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The First Year: Understanding Newcomer Adolescents' Academic Transition

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Satisfaction of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

by

Gregorio Verbera

2014
ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

The First Year: Understanding Newcomer Adolescents' Academic Transition

by

Gregorio Verbera

Doctor of Education

University of California, Los Angeles, 2014

Professor Patricia C. Gandara, Co-chair, Professor Eugene Tucker, Co-chair

This study is an examination of the social experiences and school processes that high school immigrant students from Mexico encounter during their first year in U.S. schools and the meaning the subjects attribute to those experiences and processes in relation to their academic performance. The study is designed to answer the following research questions. How do high school age, newcomer-immigrants from Mexico characterize their first year in the American school system? How do high school age, newcomer-immigrants from Mexico perceive the social experiences and school processes they encountered during their first year in an American school? What is the role of social experiences and school processes in the academic performance of high school age, newcomer-immigrants from Mexico in their first year in an American school?

Thirty high school students, ages 14-20 were interviewed in this study. Parity in gender was controlled for, selecting an equal number of females and males. Data were
collected using a semi-structured interview protocol that included a variety of closed and open-ended questions with opportunities for follow-up questions to clarify meaning and add depth to responses. The interview data were analyzed using the constant comparative method in order to examine, compare, conceptualize and categorize data to derive findings.

Data suggest that newcomer adolescent students from Mexico generally keep a positive perception of their first year in school. The immediate obstacles faced by newcomers in schools are unfamiliar school processes, structures, grade demotion and their inability to speak English. These obstacles impact academic performance. Positive relationships with peers, teachers and other school agents are critical for confronting and overcoming these obstacles. Additionally, relations with peers were reported to be most significant in determining the academic performance of newcomers, as peers served as academic supports, language brokers, mentors, and champions of other newcomers.

Of noticeable concern, however, is that peer relationships were defined almost entirely as relationships with other newcomers, and dominated by interactions in Spanish, suggesting a degree of social and linguistic isolation at schools.

Moreover, interview data suggest that only about half the participants felt like their teachers knew them, tried to know them or catered to their linguistic and or academic needs. Only a quarter of the participants reported having minimal relationships with non-teacher school employees. Data analyzed by gender suggest that females have a more positive appraisal of their first year experience than their male counterparts, report more positive relations with peers and adults on campus than their male counterparts, and have a more positive outlook on those relationships than male participants. Data also
suggest an association between age and participants’ perceptions of school, and the
development and perceptions of relationships with peers and adults on campus. Findings
for each age group in the study shows that as the participants increase in age, their
perceptions of their school experience improves, the nature of their relationships with
adults and peers is more positive, and their appraisal of those relationships is also more
positive.

Lastly, participants reported that learning English quickly, improving relations
with peers and adults on campus, in addition to gaining a better understanding of school
processes earlier in their experience can lead to improved academic performance.
The dissertation of Gregorio Verbera is approved.

Carola E. Suarez-Orozco

Otto Santa Ana

Eugne Tucker, Committee Co-chair

Patricia Gandara, Committee Co-chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2014
DEDICATIONS

For Dahlia Verbera - (02/09/13-02/09/13)

Para Gregorio Verbera y Maria de La Luz Verbera.

Mis mejores ejemplos, mis mejores maestros.
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Presidential Citation Award for Outstanding Achievement and Service – Loyola Marymount University
Faculty Association Award, Academic Excellence and Commitment to Social Justice – Loyola Marymount University
Award for Literary Excellence, National Authors Registry and Iliad Press
Embodiment of Loyola Marymount University Award
Fr. Alfred Kilp, S.J. Award for Service and Leadership – Loyola Marymount University
Loyola Marymount University Student Worker of the Year
Academic Guild Scholarship – Loyola Marymount University
El Espejo Mentor Program- Tutor of the Year – Loyola Marymount University
Loyola Marymount University Student Worker of the Year
Dean’s List – Loyola Marymount University
CHAPTER 1

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

“From their very first days in a new school in an unfamiliar country, immigrant students are actively looking for ways to become acclimated and successful. Yet their level of academic achievement depends not only on their willingness to work hard, but also their ability to make friends, please teachers, avoid dangerous situations, find helpful mentors, and most of all, learn English quickly and well” (Suarez-Orozco, Suarez-Orozco, Todorova, 2008, p. 53).

Introduction

If you can’t relate to the immigrant experience, think of the feeling you get when you first set foot in a foreign land. You walk out from the airport to the rush of the city. The sights, the sounds, the smells of the scene before you stand in vivid contrast to all you are accustomed to. You find yourself in a surreal bubble. You have no idea in which direction to head out. Is there a friendly face around? Does anyone look like they might speak English? The only recognizable signage is the universal restroom sign and a Coca-Cola sign off in the distance.

You notice the way people look at you. Their stares tell you that you don’t belong. Their eyes do not hold reverence or respect for who you are back home. There is no acceptance in their eyes, no patience, no consideration of your status, no invitation to ask in which direction your hotel lies.

You listen for English. There’s a crowd of men in the corner. Perhaps one of them speaks English? You lean in towards their conversation, you think you recognize some words, but their language sounds like English being read backwards. Then you notice the frantic movement of their hands. Their words are punctuated with hand
gestures. You conclude they are absolutely not speaking English. English is not a language spoken with the hands.

Eventually, a driver rescues you. He grabs your luggage and with a smile reassures you that there is nothing to worry about. He shows you the way with an outstretched arm. You can’t refuse his offer. In that moment, you do not give consideration to the cost of transportation. Once in the taxi, you are relieved you made reservations at a globally recognized hotel. You are confident the hotel employs English speaking staff that can help you get your bearings. Once you’re in your hotel room, you look out the window and take in the city. You sit for a moment and tune the tv to CNN to see what is happening back home, because home means more to you now than ever.

Now pretend that you are an adolescent girl or boy and your stay in this foreign land is not temporary. This is not a vacation. This unfamiliar, frightening place is to be your home, but how will this place ever become your home? The language, the people, the culture, the social norms are all reminders of how different you are. The fact that you are foreign to this world makes you feel flawed and rejected, alienated, and ill-equipped to survive, not to mention thrive. All that you’ve ever known is now back home, including your friends, family, and as in the case of many immigrants, maybe your parents. The only thing you have to hold on to is the knowledge that in the long run this seemingly endless consternation will pay off, that the sacrifice of leaving home can lead to better things, although right now you’re not sure you believe that.

This is the experience of millions of immigrants who come to this country. The impact of the experience is much the same for all people who migrate to lands with distinct languages, cultures and norms. I speak to this point from the perspective of a
researcher and from personal experience. I am an immigrant. I entered this country when I was seven years old. Like many other young immigrants from Mexico and Latin America, my family migrated to the U.S. in pieces. My father migrated to the U.S. first to look for work and set up a place for my family to live. My mother, my two sisters and I, reunited with my father eight months later. We settled in a suburb in Los Angeles, CA. Living in America felt like a dream, at first. I was mesmerized by everything, traffic lights, telephones, manicured lawns, paved roads, skyscrapers, color tvs, microwaves, and electricity that didn’t cut out. Upon reuniting, we went on family outings to Disneyland, to arcades, to the movie theaters and the mall. In my seven-year old mind these experiences were a splendidous forecast of our lives in America. Life, I thought, was to be an endless string of fun and excitement. In many ways life was better here than back home. However in school, life was more difficult, especially in the early years.

For many years my sisters and I were unable to talk about our early school experiences. As adults, we are just starting to open up about some of the experiences we encountered during our first year in school. We were travelers arriving in a foreign land, absent of the language, cultural norms, and familial resources to guide us in our journey. And thusly, we were thrust into our educational journey in America. We were unarmed and entirely susceptible to the pitfalls of schooling.

I recount my experience as an immigrant for several reasons. First because my experience as an immigrant shaped my academic life, my research, and my professional life as an educator and as an advocate for student rights in general. And secondly, I share my experience because my story as an immigrant in many ways mirrors the stories of the subjects in this study.
I am a firm believer that to better understand the factors that impact the performance of immigrant students we must talk to the students to understand their experiences, their perspectives, their motivations, and their social and school contexts. My experience as an immigrant student has been valuable in my understanding of the experience of other immigrant students. Yet neither my experience nor any other singular experience can fully capture the breadth and the depth of the immigrant student experience as a whole. Thus, the participants in this study serve as brush strokes in the vast composite landscape that is the immigrant experience, giving us clues about factors that impact academic performance.

This is a study of the experiences that adolescent immigrant students from Mexico encounter when they first arrive in U.S. schools. What are the similarities in their experiences? What can those young students tell us about the role that social and institutional experiences play on their academic performance during their first year in school? The answers to these questions can form a foundation for conceptualizing the ideal conditions at school sites for the reception of newcomer immigrant students in an effort to maximize their potential towards enduring positive educational trajectories.

**Statement of the Problem**

California, the place where this study is being conducted, has the largest immigrant population in the nation (Census Bureau, 2010). It is estimated that nearly a third of the state’s population, over 10 million, are immigrants. Men, women and children hailing from Mexico represent the majority of these immigrants (Migration Policy Institute, 2012).
Unlike other periods in American history, the immigrant population in this country is relatively young. In 2010, there were 3 million foreign-born children under the age of 18, with an additional 145 million children of immigrants also under the age of 18 (Passel, 2011). Moreover, immigrants and children of immigrants make up approximately a quarter of the U.S. population and it is projected to become a third of the population by 2050 (Passel, 2011).

Latinos are the largest immigrant group. Of all Latinos, 64 percent have Mexican roots (Census Bureau, 2010). Latinos comprise a large portion of the overall U.S. population. For this reason, it is especially important that this segment of the population is equipped with the necessary skills to fill the labor demands of the 21st century. However, currently this is not the case. Adult immigrants from Mexico are entering the country with an average of nine years of formal education, which is lower than immigrants from other countries (Smith, 2006). Similarly, of all immigrants, school aged immigrants hailing from Mexico have the lowest level of educational attainment. The average number of years of schooling completed by all immigrants in the U.S. is 9.5 years for men and 9.8 years for women. While Mexican immigrants average 8.5 years of completed schooling (Duncan, Hotz & Trejo, 2006). These numbers do not tell the full story. Many adolescent immigrants never enroll in U.S. schools. Ruiz-de-Velasco and Fix (2000) found that immigrants are less likely to enroll in school after 8th grade. It is imperative that those adolescent immigrants make their way to school and that schools provide the proper support structures and resources to improve their chances for success.

From the moment immigrant students set foot in their first American school they are confronted with a host of educational challenges. One of the most immediate
challenges immigrants face is navigating the striking differences between their homeland and their new land. Students are faced with a new culture, a new language, and new schooling practices (Suarez-Orozco, 2013). For many students being Latino, being an immigrant and being a Spanish speaker may mean encountering racism and anti-immigrant hostility (The Urban Institute, 2006). Moreover, the majority of immigrant students from Latin America enter schools that are not fit to meet their specific educational needs (Suarez-Orozco, 2013; Orfield & Lee, 2006). Schools with proportionately large populations of Latino students typically have a high degree of ethnic, racial and linguistic segregation, are under-resourced, overpopulated, located in high-crime communities, and have inadequately trained teachers (Orfield & Lee, 2006; Callahan & Gándara, 2004). It is within this context that immigrant students must learn English quickly (Suarez-Orozco, Suarez-Orozco & Todorova, 2008), master complex course content with incomplete content knowledge and with little familiarity about the way U.S. schools are structured (Short & Boyson, 2012), pass high school exit exams such as the CAHSEE in California and the Regents Exam in New York, (Sadowski, 2013) in punitive high-stakes testing environments (Suarez-Orozco, Suarez-Orozco & Todorova, 2008), and in schools where more often than not immigrant students who are classified as English Learners (ELs) are denied access to rigorous college prep courses, regardless of the student’s competencies (Callahan & Gándara, 2004). These factors make it challenging for Latino newcomers in U.S. schools to graduate or be college ready. The confluence of these factors add up to troubling educational statistics for Latinos along several indicators including standardized tests, high school graduation rates, and college matriculation (Gandara & Contreras, 2009).
Conceptual Framework

A broad conceptual framework anchors this study. Maxwell (2005, p. 33) defines the conceptual framework of a study as the system of “concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs and theories that supports and informs” the research. My study is grounded on two assumptions that are separate yet interrelated. These assumptions played a deciding role in the development of the research questions and in the design of the study. The assumptions that inform this study both stem from the body of literature on immigrant students.

First, the body of literature on immigrant students who originate from Mexico and other Latin American countries suggests that their academic performance is impacted by a host of social and school-related (institutional) factors. In this study, I am looking particularly at social factors and school-related processes that impact the academic performance of newcomer students. The second assumption is based on a considerable body of literature that documents how the challenge of adaptation from the onset of the immigrant experience impacts the academic performance of immigrant students. Bringing together these two assumptions, the conceptual framework for this study can be articulated in the following manner. Given that immigrant students experience a unique set of social factors and school processes from the onset of their educational experience in U.S. schools, the first year of school has the potential to be a significantly pivotal year in the educational trajectory of newcomer students.
Research Questions

This study is an examination of newcomer adolescent immigrant students from Mexico and their perceptions of the social experiences and school processes they encountered during their first year in school and their insights into how those experiences and processes impact their academic performance. The following questions anchor this study.

1. How do high school age, newcomer-immigrants from Mexico characterize their first year in the American school system?
2. How do high school age, newcomer-immigrants from Mexico perceive the social experiences and school processes they encountered during their first year in an American school?
3. What is the role of social experiences and school processes in the academic performance of high school age, newcomer-immigrants from Mexico in their first year in an American school?

Research Site and Research Sample

Recent immigrant students from Mexico, currently enrolled in high school, are the target population for this study. This study focuses on the participants’ first year in school and requires that they have completed at least one year of schooling in the U.S. but no more than three years. A critical point in the selection process was ensuring that participants resided in the U.S. fewer than three years because the design of this study calls for a retrospective approach. A retrospective probe into students’ memories may be susceptible to memory errors and memory distortion (Gandara, 1995) if participants are
asked to recall events from too long ago. Selecting participants who are close to their first year in school is a strategy for minimizing memory error or distortion.

There are several compelling reasons for limiting the study to Mexican immigrants. The Mexican population is the largest Latino group in the nation. Sixty four percent of all Latinos identify themselves as Mexican. Mexican immigrants also represent the largest immigrant group in the nation (US Census Bureau, 2010).

Moreover, in comparison to other ethnic and racial immigrant groups, immigrant students from Mexico are underperforming on standardized tests, have lower GPAs, drop out at a rate three times that of the national average, and have one of the lowest rates of college matriculation. Research has treated the Latino population as a singular entity, failing to account for regional, geographical, cultural, economic, and historical differences that impact the immigrant experience, academic performance and educational attainment. A study sample of all Mexican immigrant students serves to control for some of these differences. Additionally, working with a relatively small sample required a narrow criteria for participation in order to keep the findings meaningful and potentially generalizable.

The participant pool was composed of an even number of females and males. The participant pool was made up of students who were born in Mexico, attended school in Mexico, migrated to the United Stated within three years from the beginning of the study, completed at least one year of schooling in the United States, were between the age of 14 and 20, and were enrolled in high school during their participation in the study.

My secondary research population included key informants at each of the school sites I drew student participants from. Two key informants per research site were
interviewed to solicit data regarding the established processes at their respective schools for receiving and supporting newcomer students. Key informants who are school employees included two counselors and two English Language Development Program Coordinators. It was a prerequisite that key informants be knowledgeable about the school site’s processes for enrolling, assessing, programming, monitoring and supporting newcomers.

I recruited participants from two high schools, Bellwood Park High School and North View High School, both part of a large urban public school district in southern California that spans multiple cities. The two schools are located in two adjacent cities. These cities are densely populated communities where Latinos represent the highest percent and vast majority of inhabitants (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). It was anticipated that due to their demographic composition, these schools would yield an eligibility pool large enough to draw a sample of at least 15 male and 15 female student participants. The study was originally designed for a minimum of twenty participants but during the data collection process 10 more participants were added to reach a point of data saturation, the point where responses become repetitive.

During the recruiting process, my goal was to draw my sample from as few school sites as possible. Originally, students were to be recruited from three high schools to ensure the eligibility pool was large enough to draw a minimum of twenty participants. A third site was not necessary since two schools yielded sufficient eligible participants. Thus, the total number of research sites was reduced to two. While the entire sample for this study came from two schools, the fact the study is looking at participants’ first year in a U.S. school meant that some of the students would be talking about their experiences
in schools other than their current school. Therefore, while all participants attend either of the two research sites, the experiences under study here represent nine different schools.

**Research Design**

This study is an examination of the experiences immigrant students from Mexico have during their first year in U.S. schools and the meaning the subjects attribute to those experiences in relation to their academic performance. The nature of the research questions necessitates a qualitative study design.

Merriam (2009) explains that research that aims to understand how people “construct their worlds, and the meaning they attribute to their experiences” necessitates qualitative methods (p. 5). Survey data typically serves to establish a baseline understanding of a particular issue, mainly the “what” elements of that issue, which becomes the platform for further research (Cresswell, 1994). Qualitative research is necessary for answering the “how” and “why” type of questions (Cresswell, 1994). This study is guided by how and why research questions. Interviews are, therefore, necessary to extract robust accounts of participants’ perceptions of their first year in an American school and their insights into how those experiences impact their academic performance. A complete rationale for why interviews are the most appropriate qualitative method for data extraction in comparison to other qualitative data collection methods follows in Chapter 3.

Data for this study came from four sources: interviews, a participant profile questionnaire, observation field notes and student performance data.
**Student and Key Informant Interviews**

Participant interviews yielded the bulk of the data for this study. There were two types of participants in this study, students who meet the criteria outlined earlier in this chapter and key informants at each of the research sites.

The student interviews were the only data used to directly answer the research questions. The interviews with key informants served to define the school’s processes for enrollment, assessment, programming, monitoring and supporting of newcomers. This information was useful for understanding, analyzing and corroborating student responses and in describing the context of reception for newcomers at their respective schools, but the data were not used to answer the research questions.

I conducted the interviews using a piloted semi-structured interview protocol (Creswell, 2009). The interview protocol included a variety of closed questions and open-ended questions, with opportunities for follow-up questions to clarify meaning and add depth to responses. A semi-structured protocol is most appropriate for answering the research questions because the flexibility inherent in semi-structured protocols is optimal for exploring participants’ perspectives (Merriam, 2009). The interview protocols for student participants and key informants can be found in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 respectively.

**Participant Profile Questionnaire**

Before commencing the interview, students were asked a series of eight questions using the Participant Profile Questionnaire (Appendix 3). The questionnaire was used to solicit descriptive information including gender, age, years of residence in the U.S., years of schooling in Mexico, guardianship, parental education,
and parental employment status. This descriptive data are reported in the findings chapter (Chapter 4) to render a composite representation of the participant pool and to serve as reference for analyzing student interview data.

**Observation Field Notes**

Observation field notes of the school site and of the neighboring community were recorded. Schools with proportionately large populations of Latino students typically have a high degree of ethnic and racial segregation, are under-resourced, overpopulated, located in high-crime communities, and have inadequately trained teachers (Orfield & Lee, 2006; Callahan & Gándara, 2004). Therefore, the observation field notes were essential for profiling the research sites and evaluating whether the participating sites match the description of a typical school with a high Latino population.

**Student Performance Data**

Student performance data were extracted for each student to ascertain credit sufficiency. Participants’ transcripts were analyzed for credit deficiencies. Classes passed typically earn five semester credits. Credit deficiencies exist when students do not earn passing grades. After analyzing each academic transcript, each participant was assigned a course credit rating. Students were assigned a rating of credit sufficient when their credits correspond with the expected amount of credits in relation to the number of classes completed. When the number of credits is under par with the number of expected credits in relation to the number of classes completed, the student was assigned a rating of credit deficient. Student performance data is especially important in the analysis of interview data, as interview responses will be categorized in terms of credit sufficient or
credit deficient student groups and used as a point of triangulation in the analysis of interview data.

Data Analysis

This study includes four sources of data. Each data source serves a different purpose in answering the research questions. Data from interviews with key informants, the Participant Profile Questionnaire and the observation field notes was not analyzed in relation to the research questions. The purpose of collecting this data was to help me understand the research site from the perspective of the people responsible for handling newcomers, to understand the community around the school, and to capture a snapshot of the students’ backgrounds. The information from these three sources was not essential for answering the research questions but it provided a reference for better understanding the context of reception for newcomers and for informing my analysis of the student interview data.

The interview data was analyzed using the constant comparative method. This method is effective for identifying concepts, principles or process features of the experience under study (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The constant comparative method involves the examination, comparison, conceptualization and categorizing of data (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). After transcribing and examining the transcribed interviews, they were each compared to identify recurring concepts and form categories of data. Findings were drawn from the data categories.
Significance of the Research for Solving the Problem / Public Engagement

A better understanding of how schools can support immigrants from the onset of their educational experience can lead to changes in how schools structure their induction process and support newcomer immigrants towards positive educational trajectories.

My research is intended to have practical implications for the school system. From my findings, I hope to derive very clear and specific best practices and recommendations to schools on possible ways to develop comprehensive induction programs for immigrants that go beyond addressing academic course loads, to purposely working to develop and amplify students’ social, cultural and linguistic capital within the school to promote social adaptation and inclusion into the mainstream and college bound curricular track. A guiding framework that provides the knowledge, skills and strategies for supporting their newcomer child is essential for promoting positive educational trajectories.

Chapter Summary

This study is an examination of the experiences that high school immigrant students from Mexico have during their first year in U.S. schools and the meaning the subjects attribute to those experiences in relation to their academic performance. The study is designed to answer the following research questions. How do high school age, newcomer-immigrants from Mexico characterize their first year in the American school system? How do high school age, newcomer-immigrants from Mexico perceive the social experiences and school processes they encountered during their first year in an American school? What is the role of social experiences and school processes in the academic
performance of high school age, newcomer-immigrants from Mexico in their first year in an American school? Qualitative methods were employed to collect data. In all, 30 students were interviewed, 15 males and 15 females. Student participant data was used to answer the research questions. Additional data sources, including key informant interviews, a participant profile questionnaire, observation field notes, and student performance data were used as reference points in the analysis of student participant interview data. The constant comparative method was used to analyze student interview data. Findings were presented in the form of an executive summary to each of the research sites and to the research unit of the sponsoring school district.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

Statement of the Problem

From the moment immigrant students set foot in their first U.S. school they are confronted with a host of educational challenges. One of the most immediate challenge immigrants face is navigating the striking differences between their homeland and their new land. Students are faced with a new culture, a new language, and new schooling practices (Suarez-Orozco, 2013). For many students being Latino, being an immigrant and being a Spanish speaker may mean encountering racism and anti-immigrant hostility (The Urban Institute, 2006). Moreover, the majority of immigrant students from Latin America enter schools that are not fit to meet their specific educational needs (Suarez-Orozco, 2013; Orfield & Lee, 2006). Schools with proportionately large populations of Latino students typically have a high degree of ethnic, racial and linguistic segregation, are under-resourced, overpopulated, located in high-crime communities, and have inadequately trained teachers (Orfield & Lee, 2006; Callahan & Gándara, 2004). It is within this context that immigrant students must learn English quickly (Suarez-Orozco, Suarez-Orozco, & Todorova, 2008), master complex course content with incomplete content knowledge and with little familiarity about the way U.S. schools are structured (Short, & Boyson, 2012), pass high school exit exams such as the CAHSEE in California and the Regents Exam in New York, (Sadowski, 2013) in punitive “high-stakes testing environments” (Suarez-Orozco, 2013), and in schools where more often than not immigrant students who are classified as English Learners (ELs) are denied access to
rigorous college prep courses, regardless of the student’s competencies (Callahan & Gándara, 2004). All of this makes it especially challenging for Latino newcomers in U.S. schools to graduate or be college ready. The confluence of these factors add up to troubling educational statistics for Latinos along several indicators including standardized tests, high school graduation rates, and college matriculation (Gandara & Contreras, 2009).

Latinos are the largest immigrant group, and of all Latinos, 64 percent have Mexican roots (Census Bureau, 2010). Making up a great part of the overall population, it is especially important that this segment of the population is equipped with the necessary skills to fill the labor demands of this young century. But that is not the case, in comparison to other ethnic and racial immigrant groups, immigrant students from Mexico are underperforming on standardized tests, have lower GPAs, drop out at a rate three times that of the national average, and have one of the lowest rates of college completion (Gandara, & Contreras, 2009). Schools can do more and need to do more to arrest the negative forces that prevent immigrant students from reaching their academic potential.

**Chapter Overview**

This chapter is organized in seven sections that zoom in and out on the literature surrounding immigrant students. Section I describes the educational landscape for Latino students and introduces the broad economic ramifications of an undereducated Latino population. Section II briefly zooms in on immigrant students as they begin their journey in American schools, framing the challenges of adaptation. Section III presents the
educational achievement and attainment of immigrant students. Section IV explains how school structures and school processes impact the educational attainment and achievement of Latinos and immigrants. Moreover, Section V presents a social, cultural and linguistic perspective on the mechanisms that define educational achievement and attainment for immigrant students. The literature review concludes with Section VI, where best practices for improving the chances of success for newcomer students are discussed. Section VII presents a summary of this chapter.

**Section I: The State of Education for Latinos and Implications**

To understand how Latinos are fairing educationally, we need to begin by understanding the changes in the Latino population over the last 25 years and the effects of those demographic changes on the public school system.

Latinos are the fastest growing and the largest ethnic minority group in this country. In the 1990s, international migration accounted for 31 percent of the nation’s population growth. Additionally, the U.S. Bureau of the Census predicts that between the years 2000 and 2015, at least 50 percent of the population growth will come from international migration. Latino immigrants played a prominent role in that growth. It is projected that the Latino population will grow to 20 percent by 2015 (Kirsh, Braum, Yamamoto, & Sum, 2007). Moreover, the growth of the U.S. labor force over the next 15 years will be attributed to foreign-born workers (The Urban Institute, 2006). As the face of the U.S. labor force changes, so must the system charged with educating and preparing it for the labor demands of this burgeoning century.
The growth in the Latino immigrant population is changing the face of public education in this country. According to the Pew Hispanic Center (2013) from 1990 to 2006, Latinos accounted for 60 percent of the overall growth in K-12 enrollment. By 2006, Latinos made up 20 percent of the national K-12 school enrollment. The vast majority of Latino students are enrolled in concentrated regions in the country, predominantly in California, Texas, New York, Florida, Illinois, and New Jersey (The Urban Institute, 2006; Valencia, 2011). In 2000, ninety percent of the Latino population resided in ten U.S. states (Census Bureau, 2010). But more recent migration waves are taking Latinos beyond these traditional points of entry. By 2010, the Latino population had dispersed, leaving only seventy five percent of the population in the ten states that have historically hosted nearly all of the Latino population. North Carolina, Nebraska, Arkansas, Nevada, Georgia, Iowa, Tennessee, Oregon, Colorado, and Idaho (The Urban Institute, 2006) all have registered substantial growth in the Latino population and now more than ever are confronted with the challenge of responding to the needs and demands of Latino students. (Kirsh, Braum, Yamamoto, & Sum, 2007).

Latinos are, by a large margin, the largest ethnic minority group in the K-12 public school system, and the margin is becoming wider. If transnational migration patterns hold, by 2050 there will be more Latinos enrolled in public schools than White students in the nation (Valencia, 2011). But Latinos are lagging behind academically. Data from the 2005 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) indicates that only 16 and 19 percent of fourth grade Latinos scored at or above proficient in reading and math, respectively. Latino eighth graders scored at even lower levels, with only 15 and 13 percent scoring at or above proficient in reading and math, respectively.
Comparisons of grade point averages also offer evidence of the performance gap. Grade point averages for graduating Latinos were significantly lower than those of Asian and White students (Gandara & Contreras, 2009). Additionally, Latino students are retained from one grade to another at a higher rate, are under-represented in gifted and talented programs (Valencia, 2011), are overrepresented in special education programs (Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002) and have one of the lowest rates of high school graduation (Saenz, & Ponjuan, 2009). Compounding the problem is the low rate of Latinos matriculating into college. Over the past three decades there has been almost no progress in the completion rate of Latinos in higher education (Gandara & Contreras, 2009). In 1975, only 9 percent of Latinos completed undergraduate degrees, by 2011, the figure of Latinos who completed undergraduate degrees improved to 14 percent. Between 1971 and 2009, the gap in the attainment of bachelor degrees between Latinos and Whites widened from 14 percentage points to 25 percentage points (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013).

There is a moral imperative for improving the performance and educational outcomes of Latino students. But parallel to the moral imperative for improving the levels educational attainment for Latinos, is an economic imperative. The American economy is growing increasingly dependent on the Latino population. As the fastest growing and youngest segment of the U.S. population (Passel, 2011), the Latino population, by their numbers alone, will come to represent a large percent of the active labor force for generations to come. Adverse consequences can be anticipated for the U.S. economy if such a large percent of the labor force is under-skilled and undereducated.
An undereducated population means that the American workforce is becoming less and less fit for the industry demands of this burgeoning century. Three powerful forces are impacting the American labor market; “divergent skill distributions, the changing economy, and demographic trends.” These three forces speak to the growing, unskilled and underprepared Latino population that is positioned, by numbers alone, to take its place at the foreground of America’s economy (Kirsh, Braum, Yamamoto & Sum, 2007). The confluence of these three forces over the next 25 years promise a bleak economic future for America if we do not invest in sound policies that aim to bridge social divides and focus on developing the skills of the fastest growing segment of the population (Krish, Braum, Yamamoto, & Sum, 2007).

A postsecondary education is critical for personal upward socioeconomic mobility and a college-educated workforce ensures economic growth (Kirsh, Braum, Yamamoto, & Sum, 2007). It is predicted that by 2025 at least 55 percent of the United States labor force must be college educated if the U.S. is to continue its economic dominance in world markets, and by their numbers alone, Latinos need to figure prominently into that statistic (Kirsh, Braum, Yamamoto, & Sum, 2007). While the U.S. lead in high school graduation rates for most of the 20th century, by 2005 it had dropped to 21st out of 27th place among economically advanced nations. As a whole, the percent of Americans who hold degrees is low. The Lumina Foundation for Education (2009) reports that only 39 percent of American adults hold a two or four-year degree. The College Board (2008) reports that only 18 percent of adult Latinos have at least an Associates Degree. The percent of Latinos who hold four-year degrees is significantly lower. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics only 14 percent of Latinos graduate from college, the
lowest graduation rate in comparison to White, Asian, and Black ethnic groups (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013). The underperformance of the Latino population will prove to be increasingly problematic for the U.S. economy.

Considering that Latinos are the fastest growing segment of the K-12 population (Valencia, 2011), have one of the highest drop out rates (Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009), and one of the lowest rates of college completion (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013), improving Latino learning and achievement is a formidable challenge that demands immediate and intense action.

Section II: The Challenges of Adaptation

Migration is a stressful event for students and its effects extend many years beyond the student’s point of entry into U.S. schools (Suarez-Orozco, Suarez-Orozco, & Todorova, 2008). Newcomer immigrants from Latin America share common stresses that include prolonged separation from parents and family members causing grief and leading to emotional reunifications (Portes & Rambaut, 2001; Suarez-Orozco, Todorova, & Louie, 2003). Immigrant children also often face ethnic, racial, and linguistic segregation in schools (Callahan & Gandara, 2004), rejection, school isolation (Olsen, 2008), culture and language shock (Sadowski, 2013), discrimination, racism (The Urban Institute, 2012; Sadowski, 2013) and microaggressions (Solorzano, Allen & Caroll, 2002). By way of default, newcomer immigrant students lack knowledge of structures and expectations of the American school system (Short & Boyson, 2012). Compounding these stresses is that to a significant degree, immigrant parents are also not equipped to
access the often hostile school system, rendering parental support in the schools almost non-existent (Gandara & Contreras, 2009).

**Section III: Immigrant Educational Achievement and Attainment**

The immigrant population, as a whole, is not fairing well academically. Fry (2005) found that nearly a quarter of the nation’s dropouts are immigrants. Across the nation, the immigrant student population completed an average of 9.65 years of schooling. Comparatively, Mexican immigrants completed an average of 8.5 years of schooling (Duncan, Hotz, & Trejo, 2006), a statistic more troubling considering that immigrants from Mexico are the largest immigrant population (Crosnoe, & Turley, 2011). Mexican immigrants leave high school at a rate three times the rate of U.S. born children of Mexican immigrants. Forty three percent of Mexican immigrants, ages 16 to 19, leave high school before graduating (Oropesa & Landale, 2009).

As the population of newcomer immigrants overlaps with the English Learner (EL) population, it is crucial to look at English Learner data to understand patterns of immigrant performance. It must be noted, however, that while most newcomer immigrants are ELs, not all ELs are immigrants. Most ELs, more than 80%, are U.S. born students. In fact, a large segment of the EL population is termed Long Term English Learners (LTELs), a designation attributed to students who have been in U.S. schools for six years or longer and yet have failed to exit the English Learner Program (Freeman, & Freeman, 2002; Short, & Boyson, 2012). Despite improvements in the Latino high school graduation rate to roughly 85% and improvement of nearly 14 percentage points between the year 2000 and 2011 (Pew Hispanic Center, 2013), Latino,
English Learners are more likely to drop out of high school than non-English Learner Latinos. The majority of English Learners drop out of high school (Rumberger, & Larson, 1998).

But with such a large population of immigrant students, variation in academic performance and attainment can be expected. Educational trajectories vary for immigrant students (Suarez-Orozco, et al., 2008). The Longitudinal Immigrant Student Adaptation study, a longitudinal, mixed-methods study on the adaptation of recently arrived immigrants from Central America, China, the Dominican Republic, Haiti and Mexico documented several distinct educational trajectories in the 300 plus participants from over 50 schools in Boston and San Francisco. Findings from this five year longitudinal study found that in terms of grade point average, the participants fell into one of five distinct trajectories: high performers (22.5 percent), slow decliners (24.7 percent), precipitous decliners (27.8 percent), improvers (10.6 percent) and low achievers (14.4 percent). Significantly enough, the investigators found that all trajectories had a course correction in the third year of the study, dipping slightly, with the exception of the improvers who showed accelerated growth in year three (Suarez-Orozco, et al., 2008).

While the LISA study looked at the academic performance of immigrants across a five-year span, the Center for Applied Linguistics collected data from newcomers that categorized newcomers in terms of their primary language literacy skills upon enrolling in U.S. schools. The authors of this study, Short and Boyson (2012) identified three distinct groups of newcomers: 1) literate, with literacy in the first language, and no education gaps, 2) literate, with first language literacy, and partial gaps in schooling, and 3) students with interrupted formal education, and lacking first language literacy. These
two studies demonstrate that the Latino immigrant population presents broad variations in terms of academic need, in terms of academic skills and in terms of academic performance.

