

STRUCTURING OPPORTUNITY FOR IMMIGRATION ORIGIN CHILDREN

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Abstract

Immigrant origin children are the fastest growing sector of public schools in many post-industrial countries. In this chapter we begin by reviewing key challenges that these students bring with them as they enter schools in their new lands. We draw on two studies to address how well schools are prepared to address the needs of recently arrived immigrant students. The first mixed-methods study followed 400 diverse recently arrived students for 5 years as they transitioned to their new land considering school, family, and individual factors. The findings from that study illuminated the cumulative challenges these youth encounter as well as the ways in which their educational environments often fail to meet their socio-emotional and educational needs. As not all schools are created equal, the other study used a multiple case study design of 4 promising schools in New York and Sweden, delineating practices that served immigrant students well.

Where migrant workers arrive, families often follow. Immigration, in its fullest sense, is about families, communities, and ultimately, the next generation. The children of immigrants are a fast-growing sector of the child and youth population in disparate high-income countries around the world such as Italy, Australia, Canada, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, and Sweden. In the United States, approximately a quarter of all youth is of immigrant origin (over 16 million in 2010) and it is projected that by 2030 over a third of all children will be growing up in immigrant households (Mather, 2009). Because of migration, schools all over the globe are serving children of increasingly diverse origins, not always successfully.

Immigration is the human face of globalization emerging in classrooms the world over. Schools in cities, large and small, from New York to Reggio Emilia, from Beijing to Barcelona, from Toronto to Sydney, are being transformed by growing numbers of immigrant children. In Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and the Hague, two-thirds of all children in schools come from immigrant-origin homes. In Paris, a third of children are of immigrant origin. In Copenhagen one fifth are of immigrant origin. In Milan a third of all children entering kindergarten are of immigrant origin. In New York City, children from over 190 countries and territories, speaking over 170

different languages, go to school every morning. Schools face the opportunity and challenge of educating growing numbers of diverse students. The global integration and disintegration of economies requires the nurturing of ever more complex skills, competencies, and sensibilities on students to equip them to engage in the globally-linked economies societies and to become globally conscious, competent citizens in the 21st Century.

There is wide variation in the adaptation of immigrants coming from many contexts with a range of resources, settling in an array of settings – some more welcoming than others. Adaptations and successful integration require reciprocal interactions between individuals and their environments over time (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006; Serdarevic & Chronister, 2005). Worryingly, and somewhat counter-intuitively, a pattern has emerged contradicting conventional expectations: first-generation immigrant populations demonstrate the best performance on a variety of *physical health* (Morales, Lara, Kington, Valdez, & Escarce, 2002), *behavioral health* (Pumariega, Rothe, & Pumariega, 2005; Takeuchi, Hong, Gile, & Alegría, 2007), and some *educational outcomes* (Fuligni & Witkow, 2004; García-Coll & Marks, 2011; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 1995), followed by a decline in subsequent generations. Thus, while many recently arrived immigrants face a wide range of stressors and risks (e.g., poverty, discrimination, fewer years of schooling, and social isolation), they do better than their counterparts remaining in the country of origin, as well as second-generation immigrants, on a wide range of outcomes (Alegría *et al.*, 2007; Corral & Landrine, 2008; García-Coll & Marks, 2011). Thus, the longer immigrants are within their new societies, the worse they appear to do. Over time, then, in many countries, we are failing in our tasks to embrace our newcomers as members of our societies.

Schools are the first setting where newcomer students are likely to have sustained contact with members of the host society. It is a space where they begin to learn the rules of engagement of their new land as well as the messages of reception of their hosts. Schools are the single most important elevator of social mobility in a knowledge intensive economy. Therefore how schools succeed or fail have clear implications for immigrants as well as our societies.

Chapter Aims

In this chapter we will begin by reviewing key challenges that immigrant origin students bring with them as they enter the schools in their new lands. We will provide some insights into ways in which schools typically misalign with immigrant students needs based on a longitudinal study of newcomer students. As not all schools are created equal, we will conclude with insights

into schools that serve as islands of opportunity for their immigrant origin students, identifying common denominators of such schools.

Recognizing the Challenges of Immigrant Students

Whether or not immigrant students will be successful in school is determined by a convergence of factors – *family capital* (including poverty, parental education, and whether or not they are authorized migrants), *student resources* (their socio-emotional challenges and their facility in acquiring a second language); and the kinds of *schools* that immigrant students encounter (school segregation, the language instruction they are provided, how well prepared their teachers are to provide services to the them). This complex constellation of variables serves to undermine or, conversely, bolster academic integration and adaptation.

Immigrant families arrive to their new land with distinct social and cultural resources (Perreira, Harris, and Lee, 2006). Their high aspirations (Fuligni, 2001; Portés and Rumbaut, 2001), dual frame of reference (Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco, 1995), optimism (Kao and Tienda, 1995), dedicated hard work, positive attitudes towards school (Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco, 1995), and ethic of family support for advanced learning (Li, 2004) contribute to the fact that some immigrant youth educationally out-perform their native-born peers (Perreira *et al.*, 2006). On the other hand, many immigrant youth encounter such a myriad of challenges – xenophobia, economic obstacles, language difficulties, family separations, under-resourced neighborhoods and schools, and the like – that they struggle to gain their bearings in an educational system that often puts them on a path of a downwards trajectory (Garcia-Coll & Marks, 2001; Portes and Zhou, 1993).

Immigrant youth arrive from multiple points of origin. Some are the children of educated professional parents while others have illiterate parents. Some receive excellent schooling in their countries of origin while others leave educational systems that are in shambles. Some escape political strife; others are motivated by the promise of better jobs while still others frame their migrations as an opportunity to provide better education for their children (Hagelskamp, Suárez-Orozco, and Hughes, 2010). Some are documented migrants while millions are unauthorized migrants (see Bean and Lowell, 2007; Suárez-Orozco, Yoshikawa, Teranishi, & Suárez-Orozco, 2011). Some join well-established communities with robust social supports while others move from one migrant setting to another (Ream, 2005). The educational outcomes of immigrant youth will vary considerably depending upon their network of resources (Portes and Rumbaut, 2001).

Family of Origin Capital

Poverty

Poverty has long been recognized as a significant risk factor for poor educational outcomes (Luthar, 1999; Weissbourd, 1996). Children raised in circumstances of socioeconomic deprivation are vulnerable to an array of distresses including difficulties concentrating and sleeping; anxiety and depression; as well as a heightened propensity for delinquency and violence. Those living in poverty often experience the stress of major life events as well as the stress of daily hassles that significantly impede academic performance (Luthar, 1999). Poverty frequently coexists with a variety of other factors that augment risks – such as single-parenthood, residence in neighborhoods plagued with violence, gang activity, and drug trade, as well as school environments that are segregated, overcrowded and poorly funded (Luthar, 1999). High poverty is also associated with high rates of housing mobility and concurrent school transitions, which is highly disruptive to educational performance (Gándara and Contreras, 2008). Although some immigrant students come from privileged backgrounds, large numbers suffer today from the challenges associated with poverty (Mather, 2009; Hernández, Denton, & Macartney, 2007; United Nations Development Programme, 2009).

Undocumented Status

An estimated 11.1 million immigrants live in the U.S. without authorization and of that population 78 percent are from Mexico and Latin America (Bean, 2007). Among the undocumented population in the U.S. 1.1 million are children or adolescents (Suárez-Orozco *et al.*, 2011). These undocumented youth often arrive after multiple family separations and traumatic border crossings (Suárez-Orozco, Todorova, and Louie, 2002). In addition, there are an estimated 4.5 million U.S. citizen children living in households headed by at least one undocumented immigrant (Passel, 2006). Unauthorized children and youth in households with unauthorized members live with fear and anxiety of being separated from family members, and that they or someone they love are apprehended or deported (Capps, Castañeda, Chaudry, and Santos 2007); such psychological and emotional duress can take a heavy toll on the academic experiences of children growing up these homes. Further, while unauthorized youth legally have equal access to K-12 education, they do not have equal access to either to health, social services, nor to jobs (Gándara and Contreras, 2008; Suárez-Orozco *et al.*, 2011). In addition, undocumented students with dreams of graduating from high school and going on to college will find that their legal status

stands in the way of their access to post-secondary educational opportunities (Suárez-Orozco *et al.*, 2008). Thus, immigrants who are unauthorized or who come from unauthorized families suffer both from a particular burden of both of unequal access as well as from the psychological burdens of growing up in the shadows of unauthorized status (Suárez-Orozco *et al.*, 2011).

