learning how those cultural strengths are present in themselves as well. Every child has an ethnic heritage, so nonimmigrant students could also gain valuable insight into their cultural background. Allowing students the opportunity to talk directly to their classmates about their culture could provide knowledge that is essential to understanding, accepting, and respecting ethnically diverse communities. Counselors and teachers could also utilize the information that emerges in these presentations to create strengths-based brief reports on the ethnic groups that are present in the school which subsequently could be shared with administrators and staff.

As a means of testing the effectiveness of this project, school counselors and teachers can ask students to create a poster of what they learned about their ethnic and cultural traditions that is positive and distinctive. These posters can be presented to the class as part of the assignment and then could be hung in the classroom as a reminder of what the students accomplished. These posters therefore serve the dual purposes of being both a tangible representation of what the students achieved and also a constant reminder of the diversity and personal strengths of the students present in the class. Majority students may be less familiar with the traditions of the immigrant families, so the posters provide a space to honor those cultures equally.

Coping with changing roles may be a concern for many immigrant children, as they are adjusting to a new community and balancing differing expectations from school and home. The ability to cope effectively with those life contexts is at the center of the second goal (see Table 1). Both home and school environments have a significant impact on how children connect to their ethnicity (Orozco, 2008; Quintana et al., 2006). Receiving competing messages from home and school may make identifying with one culture stressful for a student who is in the ethnic exploration stage (Phinney, 1990). For example, a student could hear about the importance of homework from teachers, then return home and be expected to defer homework in order to take care of family chores. This is a reality for many immigrant students who are in the ethnic

exploration stage; they feel that no matter how they choose to behave or which roles they adopt, important people in their lives will be disappointed (Romero & Roberts, 2003).

School counselors can help to validate these feelings for the students within a small counseling group. It can be helpful for students to know that adults in the school recognize the push and pull of home and school cultures, and it could be equally helpful to share these feelings with other students in a small group setting. School counselors facilitating these groups would help immigrant students find a way of coping and thriving within both the school and home cultures (Phinney et al., 2001). Topics for the counseling group could vary, including cultural traditions at home or at school around managing stress, strategies for working through conflict with peers and adults, and differences in expectations or social roles in school and at home or in the family's home country. Creating a network for sharing concerns and culturally congruent coping skills could mean the difference between students successfully navigating the U.S. school system or struggling to engage.

The effectiveness of the group could be evaluated in several ways. Counselors could complete a brief inventory such as the 9-item List of Coping Responses (Mena, Padilla, & Maldonado, 1987) after each group, note what types of coping strategies were mentioned by group members, and compare these to previous sessions. Such a list could also give counselors ideas of coping responses to teach or encourage in the students, bearing in mind that individualist cultural traditions often approach or cope with problems in a way that differs from collective cultural traditions (Kuo, 2013; Trumbull & Rothstein-Fisch, 2011). Alternatively, students could be asked to draw two circles on a piece of paper, one representing the world of home and the other the world of school. Depending on how students felt about their home and school roles, the circles could be overlapping (to indicate congruence and connection between the two sets of roles and expectations) or distinct (to represent distance or conflict between the two sets of roles). This activity would give the facilitator information about the effectiveness of the group in minimizing inter-role conflict.

Peer Context

Another facet of immigrant adolescent ethnic socialization lies with peers. Although some researchers have focused on discriminatory attitudes expressed by peers and their negative impact on ethnic identity (e.g., Rivas-Drake et al., 2009), others have examined the frequency of social contact with ethnically similar peers (Phinney, Romero, Nava, & Huang, 2001). The availability of similar peers in the school, presence of peer discrimination, and makeup of the local community could be tremendously important for the ethnic identity

development of immigrant students. In a recent study (Perreira, Fuligni, & Potochnick, 2010), Latino students in an emerging immigrant community in the southeast were more likely to perceive and be concerned about discrimination than a similar group in Los Angeles. However, the same students also reported positive interactions with other peers and adults in their schools that helped them maintain a positive sense of school attachment. Portes and Zhou (1993) posited that immigrant students who build ties to peers outside of their ethnic groups while simultaneously maintaining a strong sense of ethnic identity and cultural connection (e.g., bicultural) often have the best academic outcomes. Kiang, Peterson, and Thompson (2011) described the ethnic peer affiliations of Asian heritage immigrant students, with choices of in-group or out-group friendships being influenced by English language fluency, ethnic centrality, and experiences with discrimination. These studies point toward peers as being factors in ethnic identity development, whether positive or negative.