A growing body of research shows that first-generation immigrant students (foreign-born) from Mexico and other parts of Latin America outperform second or later-generation (U.S. born) students of Latin American descent (Kao & Tienda, 1995; Valenzuela, 1999; Portes & Rumbaut, 2002; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 1995, 2001; Waters & Jimenez, 2005; Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009). A framework that explains the decline in educational attainment and achievement for immigrants across and within generations is the “immigrant paradox” (Suarez-Orozco, Rhodes & Milburn, 2009, p. 151). The “immigrant paradox” posits that for immigrant students, length of residency in the United States is negatively associated with achievement (Padilla & Gonzalez, 2001; Portes & Rambaut, 2001; Suarez-Orozco, Rhodes & Milburn, 2001; Suarez-Orozco & Todorova, 2009). Studies identified this phenomenon within and across generations, noticing that a decline in school interest, positive affect, grade point average, college aspirations, positive relations with institutional agents, is observable as early as a few years after migration and more prominently across generations, where the educational attainment and achievement of second and third generation immigrants was lower than the preceding generation’s (Kao & Tienda, 1995; Stanton-Salazar, 1997; Valenzuela, 1999; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 1995, 2001; Waters & Jimenez, 2005; Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009; Suarez-Orozco, Suarez-Orozco, & Todorova, 2008). This body of research offers evidence of the “immigrant optimism hypothesis” (Kao, & Tienda, 1995, p. 12). The immigrant optimism hypothesis posits that the success
of first generation immigrants is owed in part to their positive appraisal of their improved socio-economic conditions and educational opportunities in America (Kao, & Tienda, 1995; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 1995; Valenzuela, 1999).

Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco (1995) also found that immigrant optimism plays a role in the educational success of immigrant students. A comparison of Mexican immigrant students to U.S. born Mexican-American students, demonstrated that recent immigrants had a dual reference frame that allowed them to contrast their lives before migration to their current conditions in the U.S. The negative economic and political conditions that motivated their migration enabled immigrants to appraise their current conditions in the U.S. as positive (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 1995, 2001) and temporary, an outlook that shaped their attitude towards schooling and spurred their motivation to succeed (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 1995, 2001).

Similarly, Valenzuela (1999) explains that the dual reference frame prevents immigrant students from associating being Mexican to underachievement. Mexican immigrants “had the experience of knowing high-status professionals (e.g., doctors, lawyers, and engineers) who are Mexican” (p. 14). Their experience casts high expectations for them as Mexicans. Participants from Valenzuela’s (1999) study of over 2,000 students, who did not have the dual reference frame could not think of their current conditions as better than the conditions in their home country and additionally saw themselves as marginalized in comparison to the dominant culture.

As a whole, Latino immigrant students are not fairing well. But a closer look at student achievement data reveals that a wide variation exists in the academic achievement and educational attainment of immigrant students. An implication of this research is that
newcomers cannot be viewed by the school systems as monolithic entities with one-dimensional educational needs. School systems can not satisfy the needs of newcomers with rigid, one-size-fits-all school structures, that serve more to sift students out of schools, rather than supporting and allowing students to develop their language and content competencies at a more appropriate pace (Short & Fitsimmons, 2007).

Section IV: School Structures and Processes that Impact the Educational Achievement and Attainment of Immigrant Students

Schools, by default, are the first institutions where newcomers are obligated to negotiate their old world with their new world, making schools defining mechanisms in the adaptation of newcomers. Some schools present welcoming environments for newcomers, while other schools are ill-equipped to serve them (Suarez-Orozco, 2013). With the majority of school age immigrants arriving during their secondary school years and most interventions for newcomers being designed for the primary grades (Rodriguez & Cruz, 2009; Sadowski, 2013) immigrant students are one of the most underserved and overlooked student populations (Ruiz-de-Velasco & Fix, 2001).

The primary educational challenge facing newcomers is learning English. Learning the language is essential for their adaptation and for their academic success. For immigrant students, English proficiency has been found to be a strong indicator of academic success (Suarez-Orozco et al., 2008). But the language instruction that immigrant students who are classified as English Learner encounter varies in terms of quality and quantity (Callahan & Gandara, 2004). Moreover, English Learners lack access to and exposure to a rigorous curriculum program regardless of their competencies
(Callahan, 2005; Callahan & Gandara, 2004), an outcome of tracking practices that ultimately create a caste like system in schools (Oakes, 2005).

Valencia (2002; 2011) offers a framework that characterizes schools with high concentration of Latino students, the typical schools where newcomer students matriculate. The framework presents a set of systemic conditions present at these schools and the adverse outcomes of these conditions. The internal conditions that define schooling outcomes for Latinos are school segregation, language suppression, cultural exclusion, lack of resources, poor teacher-student interactions, a lack of qualified teachers, lack of curriculum differentiation, an overrepresentation in special education referrals, and a lack of access to gifted education (Valenzuela, 1999; Quiroz, 2001; Darling-Hammond, 2007; Valencia, 2011). The outcomes of these conditions for Latino students are low academic achievement, high rates of grade retention, poor school holding power, low matriculation rates to college and a disparate impact of high-stakes testing and school stress (Valencia, 2002; 2011).

The rigidity of school structures is of detrimental significance for immigrant students. Newcomer students who arrive during their high school years must surpass numerous structural challenges. These students must meet the credit requirements for graduation, in many instances, in fewer than four years (Ruiz-de-Velasco, & Fix, 2000). They must pass high school exit exams in some states, for example, California and New York (Sadowski, 2013), perform on standardized tests, all while learning English in classrooms with teachers who are often underprepared to teach limited English proficient students (Callahan, 2005). While these structures keep many immigrant students and English Learners from the graduation stage, the lack of access to the college bound track
keeps those who do graduate from fulfilling the prerequisite high school courses for applying to four-year colleges or universities (Callahan, 2005). Consequently, a large percent of Latino college students end up in community colleges, where their under-preparation forces them into remedial, non-credit bearing college courses, prolonging their stay and reducing the probability of completing an associates degree, transferring or earning a certificate (Melguizo, Hagedorn, & Cypers, 2008). According to the National Center for Educational Statistics up to 18 percent of Latinos have an associates degree and only 14 percent of Latinos graduate from a four-year college, the lowest graduation rate of White, Asian, and Black ethnic groups (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013).

The school based structures and processes presented in this section represent a maelstrom that undoubtedly impacts the academic performance of immigrant students. Moreover, beyond school structures and processes, there is a robust body of research that aims to explain the academic performance and attainment of immigrant students by looking at social, cultural and linguistic mechanisms that impact academic performance and attainment.

**Section V: A Social and Cultural Perspective on the Mechanisms that Define Educational Achievement and Attainment for Immigrant Students**

**Caste Theory: Voluntary and Involuntary Minorities**

Caste theory represents a model for understanding underachievement that was advanced by anthropologist J. Ogbu. In numerous writings, Ogbu classifies racial and ethnic minority groups in the U.S. as voluntary or involuntary minorities that come to
view the relationship between education and upward socioeconomic mobility as positive and negative, respectively, and thus adopt either a favorable or oppositional stance towards schooling. Involuntary minorities are thusly trapped in a self-reproducing caste-like social structure (Ogbu, 1978; Valencia, 2011).

The immigrant optimism hypothesis is congruent with Ogbu’s (1990) description of the “voluntary” and “involuntary” minority. Voluntary minorities are those who entered into a minority status by their own free will. Self-initiated immigrants are the best example of voluntary minorities in this country. Involuntary minorities are typically born into the minority status and are characterized by race, ethnicity, nationality or even social economic status. African Americans and second-generation immigrant groups are generally included in Ogbu’s classification of involuntary minorities.

Ogbu argues that “voluntary” minorities, immigrants, motivated by their dual reference frame, willingly endure hardships to succeed, are less sensitive to discrimination in school, and more receptive to schooling despite the trying process of adjustment to a new culture and language (Padilla & Gonzalez, 2001). Voluntary minorities, as in the case of Mexican immigrant students are characterized by teachers and counselors as positive, motivated, obedient, resilient, and embody a pro-school ethos (Valenzuela, 1999; Suarez-Orozco-Suarez-Orozco1995; Stanton-Salazar & Dornbusch, 1995; Suarez-Orozco & Todorova, 2003). Involuntary minorities on the other hand, are sensitive to patterns of discrimination, prejudice and marginalization. Consequently, they can develop feelings of helplessness, hopelessness, (Gibson & Ogbu, 1991) withdrawal, apathy and aggression towards authority figures (Valenzuela, 1999) and adopt behaviors

Ogubu (1990) also contends that students’ perception of education as a vehicle of social mobility impacts their educational attainment and achievement. Involuntary minorities have not been historically proportionately rewarded for the educational achievement with upward social mobility, consequently they “view the inadequate and unequal reward of education as a part of institutionalized discrimination structure which getting an education cannot eliminate (p. 53). In the estimations of involuntary minorities, upward social mobility as an outcome of educational attainment is more a myth than a promise (Ogubu, 1990). Critics of Ogubu’s caste theory, however, point out that it is based on broad generalizations and that it fails to account for success cases, casting a grim prognostication for involuntary minorities.

The belief that education correlates to social mobility is a core piece of the immigrant optimism hypothesis. But as presented by the “immigrant paradox” hypothesis, the longer an immigrant student is in school, the lower their expectations are, the weaker their relationships are and the less positive their attitudes become towards education (Suarez-Orozco & Todorova, 2009). Valenzuela (1999) found that second and later generation Mexican American students did not have an optimistic view of their future educational and career opportunities. Rather, the participants envisioned a bleak and hopeless future for themselves, which correlates positively with their lower performance levels.
Subtractive Schooling

Socio-cultural scholars continue to argue that school and the system of education as a whole have subtractive powers over minority students. In its current state, the system of education reinforces the negative correlation between time spent in the system and the educational attainment and achievement of Latino students (Padilla & Gonzalez, 2001; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 1995; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001). Valenzuela, (1999) posits that the American education system is “subtractive” by design (p.4). Valenzuela (1999) coined the term “subtractive schooling” to explain how the system of education is designed and organized, albeit unintentionally, to divest Latino students of the social, cultural and linguistic capital they possess, resulting in lower levels of trans-generational educational attainment and achievement.

The subtractive schooling framework offers an explanation to the phenomenon of the depreciating level of educational attainment and achievement between first generation immigrants from Latin America and second and later generation Latino students. The concept of “subtractive schooling” is predicated on the premise that in general, the longer a Latino student resides within the education system, the more the system will take from their social, cultural and linguistic capital, and that the existence of this subtractive process is evidenced by the disparate levels of educational attainment and achievement between foreign-born and second and later generation Latino students (Valenzuela, 1999).

Valenzuela (2005) explains that the origin of the term “subtractive schooling” is found in sociolinguistic literature and social reproduction literature. Sociolinguistic literature rejects assimilation as a neutral process. According to this perspective, schools
are designed to add a second culture and language and subtract the Latino students’ original culture and language. Additionally, social reproduction literature postulates that schools actually work to reproduce social orders along racial, class and gender lines. While the expressed purpose of schools is not to reproduce social inequalities, the underperformance of minority students is a latent effect (Valenzuela, 2005; & Schmid, 2001).

Valenzuela’s (1999) seminal study on Mexican youth at a high school in Texas defined the context for the subtractive schooling framework. Valenzuela employed mixed methods in the study, collecting quantitative survey data from 2,281 students and qualitative data in the form of participant observations, open-ended interviews, and ethnographic field notes. The findings of the study indicate that the school subtracted resources from youth in two ways. The first involves the “de-Mexicanization” of students, as a consequence of the rejection of the students’ home language and culture, through explicit assimilation policies, thus eroding their social capital (Valenzuela, 2005, p.83). The second way involves the “role of caring between teachers and students in the education process” (Valenzuela, 2005, p.83). Teachers perceived that students did not care about education, but students perceived that teachers did not care about them. Valenzuela asserts that caring teacher/student relationships form the core of how Mexican culture defines education. Thus, if caring relationships are absent from the education process, students’ expectations for education are violated, leading to the development of an appositional stance and rejection of the type of education that is offered to them (Valenzuela, 1999, 2005).
Similarly, Solorzano, Allen and Carroll (2002) argue that Latino students often come to view themselves as victims of discrimination and racism as they experience racial “microaggressions” (p. 17). Microaggressions are subtle, layered insults (verbal or non-verbal, done consciously or unconsciously) directed toward non-Whites, based on one or more identifiers of minority status: race, gender, class, language, sexuality, accent, and surname.

Students respond differently to microaggressions, some isolate themselves and grow silent, others become confrontational, defying authority and portraying an oppositional stance towards education (Gibson & Ogbu, 1991). Some are motivated by the negative nature of microaggressions to succeed. They are driven to defy expectations and become high achievers. Often times, their success rests heavily on social and academic networks that validate their own identity and experiences (Stanton-Salazar, 1997).

The “subtractive schooling” framework reframes academic success and failure for this particular student sub-group. Through a “subtractive schooling” framework, educational attainment and achievement of Latino students is illustrated “more as products of schooling than as something that young people do” (Valenzuela, 1995, p. 88), placing the onus of student performance on schools and not attributing student failure solely to students.

This section presented a body of research that attempts to explain in broader terms the variance in academic performance between different Latino subgroups. The following section presents the argument that assimilation is a complicit mechanism that
enables the decline of educational attainment and achievement within and across generations of immigrants.

**Assimilation**

This section presents several theoretical perspectives on assimilation in educational research, making the case that assimilation is taking place for Latinos and presents the argument that assimilation is a mechanism that subtracts social capital from Latino students, resulting in comparative lower levels of educational attainment and achievement within and across generations of immigrants.

Educational research encompasses several theoretical constructs of assimilation; each is unique in its appraisal of the manner and degree to which assimilation affects the performance of Latino students. In a major review of literature, Portes and Rivas (2011) identified two major theoretical perspectives on assimilation: cultural and structural. The cultural perspective focuses on the role of newcomers in the cultural and linguistic reality of the host society. The structural perspective looks at newcomers and their place in the socioeconomic hierarchy of the host society. Both perspectives offer theories that range from pessimistic to optimistic.

On the pessimistic end of the cultural perspective spectrum are theories that suggest that children of immigrants are not assimilating due to a high population concentration in localized regions, attenuating assimilation (Portes & Rivas, 2011). On the more optimistic end of the cultural perspective spectrum are assimilation theories rooted in the metaphor of the “melting-pot” to describe the assimilation process (Portes & Rivas, 2011, p. 223). Alba and Nee (2003) suggest children of immigrants are assimilating culturally and linguistically into American society, and argue that
assimilation is inevitable, though not a guarantee of upward socioeconomic mobility (Portes & Rivas, 2011).

The theories from the structural perspective on assimilation also range along a pessimistic to optimistic continuum. On the pessimistic end of the structural framework are theories that point to a bleak future for immigrants due to exclusionary forces that relegate them to “racialized” and “marginalized” segments of society, denying opportunities in the mainstream (Portes & Rivas, 2011, p. 223). A more optimistic view of assimilation under the structural perspective points to the “second-generation advantage” which describes children of immigrants living in two societies and cultures, and drawing on the social and cultural resources from both to succeed (p. 224). Towards the middle of the spectrum lies “segmented assimilation” (p. 222). Portes and Rumbaut champion segmented assimilation. Drawing on data from the Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study (CILS), a study that followed 5,266 eighth and ninth grade students in San Diego and Dade County, Florida, to adulthood, Portes and Rumbaut (2006), determined that assimilation may or may not determine economic outcomes. Economic outcomes are dependent on the racial, labor, socioeconomic sectors, and on human capital, family structure, and contexts of incorporation into the host society. In order to succeed, immigrant children must negotiate the benefits and detriments of family background and racial labeling, and shed the ethnic profile of a disadvantaged minority (Portes & Rivas, 2011).

Kao and Tienda (1995) present similar findings to those of Portes and Rumbaut regarding the association between the degree of assimilation and academic and socioeconomic outcomes. By analyzing data from the first panel of the National
Education Longitudinal Study of 1988, the investigators tested the optimism and achievement of immigrant youth against different assimilation hypothesis. First the investigators found that the straight-line assimilation framework, first established by Gordon in 1964, did not hold true for Latinos as it does for European immigrants (Waters & Jimenez, 2005). This framework suggests an association between length of residence in the U.S. and achievement, to the extent that each generation should outperform the previous (Padilla & Gonzalez, 2001; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001; Waters & Jimenez, 2005; Valenzuela, 2005; Gandara & Contreras, 2009). Kao and Tienda (1995) found that Latino immigrants and children of Latino immigrants in the sample earned better grades, produced higher test scores and registered higher levels of educational aspirations than children of U.S. born parents. The authors assert that the success of immigrant children and children of immigrants over native-born Latino students is evidence of the accommodation-without-assimilation hypothesis (Kao & Tienda, 1995, p. 13). First established by Margaret Gibson in 1993, the accommodation-without-assimilation hypothesis implies that achievement declines as immigrant youth assimilate with their native peers. Immigrants who can adapt to their new environment, acquire English, follow American customs at school, while retaining their home cultural values, are likely to be more successful, as evidenced by a study of Punjabi immigrant students in central California (Kao & Tienda, 1995; Schmid, 2001). The accommodation without-assimilation hypothesis is also supported by Valenzuela’s (1999) research that found that immigrant students who were more successful than their U.S. born counterparts did not accept and to a significant degree rejected the behaviors and attitudes of native-born Mexican-American, calling them “americanizados” (Americanized) (p. 19).
The research shows that academic success for immigrants and children of immigrants depends on the degree of assimilation and on the degree of retention of the home language and culture (Kao & Tienda, 1995; Zhou & Bankston, 1994; Valenzuela, 1999, Schmid, 2001; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001).

The following studies offer evidence that Latinos are assimilating into American society, but that assimilation is not associated with upward educational, social and economic mobility.

Generations of Latino immigrants are assimilating into American society, but some scholars argue that the perception that Latinos are not assimilating is due to the dispersion of the Latino population beyond established ethnic enclaves, and to the replenishment of immigrants by ongoing migratory waves (Waters & Jimenez, 2005). In a review of research on the assimilation of immigrants, Waters and Jimenez explain that assimilation of immigrants can be measured along four primary benchmarks of assimilation: “socioeconomic status, spatial concentration,” “intermarriage” and “language assimilation” (p.105).

Immigrants are assimilating along these four domains. There is concern that immigrants hailing from Mexico and Central America are not assimilating to the same degree. From a socioeconomic perspective (defined as educational attainment, occupational specialization, parity of earning), Mexican and Central Americans are behind other immigrant groups. Although there is improvement in socioeconomic status between the first and second generation, a decline occurs by the third generation. Additionally, Waters and Jimenez also note that the dispersal of immigrants out of established ethnic enclaves is evidence of the spatial assimilation model, which posits
that the decreased residential concentration for a particular ethnic group is the result of increased generational socioeconomic attainment. Increasing intermarriage rates also provides proof of assimilation amongst Latinos. Waters and Jimenez explain that native-born minorities intermarry at a higher rate than immigrants. Intermarriage rates suggest that where marriage is concerned, social and economic barriers between Mexican Americans and non-Hispanic Whites are not as formidable as in other domains (Waters & Jimenez, 2005). The degree of dispersal of the Latino population across the country however, does not mean that Latino students do not remain segregated. Current research from the Civil Rights Project suggests that Latino students in increasingly large percentages are moving to schools without white students, and that Latino students are most segregated in California (Orfield & Ee, 2014).

Language assimilation is also taking place for immigrant populations (Schmid, 2001; Tran, 2010). Language assimilation has long been regarded as “one way” process that requires members of immigrant or ethnic groups to abandon their “mother tongue with the endpoint of [monolingualism]” (Tran, 2010, p. 260). The process to monolingualism follows a three-generational model. The first generation may learn English but retains a preference for their primary language. The second generation develops a preference for English but retains the primary language in the home. And the third generation, speaks only English (Tran, 2010). The 2002 National Survey of Latinos (n=2,929), conducted by the Kaiser Family Foundation, provides data that supports the three-generational model. Data from this survey show that of first generation Latino immigrants four percent were English Dominant, 24 percent were Bilingual, and 72 percent were self-identified as Spanish Dominant. Comparatively, 46 percent of second-
generation Latino immigrants were English Dominant, 47 percent were Bilingual and seven percent were Spanish Dominant. By the third generation or higher, 78 percent were English Dominant, 22 percent were Bilingual and there were no respondents who were Spanish Dominant. Data from the 2000 census confirms this pattern. Only 10 percent of immigrants from non-English speaking countries did not speak English at all at the time of the census. Data from the 1990 census shows that among third generation Cuban-Americans and Mexican-Americans, two thirds did not speak Spanish. Garcia, Wiese and Cuellar (2011) add that English fluency increases every generation, noting that only five percent of third generation Latinos are not fluent in English, compared to 43 percent of first generation Latino immigrants who are not fluent in English. The three-generational model of language assimilation holds true for most immigrant groups (Tran, 2010).

Language is a powerful instrument of assimilation, as it is tied to identity (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001;). In the sphere of public debate, Spanish in schools has been and continuous to be a controversial issue. While studies demonstrate convincingly that dual language programs produce higher levels of English language attainment and higher levels of overall academic performance, (Valenzuela, 1999; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001; Tran, 2010; Izquierdo, 2011) the English-only movement remains strong within the politics of education under the guise that the primary language posses barriers to English acquisition (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001; Garcia, Wiese, & Cuellar, 2011). For immigrant students’ whose primary language is Spanish, the loss of their birth language is of great consequence. Language has irrevocable ties to identity and culture. The loss of the home language
hampers communication and impairs the transmission of cultural values across
generations (Tran, 2010). Losing the home language may lead to the loss of identity and
to the weakening of social and familial networks that serve as important resources for
academic success (Suarez-Orozco-Suarez-Orozco, 1995; 2001; Valenzuela 1999; 2005). Retention of the primary language not only predicts positive academic outcomes (Padilla & Gonzalez, 2001; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001; Tran, 2010) but attenuates some of the adverse consequences of assimilation (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Schmid, 2001).

To gain a better understanding of the nexus between assimilation and education it
is necessary to examine the cultural underpinnings of schools in the United States. Schools in the United States are grounded on middle class, European values (Valenzuela, 2002; Bazron, Osher, & Fleishman, 2005). Middle class, European values, therefore create a cultural hegemony that leave little room for valuing diversity and by default lead many schools to ignore or downplay the strengths of diverse students (Bazron, Osher, & Fleishman, 2005; Garza & Crawford, 2010). Terms like “whitestream” have been used to capture the dominance of White culture in the education system and to define the asymmetrical cultural relationships that dominate the organization, operations and interactions at schools (Urrieta, 2009). It is the dominance of one culture over another that creates a stratified system of education where some benefit from the system more than others.

The social, cultural, and linguistic disconnect between the dominant White culture and the Latino culture is the root of the subtractive forces in schooling (Valenzuela, 1999). Cultural hegemony leads us to perceive assimilation of culture, values and
language as a necessity for school success (Garza & Crawford, 2010; Gainer & Larrotta, 2010). But scholars argue that assimilation is the most powerful ideological mechanism for divesting Latino/a and immigrant students of their cultural and linguistic capital (Valenzuela, 1999; Urrieta, 2009; Garza & Crawford, 2010; Gainer & Larrotta, 2010). While to some degree assimilation to the culture, values and practices of a school is a pragmatic strategy for improving the chances of success, as suggested by the *accommodation without assimilation* hypothesis, (Portes & Rivas, 2011) assimilation policies and de facto practices produce adverse effects that endure and magnify across generations (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001).

The dominant group and the subordinate group experience assimilation policies and practices differently. Within an educational setting, assimilation policies and practices are defined broadly and can include but are not limited to a Eurocentric curriculum, tracking practices, eradication of bilingual education, labeling of students as English Learners, and high stakes standardized testing (Oakes, 2005; Valenzuela, 1999; Valenzuela, 2002; Urrieta, 2009; Garza & Crawford, 2010; Gainer & Larrotta, 2010). Assimilation policies, therefore, become a cast for the assumptions about the nature of learning and knowledge: about what is worth learning; and what can be left out of the curriculum. For the dominant group, assimilation policies support their cultural hegemony and provide a framework and rationale for rejecting diversity of culture and language. It is when these assumptions go unquestioned that schools normalize and reflect almost exclusively the dominant culture (Urrieta, 2009; Gainer & Larrotta, 2010).

The subordinate group experiences the assimilation policies differently. While Latino students, for example, may see the benefit of assimilating and “acting white,” they
may perceive assimilation as a rejection of their culture, their language and of themselves, generating feelings of alienation, disillusionment, purposelessness, and often shaping the manner in which students perceive their families and their future employment prospects (Valenzuela, 1999, 2002; Quiroz, 2010). Forced assimilation and discriminatory practices and policies, Ogbu (1978) argues, lead minority students to the realization that education does not lead to social mobility and consequently to developing an oppositional stance towards schooling, which leads to low achievement.

This section presented broad theoretical constructs that emerge from educational research on assimilation and expanded on several hypotheses that explain the nexus between assimilation of immigrant students and academic performance. This section also presented two arguments. The first is that immigrants, specifically Latinos, are assimilating into American society, but that for Latinos, assimilation does not result in higher educational attainment and higher social mobility. The second argument is that linguistic assimilation, defined as the loss of the primary language, negatively impacts social, cultural and linguistic capital.

**Social Capital, Culture and Language**

This section presents the argument that social capital is a definitive factor in the educational attainment and achievement of Latino immigrant Students. The section presents a definition of social capital and establishes Coleman’s (1988) conceptualization of social capital as a framework that positions culture and language as mechanisms that broker the reproduction and expansion of social capital.

Theoretical perspectives on social capital are instrumental for understanding “educational stratification by race, ethnicity and immigrant status” (Kao, 2004, p. 175).
Coleman (1988) introduced the concept of social capital into social theory, applying the functional definition of capital, as applied in financial capital, physical capital and human capital to social structures. Social capital is broadly defined as the relationship networks from where individuals can draw support through social exchange (Ream, 2003) in an effort to attain goals that cannot be individually attained (Stanton-Salazar, 1997; Valenzuela, 1999; Schmid, 2001). The concept of social capital identifies properties of social structures that are used by individuals to reach goals. Individuals come to rely on social structures such as family, relatives, peers, community groups and religious affiliations for goal attainment. Because the concept is predicated upon governing social structures, it is argued that social capital is cumulative, can produce social profits, is convertible to other forms of capital, and can reproduce itself (Coleman, 1988; Stanton-Salazar, 1997; Ream, 2003; Kao, 2004). Ream (2003) conceptualizes social capital as the aggregate of the actual or potential resources found in social networks that can yield other forms of capital.

Coleman (1988) identified three major areas where social capital is manifested, (1) obligations and expectations, (2) information channels, and (3) social norms. In relationships there are certain obligations and expectations between parties. This concept is easily understood in terms of trading favors, one party lends money to another party, for example, and the obligation and expectation is that that favor can be reciprocated in the future (Kao, 2004). Logically, the more isolated, alienated or marginalized the person is, as in the case of newcomer immigrant students, the fewer opportunities for exchange they will have. Information channels are also essential in the acquisition of social capital. Resources in terms of information, such as information about educational opportunities,
are transferred through information channels. Kao (2004) contends that parents who can access information channels in schools can affect student outcomes. Information channels are especially important to immigrant populations. As the “mother-tongue” disappears from one generation to another, a narrowing of information channels takes place, limiting the transmission of social and cultural values and the ability to reproduce social capital (Tran, 2010). Social capital also manifests itself through social norms. Social norms are a powerful mechanism for controlling individual action. In a school setting, social norms serve as the measure by which to reward positive behaviors and sanction negative behaviors (Kao, 2004). Aligning to established social norms is essential for acquiring social capital (Stanton-Salazar & Dornbusch, 1995). For example, non-conformist attitudes of minority students have resulted in cases of over-identification of minority boys in Special Education programs, in disproportionate suspension rates (Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002; Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009) and has lead to the characterization that Latino students posses an uncaring disposition towards education. But it is the obedient, submissive and optimistic nature of immigrant students that make them more socially palatable, (Ogbu, 1990; Valenzuela, 1999; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001) which makes them better candidates for sponsorship by school agents into the educational mainstream, augmenting their social capital (Stanton-Salazar & Dornbusch, 1995).

Social capital is a predictor of educational attainment and achievement. In a school setting social capital is largely brokered through relationships and these relationships affect school educational attainment and achievement (Gandara, & Contreras, 2009). Valenzuela (1999) found that immigrant students were more successful
than U.S. born Latinos because immigrant students collectively shared common experiences and goals and fostered a pro-school ethos that was not as evident in U.S. born Latinos. Additionally, immigrant students demonstrated to have more and better relationships with teachers and counselors. This finding was supported by data from the Longitudinal Immigrant Student Adaption (LISA) study (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001; 2009; Green, Rhodes, Hirsch, Suarez-Orozco & Camic, 2008; Suarez-Orozco, Rhodes, & Milburn, 2009; Suarez-Orozco & Todorova, 2008).

Ream (2003), however, warns that what Mexican immigrant students report as positive school relations may be in fact a type of counterfeit social capital that can adversely affect long term education attainment. Counterfeit social capital is characterized by patronizing forms of social support (based on ill-formed perceptions that immigrants are not equipped to perform at high levels) intended to cultivate and nurture social relations for the purpose of maintaining classroom harmony, while sacrificing high expectations and instructional rigor.

Social capital is also a predictor of school completion. Ream and Rumberger (2008) analyzed data from the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 to examine the effects of peer social capital on school dropout rates of Mexican American and non-Latino White students. Drawing on a sample of 9, 566 participants, of which 1,062 were Mexican Americans, the investigators found Mexican American students were less likely than non-Latino White students to engage in organized academic endeavors, suggesting thinner forms of peer social capital, leading the investigators to conclude that engagement behaviors and school-oriented friendship networks have the potential to reduce dropout rates.
The power that social capital has over academic performance manifests itself vividly in the disparate levels of educational attainment and achievement between Latinos and Latinas (males and females). Relational factors are strong predictors of performance for Latinas. Among the Latino student population, Latinas have higher levels of educational attainment and achievement than Latinos (Valenzuela, 1999; Schmid, 2001; Gonzalez, Stoner, & Jovel, 2003; Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009; Suarez-Orozco, Rhodes, & Milburn, 2009). Of all Latinos enrolled in college, 61 percent were females. Mexican students had a female ratio of 63 percent (Perez, et al, 2009). Data from the LISA study show that Latinas were overrepresented in the High Achievers group, while Latinos were overrepresented in the Low Achievers group and in the group labeled as Precipitous Decliners (Suarez-Orozco, Suarez-Orozco & Onaga, 2010). The overrepresentation of girls in the High Achievers group is explained by their ability to build and sustain positive familial and institutional relations. Suarez-Orozco, Rhodes, and Milburn (2009) similarly found that girls demonstrated a higher level of relational engagement than boys. Girls and teachers also rated their relationships with each other as closer and less conflicted in comparison to the relationships between boys and teachers. Better relational engagement, does not however, translate to feelings of school belonging. It’s been found that female students often experience feeling like they belong to the school to a lesser degree than their male counterparts (Gibson, Gandara, & Koyama, 2004).

Gonzalez, Stoner and Jovel (2003) used life histories to examine the role of social capital in gaining access to college for Latinas. Their study of 22 college students revealed that the exposure and accumulation of high and low volumes of social capital
and or institutional neglect determined the perceived and actual opportunities for accessing college. Institutional neglect, defined by the investigators as the general school curriculum, ESL and Special Education tracking, teachers, counselors, and school administrators, could limit the transmission of valued resources such as emotional support, privileged information and knowledge to access opportunities for college admittance. But high volumes of social capital, emanating from family, school (specialized honors programs, teachers, counselors), and college/university outreach programs could counter institutional neglect.

Social capital also positively impacts the psychological domains of learning. Bandura (1983) explains that student self-efficacy and therefore performance is influenced not only by cognitive factors but also by environmental and relational factors. Learning and performance is based on ability but more importantly on what students come to view as possible for themselves as defined by their social context (Cleary & Zimmerman, 2004). Similarly, Perez, Espinoza, Ramos, Coronado, and Cortes (2009) found that protective environmental factors which include supportive parents, friends, and participation in school activities, influence how students perceive their educational experience and thus perform. Their study of 104 undocumented Latino immigrants, yielded data that suggests protective environmental factors helped reduce the effects of risk factors including feelings of societal rejection, low parental education, and high employment hours during school. Participation in extra-curricular activities and volunteerism proved to be the strongest predictors of academic achievement for undocumented students.
According to Coleman’s conceptualization, social capital manifests itself via obligations and expectations, information channels, and social norms, which means that culture and language are pivotal in the formation of social capital. The following paragraphs explain the role that cultural mores and language play in the formation and reproduction of social capital.

**Culture**

Culture is a defining mechanism in the development of social norms, social obligations and expectations. Culture is broadly defined as the values, skills, traditions, beliefs, perceptions and knowledge families transmit to their offspring (Gandara, 1995). Stanton-Salazar (1997) asserts that all children possess cultural knowledge and values that are essential for negotiating everyday life and achieving academic success. However, scholars have suggested that middle and upper class cultural values are essential for academic success because schools integrate “family and community-based funds of knowledge” that most resemble the middle and upper classes (DiMaggio, 1982; Stanton-Salazar, 1997, p. 13). Bourdieu (1973; 1977) postulated that middle and upper middle class families transmit cultural capital (etiquette, demeanor, speech, and general interaction styles) to their offspring to maintain class privilege. Conventional academic tasks are therefore built upon “White, middle class, community based cultural and linguistic knowledge and cultural style” (Bartlett, McKinley, & Brayboy, 2006; Stanton-Salazar, 1997, p. 13). Thus, success in school is not determined solely on learning and performing, but rather on being able to negotiate and “decode the system” (p. 13). But this perspective suggests that Latinos lack the cultural capital to succeed and that educational interventions should be directed at introducing “hegemonic knowledge,
ignoring the assets [Latinos] may bring to their schooling” (Hurtado, Cervantes, & Eccleston, 2011).

Yosso (2005) counters this perspective by introducing six forms of capital that Latino and other minority students bring to their education. *Aspirational capital* refers to a student’s ability to maintain a positive outlook of the future in the face of “real or perceived barriers” (p. 77). *Linguistic capital* refers to a student’s “intellectual and social skills attained through communication experiences in more than one language and or style” (p. 78). *Familial capital* refers to the student’s cultural knowledge as nurtured through the family that engenders a sense of “community, history, memory and cultural intuition” (p. 79). Related to familial capital is *social capital*, which refers to the social networks of people and community resources that stem from the other forms of capital. An extension of social capital is *navigational capital* or a student’s ability to maneuver through social institutions. Lastly, Latino and minority students also exhibit *resistant capital*. As students encounter unfair institutional practices and policies, social inequalities are revealed to them, promoting resistant behaviors that foster knowledge and skills to challenge inequality.