Family Educational Background

Parental education matters. Highly literate parents are better equipped to guide their children in studying, accessing and make meaning of educational information. Children with more educated parents are exposed to more academically oriented vocabulary and interactions at home, and they tend to be read to more often from books that are valued at school (Goldenberg, Rueda, and August, 2006). They understand the value and have the resources to provide additional books, a home computer, Internet access, and tutors than less-educated parents. They are also more likely to seek information about how to navigate the educational system in the new land.

Unfortunately however, many immigrant parents have limited schooling (The National Task Force on Minority High Achievement, 1999). Moreover, low parental education is compounded by parents' limited language skills of the new land, which index the support children receive for learning the language of instruction at home (Páez, 2001). Such disadvantaged backgrounds will have implications for the educational transition – unsurprisingly, youth arriving from families with lower levels of education tend to struggle academically, while those who come from more literate families and with strong skills often flourish (Kasinitz, Mollenkopf, Waters, and Holdaway, 2008).

Immigrant parents, however, often do not possess the kind of “cultural capital” that serves middle-class mainstream students well (Perreira *et al.*, 2006); not knowing the dominant cultural values of the new society limits immigrant parents ability to provide an upward academic path for their children. Parental involvement is neither a cultural practice in their countries of origin nor a luxury that their financial situation in this country typically allows. They come from cultural traditions where parents are expected to respect teacher's recommendations rather than to advocate for their children (Delgado-Gaitan, 2004). Not speaking English and having limited education may make them feel inadequate. Lack of documentation may make them worry about exposure to immigration raids (Capps *et al.*, 2007). Low-wage low-skill jobs with off-hour shifts typically do not provide much flexibility to attend parent-teacher conferences and childcare. The impediments to coming to school are multiple and are frequently interpreted by teachers

and principals as “not valuing” their children’s education. Ironically, however, immigrant parents often frame the family narrative of migration around providing better educational opportunities to their children (Suárez-Orozco *et al.*, 2008). While they may care deeply about their children’s education and may often urge their students to work hard in school so they do not have to do hard physical labor as they do, immigrant parents frequently do not have first-hand experience in the host country’s school system or in their own native system (Lopez, 2001). They also have very limited social networks that could provide the educational resources to help them navigate the complicated college pathway system host country (Auerbach, 2004). Thus, they often have limited capacities to help their children successfully “play the educational game” in their new land.

Student Level Challenges

Socio-emotional Challenges

Migration is a transformative process with profound implications for the family as well as the potential for lasting impact on socio-emotional development (García Coll and Magnuson, 1997; Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco, 2001). By any measure, immigration is one of the most stressful events a family can undergo (Falicov, 1998; Suárez-Orozco, 2001) removing family members from predictable contexts – community ties, jobs, and customs and stripping them of significant social ties – extended family members, best friends, and neighbors. New arrivals who experienced trauma (either as prior to migrating or as secondary to the ‘crossing’) may remain preoccupied with the violence and may also feel guilty about having escaped when loved ones remained behind (Amnesty International, 1998; Lustig, Kia-Keating, Knight, Geltman, Ellis, Kinzie, Keane, and Saxe, 2004); those who are undocumented face the growing realities of workplace raids that can lead to traumatic and sudden separations (Capps *et al.*, 2007). For some immigrants, the dissonance in cultural expectations, the cumulative stressors, together with the loss of social supports lead to affective and somatic symptoms (Alegria *et al.*, 2007; Mendoza, Joyce, and Burgos, 2007). Many immigrant parents are relatively unavailable psychologically due to their own struggles in adapting to a new country, thus posing a developmental challenge to their children (Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco, 2001). The immigrant parents of immigrant youth, whether their children are of the first or second generation, often turn to them in navigating the new society. Children of immigrants are asked to take on ‘parentified’ roles including translation and advocacy (Faulstich-Orellana, 2001). Such tasks often fall more to on the shoulders of daughters, which

has both positive and negative consequences for their development (Suárez-Orozco *et al.*, 2005).

Immigrant children and youth also face the challenges of forging an identity and sense of belonging to a country that may reflect an unfamiliar culture while honoring the values and traditions of their parents (Berry, Phinney, Sam, and Vedder, 2006; Suárez-Orozco, 2004). Acculturative stress has been linked to high levels of intergenerational conflict as well as psychological and academic problems (Gibbs, 2003; Suarez-Orozco, 2000). They are often asked to take on responsibilities beyond their years including sibling care, translation, and advocacy (Faulstich-Orellana, 2001), which at times undermine parental authority. These often highly gendered roles may have both positive and negative consequences for development (Smith 2002; Suárez-Orozco and Qin-Hillard, 2004).

First generation immigrant youth face their parents' challenges of adjusting to a new context. They also, often, immigrate not simply to new homes but to new family structures (Suárez-Orozco *et al.*, 2002) as many are separated for long periods of time from their parents during the course of their migration (*ibid.*). Further, the first generation must learn a new language going through a difficult transition when they are unable to communicate their thoughts with ease; while some acquire competency over time, most are marked by accents, and others never gain proficiency (Mendoza *et al.*, 2007). The significant time it takes to acquire academic English presents significant educational as well as social challenges for immigrant students (Cummins, 1991; Suárez-Orozco *et al.*, 2008).

The second generation often has limited facility in their parents' native language (Portes and Hao, 1998), which present other challenges in maintaining communication at home with parents (Suárez-Orozco *et al.*, 2008). While immigrants and their first generation parents may share a lack of access to those who can guide them through the institutions of the unfamiliar dominant society, they are spared the challenges of pre-migratory trauma, status related stress, and family separations. On the other hand, they often face the stressors of poverty, typically in urban contexts (Noguera, 2003) without the protection of immigrant optimism (Kao and Tienda, 1995) and a dual frame of reference (Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco, 1995); the burden of forging a transcultural identity where they can navigate both their parents' culture and the dominant culture also falls more to them (Suárez-Orozco, 2004).

Data examining the wellbeing of immigrant origin populations in general and immigrants in particular across generations and ages reveals mixed results according to country of origin, developmental group, cohort, and

age of arrival as well as developmental outcome (Rumbaut, 2004; Takeuchi, Hong, Gile, and Alegria, 2007). While there is a fairly consistent “immigrant paradox” showing a decline across generations with greater length of residency for *physical health* outcomes and engagement in *risk behaviors*, the results are inconsistent in regards to the risk to *psychological health*. Further, the body of evidence on the immigrant health has focused on adults and families rather than on adolescents (Lansford, Deater-Deckard, and Bornstein, 2007; Taningco, 2007). Immigrant youth of refugee origin appear to be at greatest risk for affective disorders (Lustig *et al.*, 2004). Immigrant and immigrant adolescents show patterns of progressive risk-taking behaviors the longer they are exposed to U.S. culture (Vega, Alderete, Kolody, and Aguilar-Gaxiola, 1998). This is also the case for academic engagement – an increasingly important indicator of wellbeing in the knowledge intensive economy – also decreases across time across generation and with increasing time in the U.S., particularly for immigrants (Fuligni, 1997; Portes and Rumbaut, 2001; Sirin, 2005). Given the limited and mixed evidence on the developmental trajectories of this growing population of urban residing immigrant adolescents, more research on a variety of indicators of their wellbeing is needed using both qualitative and quantitative lenses.

Challenges of Language Acquisition. Many immigrant children experience difficulties with English in school. In 2000, about three-quarters (71 percent) of all children who spoke English less than “very well” were immigrants in Pre-Kindergarten to 5th grade (Capps *et al.*, 2005). A more recent survey in 2006 revealed that 18.4 percent of all immigrant school age children (5-17) spoke English with difficulty (Planty *et al.*, 2008). The struggle to speak English among immigrant students is not just a challenge for immigrant children. Among Pre-Kindergarten to 5th grade immigrant children in the U.S., 62 percent of foreign-born children spoke English less than “very well”, as well as 43 percent of the U.S. born children of immigrants and 12 percent of children of U.S. born immigrants (Capps *et al.*, 2005).

Learning a second language often takes a long time and being a competent language user at an academic takes even more. It has been well established that the complexity of oral and written academic English skills generally requires between 4 to 7 years of optimal academic instruction to develop academic second language skills comparative to native English speakers (Collier, 1987, 1995; Cummins, 1991, 2000). Struggles in language are well presented in LISA data; only 7 percent of the sample had developed academic English skills comparable to those of their native-born English-speaking peers after 7 years on average in the U.S. (Carhill, Suárez-Orozco, and Páez, 2008). Yet, immigrant ELLs do not typically encounter robust sec-

ond-language-acquisition educational programs, as noted earlier, and also often face individual disadvantages and structural linguistic isolations that may hinder their adequate academic English development.

