

Materials Review

**Creating a sense of belonging for immigrant and refugee students:
Strategies for K-12 educators**

**Mandy Manning, Ivonne Orozco Sahi, Leah Juelke, & Sarahí
Monterrey, Routledge, 2022. 224 pp.**

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Socio-emotional learning is a critical element of any classroom. Four nationally recognized educators, Mandy Manning, Ivonne Orozco Sahi, Leah Juelke, and Sarahí Monterrey, describe ways to support emergent bilingual students in their socio-emotional well-being. In *Creating a Sense of Belonging for Immigrant and Refugee Students: Strategies for K-12 Educators*, published by Routledge in 2022, these educators provide practical strategies and vignettes of inspiration for all those working with multilingual students. This book review provides commentary on the significance of this text for K-12 educators. It details the major themes of the book and describes socio-emotional and academic supports for emergent bilinguals.

New York State educators should have knowledge of emergent bilingual-specific needs and experiences. During the 2017-2018 school year, 10.4% of New York State students were classified as multilingual learners (New York State Education Department, 2019). New York State funding of Afghan resettlement and waves of Ukrainian refugees have increased the number of multilingual learners even more (Governor Kathy Hochul, 2021; Jordan et al., 2022). According to Manning, Sahi, Juelke, and Monterrey, these multilingual, immigrant, and refugee students will need specific instruction and support to become successful in their new schooling contexts. *Creating a Sense of Belonging* describes practical ways for educators to support these students' socio-emotional well-being and narrates emotional experiences they have had with their students.

The text begins with an introduction and then includes four sections, each written by one of the authors. The introduction is penned by Manning, 2018 National Teacher of the Year and former teacher of newcomer immigrants from Washington State. Here, Manning introduces a common theme threaded throughout the text: educators should use "language as a vehicle for connection and culture" (Manning et al., 2022, p. 4). Connecting with students is critical for their socio-emotional well-being, but connecting with immigrant and refugee students may require educators to adjust their routine teaching practices. This book provides many examples of how teachers can do this. The book includes both practical classroom applications for those working with emergent bilinguals and personal narratives of educators who are bilingual themselves.

Creating a Sense of Belonging is a helpful read for K-12 educators because it provides practical classroom applications. For example, Juelke, a secondary English

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Language Arts teacher from North Dakota, details critical information about how to plan sheltered instruction in content area classrooms, including details from the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP). Also, the four authors collaborated with a concluding chapter on how to support multilingual students during remote instruction. Woven throughout the text are classroom projects that the authors have worked on with their students. These classroom applications provide practical ideas of how K-12 educators can engage their multilingual students.

Additionally, this book includes narratives of educators who are bilingual themselves. Sahi, a secondary Spanish teacher from New Mexico, shares her experiences as an immigrant from Mexico and an emergent bilingual teenager. Sahi's narrative offers both the perspective of a newcomer student and an educator of emergent bilinguals. It is especially interesting to read about Sahi's conflict as she loses her Spanish fluency as an adolescent while struggling to gain full English understanding. Monterrey, a secondary English as a New Language (ENL) teacher from Wisconsin, also shares her experience as an immigrant from El Salvador. For K-12 educators who are not bilingual, reading the experiences of Sahi and Monterrey provide a unique and important perspective to consider.

By reading this book, educators learn more about how to teach immigrant and refugee students. Each of these sections provide concrete examples of academic and socio-emotional activities that can support immigrant and refugee students. For example, peer teaching allows students to take a leadership role and teach their classmates about a topic that they are experts in. Another example is project-based instruction, such as Native Country Presentations, where students present information about their culture and language. Both instructional activities enhance multilingual students' socio-emotional skills, as the activities can promote a sense of belonging and pride. The authors also include elements of sheltered instruction in their recommendations, which can support students' academic and language knowledge.

Educators should also read this book to reflect on their practice. Embedded in each chapter are reflection questions that are designed for practicing K-12 educators. These questions can be for individual reflection or for groups of educators to discuss. For example, Monterrey's Building Relationships with Families chapter includes the question "What systems are in place at your school to provide families with information in their native language?" (Manning et al., 2022, p. 143). These questions allow readers to contemplate how the authors' experiences could influence their schooling contexts. The inclusion of these questions is a strength of the book, as they allow educators who may know less about multilingual students to have specific questions to ponder.

While this text includes a variety of perspectives, it should be noted that each of the authors is a secondary educator. There are few recommendations specific to elementary classroom settings. This is surprising, as the title notes that the book includes "strategies for K-12 educators." An additional author with elementary experience would have enhanced this text. However, despite this critique, this book is rich in its narrative. It is a worthwhile read for any K-12 educator who is seeking more information on social-emotional support for emergent bilingual, immigrant, and refugee students. By having practical strategies and reflection questions woven throughout, educators of multilinguals will be able to connect easily with this book. It is currently available on the Routledge website for \$38.95.

Nicole Sandretto is a PhD in Literacy student at the University at Albany. She currently works as an ENL teacher in the Lewiston-Porter Central School District. She is interested in researching assessment bias with emergent bilingual students, particularly at the elementary level.

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