Studies confirm that for Latinos their home culture possess a great amount of capital that is essential for their academic success. In a study of 50 high achieving Latinos, all holding doctorate degrees or Judicial degrees, Gandara (1995) found that culture provided the capital to leverage academic and career success. Gandara found that participation in extracurricular activities, bilingualism, and familial expectations were essential to the participants’ success. Familial expectations, as transmitted through family stories, were especially important. Stories that recounted family histories that
included hardships and success served to inspire, motivate and cast lasting obligations and expectations. One of the most important findings from this study of successful Latinos was that their parents purposely had them envisioned themselves as accomplished professionals and tied to their families and communities.

**Language**

English language proficiency is a strong predictor of academic success, as language is essential for the prerequisite inputs and outputs of schooling (Quiroz, 2001; Suarez-Orozco, Suarez-Orozco, & Todorova, 2009). But English proficiency is not the only predictor of academic success. For Latinos bilingualism is a strong predictor of academic achievement. In a study of ninth graders, Rumberger and Larson (1998) found that bilingual students who were classified as Fluent English Proficient Students (FEPs) earned better grades, had higher rates of educational stability, and were more apt for completing the 9th grade credit requirements than were ninth graders identified as English Only, or Limited English Proficient. Similarly, in a study of high school students (n=2,167), Padilla and Gonzalez (2001) found that college track students who received some form of ESL or bilingual education reported higher grades than students who had not received any form of second language support instruction. Menken and Kleyn (2010) also found evidence that supports that the primary language has academic benefits, concluding that a lack of proficiency in the primary language makes it increasingly difficult to build English mastery. In light of this research, the loss of the primary language through assimilation can have a detrimental impact of student achievement.

Language also plays a role in educational outcomes because it is an indicator of social capital and social capital is an indicator of achievement (Stanton-Salazar &
Dornbusch, 1995). Language is essential for maintaining and reproducing social capital. Language is the medium for the transmission of cultural values and negotiating social interactions (Tran, 2010). Fluency in the parents’ language acts as a buffer to some of the adverse affects of assimilation and connects children to a system of social networks that support academic performance (Schmid, 2001). Language fluency also predicts associations with the formation of relations with institutional agents such as teachers and counselors. These relations form the basis for functional social networks that control the flow of privileged information at schools (Stanton-Salazar & Dornbusch, 1995; Stanton-Salazar, 1997).

This section presented a broad argument about the association between social capital and educational attainment and achievement for Latino and immigrant students and explained the association between culture and language to the acquisition and reproduction of social capital.

The next section narrows the lens on the literature of immigrant students and what we know about effective practices to maximize immigrant student academic success.

**Section VI: Best Practices for Newcomer Immigrant Students**

Schools can do much to counter the adverse conditions that immigrant students face in order to improve their chances of academic success. Practices that make positive contributions towards student performance include positive relational engagement - relationships between student and institutional agents (Suarez-Orozco, et al., 2008; Stanton-Salazar, 1997), creating welcoming spaces that help students develop a sense of belonging in the school community and develop positive peer relationships (Gibson,
Gandara, & Koyama, 2004), enacting mentoring programs where teachers and counselors help students define academic and career goals (Jaffee-Walker, & Lee, 2011), promoting a culture of high expectations for all students with the supports to help them reach them, and demonstrating value for the culture and language of students (Lucas, Henze, & Donato, 1990).

But most schools do not have comprehensive and systemic programs for newcomer students. Newcomer programs, defined as specialized settings that serve newcomer immigrants English learners for a limited period of time are few (Short & Boyson, 2012). A total of 63 newcomer programs fitting this definition were identified in a national survey conducted by the Center for Applied Linguistics. Some of these programs are housed in schools, other are located on isolated sites. While reviews of such newcomer programs have been mixed (Gandara & Rumberger, 2009), a study of these programs revealed that some practices are working well. Successful programs typically have flexible scheduling of courses and students, pay careful attention to staffing and professional development, include basic literacy development in the content areas and reading interventions, instruct in the content area to fill gaps in the educational background, offer extended time during non-instructional hours for interventions, develop connections with families and social services, diagnose and monitor student progress, and implement transition measures to ease newcomers into the regular school program or beyond high school (Short & Boyson, 2012). In a different review of exemplary programs designed to support English Learners from high school to college, researchers found that these programs allow access to rigorous academic curriculum, integrate extracurricular activities in school program, build in extra time for learning, practice
differentiation of instruction and do all this within a context of school reform (Callahan & Gandara, 2004).

**Section VII: Chapter Summary**

This chapter presents literature that explores multiple perspectives on the question of what impacts the educational achievement and attainment of immigrants, more specifically Latino immigrants. The literature is framed by the need to improve the educational achievement and attainment of immigrant students, especially immigrant students from Mexico. Literature that appraises the current state of education for Latinos is synthesized with literature that frames educational improvements for Latinos in terms of an economic imperative. The chapter then turns to the immigrant experience in school, introducing the challenges that students face as they begin their educational journey in America, and then zooms out to discuss the school structures and processes that impact educational attainment and achievement, as well as the social, cultural and linguistic factors that impact the educational achievement and attainment of immigrant students. Lastly, the chapter ends with a synthesis of recent research on best practices for improving the chances of academic success for newcomer immigrant students.
CHAPTER 3
DESIGN and METHODOLOGY

Purpose of the Study

Immigrant students face formidable educational and social adaptation challenges from the moment they set foot in American schools. This study explores whether immigrant students believe that their first year in school determines how they perform in subsequent years. What students tell us about what was most helpful to them as newcomers can lead to a better understanding of how schools can support immigrants from the onset of their educational experience and lead to changes in how schools structure and establish an immigrant student induction processes that supports newcomers towards positive educational trajectories.

Goals of the Study

Maxwell (2005) explains that the goals of a study can be personal, practical or intellectual. A primary goal of my study is to gain a comprehensive and richer understanding of the immigrant experience in the public school system. As a school administrator working in a school district with similar demographics to the students represented in this study, I am not only personally, but also professionally compelled to seek informed solutions to the challenges my school and schools like it face. A secondary goal of the study is practical in nature. The findings of my study will help generate a set of recommendations for schools and districts for designing and implementing a comprehensive induction model for immigrant students, specifically
immigrants originating from Mexico and Latin America, that can improve the chances of student success. This goal is especially significant. Migration patterns are changing. Immigrants are settling beyond established immigrant points of entry; California, Texas, New York, Florida, Illinois and New Jersey. States and school districts that have not historically served immigrant students are experiencing significant influx of immigrant students (The Urban Institute, 2006). The third goal of the study is intellectual in nature. This study will add to the body of research by specifically focusing on how immigrant students from Mexico perceive their first year experience in the U.S. and how they associate social experiences and school processes to their academic success. Understanding how these particular students perceive their experiences and what they identify as contributing factors and why these factors are significant to their educational trajectory is missing from the literature.

**Conceptual Framework**

A broad conceptual framework anchors this study. Maxwell (2005, p. 33) defines the conceptual framework of a study as the system of “concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs and theories that supports and informs” the research. My study is grounded on two assumptions that are separate yet interrelated. These assumptions played a deciding role in the development of the research questions and in the design of the study. The assumptions that inform this study both stem from the body of literature on immigrant students.

First, the body of literature on immigrant students who originate from Mexico and other Latin American countries suggests that their academic performance is impacted by
a host of social and school-related (institutional) factors. In this study, I am looking particularly at social factors and school-related processes that impact the academic performance of newcomer students. The second assumption is based on a considerable body of literature that documents how the challenge of adaptation from the onset of the immigrant experience impacts the academic performance of immigrant students. Bringing together these two assumptions, the conceptual framework for this study can be articulated in the following manner. Given that immigrant students experience a unique set of social factors and school processes from the onset of their educational experience in U.S. schools, the first year if school has the potential to be a significantly pivotal year in the educational trajectory of newcomer students.

**Research Questions**

This study is a study of newcomer adolescent immigrant students from Mexico and their perceptions of the experiences and processes they encountered during their first year in school and their insights into how those experiences and processes impact their academic performance. The following questions anchor this study.
1. How do high school age, newcomer-immigrants from Mexico characterize their first year in the American school system?

2. How do high school age, newcomer-immigrants from Mexico perceive the social experiences and school processes they encountered during their first year in an American school?

3. What is the role of social experiences and school processes in the academic performance of high school age, newcomer-immigrants from Mexico in their first year in an American school?

The Research Sample and Research Sites

Research Sample

The research sample was composed of an even number of females and males, 30 participants in total. The participant pool was made up of students who were born in Mexico, attended school in Mexico, migrated to the United States within three years of the beginning of the study, completed at least one year of schooling in the United States, and were between the age of 14 and 20 and enrolled in high school at the time of their participation in the study.

The fact that this study focused on the participants’ first year in school required that they have completed at least their first year of schooling in the U.S. It was critical that participants in the study had not been in the country more than three years as the design of this study called for a retrospective approach. Data collection methods that aim to study events or experiences retrospectively may be susceptible to memory errors and memory distortion (Gandara, 1995) when participants are asked to recall events from too
long ago. Selecting participants who were close to their first year in school was the strategy for minimizing memory distortion and errors.

There were several compelling reasons for limiting the study to Mexican immigrants. The Mexican population is the largest Latino group in the nation. Sixty four percent of all Latinos identify themselves as Mexican. Mexican immigrants also represent the largest immigrant group in the nation (US Census Bureau, 2010). Moreover, in comparison to other ethnic and racial immigrant groups, immigrant students from Mexico are underperforming on standardized tests, have lower GPAs, drop out at a rate three times that of the national average and have one of the lowest rates of college completion. While the same can be said for the entire Latino population, research has treated the Latino population as a singular entity, failing to account for regional, geographical, cultural, economic, and historical differences that can impact the immigrant experience, academic performance and educational attainment. A sample of all Mexican immigrant students served to control for some of these differences. Additionally, working with a relatively small sample, approximately 30 students, required a narrow criteria for participation in order to keep the findings meaningful.

The secondary participants were key informants at each of the school sites I drew student participants from. Two key informants per research site were interviewed to solicit data regarding the established processes at their respective schools for receiving and supporting newcomer students. Key informants were employed at the research sites at the time of the study. It was a prerequisite that key informants be knowledgeable about the school site’s process for enrolling, assessing, programming and monitoring
newcomers and knowledgeable about the systems in place at their school for supporting
newcomer students.

**Research Sites**

This study was designed to explore the experiences of students during their
induction year in American schools, but this was not a study about the schools
themselves. A treatment of each of the research sites is necessary at this junction to set
the context for the findings that are reported in the following chapter.

What follows is a statistical snapshot of each research site and a concise
explanation of recent structural changes at each site that could have prove definitive in
the experiences of matriculating students.

Participants for this study came from two large comprehensive high schools from
a large urban public school district in southern California that spans multiple cities. The
two schools are located in adjacent cities and are only five miles away from each other.
These cities are densely populated communities where Latinos represent the highest
percent and vast majority of inhabitants (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). The following
statistics from the U.S. Census Bureau help to illustrate the demographic composition of
each city (quickfacts.census.gov, retrieved on 04/05/14).
Table 3.1: Demographic Data of Cities Where the Research Sites are Located

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>City One, California</th>
<th>City Two, California</th>
<th>California</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population, 2012 estimate</td>
<td>58,673</td>
<td>95,304</td>
<td>37,999,878</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic %</td>
<td>97.1%</td>
<td>94.8%</td>
<td>37.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Born</td>
<td>51.0%</td>
<td>43.8%</td>
<td>27.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language other than English spoken at home</td>
<td>94.8%</td>
<td>89.3%</td>
<td>43.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school graduate or higher, percent of persons age 25+, 2008-2012</td>
<td>41.1%</td>
<td>52.5%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelors degree or higher, percent of persons age 25+, 2008-2012</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>30.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeownership rate, 2008-2012</td>
<td>28.1%</td>
<td>46.1%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing units in multi-unit structures, percent, 2008-2012</td>
<td>48.4%</td>
<td>30.4%</td>
<td>30.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per capita income in past twelve months</td>
<td>$12,464</td>
<td>$14,342</td>
<td>$29,551</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median household income, 2008-2012</td>
<td>$36,620</td>
<td>$41,851</td>
<td>$61,400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The two high schools are Bellwood Park High School and North View High School. North View High School is a mid-size comprehensive high school of about 2,500 students (grades 9-12) located in predominantly Latino community (City Two, represented in Table 3.1). The school’s demographics match the community’s demographics very closely. Demographically, North View High School is 96 percent Latino, two percent White, one percent African American and one percent other. In regards to language classifications, of the entire student population approximately 20 percent are English Learners (ELs), 15 percent are Initially Fluent English Proficient (IFEP), 51 percent are Reclassified English Proficient (RFEP) students, and 14 percent are identified as English Only students. Additionally, 86 percent of students are labeled as Economically Disadvantaged per federal guidelines. Eleven percent of the entire
school population has been identified as Gifted and Talented and 10 percent has been determined to be Students With Disabilities (SWDs).

While North View High School is categorized as Program Improvement under the No Child Left Behind federal legislation, student performance data demonstrate that North View High School has experienced consistent growth over the last 5 years. Based on California Standards Test (CST) scores, North View has grown 98 points on the state’s Academic Performance Index (API), surpassing the state’s expectations for growth every one of the last five years. In English Language Arts (ELA), there has been an increase in proficiency rates of 5.2 percent each of the last five years. And in Mathematics, there has been an increase in proficiency rates of 1.7 percent per year, over the same time period.

In many ways, the improvements in academic performance at North View are a result of the efforts of the teaching staff and school leadership. But the significance in the academic improvements seen at North View are relative. Despite growth in the rate of students scoring proficient or advanced in both ELA and Math, the majority of students at North View High School do not perform at grade level in these two academic domains. Only 43 percent of all students scored proficient or advanced in ELA and 11.7 percent of all students scored proficient or advanced in Mathematics. Graduation rates also help illustrate the academic performance pattern at North View. School data tell us that in the 2012-2013 school year, 64.8 percent of students who attended this school all four years graduated. While North View’s graduation rate is better than that of neighboring high schools of similar size and demographic profile, its potential holding power is greater than that figure indicates. In 2012-2013, 89.5 percent of 12th graders
passed the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE), one of the requirements for graduation. The other requirement for graduation is credit attainment and the completion of specific courses. Of the roughly 90 percent of 12th graders who passed the CAHSEE, a large percent of those 12th graders did not graduate in part because of credit deficiencies and or lack of access to the required courses. As it turns out, for most of the participants in this study, credit deficiencies and lack of access to credit bearing courses proves to be major impediment to their success.

Located no more than five miles from North View High School is the second research site, Bellwood Park High School. Bellwood Park High School closely resembles North View High School in many ways. Bellwood Park, also a mid-size comprehensive high school of about 2,300 students (grades 9-12), is located in a predominantly Latino community (City One in Table 3.1). The school’s demographics match the community’s demographics very closely. Demographically, Bellwood Park High School is 99 percent Latino and 1 percent other. Of the entire student population approximately 23 percent are English Learners (ELs), 12 percent are IFEP, 55% are RFEP and 10 percent are classified as English Only. Eighty-five percent of students are identified as Economically Disadvantaged per federal guidelines. Additionally, 8 percent of the entire school population has been identified as Gifted and Talented and 12 percent has been determined to be Students With Disabilities (SWDs).

Bellwood Park High School is also categorized as Program Improvement under the No Child Left Behind federal legislation. Based on the California Standards Test (CST) scores, Bellwood Park has grown 108 points on the state’s Academic Performance Index (API), surpassing the state’s expectations for growth each of the last five years. In
English Language Arts (ELA), there has been an increase in proficiency rates of 2.8 percent each of the last five years. And in Mathematics, there has been an increase in proficiency rates of 1.5 percent per year, over the same time period. Despite growth in proficiency rates, rates in ELA and Math remain relatively low. Only 31.9 percent of all students tested scored proficient or advanced in ELA, and or 10.9 percent scored proficient or advanced in Mathematics.

The graduation rates at Bellwood Park are similar to those at North View. Sixty-four percent of students who started as freshmen at Bellwood Park High School graduated in four years in 2013. As in the case at North View High School, at Bellwood Park, a significant disparity exists between CAHSEE passing rates and graduation rates. In 2013, 86.5 percent of 12th graders had passed the CAHSEE, but a lesser percent graduated, pointing to credit deficiencies and lack of access to courses as possible explanations for the disparity between CAHSEE passing rates and graduation rates.

Bellwood Park High School underwent several structural changes in the last three years, the effects of which might have impacted the educational experience of its students. At its 100th year anniversary, during the 2011-2012 school year, Bellwood Park underwent a reconstitution process that involved a take over of the school as part of the district’s school reform strategy titled Public School Choice. The reconstitution involved the removal of approximately 90 percent of the staff. In the two school years that followed, the staff turn over rate was near 70 percent. Compounding the stress of the reconstitution was the school’s transition from a year-round school calendar with multiple tracks to a traditional school calendar. The transition to a traditional calendar resulted from the opening of a new high school that relieved nearly half of the student
population from Bellwood Park High School. To sum it up, Bellwood Park High School was reconstituted, lost nearly its entire staff, transitioned to a traditional school calendar and went from a student enrollment of nearly 4,000 students to 2,300 students, all in a period of a year.

All 30 participants in this study were enrolled in either North View HS or Bellwood Park HS at the time of the study, however, not all of the participants commenced their education in the U.S. at their current school. Of the 30 participants, only 20 started their education in their current school. Ten students experienced their first year in a different American school. In all, those ten students attended seven other schools. Which is to say, that this study of the first year school experiences of immigrant students encompasses nine different schools. All of the nine schools are within a six-mile radius from North View High School. These schools share similar demographics, except for one school, which has an African American population of three percent, all of the other schools are nearly 100% Latino.

**Research Design**

This study is an examination of the experiences immigrant students from Mexico have during their first year in U.S. schools and the meaning the subjects attribute to those experiences in relation to their academic performance. The nature of the research questions necessitates a qualitative study design. Merriam (2009) explains that research that aims to understand how people “construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences” requires qualitative methods (p. 5). Survey data typically serve to establish a baseline understanding of a particular issue, mainly the “what”
elements of that issue, which becomes the platform for further research (Cresswell, 1994). Qualitative research is necessary for answering the “how” and “why” type of questions (Cresswell, 1994). My study is guided by how and why research questions. Interviews are, therefore, necessary to extract robust accounts of participants’ perceptions of their first year in a U.S. school and their insights into how those experiences impact their academic performance.

Data for this study came from five sources: student and key informant interviews, a participant profile questionnaire, observation field notes and student performance data.

Questions for the student interviews were derived from the literature dealing with the academic performance of immigrant students. The themes from the literature that guided the development of the interview questions were (1) the process of migration, (2) academic supports beyond the classroom walls, (3) peer relations, (4) relations with teachers and institutional agents, and (5) school structures and practices. Seven questions from the student interview protocol were reused from the Longitudinal Immigrant Student Adaptation (LISA) study with permission from tone of the principal investigators of that study.

**Student and Key Informant Interviews**

Participant interviews yielded the bulk of the data for this study. There are two types of participants in this study, students who met the criteria outlined earlier in this chapter and key informants at each research site.

The student interviews were the only data source used directly to answer the research questions. The interviews with key informants served to define the school’s processes for enrollment, assessment, programming, monitoring and supporting
newcomers and to gain background knowledge of the school. This information was useful for understanding and analyzing student responses about specific processes they encountered at school.

The initial design of the study called for a minimum of 20 students to be interviewed, but more participants would be added if necessary to reach a point of data saturation, a point in the collection process where responses become repetitive and I could be certain that new information would not be contributed. During the process of data collection, 10 more participants were added to the study. Parity in gender was controlled for during the recruitment process and in the process of adding participants, ensuring an equal number of females and males. In this study, data saturation was reached at around 24 participants, but continued to interview participants 25-30 to be completely sure that my data included the full range of responses that the interview questions could possibly solicit.

Two key informants were interviewed at each research site. Key informants included two counselors and two English Learners’ Program Coordinators. The school’s Principal identified key informants for their knowledge of the schools’ process for enrolling, assessing, programming, monitoring and supporting newcomer students.

I conducted the interviews using a semi-structured interview protocol (Creswell, 2009). The interview protocol included a variety of closed questions and open-ended questions, with opportunities for follow-up questions to clarify meaning and add depth to responses. A semi-structured protocol was most appropriate for answering the research questions because the flexibility inherent in semi-structured protocols make them optimal for exploring participants’ perspectives (Merriam, 2009). The interview protocols for
student participants and key informants can be found in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 respectively.

Before commencing interviews, I piloted the interview protocol to test it for continuity, clarity, time required for completeness and to assess the effectiveness of questions in generating responses that address the research questions. The pilot of the interview protocol for student participants included newcomer students who have been in the country for a period of fours years or more, or a period of less than a year, or who did not originate from Mexico. Six students, three males and three females participated in the pilot interviews. After each pilot interview, questions were added or eliminated as necessary. Most changes to the interview protocol resulting from the pilot involved changing the wording of the questions to reduce ambiguity and vagueness. The Teen Assent Forms for pilot participants can be found in Appendix 6.

I piloted the interview protocol for key informants on two individuals who fit the description of an informant but who do not work at either of the research sites. The interview protocols were modified after each pilot round to improve their effectiveness. The Study Information Sheet and the Key Informant Consent Forms are found in Appendix 7 and 8 respectively.

Compared to other qualitative methods of data collection, interviews were the most appropriate method for this study. This is a study of perceptions of experiences. Past experiences and perceptions are unobservable. Interviews allow the researcher to learn about what cannot be directly observed (Patton, 2002). Feelings, thoughts, intentions, motivations and perceptions cannot be directly observed. Events that took place in the past cannot be observed. Researchers cannot observe the way subjects organize the
world and the meanings they attach to what goes on in their worlds (Creswell, 2009; Merriam, 2009). Unlike focus groups, interviews are private. Privacy is especially important when working with a population of minors, who through their responses may reveal privileged information about themselves, classmates, teachers and family members. Moreover, if this study was about the students’ current school year ethnographic methods would be most appropriate. But this study concerns itself with the participants’ first year in school. Depending on the length of residency in the U.S. of each participant, the first year in school could be up to two years from the start of the study. The best method to learn about that first year is by speaking directly with the students and asking them questions. An ethnographic approach would draw out data primarily about the participants’ here and now (Merriam, 2009).

**Participant Profile Questionnaire**

At the beginning of the interview, students were asked a series of eight questions using the Participant Profile Questionnaire (Appendix 3). The questionnaire was used to solicit descriptive information including gender, age, years of residence in the U.S., years of schooling in the US, years of schooling in Mexico, guardianship, parental education, and parental employment status. This descriptive data is reported in the findings chapter (Chapter 4) to render a composite representation of the participant pool and to serve as reference for analyzing student interview data.

**Observation Field Notes**

Observation field notes of the research sites and of the neighboring community were taken on site before conducting the interviews. Schools with proportionately large populations of Latino students typically have a high degree of ethnic and racial
segregation, are under-resourced, overpopulated, located in high-crime communities, and have inadequately trained teachers (Orfield & Lee, 2006; Callahan & Gándara, 2004). Therefore, the observation field notes are essential for profiling the research sites and evaluating whether the participating sites match the description of a typical school with a high Latino population.

**Student Performance Data**

Student performance data were extracted for each student to ascertain credit sufficiency. Each student participant had her or his high school transcript analyzed for credit deficiencies. Classes passed typically earn five semester credits for students. Credit deficiencies exist when students do not earn passing grades. After analyzing each academic transcript, each student was assigned a course credit rating. Students were assigned a rating of credit sufficient when their credits corresponded with the expected number of credits in relation to the number of classes completed. If the number of credits is under the number of expected credits in relation to the number of classes completed, the student was assigned a rating of credit deficient.

Student performance data are especially important in the analysis of interview data, as interview responses were to be categorized in terms of credit sufficient or credit deficient student groups and used as a point for triangulation in the analysis of interview data.

**Data Analysis**

This study includes five sources of data. Each data source serves a different purpose in answering the research questions. Data from interviews with key informants, the
Participant Profile Questionnaire and the observation field notes were not analyzed in relation to the research questions. The purpose of collecting this data was to help me understand the research site from the perspective of the people responsible for handling newcomers, to understand the community around the school, and to capture a snapshot of the students’ backgrounds. The information from these three sources was not essential for answering the research questions but it provided a reference for better understanding the context of reception for newcomers and for informing my analysis of the student interview data.

The data from student interviews was used to answer the research questions. At the completion of all student interviews, the transcript for each interview was tagged with a course credit rating for the corresponding student. Based on the course credit rating, the transcripts were then divided into two categories, (1) credit sufficient or (2) credit deficient. Course credit rating was intentionally not controlled for during the recruitment process. It was, therefore, likely that each course credit rating category would not be represented equally, possibly rendering a comparison between the two groups unreliable. However, the lack of parity between the two groups could be a significant finding, especially if the vast majority of students classified in either of the two categories. Being that the research population is composed of a volunteer sample from amongst the students who meet the participation criteria, it remained unknown what the final numbers would be in each category until the participants selected and interviewed.

After the student performance data were extracted for each participant a deviation from the research design became necessary. Of 30 student participants, only two students were qualified for a course credit rating of sufficient. The other 28 participants received
a course credit rating of insufficient. The comparison of these categories was meant to
determine if exposure to specific types of experiences and processes was related to
academic performance. The disparity in the size of each group made the comparison of
the two groups unrealizable.

The interview data were analyzed using the constant comparative method. This
method is effective for identifying concepts, principles or process features of the
experience under study (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The constant comparative method
involves the examination, comparison, conceptualization and categorizing of data
(Strauss & Corbin, 1990). After examining the transcribed interviews, they were each
compared to identify recurring patterns and form categories of data. Findings were
drawn from the data categories. Objectivity is key to this analytical method. To
minimize my biases I engaged in the “epoche” process before each interview session and
prior to analyzing each piece of data (Merriam, 2009, p. 20). The epoche process
involves the examination and “bracketing” of conscious biases on specific topics in order
to bring awareness of personal prejudices, viewpoints and assumptions (Merriam, 2009).
The “epoche” process was intended to help monitor the infiltration of my past
experiences into my data analysis to minimize this threat to my objectivity (Merriam,
2009). The exact details for this process included the scripting of anticipated answers to
each of the questions I asked the students. I then created a three column chart that I used
during the interviews to check my biases against student responses. In the first column, I
included the interview questions. In the second column, I wrote down the answers I
expected to be given for each of the questions. The last column contained the actual
student responses, which I jotted as I conducted the interview and which I inserted in
their entirety as I transcribed the interviews. During the interview, as I scripted responses, I was able to compare participants’ responses to my anticipated responses and make decisions on follow up questions based on the comparison. For example, I tended to ask follow questions that required students to offer, if any, alternate examples if the participants’ answers matched mine. If their responses did not match mine I would probe deeper into their responses with follow up questions to ensure that I captured enough details to fully comprehend the meaning behind their responses. This process was especially critical as I analyzed the data because it made me more familiar with my own biases and it forced to be more perceptive and sensitive to the experiences that fell outside my personal frame of reference.

I conducted and recorded all interviews with each participant. A digital recording device was used to document all interviews. The interviews were transcribed verbatim and translated when necessary. Translated interviews were verified for accurateness to ensure participant responses maintained their intended meaning. Analysis of recorded interviews took place after completing each interview.

I created Excel spreadsheets for each interview question to organize data in an easy to read manner. This allowed me to sort through data easily during data analysis. I used an inductive approach to analyze data. The data was organized into patterns, categories, and themes (Creswell, 2009). Meaningful and recurring themes were coded by category names. I developed a master codebook to list all emerging codes. Codes were applied to new data segments each time an appropriate theme/pattern was encountered during the coding process (Creswell, 2009). After the data were analyzed for themes, the data were enumerated to describe frequencies in the number of times each code was
applied to the data. Major findings are reported in Chapter 4. Quotes from participant interviews are used to support the findings of the study. These excerpts contribute to the rich descriptive nature of the study (Creswell, 2009).

The questionnaire data were inputted into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). SPSS allowed me to sort participants by gender, age, years of residence in the U.S., years of schooling in the US, years of schooling in Mexico, guardianship, parental education, and parental employment status. Answers were categorized and labeled accordingly. This organization allowed for an analysis of frequencies among the sample. Statistical tests were not used. A Research Questions and Data Source Alignment Table and a Research Questions and Interview Protocol Topic Alignment Table can be found on Appendix 4 and 5 respectively.

**Data Collection Process**

Data collection occurred in seven sequential steps.

*Step 1: Gaining District Approval to Conduct Research*

The first step was to submit a research proposal to the district where I propose to conduct this study. Once the district approved the research proposal I moved on to step two.

*Step 2: Gaining Access to School Sites*

I began the process of finding adequate research sites after the district’s research unit approved the proposal. I focused on schools located in cities with high concentrations of Latino residents, mostly for reasons of convenience and because it seemed logical to do the study where the students under study attend school. It must be
noted at this juncture, however, that finding research sites in highly segregated cities for this study, guaranteed that the participants reported a set of experiences very different from other adolescent immigrant students who attend schools with less racial and ethnic segregation.

I began the process of contacting the Principals at each of the schools to gain access to the school sites. This process included emailing Principals a letter of introduction with a request for an appointment to discuss the possibility of a research study at their respective school site. English Language Learners’ Program Coordinators at each school site were included in the correspondence since they are generally responsible for assessing, programming and servicing recent immigrant students. The nature of the work they do at school sites make them ideal candidates for identifying potential student participants.

During the meetings with the Principals, I discussed the following topics in relation to my study: research questions, selection of research sites, target population, sample, data collection methods, researcher obligations, reporting of findings, benefits of participation and timeline.

The objective for this meeting was to gain permission to conduct my study at the school site. I gained access in two school sites, North View High School and Bellwood Park High School. Initially, I received permission from the Principal of the third school to conduct the study but withdrew the offer before I began interviewing students, citing a desire to minimize interruptions to instructional time and disruptions to student learning.
**Step 3: Identifying and Recruiting Participants**

After gaining permission from Principals to conduct this study at their school sites, the third step was to identify eligible students. Participants were recruited by way of flyer (Appendix 9) and announcements made during the schools’ Public Address (PA) announcements window (Appendix 10). The flyer included information about the participation criteria, the types of questions that would be asked and the honorarium for participation. The Principals at each school-site approved the flyer and PA announcement before they were distributed. I provided sufficient flyers for posting in each classroom and in high traffic areas. Interested students were asked to report to a specified location on school grounds, pick up a teen assent form (Appendix 11) and parent permission form (Appendix 12) and return the completed forms to the school designee. Interested students over the age of 18 did not need a teen assent form or parent permission letter. Instead, they were required to submit a consent form (Appendix 13). Students who submitted completed forms were asked to attend an information session during their lunch break. Lunch was provided to the students during the information session.

**Step 4: Establishing the Participant Pool**

The fourth step included holding a pre-study meeting with the students at each of the high schools to recruit participants. Eligible students were presented with an overview of the study that included the research questions, selection of research sites, target population, sample, data collection methods, researcher obligations, reporting of findings, benefits of participation and timeline. Students were also informed that participants would receive an honorarium of $20 for participating in the study. In
addition to the honorarium, participants would also be entered into a drawing to win an iPad mini, estimated value of $350.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the students were asked if they wished to withdraw their assent form and parent permission form and forfeit consideration for participation. All students who submitted forms agreed to continue with the process. All interactions with interested candidates were conducted in Spanish.

A total of 48 eligible students submitted the proper forms for participation, 29 students from North View High School and 19 from Bellwood Park High School. Submitted forms were grouped by gender to randomize participant selection. I wrote each name on a two inch by two-inch piece of paper. I folded over the piece of paper twice then placed the folded pieces in a container. I blindly pulled up twelve names from the female container and twelve names from the male container, a total of 24 names. The first ten names pulled from each container comprised the originally intended participant pool of 20. The two additional names from each container were added to a candidate reserve list. Names from the reserve list would be pulled in the same manner as described above in case participants withdrew from the study at any point. Candidates from the reserve list were not intended to receive an honorarium unless they were asked to participate in an interview, but their names were still entered into the drawing for the iPad Mini.

After including the two male and two female participants from the reserve list in the study, it was necessary to interview at least six more students to reach a point of data saturation in the collection process. Six more eligible students were selected from the remaining 24 students who were not part of the original 24 who were randomly selected
to form the sample. The selection of the six additional participants followed the same protocol used to select the initial sample. The names of the remaining 24 eligible students were written on a two inch by two inch sheet of paper. The double folded sheets were placed in a container. The folded pieces of paper were blindly pulled form the container. The first three females and first three males pulled were asked to participate. All six agreed to join the study.

The recruitment of key informants was much less involved. The school Principals designated a person from their school to serve as my point person for this study at their school. The school designees identified the key informants. Using a study information sheet, I approached the recommended informants and introduced the study. The individuals I approached agreed to participate in the study, each signed a consent form. Each Key Informant received an honorarium of a $50 gift card.

**Step 5: Collect Data (Interviews)**

The fifth step was to begin interviews at each school site. The design of the study called for at least 20 participant interviews, at least ten females and ten males. Five more female and male participants were added to reach data saturation, the point in the data collection process where responses became repetitive and I could logically conclude that new information would not be added if more participants were interviewed.

Each interview took between 35 minutes to an hour and twenty minutes. Most interviews were conducted during non-instructional time (after-school), but in some cases the school Principal allowed interviews during instructional time. All interviews were conducted in a private location at the research site. With permission from the participant, the interviews were audio recorded. After each interview, the audio recording was
transcribed and set for comparative data analysis. Prior to commencing the interview, participants were informed of their right to end the interview at any point in time without foregoing the honorarium. The student interview protocol is included in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2.

To account for low levels of English proficiency, the student interviews were conducted in English or Spanish, in accordance with the participant’s preference. Interviews that were conducted in Spanish were transcribed in Spanish and then translated to English. All but one interview was conducted in Spanish.

Four key informants were interviewed. Each interview took between 45 minutes to an hour and a half. The interviews took place in private settings at the research sites. Each interview was audio recorded. Recordings were transcribed and set to analysis.

**Step 6: Data Analysis**

The sixth step was preparing data for analysis. The qualitative data were analyzed using the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

A Research Questions and Data Source Alignment table and a Research Questions and Interview Protocol Topic Alignment table can be found in the Appendix 4 and 5.

The proper handling of data was of great priority. Data was stored in a fireproof safe and in a password-protected computer stored in a secure location away from the research sites and only accessible to me. Audio recordings were erased immediately after being transcribed. Data were destroyed after completion of the study.
Step 7: Thanking Participants and Dissemination of Findings

The seventh step was thanking all participants and school personnel for their involvement in this study. They received thank you letters that include a general timeline for the delivery of an Executive Summary to all participants and involved school personnel. If the school Principals desired, I offered to present the study and its findings to the faculty and staff once the study has been completed in its entirety.

The findings were distributed in the form of an Executive Summary to various sites and offices in the school district where this study was conducted. All schools involved in the study received the findings. However, at no time in the Executive Summary was the identity of the schools revealed. Additionally, the findings were also presented to the school district’s Director over the Multilingual and Multicultural Education Department. The director also received a PowerPoint presentation that can be used district wide with English Learner Coordinators and Migrant Education Coordinators. I made myself available to the Multilingual and Multicultural Education Department to make the presentations.

