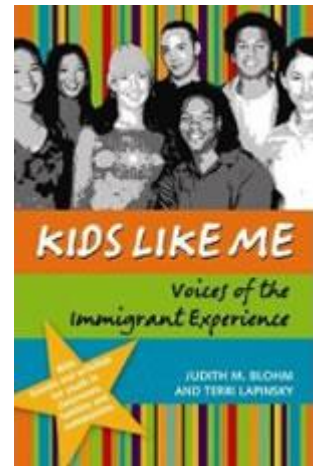


Book reviews

Reviewer [George Simons](#), SIETAR member
Review May 2006
Author Judith M. Blohm and Terri Lapinsky
Title Kids Like Me: Voices of the Immigrant Experience
Publisher [Nicholas Brealey/Intercultural Press](#)
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At a time when immigration is being debated hotly on both sides of the Atlantic, Judith Blohm and Terri Lapinsky have provided a timely tool for educating US children about each other—and in the process, teachers, parents and other members of society.

Kids Like Me consists of two parts. First there are 26 four or five-page personal stories told by immigrant kids who are growing up or are just becoming young adults in the USA. They tell about such things as their names, where they are from, what cultural customs, values, behaviors even feasts and foods that they and their families brought with them to the USA. More importantly they also tell about the challenges of fitting into a new culture and a new society and both the painful and glorious moments of their integration. This is true both of the immigrant children who come from positions of social privilege as well as those who arrived on US shores as refugees or even as children of illegal immigrants.

Blohm and Lapinsky take nothing for granted in processing the stories. Each story is followed by half a dozen or so questions that encourage the student to understand words and features of the story that are not immediately apparent to those who have not shared this immigration experience. Then there are a couple of research assignments that round out the background or context of the kids' stories. These may be historical, geographical or about cultural customs and send the student to the books or to the Internet to find and discuss the answers. Finally there are activities related to the stories which send the learner to the resources in Part Two of the book.

Part Two of the book is entitled, “Activities and Resources,” but it is in fact much more than that. It is a basic course in intercultural communication and living, brought directly to the level of the student. This facilitates the teacher’s task of giving the bigger perspective in bite-sized and digestible form. Activities are also analyzed for how they fit with various audiences in school or community. Far from being academic, the lessons of Part Two are reinforced by useful exercises and discussion of the actualities of immigration, refugee status, and the various ways that newcomers can be welcomed and integrated into their local society.

Finally there is an ample and up-to-date collection of resources in the form of organizational contacts, printed and online materials.

The author's agenda is large but feasible. As addressed in the introduction the program of this book is an antidote to harmful stereotyping and provides tools to teacher, parents and others who are willing to both learn with and from the "kids" in their multicultural world. There is enough here both in terms of content and challenges to keep the book's users busy for many months.

The key to the success of the book is the guidance it offers us about encountering real people, and working our way through the inevitable stereotypes and myths that surround difference. Linking the classroom and the community means that this is a source of social education in the best sense of not just providing information but inviting social engagement in a way that education needs much more of. The authors are to be congratulated for their mastery of the dynamics of interculturality and their ability to take them to the level where they can be understood and put into practice by children, parents and teachers