Goals for Personal/Social and Ethnic Identity Development

Even though school staff cannot be aware of every peer interaction, carefully planned interventions can help to build skills among all students to improve future interactions with classmates. One goal for counselors and teachers could be to promote a classroom climate of acceptance among peers and help all students celebrate their cultural differences (see Table 1). This goal incorporates ASCA student competencies (2004) related to recognizing, accepting, respecting, and appreciating individual difference (PS.A2.3), demonstrating a respect and appreciation for individual and cultural differences (PS.B1.7), and identifying and expressing feelings (PS.A1.5) associated with positive and negative classroom climates. Again, both immigrant and nonimmigrant students will benefit from these lessons of cultural acceptance. A second goal could be to help students learn techniques and skills for managing conflict with peers (C.C2.2, PS.C1.10) and to take responsibility for their actions in peer relationships (A.A3.1). These goals acknowledge the influence of peers within the school and also encourage students to understand how they can change a school climate through their own actions. School counselors and teachers can guide students through this personal/social developmental process by using targeted interventions, eventually empowering both immigrant and nonimmigrant students to contribute to the creation of their school environment. Supportive school personnel can help to offset negative peer interactions, if present (Demaray & Malecki, 2002).

Suggested Activities

There are many ways school personnel could achieve goals related to appreciating ethnic or cultural differences and managing conflict. Classroom lessons,

facilitated either by the counselor or the teacher, could reflect the exploration stage of ethnic identity by focusing on overall themes of peer acceptance and celebration of differences as seen in a book. For example, *Crow Boy* (Yashima, 1983) tells the story of a student who is an outcast when he first arrives at his new school. At the end of the school year, he demonstrates his ability to mimic the sounds of a crow and wins over his classmates, receiving a new nickname. Discussion of the book could center on how the new student must have felt while being ostracized by his peers, as well as talking about how differences are valuable parts of any classroom. Depending on the level of book chosen, this discussion gives students of any age the chance to think about how they act toward peers who may be culturally different from themselves.

A parallel lesson could be salient for middle and high school students who are more likely to be in the ethnic exploration stage of ethnic identity development (Phinney, 1993). Students at this stage tend to be aware of themes associated with their ethnicity (for better or worse) but may not be sure how to make sense of them. For this age group, guidance lessons that focus on acknowledging and accepting peer differences may help students sort through their own thoughts and attitudes towards ethnicity. A classroom activity might begin with the counselor or teacher showing an image that is an optical illusion, such as the classic drawing that includes both the old woman and the young girl. Students quickly learn that their view of the image is not the only one; they may even struggle to see what others are describing. Essentially, this activity touches on knowledge (everyone has a distinct worldview) and awareness (no worldview is right or wrong). The facilitator can then encourage students to take a more critical look as to how this exercise parallels other differences in worldview, emphasizing that being different from one another is normal and even valuable.

A quick way to test the effectiveness of these activities would be to pass out "exit slips" to students as the discussion is concluding. With ten minutes left in class, the counselor or teacher could pass out a small sheet of paper to each student and ask them to write down three things that stood out for them from the activity (book discussion or optical illusion). Once the students have filled out their papers, they hand it in as they exit the room, leaving evidence of what the students learned.

The second goal in the peer context is to help students manage stress and conflict. To address this goal, administrators and counselors could implement a diverse peer mediation program. Selecting and training peer mediators from all ethnic groups present in the school is a strategy that allows students to learn basic conflict resolution skills and trains students who can see peer conflicts through a cultural lens. A fight between two immigrant boys might look like a simple playground game that escalated, but a peer mediator from the same ethnic group might be able to sense a larger within-group conflict that requires attention. A mediator who was at the commitment stage of ethnic identity could describe to others his or her own struggle with the ethnic identity process, thus acting as a role model. Having a peer leader who could normalize ethnic identity development could help to relieve pressure surrounding the process and could connect students to others who have similar life experiences and could offer guidance. Having peer mediators trained by or in communication with the administrative team also gives them legitimacy and improves the flow of information to the school leadership.