Ethical Issues

There were a few ethical considerations in this study. Ethical issues could have risen from the research questions, the methods of data collection or from the reporting of findings (Creswell, 2009). I anticipated that ethical concerns could arise from the research questions and from the data collection methods. The research questions required participants to reflect on their first year educational experiences. These questions have the potential to conjure negative emotions. For many immigrants migration is a
traumatic experience. A high percentage of immigrant students face issues that impact their psychological wellbeing. Some of the common issues include; posttraumatic stress disorder, racial labeling and categorization, inadequate social support networks, poverty, violence, lack of social acceptance, parental separation, culture shock, fear of abandonment, adjusting to new learning style, experiencing unfamiliar cultural and linguistic scripts, feelings of isolation, fear, anxiety, depression, confusion, hopelessness, frustration, lowered self-esteem, and loss of efficacy (Williams & Kent, 2004; Cardenas, Taylor & Adelman, 1993; Kirova, 2001).

I took several precautions to ensure that the data collection process did not place the participants under emotional duress. I created opportunities for participants to withdraw from the study. The first opportunity came before the study begins. During the introductory meeting with interested students, I introduced the purpose of the study, the research questions, as well as explained the types of questions that would be asked. After submitting assent forms and parent permission forms, students were asked again if they wished to withdraw from the selection process. Parents or guardians also had the opportunity to deny permission for participation. If a parent or guardian did not sign the consent form, their child was not considered for participation in the study.

Once the data collection process commenced, participants had a second opportunity to withdraw from the study. Participants were informed of their right to decline to answer any question or withdraw entirely from the study without forfeiting the $20 honorarium or their eligibility in the drawing of the ipad Mini as not to coerce them into participation.
Participants were also ensured that all answers would be treated with absolute confidentiality and that pseudonyms would be used throughout the findings to preserve the anonymity of participants.

The second ethical consideration came from the possibility that some participants could be undocumented immigrants who are afraid to talk about their immigrant status. Direct questions about the participants’ journey to America were not asked during the interview to avoid content that could potentially cause participants unwarranted discomfort or that could lead participants to reveal information bearing legal implications. The interview protocol did not include questions about the participants’ legal status, however, I knew that the open-ended questions could potentially draw out some of that information. Participants were informed that the data would be treated with absolute confidentiality. Prior to the interview I explained to each participant that each transcribed document would be coded to protect their anonymity and that I would be the only person who can trace responses back to the respondent. Additionally, I informed participants that the findings of the study would be presented in a way that reduces the possibility of connecting findings to individual students. Additionally, findings would be generalized to the entire participant pool.

Confidentiality has been maintained by changing any descriptive or demographic information that might identify the participants or the participants’ affiliated school. Pseudonyms have been used to identify participants and schools. All data were stored in a password-protected computer which is stored in a secure location when not in use and only accessible to me. Audio recordings were erased immediately after transcribing. Data will be securely destroyed after completion of the study.
Reliability, Credibility and Trustworthiness

In order to ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the study I needed to monitor my bias. My bias in this study stems from the fact that like my participants, I am a first generation immigrant from Mexico. I was especially cautious not to allow my personal experiences to influence how I interact with participants and with the data. In every phase of the data collection process I followed a scripted protocol to ensure that I presented myself and the study in an objective and neutral manner. Additionally, as described earlier in the data analysis section of this chapter, prior to interviews I engaged in the “epoch” method, a metacognitive process designed to uncover my biases and preconceptions of the participants, their experiences and their responses. This process was repeated during the data analysis phase of the study to consciously check my biases as I analyzed interview data for prominent themes.

Additionally, standardization of procedures was key in increasing the credibility, validity and trustworthiness of the study. I collected data from multiple sites. Utilizing an interview protocol ensured standardization of methods across all sites. The interview protocol was piloted to ensure that it was clear and direct, jargon free and specific enough to ensure that the participants provided answers to the actual questions. Additionally, participants were offered the option of conducting the interviews in Spanish to accommodate low levels of English language proficiency, as communication issues can raise questions about the validity of the study. As I conducted the interviews, I remained mindful of the need to clarify questions, repeat questions, or rephrase questions, while maintaining the integrity and content of the original question. Standardization of
procedures also limited reactivity from myself and the participants and prevented the
study falling prey to sloppy procedures.

Chapter Summary

Chapter three offered a rich description of the research design and methods for
this study. The chapter introduced the framework that grounds this study. The principal
concept guiding this study is whether the first year in school for newcomer immigrant
students is in fact pivotal in their academic and educational trajectory. The section on
research population and research sites offers a thorough explanation of who the
participants are and why they were selected. A robust description of each research site
was included to better understand the context of the school experiences and processes
being explored through this study. Furthermore, an explanation of the research design and
methods was offered with a detailed explanation of the propriety of interviews as a data
collection instrument. The section of data analysis outlined the processes and methods
used to analyze interview data. Lastly, the chapter discussed strategies for addressing
potential ethical issues and issues on the reliability, credibility and trustworthiness of the
study.
CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Introduction

The voices of immigrant students paint a vivid story of the immigrant experience, of the struggle of adaptation, and of the factors that impact their ability to perform academically.

Immigrant students face formidable educational and social adaptation challenges from the moment they set foot in U.S. schools. This study explores how immigrant students from Mexico perceive their first year in U.S. schools and whether immigrant students can trace how social experiences and school related processes impact their academic performance.

Three research questions anchored this study.

1. How do high school age, newcomer-immigrants from Mexico characterize their first year in the American school system?
2. How do high school age, newcomer-immigrants from Mexico perceive the social experiences and school processes they encountered during their first year in an American school?
3. What is the role of social experiences and school processes in the academic performance of high school age, newcomer-immigrants from Mexico in their first year in an American school?

By way of qualitative research methods, data were collected from multiple sources. Data was collected from five sources; a participant questionnaire, student
interviews, key informant interviews, observation filed notes on each of the research sites, and student transcripts. While data were collected from multiple sources, only data from student interviews have been analyzed in reference to the research questions. Data from interviews with key informants and observation field notes will also be presented in this chapter.

This chapter is organized into five sections. Section I offers information on the number of sites this study encompasses and provides data from interviews with key informants to bring clarity about what is meant by school processes and school structures at each of the research sites. The findings from interviews with key informants are also presented in this section to establish the context for understanding the findings for the research questions. Lastly, presented in this section is an overview of the observation field notes from each research site. Section II presents the collective profile of the participants as generated by the participant questionnaire. Sections III presents the findings for research question 1. In Section IV, I present the findings for research questions 2 and 3. I combined the findings for those two questions in one section because research question 3 is an extension of research question 2 and therefore is best understood within the context of research question 2. In Section V, I present findings of the impact of family separations on academic performance and the findings of participants’ academic goals. Section VI presents a chapter summary.

**Section I: The Research Sites**

This study is designed to explore the experiences of immigrant students during their induction year in a U.S. school but this is not a study of the schools themselves.
The 30 participants in this study came from two large comprehensive high schools situated in a large urban public school district in southern California that spans multiple cities. The two schools are located in adjacent cities and are only five miles apart.

All participants in this study were enrolled in either North View High School or Bellwood Park High School at the time of the study, however, not all of the participants commenced their education at their current school. Out of 30 participants, only 20 started their education in their current school. Ten students experienced their first year in a different school. In all, those ten students attended seven other schools. Which is to say, that this study encompasses nine different schools. All of the nine schools are within a six-mile radius from North View High School. All schools share similar demographics, except for one school, which has an African American population of three percent: all of the other schools are nearly 100% Latino.

Findings From Key Informant Interviews

Two key informants were interviewed at each of the research sites. School administrators, instructional coaches, teachers, were not identified by the school Principals as the most knowledgeable about the processes and practices surrounding the handling of newcomers at their school sites. In both schools, counselors and coordinators were identified by the Principals as the most knowledgeable individuals on campus on all matters concerning newcomer immigrant students. The informants I interviewed at each of the schools were a counselor and a English Language Development Program Coordinator.

The purpose of the interviews with key informants was to define the school processes that newcomers encounter during their first year in school and to help establish
a broad view of the educational climate at each school. The following paragraphs describe both of these elements, per school site, as reported by the informants. The findings have been organized under three themes, (1) school processes, (2) academic supports, (3) social experiences.

**North View High School**

At North View High School both informants were asked to define the school processes that impacted newcomer students. Informants described these processes in terms of policy and school practice.

**School Processes**

The policy for enrolling a new student from another country is set by California law and by district policy. The enrollment process for newcomers involves the following steps. First, the parents must complete a Home Language Survey. If on the Home Language Survey, the parents indicate that the student speaks or has been exposed to a language other than English in the home, the student must be assessed within 30 days of enrollment to ascertain English language proficiency and determine their language classification. All newcomers who speak or have been exposed to a language other than English in the home are assessed with the California English Language Development Test (CELDT), which measures the student’s listening, speaking, reading and writing abilities. If students pass this test, their language classification is termed Initially Fluent English Proficient (IFEP). The language classification assigned to students who do not pass the CELDT is Limited English Proficient (LEP). The term English Language Learner is used interchangeably with LEP and is the preferred term because it does not carry the negative connotation that the word “limited” in LEP attributes to English
Learners. According to the coordinator at North View, the term Spanish-Dominant is becoming more used in reference to English Learners. The CELDT is administered to English Learners annually and until they exit the English Learner Program.

Per state policy, in order for students to exit the English Learner Program, although a program only by name, they must meet several academic achievement benchmarks known as the Reclassification Criteria. In a single grading term, ELs must earn a C or better in their English course, have a passing score on the CELDT, and reach either the Basic, Proficient, or Advanced scoring bands on the California Standards Test (CST). As a side note, for both schools in the study, the Reclassification Criteria was being redesigned at the time of the study due to the elimination of the CST at this particular school district. Under the umbrella of the California Office to Reform Education (CORE), ten school districts in California joined to file a request for waivers under Section 9401 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, to exempt schools from administering the CST during the 2013-2014 school year. Without the CST, English Learners cannot exit the English Learner Program. Therefore, the districts included in this petition each had to introduce an adequate substitute for the CST to their Reclassification Criteria. The district where this study was held determined that a district created Periodic Assessment in English Language Arts was an adequate replacement for the CST. According to the coordinator at North View High School, that news of the new Reclassification Criteria was distributed to schools a few months prior to when students had to take this new assessment, allowing little to no time to prepare for this test.

The programming of newcomers at North View is handled primary by the school counselor. Mrs. Navarro, the school counselor has taken the mandate of programming all
newcomers. She also convinced the Principal to let her carry all newcomers on her case-load after seeing that many newcomers were being programmed incorrectly into classes where they were sure to get little to no primary language support and consequently were “falling through the cracks.”

At the high school level, prior schooling is taken into consideration when programming newcomers. The counselor requests documentation from students from their previous school. In the case of newcomers, the counselor looks for transcripts, report cards or other forms of documentation that provide a record of the courses successfully completed in their country of origin.

“I am most familiar with report cards from Mexico because they have a uniform education system there, I think, it doesn’t matter what state in Mexico the student comes from, the report cards look the same. Documents from Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, are a little more difficult to decipher, but I try my best. I look for course titles and grades. It’s up to me to determine if we can give them credit for the courses completed there. In most cases, students can’t produce any documentation. I can understand how with all the stress that comes with leaving one’s homeland, transcripts are not the first thing on our mind. When they bring me the transcripts, some students have some classes I can give them credit for, but very few classes at that. Because of that, most students enter high school as 9th graders, they do not meet the credit requirements for 10th grade or 11th grade even if they’ve completed most of their high school education abroad. That’s one of the more unpleasant parts of working with these children, because they are still children. That is why we still have some students who are 19 or 20, we’ve had 21 year olds. Hey, those kids who are still struggling to finish their education at 21, they are my heroes.”

North View High School has a predetermined course sequence for all 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th grade students, designed to give every student an opportunity to meet the high school graduation requirements and the A-G requirements for admission into the University of California system. Theoretically, with this structure, all students who matriculate at North View in the 9th grade can complete the graduation requirements and the A-G requirements, provided they pass all their classes, within four years. The
architecture of the class matrix also provides flexibility in terms of opportunity for credit recovery and opportunities for enrichment through elective courses and acceleration through Advanced Placement (AP) courses. Thirteen different AP courses are offered at North View High School.

Newcomers, entering in the 9th grade follow the 9th grade course sequence in classes with teachers and paraprofessionals (Teacher Assistants) who can offer primary language support in the various content areas. The course sequence for newcomers includes their English Language Development (ELD) class, which does not give them graduation credits and does not satisfy the A-G requirement for 9th grade English, which means that from the start the students are behind on credits. The course sequence also includes Math, Biology, and foreign language. The two periods of ELD, one period of Math, one period of Biology, and one period of foreign language add up to 5 out of 8 periods. The other three periods are filled with elective courses. At North View High School, most newcomers are programmed into a dance elective, folklorico, which many of the students discussed in their interviews. Some students opt out of folklorico for sports or other non-academic elective courses.

The coordinator, Ms. Camacho, pointed out that in terms of programming students what throws a “wrench in the students’ schedules” is that newcomers arrive at all times during the school year. Students, for example, who arrive during spring semester, will have to repeat almost entirely their first year, the following school year. As some students progress to the following courses in the sequence, others stay behind, making it especially difficult to spread the limited academic supports to all those students and classes.
“I have students who have been in the country for three months, taking the same classes with students who have been in the country for a year, or longer, and others who have taken the class but can’t pass it, so they are repeating it for a second time, and I have only one TA (Teacher’s Assistant). I know TAs are not the answer, but what is? I’ve tried so many different things to support these kids, but still, I can’t get my mind around it.”

North View High School does not have a formal process for introducing newcomers to the grading procedures, the high school graduation requirements, the credit based grade promotion system, the high school exit exam (CAHSEE), or the A-G requirements. Mrs. Navarro and Ms. Camacho, however, do make a concerted effort to introduce students to these processes. Ms. Camacho meets with every newcomer on his or her first day of school and gives them a tour of the school. She introduces them to their teachers and their classmates. She also makes an effort to pair them up with a student who can “buddy up” and show them around school and help them get acquainted with other students. Throughout the year she meets with students to discuss benchmark assessments like the CELDT and CST. She also works closely with newcomers in preparing them for the CASHEE and for juniors and seniors on registering them for the SAT and ACT.

Mrs. Navarro has become known as the English Learner counselor. Teachers and other counselors both see her as the “case-carrier” for newcomers. While she doesn’t follow a formal process for supporting newcomers, she does meet with every single newcomer to create a Individualized Graduation Plan (IGP), to review A-G requirements, to discuss opportunities for credit recovery, to offer prep courses for the CAHSEE, and to do a general check up on how well they are adapting to their new school. Mrs. Navarro and Ms. Camacho also actively recruit newcomers into Saturday school, summer school and independent study to get them “caught up on their credits.”
Academic Supports

Per district policy, students enrolled in ELD courses experience a curriculum specially designed for English Learners. ELD classes are designed in levels, from Level 1: Beginning to Level 4: Advanced. Each level is a year-long course, it is expected that students progress through the levels at that pace. Students who do not pass the course with a “C” or better must repeat the course. Ms. Camacho reported that newcomers are scheduled into ELD classes with multiple ELD levels, due to the low numbers of newcomer students, only 27 newcomers in the school with fewer than three years of schooling in the U.S. The low numbers forces the inclusion of multiple levels into one class in order to maintain class size. Multiple levels (four levels in the case of North View HS) in one classroom, each level with its own curriculum, create instructional challenges for the teacher. Even with extensive training on teaching each of the levels, the teacher cannot implement the lessons with fidelity. Ms. Camacho explains the challenges faced by the ELD teacher.

“The teacher must juggle curriculums and students; those who came in late in the school year, the ones repeating, the ones with enough fluency to sustain basic conversations to the ones who cannot even ask to go to the restroom. And on top of it, the teacher has to handle four lessons at a time. He really is good, he tries different strategies, he tries to bridge the curriculums to use the various proficiency levels in the class as a teaching tool, he incorporates collaborative learning strategies, and students benefit from it, but they need more interactions with the teacher who can model the language.”

Content teachers (non ELD teachers) also face particular instructional challenges. The biggest instructional challenge for the content teacher is making complex content comprehensible to newcomers and assessing mastery of content from students who can’t produce written work at grade level. Mrs. Navarro explains that this is one of the most critical challenges in teaching newcomer students. “I don’t always have full faith in the
grades student receive,” she states. As an attempt to circumvent this issue, teachers in all content areas have received training in SDAIE (Specially Design Academic Instruction in English), and are required to be certified to teach English Learners. Additionally, teachers who speak Spanish are given the “ELD line” so that they can provide newcomers with primary language support. As is reported later in the chapter, however, students reported that few teachers impart the lesson in Spanish or communicate with students in Spanish to clarify instruction. When asked to speak on why teachers don’t do more to differentiate instruction for newcomers, Ms. Navarro explained.

“Part of the issue is that some teachers don’t see it as their job to do so. I’m a Math teacher or a Science teacher, not a language teacher, they’ll say. Some teachers may even resent the students for putting them in a position to have to differentiate instruction, period. But I think part of it has to do with the fact that if you have a small sprinkling of students in your class that require special accommodations, it is easier to ignore them.”

Beyond the classroom, North View offers newcomers few academic supports. Newcomers are recruited into Saturday school, summer school and independent study courses. Additionally, Mrs. Navarro and Ms. Camacho are working to bring to campus opportunities for online classes that can help students earn credits towards graduation and satisfying the A-G requirements. These services are not offered exclusively to newcomers, but both informants have made it their mandate to use their ability to communicate in Spanish with the students and their parents/guardians, and the rapport they’ve worked to establish with them, to encourage them and motivate them to take advantage of the multiple academic opportunities at North View High School.

**Social Experiences**

When asked how they characterized the social interactions of newcomers at North View High School, both informants indicated that newcomers “stick together.” Social
interactions are limited mostly to other newcomers or immediate classmates. In Mrs. Navarro’s estimation, newcomers do not really associate with peers who do not speak Spanish. Both informants report that newcomers have complained to them about not feeling comfortable at school, hinting at feeling out of place, rejected and pushed aside. According to the informants, to the best of their knowledge, few newcomers participate in extra-curricular activities at school, including team sports, clubs, or student government.

“I know, as a counselor, I know how important friends are to teenagers. That is why these students meld together, they satisfy each others’ needs for closeness, their need for togetherness. But, I feel like that strong bond is a two-sided blade that cuts both ways. That bond also prevents them from getting out there and making friends with other students outside of their immediate classmates. Most of our students at this school speak Spanish, but they [newcomers] find their solidarity more in their immigrant experience than in their common language.” (Mrs. Navarro)

Interactions with teachers are also limited, due in large part to their inability to communicate. Ms. Camacho estimates that roughly 50% of the staff speaks Spanish, but both informants report seeing few interactions between teachers and newcomers outside of class. Ms. Camacho has been asked by students to intervene when clashes between newcomers and teachers erupt as a result of their inability to communicate effectively. For some students and teachers, the difficulties with communication have resulted in feelings of stress, and mutual animosity and disrespect.

When asked what is needed at North View High School to better serve the needs of newcomers, both informants provided a range of responses. Both informants mentioned more academic supports in classrooms in terms of training for teachers, paraprofessional support, a curriculum that emphasizes reading and writing over grammar exercises, and a commitment to serving the language needs of students. As for
addressing their social emotional needs Ms. Camacho summed it with by getting to the heart of this complex period of transition that newcomers are facing.

“The more I know about the kids the more I feel we need to do more to help them be successful in school. Each one is a special case, they each have a fantastical story. There is a student, for example, who stopped coming to school. He doesn’t want to come to school. He lives with his brothers. The guardian is like 22 years old. When I met him I thought he was a student too. The student stopped coming to school. We sent our attendance counselor to go look for him and find out what was going on. His brother hadn’t seen him in days either. Finally he turned up, who knows where he was………..We have a lot of stories like that one. I think what we need is a plan for getting to know the students and for connecting with them so they can fit in and believe that they can succeed. We need to do more, as an entire school to better meet their needs and I think the first step is for everyone to know that they have unique needs. We need everyone to be part of this.”

Bellwood Park High School

The two informants from Bellwood Park High School who participated in this study were Mrs. Garcia and Mr. Fausto, a counselor and coordinator, respectively. The informants provided data regarding (1) school processes, (2) academic supports for newcomers and (3) social experiences.

School Processes

Since many of the school processes that directly impact newcomers are set by policy, many of the processes from North View High School discussed in the previous section are mirrored at Bellwood Park High School. Bellwood Park High School has the same processes for enrolling students, identifying possible ELs, assessing newcomers’ language proficiency, assigning language classifications, and reclassifying students. Additionally, the grading scales, the graduation requirements, the CAHSEE requirements, the CELDT requirements, and the CST requirements are all the same at both schools.
Programming of students varies to a small degree at Bellwood Park High School. Like at North View High School, counselors evaluate transcripts from the home country to ascertain credits and determine grade placement. Bellwood Park High School also has a predetermined course sequence for 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th graders. Due to credit deficiencies, newcomers, regardless of educational history, typically are programmed in the 9th grade. Exceptions are few. The coordinator did report that cases of newcomers entering school with near grade level English proficiency have been able to access courses not included in the 9th grade course sequence, including AP courses. A notable success case from Bellwood Park High School was Mario, a freshmen at UC Berkeley at the time of this study. Mario started school in the U.S. at the age of 16 and was able to complete all graduation requirements, meet the A-G requirements, while serving as student body president, and playing a varsity sport, in a little over three years. Mario passed the CELDT in his first try, allowing him to bypass the ELD classes, providing more flexibility in his class schedule for AP courses and for doubling up on academic courses required for graduation.

First-year newcomers at Bellwood Park have a similar class schedule to the first-year newcomers at North View HS. At Bellwood Park the students have fewer periods in the day, 6 periods as apposed to 8 periods at North View, which means that the class matrix is less flexible than the matrix at North View. The flexibility of the matrix is determined by the number of mandatory classes a student must take and the number of available slots to take those classes. Fewer periods in the day, means fewer opportunities for taking mandatory classes and even fewer opportunities for making up a failed class, accessing AP courses, opting to play a sport, etc. First-year newcomers at Bellwood Park
have two periods of ELD, one period of Math, one period of Biology, one period of foreign language or elective, and one period of physical education. Their program is even more constricting due to the fact that they must take those courses at a given period during the day that has been designated as the ESL Math class or the ESL Science class, for example. To clarify, although these classes have the prefix assignation of ESL, they are not taught in Spanish, they are taught in English with extensive language scaffolds to make the content comprehensible for English Learners. However, according to Mr. Fausto, “if you walked into an ESL Science class, for example, you would not know it, because the teachers teach it just like any other class.” Restrictions in the class schedule means that newcomers end up in traveling cohorts from period to period, with little variation in class composition.

Bellwood Park High School does not have a formal process for introducing newcomers to the grading procedures, the high school graduation requirements, the credit-based grade promotion system, the CAHSEE, or the A-G requirements. Newcomers are informed about all these requirements in much the same way that all students are. Counselors meet with every student, beginning in the 9th grade to develop and Individualized Graduation Plan (IGP) driven by the students’ post high school goals. The IGPs are developed also with input from parents. During the IGP meetings important information is shared with students and parents regarding grades, graduation requirements, A-G requirements and the CAHSEE. According to Mrs. Garcia, all but one of the counselors at Bellwood Park speak Spanish and hold these meetings in Spanish with students and parents who are not proficient in English. Additionally, Mr. Fausto visits all the ELD classes several times a year and does presentations on some of these
same topics and provides information to newcomers on opportunities for credit recovery, independent study, adult school, and summer school, all opportunities for newcomers to make headway towards completing graduation requirements.

**Academic Supports**

Due to recent waves of teacher turnover at Bellwood Park High School, the teaching staff is relatively young with few years of teaching experience. According to Mr. Fausto, school leadership has placed a strong emphasis on professional development for all teachers to improve instructional effectiveness. Part of that ongoing professional development has been focused on developing teacher knowledge and skills for addressing the linguistic needs of English Learners. Additionally, Bellwood Park High School hires six Teachers Assistants (TA) who follow newcomers to their academic classes offering primary language support. The TAs are assigned primarily to teachers who do not speak Spanish and cannot offer instructional support in Spanish.

Mrs. Garcia explains that she has worked with many newcomers who are frustrated about their inability to pass classes. The students’ frustration speaks to lack of academic supports and to the sentiment shared by some educators that student achievement outcomes are a direct result of their efforts.

“Almost every single student fails Mr. Espinoza’s class, and it’s a class they need to graduate. The students come in super frustrated. They tell me that no matter how hard they try it’s not going to happen. And I see it with all students in his class. The fail rate in those classes is close to 80 percent. For immigrant students it must be even more frustrating. I feel for them.”

Providing instructional support in Spanish is a strategy used at Bellwood Park High School. Mr. Fausto explained that all newcomers have some form of primary
language support in all academic classes. The support comes from either teachers who are fluent in Spanish or from Teacher Assistants.

Bellwood Park High School also provides students with opportunities for accelerating English language acquisition and for additional opportunities for credit recovery but no programs that are specifically designed for newcomers. Programs accessible to all students are online courses, Saturday school and summer school.

**Social Experiences**

Bellwood Park High School has historically been an entry point for many newcomer immigrant students. According to Mr. Fausto in recent years, when migration rates where higher, it was not uncommon to have 50 to 70 newcomers arrive each year. Currently, 41 students at Bellwood Park are considered newcomers. Mr. Fausto has observed the same pattern of interactions with newcomers for many years. Newcomers socialize and interact almost exclusively with other immigrant students. They appear to segregate themselves. Spanish is the dominant language in their interactions, even as they acquire English. Mr. Fausto explained that they seem to form their own culture that is passed down from “one generation to another.” Immigrants who have been in school for three to four years still associate with more recent immigrants, even when they do not share classes. Immigrant students have even appropriated a specific section of an outdoor courtyard were they “hang out.” The place where immigrant students meet during lunch or during their free time is referred to as “little TJ” (little Tijuana, Mexico).

Immigrant students who transcend their immigrant student groups are the ones who develop an affiliation with another group. Few of the immigrant students join sport-teams and begin to associate with the team members. Other students, Mr. Fausto
explains, become “rockers, so they start hanging out with the rockers.” According to Mrs. Garcia, however, newcomers in general seem to avoid extra-curricular activities. When completing the Individual Graduation Plans, newcomers appear to be lacking in school extra-curricular activities.

Both Mrs. Garcia and Mr. Fausto believe that interactions between newcomers and teachers and school personnel to be fairly good, or no worse than with all other students. Neither of the informants reported hearing overt anti-immigrant comments from staff members, however, they both admit that in their estimation, the students probably do not feel well supported or well known by their teachers.

When asked what is needed at Bellwood Park High School to better serve the needs of newcomers, both informants provided a range of responses. Both informants mentioned a need to do more to support the students’ social-emotional needs. Mrs. Garcia shared some of her experiences working with newcomers.

“I try to keep a straight face when they tell me what they’ve been through, or are going through. A little girl told me about her family migrating here. They were separated along the way, I’m not too clear on the details, and her mom was sold into slavery, into prostitution. And she’s telling me this story with such a matter of fact tone. That’s a sign of trauma. I think many of these students suffered traumas and we don’t know it. That can have a huge impact on how they do in classes.”

Mr. Fausto spoke about what can be directly done to help students finish high school.

“The students, well most of them, come with a clear goal or purpose. They want to get an education. They want to learn English. But it’s more difficult for them then for others. Time is against them, especially for the older students. We need to provide them more opportunities to earn credits. And we need to do a better job convincing them to take the opportunities. Not many come to Saturday school, or CAHSEE prep. We need all of them here. They know what they want, but we need to help them see how to get there step by step, walking them step by step, because it’s too easy to not graduate.”
Observation Field Notes

Observation field notes of each research site and the surrounding community were taken during each visit. Schools with proportionately large populations of Latino students typically have a high degree of ethnic and racial segregation, are under-resourced, overpopulated, and are located in high-crime communities (Orfield & Lee, 2005, 2006; Callahan & Gandara, 2004). I wanted to use field notes to profile the research sites and evaluate whether they match the description of a typical school with a high Latino population. Both research sites match some and possibly all of the markers listed above.

North View High School

North View High School is a new school. From the outside it looks more like an art museum than a school. The architecture is modern. The main building looks like several buildings of different dimensions stacked haphazardly together creating sharp angles that cast shadows against the large exterior walls. This building is not parallel to the street. The building sits off center at an angle and sits back far enough from the street to create a wide-open area in front of the school for students to congregate. The colors on the buildings are muted, olive green, tan and gray tones. The fence that surrounds the school is made of metallic spikes.

The school is situated on a mid-size four-lane road. Directly in front of the school are several small businesses, a barbershop, a small restaurant, a convenience store, two medical clinics, a small non-denominational church and several homes. To the north of the school, the immediate neighborhood is made up of small two to three bedroom single-family homes. On a street running perpendicular from the school is a row of large
apartment buildings. To the west of the school, approximately 100 yards away are the railroad tracks. Approximately 400 yards from the railroad tracks is a development of low-income residential housing units, the projects. To the east of the school are a few more small businesses, a *carnicería* (butcher shop), a *panadería* (bakery), and a fast food burger restaurant. About 300 yards east is also a large chain-store pharmacy and a grocery store. South of the school is an industrial complex with several manufacturing plants and a large steel distribution site.

During my visits to North View, the community seemed calm and peaceful. I never felt unsafe. In the interest of full disclosure, as a teenager, I lived a block away from the site that was to become North View High School. In the late 1990s, the site was an empty lot left behind by an automobile plant that closed down in the early 1980s. It is possible that my familiarity with the community added to my feeling of safety.

A parent volunteers greets visitors inside the main building. Every visitor must sign in, state their business and adhere a visitors’ pass before entering. The main entrance is nicely decorated with banners, an accreditation certificate, trophies, informational pamphlets, class panorama pictures and photographs of school events. The campus is clean. The walls inside the buildings are an off-white color. During passing periods the hallways are crowded. The hallways are much too narrow for the number students making their way to class. The eating area is industrial looking, metallic tables with umbrellas to protect students from the sun. I experienced a feeling of relative safety as I observed the students during lunch-time. As a school employee, I know how to spot suspicious yard behavior; crowding of students, students hiding in corners, groups roaming together as if following one group member, crowds forming around students, a
student announcing to the group members that an adult is heading their way. I did not witness students engaged in verbal or physical altercations. The only unnerving site during lunch was the presence of two armed school police officers.

Racial cliques were not observed, as nearly 100 percent of the student population is Latino. I also did not observe the participants from this study out during lunch break. As I circulated through the lunch area the majority of the conversations I overheard were in English. On a few occasions I heard the blending of English and Spanish.

**Bellwood Park High School**

Bellwood Park High School has a history over a century old. The main office building is a beautiful two-story art deco building that faces a busy four-lane road. The immediate neighborhood around the school is mostly residential. A row of townhomes lines the sidewalk in front of the school. A few small businesses surround the school; a printing shop, a panaderia (bakery), a laundromat, a carnicería (butcher shop), two fast food burger restaurants, and warehouse advertising wholesale of comforters, bedspreads and piñatas. On the southern boundary of the school is a railroad line. On the western boundary of the school is a residential area spanning several blocks comprised of multi-unit apartment buildings. Behind the school, against the newly remodeled football field is a large chain do it yourself home remodel store, a coffee shop, and several fast food eateries.

As I entered the campus, a parent volunteer greeted me near the main office. As is customary in most schools I signed in and picked up a visitors’ pass. Students roamed the halls freely. A student stopped in front of me and asked if wanted to donate to a charity drive. The ambiance felt relaxed. I did not feel intimidated. I felt welcomed.
According to Mr. Fausto, the campus has undergone a major facelift since it was reconstituted. The buildings were recently painted and several of the buildings were remodeled or restored. Keeping the campus clean is of great priority. If graffiti goes up, it comes down immediately. The campus appeared clean. The hallway floors were shiny and the public outdoor areas were litter free. Not many decorations hung on the walls, the raw architecture of the buildings were in full display. But in nearly every office or common indoor area, posters of the school mission and vision are prominently displayed.

The long and proud history of Bellwood Park High School can be felt through the large-scale murals of the school mascot painted in the brilliant school colors on exterior walls. The school spirit was palpable. All around were students wearing school apparel.

During lunch time the size of the school population can be felt as nearly the two-thirds of the 2,300 students convene in three courtyards. The environment seemed jovial. School personnel carrying radios supervised these areas. Interactions between school personnel and students were witnessed. A school police officer circulated through the courtyards having brief conversations with students and moving on. Small cliques of students seemed to take ownership of tables. There was a sense that each group had their own space. Mr. Fausto alerted me to specific courtyard where historically at this school newcomer students “hang out.” Many years ago that location had been termed “little TJ.” TJ being abbreviation for Tijuana, Mexico. The location where newcomers commiserate during their free time continues to go by that name.

Section I Summary

Key informants provided data for defining school processes, academic supports for newcomers and the social patterns of newcomer students. At each of the research
sites school processes are a matter of policy and practice. Policy determines the enrollment, assessment, and programming of newcomer students. The monitoring of student progress is a matter of practice at each of the schools. Neither school had a formalized process for monitoring the academic progress of newcomer students but both schools had dedicated personnel for helping newcomers transition to the U.S school system. Additionally, each school site included newcomers in all of their intervention programs and opportunities for credit recovery. Neither school, however, had a formal academic program for newcomers, except for ELD courses. Informants also characterized the social relations of newcomers as almost exclusive to other immigrant students with Spanish as the far dominant language. Moreover, informants described the involvement of newcomer students in school sponsored extra-curricular activities and the relationships between newcomer students and teachers / school personnel as minimal.

**Section II: Participant Pool Profile**

All participants were born in Mexico, migrated to the US in the last three years, have completed at least one year of schooling in the US, attended school in Mexico and are 14 to 20 years old. Additional information was collected with the participant questionnaire to establish a profile of the entire participant pool. The dataset pulled from the profiles serves as a reference point in the discussion of findings in the following chapter.

The participant questionnaire drew out information about the participants’ gender, age, years of residency in the US, first grade of schooling in the US, prior years of education before arriving in the US, current grade, family separations, legal guardianship,
parental level of education, and household employment status. Appendix XVI presents a series of tables that present the participant profile of the 30 student participants, 15 males and 15 females.

The participant pool can be summed up in the following manner. The 30 student participants have an average age of 15.7 years and have lived in the United States an average of 1.4 years. They started school in the United States at various grade levels but the majority of the participants, 21 out of 30, commenced in the 9th grade. All but two participants experienced school gaps back in Mexico. Additionally, all participants have experienced or were currently experiencing prolonged separations from one or both parents. In regards to their current guardianship, nearly half of the students were not under the direct care of at least one parent. Moreover, the majority of guardians did not complete at least high school. Parent/guardian employment status varied as well. The greater majority of the parents/guardians were employed at least part-time, with only 2 of the 30 being unemployed and looking.