Many immigrant students from strife-ridden or poverty-stricken countries enter schools in their new lands with little or no schooling, and they may not read or write well in their native languages (Hernández *et al.*, 2007). Research in second language acquisition suggests that when students are well grounded in their native language and have developed reading and writing skills in that language, they are able to efficiently apply that knowledge to the new language when provided appropriate instructional supports (August and Shanahan, 2006; Butler and Hakata, 2005). Many immigrant students do not enter schools with this advantage. Further immigrant ELL students often cannot receive support for learning English from their parents at home. Immigrant parents who have often limited education and limited language skills of the host country are unable to support host language learning contexts for their children (Capps *et al.*, 2005).

This state of linguistic isolation is a reality in the social contexts of many immigrant students who live in segregated neighborhoods. Many immigrants live in predominantly minority neighborhoods, which do not promise much direct contact with well-educated native English speakers. At school, ELL students in general and immigrant students in particular, are also often segregated from the native English speaking peers by being relegated to the basement or a wing of the school (Olsen, 1997). In many cases, children have almost no meaningful contact with English-speaking peers (Carhill *et al.*, 2008). Indeed, more than a third of the immigrant students in LISA study reported that they had little opportunity to interact with peers who were not from their country of origin, which no doubt contributed to their linguistically isolated state (Suárez-Orozco *et al.*, 2008). This isolation is clearly disadvantageous to immigrant ELL students by minimizing exposure to English they need to learn. Research suggests that sustained interactions with educated native speakers, particularly in informal situations (such as at work, with friends, in the cafeterias and hallways of school, and in neighborhood contexts) in peer and community contexts, predicts stronger academic second language proficiency outcomes (Carhill *et al.*, 2008; Jia and Aaronson, 2003). Without such contact, an important source of language modeling is missed.

Less-developed Academic English proficiency often masks actual skills and knowledge of immigrant second language learners. Even when second learners are able to participate and compete in mainstream classrooms, they often read more slowly than native speakers, may not understand double-

entendres and simply have not been exposed to the same words and cultural information of native-born middle-class peers. Their academic language skills may also not allow them to be easily engaged in academic contents and to perform well on “objective” assessments that designed for native English speakers. Taken together then, it is not surprising that limited English proficiency is often associated with lower GPAs, repeating grades, poor performance and standardized tests, and low graduation rates (Ruiz-de-Velasco and Fix, 2000; U.S. Department of Education, 2004).

School Contexts

Segregation

Segregation in neighborhoods and schools has negative consequences on academic success for minority students (Massey and Denton, 1993; Orfield and Lee, 2006; Orfield and Yun, 1999). In all but a few “exceptional cases under extraordinary circumstances, schools that are separate are still unquestionably unequal” (Orfield and Lee, 2006, p. 4). Nationally, immigrants tend to settle in highly segregated and deeply impoverished urban settings and attend the most segregated schools of any group in the U.S. today – in 1996, only 25 percent of immigrant students attended majority white schools (*ibid.*). The degree of segregation results in a series of consequences; in general, immigrants who settle in predominantly minority neighborhoods have virtually no direct, systematic, or intimate contact with middle-class white Americans. This in turn affects the quality of schools they attend, and the networks that are useful to access desirable colleges and jobs (Orfield, 1995; Portes, 1996).

Segregation for immigrant-origin students often involves isolation at the levels of race and ethnicity, poverty, and language – aptly named “triple segregation” (Orfield and Lee, 2006). These three dimensions of segregation have been associated with reduced school resources and to a variety of negative educational outcomes, including low expectations, difficulties learning English, lower achievement, greater school violence, and higher dropout rates (Gándara and Contreras, 2008). Such school contexts typically undermine students’ capacity to concentrate, their sense of security, and hence their ability to learn.

The Longitudinal Immigrant Student Adaptationⁱ (LISA), a mixed-methods, five-year longitudinal study that collected student, parent, teacher and student level data found a number of associations between triple segregation and more negative academic adaptation for recently arrived immigrant youth over the course of time (Suárez-Orozco *et al.*, 2008). Numerous negative qualities were associated with this level of segregation.

For example, when asked to relate their perceptions of school in the new country, many students spoke of crime, violence, gang activity, weapons, drug dealing, and racial conflicts. Students who attended highly segregated schools with high levels of perceived school violence were more likely to demonstrate patterns of academic disengagement and grade decline over time. Indicators of school inequality, including: percentages of inexperienced teachers as well as out-of-subject certification rate; greater than average school size; drop-out rate; daily attendance; higher than average suspension and expulsion rates; percentage of students performing below proficiency on the state-administered English language arts and math standardized tests; and a significant achievement gap on the standardized exam between one or more ethnic groups that attend the school, were linked to these highly segregated schools and consequently lower student performance. Indicators of school segregation and violence were consistent with poor performance school-wide on standardized tests across the immigrant groups. Mexican, Central American, and Dominican were most likely to attend highly segregated schools. At the group level, the LISA study found that only 20 percent of Dominican and Central American students, and 16 percent of Mexican students in low quality schools, reached proficiency level or higher on the federally mandated, state-wide English language arts exam. There was also a significant relationship between segregated schools and individual achievement outcomes, including both grades and students' standardized achievement test scores (Suárez-Orozco *et al.*, 2008).

Segregation places students at a significant disadvantage as they strive to learn a new language, master the necessary skills to pass high-stakes tests, accrue graduation credits, get into college, and attain the skills needed to compete in workplaces increasingly shaped by the demands of the new global economy. Unfortunately, all too many schools that serve the children of immigrants, like schools that serve our other disadvantaged students, are those that are seemed designated to teach "other people's children" (Delpit, 1995). Such segregated, sub-optimal schools offer the very least to those who need the very most structuring and reinforcing inequality (Oakes, 1985).

Second Language Instruction. The majority of immigrant students must learn a new language in their journey to their new land; as such, second language instruction is a critical component to ensuring their academic success (Batalova, Fix, and Murray, 2007). Frequently, students are placed in some kind of second language instructional setting as they enter their new school (Gándara and Contreras, 2008). Students are then transitioned out of these settings in various schools, districts, and states with very little rhyme or reason for transition (Suárez-Orozco *et al.*, 2008; Thomas and Collier,

2002). Research considering the efficacy of second language instruction and bilingual programs reveals contradictory results. This should not be surprising given that there are nearly as many models of bilingual and language assistance programs of a wide array of practices and programs as well as philosophical approaches (Thomas and Collier, 2002) as there are districts. Well-designed and implemented programs offer good educational results and buffer at risk students from dropping out by easing transitions, providing academic scaffolding, and providing a sense of community (Padilla, Lindholm, Chen, Duran, Hakuta, Lambert, and Tucker, 1991).

There is, however, a huge disparity in quality of instruction between settings. While it has been well demonstrated that high quality programs produce excellent results, not surprisingly those plagued with problems (August and Hakuta, 1997; Thomas and Collier, 2002) produce less than optimal results. Many bilingual programs, unfortunately, face real challenges in their implementation characterized by inadequate resources, uncertified personnel, and poor administrative support. Perhaps the most common problem in the day-to-day running of bilingual programs is the dearth of fully certified bilingual teachers who are trained in second language acquisition and who can serve as proper language models to their students (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). Because many bilingual programs are ambivalently supported throughout the nation, they simply do not offer the breadth and depth of courses immigrant students need to get into a meaningful college track. Hence, there is an ever-present danger that once a student enters the “second language” or “bilingual” track, she will have difficulty switching to the college-bound track. The mission of the schools is often not focused on meeting the needs of newcomer students – at best they tended to be ignored and at worst they were viewed as a problem contributing to low performance on state mandated high-stakes tests (Suárez-Orozco *et al.*, 2008).

