

Understanding The Impacts of Social Interaction For Immigrant Youth



Research Question ?

How does the transition and adjustment into a new culture, society and system affect Immigrant youth's ability to create social bonds and interactions with others?

Abstract

Using sociological research I explore social bonding and interaction of immigrant youth. Student's interactions in school are dependent on the school setting, proximity of people, teacher's involvement and shared identities. In my research, I will focus on social relationships and how relationships are formed in a school setting, thus displaying the significance of social interaction for immigrant youth. This research also analyzes the challenges faced as they affect Immigrant youth's ability to feel socially included or excluded, and how it alters peer dynamics. My research will illustrate themes and connecting around the framework of cultural identities and racialized bodies.

Challenges Immigrant Youth Face

- Interacting with other peers
- Forming healthy and positive relationships
- Understanding and learning new curriculum
- Overcoming language barrier and cultural differences
- Feeling included and a part of the classroom and school community

Methods

Two Semi-Structured interviews were used to gather data. This data was gathered in Toronto, Ontario by two teachers employed in the York Catholic District School Board teaching Grade 2 and 3.

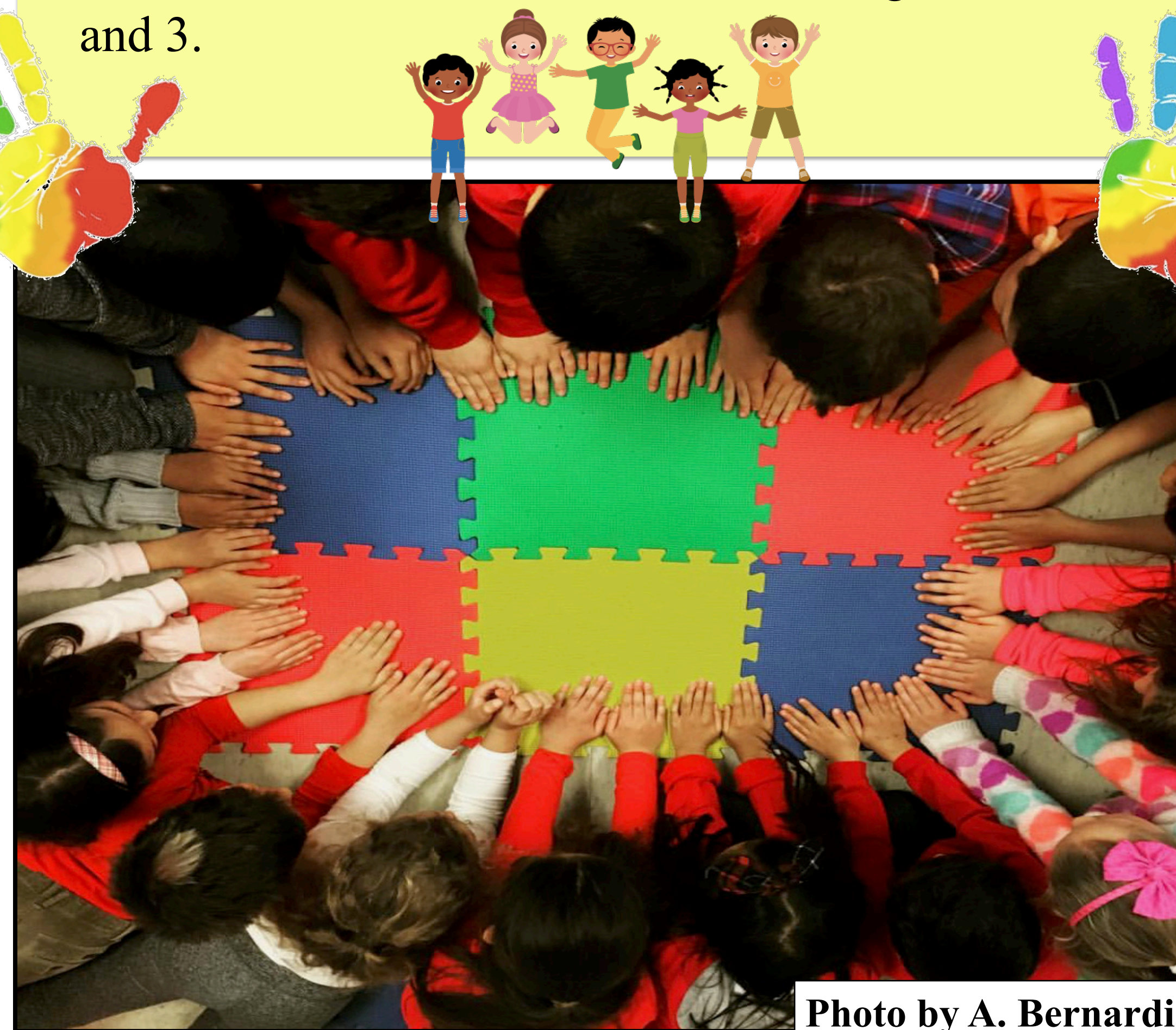


Photo by A. Bernardi

Important Quotes

“A teacher plays a key role in encouraging social interaction between Immigrant students and others through guided activities and group work.”

- Interviewee #2

“Facilitating group work so that students are integrated all together, sharing ideas show other students that that Immigrant youth **DO** in fact have something to contribute.”

- Interviewee #1

Findings

- Immigrant youth of visible minority experience difficulty when making friends with other students
- Social bonds are a longer process for Immigrant youth
- Language barriers and cultural differences in classrooms impact Immigrant youth's social interaction
- ESL classrooms can benefit students educationally, however teachers recognize how being separated from peers may cause social exclusion
- Both interviews express how as a teacher it is critical to encourage Immigrant youth to become involved in school clubs/activities. They both notice that participating in these help Immigrant youth to feel socially included and socially interact with others

Next Steps: To Encourage Positive Social Interaction

- Facilitate interaction between classmates by playing simple games that do not require a lot of language (For example: sports or Zumba)
- Teaching the virtues of compassion, empathy and responsibility
- Reading social stories that portray different themes related to other cultures and languages
- Prompting discussions during Family Life that discuss the themes of friendship, relationships, community and building connections