The following section presents findings from the student interviews that directly answer the three research questions. The findings have been organized according to research question. Direct quotes are embedded throughout the section to support the findings and to bring voice to the students themselves. Every effort has been made to keep translations to English true in meaning and voice. The embedded quotes have been purposely kept unrevised, unedited and unpolished to more accurately relate the full force of the participants’ experiences. Their words carry the weight of their experiences. Their words emote their joys, their pains, their hopes and their fears, and this study would be much less without their very words.
The pre-design of this study called for all student interviews to be divided into two categories: (1) credit sufficient and (2) credit deficient. The intent was to analyze each category separately and compare them to add a layer of analysis and meaning to the findings. However prior to data collection, volunteer students were not screened for their credit sufficiency or deficiency status. Per school district policy, student records cannot be acquired without student assent and parent permission forms. Therefore, credit sufficiency or deficiency was not controlled for in the participant selection process. Once the interviews were conducted and transcripts were extracted for each participant, it was determined that all but two participants were credit deficient. The lack of parity in the credit sufficient and deficient groups makes an analysis between these two groups unrealizable. Consequently, rather than separating the interviews in two categories, all interviews were kept as one group and analyzed thusly.

In the sections that follow, reference is made to students by first name. All names and other identifiers have been changed to protect the participants’ anonymity.

**Section III: Findings for Research Question I**

**Research Question 1: How do high school age, newcomer-immigrants from Mexico characterize their first year in the American school system?**

Student interview data suggest that subjects characterize their first year in American schools in a binary way. The large majority of the participants characterize their first year of school in the United States in positive terms, few participants in negative terms and only two participants expressed ambivalence about their experience.

Of the 30 participants, 19 (12 females, 7 males) indicated that their experiences in school during their first year were overall positive. Nine students (2 females, 7 males)
said their experiences were overall negative. Two students (1 female, 1 male) could not figure out whether their overall experience was positive or negative.

Positive and negative characterizations of their first year experiences are shaped by four factors; (1) unfamiliar school structures, (2) language shock, (3) positive peer relations and (4) positive relations with teachers and other school agents. Each theme is explained below.

In the following sub-sections findings are presented on themes that can be influenced by gender and age. These findings are summaries on Table 4.10 at the end of Section II.

**Unfamiliar School Structures**

Unfamiliarity with school structures resulted in confusion, fear and lead to a period of disorientation that varied in duration amongst participants. Twenty-three students reported that upon entering school they experienced feeling overwhelming confusion and fear by the size of the school, the number of students, the number of teachers and the number of hours spent at school each day. Twelve students reported confusion about the classes they were assigned, and the manner in which they were assessed in the classes, not recognizing the letter based grading scales typically used in this country. Thirteen students were dismayed by being demoted to the 9th grade despite having completed one or more years in a “preparatory” school in Mexico, an equivalent to a high school. The data that suggest the impact of grade demotions on participants’ academic performance is presented in Section IV.

Alexa, a 16 year-old 10th grader from North View High School recounted some of her earliest impressions of school.
“I had to get up at 6:00 in the morning, super early. There were so many people walking to school, more than I’ve ever seen in one place. The schools here are so strange and so different to the schools over there. Over there schools are small. I got lost here. No one would tell me where to go. I don’t even remember how I got to my class. All I remember thinking was God save me from this.”

It is to be expected that immigrant students experience a degree of disorientation and mixed emotions upon entering a school system that is unfamiliar to them. What exacerbates their disorientation is their inability to speak English at even the most basic level and to access the information they need to navigate the school system and to perform in class to at least the levels they are accustomed to. The following section reports the impact that language shock had on participants’ general perception of their first year in an American school.

**Language Shock**

All 30 participants reported that learning English is the most formidable challenge to their academic performance and to their process of adaptation.

A coy 10th grader from Bellwood Park High School named Melody explained how she felt for the greater part of her first year, unable to communicate in English.

“What I liked least about school is how I felt. I had to learn another language, I couldn’t communicate with other people. The classes were too difficult. I didn’t understand anything. I wanted to return. I was not me, I couldn’t be me here. I just wanted to return.”

An 11th grader named Gabriel who originated from the border city of Tijuana, Mexico expressed his shock of being a student without a voice for the first time in his life.

“Well, I believe that the change in language is felt very heavily. My grades also fell. Over there, I was a good student. So then to get here, boom, I went down, it was the language, it had to be since there were many things I saw in class that I had already seen in Mexico, the language failed me, it’s what hit me the hardest, it’s what I liked least about being here. There was nothing I could do, I knew it would take time. In my mind I
had told myself that learning English doesn’t happen from one day to another, but it was more difficult than I thought to be in class and feeling incapable.”

Aside from finding it difficult to navigate the schools and negotiate their academic requirements, several students experienced what adds up to language rejection. Seven participants reported experiencing multiple incidences of language rejection from both teachers and students.

Esteban, a 15 year old, with piercing intelligent eyes explained what he interpreted as a form of language rejection from teachers.

“In biology class, the teacher speaks Spanish, he has a Spanish last name and even his parents are Mexican, he knows most of us don’t understand. I ask him a question about what he’s teaching and he responds in English. I think he thinks he’s a great thing, something more than us because we do not speak English yet.”

Esteban later added that his Algebra teacher clarified the lesson in Spanish and even tutored them in Spanish. He asserted that his Algebra teacher had been the teacher who has helped him most.

Other students reported a degree of language rejection from their peers.

Guillermo, one of the few participants who started his education in the U.S. at the middle school level expressed his dismay about the type of student who he feels discriminates against newcomers.

“The kids who have Mexican parents, they are born here but they discriminate. *Mexicanito* (little Mexican), they’d call me, but they’re Mexican too, of Mexican parents, they are the ones who speak English too but they speak Spanish too but they don’t want to. They act like it lifts them up to not speak Spanish.”

Like Guillermo, Miriam recounted similar experiences with language rejection.

“One of the reasons I don’t like school is that it’s difficult for me to come out of my house, I prefer not to because of the English, I don’t like to come out, or to talk to people, or try. I used to attempt it but some people look at you like if you’re crazy when I speak Spanish. I don’t like to talk to people in school because of the language. It’s like everyone speaks Spanish but it’s wrong if we do.”
When asked what they wish would have been different about their first year experience, 18 participants (8 females, 10 males) responded that during their first year in school they needed more support with learning and understanding English. Conversely, when asked if they felt a school employee had truly helped them during their first year, the 16 students (10 females, 6 males) who answered in the affirmative to that question stated that those school employees communicated with them in Spanish to either conduct a lesson or to counsel them on school and or personal related matters.

**Positive Peer Relations**

For student participants in this study, positive peer relations, almost entirely with other newcomer students, were the primary mechanism for circumventing the adverse conditions they faced, (1) unfamiliar school structures and (2) language shock.

Twenty-three students (12 females, 11 males) indicated that friends were the most important for becoming familiar with the school. Friends helped students navigate the campus, helped them feel welcomed, and engendered a sense of belonging. Friends served as tutors, as confidants and as advisors who helped steer them out of trouble. Most importantly, friends served as language brokers who helped make sense of work assignments, translate conversations for teachers, and also introduce newcomers to other students who they normally would not associate with, English dominant students. For eight students (5 females, 3 males), friends were the primary reason to continue coming to school.

Most students commented on the role of friends or classmates who they felt were positive figures during their induction year. Mauricio, a 10th grader and the oldest of all
participants at 19 years of age recounts how friends welcomed him and helped him
survive the first trying weeks at his new school.

“When I came, I imagined that the school was going to be big but not as big as it really is. When I came here they gave me a map and they said here you go. I looked at the paper and I thought, how is this a map? It was so confusing. I stopped a girl who was walking by and I told her, hey, help me no? Similarly, when I came here, I didn’t talk to anyone, I was all alone here and little by little they started talking to me, classmates, from different countries too, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, and so we started hanging together, and things got a little better.”

Araceli, a young lady, now an 11th grader on her third year in the country shared her experience in her first English class.

“I got to the class before it started and I sat and everyone started to arrive and they spoke Spanish and I was like how, serious, they speak Spanish? So then they explained to me that this was not a regular English class, in this class all students coming from other countries are here. And they were like me, learning English. At first I was very scared but I had classes with all of them and they spoke to me in Spanish and told me what the teachers were saying and how to say things in English and I started to feel a little better. I started to speak to more and more people and even started to go out with them. We went to football games or we would go to the stores and like that.”

Similarly, Nayeli, found that peers helped her amplify her school social network by introducing her to students who were not immediate classmates and by getting her involved in school activities.

“It was my classmates who knew that I was new to the school who showed me the school and who started helping me. It was because of them that I joined the folklorico club and also I was in the swim team.”

Positive peer relations also shaped the participants views about school. When asked if school was a place they wanted to be during their first year in school, 16 students (11 females, 5 males) answered yes. Ten of the 16 respondents cited friends as the primary reason why they wanted to be at school. Nine students (3 females, 6 males) responded that school was not a place they wanted to be during their first year, citing familial issues, problems with friends, or not really liking school that much.
Positive peer relations also shaped the way in which newcomers see their place in school. Participants were asked if they felt a sense of school belonging during their first year in school. Answers to this question varied widely. Seven students (3 females, 4 males) answered that they felt a sense of belonging to the school. Twelve students (7 females, 5 males) expressed that they did not feel like they belonged and several still feel like they do not belong, even after multiple years in school. Eleven students (5 females, 6 males) exhibited ambivalence in their responses. On some occasions they felt like they belonged and at others not. Of the 11 who expressed ambivalence in their response, they cited friendships as the reasons for why they felt like they belonged at times.

“Partly, I felt like I was from this school, but in part there were things that made me feel that this was not my world, the first was not speaking English, the other was my classes, I felt very different than everyone else, what I was going through did not make me feel comfortable. Coming to school and talking to people, with classmates, and playing sports was what made me feel right, like I could be counted as a student here.”

These are Isaac’s words. Isaac is an articulate and soft-spoken 10th grader who captures some of the complexity of the leveraging effects of positive peer relationships.

Conversely, Laura, who didn’t feel a sense of belonging to school expresses why.

“No, I didn’t. I missed my school in Mexico. I still do. I missed my friends from Mexico. No one spoke to me here except two girls. I felt uncomfortable. I don’t think I am ever going to feel comfortable. There is nothing for me here.”

Experiences and relationships with teachers and other school agents, shaped newcomers’ perceptions of their first year in school to a lesser extent than did experiences and relationships with peers.

**Positive Relations with Teachers and School Agents**

Positive relations with teachers and school agents have the potential to be significant in shaping newcomers' perceptions of their first year of school. Positive
relations with teachers manifested themselves in two distinct forms. Teachers impacted newcomers not only through their instruction but also by the care and personal attention they gave them.

Data suggests that for participants, their perceptions of the relations with teachers were defined by how well they felt their teachers knew them and by how much help teachers offered them. Participants were asked if they felt that during their first year in school their teachers got to know them, nine students (5 females, 4 males) answered positively. Few students were able to identify more than one teacher who they felt knew them. Additionally, when asked if they felt that a teacher really helped them learn during their first year, 16 students (7 females, 9 males) responded that they had at least one teacher who really helped them out. The explanations of how teachers helped them vary. Of the 16 students who responded that at least one teacher helped them, 12 said that teachers took the time to clarify the lesson in Spanish and that they offered continuous tutoring after-school. Teachers also provided guidance, support, and motivation for students. Nineteen of the 30 participants, however, stated that most teachers do not take that time and extra steps to make the language comprehensive in the classroom. These data suggests that newcomers encounter few teachers who make an effort to get to know them, that provide instruction suitable to their linguistic needs and who champion their education.

Fourteen students (11 females, 3 males) also described at least one teacher as a mentor or motivating figure whose encouragement resonated with them. Eli, a 9th grade student at Bellwood Park High School describes the persistent message from one of her teachers.
“Ms. Hernandez would always tell us, how is your English class going? You have a friend here because like you, like you I came to this country, I came to this country, and I suffered but I learned English, you can do it too.”

Similarly, Karina, a 15 year old from North View High School recounts the words of motivation from her teacher Ms. Garcia.

“I would say that Ms. Garcia helped me greatly, she put a lot of effort so that I wouldn’t give up because a lot of people say that English is very difficult and it is, you’ve never heard anything more difficult in your entire life. But she never let me give up, she wouldn’t even let me think about it. She always told me that it’s possible even when others say no.”

Students also identified teachers as agents who helped them feel like they belonged at school. A 10th grader from North View High School named Miguel explained how even what seem to be an insignificant invitation made him feel like part of the school.

“At first I didn’t feel like part of the school. I felt excluded because of English, I felt like I understood English but I wanted the opportunity to do work in Spanish but I felt they didn’t want to give me the opportunity. Afterwards I started getting to know my Physical Education teacher and in Spanish he told me that he wanted me to join the soccer team and I did and felt like part of the team. I was also in music class and the teacher was a really good person and he also told me to join the music class but I told him no because I wanted to play soccer and couldn’t join band, those things make me feel part of this school.”

As for other school employees, only 8 students (5 females, 3 males) stated that they felt another adult at school knew them during their first year in school. Seven students identified a counselor or the English Language Development (ELD) Coordinator at their respective schools as that other adult at school who knew them and spoke to them frequently. One student identified a parent volunteer at the school who always greeted him nicely. Six of the eight participants responded that these other adults served to familiarize them with the school, with the programming of classes, and informed students
of school resources including tutoring, opportunities for credit recovery, academic enrichment and extracurricular activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Findings in relation to participants’ first year in a U.S. school.</th>
<th>Total Responses</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Age:14-15 14 Participants</th>
<th>Age:16-17 13 Participants</th>
<th>Age:18-19 3 Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall positive appraisal of school experience</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report needed more help learning English during their first year</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends were most important in helping them become familiar with their new school</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiends were the primary reasons to not stop coming to school.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School was a place they wanted to be</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School was NOT a place they wanted to be</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felt a sense of belonging to the school</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did NOT feel a sense of belonging to the school</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrated some ambivalence about their sense of belonging to school</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felt their teachers knew them</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felt their teachers really helped them out</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Described a teacher as a mentor or motivating figure</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felt that a school employee, not a teacher, knew them</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In answering research question one, the data point to four primary school-based mechanisms that shaped newcomers’ perceptions about their first year of schooling in the U.S. These four mechanisms were reported in this section; unfamiliar school structures, language shock, positive peer relations with newcomers, and positive relations with teachers and other school agents. However, unintended findings in this study offer insights into external factors that may also affect the way newcomers perceive their induction year in school. These external factors are the push and pull forces that triggered their migration, their journey to America, and their expectations of America before arriving.

**The Push and Pull Forces of Migration**

The forces that compel the families in this study to uproot and face the trying experiment of migration are many. According to student participants, their migration was motivated by forces that pushed them out of their homeland and forces that pulled them into America. The push forces, in order of frequency, as reported by the 30 participants are the lack of economic opportunities, lack of education opportunities, family reunification, concerns about safety, and other familial issues. Conversely, what attracted them to the United States was greater economic opportunities, greater educational opportunities, reuniting with parents or other family members who migrated before them, and to find a safer more peaceful place to live. Most students cited multiple reasons for migration.

Of the 30 participants, 28 mentioned that lack of economic opportunities drove their families out of Mexico to the United States. Twenty-seven students mentioned that getting an education and learning English was a motivator in their migration. Fourteen
students added that they came to the United States because one or both of their parents
where already living here. Twelve students referenced safety concerns back home,
alluding to rampant drug related crime and violence in their cities. Two students cited
other familial concerns, a student who was sent to the U.S. because she became pregnant
and her parents wanted her away from the child’s father and another student who
migrated with his father to avoid a pending criminal trial.

Isaac, a soft-spoken 10th grader at North View High School explained it thusly.

“I was born in Puebla, Mexico, in a small town called San Salvador de Chapa. The town
is beautiful, it’s close to the city, but right now it’s an ugly place to live. The people who
are moving there are not originally from there. They are becoming a bad influence in that
town, they are bringing in gangs and drugs and crime. The schools are really bad. There’s about 30 schools but they’re not good. There’s also contamination. We are
behind on everything in Mexico, on everything, in sanitation, the people, education. So I
wanted to come here to study and learn this language, to learn English and make a better
life for me, to do something in life and have better opportunities. So I talked to my
parents about it and they agreed, they let me come and live with my aunt and uncle.”

The participant profile demonstrates that of the 30 participants, only 6 are living
with both parents, 12 are living with at least one parent and the rest with relatives or
siblings. All participants have experienced at one point in their lives prolonged
separation from their parents; separations that are linked to their family migration
patterns. Consequently, the participants are either going through a period of separation
and or reunification from their parents, and siblings.

Matilde, one of the oldest participants in this study expressed that what she liked
most about living in the United States was finally being with her family.

“In fact, my mother already lived here, and I was with my grandmother in Mexico, and
since my brother and other sister had already left [Mexico], well I was just with my
grandmother, but she was only getting older. My mom didn’t want to leave her that
responsibility, so she went to get me and brought me back. I got to see my brother and
sisters for the first time since I was little. My sister is only two years older than me. I
was so happy, but at the same time I felt like I left my mother behind because my grandmother is like my mother.”

Safety concerns were also vividly recounted by nearly half of the participants. Rogelio, a 15 year old from Tijuana, Mexico recounted the reasons that triggered his migration to the United States.

“My mother sent me here. There is a lot of narco-trafficking. See what happened was that I was in school one day. And have you heard of everything that is happening with the cartels? These hooded men came into my school with arms and took the school hostage, they took out the teachers and began to choose students. They said you, you, you and you. They asked us if we wanted to collaborate with them. It scared us all. My mother said no, you’re not going back to school, so I never did. When she was able to, she sent me to live here.”

Stories that demonstrated how close these adolescents were to fear, death and violence were not uncommon. One of the youngest student participants, a 14 year old name Braulio told his story in an calm perfunctory tone.

“My dad won a custody case from my mother, but even if he didn’t win the case, she was going to let him take me because they were killing lots of people. I had friends that lived there and they were very problematic. They were narcos, they were my age, and that was the problem, as my mom saw it. She didn’t want me to get into that and I think that’s what she thought the problem was, she didn’t want me to have those problems over there. And I also wanted a better life, have more opportunities, make more money than over there, triumph, make more than over there.”

The Journey to America

Direct questions about the participants’ journey to America were not asked during the interview to avoid content that could potentially cause participants unwarranted discomfort or that could lead to participants revealing information bearing legal implications. What did come out in their responses throughout the interview, however, were morsels of data about how they came to this country and how their journey precipitated family separations.
Five students mentioned that they came to this country with a visa. Two students made mention of their fear of immigration. As for their journey to this country, 23 students did not journey to this country with at least one parent. Of those 23, the majority traveled with a sibling or relative. Six students traveled alone.

**Expectations of America**

Participants had a range of expectations about the United States before migrating. Expectations range from no expectations at all to believing that the U.S. was the “glory” a “first-world country.” Some participants traveled to the U.S. before permanently migrating, they had an informed reference for their expectations. Others only had stories from relatives, movies and American tv shows as reference.

Participants provided multiple answers for what they expected life to be like in America. On 17 separate occasions, participants stated they expected the U.S. to be a land of economic and educational opportunities. On 19 occasions, the United States was described with terms such as big, beautiful, modern, peaceful, with many places to visit and with lots of entertainment. Some students had mixed or even negative expectations.

Nine participants offered statements about how difficult life can be in the U.S. These students described the adverse conditions that immigrants face; language shock, discrimination, poor treatment of immigrants, lack of jobs and less freedom for minors to drive and move about the city at night.

Gustavo, a 15 year-old freshman at Bellwood Park High School, captured what he expected to be one of the most difficult things about living in the U.S.

“I imagined a beautiful place with many opportunities, and it’s true, you have them, my parents who came here would tell me that it was very beautiful but that at the same time they suffered greatly for being immigrants. Immigrants are not treated like full human
beings here. I already knew that before coming here. Immigrants always have to watch out here.”

Conversely, Amanda and Judith discussed the lofty expectations they had of America before moving here.

“I imagined we would always go out, and that everything was going to be very beautiful. At first my mom and cousins who already lived here would take me places. They took me to Disneyland. But once I started school that was it, we didn’t go places anymore.” (Amanda)

“Glory [as in heavenly glory] is the image I had and it still is because there are opportunities here, that whatever you want to do here you can do, obviously everything with measure, you can’t kill anyone either, but you have lots of privileges. This place offers you the glory in regards to your education, your rights and lots of things, I don’t know how to explain it.” (Judith)

The possible connection between participants’ expectations of the U.S. and their perceptions of their induction year lies in whether their expectations were realized once they arrived in the U.S. An even number of students, 15, stated that the U.S. was what they expected, the other 15 stated that it was not.

**Summary of Findings for Research Question #1**

Nineteen of 30 participants indicated that overall they have a general positive perception of their first year experiences in a U.S. school. Their positive outlook, however, is not an indication that participants did not feel the stresses of unfamiliar school structures and processes. For thirteen participants this included being demoted to the 9th grade, regardless of having completed a year of more of high school education in Mexico. Additionally, participants experienced language shock and language rejection, mostly coming from U.S. born Latino students who also speak Spanish. Data suggest that peer relations and relations with teachers and other school agents have the potential for helping newcomers overcome their language challenges and accelerate their adaption.
into the U.S. school system. Moreover, data revealed that the participants’ perceptions of their school experience is defined in-part by external factors including the push and pull forces that triggered their migration, their journey to the U.S., their expectations of life in the U.S. prior to their migration.

Section IV: Findings for Research Questions 2 and 3

Research Question #2: How do high school age, newcomer-immigrants from Mexico perceive the social experiences and school processes they encountered during their first year in an American school?

Explicitly, as the findings to the first research question support, the participants in this study perceive the social experiences and the school processes they encountered during their first year in school in a largely positive manner, as evidence by 19 participants who characterize their overall experience in school during their first year as positive. However, implicit in their responses is a harsher characterization of the social experiences and school processes they encountered that may be imperceptible to newcomers who perceive their new reality in the U.S. through a rather optimistic lens. The positive sentiments that participants voiced towards their social experiences are almost all in reference to their classmates and close friends who are all recent immigrants themselves. Only very few participants reported relationships with non-immigrant peers. This provides evidence of a type of de facto school segregation that is much the result of school practice as it is of the natural pattern of students socializing with people who most closely resemble them.

Upon entering U.S., schools students experienced linguistic isolation and social isolation. Of the 30 participants, 22 (14 females, 8 males) verified that they had more friends in school back in Mexico than they had during their first year in school in the U.S. Six students (1 female, 5 males) said they had about the same number of friends in Mexico as they did in the U.S. during their first year in school. Two students (2 males) didn’t know because they were unsure about how to distinguish friends from classmates or acquaintances. Of the 30 students, all but 11 students (7 females, 4 males) said they would like to have more people in their circle of friends. When asked if students had friends who were not or had not been classmates, only 3 students (1 female, 2 males) answered they had friends who they have never had in a class.

Outside of school, participants also experienced few relationships with peers. Seven students (2 females, 5 males) reported having friends or socializing with peers outside of school. The reasons most cited for the lack of social interactions outside of school were familial responsibilities and perceptions of danger in the community.

During their first year in school, newcomers experienced a high degree of language isolation at their respective schools. Twenty-eight students (13 females, 15 males) reported that Spanish was used almost exclusively in social interactions with friends. On occasions, English was introduced into the conversations because there were some students in the group more proficient with English than others. Few students saw that speaking English with their friends was a way of practicing the language. Twenty-
two students (10 females, 12 males) indicated that during their first year in school they had roughly the same classmates in all their classes, limiting the opportunities they had to interact with students of higher language abilities.

Araceli, explained the unique language dynamic that unfolds in social interactions.

“The major part of the time we speak Spanish because that’s all we know how to speak. We don’t feel limited in Spanish. But sometimes we practice saying things. Like we were practicing how to say “restroom” because I don’t know how to say it and Fernando was telling me, no that’s not how you pronounce it, but then Miriam said, no idiot, you that’s not how you say it either. So we try to teach each other English, but not enough.”

Conversely, when asked if they associated with other students who are non-Spanish speakers or English dominant students, only one student, Mauricio, the oldest of all participants, responded affirmatively.

“I have a friend outside of school that doesn’t speak Spanish, and I have friend in school here too that doesn’t speak Spanish. I try to communicate with them any way I can, even with hand gestures. For example, after school when I have to go home, I tell them (hand gestures walking fingers) so they know I have to go home. Or if I’m hungry, I show them with my hands too.”

Almost half of the students in this study participated in school sponsored extra-curricular activities during their first year in school. A total of 14 students (6 females, 8 males) participated in extra-curricular activities. Of the fourteen, nine participated in folklorico and five participated in sports. Three of the five who participated in sports continued with their sport beyond their first year in school. The reasons most often cited for not participating in extra-curricular activities during their first year in school were academic responsibilities (1), a lack of information about what opportunities exist at the school (2), familial responsibilities (3), lack of interest in any activity (4), the inability to communicate with teammates and coaches (5), low grades (6), the cost of the activities
Outside of school, two students were involved in organized peer groups. One student (male) was a member of a soccer team based in a local park and the other student (female) was a member of a church youth group that met several times per week.

**Perceptions of Social Relations With Peers, Teachers, School Agents**

Students defined social relations with peers, teachers and other school agents by their impact on their academic performance and rate of adaptation.

**Peer relations**

Participants perceived their social experiences in positive terms. It must be noted, however, that their peer relations are almost exclusively with other recent immigrants. Only three students (1 female, 2 males) associated with peers who were not classmates and only one student associated with peers who are not Spanish dominant.

Peer relationships had a positive impact on participants’ academic performance. Twenty-seven students (14 females, 13 males) reported receiving assistance from classmates on school-work and assignments. Assistance came in the form of language translation (23 participants), teaching new skills (17 participants) offering encouragement and motivating students to persevere (16 participants). Margarita, a 16 year-old from North View High School, who demonstrated some reluctance throughout the interview, brightened up when asked to discuss how her friends helped her academically.

“I have two classmates who always help me. One of them is about to graduate. They always want me to work and never let me copy them. They spend a lot of time scolding me, telling me to work, to put *ganas* (effort) into it. Without them explaining things in Spanish, I’d do nothing.”

Ivette was one of 17 participants who explained the manner in which classmates aided the acquisition of new skills.
“In History class sometimes I don’t understand anything or how to do the assignments. We had to do an essay and I’ve never written one before, the teacher was talking about an introduction or something like that, I didn’t know what that was. A girl in my class explained it to me, that I had to write paragraphs after the introduction and then the conclusion. They didn’t teach us how to write like that at my other school. My friends in class, well the ones who have been here longer, they’re always telling me how to do things better.”

Peer relations were also positively related to social adaptation. Twenty participants (12, females, 8 males) reported that their friends were positive social influences. Seven students (2 females, 5 males) reported that their friends could be negative influences. Three students (1 female, 2 males) reported that friends were neither positive nor negative influences. Friends were considered positive influences because they presented positive models of behavior, they presented models of good studentship, they helped them navigate the school and their classes, they introduced them to other students who were not immediate classmates, and they encouraged them to seek help from teachers and other adults regarding non school-related matters.

Friends were considered negative influences because they encouraged or provoked improper conduct in class, they offered or introduced them to drugs, encouraged skipping class, and were involved in gang or criminal activity. Fernando, now a 10th grader from Bellwood Park High School but who’s first year in school was spent in middle school, offered words of caution to other newcomer students.

“I want to tell students that are newcomers to be careful, to not trust people right away. There are drugs here, there are gangs, I was arrested when I first got to this country for driving without a license. I didn’t know I needed one. I always drove in Mexico, but the kids I was with knew and they told me let’s go. I know that I’m my own person, but it’s harder to do good when there’s always people telling you in your ear to do something else.”
Saul from North View High School, captured the wide range of influence cast by peers.

“I have friends who are both good and bad influences. Some care about education and getting to a university and being a person of good and all that. And the bad ones just come to school to not be bored at home or to see their girlfriend. They cause problems in class, they talk over the teacher, or they don’t come to class at all. I say, well, that’s them, it doesn’t have to be me.”

Peers were also instrumental in helping recent newcomers develop their understanding of important school structures and processes such as the grading system, the course credit system, and the graduation requirements. During their first year in school, 17 participants (10 females, 7 males) had conversations with friends about grades and grade point averages. Nearly the same number of students, 14, (9 females, 5 males) also had conversations with friends about the graduation requirements. Their conversations included exchanges of information on who to talk to for assistance and about opportunities for credit recovery. Only 6 students (4 females, 2 males) reported having conversations with friends about college or college entrance requirements.

**Relations with Teachers and Other School Agents**

Relations with teachers and other school agents also proved to have an impact on the academic performance of students and on their rate of adaptation to the school environment.

First, newcomers generally perceive their relations with teachers and other school agents in positive terms. Eighteen participants (11 females, 8 males) reported feeling that teachers and school personnel treated them favorably during their first year in school and in subsequent years. Five more students (3 females, 2 males) responded that newcomers were treated by teachers the same way they treat all other students. Seven students (1
female, 6 males) perceived poor treatment from some teachers. Students described poor
treatment from teachers using terms like “racist”, “discrimination”, or “they don’t make
us feel bienvenidos” (welcomed).

Participants considered few teachers truly helpful in meeting their academic
needs. Sixteen participants (7 females, 9 males) reported that during their first year in
school, they had at least one teacher who truly helped them learn. When asked what
teachers did to help them learn, every student responded that teachers used Spanish in
their instruction to help access the content being taught. Some teachers used Spanish to
impart the lesson. Other teachers allowed students to translate for one another to make
the content comprehensible. Six students indicated that some teachers also interjected
humor, personality and care into their lessons to make them engaging and interesting.
Eleven students mentioned teachers going out of their way to offer tutoring, even with
subjects not their own.

“My English Language Development (ELD) teacher helped me survive. Even though I
really like going to his class because it was English and it causes me panic, I feel like
he’s helped me a lot to learn English. His classes are sometimes boring and not really
interesting, but he’s taught me by using Spanish. It’s strange because it’s an English
class. There are words in Spanish that are almost the same in English, he taught me that,
like content and contento. Now when I don’t know a word I see if it looks like a Spanish
word.” (Ana)

Despite an overall positive appraisal of their relations with teachers, fourteen
students (8 females, 6 males) felt that not one teacher helped them learn. Twenty-one
students (9 females, 12 males) believed that all their teachers were not doing all they
could to help them learn.

Few students experienced positive social experiences with school personnel other
than their teachers. Only 8 students reported that during their first year in school they felt
that a school employee other than their teachers knew them. Those school employees were named as their counselors or English Learners’ Program Coordinator. These students reported that their counselors or coordinator assisted them with understanding the school structures during their first year. Counselors were most frequently mentioned as the individuals who were most deliberate in explaining to students the grading systems, the high school graduation requirements, encouraging them to take advantage of opportunities for credit recovery, or test prep for the California High School Exit Exam, or in three cases inviting them to college field trips.

A summary of the data that can be influenced by gender and age are presented in Table 4.11.

**Perceptions of School Processes**

The school processes that are crucial in shaping educational experiences were largely unknown or ambiguous to newcomers during their first year in school. The school processes focused on in this study were the programming of classes, grading policies, the credit based promotion system, the A-G course requirement for applying to the California State University System or the University of California system, state standardized tests, including the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE).

Newcomers were clustered together in the same classes with few variations. Between North View High School and Bellwood Park High School there were few differences in approaches to program newcomer students. At both schools all newcomers were programmed into an English Language Development classroom at Level 1. The class was in session for a block of two periods. Then the students broke off into a sequence of classes that was almost entirely determined by their grade level. Math
classes and elective courses posed deviations to the grade level class sequence. At both schools, most newcomers traveled together from class to class throughout the day. This approach to programming by language proficiency created a clustering of newcomer with limited exposure to heterogenous classrooms.

Twenty-three participants confirmed that during their first year they had nearly the same students in most if not all their classes. When asked to speak about the ELD class specifically, 28 students were able to explain why they were programmed in the ELD class. Fernando, a 10th grader at Bellwood Park was able to give a complete breakdown of the entire ELD Program.

“I’m in the ELD class because I am an English Learner, I don’t speak English well, yet…..There are four levels of ELD. I’m in ELD 2 right now and next year three. If I pass the CELDT [California English Language Development Test], I almost passed it, next time, next time, I’ll be able to reclassify. I want to reclassify. I want regular English classes. If I do, I’ll feel like I triumphed and I conquered English.”

Of the 21 students who started school in the U.S. at the high school level, 13 had completed at least one year and in some cases completed up to three years of high school in Mexico. All 13 of these students had to start high school at the 9th grade level. Only 8 of the 13 students were able to produce transcripts from Mexico to confirm courses and earn credits towards grade promotion. All 13 students who “lost years” expressed their discontent and dismay over having to start high school over. Erick, a student at Bellwood Park HS, expressed his discontent with being demoted to 9th grade with a defiant tone.

“Yes, since we come without language, they send us to elective classes. Last year, I received 4 elective classes. I came to my counselor, I told him to put me in higher classes, the ones that count for graduation so I can graduate. He said he couldn’t. So I asked him what’s the point of putting me in 9th grade if the classes I got were worthless? That really made me think hard about school, I didn’t think I could do this. At this pace I’ll be 20 by the time I finish. I thought I was going to be able to finish the year and half I had left and be done with school.”
Ulyses, a 17 year-old 10th grader at Bellwood Park High School described the experience of being demoted to 9th grade and being programmed into mostly elective courses during his first year in school.

“Last year when I started they only put me in 9th grade but I had already done two years of “preparatoria.” I went to talk to my counselor and she said I didn’t have the credits and that was it. I went to speak to Mr. Fausto after that and he told me that I needed to verify that I had completed certain classes. He precipitated the whole thing [the student’s attempt to provide verification of course completion from Mexico]. I tried getting documents from my school in Mexico but I wasn’t able to. So then they put me in mostly elective classes. My counselor told me that they could not place me in stronger classes because I do not yet know enough English.”

Newcomers at North View High School also faced grade demotions. Transcripts from their previous school were requested upon enrolling in school. Failure to produce proof of coursework meant that students would start their high school education at the ninth grade regardless of prior schooling. Margarita, a 16 year-old 10th grader also articulated her frustration at loosing valuable time, as she saw it, when demoted to the ninth grade.

“I felt really bad, really bad. I came here thinking that I was going to finish my schooling in two years, because that’s the time I had left over there. When they told me I was going to be in 9th grade, I said, I’m leaving. Why even go to school? I felt like it took my breath away. My mother didn’t like it either. When we got home, she said, think about, it’s your decision if you want to go to school. I didn’t know if I even wanted to start, but as you can see, I’m here.”

Participants had a developed understanding of the grading system, and the credit based grade promotion process. During their first year all 21 students who began school at the high school level learned about the grading system and the credit based grade promotion process from friends, classmates, teachers and counselors. The nine students who started school at the middle school level also knew about the grading system, but not about the credit based grade promotion process because it doesn’t exist at the middle
school level. Similarly the middle school students learned about the grading system from teachers and students.