Teacher Expectations. In schools that serve immigrant students we commonly find cultures of low teacher expectations where what is sought and valued by teachers is student compliance rather than curiosity or student cognitive engagement (Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco, & Todorova, 2008; Conchas, 2001). Low teacher expectations shape the educational experience and outcomes of their students in fundamental ways beyond simply exposing them to low educational standards (Weinstein, 2002). Classrooms and schools typically sort students into those who are thought to be talented versus those who are thought to be less so. These expectations may be made based on impressions of individual capabilities, but are often founded upon stereotyped beliefs about their racial, ethnic, and socio-economic back-

grounds as well (e.g., “Asian students are smart and hard-working” while “immigrant students are not”). Students are very well aware of the perceptions that teachers have of them; well-regarded students receive ample positive social mirroring (or reflections and feedback) about their capacity to learn and thus are more likely to redouble their efforts (Suárez-Orozco, 2000). Students who are found wanting on any combination of these characteristics, however, tend to either become invisible in the classroom or are actively disparaged. Under these circumstances, only the most resilient of students tend to remain engaged. Immigrant students from families who do not always share the culture of the teachers who teach them are particularly susceptible to such negative expectations and poor outcomes (Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco, 2001).

Adaptations Over Time – Findings from the Longitudinal Immigrant Student Adaptation Study

How are schools doing in helping newcomers adapt over time? The data reported here were derived from the Longitudinal Immigration Student Adaptation (LISA) study – a five-year longitudinal studyⁱⁱ that used interdisciplinary and comparative approaches, mixed-methods, and triangulated data in order to document patterns of adaptation among 407 recently-arrived immigrant youth from Central America, China, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, and Mexico. Ecological (Bronfenbrenner, & Morris, 1998) and segmented-assimilation (Portes & Zhou, 1993) theories informed the conceptual framing of this study.ⁱⁱⁱ We deepened our examined academic trajectories of performance by using a complementary mixed-methods strategy (Hammersley, 1996). Latent growth modeling was used to describe trajectories of performance over time. Multinomial logistic regression was used to delineate associations between indicators of family capital, school characteristics, and individual characteristics to academic trajectories. We implemented multiple case studies to uncover unanticipated causal links, which quantitative data do not reveal, and to shed light on the developmental and interactional processes at play (Yin, 2003). This mixed-methods approach allowed us to triangulate our findings and deepened our understanding of the ecological challenges recently arrived immigrant adolescent youth encounter as they enter their new schools (*For more details on this project see Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco, & Todorova, 2008 and Suárez-Orozco, Gaytán, Bang, Rhodes, Pakes & O’Connor, 2011*).

Latent class growth modeling revealed five distinct trajectories of performance for the recently arrived students (*see Suárez-Orozco, et al., 2008 for details*). We examined the contributing role of several family capital fac-

tors, school characteristics, and individual characteristics using multinomial logistic regression analyses (see *Suárez-Orozco, et al., 2011, for details*). These analyses established factors that distinguished trajectories including: having two adults in the household, school segregation and school poverty, student's perceptions of school violence, academic English proficiency, reported psychological symptoms, gender, and being over-aged for grade. A multiple case study approach (Yin, 2003) triangulated and validated many of these quantitative findings. The multiple case study approach “capture[d] the complexity of the experiences” (Foster & Kalil, 2007, p. 831) across school and home contexts, allowing us to make cross-case conclusions, and revealed patterns that did not emerge simply from the descriptive data nor from the multinomial regressions.

Trajectories of Performance

Five trajectories emerged from the analyses (Suárez-Orozco *et al.*, 2008) (See *Figure 1 below*).

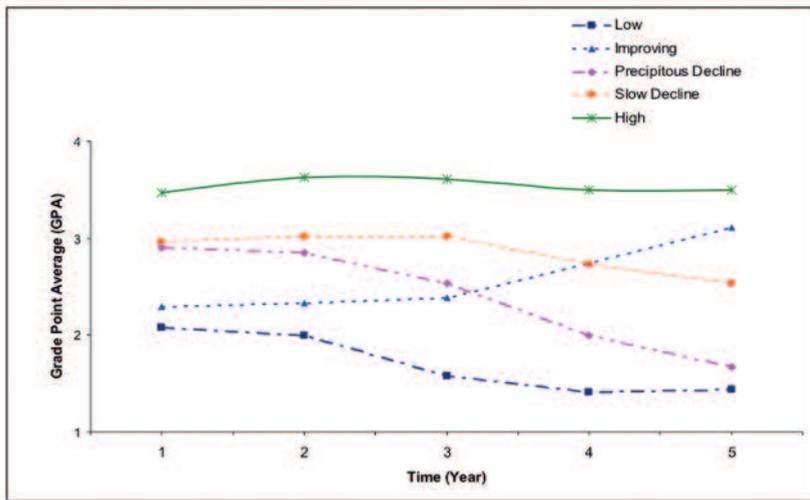


Figure 1. GPA Performance Trajectories.

Approximately a quarter of the participants did remarkably well academically. These *High Achievers* started out as high performers and maintained high achievement through the course of the 5 years of the study. High Achievers demonstrated predictable advantages in family capital and family structure associated with academic achievement (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Madaus &

Clarke, 1998; Sirin & Rogers-Sirin, 2005). Relative to the other groups, High Achievers attended schools that were the least segregated and had the fewest students qualifying for free lunch. They had the strongest English language skills and were the most engaged in their studies.

The academic performance of nearly two-thirds of the sample declined over the course of the study. Approximately a quarter of the participants were *Slow Decliners*, demonstrating a waning in performance of approximately a half of a grade over 5 years. The analyses of our multiple-case studies data set allowed us to code for unanticipated patterns, which revealed that in many cases, a premature transition into a demanding academic setting led to a downward trend in grades. Often we would see a recently arrived student put in a Herculean effort in a fairly sheltered setting, one which was not particularly demanding academically, and achieve high grades in that setting. After two or three years, students would then be transferred into a more demanding academic setting. However, they did not necessarily have the requisite academic English skills in place and received little in the way of social or academic supports while making that transition. This academic context would lead to a drop in grades as well as a highly stressful academic voyage. Some young people swam against these strong currents, eventually getting to the other side, but others had trouble sustaining the energies it took to do so (Suárez-Orozco *et al.*, 2008).

More alarming was the grade-and-a-half drop that *Precipitous Decliners* (who comprised 27.8% of the sample) experienced. The multinomial logistic regressions indicate that these students struggled with multiple school and background impediments. They attended low quality schools and had poor English language proficiency. In addition, *Precipitous Decliners* were the most likely of all the groups to report psychological symptoms both at the beginning and end of the study – clearly, these issues took their toll. The case studies revealed that many of these students had difficult pre-migratory histories (hardship abroad and long separations from parents) and arrived to complicated circumstances (difficult reunifications, less than optimal neighborhoods and schools) once they arrived to their new land. Students who were initially engaged in their schoolwork had difficulty maintaining this engagement for long in far from optimal and often hostile school environments (Suárez-Orozco *et al.*, 2008). Few had adult supports or academic models, though they sometimes had active social lives with peers. Although the majority of *Precipitous Decliners* arrived with great hopes and dreams, they could not sustain them in the face of cumulative adversity.

Another 14.4% of our participants – the *Low Performers* started out with low performance and declined further over time. Low achieving students

tended to arrive to their new land with a series of significant challenges. The quantitative data showed that these students had families with the least resources. Their English skills were weak, and they admitted to the least academic engagement, which distinguished them from all of the other trajectories. Their low engagement was not surprising given that school segregation and poverty, indicators of poor quality schools, also separated them from all of the other performance trajectories. The multiple case study analyses added further insights into the role of interrupted schooling, lengthy family separations, undocumented status, and barren social worlds in the poor academic performance of these youth. The *Low Achievers* simply never found their academic bearings and found the lure of work both economically more viable and a salve to their egos.

The remaining 11% of the students – the *Improvers* – started out quite low but over the course of time, overcame their initial “transplant shock” and reached nearly the same levels of achievement as the *High Achievers*. With these participants, the quantitative data revealed that they tended to be more engaged and attend less problematic schools than their counterparts who precipitously declined or who achieved poorly. The multiple case studies, however, provided evidence that there were other distinguishing patterns among these recently arrived immigrants. Many had sustained some sort of pre-migratory trauma. They had undergone long family separations and problematic initial family reunifications. To their advantage, they tended to settle into schools that provided them a healthy fit with their developmental needs (Eccles *et al.*, 1993). Over time, many found mentors and community supports that guided them in their journeys in their new land, and who arguably contributed to their academic engagement (Suárez-Orozco *et al.*, 2008).

Thus, overall, students with the most school, familial, and individual resources tended to perform better academically over time. The *High Achievers* often demonstrated a constellation of advantages: they started out as high performers and maintained high achievement throughout the five-years of the study. On the other hand, the *Low Performers* started out with low performance and declined further over time, unable to engage in school given the myriad of risk factors. The *Precipitous Decliners* started out doing better in school than their *Low Achieving* peers but after struggling with multiple school and background impediments, appeared unable to sustain the effort over the course of time. *Improvers*, on the other hand, faced initial challenges but had enough environmental supports that over the course of time, allowed them to overcome their initial “transplant shock”.