Measuring the outcome efficacy of peer mediators is commonly done through the use of teacher reports. Peer mediation is likely to be implemented when there is an identified maladaptive incident or pattern taking place in class; hence, teacher-identified behaviors would be an obvious target to determine if the methods are working. The counselor may want to schedule a weekly meeting with the classroom teacher to see if the teacher is noticing any differences in behaviors in his or her class. If the teacher reports that problem behaviors are decreasing between students, then this could be an indication that peer mediation is successful.

School Context

For many children with immigrant parents, adults at the school become critical figures in their process of cultural socialization to U.S. academic expectations, social norms, and career and educational planning (Park-Taylor et al., 2007). When parents have less fluency in English than their children or less exposure to U.S. educational systems, they rely even more on school counselors and teachers to show their children ways to succeed in school (Gonzalez, Stein, & Huq, 2013; Villalba, Akos, Keeter, & Ames, 2007). Researchers have noted that caring relationships with adults in the school community have the potential to buffer against emotional stressors, affirm competence and self-worth, and provide critical information for Latino students so they can stay engaged with school and move forward successfully (Green, Rhodes, Hirsch, Suárez-Orozco, & Camic, 2008). Unfortunately, immigrant students often have difficulty accessing these supportive relationships, whether due to language barriers, scarce

resources at their schools, or stereotypes about their educational motivation. This lack of support impacts ethnic identity when school practices reinforce biased views of a cultural group, causing members and others to doubt their capabilities. The role of school administrators is critical in this regard, to set expectations that counselors and teachers will be culturally appropriate and respectful in their interactions with all student populations and that they will dedicate the time to establish channels of communication with immigrant students and families (Aydın, Bryan, & Duys, 2012).

Goals for Personal/Social and Ethnic Identity Development

Creating positive public regard for diverse groups in the school has the potential to offset stereotypes and foster a sense of cohesion and connectedness between students and staff. One goal for increasing student competencies (ASCA, 2004; see Table 1) is to help students identify and learn how to use effective communication with other individuals and groups in the school (PS. A2.6) and learn to use communication skills to ask for help when needed (A.A2.3). Improved communication among all groups present in the schools will promote a schoolwide atmosphere that respects and appreciates different cultures, languages, and traditions (PS.A2.4). The second goal for the school context is focused on identifying cultural brokers who can improve understanding and communication schoolwide (PS.C1.6). Cultural brokers are individuals who are familiar with both the U.S. culture and the ethnic culture of origin of the immigrant students. Cultural brokers may be ESL teachers, translators/interpreters, parents who are active and take leadership roles, community or religious leaders, and so on. For example, if counselors and teachers learn to work with cultural brokers as resource people in the school and community, their ability to perform their own functions will improve.

Suggested Activities

Goal one relates to schoolwide communication and systemic access to resources. Newly immigrated students may feel isolated in school, afraid to share their experiences with others, and unsure of how to ask for help (Williams & Butler, 2003). These individuals may benefit from being in small groups with other adolescents of the same ethnicity or others at the same stage of ethnic identification to talk about their struggles and learn from each other in a safe environment (Malott, Paone, Humphreys, & Martinez, 2010). Such a group could be beneficial both to the students within the group and also to the school counselor, who could learn about factors that might be impeding communication in the school. For example, if immigrant students in such a group all shared that they felt embarrassed to read out loud in class, the school counselor could work with teachers to find a new way of conducting class assignments

so that all children felt respected while still being engaged in the lesson. In this way, school counselors could help immigrant students improve their private regard for their ethnic group, while working with teachers to make the school environment welcoming for all, promoting positive public regard among cultural groups (Sellers et al., 1998).

