

Learning08: Methodologies and Practices for Approaching Learning as a Social Phenomenon Inside and Outside of School

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What can lead Israeli-Ethiopian students en route for academic success?

This study was conducted in an Israeli teachers' college during three academic years, 2006 till 2008. The students have been enrolled in various courses and types of studies, i.e., pre academic and academic classes, as well as continuing education programs. Some of the classes have been designed as special classes only for students who emigrated from Ethiopia to Israel.

Research into the migration of humans and the continuing evolution of various cultures opens up vast areas of potential inquiry especially for students, and helps them re-imagine their emigrational status in the world in terms of the incessant movements of people, culture and ideas. This research area is a broad one, so that its topics have been selected and developed in ways that could expose for us the best use of students' talents and abilities in the modern Israeli society. Whether this research is in point of well-known emigration factors in the world in the era of globalization, or focusing on a little-known individual from a small community, students have been asked about their lives and their experience, in order to determine the significance of these components, which show development over time, and could be relevant for other young emigrants.

To understand the social-historical importance of their experience, students have been asked questions of time and place, cause and effect, change over time, and significance. They have been asked not only when did events happen but also why did they happen. What factors contributed to their personal and social development? What was the lasting influence on their personal and family's life? How did this experience change the course of events? What effect did it have on a community, society, nation or the world? Did the new ideas complement or challenge older cultural patterns? And how did ideas travel?

This study discusses the principles for developing effective learning contexts for immigrants' students and profiles a program that should be implemented in academic environments, as an outcome of the students' answers to the questionnaire. Such a program could be successful in promoting the academic success of the immigrants' students, by implementing the principles that we assume that are necessary for improving their achievements.