“Sites of Possibilities”?

This data illuminated the cumulative challenges recently arrived immigrant youth encounter as well as the ways in which their educational environments often are misaligned with their socio-emotional and educational needs. Understanding various school, family, and individual variables that contribute to varying patterns of academic trajectories for recently arrived youth is important; focusing on schools is essential due to the mutable nature of this setting. Working to develop and implement policies to bridge the gap between recently arrived immigrants’ developmental challenges and their educational environments is the crucial step to help our nations’ newest students achieve their potential.

Newcomer immigrant students with limited resources often enter our poorest and most segregated schools, which have the very least to offer the students most in need of support. The poor performance of *Low Performers* and *Precipitous Decliners* can, in part, be attributed to the particularly low quality of the schools these students attended, which did little to foster engagement of their students and possibly motivated frequent transfers to other schools, augmenting academic risk (Eccles *et al.*, 1993; Orfield & Lee, 2006). The majority of our recently arrived participants enter highly segregated, high poverty, linguistically isolated schools (Orfield and Lee, 2006) that provide far from optimal learning conditions. Our ethnographies showed that high levels of poverty and racial segregation within the schools was linked to a variety of forms of inequitable distribution of resources including run down facilities, less access to basic supplies like textbooks, as well as high rates of teacher and principal turnover (Suárez-Orozco, *et al.*, 2008). In many such schools, we observed low standards and aspirations for the students and frequent exchanges of disparaging comments. Many of these schools were sites of gang activities and/or bullying and the adults on site demonstrated little connection with their students or the parents they ostensibly served (See Suárez-Orozco *et al.*, 2008 for detailed descriptions of these “less than optimal schools”). Rather than acting as “sites of possibilities” (Fine & Jaffe-Walter, 2007) all too many schools were failing to meet the needs of their newcomer students.

Recently arrived immigrant children have almost no meaningful contact with mainstream peers in their schools (Suárez-Orozco *et al.*, 2008). Indeed, more than a third of the immigrant students in the LISA study reported that they had little opportunity to interact with peers who were not from their country of origin. This contributed to only 7 percent of the sample having developed academic English skills comparable to those of their native-born English-speaking peers after an average of 7 years in the U.S. (Carhill, Suárez-

Orozco, & Páez, 2008; Suárez-Orozco *et al.*, 2008). These students were often provided less rigorous academic material and academic contexts. It has been well established that 4 to 7 years of *optimal academic instruction* are generally required for students to develop academic second language skills comparative to native English speakers (Cummins, 1991; Hakuta, Butler, & Witt, 2000).

The strong emphasis on high-stakes tests made educational context of second language learners extremely challenging (Menken, 2008). To meet the required 'adequate yearly progress,' the second language learners' curriculum and daily instruction was increasingly focused on language skills rather than academic content knowledge; many of the recently arrived immigrants were tested well before their skills are adequately developed with assessments that were not psychometrically valid (APA, 2012).

The effects of immigration are not confined to mere changes of geography. The political upheaval, ethnic or religious persecution, and traumas prior to migration add additional burdens for many youth beyond the usual dislocations and adjustment of immigration. Separations from parents for lengthy periods of time occur in a majority of migratory journeys. Some face the added stress of undocumented status. The repercussions of these burdens were particularly evidenced by the higher levels of reported psychological symptoms among *Precipitous Decliners*. Lamentably few of the educators serving the recently arrived immigrant students were aware of the issues their students were facing. In recognition of the unique constellation of risks that burden some immigrant youth and their families, mental health and community support services should be made available to at-risk students.

Social relationships and daily interactions with schoolmates, teachers, and counselors along with the flow of informational capital (Perreira, Harris, & Lee, 2006; Pianta, 1999; Ryan, Stiller, & Lynch, 1994) play a significant role in shaping academic outcomes for youth with limited opportunities (Stanton-Salazar & Dornbusch, 1995). For recently arrived immigrants, positive relationships with family, community, and *school members* serve to create a sense of well-being in school. Formal and informal relationships with supportive adults and mentors can help recently arrived immigrants by providing crucial information about the educational system, as well as explicit academic tutoring, homework assistance, and college pathway scaffolding. Programs developed with the needs of this target population in mind can play an important role in the easing their transition to their new land (Roffman, Suárez-Orozco, & Rhodes, 2003; Suárez-Orozco *et al.*, 2008). Our ethnographies and case studies demonstrated that not all schools were created equal. While all too many were disconnected from their students and parents, some were islands of opportunity. This led to the Promising Prac-

tices Project – just what were the common denominators of schools that were “sites of opportunity” (Fine & Jaffe-Walter, 2007).

The Promising Practices Project

As we have seen, immigrant-origin students bring to schools a variety of academic and linguistic challenges and many of the schools that receive them provide far from optimal educational opportunities (Ruiz-de-Velasco & Fix, 2001; Suárez-Orozco *et al.*, 2008; Valenzuela, 1999). While it is not a challenge to critique the myriad of ways that schools fail to meet the needs of these students, it is decidedly more difficult to identify promising practices that serve them well (Lucas, 1997; Walqui, 2000). In this study we^{iv} sought to illuminate curricula and programs that prepare students from immigrant backgrounds to be active and empowered actors in the multicultural, global contexts of their receiving nations. The Promising Practices Project hoped to shed light on the strategies that teachers, students, and administrators develop as they attempt to meet the educational challenges of preparing immigrant-origin youth for this global era in two quite distinct social, political, and educational contexts – large cities in Sweden, and New York City.

Both the United States and Sweden^v share a contentious climate of debate over immigration (see Chavez, 2001 for an example in the United States; see Mattsson & Tesfahuney, 2002 for an example in Sweden). These two nations also share a similar pattern of low achievement by minority students from low-income backgrounds (Bunar, 2001). Both countries exhibit the problem of a gender achievement gap – girls consistently outperform boys (Suárez-Orozco & Qin, 2006; Öhrn, 2002). Further, in both contexts, students of minority ethnic backgrounds are likely to be taught by teachers of mainstream backgrounds (Ingersoll, 2003; Ljungberg, 2005). Schools in both Swedish cities and New York are subject to marketplace-driven school reforms, which place high value on testing, performance, and accountability (Apple, 2004). This emphasis on “objective” measures does not take into account that second-language acquisition presents a unique set of challenges. The lack of consideration for these challenges takes a particularly high toll on immigrant-origin students and the schools that serve them (2008; Suárez-Orozco *et al.*, 2008). Finally, while in most parts of the United States, students attend neighborhood high schools, in Swedish cities and New York alike, another market-based reform, “school choice”, provides students with the option to “apply” to high schools. This process allows students to rank a number of schools and thereafter go through a selection process that can include entrance or standardized exams, interviews, audition, and/or lottery, and neighborhood demographics.

We were guided by the question of what school-based practices were implemented in innovative, promising school settings to both ease the *transition and integration* and *foster and enhance the academic performance* of immigrant-origin youth?^{vi}

School Practices Conducive to Positive Outcomes for Immigrant-Origin Youth

Across schools we sought to identify approaches and strategies implemented in the various school sites that would serve to ease the adaptation and meet the educational needs of immigrant-origin youth. We began with overarching conceptual categories based on previous research in the field. As part of the iterative process of fieldwork, we added new practices to our conceptual categories as we encountered them. We then sought to determine if these practices occurred in each site.

We found that some practices were sound, promising, or innovative for immigrant-origin students whether they were second generation, newcomers, or second-language learners. Arguably, some of these practices are simply sound for students in general, regardless of whether they are of immigrant origin. We organized the conceptual categories along the lines of: 1) curriculum; 2) pedagogical approaches; 3) school structures; 4) school climate; 5) assessment strategies; 6) educational supports and enrichment outside of class; and 7) preparation for higher education and the workplace (See Table 4). We also, found that other practices were very specific to the needs of newcomer students and second-language learners, serving to ease their negotiation of the cultural transition and learning a new language. We considered these separately later.