Of the 21 participants who started school at the high school level, 11 students reported hearing about the A-G courses during their first year in school. Teachers were cited as sharing information on the A-G courses with the students. Counselors and English Learners’ Program Coordinators were also identified as key individuals in providing information and visiting ELD classes to present on the A-G credit requirements. On few occasions, participants also held conversations with friend and or classmates about the A-G requirements. Additionally, of the 21 students who started school at the high school level, 17 students reported never having conversations with adults at school about college, specifically about the processes for applying and matriculating to college. Of the 9 students who started school at the middle school level, not a single student reported ever having conversations with an adult at school about the process for applying and matriculating to college.

The CAHSEE can be a major roadblock for many students on their path to graduation. The CAHSEE is less talked about in middle school. The 9 participants who began their education in this country at the middle school level did not receive any information about the CAHSEE until they matriculated to high school. The 21 students who started school in this country at the high school level all learned about the CAHSEE during their induction year. Students learn about the CAHSEE from their teachers, counselors, coordinator and other school employees. In fact, 7 students reported that counselors called them to their office to discuss grades and the CAHSEE. Five students reported having participated in a CAHSEE prep program. Three students expressed some
concerns about taking the CAHSEE in the coming week. “I’m worry not passing it. I don’t feel confident, because of the English mainly,” expressed Melody.

*The Role of Social Experiences and School Processes on Academic Performance*

According to participants, the social experiences and the school processes they encountered during their first year in an American school were of significant importance to their academic performance. The association between social experiences and academic performance was discussed in Section IV of this chapter which discusses the findings for research question 2 because participants talked extensively about their social experiences in relation to their academic performance.

*Participants’ Understanding of the Association Between Social Experiences and Academic Performance*

Participants associated positive social experiences, characterized by relationships with peers, teachers and other school agents with positive academic performance. Participants reported that peers were contributory to their academic performance because peers served as language brokers between teachers and other students, as tutors, as mentors, and as support systems. Peers were also identified to be invaluable to the process of adaptation. Friends helped newcomers get acquainted with the school, provided information about school processes and structures, including the programming of classes, the credit based grade promotion system, the CAHSEE and even the A-G requirements. Interview data suggest that the most invaluable service peers provided was to make newcomers feel welcomed upon entering school and eventually even, in the case of over two thirds of the participants, feel like they belonged to the school. Conversely, peers were also identified to be a potential negative influence to academic performance.
Participants felt negative peer pressure from some friends and or classmates to skip class, to get involved in gangs, to take drugs, and to act out and misbehave in class.

According to participants, teachers and other school agents had a similar impact, but to a lesser extent than peers, to their academic performance during their first year in school. Teachers who used Spanish to impart lessons and to socialize with students were identified as being the most helpful in improving academic performance. Additionally, teachers and other school personnel also helped newcomers adapt to their new school. Teachers were instrumental in the acquisition of in-depth information about the grading system, the credit based grade promotion system, the A-G requirements, the CAHSEE and about opportunities for academic support, credit recovery and extra curricular activities. Moreover, teachers who were identified by students in positive terms also served as support systems, offering words of encouragement, motivating students, helping them to persevere through the adverse conditions they faced. But according to participants, during their first year in school very few teachers filled these roles. Most students could not identify more than one teacher or school employee during their first year who they felt really helped them.

Participants believe that social experiences impact the way they define themselves as students. Eighteen students (6 females, 12 males) reported that they feel they are average students. Their definitions of average can be wrapped up as “not the best but not the worst.” When asked how they thought their teachers saw them, nearly all students, 25 (11 females, 14 males), answered that most teachers perceive them in the same manner they perceive themselves. Additionally, participants were asked to describe how they felt
their peers would characterize them as students. Eleven students (4 females, 11 males) responded that their peers would classify them as an average and above.

When asked to think and explain what they would do differently if they had to start school all over in the U.S. again, 20 students gave responses that demonstrate their perceptions of the association between social experiences and academic success and school adaptation. The responses from these 20 participants can be categorized into three categories. Students said that if they had to start school over all again they would (1) try harder to improve social experiences by either making more friends, (2) avoid negative influences and (3) solicit more help from teachers and counselors on academic matters. Gustavo, Margarita and Ivette spoke to these three points.

“I would definitely try to make more friends. I was afraid of students when I got here. I didn’t speak to anyone and no one spoke to me. When they started talking to me they started saying, no do things this way, don’t hang out with them they’re mariguanos (a person who smokes marijuana), come over here with us. In class it was the same, they would teach me how to do the work and invited to tutoring and like that.” (Gustavo)

“I would want more friends because I used to have a lot of friends, but I see that sometimes they get you in trouble. The way they behave. When I started school there were older students in the class and I was the little one and I would tell me, no don’t go to class, it’s boring, let’s walk around instead. Or saying things like you should get with this guy, and things like that. I want friends who can help me get better grades and who won’t get me in trouble.” (Margarita)

“I didn’t make myself known. I only had one teacher who I can ask for help. But I never tried asking the other teachers. I remember thinking I need help but I didn’t dare to ask them so I said forget it and I would put it out of my mind like I didn’t need it and just try to forget about what I did not know what to do.” (Ivette)

**Participants’ Understanding of the Association Between School Processes and Academic Performance**

Even though most students reported that teachers and other school agents provided them, on an ongoing basis, important information regarding grading methods,
the credit based grade promotion system, the graduation requirements and the A-G requirements, when asked what they wished they knew more about in terms of how their school functions, almost all students wished they had a better understanding of these same items. Thirteen students said that during their first year in school they didn’t understand how grades were assigned to students, or what the letter grades meant. Nayeli, said that one of her friends told her that all grades are good, except an “F.” Nine students reported they wished they knew more about the California Standards Test (CST). Two students expressed consternation about taking a test that doesn’t count towards their grade but it counts for the school. They were not used to taking a test for the school. Three students expressed a desire for knowing methods for learning English more rapidly. And 16 students wanted to know more clearly about graduation requirements, specifically, the number or credits and the exact classes needed to graduate.

Participants report that learning about the credit based grade promotion system, the graduation requirements and the A-G requirements earlier into their educational experience could have a positive impact on their academic performance. Twenty-two students responded that understanding this information is important to students’ success in school. The reasons given to explain the association between the knowledge of school systems and academic performance can be placed into two categories, (1) school requirements provide a target for students to shoot for and (2) fixed requirements allow students to self-asses their progress.

Matilde, captured the complexity of the association between knowledge of school systems and academic performance.

“When I started school I didn’t know anything, anything. Nothing here is like in Mexico. There you go to school only a few hours. There they use numbers as grades. Here we
have too many classes. If I knew I needed credits and certain classes to graduate, I would have made sure I was given those classes and I wouldn’t have accepted the elective classes my first year. Even though it would have been more work in the academic classes.”

The eight students who responded that not having knowledge about school systems had no impact academic performance, either did not see the relationship between the two or attributed their performance to other factors. Ismael, a 10th grader from Bellwood Park High School expressed his view on this question with rigid logic.

“I always try to do the best that I can. I don’t have better grades because I’m missing the English and well maybe because I talk too much. I miss assignments because I don’t know how to do them. Does it matter that I don’t know about what I need to graduate if I can’t read English well enough to read a book?”

School processes also had a defining role in how newcomers view themselves as students. Twenty-seven students expressed that not knowing or understanding school processes made them feel like bad students. Saul, a 10th grader at North View High School, gave voice to the affects of school processes on his perception of himself as a student.

“Well, I felt bad, like a bad student, I didn’t know anything. I didn’t know if I was doing well or not or what I needed to do to do better. Over there, I knew what was expected of me, here no one told me what I needed to do. They just said here, they gave me a little paper and said these are your classes. I, in reality told myself, well, God help me, because this is going to be hard.”

Ana, a 9th grader at Bellwood Park High School explained the relationship between knowing how school works and how she associates it with her definition of herself as a student.

“Now that I know better, I feel like I am a good student because now I know how they are measuring me. I know the school, I know the teachers, I know how to graduate. I feel like I have control over myself, at first I felt like I was like a car without a steering wheel. Now I feel good.”
Similarly, Rogelio, explained some of the debilitating effects of not understanding the way schools work.

“I wanted to give it all my effort. I started with *ganas* but I didn’t know anything about how things work here. I didn’t speak *pinche* (dam) English, I can’t do something, so how am I supposed to do well in school? How am I supposed to give it my best effort if I don’t know anything about this school or I don’t speak English?”

When asked to think and explain what they would do differently if they had to start school all over in the U.S. again, 18 participants presented answers that suggested they would learn how the school functions sooner to be better informed about what they needed to do to be successful students. Fernando, Araceli, and Karina each emoted a sense of regret and even self-frustration in answering this question.

“I would have liked to know about credits sooner. I didn’t think the letter grades mattered for graduation. I always thought graduation would be easy, but once you start loosing the race is difficult to try to win. Right now I just want to finish, finish the race, but I don’t know if I will be able to.” (Fernando)

“I would learn everything I could to earn better grades and to have more *ganas*. I’m not doing well in school right now, I’m not giving it a good effort. If I was starting from the beginning I would also try to learn English first. I think the other subjects would become easier and I could get ahead in math, algebra, because I also don’t understand that. I would also like to learn about the hard classes that I need to graduate and to go to college.” (Araceli)

“I would like to take more classes that prepare me better, more advanced and to get more involved in clubs and sports, like some of my friends. They are in everything and they get good grades too, I want to be like them, happy. I would also talk to my counselor about changing my classes to better classes. I didn’t know that was possible until this year.” (Karina)

**Summary of Findings by Gender and Age**

**Table 4.11 - Gender and Age Analysis of Perceptions of School Processes, School Experiences and Relations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Findings in relation to participants’ first year in a U.S. school</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Age:14-15 14 Participants</th>
<th>Age:16-17 13 Participants</th>
<th>Age:18-19 3 Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Had more school friends in Mexico than school friends in U.S. school</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would like to have had more friends in school during first year</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had relationships with peers outside of the school setting</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish was the only language of communication with peers</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reported having the same classmates in most of their classes</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participated in school sponsored extra-curricular activities</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participated in structured activities outside of school</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associated with peer who were not classmates</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reported receiving academic assistances from peers</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer friends were positive influences</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reported friends to be negative influences</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had conversations with friends about G.P.A</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had conversations with friends about high school requirements</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had conversations with friends about college entrance requirements</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reported that teachers and school personnel treated them favorably</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reported that teachers and school personnel treated them the same way all students are treated</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reported that teachers and school personnel treated them poorly</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.10 and 4.11 present interview data by gender and age. The following paragraphs report key findings from data that suggest that gender and age could possibly be controlling factors in the significance of social relations on the overall educational experience of immigrant students.

Data suggest that female participants had better perceptions of their school experience, and had more positive relations with peers and adults. Twelve out of 15 females appraised their overall school experience during their first year as positive, compared to 7 out of 15 males. Eleven females described school as a place they wanted to be during their first year compared to 5 males. Conversely, three females reported that school was not a place they wanted to be, compared to 6 males. Few participants explained that they felt a sense of belonging to the school. Nearly half reported feeling like they didn’t belong, 7 females reported feeling like they didn’t belong, compared to 5 males.

Data suggests that gender is also significant in terms of the quality and richness of social relations with adults on campus. Eleven females described a teacher as a mentor or a motivating figure in their lives, compared to 3 males. Of the 8 participants who
reported that a school employee other than a teacher knew them, 5 were females. Eleven females reported that teachers and school personnel treated them favorable, compared to 7 males. Conversely, 6 males reported that teachers treated them poorly, while only one female reported the same.

Gender also played a significant role on the impact that peer relations have on the overall school experience and on the academic performance of newcomer students. Twelve females reported that friends were a positive influence, compared to 8 males. More males, on the other hand reported that friends were a negative influence. Five out of 7 participants who reported peers as a negative influence were male. Females engaged more in conversations with peers about school, and school processes than did male participants. Nine females engaged in conversations with peers about grades and G.P.A., compared to 5 males. Few participants talked with peers about graduation requirements but the majority of those students were female. Nine females spoke to peers about graduation requirements, compared to 5 males. An even smaller number of participants discussed college entrance requirements with peers, 4 of the 6 students who had these conversations were females.

Data suggest that the age of the participants impacted their perceptions of their overall school experience, as well as their relationships with peers and adults on campus.

The student participants were grouped into three categories by age. The first group included 14 participants, ages 14-15. The second group included 13 participants, ages 16-17. The smallest group, with only three participants, included ages 18-19. Because every group has a different number of participants, findings will be discussed in terms of percents.
Data suggest that age has an impact on participants overall perception of their school experience. Only 21% of 14-15 year olds described their overall first year experience in school as positive, compared to 92% and 100% of 16-17 year olds and 18-19 year olds, respectively. Similarly, 35% of the youngest group explained that school was a place they wanted to be during their first year, compared to 69% and 66% of the middle and eldest groups, respectively. The youngest group, also recorded the highest percent of students not feeling like they belong to school, with 42%.

Data suggests that age also has a bearing on relations between participants and adults on campus, the older the students the better the relationships with adults. Thirty-five percent of the 14-15 year olds described a teacher as a mentor or motivating figure, compared to 46% and 100% for the middle and eldest group, respectively. Only 14% of the youngest group felt that school an employee, not a teacher, knew them during their first year in school. Percentages in the other groups are low, but higher than the percent in the youngest group, with 30% for the middle group and 66% for the eldest group who reported that an adult on campus other than a teacher knew them.

Age also seems to hold significance in terms of the types of experiences that participants have with adults on campus and how they perceive interactions with them. Forty-two percent of the youngest group reported that teachers and school personnel treat them favorably. Sixty-nine percent of the 16-17 year olds believed that adults on campus treated them favorably. And all participants, ages 18-19 reported that adults on campus treated them favorably. The data is consistent with this pattern when participants responded to adults on campus treating them poorly. Forty-two percent of the youngest group reported adults on campus treating them poorly, compared to 7% of the middle
group, and no one in the eldest group reporting poor treatment from teachers and school personnel.

Relations with peers varied less according to age. Nearly the same percent of students reported that peers were a positive influence, or a negative influence, across all three age groups. But more variability is present in the data in relation to peers and academics. Data suggest that the older the student is the more she or he will engage with peers in conversations regarding academics. Thirty-five percent of 14-15 year olds had conversations with peers during their first year about grades and G.P.A., compared to 64% and 100% for the middle and eldest group, respectively. The same pattern of engagement holds for students who had conversations about high school requirements. Twenty-eight percent of 14-15 year olds had these conversations, compared to 53% of 16-17 year olds and 100% of 18-19 year olds. Lastly, 7% of the youngest group reported engaging with peers in conversations about college entrance requirements, compared to 23% of the middle group and 66% for the eldest group.

Section IV: Summary

Participants perceived social experiences during their first year in school in mostly positive terms. However, this finding needs to be interpreted in relation to social experiences that were almost exclusive with other immigrant students. Despite a positive portrayal of their social experiences, during their first year in school participants faced language shock and language rejection. Perceptions of relations with teachers and other school personnel were characterized as positive too, but data reveal that few students felt like their teachers and other school personnel knew them, supported their English language development, encouraged them to participate in school-sponsored extra-
curricular activities or helped them with non-school related matters. Lastly, participants affirmed that social relations with peers and adults on campus were crucial to academic improvement. Peers and school personnel are the primary support for learning in the classroom and for confronting and overcoming complex school structures and processes.

Participants expressed confusion, consternation and frustration about specific school processes. First, participants at both school sites, experienced similar school practices in the programming of courses, in the clustering of students in the course sequence, and for students starting school at the high school level, practices of grade demotion. Participants at both school sites also demonstrated some knowledge of policies for grading, graduation, assessments, and college entrance, but nearly all students felt that a better understanding of what these policies are and how they work can lead to improved academic performance.

Lastly, an interpretation of data by gender and age revealed that these two variables could possibly be controlling factors in the significance of social relations on the overall educational experience of immigrant students.

Section V: Family Separations, Academic Performance and Participants’ Academic Goals

Family Separations and Academic Performance

Interview data produced findings not aligned specifically to any research question, but which, tangentially identifies contributing factors that impact the academic performance of newcomers during their first year.

Family separations have a negative impact on academic performance. Of the 30 participants, 23 were separated from at least one parent at the time of the study. In all but
six cases, the separation was related to the family’s migration situation. In these six cases the separations were owed to a split between parents, divorce or a parent death. That leaves 17 students who were separated from their parent/s as a result of migration patterns. These students reported that parental separation impacts their (1) emotional state, (2) their sense of stability in the home, and (3) their academic support structure.

Nine students reported feeling sad and lost without their parent or parents. Nayeli, made a connection between these type of emotions and her behavior and performance in school.

“It’s just that without my mom, things don’t matter much. My dad, well he’s always been here with my brothers and I didn’t know my brothers because they left when I was little. My dad is not like my mom. She always told me to do well in school. She would help me with my assignments. I don’t feel like I have to do that now, nobody cares if I do.”

Six students expressed a loss of stability in the home when they migrated to this country and faced life without one or both of their parents. Ismael explained how live was different at home before he moved to the U.S.

“My dad let’s me do whatever I want and other there my grandma would have be nice and clean, she had my clothes ready, I ate at the same time each day when I got home from school. My dad doesn’t cook, so here, I only eat street food. My dad spends his time with his girlfriend so I’m always outside on the street with my uncle fixing his trailer truck.”

Braulio expressed feelings of insecurity over his home live that extend directly from the separation from his mother.

“I came here and found out that my father had another family here, with kids and a new woman. I met him here, well I met him before when he would visit us over there. And his kids were much older than me so my older sister is like my mom, she’s almost 50. She’s the one who helps me, but she has her own kids and I don’t feel like her house is mine. My dad is old, he’s grey. He doesn’t really ask about me so my sister she’s the one who takes care of me.”
Seven students voiced concerns over loosing their academic support structure. Isaac, and Melody explain how being without a parent meant a loss in their academic support system.

“To be honest I need my mother and father. I’m here with my aunt and uncle by my own decision but I miss them more than I thought I would. My father was my teacher, he is a teacher in Puebla and he always helped me especially with mathematics. I was one of the best students at my school because of his help. I got the math prize. I don’t have anyone to help me at my aunt’s house, my little cousins are too young to help me even though they speak more English than I.” (Isaac)

“My mother would help me with school and when I had problems at school. She would tell me, no do things this way when I had problems. She would tell me what not to do at school to stay away from trouble. “ (Melody)

On the other hand, three participants explained how the separation from parents became a motivator for success in the U.S.

“I need to study, to be successful, not to support my mother, but to make her proud. She tells me that I need to have a future, that I should not be dependent on another person. Every time we speak she talks to me about school and she tells me to apply myself to give it my best effort.” (Amanda)

“Yes, I know my parents really sacrificed themselves to send me here. At first, I didn’t understand why they wanted to send me away. I didn’t want to come. Now, I see the opportunities, the schools are better, so well, there’s no choice for me but to give it my best effort and there’s no looking back.” (Ulyses)

**Academic Goals**

Participants reported academic goals primarily in terms of future career and employment opportunities. When asked to describe their career goals, all participants explicitly mentioned learning English. Secondly, 17 students (9 females, 8 males) explicitly mentioned graduating high school. Eleven students (5 females, 6 males) included a college or university education in their academic goals. Nearly all participants in the study, 26, made connections between their educational goals and future career opportunities. Rogelio explained this connection in simple terms.
“Well what good is education for if it’s not to get a better job. I don’t know of any jobs, good jobs, not like doing construction or like doing maintenance, that does not require education. I would like to be a god person, with money, a lawyer, I don’t know, a producer, something like that. I’m going to have to go to college for that.”

When asked, however, if they felt they could accomplish their academic goals, of the 17 participants who stated they wanted to graduate high school, 13 said they thought they actually could. Of the 11 participants who stated they wanted to get a college degree, four stated that they thought they actually could.

Section V: Summary of Findings

Family separations have impacted all of the participants in this study. Participants report that the separation had mostly a negative impact on their ability to perform in school, but some students found a silver lining to their family separations. Family separations impact the students emotional state, their sense of stability in the home, and the academic support structure they were accustomed to prior to the separation. Few students, however, note that the separation from their parents is a reminder of their purpose for migrating to this country and provide motivation for school success.

Newcomers enumerate their academic goals as (1) learning English, (2) graduating from high school, and (3) graduating from college. Not all participants, however, believe they will be able to meet their educational goals.

Chapter Summary

Thirty admirable students and four key informants lent their voice to this study. Findings were derived from key informants on the school processes, academic supports and the dynamic of social relations that shaped newcomers’ experiences and ultimately may impact their academic performance.
From student interviews we learned that nineteen of 30 participants indicated that overall they have a general positive perception of their first year experiences in a U.S. school. Their positive outlook, however, is not an indication that participants did not feel the stress of encountering unfamiliar school structures and processes, among which included being demoted to the 9th grade, regardless of having completed a year of more of high school education in Mexico. Additionally, participants experienced language shock and language rejection, mostly coming from U.S. born Latino students who also speak Spanish. Data suggest that peer relations and relations with teachers and other school agents have the potential for helping newcomers overcome their language challenges and accelerate their adaption into the U.S. school system. Moreover, data revealed that participants’ perceptions of their school experience is defined in-part by external factors including the push and pull forces that triggered their migration, their journey to the U.S., and their expectations of live in the U.S. prior to their migration.

Participants perceived social experiences during their first year in school in mostly positive terms. However, this finding needs to be interpreted in relation to social experiences that were almost exclusive with other immigrant students. Despite a positive portrayal of their social experiences, during their first year in school participants faced language shock and language rejection. Perceptions of relations with teachers and other school personnel were characterized as positive too, but data revealed that few students felt like their teachers or other school personnel knew them, supported their English language development, encouraged them to participate in school-sponsored extra-curricular activities or helped them with non-school related matters. Lastly, participants affirmed that social relations with peers and adults on campus are crucial to academic
improvement. Peers and school personnel are the primary support for learning in the classroom and for confronting the complex school structures and processes. Additionally, an interpretation of data by gender and age revealed that these two variables could possibly be controlling factors in the significance of social relations on the overall educational experience of immigrant students.

Participants expressed confusion, consternation and frustration about specific school processes. First, participants at both school sites, experienced similar school practices in the programming of courses, in the clustering of students in the course sequence, and for students starting school at the high school level, practices of grade demotion. Participants at both school sites also demonstrated some knowledge of policies for grading, graduating, assessing, and gaining college entrance, but nearly all students felt that a better understanding of what these policies are and how they work can lead to improved academic performance.

Family separations have impacted all of the participants in this study. Participants report that the separation had mostly a negative impact on their ability to perform in school but some students found a silver lining to their family separations. Family separations impacted the students’ emotional state, their sense of stability in the home, and the academic support structure they were accustomed to prior to the separation. Few students, however, noted that the separation from their parents is a reminder of their purpose for migrating to this country and provided motivation for school success.

Lastly, newcomers enumerated their academic goals as (1) learning English, (2) graduating from high school, and (3) graduating from college. Not all participants, however, believed that they could reach their educational goals.
CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Introduction

I conducted qualitative research to further our understanding of how newcomer immigrants perceive their first year in an American school, the social experiences and school processes they encountered during said year and how they associate said experiences and processes to their academic performance during their first year in school and beyond. I interviewed a total of 30 high school newcomer students, 15 males and 15 females using a semi-structured interview protocol. What students tell us about what was most meaningful to them as newcomers can lead to a better understanding of how schools can support immigrants from the onset of their educational experience and lead to changes in how schools structure and establish an induction process that supports newcomers towards better academic outcomes.

In this chapter, I provide and overview of findings and discussion of their significance. Then I discuss the limitations of the study. I follow with recommendations for practice and future research. I conclude with a final reflection about the participants in this study.

Overview of Findings

The factors that shaped immigrant students’ perceptions of their first year in a U.S. school can be best explained in terms of a linear timeline. Therefore, the overview of findings will be presented in the following sections that mirror the participants’
storyline from before migration through their complete first year in school; (1) the circumstances of migration, (2) unfamiliar school processes and structures, (3) language shock, (4) developing relationships with peers, (5) developing relationships with teachers and other school agents, and (6) defining the role of social relations and school processes on academic performance.

**The Circumstances of Migration**

The manner in which a student views their educational experience cannot be studied in a vacuum. We need to look beyond the school itself to understand what shapes students’ perceptions of schools. This study found that for immigrant students the circumstances of migration had a direct impact on how they came to perceive their first year in school.

The circumstances of migration referenced in this study include a set of factors that are directly linked to the subjects’ migrant story. These factors include, (1) the push and pull forces that triggered migration, (2) the expectations of the United States before arriving here, (3) family separations and reunifications, (4) their journey to America and (5) the subjects’ educational goals and career aspirations.

Most students reported multiple reasons for migrating to the U.S. The pull forces most often cited, in order of frequency are greater economic opportunities, greater educational opportunities, family reunifications, and residing in a safer and more peaceful place. The last of these triggers is of special note because looking for a safer and more peaceful place to live is not found in the literature as a contributing factor to the migration of immigrants from Mexico. Nearly half of the participants reported safety concerns as a principal cause of their migration. *Narco* violence, most often witnessed in
Mexican border cities, created an environment of fear and death that forced families into making the decision to migrate or to send their children to the United States.

Closely associated with the pull forces of migration, are the participants’ expectations of the U.S. prior to their arrival in the U.S. Participants had a range of expectations about live in the United States before migrating. Few participants expected little differences between Mexico and the United States, with the exception of the language. The majority of participants, however, imagined the U.S. as the land of economic and educational opportunities. The majority of participants also had grandiose visions of live in America, a place so big and beautiful, filled with modern amenities, and lost of entertainment and places to visit. In discussing their expectations of the U.S. before arriving, two students, even described the U.S. as a utopia, a land like no other, a first-world country, la gloria (the glory, as in a heavenly place). The connection between participants’ expectations of the U.S. and the manner in which they came to perceive their first year in school can be noted in that while the vast majority of participants had elevated expectations of the U.S. prior to migrating, only half of the participants reported that the U.S. was what they expected after migration. What changed was that students realized how difficult life in the U.S. can be for immigrants. Participants realized that the transition to the American educational system is not an easy one. Besides having to contend with learning a new language, they must also navigate new school practices in schools where direct supports are limited.

Family separations and reunifications is an element most prevalent in the story of all participants. All but 6 participants attributed the separation from their parents to familial migratory patterns. All 30 participants reported experiencing a prolonged family
separation. Which is to say that all participants are currently experiencing either a family separation or reunification. Of the 30 participants, only 7 are living with both parents, 12 live with one parent and the remaining 11 are living with older siblings, grandparents or other relatives. Participants reported that the instability in the family unit caused by migration, has negative effects on academic performance. These effects were felt on the participants’ emotional state, their sense of stability in the home, and their accessibility to academic support from their family. For a few participants, on the other hand, being separated from their parents served as a motivation factor, bringing a sense of purpose and urgency to their schooling in the U.S. The separation made these three participants feel like they had no choice but to succeed.

For some participants, the separation from their parents began on their journey to the U.S. It’s logical to conclude that migrating to the U.S., documented or undocumented, is an expensive venture for any family. Which is why 23 participants did not journey to this country with at least one parent. Of the 23 participants who offered information about their journey, 17 traveled to this country with a relative, and an additional 6 undertook their journey to the U.S. all alone.

Regardless of the particular forces that triggered their migration, the conditions surrounding their journey to America, or their familial living arrangements, most participants had three clear educational goals. The first goal was shared by nearly all participants, to learn enough English to perform in a classroom setting and to have access to job opportunities beyond high school. The second goal was articulated by over half of the participants, to graduate high school. And the third goal, expressed by fewer participants was to go to college and earn a degree that could establish them in a
profession. Unfortunately, few students reported feeling confident about accomplishing their educational goals.

**Unfamiliar School Processes and Structures**

Unfamiliarity with school processes and structures resulted in confusion, fear and lead to a prolonged period of disorientation and helplessness. Problematic school processes identified by students were the letter-based grading system, which differs from the numerical grading system they were accustomed to, the credit-based grade promotion system, the programming of classes, the graduation requirements, and the battery of standardized tests they are required to take. The school structures that presented a challenge for students was the length of the school day, the period-by-period bell schedule, the number of classes demanded each day, the size of the schools (in some cases the school population outnumbered the populations of the towns students were from), and school policies. The complexity of the school processes and school structures first encountered by newcomers, compounded with their inability to speak or understand English marked their first year in school with feelings of fear, insecurity, frustration and helplessness.

**Language Shock**

Every newcomer expected that no being able to speak English would pose educational and adaptive challenges, yet every participant expressed feeling shocked when first confronted with the English language. Not being able to speak or understand English greatly limited students in the classroom setting, especially in classes where Spanish language support was unavailable from teachers, teacher assistants, or classmates. In fact, nearly all students cited their lack of English proficiency as the
primary factor keeping them from their peak level of performance. But beyond the
students’ inability to access the academic content and to perform in class at the academic
level they were accustomed to back in Mexico, students also experienced several social
adaptive challenges stemming from their inability to speak English. For newcomers,
social isolation became the norm, until it was broken by other newcomers who had been
in school longer and who could provide guidance in terms of school practices and social
norms. Participants also reported feeling helpless over their academic outcomes and
feeling rejected by English dominant peers and by teachers as a result of not speaking
English. For most participants, the feelings persisted for the duration of their first year
and for some continued into their second and third year in school. Moreover, for most
participants, not being able to speak English impacted their motivation to come to school
and their sense of belonging to the school.

Developing Relationships with Peers

Participants described their unfamiliarity with school processes and learning
English as the most formidable challenges to their academic performance and to their
process of adaptation. Participants identified their relationships with peers as the primary
mechanism for circumventing these challenges.

Nearly all participants indicated that friends were the most important for
becoming familiar with the school. Peers helped students navigate the campus, helped
them feel welcomed, and helped them engender a sense of belonging. Friends served as
tutors, as confidants and as advisors who helped steer them out of trouble. Most
participants reported informally learning about the graduation requirements and other
important school policies from their peers. Most importantly, friends served as language
brokers who helped make sense of work assignments, translate conversations with teachers, and also introduce them to other students, expanding their social network and creating opportunities for school inclusion.

Positive peer relations also shaped the participants’ views about school. Participants who found that school was a place where they liked to be, attributed their reasons to friendships. Participants who felt a sense of belonging to the school some or all of the time, attributed that feeling of belonging to peers who made them feel welcomed, included in school events, motivated to learning, motivated to participate in school sponsored activities, and empowered to seek help from teachers and other school agents when they need it.

Participants also reported negative peer influences. Friends were considered negative influences because they encouraged or provoked improper conduct in class, they offered or introduced them to drugs, encouraged skipping class, and were involved in gang or criminal activity.

A closer examination of participants’ perceptions of their peer relationships revealed a harsher characterization of the social experiences and school processes they encountered. The positive sentiments that participants voiced towards their peer relationships are almost all in reference to their classmates and close friends who are all recent immigrants themselves. Participants did not report on their relationships with non-immigrant peers. This provides evidence of a type of de facto school segregation that is much the result of school practice as it is of the natural pattern of students socializing with people who most closely resemble them.
Developing Relationships with Teachers and Other School Agents

Relations with teachers and school agents have the potential to be significant in shaping newcomers’ perceptions of their first year of schooling. Positive relations with teachers manifested themselves in distinct forms. Teachers impacted newcomers through differentiated instruction that allowed newcomers to access the academic course content, by creating a welcoming classroom environments, by helping newcomers navigate the unfamiliar school processes and school structures, by serving as language brokers with non-Spanish speaking staff-members, by serving as mentors and confidants, by encouraging students to get involved in school activities and by demonstrating care and a personal investment in the students as learners. Participants who experienced these types of interactions with teachers had more positive perceptions of their first year in school.

Not all participants, however, experienced these positive interactions. Only 19 participants felt that during their first year their teachers knew who they were. Even fewer participants felt that at least one teacher really helped them learn during their first year. Most participants stated that most teachers did not take that time or extra steps to make the language comprehensible in the classroom or to get to know them.

As for other school employees such as counselors, program coordinators or school administrators, fewer students developed relationships with them then they did with teachers. Only 8 students stated that they felt another adult at school knew them during their first year in school. Seven students identified a counselor or the English Language Development (ELD) Coordinator at their respective schools as that other adult at school who knew them and spoke to them frequently. One student identified a parent volunteer at the school who always greeted him nicely. Six of the eight participants responded that
these other adults served to familiarize them with the unfamiliar school processes and structures, the programming of classes, and informed students of school resources including tutoring, opportunities for credit recovery, academic enrichment and extracurricular activities.

**Defining the Role of Social Relations and School Processes on Academic Performance**

Participants associated positive social experiences, characterized by relationships with peers, teachers and other school agents with positive academic performance. Participants reported that peers were contributory to their academic performance because peers served as language brokers between teachers and other students, as tutors, as mentors, and as support systems. Peers were also identified to be invaluable to the process of adaptation. Friends helped newcomers get acquainted with the school, provided information about school processes and structures, including the programming of classes, the credit based grade promotion system, the CAHSEE and even the A-G requirements. Interview data suggest that the most invaluable service peers provided was to make newcomers feel welcome upon entering school and eventually, in the case of over two thirds of the participants, feel like they belonged to the school. Conversely, peers were also identified to be a potential negative influence to academic performance. Participants felt negative peer pressure from some friends and or classmates to skip class, to get involved in gangs, to take drugs, and to act out and misbehave in class.

According to participants, teachers and other school agents had a similar impact, but to a lesser extent than peers, on their academic performance during their first year in school. Teachers who used Spanish to impart lessons and to socialize with students were identified as being the most helpful in improving academic performance. Additionally,
teachers and other school personnel also helped newcomers adapt to their new school. Teachers were instrumental in the acquisition of in-depth information about the grading system, the credit based grade promotion system, the A-G requirements, the CAHSEE and about opportunities for academic support, credit recovery and extra curricular activities. Moreover, teachers who were identified by students in positive terms also served as support systems, offering words of encouragement, motivating students, helping them to persevere through the adverse conditions they faced. But according to participants, during their first year in school very few teachers filled these roles. Most students could not identify more than one teacher or school employee during their first year who they felt really helped them.

Participants believed that social experiences impact the way they define themselves as students. Eighteen students reported that they felt like average students during their first year in school. Participants felt that most teachers perceived them in the same manner they perceived themselves. Additionally, participants were asked to describe how they felt their peers would characterize them as students. Fewer than half of the students responded that their peers would classify them as average or above.

**Participants’ Understanding of the Association Between School Processes and Academic Performance**

Even though most students reported that teachers and other school agents provided them, on an ongoing basis, important information regarding grading methods, the credit based grade promotion system, the graduation requirements and the A-G requirements, when asked what they wished they knew more about in terms of how their school functions, almost all students wished they had a better understanding of these
same items. Moreover, participants reported that learning about the credit based grade promotion system, the graduation requirements and the A-G requirements earlier into their educational experience could have a positive impact on their academic performance. Twenty-two students responded that understanding this information is important to students’ success in school. The reasons given to explain the association between the knowledge of school systems and academic performance can be placed into two categories, (1) school requirements provide a target for students to shoot for and (2) fixed requirements allow students to self-assess their progress.