Measuring the effectiveness of this small group could be done with the use of simple Likert-scale questionnaires. Counselors could use preestablished questionnaires or could easily create their own and then track the progress of students who are in the group. A simple behavioral questionnaire could contain items such as "I asked a question in class this week"; "I asked for help from my teacher when I needed it"; "I turned in my homework on time this week"; and "I studied for my tests/quizzes." Consistently tracking these behaviors can give concrete proof to the school counselor that students are changing the way they interact in class after being placed in the small group. This evidence can be used as a basis for why this small group is beneficial to student engagement and therefore needs to continue through future years.

Another example related to promoting positive schoolwide communication calls for the counselor or administrator to utilize consultation. Enlisting the services of cultural brokers (as described previously) can improve the school's relationship and communication with the ethnic community, increase the counselor's and administrator's awareness of the ethnic group's values and traditions, and help counselors consult with teachers and administrators in a more skilled manner. For example, school counselors could collaborate with a chosen cultural broker and conduct an in-service for teachers centered on promoting cultural understanding.

Teacher classroom behaviors set the tone for establishing positive or negative public regard for the immigrant groups that are present (Green et al., 2008; Stone & Han, 2005). Counselors could provide an in-service for teachers about variations in cultural norms and correct any misperceptions regarding the ethnic groups present in the class. For example, some collectivist cultures promote harmony over individual accomplishment, so it would be helpful for teachers to recognize that when some students do not actively ask for help in class, it may be due to their cultural values and not an act of defiance (Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2005). This provides a learning opportunity where the teacher could explain to the student how to communicate his or her needs and also listen for the student's preferred style of interacting rather than developing a negative perception about students from that ethnic group.

To test the effectiveness of this in-service presentation, school counselors could use survey-creating software (such as surveymonkey.com) to create a pre- and post-test of what teachers are aware of in terms of the culture of their

students. Surveymonkey.com is an especially useful website because it allows users to create surveys with true/false, Likert scale, and open ended questions, and using the software for small scale projects is typically free. Teachers could be asked to take a survey prior to the in-service training provided by the counselor and then asked to take the same survey again after the conclusion of the training. The differences between pre- and post-training responses could provide the counselor with evidence for why the in-service is useful in shaping the attitudes of teachers towards students and their ethnic groups.

Summary

Adult members of the school community are in a powerful position to create programs within the school that can positively affect the development of ethnic identity in immigrant students. Using the ASCA-based activities described in this article, administrators, counselors, and teachers could promote positive ethnic identity development and personal/social skills for immigrant and nonimmigrant youth alike. This is particularly important for immigrant youth as they face multiple adjustments when their families arrive in the U.S., and their parents may not be in a position to aid them in all of their transitions. If the school community environment encourages cultural competence among the school staff, integrates cultural perspectives from the families, and supports cultural exploration and acceptance among peers, the process of ethnic identity development can proceed. We have suggested activities that can encourage both individual exploration of culture and intergroup exchanges, so that positive regard between ethnic groups can be encouraged. The types of positive outcomes described in the literature review (e.g., improved adjustment, coping, self-regard) are helpful for students in their social, personal, and academic tasks, and thus worth the time and effort it might take school staff to adopt these practices. Space did not permit full exploration of how ethnic identity could also support movement toward academic and career development of students, but this would be an important next step (ASCA, 2004).

It is worth mentioning some common strategies that school communities may already be using to promote acceptance of ethnic groups. For example, students can share how they celebrate holidays that may be different from the majority culture. American students are familiar with Halloween, but some students may not be familiar with the Mexican celebration of Dia de los Muertos, for example. Talking about holidays gives the entire school community a window into both "surface-level culture," which includes food, music, or celebration, and "deep-level culture," or what people from a certain culture believe to be polite, respectful, and honorable (Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2005). Being

able to involve all three key contexts (i.e., family, peers, and school) in programmatic efforts could increase the chances of positive impact. Future research and practice can examine which activities have the most impact on ethnic exploration and commitment or which provide a school environment where private and public ethnic regard for all groups is promoted. While school counselors may initiate or lead several of the activities described in this article, the intent was to describe ways that all adults employed in the school could contribute toward a healthy personal/social environment that would connect children from immigrant families with the other students in the school community.

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