All four schools practice reforms founded on progressive multicultural education (Banks & Banks, 2007; Nieto, 2004). Interdisciplinary, project-based, and student-centered approaches to curriculum and instruction are central to teaching and learning across the schools. All four schools utilize an integrated curriculum in some form, and the two Swedish schools place particular emphasis on the integration of technology into the curriculum. The four schools have attempted to create curricula that are relevant to the lives of the diverse students they serve. To successfully deliver content, the schools use decentralized pedagogical strategies designed to place the student at the center of learning and move away from traditional teacher lectures for at least part of the time. In addition to rethinking content and delivery, the schools seek multiple strategies to assess their students as well as ways to prepare them for the high-stakes testing where immigrant origin youth are at a notorious disadvantage. All of the schools have implemented some kind of academic sup-

ports to help them to be successful. And finally, several of the schools place particular focus on the postsecondary school experience.

In addition to the practices described above, newcomer immigrant youth and second-language learners have additional academic and socio-emotional needs, different from those of the typical non-immigrant or second-generation student. At the forefront is the need to develop both the social and academic language of their new country while mastering the content knowledge necessary to be successful in the new society. Most graduation pathways are quite unforgiving of the 5 to 7 years it takes for most students to develop the academic language to the point of competitiveness with native peers (Cummins, 2000; Hakuta, Butler, & Witt, 2000). This is the level of language competence required to be competitive on a timed multiple choice test, write a well argued essay, or confidently join in a class discussion. Thus, immigrant students often are tracked into non-college-bound courses, falter in confidence, and fall behind their nonimmigrant peers (Menken, 2008; Ruiz-de-Valasco, Fix, & Clewell, 1998; Suárez-Orozco *et al.*, 2008).

Further, as noted earlier, it is important to keep in mind that immigration is a stressful event (Suárez-Orozco, 2001; Suárez-Orozco *et al.*, 2008), removing youth from predictable contexts while stripping them of significant social ties (Suárez-Orozco *et al.*, 2008). Many have been separated from their parents for protracted periods of time and may face emotionally complex reunifications (Suárez-Orozco, Todorova, & Louie, 2002). Immigrant children must contend with the particular acculturative challenges of navigating two worlds (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006). They are often asked to take on responsibilities beyond their years, including sibling care, translation duties, and advocacy for their families (Faulstich-Orellana, 2001), which at times undermine parental authority. These often highly gendered roles may have both positive and negative consequences for development (Smith, 2002; Suárez-Orozco & Qin, 2006). Children of immigrants also face the challenge of forging an identity and developing a sense of belonging to their new homeland while honoring their parental origins (Suárez-Orozco, 2004). This acculturative stress has been linked both to psychological distress (APA 2012; García-Coll & Magnuson, 1997) as well as to academic problems (Suárez-Orozco *et al.*, 2008).

Thus, we considered innovative and promising practices that served to ease the emotional and linguistic transitions of newcomer and second-language learners at two school sites: World Citizen High School, which serves only newcomer immigrant youth, and Bergslunden, whose dedicated second-language-learners team gave the researchers full access to their work and their program. Both schools paid particular attention to the following

innovative strategies to address both the academic needs of newcomer youth as well as their acclimation to their new environment: 1) support in helping students navigate the cultural transition to the new country; 2) support for students who had gaps in literacy or due to interrupted schooling; 3) teaching across content areas; 4) language-intensive instruction across the curriculum; and 5) language-learning accommodations.

Negotiating Cultural Transitions

The schools were highly strategic in their approach to help newcomer youth adjust to their new environs. As new students came in, teacher teams met to discuss each one, and a series of assessments were conducted and discussed in order to develop the best plan for him or her. The teachers tried to meet with as many of the parents as possible. Parents were asked to bring in signed forms/health records at the beginning of the school year. Teachers also met with parents sometime around the end of the first grading period. This is when students first get to see their report cards, and it is an opportunity for teachers to get a sense of what their students' home and family situations are like. The information gleaned from these conferences is then shared when teachers meet across the teams working with each student.

The ongoing transition was primarily the responsibility of the advisory program, which helps students to adjust to their new school under the guidance of an advisor who is looking out for them. One of the guidelines for forming advisory groups is to have a newcomer/beginning learner of the new language in the same group as at least one student who shares the same native language and is also proficient in the new language, so that the more advanced new language speaker can translate. In advisory groups, students would discuss a range of topics from difficulties with a class, missing families and friends back home, to boyfriend/girlfriend issues.

Further, aligned with the language-intensive and student-centered-learning approaches, instructional tasks, in particular writing tasks, encouraged students to share their personal experiences both in their old and new countries and in the transition from one to the other. For example, students often wrote of their migratory experiences and were encouraged to share their stories with one another. Such activities help them to recognize that they are not alone in the difficulties of transition.

Supports for Gaps in Interrupted Schooling and Literacy

Some students enter secondary school with limited prior education or significant interruptions in their schooling. These may occur for a variety of reasons including socio-economic or gender inequities in original edu-

cational access, political strife that could have interrupted schooling, or hiccups in the migratory process that may have led to a sustained period out of school before reentry in the new land. Whatever the cause of an interruption in schooling, the consequence is often students who are over-aged and under-skilled and have considerable catching up to do in the classroom. This takes significant creativity, flexibility, and sustained effort on the part of school administrators and teachers. Understanding was shown for these students. Sensitivity was demonstrated towards the over-aged students; support was provided with encouragement to allow as much independence and peer support as possible.

SIFE students receive the same supports provided to other newcomer students and more. Particular emphasis is placed on literacy. Typically, these students take longer than the standard four years to graduate from high school – often stretching to seven years. With the right amount of scaffolding, the daunting tasks of learning a new language, acquiring literacy, mastering content knowledge of a new culture, accruing graduation credit courses, and passing high-stakes tests are achievable for many students who would have given up in another setting.

Second-Language Learning

While not all immigrant students are second-language learners, many if not most are; and, in some cases, immigration requires learning three or more languages. As noted earlier, learning a second language to a competent academic level takes considerable time (Christensen & Stanat, 2007; Collier, 1995; Cummins, 2000; Cummins, Brown, & Sayers, 2007; Hakuta, Butler, and Witt, 2000; Thomas & Collier, 2002) and the preparation of incoming students vary widely. Some students arrive from high quality educational systems while others arrive from war torn zones schools are shut down. Those students will need more time to be prepared for high stakes test. Thus, immigrant students entering secondary schools with little background in the language of instruction require systematic and effective long-term curriculum plans for language education.

All the schools we observed had systematic second-language acquisition policies and practices (though typically schools in the United States do not, which places ELL students at a disadvantage). Second-language instruction is most successful when learners are placed into a progressive and systematic program of instruction that first identifies a student's incoming literacy and academic skills (Christensen & Stanat, 2007). Research shows that consistency of instruction is essential for students as frequent transitions place them at considerable disadvantage (Gándara & Contreras, 2008). Second-

language learning is most successful when high-quality second-language instruction is provided with continued transitional academic supports – like tutoring, homework help, and writing assistance – as the language learners integrate into mainstream programs (Christensen & Stanat, 2007). In order to ensure a smooth transition between grades as well as the continual development of skills, teachers need to both understand and conform to the instructional model ascribed to by the school or district (Sugarman & Howard, 2001). Further, assessment of skills growth should be done annually using portfolio assessment as well as testing in order to measure progress and adjust interventions (Christensen & Stanat, 2007).

Teaching Across Content Areas

In addition to developing communicative proficiency in the language of their new country, second-language learners (SLLs) need to simultaneously build content literacies; many of them also have low cognitive academic-language proficiency skills (CALP). Second-language acquisition programs (e.g., bilingual education, self-contained SLL programs) primarily focus on literacy development in terms of language proficiency, with only limited attention to academic second-language acquisition in content areas (August & Hakuta, 1997). It is a challenge for students to learn content across the academic disciplines while at the same time acquiring new language and literacy skills, and it poses an instructional challenge to many teachers as well (August & Hakuta, 1997; NCES, 1999). Teachers in the exemplary schools received extensive training in language-intensive curriculum; language learning is embedded across the entire curriculum. Writing is not simply an activity for language-arts classes. Students are pushed daily to write and use their developing language skills in every class.