School processes also played a defining role in how newcomers view themselves as students. Lack of knowledge about school processes produced debilitating effects. Twenty-seven students expressed that not knowing or understanding school processes made them feel like bad students because they did not know how they were being measured and did not know what was expected of them to be good students.

**Gender and Age as Controlling Variable in the Development and Perceptions of Relationships on Campus**

Data suggest that female participants had better perceptions of their school experience, and had more positive relations with peers and adults. Twelve out of 15 females appraised their overall first year experience as positive, compared to 7 out of 15 males. More females also described school as a place they wanted to be during their first year. Few participants reported feeling a sense of belonging to the school. Fewer females reported feelings of belonging than males.

Data suggests that gender is also significant in terms of the quality and richness of social relations with adults on campus. Eleven females described a teacher as a mentor or a motivating figure in their lives, compared to 3 males. More females reported that a
school employee other than a teacher knew them. Nearly all females reported that teachers and school personnel treated them favorable, compared to only 7 males. Conversely, more males than females reported that teachers treated them poorly, while only one female reported the same.

Gender also played a significant role on the impact that peer relations have on the overall school experience and on the academic performance of newcomer students. Most females reported that friends were a positive influence, compared to only about half of the male participants. More males, on the other hand reported that friends were a negative influence. Additionally, females engaged more in conversations about school, grades, graduation requirements and college entrance requirements than their male counterparts.

Data suggest that the age of the participants impacted their perceptions of their overall school experience, as well as their relationships with peers and adults on campus.

The student participants were grouped into three categories by age. The first group included 14 participants, ages 14-15. The second group included 13 participants, ages 16-17. The smallest group, with only three participants, ages 18-19.

Data suggest an association between age and participants’ perceptions of school, and the development and perceptions of relationships with peers and adults on campus. Findings for each group of participants shows that as the groups increase in age, their perceptions of their school experience improves, the nature of their relationships with adults and peers is more positive, and their appraisal of those relationships also is more positive.
Discussion of Findings

To begin the discussion, I must first set the frame. This study was not intended to corroborate research, to study the school sites, or to evaluate practices or policies. This study was intended to capture what was important to newcomers as they set off on their educational journey in this country. As such, it is necessary to understand that what research claims to be the most definitive factors in the educational experiences and academic outcomes of immigrants may not be what students found most critical in their experience as newcomers. Secondly, the study was confined to what happens within the four walls of the classroom or within the spiked or wire mesh fences at these two schools. This study is not blind to the host of community, economic, personal, familial and legal factors that impact the performance of immigrant students, nor is it blind to the many adverse conditions that exist within schools. While perspectives on some of those factors and school conditions emerged in the data and were reported in the findings, they were an unintended byproduct of this study, and I cannot with any certainty claim that participants were cognizant or deliberate in their reporting of said factors and conditions.

The Importance of the Research Sites in Relation to the Findings

I will begin the discussion by focusing on the research sites because the sites themselves could prove to be an important element in how participants characterize their first-year school experience. Both schools share characteristics that are typical of other schools with large Latino populations. Both schools are mid-size comprehensive high schools where over half of the students do not score in the proficient bands on standardized tests and where at best 60 percent of the students graduate. What is unique about both schools, however, is the degree of demographic homogeneity. Both schools
are nearly 100 percent Latino. The Latino population is nearly 40 percent in California, and reportedly now the largest single group population in the state. But the extraordinarily high concentration of Latinos in this area has created schools with virtually no racial diversity. What impact does this level of ethnic, racial and even linguistic segregation have on participants?

Participants reported being surprised by the ubiquitousness of Spanish in their school and in their community. It is quite possible, therefore, that for a newcomer the transition and process of adaptation is smoother at these schools than at other less segregated schools in more diverse communities or even in schools were the Latino population is relatively small. The concentration of Latinos also ensures that the school culture will be infused with the Latino culture. The recognition of elements from their culture in the school culture may also ease the newcomers’ transition to their new school. Moreover, the school staff at schools like North View HS and Bellwood Park High School may be also more familiar and therefore possibly more sensitive and attentive to the backgrounds, and needs of immigrant students. In schools where Latinos are a minority, newcomers will be few and consequently be imperceptible to teachers and other school personnel. The interviews with key informants made it convincingly clear that while they lacked formal processes for meeting the needs of all immigrant students, deliberate and purposeful actions were taken by school personnel to improve their chances of success. All of these factors could be contributory to the participants’ construction of their pro-school ethos.

There are several drawbacks for newcomers attending schools with this degree of ethnic, racial and linguistic isolation. For one, the pervasiveness of Spanish makes it
possible for newcomers to engage in conversation in Spanish with nearly 90 percent of the student body and over 50 percent of the staff. Nearly all students reported that their conversations with peers are exclusively in Spanish. Only one student reported having a friend who did not speak Spanish. Additionally, students identified the most helpful teachers as the ones who imparted lessons in Spanish, or who engaged in personal conversations with them in Spanish. Participants, however, reported that acquiring English was their most urgent need. Practicing English is the most essential element in the acquisition of English and most difficult to do when students always have their default language as an option. Additionally, attending a school with a high concentration of Latino students is no guarantee for Latino newcomers to be accepted into the school community. Schools are naturally stratified institutions. Newcomers, numerically, are a relatively small group and are left out of the higher strata because they do not represent the broader dominant values, they do not speak the dominant language, they are unfamiliar with the way things work at the school in general, and they are perceived as different. Participants reported language rejection and even name calling, *mexicanito* (little mexican). Additionally, informants suggest that newcomers form their bond not around common ethnic backgrounds or even common language, but rather around their immigrant experience. This means that newcomers set themselves apart based on the one characteristic that makes them different from all other Latinos at their school, being born abroad and facing the trial of adaptation. The confluence of these elements results in a high degree of isolation of newcomers (as seen in “little TJ” at Bellwood Park High School) even amongst an all Latino student body.
Lastly, there’s something to be said about the educational experience that all students receive at ethnically and racially segregated schools. In general, can ethnically and racially segregated schools provide the type of well-rounded 21st century education that requires students to be able to communicate and function in diverse social, ethnic, cultural, racial and linguistic settings? The answer to this question is beyond the scope of this study, but it is one that needs pondering when considering educational policy. Schools are meant to prepare students for life beyond the school and the word does not mirror the demographics of these two school sites.

**Immigrant Optimism**

A few years ago, I had a discussion with a professor who asked if as a Latino student I ever felt discriminated or treated unequally when I was going through the public school system. I responded that I never felt either of those two things. He then asked where I was born. In Mexico, I responded. That explains it, he answered. I was baffled by that conversation and for years I thought him to be a little too presumptuous. After interviewing these students, analyzing their responses, speaking to personnel at their schools, and observing their schools, I can conclude that my professor was right, that my response to his first question was the result of immigrant optimism and that for most of the participants, optimism colors their first year experience.

The immigrant optimism hypothesis posits that the success of first generation immigrants is owed in part to their positive appraisal of their improved socio-economic conditions and educational opportunities in the U.S. (Kao, & Tienda, 1995). Data from this study reinforced this hypothesis. Participants held optimistic views about their experiences in this country and they seemed to believe that success rested almost entirely
on their own ability, all they needed was *ganas* (drive and effort). Their optimism to some extent, however, may have hidden the adverse conditions they were facing. Participants, for example, seemed frustrated over certain adverse conditions and practices such as “loosing years” of schooling or not receiving much Spanish language support in all classrooms, but demonstrated a degree of acceptance of these conditions and practices. These findings are consistent with studies of immigrant students. A comparison of Mexican immigrant students to U.S. born Mexican-American students, demonstrated that recent immigrants had a dual reference frame that allowed them to contrast their lives before migration to their current conditions in the U.S. The negative economic and political conditions that motivated their migration enabled immigrants to appraise their current conditions in the U.S. as positive (Suarez-Orozco, & Suarez-Orozco, 1995, 2001) and temporary, an outlook that shaped their attitude towards schooling and spurred their motivation to succeed (Suarez-Orozco, & Suarez-Orozco, 1995, 2001).

Optimism alone cannot drive the success of immigrant students. The academic success of immigrant students also depends on how much the schools offer them and how much the student is capable of receiving. But what are schools doing to tap into that optimism in a formal and systemic process to inform, instruct, guide, mentor and empower immigrant students to reach the full measure of their academic potential? Neither of the schools in this study had formal processes for addressing the learning needs and social adaptive needs of immigrant students. Passionate and well-intentioned school personnel made newcomers a priority in their work. But the work of getting it done still depends almost entirely on the students. With many liabilities against them, newcomers often find that schooling is just not possible for them. All the participants in
this study had lofty academic goals, from learning English, to graduating high school and attending college, yet very few believed their goals were within reach.

**Peer Relations**

For adolescent students in high school, peers, generally imply “age mates, friends, acquaintances, and other individuals in close proximity” (Gibson, Gandara, & Koyama, 2004, p. 4). By their proximity alone, peers and peer groups can exert both positive and negative influence on the individual. For participants in this study, peer relations were central to their educational experience.

For newcomer immigrant students, peers can be most significant in helping them overcome the language barrier and the unfamiliar school processes and practices. Adolescents spend more time with peers than they do with anyone else (Gibson, Gandara, & Koyama, 2004). All but 7 participants in this study lack the advantage of living with both parents. The majority of the participants lived with only one parent or with relatives, making perhaps the influence of their peers even more significant to their lives.

This study provides data to suggest that peers are the informal channels of information on how schools work, and proved to be valuable social and linguistic resources. Participants reported that peers helped students navigate the campus, helped them feel welcome, and for some students, helped them engender feelings of belonging. Friends also served as tutors, as confidants and as advisors who helped steer them away out of trouble. Most participants reported informally learning about the graduation requirements and other important school policies from their peers. Most importantly, friends served as language brokers who helped make sense of work assignments, translate conversations with
teachers, and also introduce them to other students, expanding their social network and creating opportunities for school inclusion.

Peers can also exert negative influence. A third of the participants reported that friends were at times a negative influence pressuring them to misbehave in class, to cut class, to use drugs, to get involved in gang activity or criminal activity. Of the seven students who reported that friends were a negative influence, five were male, suggesting that negative peer influence is felt most by boys. Conversely, of the 20 participants who reported that friends were a good influence, 12 were females, suggesting that females encounter negative peer influence to a lesser degree.

For newcomers, peer relations were limited to other newcomers or immediate classmates. This pattern of peer grouping is consistent with the literature. Peers tend to select their closest friends from their own ethnic group (Gibson, Gandara, & Koyama, 2004). Newcomers, therefore, have limited interactions with students who do not share the immigrant experience (Suarez-Orozco, Suarez-Orozco, & Todorova, 2008). Since the immigrant group is relatively small, their close affiliation creates a high degree of isolation. This isolation can make it even more difficult for them to venture out into the social life of the school or into extracurricular school activities.

**Relations with Teachers and School Agents**

Relations with teachers and other school personnel were characterized as positive but data reveal that few students felt like their teachers or other school personnel knew them, supported their English language development, encouraged them to participate in school-sponsored extracurricular activities or helped them out with non-school related matters. What is problematic for many immigrant students is the fact that they never
develop these relationships. This study confirms that only about half of the participants felt a connection to at least one teacher. Only a quarter of the participants established relationships with other school personnel. It is possible that newcomers internalize the limited relations with teachers, school employees and the school itself as a form of rejection.

Researchers have found that sponsorship by teachers and school personnel are indicators of academic success (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001; 2009; Green, Rhodes, Hirsch, Suarez-Orozco & Camic, 2008; Suarez-Orozco, Rhodes, & Milburn, 2009; Suarez-Orozco & Todorova, 2009). Relationships with institutional agents become part of an individual’s social capital. Social capital is a predictor of school completion (Ream, & Rumberger, 2008). For newcomers, being separated from families, locked into almost exclusive relationships with other newcomers, isolated from school sponsored extracurricular activities, and with limited language ability, results in thinner forms of social capital that proves disadvantages to their academic performance and educational attainment.

School Processes

School processes and structures are complex. The task of gaining a deep enough understanding of these structures to be able to navigate them and plan out an educational pathway proves to be a challenge for any student, not to mention immigrant students. Teachers and school personnel provided participants with information about grades, graduation requirements, college entrance requirements, grade promotion, credit recovery, and so on. In some instances, schools provide roadmaps for students to take the guess work out of their education, as in the case of both schools in this study, each school
working with students to develop an Individualize Graduation Plan. But newcomers need more than other students. Their circumstances alone demand more. Participants in this study demonstrated an understanding of what was required of them to graduate, but nearly all students wished they knew more, and more importantly, how to go about doing it. Newcomers have to struggle learning the basic parts of schooling that are often taken for granted, not to mention trying to adapt to their new language and social and physical environment. The time they spend figuring things out, is wasted time. By the time newcomers get acquainted with the school, with the new social norms, and with the proper school personnel, it may be too late for them to get on track.

The rigidity of school structures proves to be major detractor from newcomers’ individual capacity to reach their maximal education potential. For participants in this study, being programmed into the 9th grade regardless of prior schooling not only cost them time but also created a serious road-bump that quelled their momentum, tainted their optimism, reduced their motivation and tarnished their general outlook towards schooling. There were other byproducts of rigid programming practices. Grade based course sequences as described in chapter 4 of this study are designed to ensure that all students meet the graduation requirements in a four-year span. But the prescription creates limits on students who can accelerate passed courses, especially those immigrant students who mastered the course content prior to ever enrolling in school. And lastly, the practice of programming students based on English ability creates a traveling cohort of students, and in the case of newcomer students, a cohort of newcomers who are in most classes together. This practice adds to the segregation and isolation of newcomers,
and limits their opportunities to engage with non-immigrant students in an academic setting.

*What Students Say Helps Most*

This study was intended to go into the mind of newcomers to understand their experiences, their perceptions and to gain an understanding about what has been helpful along their educational journey in relation to their academic performance.

Current students are in the unique position to tell us what is working for them and what is not. Participants in this study warn about the debilitating consequences of grade demotions, rigid programming structures, of not receiving enough academic and linguistic support in classes, and of encountering language rejection and discrimination in school. They also offer insight into what has been most helpful in their overall educational experience. The answer to this question is that what helps newcomers most, are the individuals at school who can help them make sense of language, of academic course work, of social norms, and of the inherently complex processes and structures found in schools. These invaluable individuals are friends and caring educators.

*Limitations of the Study*

This study had several limitations. The limitations stem mostly from the method of data collection, the sample size, the composition of the sample, and the generalizability of findings. Additional limitations stem the demographics of the research sites and from several research sites being unaccounted for in this study. Lastly, a limitation stems from potential researcher bias.
I used interviews to collect data from the participants in this study. Being that the study focused on the participants’ first year in school in this country, meant that I was really studying the participants’ memories of their first year in school. For some participants, their first year was only a few months away, for others, their first year in school was up to two years away. Initially, my concern was that this retrospective approach was susceptible to errors or distortions in memory. What I found, however, was quite the opposite. Participants had very clear and vivid memories. Their stories were not contrived; they were detailed and resonated with the emotional vibrancy that I speculate, mirror the true emotions felt as they lived those stories. But, the limitation to interviews is perhaps that for some participants, not enough time had passed for them to gain the perspective and insight about their first year in school and determine what was most important from their first year towards shaping their educational trajectories. Their trajectories, after all, were still playing out at the time of the study and it is difficult to speculate, even for students well versed on the complex school processes and structures, on what experiences will prove pivotal in years to come. Moreover, what students do not know about their school experiences also needs to be considered in evaluating the findings of this study. Participants expressed a pro-school ethos that was framed by their experiences and knowledge about school. The fact that they have not resided in the country long enough to fully appraise their chances of academic success and the adverse conditions they will face for the duration of their high school career, could account for some of the positive perceptions they hold about their first year in school. Perhaps what is needed to circumvent these limitations is a supplemental tool of data collection. An ethnographic method could potentially capture more completely the experience of
newcomers, as a researcher could capture the details that are imperceptible to newcomers who are drifting through their first year in school.

The sample size also constitutes a limitation to this study. The sample size of 30 participants, 15 females and 15 males is a considerable number for a qualitative study. The original design of the study called for 20 participants, 10 females and 10 males. Throughout the course of the study, however it became necessary to introduce additional participants to reach a point of data saturation, when the information that is being shared becomes repetitive and does not contain new ideas and I could reasonably conclude that it was unnecessary to include additional participants. And while some definitive themes emerged from the data, it is not exactly clear whether the findings can be generalized to all adolescent immigrant students from Mexico or to other immigrant groups.

Parameters were established in the sample selection process to control several defining characteristics, that if not controlled for could dilute the findings, or could prevent me from studying the students and the actual time period this research intended to study. The sample, however, was a volunteer sample, allowing for any student who met the participation criteria to sign up for the study, as apposed to a representative sample. A larger sample, purposely recruited to form a representative sample, could yield findings that are more generalizable. Moreover, the lack of a comparison group in the study makes it difficult to ascertain whether the findings from this study are transferable to other immigrant students hailing from different countries and with different social, cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Educational experiences vary from school to school. Newcomers navigating their first year in school, therefore, will have different experiences based on the school they
attend. While the study pulled participants from only two schools, 10 of the 30 participants experienced their first year in a school other than one of the research sites in this study. These ten participants attended a total of seven different schools. Interviews with key informants and observations notes were not obtained at each of those seven other schools, therefore, no data exists to corroborate what those participants reported about their experiences during their first year in school.

Another possible limitation to this study is the fact that both of the research sites are located in highly segregated communities, where the Latino population is nearly 100 percent. A school with nearly a 100 percent Latino population is not the norm in California or in the nation. Would the study prove to have different findings if the research sites were located in less segregated cities? This study cannot answer that question. A research site located in a community that closely resembles the ethnic and racial profile of the state or the nation could perhaps give us findings that are more generalizable.

As an immigrant from Mexico, who migrated to this country at the age of seven and who experienced most of his education in this country, I know that my analysis is perhaps more susceptible to bias then for a researcher who does not share the same background with his or her subjects. Other sources of bias are the fact that I am also an educator with nearly 14 years of experience working with newcomer students and with issues that directly impact immigrant students. I engaged in a purposeful process to purge my biases before the interview sessions and every time I engaged in data analysis to be more cognizant of my own biases and to engage in the work with a clean slate. But, I also understand that the slate can never really be fully cleaned. The best that I could do
was to stay critical of my own judgments and on the spot decisions during the duration of the study. I know that I was successful in minimizing my bias because some of the most significant findings in this study betray my pre-assumptions.

**Recommendations for Practice**

In an OpEd posted on the huffingtonpost.com on April 30, 2014, Dr. Hunter Quartz and Dr. M. Suarez-Orozco wrote in regards to successful immigrant students who are graduating from high school this year and are on their way to college.

“What they all have in common is a strong school community of peers and adults who have committed to their futures. Strong school communities hold the key to establishing a college-going culture, especially for immigrant students. It is in the company of others that students learn what it means to belong, to engage, to achieve. Research on newcomer students’ experience in urban schools too often reveals a lack of solidarity and cohesion. In many schools, only a handful of immigrant students can name a teacher as someone they would go to with a problem; even fewer can identify a teacher who was proud of them.”

It is fitting and proper to begin this section of recommendations for practice with this quote. On a macro-scale, at every school, it needs to be understood that learning is a social process and therefore our ability to learn goes well beyond our ability to read, write and work-out numbers, as many lay individuals, or unfortunately, educators who believe that student success is the direct outcome of the students’ ability to process the instruction they are given, without much consideration of the social context where the students are receiving it. Here, therefore, is a set of recommendations, derived from the findings in this study and supported by relevant research. All of these recommendations must be understood within a frame of school community, because it was the school community that helped define the educational experience and to a certain degree the academic performance of the participants in this study.
Recommendations for practice follow for improvement in four areas, (1) improving academic performance, (2) navigating unfamiliar school processes and school structures, (3) developing meaningful relational engagement between newcomers and peers, teachers, other school agents, (4) and optimizing educational time. Suggestions for how to fund some of these recommendations follow immediately after.

**Improving Academic Performance**

Every classroom, in every school needs to be a safe space for learning. A classroom climate where students feel comfortable sharing, asking questions, engaging with teachers and students is necessary for the effective and meaningful exchange of ideas that we call learning. Learning a language is an interactive endeavor. Language must be practiced. The fear or ridicule often prevents newcomers from attempting to speak English. Demonstrating value for the culture and language of all students is helpful in reducing the affective filter of English learners.

Beyond providing a classroom climate ideal for learning, schools must also provide the actual linguistic and academic supports that newcomers need to master the academic course content while acquiring English. Schools need to pay special consideration to staffing and to teacher professional development. Teachers selected to work with newcomers should receive training on basic literacy and reading intervention, regardless of what they teach, so that they can better scaffold content and language for students, fill learning gaps and provide opportunities for students to acquire English. Additionally, whenever possible, newcomers should be programmed with teachers who can provide Spanish language support, or with teachers who can deliver the content in the students’ primary language, with the intent to transition to English. Trained Teacher
Assistants are also indispensible for providing needed primary language supports when the classroom teacher cannot.

Schools must adopt heterogeneous grouping practices to reduce newcomers’ physical and linguistic isolation. It is common practice to group students by English proficiency level in their English class, but grouping them together in all their classes is more advantages to teachers than to the students themselves. As a teacher, I know that it is easier to teach homogenous groups because when planning a lesson it is easier to hit one big target than many small ones. But let’s think of the disadvantage that homogenous groups bring to the students. Homogenous groups, by definition, do not offer students a range of student models who posses a range of abilities. If we conceptualize learning as a social process, we can imagine what is lost in homogenous groups. Students learn more from students who are les like them, who have different skill sets and who can provide varied models of studentship. This point is specially relevant for immigrant students who are learning how to become students in this country and who need proper language models to aide them in their quest to learn English.

Navigating Unfamiliar School Processes and School Structures

It is incumbent on the schools and no one else to inform and guide students through the processes and structures that will either lead them to success or end up pushing them out of school prematurely. In general, most schools do inform and guide students, but more needs to be done for immigrant students, their special circumstances require it. Schools need to tap into that optimism and *ganas* to succeed that newcomers bring and use it to fuel their path to graduation. This study and others support the power of peer influence. Systems can be established around this concept to inform and guide
newcomers towards positive academic outcomes. Creating peer groups, comprised of immigrants and non-immigrant students who meet regularly to share vital information, discuss and plan course schedules, opportunities for enrichment, intervention, credit recovery and extracurricular activities can be powerful vehicles for the ongoing development of an educational roadmap that extends beyond high school. An extended benefit of this type of peer group is the departure from their home group of newcomers and the expansion of the students’ social network.

Every effort must also be made to engage parents and or guardians in the process of familiarization. Parent and or guardians need to be informed at the point of enrollment about that the various school requirements that impact the trajectory of their child’s high school experience. Parents need to be provided information, in their home language, about the grade-based promotion system, high school graduation requirements, standardized testing requirements, A-G requirements, high school exit exam requirements, and the process of class programming. While many school districts keep these as mandatory topics in Individualized Graduation Plan (IGP) meetings, parents of immigrant students should receive this information as early as possible. For parents, clear and actionable expectations are critical for planning and managing their child’s educational career. This work must be done on ongoing basis, in a meaningful manner, with earnest mutual respect and in the spirit of partnership.

**Developing Meaningful Relational Engagement Between Newcomers and Peers, Teachers and Other School Agents**

Positive relationships with other students and adults at schools are essential for learning and adapting, and therefore, when they do not occur naturally they must be forced, or at least planned for.
A good example of how to engender positive relational engagement between students comes from North View High School. Most newcomers at that school are programmed into an elective dance class (folklorico) or are programmed into their elective during the last period of the day, giving students the opportunity to join sports teams. This programming decision ensures that newcomers will be part of a structured social setting with diverse students where teamwork is practiced and where social networks are formed and strengthen.

Schools should develop a welcoming committee made up of students, counselors and office staff. These individuals can be responsible for giving tours of the school to new students and for introducing students to their teachers, classmates and other key personnel. This process can present opportunities for school personnel to informally invite and encourage students to take full advantage of the various learning and extracurricular opportunities the school offers. As reported by several participants in this study, it took just an invitation from the coach or a teacher to join a sport or a school club. Research has proven that newcomers often can’t identify an adult on campus who they trust or can turn to for support (Suarez-Orozco, Suarez-Orozco & Todorova, 2008). Here is one practical and attainable strategy for supporting new students.

Teachers, counselors and other school personnel need to recognize the immigrant students face unique linguistic challenges and challenges of social adaptation. Teachers and school personnel do much to help students overcome the challenges they face by simply being “special teachers” (Sadowski, 2013, p. 136). These are teachers or other school employees who are sensitive to the needs of students, who go beyond instruction and show care for the students. Often, they work to build relationships with students and
they leverage those relationships to guide, motivate and empower students. Valenzuela’s (1999) study of U.S.- Mexican youth is founded on a framework of caring, concluding that students will not care to learn from teachers who they know do not care for them.

**Optimizing Educational Time**

Between October 2013 and July 2014 an estimated 50,000 unaccompanied migrant children from Central America arrived at the Mexico - U.S. border (Scherer, 2014). Crime, fear of violence and bleak economic conditions drove many children to undertake the dangerous journey to America, where it was rumored, they would be granted entrance to the country, for many of them ending the prolonged separations from their parents who themselves survived the perilous journey. While immigration supporters demanded compassion for these migrant children and their families, anti-immigration supporters found the daring act of survival undertaken by these children, egregious. But to educational leaders across the nation and at all levels of the education system, the arrival of these children should signal a call to action.

While the phenomenon of lone migrant children is unprecedented, the arrival of school-aged immigrants to this country is not. As documented earlier in this dissertation, immigrant youth are common. Early and systemic intervention services, therefore, are needed at all districts and schools that receive immigrant students. School districts must standardize the process for evaluating transcripts of foreign students with an emphasis on honoring prior course work and not regressing high school immigrant students to the starting line. Grade regressions are devastating to immigrant students with high school experience in their country of origin. In an effort to optimize academic transition and maximize their time in high school, every effort must be made to understand and
recognize the prior school history of adolescent immigrant students. Counselors and key personnel need to be provided training on how to assess, enroll, and support academic and social-emotional adaption. High schools must, therefore, require that counselors or other key personnel act as the resident experts who evaluate transcripts, assess incoming students’ language and academic proficiencies, program students accordingly, inventory the academic and social needs of incoming students and align and coordinate school resources to meet those needs.

**Suggested Funding Streams**

The recommendations listed above are specific to districts schools or to individual students. It is important, however, to also think about how to impact change at a macro level. A report published recently by the Civil Rights Project out of the University of California, Los Angeles, offers encouraging suggestions for how to impact the early school experiences of immigrant students at a larger scale. The report titled *Segregating California’s Future: Inequality and Its Alternative 60 Years After Brown v. Board of Education*, exposes growing segregation across the nation’s schools (Orfield & Ee, 2014). In the report the authors speak of triple segregation to describe the segregation being experienced by Latino and African Americans. Triple segregation refers to segregation by ethnicity, poverty and language. California, the state where this study was conducted, has had an increase in the segregation of Latinos in the last 40 years. According to the authors of this report, however, California is currently presented with an opportunity to reverse the patterns of segregation with its new Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF). “The Local Control Funding Formula is an equity-focused policy and funding strategy” that allows extra money to service high-needs, low income, English
Learners and foster students (Orfield & Ee, 2014, p. 61). Immigrant students fit these descriptors and a few others. Using the framework of triple-segregation that Orfield and Ee used to describe the schooling conditions of Latino and African American students, I would add that immigrant students experience yet another level of segregation. Latino immigrant students, as found in this study, are not only segregated by ethnicity, language and poverty by default of where they live and where their schools are located, but are also segregated in their own schools by virtue of being immigrants. This study found that immigrant students are segregated based on their newcomer status. The case can be made, therefore, that a significant percent of newcomer immigrant students experience quadruple-segregation.

While Orfield and Ee focus on how to reverse segregation and arrest segregation patterns with the Local Control Funding Formula, their argument can be extended to using the LCFF to improve the educational conditions that immigrant students typically face. The following recommendations presented by Orfield and Ee are feasible under the new LCFF in California. (1) Create regional collaborations between school districts and outside entities to jointly develop and operate “magnet schools and transfer programs” around specific educational needs and offering real choice to students (Orfield & Ee, 2014, p. 59). If school choice is given to students in terms of a magnet school or a high performing school, it is critical that transportation is also provided to students. It is not realistic for families with limited economic means to send their child to a school outside of their immediate community. Without free transportation, students and their families have no choice but to accept the education that their community school offers just around the corner. (2) Provide expanded learning opportunities to students and to parents and
provide a challenging curriculum to students along with the needed supports for success, including tutoring and after school and summer learning opportunities as well as opportunities for credit recovery. (3) Recruit, train and retain teachers and educational leaders who are most qualified to meet the academic needs of students and who have the cultural and linguistic competency to “effectively teach non-native speakers of English and communicate with their families” (Orfield & Ee, 2014, p. 60). (4) Provide health and counseling services to students and their families. There is great need for counseling resources at impoverished schools. Counseling on matters concerning dropout prevention, “course choices, testing, and access to post-secondary education, as well as the severe out-of-school problems many students face” is critical (Orfield & Ee, 2014, p. 60). (5) Eliminate punitive disciplinary measures and adopt positive approaches to keep students in school, which includes eliminating “discriminatory suspensions”, and erroneous placement in special education.

**Recommendations for Research**

Several key factors that impact immigrant students need further study. The first concerns the family separations and reunifications of immigrant students. Specifically, how do students cope with that separation, what impact do they have on the student’s motivation, academic performance and social-emotional wellbeing? Of particular interest to me, only because it was discussed by several participants in this study, how does the ability to video chat, text and talk with parents and family members change, if at all, the nature of the separation and its effects on the student?
Secondly, the world of public education in the United States is changing with the advent of the Common Core State Standards. With Common Core Standards for English Language Development lagging behind, what impact will that have on the type of instruction that immigrant students, presumed to be English Learners, receive and how long will it take for schools to implement those standards with fidelity?

The third recommendation for research focuses on creating communities of reception where immigrant students feel welcomed, they feel that they belong and they see that the full measure of the school’s resources are there to ensure their success. If a school does not already have this type of school community, can it be done, and how, without having to dismantle a school, as Bellwood Park High School was just a few years prior to this study?

Closing Remarks

During data collection a student from my pilot group offered up this story. He started by telling me that he has been in the country roughly six months. He is from southern Mexico. His family resided in a small rural community but he lived an hour away in the closest city. Before migrating to the U.S. he had been studying at a prestigious high school on scholarship. He was at the top of his class. One day, he was approached by a group of men who he identified as known drug cartel members. He was told they knew he was one of the best students at the school and that they would sponsor his future university education if he would come work for them. He knew it was a proposition he was not allowed to refuse.
That night, he student made it back to his family. He recounted what transpired earlier and without planning, that same night, his grandmother, his two siblings and him, left everything and everyone behind and began their journey to the U.S. Without money, they travelled north riding on top of train boxcars. After three weeks of traveling, at an attempt to switch trains somewhere near the U.S. - Mexico border his grandmother and sister did not make the train. The group became separated. He and his younger sister continued their journey not knowing whether they’d ever see them again. Two weeks later, he made it across the border with his little sister. They trekked through the desert with a small band of men who he feared would do harm to his sister, but who he could not stray from because they knew the path to safety. When his sister fell ill, they left both of them behind to die in the desert. They were found by the border patrol a day later, starving, dehydrated and waiting for their lives to leave their bodies.

I retell his story because it needs to be heard. Secondly, I tell his story because in the arena of public debate over immigration, it is often forgotten that immigrants are humans who leave the womb of their motherlands behind not to commit an illegal act or to exploit and abuse the resources, people and traditions of another nation, but rather, very simply, to preserve themselves, to survive. Immigration is not a political act. Immigration is an act of survival. Immigration is a human act.
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Appendix VII: Key Informant Study Information Sheet
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Appendix I

Student Participant Interview Protocol

Thank you for choosing to participate in this interview. As I’ve explained, the goal of this study is to help us understand how important the first year in the United States is in determining school success for immigrants from Mexico. This interview will help me understand which experiences in school affected your school performance and why they affected your performance. Again, thank you for participating in this interview.

Before we get started, is it okay if I audio record our conversation? PAUSE FOR RESPONSE. Okay, great, I’ll begin recording now. TURN ON RECORDER.

From this point on I am recording our conversation. Before I ask the first question I want to assure you that if at any point during the interview you feel uncomfortable with a question I ask, you can just say “pass” and I’ll go on to the next question. Or if you do not want to continue with the interview at all, you can just say that you want to stop the interview and we will be stop. If you choose to skip a question or stop the interview you will still receive the $20 honorarium and you will still be entered into the drawing for the Ipad mini.

I also want you to know that your answer will be kept confidential. Only I will see your answers. Your name will not be used when I report my findings and I will report the findings in such a way that no one will be able to identify you, or your school. We will now start. Do you wish to continue? Great

Now I will ask you some questions to get some background information. INTRODUCE THE PARTICIPANT PROFILE FORM (Ask questions and complete together). No I will ask you some open-ended questions. Please feel free to take a few moments to think about your answer if you need to, and to add as many details to your responses as possible. We will begin.
Student Interview

Student Code: _________________________  School Code: _____________________
Age: _____________  Gender: ____________  Grade: ________  Date: ____________

**Topic 1: Immigration**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Questions</th>
<th>Research Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Where were you born? Tell me about the place you grew up in Mexico</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. How many years did you attend school in Mexico?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. How old were you when you migrated to the United States?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Before permanently moving to the US had you ever visited the US?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. What grade were you in when you first started school in the U.S.?</td>
<td>RQ1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Did your family come to the US all together at the same time?</td>
<td>RQ1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. What are some of the reasons why your family decided to come to the United States?</td>
<td>RQ1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. When you lived in Mexico what did you imagine the US was like?</td>
<td>RQ1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Is the US what you expected? Yes No Explain why.</td>
<td>RQ1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. When you first got here, what do you like most about living here?</td>
<td>RQ1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. When you first got here, what do you like least?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Topic 2: Academic Support in the Home During First Year**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Questions</th>
<th>Research Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12. When you first arrive in this country who lived in your house?</td>
<td>RQ1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. During ____ grade, who helped you at home if you needed help with homework or schoolwork?</td>
<td>RQ1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. During ____ grade, how often did your parent go to the school to speak</td>
<td>RQ1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
to teachers about your school work or grades?

