

Abstract

Operation fusion: Blending culture and health in refugee and immigrant youth

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Background: Studies show that immigrants and refugees face resettlement and acculturation challenges that stem from language and cultural barriers. Within this process, researchers found that a sense of belonging and self-agency are major components that influence immigrant/refugee youth's resilience against adversities relating to acculturation. Additionally, culturally diverse schools that engage in intercultural learning foster more inclusive identities for the refugee youth, promoting more positive relations between the refugee and the local community.

Purpose: Operation Fusion focuses on using cultural diversity as a strength. Las Americas Newcomer School seeks to help recent immigrant/ refugee students acclimate into the U.S. education system. Thus, the goal of Operation Fusion is to educate and empower these students to blend culture and health, build self-agency, and learn to use their diversity as an asset in their daily lives.

Methods: In partnership with Amaanah Refugee Services and the Albert Schweitzer Fellowship, Operation Fusion has successfully conducted a second year of sessions with 25 students with limited English proficiency. Weekly sessions led by volunteers cover a variety of health themes and are delivered through interactive activities. Journals and surveys were also utilized to assess students' learning while serving as a tool for students to build English literacy.

Discussion: Operation Fusion has shown success through an observed increase in students' health knowledge, confidence, engagement, self-agency, and English literacy. This presentation examines how Operation Fusion's program structure promotes the fusion of culture, health, and identity and has led to positive trends observed among the students' learning.

Advocacy for health and health education Assessment of individual and community needs for health education
Diversity and culture Implementation of health education strategies, interventions and programs Planning of
health education strategies, interventions, and programs Program planning