Language-Learning Accommodations

Students were encouraged to use their first language to help them learn the second language, even if others don't know their mother tongue. Informally, students are encouraged to translate for the newest immigrants, read and write in their first language during silent reading times, and carry bilingual dictionaries, but gently prodded toward their new language over time. The mother tongue is thus used strategically to aid the development of the new one. A teacher explained: "We encourage our kids to continue to develop their native language. [We encourage this] because we believe it develops the second language and it [acknowledges that] the base is the native language, and ... it becomes so much more difficult to build their second language if there is no foundation. So because we encourage our kids so

much, our kids feel free to speak whatever language they speak”. Examples of the use of first languages are commonplace. After one small-group assignment, students were told to assess their group with a twist; they had to answer questions such as “What worked well in your group?” and “Who made the group work particularly successful?” On one side of a sheet of paper, students first had to translate the questions into their native language; on the other side, they answered the questions in English. Second-language learners are not only encouraged but expected, during Problem-Based Learning assignments, to write key concepts in both their first language and second language. Teachers encourage and expect individual students to maintain first-language fluency. The tolerant attitude facilitated by teachers has had an unanticipated, yet welcome consequence. The diversity of language backgrounds means that the new language becomes the lingua franca, the language spoken in the hallway that allows students to converse with one another. In other words, speaking new language to friends becomes something that second-language learners do by choice instead of by force.

In addition to the use of first languages as a teaching/learning tool, a 9th-10th grade math teacher shared her strategy for making sure that every student is keeping up and understands: “I think it helps if I spend 5 minutes before the end of the class, reading the question, or the writing prompt, reading it to them ... and have them talk amongst themselves to make sure that they understand it, and have other kids translate for the ones who may not understand English. So make sure they understand the homework, and ... think about where kids are going to get stuck”. Assignments are continually modified to make them accessible to students, an 11th grade science teacher explained. These accommodations provide the much-needed scaffolding to newcomer students as they make the transition to their new educational setting. They begin to gain confidence in themselves and take the necessary strides in their new language to gain the academic skills they will need to be successful in their new land.

Implications for Policy and Practice

Immigrant-origin students bring a myriad of challenges to the classroom, which are compounded by the late twentieth-century climate of school reforms (Meier & Wood, 2004), which has had a series of unintended consequences for this population. Clearly there are no facile solutions to the complex problems facing many of these students. These principles, we would argue, are sound canons of pedagogy to serve all students, whether or not of immigrant origin. At the very core is a confluence of rigorous standards and high expectations coupled with a “pedagogy of care” (Nod-

dings, 2003). Rather than taking a remedial approach, or taking an approach that is simply good enough for “other people’s children” (Delpit, 2006), these are principles we would be happy to provide our own. This education is framed within an ethic of relations and care. Lastly, the schools recognize the needs of students within the context of their families.

Preparing Students for the Twenty-First Century Global Era

More than ever before, education in the twenty-first century requires the development of higher-order cognitive skills in order to be able to engage with the marketplace realities of our global era (Bloom, 2004; Suárez-Orozco and Qin-Hilliard, 2004). However, the educational practices we presented in this chapter are not limited to providing students with skills for the marketplace. Teachers diligently work to prepare students for life in general, regardless of whether they are planning on going on to college (Suárez-Orozco *et al.*, 2013).

The four schools we studied are rich with innovations that allow youth to develop the ethics, skills, sensibilities, and competencies needed to identify, analyze, and solve problems from multiple perspectives (Suárez-Orozco *et al.*, 2013). These schools nurture students to be curious and cognitively flexible, and to synthesize knowledge within and across disciplines (Gardner, 2004; Schleicher & Tremley, 2006; Suárez-Orozco & Sattin, 2007). The schools have an explicit agenda to prepare their students to successfully navigate in a multicultural world and impart skills deemed essential not merely to survive but to thrive in the global era (Bloom, 2004; Gardner, 2004). These promising schools put rigor, relevance, and relationships (Gates, 2006) at the core of their pedagogy. Unfortunately, however, rather than featuring such a preparation agenda, all too many schools serving immigrant-origin youth, like schools that serve other disadvantaged students, are those that are relegated to teaching “other people’s children” (Delpit, 2006) – such suboptimal schools typically offer the very least to those who need the very most (Kozol, 1991, 2006).

In all of the schools we examined, we found a commitment to marginalized and disadvantaged students (Suárez-Orozco *et al.*, 2013). The schools offer a stimulating, rigorous, and relevant curriculum but also provide a number of supplemental resources (such as after-school programs, tutoring, high-stakes test preparation, homework help, explicit college entry information, and so forth) to at-risk students in order to ease their educational transition and ameliorate their outcomes. Teachers make their pedagogies transparent, and there is a wealth of initiatives taken from different levels in the school system as a whole. The schools promote an alignment of instruc-

tional methods, content, and assessments and foster collaborative efforts to raise students' achievement levels and reduce barriers to educational equity. Notably, these services are helpful not only for immigrant-origin students but for other at-risk youth as well (Suárez-Orozco *et al.*, 2013).

Conclusion

Over the last century schooling has emerged as a normative ideal the world over. Schools are now defining institutions in the lives of more children than ever before in human history. In complex democracies schools are powerful institutions ideally structured to socialize emerging citizens for a “shared fate” (Ben-Porath, 2013) and to become democratic agents in a diverse, fragile and interconnected world. Schools also prepare future workers and, ideally, enable children and youth to forge the tools and sensibilities they will need to achieve the eudemonic ideal of flourishing, living well and doing good (Allen & Reich, 2013). In high income countries marked by structural inequalities schools both replicate the larger order while paradoxically expecting children to learn to be equal (Ladd & Loeb, 2013). Vast inequalities propel disadvantaged parents to want and indeed need more of the schools their children attend (Harris, 2013; Noguera, 2003). For immigrant children, schools serve a great potential as the “sites of possibilities” (Fine & Jaffe-Walter, 2007) for systematic, intimate, and long-term immersion in the new culture and society. Multiple studies have documented the varieties of immigrant optimism, academic engagement, and faith in schools and the future (Kao & Tienda, 1995; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 1995). For the ancient Greeks, a student was “the eager one” (Allen & Reich, 2003) and immigrant students are doubly eager – as students and as newcomers. But by enacting current policies and practices noxious to their needs, schools are in too many cases conferring disadvantage, perpetuating parental disempowerment, and revealing a studied indifference to authentically and successfully engage our newest future citizens. We can do better. We know how. As societies we simply must demonstrate the will and the care to do so.

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Endnotes

ⁱ See section entitled *Longitudinal Immigrant Student Adaptation Study* and footnotes ⁱⁱⁱ and ^{iv} for more detail about the study.

^{vii} We would like to thank our funders – the National Science Foundation, the W.T. Grant Foundation, and the Spencer Foundation.

^{viii} Most scholars that have examined the adaptation of immigrant origin students have employed cross-sectional approaches comparing two or more generations or cohorts (Portes & Rumbáut, 2001; Steinberg *et al.*, 1996; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 1995), rather than addressing trajectories of change over time within the same cohort (Fuligni, 2001). Moreover, studies that include second- and third-generation immigrants have been less able to capture the initial adjustment patterns and unique experiences of recently arrived immigrant students (Fuligni & Pederson, 2002; García-Coll *et al.*, 2005; Portes & Rumbáut, 2001). The LISA study sought to address these limitations through a longitudinal study of recent immigrant youth.

Students were recruited from seven school districts in regions of Boston and San Francisco areas with high densities of recently arrived immigrant students. Students in our study were recruited from over 50 schools in seven districts representing typical contexts of reception for recently arrived students from each of the groups of origin (Suárez-Orozco *et al.*, 2008). By the end of the study, the students had dispersed to over 100 schools. Transfer rates, which included normal administrative school transitions (i.e., from middle to high school), ranged between 1 and 5 transfer incidents per participant ($M = 2.4$) over the course of the five years of the study. Data on school quality for the quantitative analyses became available from school district data in the last year of the study as a result of No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). These data included the percentage of students who were poor (as assessed by eligibility for free or reduced-cost school lunch), segregation rates (the racial and ethnic composition of the school), and the percentage of students performing at proficient levels on state-mandated English language arts standardized tests. While there was fluctuation in school quality for individual students, ethnographic data revealed that students tended to stay within district and transitioned to schools of comparable quality. By the last year of the study, 74 percent of the participants were attending high school, with 96 percent attending public non-charter schools. The majority of the participants (65 percent) attended large schools (i.e., those with more than 1,000 students), while 22 percent attended schools with between 500 and 1000 students. Most of the students' schools were highly racially and economically segregated (see Table 1) and were characterized by high percentages of students living in poverty, with an average of 59.2% ($SD = 23.9$) of the student population receiving free or reduced-cost lunch. The minority representation rate at the schools was, on average, 77.9% ($SD = 23.6$). There were significant differences in segregation patterns by country of origin. Dominicans were most likely to attend low-income schools, followed by Mexicans. Fewer than half of the Chinese students in our sample attended schools where most of the students were of color, whereas nearly all of the other immigrant students attended such schools. Chinese and Haitian students were less likely (27.8 and 30 percent respectively) to attend hyper-segregated schools than the Latino students in the sample. Consistent with the findings of Orfield and Lee (2006), Dominicans, Central Americans, and Mexicans were all very likely to attend schools where more than 90 percent of the students were of color (83.1, 61.4 and 68.6 percent respectively) (Suárez-Orozco *et al.*, 2008). On average, only 31.98% of partic-

ipants attended schools where other students tested at or above the proficient level in state English Language Arts exam; again, the Latinos were most disadvantaged in this regard.

