Universal Standards for Developing Curricula for Migrant Children: A Model from Beijing

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Abstract

As rapid urbanization and development push and pull migrant communities into the world's cities, we find a growing population of migrant children whose educational needs are complex, inconsistent between individuals, and evolving. For educators who develop curriculum for migrant children, the challenge of balancing migrant children's needs persists; there is a need for a clear curricular framework for which skills are most useful to migrant children. Such a tool benefits any educator tasked with planning an academic curriculum for migrant children, whether a volunteer at a remote NPO or a public school teacher whose school's demographics are chaning. This paper is presented in three parts. The first is a condensation of recommendations from scholars of curriculum development, economists, and government agencies made to improve the education of migrant children at the curricular level. Part two, drawing from the conclusions drawn above, provides a curricular framework of scaffolded objectives based on non-cognitive skills related to discourse community development, critical thinking, and self-reinforcing motivation towards both learning and agency. The Migrant Children Curricular Standards (MCCS) are designed to help those who write curriculum for migrant populations, no matter their academic dicipline, in order to suit the needs of migrant students. Part three demonstrates the usefulness of MCCS using the model of Beijing's largest NGO for migrant children, the Migrant Children's Foundation (MCF). MCF's English as a second language curriculum as an exemplar of how MCCS can help guide educators globally toward the end of effectively educating migrant children.

Keywords: migrant children, curriculum development, theory into practice, constructivism, equity, integration, China