Students were interviewed annually and parents were interviewed at the beginning and then again five years later at the end of the study. In the third year of the study we selected 75 students evenly distributed by country of origin (15 participants in each) who represented a range of academic engagement profiles for case study research. These students were selected based upon an examination of school records and ethnographic observations by the research assistants, with an eye to capturing a range of patterns of school engagement and performance across country-of-origin groups analyses of the case studies.

^{ix}We want to gratefully acknowledge my co-investigators on this project – Margary Martin, Mikael Alexandersson, Lory Janelle Dance, and Johanes Lundenblad. We would like to thank the National Science Foundation’s Partnership for International Research and Education for funding Richard Alba/Roxanne Silber, Jennifer Holdaway/Maurice Crul, Mary Waters/Anthony Heath, & Margret Gibson/Silvia Carraso and Carola Suárez-Orozco/Mikael Alexandersson’s “Children of Immigrants in Schools” partnership study which made the research presented here possible.

^xNew York City has a long-standing history of incorporating immigrants to its shores. Currently, half of the students in NYC public schools have an immigrant parent and nearly 10 percent arrived in the United States within the past three years (NYSED 2006). The vast majority of these students are poorly served; many are attending schools suffering from the “savage inequalities” (Kozol, 1991) between school contexts. While the 1954 U.S. Supreme Court decision *Brown v. Board of Education* legislated equal access for students regardless of racial background, the requisite investments in schools serving different subpopulations have not been made (Heubert, 1998).

Swedish schools make for an interesting point of comparison because of their commitment to provide equal access to all students. The Swedish Education Act of the 1940s legislated that: “All children and youths shall have equal access to education”. As a result, Swedes invest heavily in their schools and in their most challenged students. Hence, second-generation students in Sweden have significantly lower secondary-school dropout rates as well as higher rates of university participation than in other nations (OECD, 2006). On the other hand, once immigrant students graduate in Sweden, they encounter a low glass ceiling and find it difficult to enter the employment sector (OECD, 2006). Sweden is relatively new to large numbers of immigrants from countries outside of Northern and Western Europe. It also has taken in a much higher proportion of refugees than has the United States. This population represents a significantly different set of incorporation challenges (Athey & Ahearn, 1991; Lustig *et al.*, 2004). Refugees face significant psychological trauma; while some are highly educated (e.g., Chileans), others suffer from high levels of illiteracy (e.g., Somalis); and many live in a liminal psychological space hoping to return to the homeland when ‘things settle down’. Further, many of the new immigrants are of Muslim origin, which has resulted in a considerable degree of ambivalence, backlash, and social unrest (Cesari, 2006).

^{xi}We used a case study methodological strategy (Yin, 2003) in order to describe in detail each school context serving this population. This approach allowed us to illustrate findings in the lived experiences of diverse adolescent youth and to shed light on the processes and causal links that emerge from the data. The multiple-case study approach

also provides the advantage of allowing analytical theoretical generalizations to emerge from empirical findings (Burawoy, 1991; Yin, 2003) and provides insight into the “crucial role of pattern and context” (Yin, 2003, p. x) in determining phenomena. The “replication logic” (Yin, 2003, p. 4) of the multiple-case study approach allows for cross-case comparisons and conclusions.

We identified 4 schools that were lauded locally as being particularly innovative in their approach to immigrant-origin students (see Table 3 below). Our research team used a variety of methodical strategies to gather data across sites. We conducted ethnographic fieldwork as the primary data collection strategy in order to gather information about innovative school practices, and assess the school ethos, teacher/student, teacher/teacher, and student/student relationships, school climate and intercultural understanding, as well as impediments to the implementation of innovative practices. Every school site included informants from three mixed cultural groups based on variation in: 1) demographic proportions in the school, 2) social status at each school, and 3) success in terms of grades and performance. The selected students were studied in four different contexts (classrooms during lessons, groups working on specific subjects, groups discussing general issues, and groups working together) for a period of 12 to 20 weeks (i.e., 3 to 4 months of data collection at each school). Semi-structured interviews and focus groups with teachers and administrators were also conducted to learn about their perspectives on the implementation of innovative practices and the impediments that they encounter along the way. We examined the performance of schools on quantitative indicators gathered from school records and city education statistics, which included student retention and graduation rates, and university entry rates. Lastly, the team conducted structured focus-group interviews with students in order to contextualize emerging findings. The triangulated data from each site was coded according to innovative practices important for all immigrant students along with those specific to the needs of newcomers or second-language learners. In addition, we examined theoretically relevant analytic themes (e.g., preparation vs. remedial agenda; significance of relationships; and priority of immigrant student needs) (Yin, 2003).

We used several criteria to select our case-study “innovative” schools. The schools had to serve a high proportion of immigrant-origin youth. They had to have a reputation within the broader educational community for being innovative and attaining superior outcomes on standard performance indicators in comparison to other schools with high proportions of “low-status” immigrant kids (e.g., student stability rates, teacher/student ratios, graduation rates, recruitment of highly qualified teachers, and retention of teachers). Also, three of the four schools were part of networks of innovative schools. We purposefully did not use standardized testing results as a criterion, since such tests underestimate the skills of second-language learners (Menken, 2008; Solano-Flores, 2008). All schools had an institutional commitment to prepare students for the new global era by confronting core educational challenges. All of the selected schools claimed a grand narrative of providing engaging and relevant learning environments in order to foster personally meaningful relationships and constructive habits of work shown to contribute to academic performance. These schools also explicitly had preparing its student youth to successfully navigate in a multicultural world as a central agenda. (See Table 1 and Figure 1 below for at a glance features of schools. Greater detail is beyond the scope of this chapter but is provided in Suárez-Orozco, Martin, Alexanderson, Dance, & Lundblad, 2013).

TABLE 1: Promising School Project Characteristics				
	New York High Schools		Swedish Gymnasiums	
	World Citizen	Progressive	Ekdalsskolan	Bergslunden
School Site Inclusion Characteristics				
Publicly recognized for its innovative approaches	✓	✓	✓	✓
Serves significant numbers of immigrant-origin youth	✓	✓	✓	✓
Does not have entrance exams	✓	✓	✓	✓
Academic Relationship Building Narrative	✓	✓	✓	✓
Higher than average graduation rates compared to schools serving similar populations in the area	✓	✓	✓	✓
Higher than average results on performance indicators compared to schools serving similar populations in the area	✓	✓	✓	✓
Part of Network	✓	✓	✓	
	New York High Schools*		Swedish Gymnasiums	
	World Citizen	Progressive	Ekdalsskolan	Bergslunden
Comparisons to Other Citywide Schools on Performance Indicators				
Student Graduation Rates in 4 years (USA & SE)				
~City Rate	FB= 57.5% All=50.6%		74.5	73.1
~Site Rate	64.8%	95.5%	85.2	67.0
Prepared to Enter University				
~City Rate #	36.5%	36.5%	89.5	86.4
~Site Rate ##	41.4 %	84%	70.7	82.9

* New York Source: NYSED (2006). New York State of Learning: A report to the governor and the legislature on the educational status of the state's schools. Sweden Source: Swedish Department of Education (Skolverket, 2007).

** In Sweden, upper secondary education (i.e., high school) consists of three years instead of four. However, the statistics for students who have completed their upper secondary education are calculated within a four-year time frame.

In both the U.S. and Sweden, students may remain in public secondary schools up to the age of 21. It is quite common for newcomer youth, and especially SIFE students to take longer to complete their high school education. In the U.S., graduation rates are typically reported in terms of both 4-year and 7-year rates; however, the cohorts of students participating in the study will not be at 7 years until 2011; therefore these data are not provided. Note that the 7-year graduation rate for the World Citizen Network is 90%.

For NYC, we report the percent of students who passed the Regents Diploma – a comprehensive exam that represents college readiness. For Sweden, we report the percentage of students who, based on their performance in high school, *qualify* for entry into University.

Note that for the World Citizen, the Network graduation rate is 90%.