**Topic 3: Characterization of First Year in an American School**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Questions</th>
<th>Research Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15. Can you tell me about your earliest memories of school in the _____ grade?</td>
<td>RQ1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Think back to _____ grade, what is or are some memories that stand out in your mind about school?</td>
<td>RQ1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. During _____ grade, did you feel like you belong to in your school? Yes NO --Explain why?</td>
<td>RQ1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. During _____ grade, what do you wish would have been different about your experience at school?</td>
<td>RQ1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. During your first year in school, was school a place where you wanted to be? Explain.</td>
<td>RQ1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. What advise would you give to a new immigrant starting at your school to help him succeed?</td>
<td>RQ1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Topic 4: Social Experiences at School With Peers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Questions</th>
<th>Research Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21. When you lived in Mexico how many students/friends did you spend with in school?</td>
<td>RQ2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. In _____ grade, how many students/friends did you spend time with in school?</td>
<td>RQ2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Did you want to have more students/friends to spend time in _____ grade?</td>
<td>RQ2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. What language do you speak when you socialize with your friends?</td>
<td>RQ2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. How many friends do you spend time with at school or outside of school who do not speak Spanish?</td>
<td>RQ2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Research Question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. In your first year in school, did you spend time with friends who you do not have in your classes?</td>
<td>RQ2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Are you a member of a sports team, a school club, student government, or other school activity? Yes? No? How about during your first year in school?</td>
<td>RQ2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. If not, what prevented you from joining?</td>
<td>RQ2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. In ____ grade, how did your friends or classmates help you with your schoolwork/homework?</td>
<td>RQ2 RQ3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. Did your friends talk to you about graduation requirements, class credits, A-G during your first year in school?</td>
<td>RQ2 RQ3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. During ____ grade, did you have most of the students in all your classes?</td>
<td>RQ2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. Would you say that during _____ grade your friends at school were a good influence?</td>
<td>RQ2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. Would you say that during ______ grade your friends at school got in a trouble often?</td>
<td>RQ2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. Would you say that during _____ grade your friends at school affected how you behave in school and how you perform in class? How?</td>
<td>RQ3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Topic 5: Social Experiences at School With School Personnel**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Questions</th>
<th>Research Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>35. During ___ grade, did your teachers ever speak Spanish to you in class?</td>
<td>RQ2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36. During ___ grade, did you feel like your teachers where doing everything they could to help you learn?</td>
<td>RQ2 RQ3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
37. During ___ grade, did you have conversations regularly with adults at school who were not your teachers?
If so, what were your conversations about?

38. Is there a teacher from ___ grade who you think really helped you out? What did that teacher do?

39. In ___ grade was there another adult who you think really helped you out? What did that person do?

40. How do you think most adults at your school treat most Mexican students?

41. During _______ grade did you feel like all your teachers know you? What did they do to make you feel that way?

42. During your first year in school was there an adult at your school, who was not one of your teachers, that you felt knew you? Who was that person?

43. In _____ grade who talked to you about joining a club, a sports team, or any other school group?

44. At your school, during your first year, who talked to you about going to college?

45. If you have a question about grades, graduation, or college, who do you talk to at your school?

46. Do you think that your relationships with adults at school during ____ grade affect how your doing in school?

**Topic 6: School Processes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Questions</th>
<th>Research Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>47. Can you tell me why you are in ESL classes?</td>
<td>RQ2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48. Since you started school here, have you had a class that you felt was too easy for you? Which class and why was it easy?</td>
<td>RQ2 RQ3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49. Do you know what course credits are? When did you find out about course credits? Who explained credits to you?</td>
<td>RQ3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50. During _____ grade, were high school graduation requirements</td>
<td>RQ2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
51. During _____ grade, was the CST, and CAHSEE requirements explained to you? Who explained this process to you?  

52. During _____ grade how did you know if you were doing well in class?  

53. Do you think that you knowing what is expected of you sooner could have impacted your performance in class?  

54. What do you wish you knew in _____ grade about how the school works that you know now? Why?  

55. Do you feel that your school has been preparing you for college since your first day in school?  

**Topic 7: Social Experiences, School Processes and Academic Performance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Questions</th>
<th>Research Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>56. What kind of a student would you say you are?</td>
<td>RQ3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57. What kind of a student would you say your teachers think you are?</td>
<td>RQ3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58. Do you believe that your social experiences in _____ grade affect how you see yourself as a student?  How?</td>
<td>RQ3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59. Do you believe that not knowing much about how schools work during _____ grade affected how you see yourself as a student?  How?</td>
<td>RQ3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Topic 8: Family Separations (For students who report family separations)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Questions</th>
<th>Research Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>60. Have you been separated from your family (parents, siblings)? For how long? What caused that separation?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61. Did the separation from your parents/family affect how well you did in class during your first year in school?  How?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62. Does being separated from your parents affect how you feel about living in this county?  How?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63. Does being separated from your family/parents affect the types of academic goals you set for yourself?  How?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Topic 9: Academic Goals**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Questions</th>
<th>Research Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>64. What are your school goals? What is the purpose of you coming to school?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65. How real are those goals?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66. If you had to start school all over again in the US, knowing what you know now, what would you do different?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67. How do you rate your overall experience in school during your first year?</td>
<td>RQ1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Closure:**

Now that you are ___ years / months from graduation, what are some of your career goals?

I want to thank you for taking the time to talk to me and for sharing your experiences. This has been a powerful learning experience for me. (Student receives the $20 honorarium)

Include a question for social relations outside of school to impact performance.
Estudiante: Protocolo de Entrevista

Gracias por su participación en este estudio. Como he explicado, el objetivo de este estudio es ayudarnos a entender lo importante que es el primer año en los Estados Unidos en la determinación de éxito escolar de los inmigrantes mexicanos. Esta entrevista me ayudará a entender cuales experiencias en la escuela afectaron su rendimiento escolar y por qué afectaron su rendimiento. De nuevo, gracias por participar en esta entrevista.

¿Antes de compensar, está bien si grabo nuestra conversación en audio? PAUSA PARA UNA RESPUESTA. Bueno, voy a empezar a grabar ahora. PRENDER GRABADORA

Desde este momento estoy grabando nuestra conversación. Antes de hacer la primera pregunta, quiero asegurarte que si en algún momento durante la entrevista se siente incómodo con una pregunta, puede decir paso, y yo continuare a la siguiente pregunta. O si usted no desea continuar con la entrevista, simplemente puede decir que desea detener la entrevista y la dare por terminado. Si decides no responder una pregunta o detener la entrevista, todavía recibirás el honorario de $20 y todavía participarás en el sorteo para el Ipad mini.

También quiero que sepas que sus respuestas se mantendrán confidenciales. Solamente yo mirare sus respuestas. Su nombre no se utilizará cuando reporte mis resultados y yo reportare los resultados de una manera tal que nadie será capaz de identificarla/o, o de identificar a su escuela. Ahora vamos a comenzar. ¿Desea continuar? MUY BIEN.

Ahora voy a hacer unas preguntas para obtener alguna información más al fondo. PRESENTAR EL FORMULARIO DE PERFIL DEL PARTICIPANTE (Hacer preguntas y completar juntos). Ahora voy a hacer unas preguntas abiertas. Por favor, siéntase libre de tomar unos momentos para pensar en su respuesta si es necesario, y agregar todos los detalles de sus respuestas como sea posible. Vamos a comenzar.
Entrevista para Estudiantes

Código del estudiante: _____________________  Código escolar: _____________________

Tema 1: Inmigración

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Título de la entrevista</th>
<th>Preguntas de investigación</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. ¿Dónde naciste? Cuéntame del lugar donde creciste en México.</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. ¿Cuántos años asististe a la escuela en México?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. ¿Qué edad tenías cuando emigraste a los Estados Unidos?</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. ¿Antes de mudarse permanentemente a los Estados Unidos, habías visitado alguna vez los Estados Unidos?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. ¿En qué grado estabas cuando comenzaste tus estudios en los Estados Unidos?</td>
<td>RQ1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. ¿Su familia llegó a los Estados Unidos todos juntos?</td>
<td>RQ1, 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. ¿Cuáles son algunas de las razones por las cuales su familia decidió venir a los estados unidos?</td>
<td>RQ1, 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. ¿Cuando vivías en México como te imaginabas que eran los Estados Unidos?</td>
<td>RQ1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. ¿Son los Estados Unidos lo que esperabas? Si  No  Explica por qué?</td>
<td>RQ1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. ¿Cuándo llegaste por primera vez, que fue lo que te gusto mas sobre la vida en los Estados Unidos?</td>
<td>RQ1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. ¿Cuándo llegaste por primera vez, que fue lo que no te gusto sobre la vida en los Estados Unidos?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tema 2: Apoyo académico en el hogar durante el primer año

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Título de la entrevista</th>
<th>Preguntas de investigación</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12. Cuando llegaste por primera vez a este país, quien vivía en tu casa?</td>
<td>RQ1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preguntas de la entrevista</td>
<td>Preguntas de investigación</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. ¿Durante ___ grado, quién te ayudó en tu casa si necesitabas ayuda con la tareas o asignaciones de clase?</td>
<td>RQ1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. ¿Durante ___ grado, con qué frecuencia fueron sus padres a la escuela para hablar con los maestros acerca de tu trabajo escolar o grados?</td>
<td>RQ1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Tema 3: Caracterización del primer año en una escuela americana**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preguntas de la entrevista</th>
<th>Preguntas de investigación</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15. ¿Me puedes decir de tus primeros recuerdos de la escuela en el _____ grado?</td>
<td>RQ1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. ¿Piensa de nuevo al _____ grado, cuál es o son algunos recuerdos que se destacan en tu mente acerca de la escuela?</td>
<td>RQ1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Durante _____ grado, sentiste que pertenecías a tu escuela? Si o NO - Explica por qué?</td>
<td>RQ1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. ¿Qué es lo que deseas que hubiera sido diferente acerca de tu experiencia en la escuela Durante _____ grado?</td>
<td>RQ1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. ¿Durante _____ grado, fue la escuela un lugar donde querías estar? Explica.</td>
<td>RQ1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. ¿Qué consejo le darías a un nuevo inmigrante comenzando en tu escuela para ayudarlo a tener éxito?</td>
<td>RQ1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Tema 4: Experiencias sociales en la escuela con sus compañeros**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preguntas de la entrevista</th>
<th>Preguntas de investigación</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21. ¿Cuándo vivías en México con cuántos estudiantes/amigos/as te pasabas el tiempo en la escuela?</td>
<td>RQ2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. ¿En el ____ grado, con cuántos estudiantes/amigos/as te pasabas el tiempo en la escuela?</td>
<td>RQ2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. ¿En el ____ grado, querías tener más estudiantes/amigos para pasar el tiempo?</td>
<td>RQ2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. ¿Qué idioma hablas cuando socializas con tus amigos?</td>
<td>RQ2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pregunta</td>
<td>Tema 5: Experiencias sociales en la escuela con el personal escolar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. ¿Con cuántos amigos pasas el tiempo en la escuela que no hablan español?</td>
<td>RQ2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. ¿Pasas el tiempo con amigos/as que no están en tus clases?</td>
<td>RQ2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. ¿Eres un miembro de un equipo deportivo, un club escolar, gobierno estudiantil, o de otra actividad escolar?</td>
<td>RQ2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. ¿Si no, ¿qué impide unir?</td>
<td>RQ2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. ¿Durante _____ grado, cómo te ayudaban tus amigos/as o compañeros/as de clase con tu trabajo escolar?</td>
<td>RQ2, RQ3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. ¿Hablan con tigo tus amigos o amistades sobre los requisitos de graduación, créditos de clase, A-G durante tu primer año en la escuela?</td>
<td>RQ2, RQ3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. ¿Durante _____ grado, tuviste la mayoría de los estudiantes en todas las clases?</td>
<td>RQ2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. ¿Dirías que durante _____ grado tus amigos en la escuela eran una buena influencia?</td>
<td>RQ2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. ¿Dirías que durante el _____ grado tus amigos en la escuela se metían en muchos problemas seguido?</td>
<td>RQ2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. ¿Dirías que durante el _____ grado, tus amigos en la escuela afectaron tu comportamiento en la escuela y cómo trabajabas en clase? ¿Cómo?</td>
<td>RQ3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35. ¿Alguna vez durante ___ grado, tus maestros hablan español contigo en clase?</td>
<td>RQ2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36. ¿Durante _____ grado, sentiste como que tus maestros estaban haciendo todo lo posible para ayudarte a aprender?</td>
<td>RQ2, RQ3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preguntas de la entrevista</td>
<td>Preguntas de investigación</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37. ¿Durante ___ grado, tenías conversaciones regulares con los adultos en la escuela que no eran tus maestros?</td>
<td>RQ2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>¿Si es así, acerca de que fueron sus conversaciones?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38. ¿Hay un maestro de ___ grado que crees que realmente te ayudó? ¿Qué es lo que hizo el maestro?</td>
<td>RQ2 RQ3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39. ¿En ___ grado hubo otro adulto que crees que te ayudó? ¿Qué hizo esa persona?</td>
<td>RQ2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40. ¿Cómo crees que la mayoría de los adultos en tu escuela tratan a la mayoría de los estudiantes mexicanos?</td>
<td>RQ2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41. ¿Durante el __________ grado, sentiste que te conocían todos tus maestros? Como te hizo sentir eso?</td>
<td>RQ2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42. ¿Durante tu primer año en la escuela había un adulto en tu escuela, que no era uno de tus profesores, que sentías que te conocía? Quien fue esa persona?</td>
<td>RQ2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43. ¿En el ___ grade quien hablo contigo acerca de a unirte a un club, un equipo deportivo, o cualquier otro grupo de la escuela?</td>
<td>RQ2 RQ3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44. ¿En tu escuela, quien ha hablado contigo sobre ir al colegio?</td>
<td>RQ2 RQ3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45. ¿Sabes lo que son créditos del curso? ¿Cuándo te enteraste de los créditos del curso?</td>
<td>RQ2 RQ3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46. ¿Crees que tus relaciones con los adultos en la escuela durante ___ grado afectan cómo estás haciendo en la escuela?</td>
<td>RQ3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Tema 6: Procesos escolares**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preguntas de la entrevista</th>
<th>Preguntas de investigación</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>47. ¿Me puedes decir por qué estás en clases de ESL?</td>
<td>RQ2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48. ¿Desde que empezaste a estudiar aquí, has tenido una clase que sientes que fue demasiado fácil para ti? ¿Qué clase y por qué fue fácil?</td>
<td>RQ2 RQ3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49. ¿Sabes lo que son créditos del curso? ¿Cuándo te enteraste de los créditos del curso?</td>
<td>RQ3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50. ¿Durante _____ grado, te explicaron los requisitos de graduación de la</td>
<td>RQ2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tema 7: Experiencias Sociales, Procesos Escolares y Rendimiento Académico</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Preguntas de la entrevista</strong></td>
<td><strong>Preguntas de investigación</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56. ¿Qué clase de estudiante dirías que eres?</td>
<td>RQ3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57. ¿Qué clase de estudiante dirías que tus maestros piensan que eres?</td>
<td>RQ3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58. ¿Crees que tus experiencias sociales en _____ grado afectan cómo te ves como un estudiante? ¿Cómo?</td>
<td>RQ3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59. ¿Crees que no saber mucho acerca de cómo funcionan las escuelas durante ___ grado afectado como te ves a ti mismo como un estudiante? ¿Cómo?</td>
<td>RQ3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Tema 8: Separaciones Familiares (Para estudiantes que reportaron separaciones familiares)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preguntas de la entrevista</th>
<th>Preguntas de investigación</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>60. ¿Has estado separada/o de tu familia (padre/madre/hermanos/as)? Por cuanto tiempo? Que causo la separación?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61. ¿Afecto la separación de tus padres tu rendimiento académico en clase durante tu primer año de estudios? Como?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62. ¿Afecta la separación de tus padres tu forma de sentir sobre tu vida aquí en este país? ¿Cómo?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63. ¿El estar separado de tu familia afecta el las metas académicas que te pones tu miso/a? ¿Cómo?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Tema 9: Metas Académicas**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preguntas de la entrevista</th>
<th>Preguntas de investigación</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>64. ¿Cuáles son tus metas académicas? Cual es el propósito de asistir a la escuela?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65. Que tan reales son esas metas?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66. ¿Si tuvieras que empezar la escuela de nuevo en los Estados Unidos, sabiendo lo que sabes ahora? ¿Qué harías diferente?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67. ¿ Como calificas tu experiencia durante tu primer año escolar en los EU?</td>
<td>RQ1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Clausura:**

¿Ahora que estás a ___ años / meses de la graduación, cuáles son algunas de tus metas educativas y algunas de tus metas para una carrera?

Quiero darle las gracias por tomarse el tiempo para hablar conmigo y por compartir sus experiencias. Esta ha sido una experiencia de aprendizaje poderosa para mí. (El estudiante recibe los $ 20 de honorarios)

Incluye una pregunta para las relaciones sociales fuera de la escuela que afecte el rendimiento.
Appendix II

Key Informant Interview Protocol

Thank you for choosing to participate in this interview. As I’ve explained, the goal of this study is to help us understand how important the first year in the United States is in determining school success for immigrants from Mexico. This interview will help me understand the processes that your school site has in place for enrolling, testing, programming, monitoring and supporting newcomer students.

Before we get started, is it okay if I audio record our conversation? PAUSE FOR RESPONSE. Okay, great, I’ll begin recording now. TURN ON RECORDER.

From this point on I am recording our conversation. Before I ask the first question I want to assure you that if at any point during the interview you feel uncomfortable with a question I ask, you can just say “pass” and I’ll go on to the next question. Or if you do not want to continue with the interview at all, you can just say that you want to stop the interview and we will be stop. If you choose to skip a question or stop the interview you will still receive the $40 gift card we discussed prior to this interview.

I also want you to know that your answer will be kept confidential. Only I will see your answers. Your name will not be used when I report my findings and I will report the findings in such a way that no one will be able to identify you, or your school. We will now start. Do you wish to continue? Great
### Key Informant Interview Protocol

Key Informant Code: ____________________  School Code: _____________________

Position: _______________________________________________Date: ____________

**Topic 1: Background Knowledge**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Questions</th>
<th>Research Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Please tell me about your experience in education.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Can you give me some demographic information about your school? ELs, Newcomers?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What is your role in working with newcomer students?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Is this your official role?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. What other duties do you have at this school?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Topic 2: Social Experiences**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Questions</th>
<th>Research Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6. How would you characterize the social interactions of newcomer students at your school?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. In your experience, what are some social-emotional needs common in this student population?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. How do you perceive the interactions between teachers, counselors and other school personnel with newcomers?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Overall, how would you say the staff views this student population?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Would you say that teachers are welcoming of newcomer students? Why or why not?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Can you tell me if you see newcomers participating in school activities, sports, clubs, organizations, student body, etc? If not, why not?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. In terms of social relations, what is missing for newcomers during their first year in school?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Topic 2: School Processes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Questions</th>
<th>Research Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13. Can you explain the enrollment process for a newcomer?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Who is or are the persons who carry undertake that process?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Who decides what classes a newcomer is placed into?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. How are those decisions made?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. By what criteria are newcomers group into classes?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. What are some of the variations in class placements for newcomers?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. What testing requirements fall on newcomer students?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. What special concessions for testing made for newcomers who are not yet proficient in English?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. When are newcomers informed about graduation requirements, A-G, CAHSEE?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. What special concessions for completing these requirements are made for newcomers who arrive after their 9th grade year and do not have four years to complete the requirements?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. What social emotional supports are in place, either at this school site or in partnership with outside providers or organizations that newcomers can benefit from?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. What processes are in place for providing newcomers with opportunities for accelerated ELD?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Topic 4: Academic Support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Questions</th>
<th>Research Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25. What specialized trainings do teachers of newcomers receive?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. In general are teachers implementing their training with fidelity?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. What specialized curriculum do newcomers get?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. In general are teachers implementing the curriculum?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Does the staff receive training on how to support this particular population?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. What do you recommend is needed to better serve the needs of these students?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I thank you for your time and for sharing your knowledge and experience with me. This information will help me understand the experiences of your students.
Appendix III

Participant Pool Profile:
1. Gender?
   _____ Female      _____ Male

2. What is your age?
   _____ 14 years old, _____ 15 years old, _____ 16 years old, _____ 17 years old, _____ 18 years old, _____ 19 years old, _____ 20 years old

3. How many years have you lived in the United States?
   ______ 1 year, ______ 2 years, ______ 3 years, ______ 4 years, ______ 5 years

4. What is your current grade?
   ______ 9th, ______ 10th, ______ 11th, ______ 12th

5. At what grade did you start school in the United States?
   ______ 5th grade, ______ 6th grade, ______ 7th grade, ______ 8th grade, ______ 9th grade, ______ 10th grade, ______ 11th grade, ______ 12th grade

6. How many years did you attend school in Mexico?
   _____ 1 year, _____ 2 years, _____ 3 years, _____ 4 years, _____ 5 years, _____ 6 years, _____ 7 years, _____ 8 years, _____ 9 years, _____ 10 years, _____ 11 years, _____ 12 years

7. Do you live with both of your parents? Who do you live with?
   _____ YES      _____ NO    _____ siblings _____ relatives

8. What is the highest level of education by either of your parents or guardians?
   _____ Kinder - 8th grade, _____ Some High School, _____ High School Graduate, _____ Some College, _____ College Graduate, _____ College Graduate School

9. What is your parents’ or guardians’ employment status?
   _____ unemployed, _____ employed part-time, _____ employed full time
**Appendix IV**

*Research Questions and Data Source Alignment*

**Question 1:** How do high school age, newcomer-immigrants from Mexico characterize their first year in the American school system?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Source</th>
<th>How Source Will Address Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Interviews</td>
<td>Student interviews will provide the data to directly answer RQ1 as the question directly asks how the participants characterize their first in the American school system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Informant Interviews</td>
<td>The key informants will provide data on the systemic process for enrolling, assessing, programming, monitoring and supporting newcomers at each of the research sites. This information will form a baseline of information for understanding the context of reception for newcomers. Useful information for understanding my findings to RQ1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant Profile Questionnaire</td>
<td>The questionnaire is used to solicit descriptive information including gender, age, years of residence in the U.S., years of schooling in the US, years of schooling in Mexico, guardianship, parental education, and parental employment status. This descriptive information will allow to me define the participant pool along variables that have been proven to be indicators of student performance. Useful information for understanding my findings to RQ1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation Field Notes</td>
<td>Observation field notes will be entered into analysis for RQ1. Observation field notes will be useful in gaining a broad understanding of the community around the school and in the school itself. This information is especially important for understanding newcomers’ characterization of their first year in school, as the location and physical environment of the school can have an impact in their experiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Performance Data</td>
<td>Student performance data will be collected from the participants’ first year in school but will not help to directly answer RQ1. The participants will not know I have this data. In the interviews, they will be asked to assess their academic performance. The performance data will allow me to cross-analyze their responses.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Question 2. How do high school age, newcomer-immigrants from Mexico perceive the social experiences and school processes they encountered during their first year in an American school?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Source</th>
<th>How Source Will Address Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Interviews</td>
<td>Student interviews will provide the data to directly answer RQ2 as the question directly asks how the participants characterize their perceptions. The interview protocol will get at their perceptions with a sequence of questions that build from the impersonal to the personal and from the narrow to the broad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Informant Interviews</td>
<td>The key informants will provide data on the systemic process for enrolling, assessing, programming, monitoring and supporting newcomers at each of the research sites. This information will form a baseline of information for understanding the context of reception for newcomers. The processes outlined by the key informants should mirror the processes that newcomers encounter. These processes, often become what structures social experiences, such as the grouping of students in classes, creating cohorts of newcomers who come to socialize. Useful information for understanding the findings from the student interviews in relation to RQ2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant Profile Questionnaire</td>
<td>The questionnaire is used to solicit descriptive information including gender, age, years of residence in the U.S., years of schooling in the US, years of schooling in Mexico, guardianship, parental education, and parental employment status. This descriptive information will allow to define the participant pool along variables that have been proven to be indicators of student performance. It will be interesting to analyze whether several of the variables listed here are associated with specific social experiences and or school processes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation Field Notes</td>
<td>Observation field notes will be entered into analysis for RQ2. Observation field notes will be useful in gaining a broad understanding of the community around the school and in the school itself. This information is especially important for understanding newcomers how the community and school environment come in to play with the reported experiences and processes that students encounter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Performance Data</td>
<td>Student performance data will be collected from the participants’ first year in school but will not help to directly answer RQ2. The participants will not know I have this data. In the interviews, they will be asked to assess their academic performance. The performance data will allow me to cross-analyze their responses.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Question 3: What is the role of social experiences and school processes in the academic performance of high school age, newcomer-immigrants from Mexico in their first year in an American School?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Source</th>
<th>How Source Will Address Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Interviews</td>
<td>Student interviews will provide the data to directly answer RQ3 as the question directly asks how the participants characterize their perceptions. The interview protocol will get at their perceptions with a sequence of questions that build from the impersonal to the personal and from the narrow to the broad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Informant Interviews</td>
<td>The key informants will provide data on the systemic processes for enrolling, assessing, programming, monitoring and supporting newcomers at each of the research sites. This information will form a baseline of information for understanding the context of reception for newcomers. The processes outlined by the key informants should mirror the processes that newcomers encounter. The expected outcomes of the processes described by key informants will be compared to how students explain the relationship between social experiences, school processes and their academic performance. Useful information for understanding the findings from the student interviews in relation to RQ3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant Profile Questionnaire</td>
<td>The questionnaire is used to solicit descriptive information including gender, age, years of residence in the U.S., years of schooling in the US, years of schooling in Mexico, guardianship, parental education, and parental employment status. This descriptive information will allow me to define the participant pool along variables that have been proven to be indicators of student performance. It will be interesting to analyze whether several of the variables listed here are associated with specific social experiences and or school processes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation Field Notes</td>
<td>Observation field notes will be entered into analysis for RQ3. Observation field notes will be useful in gaining a broad understanding of the community around the school and in the school itself. This information is especially important for understanding newcomers how the community and school environment come in to play with the reported experiences and processes that students encounter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Performance Data</td>
<td>Student performance data will be collected from the participants’ first year in school but will not help to directly answer RQ2. The participants will not know I have this data. In the interviews, they will be asked to assess their academic performance. The performance data will allow me to cross-analyze their responses.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Appendix V

## Research Questions and Interview Protocol Topic Alignment Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Questions</th>
<th>Student Interview Protocol Topics</th>
<th>Key Informant Interview Protocol Topics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. How do high school age, newcomer-immigrants from Mexico characterize their first year in the American school system? | *Immigration  
*Family Separations  
*Reasons for Migration  
*Expectation of US before migration  
*Differences between lifestyle in Mexico and US  
*Who lives in the home  
*Familial supports  
*Difficulties of immigration  
*Things they like most and least about US schools  
*Things they wished had been different at US school  
*Vivid memories from first year in US schools  
*Advise to new immigrant coming to their school | *Experience in education  
*Define role with newcomers  
*School demographic profile (ELs, newcomers)  
*Processes: enrollment, testing, programming, monitoring, supporting newcomers  
*School partnerships |
| 2. How do high school age, newcomer-immigrants from Mexico perceive the social experiences and school processes they encountered during their first year in an American school? | *Social relations (peers, teachers, counselors, administrators, other school personnel, sense of belonging and respect)  
*Language use  
*Daily activities  
*School processes (enrolling, testing, programming, monitoring, classroom English supports) | *Experience in education  
*Define role with newcomers  
*School demographic profile (ELs, newcomers)  
*Processes: enrollment, testing, programming, monitoring, supporting newcomers  
*School partnerships |
| 3. What is the role of social experiences and school processes in the academic performance of high school age, newcomer-immigrants from Mexico in their first year in an American school? | *Social relations (peers, teachers, counselors, administrators, other school personnel, sense of belonging and respect)  
*Language use  
*Daily activities  
*School processes (enrolling, testing, programming, monitoring, classroom English supports)  
*Academic performance (challenges, effective supports, academic goals, academic motivation) | *Progress monitoring for newcomers  
*Specialized curriculums for ELs  
*School and district supports for newcomers  
*Changes to school processes that impact newcomers |
Appendix VI

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES

“Pilot Test” ADOLESCENT (Ages 13-17) ASSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

The First Year: Understanding Newcomer Adolescents' Academic Transition

You are asked to participate in the pilot test of the interview protocol for a research study conducted by Gregorio Verbera, Ed.D. Candidate, sponsored by Patricia Gandara, Ph.D. and Eugene Tucker, Ph.D. and associates from the Graduate School of Education and Information Studies and the Department of Chicano Studies, at the University of California, Los Angeles.

You were selected as a possible participant in this pilot test of the interview protocol for this study because you meet some but not all of the criteria below:
• Were born in Mexico
• Attended school in Mexico
• Migrated to the United States within the last 3 years
• Completed at least one year of schooling in the United States
• Are between the ages of 14 and 20
• Are currently enrolled as a high school student

Your participation in this research study is voluntary.

Why is this study being done?

This study is being done to explore whether immigrant students are getting off to the right start during their first year in school and whether that first year in fact determines how immigrant students perform in later years. A better understanding of how schools can support immigrants from the beginning of their educational experience can lead to changes in how schools structure their induction process and support new comer immigrants towards positive educational trajectories.

What will happen if I take part in this research study?

Your parents will have to give permission for you to participate in this study. But even if your parents say “yes” you can still decide not to do this study.

If you volunteer to participate in this study, I will ask you to do the following:
• Complete a multiple-choice questionnaire, 8 questions total.
• Be interviewed about your experiences as an immigrant student, relating to your first year of school in the United States.
• The school district will provide records to verify that you are eligible for this study based on the criteria listed above.
• The school district will provide your transcripts and your transcripts will be analyzed for credit sufficiency.
• The interview questions in general will be about how you see your first year of school in the United States and what you think was beneficial in helping you be successful in school.
• The interviews will take place at your school, after school to avoid missing classroom time, during a minimum or shortened school day to avoid keeping you too late after dismissal.
• The interviews will be conducted in April and May of 2014.
• The questionnaire and interviews combined interviews will take approximately one and a half hour to complete.

**How long will I be in the research study?**

You will only be interviewed once. The interviews will take a total of about one and a half hour. The exact length of the interviews depends on how much you have to say about the questions I ask. The interviews will take place in April and May of 2014.

**Are there any potential risks or discomforts that I can expect from this study?**

There are no anticipated risks to you as a result of your participation in this study. However, a few inconveniences and discomforts may occur. By participating in this study, you will have to stay after school to be interviewed. For your convenience, I will try to schedule the interviews on minimum or shortened school days. It is essential that the interviews take place after school so that you do not miss classroom time. Secondly, interview questions are personal in nature, touching upon your experiences in the United States. Recalling these experiences may cause emotional reactions. For your own comfort you have the option to not answer any question that makes you feel uncomfortable or to stop the interview. If you stop the interview you will still receive the $20 honorarium and you will still be entered to win the Ipad Mini.

**Are there any potential benefits if I participate?**

You will not directly benefit from your participation in this study.

The results of the research may help generate a set of recommendations to schools and districts for better servicing and supporting immigrant students during their first year in school in order to improve their chances of academic success in the long run. The results of this study will also help parents of immigrant students understand how to support their child, even from the home, to transition to the American school system in order to improve their chances of academic success.

**Will I receive any payment if I participate in this study?**

Students who participate in the interview will receive an honorarium of $20. All participants will also be entered into a drawing to win an IPad Mini, estimated value $350.
Will information about me and my participation be kept confidential?

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can identify you will remain confidential. The transcripts from the interview will be coded with a serial number to preserve confidentiality. Only I will be able to trace the transcript to the participant. Interviews will take place in a private location at your school. Interviews will only be audio recorded with your permission. Audio recordings will be destroyed after they are transcribed. All transcripts will be destroyed at the conclusion of the study.

Confidentiality will be maintained by changing any descriptive or demographic information that might identify you or your school. Pseudonyms will be used to identify participants. Data will be stored in a password-protected computer which is stored in a secure location when not in use and only accessible to me. Data will be destroyed after completion of the study.

Withdrawal of participation by the investigator

I may withdraw you from participating in this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so. I may withdraw you from the study to protect your safety, protect others or protect that study itself. You may be withdrawn for any of the following reasons. If at some point during the study I believe that you are experiencing emotional discomforts, I may stop the interview and excuse you from continuing. If at some point during the interview I believe that you are not answering the questions with the seriousness they demand, I may withdraw you from the study. If at some point during the interview you behave in actions or in speech in a manner that is derogatory, or maliciously hurtful to other individuals, I may withdraw you from the study.

If you are withdrawn from the study after it begins, you will still receive the $20 honorarium and you will still be entered to win the Ipad mini.

What are my rights if I take part in this study?

You may withdraw your assent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty or loss of benefits to which you were otherwise entitled.

You can choose whether or not you want to be in this study. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may leave the study at any time without consequences of any kind. You are not waiving any of your legal rights if you choose to be in this research study. You may refuse to answer any questions that you do not want to answer and still remain in the study.

Who can answer questions I might have about this study?

If you have any questions, comments or concerns about the research, you can talk to the one of the researchers.
Gregorio Verbera, Principal Investigator (Ed.D. Candidate, UCLA)
Phone: (562) 292-0034
Email: gverbera@gmail.com
Mailing address: 14028 Halcourt Ave. Norwalk, CA. 90650

Committee Chair: Patricia Gandara, Ph.D
Email address: gandara@gseis.ucla.edu

Committee Co-Chair: Eugene Tucker, Ph.D.
Email address: etucker@ucla.edu
Educational Leadership Program mailing address:
Moore Hall 109, 405 Hilgard, Ave. Los Angeles, CA. 90095-1521
Phone: (310) 206-0558

If you wish to ask questions about your rights as a research participant or if you wish to voice any problems or concerns you may have about the study to someone other than the researchers, please call the Office of the Human Research Protection Program at (310) 825-7122 or write to Office of the Human Research Protection Program, UCLA, 11000 Kinross Avenue, Suite 102, Box 951694, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1694.

SIGNATURE OF STUDY PARTICIPANT

I understand the procedures described above. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

________________________________________
Name of Participant

________________________________________    __________
Signature of Participant                       Date
UNIVERSIDAD DE CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES
“Prueba Piloto” ADOLESCENTES (Edades 13-17) CONSENTIMIENTO PARA PARTICIPAR EN LA INVESTIGACIÓN

El Primer Año: Entendiendo la Transición Académica de los adolescentes recién llegados

Se le pide que participe en la prueba piloto de el protocolo de entrevista de este estudio de investigación realizado por Gregorio Verbera, Ed.D., candidato, patrocinado por Patricia Gándara, Ph.D. y Eugene Tucker, Ph.D. socios de la Escuela de Graduados en Educación y Estudios de Información y el Departamento de Estudios Chicanos de la Universidad de California, Los Angeles.

Usted ha sido seleccionado/a para participar en la prueba de el protocolo de entrevista de este estudio como posible participante en este estudio, ya que satisface algunos pero no todos los requisitos siguientes:
• nací en México
• asistí a la escuela en México
• emigré a los Estados Unidos dentro de los últimos 3 años
• completado por lo menos un año de educación en los Estados Unidos
• están entre las edades de 14 y 20
• actualmente está inscrito como un estudiante de secundaria

Su participación en este estudio no es obligatoria.

¿Por qué se realiza este estudio?

Este estudio se está realizando para explorar si los alumnos inmigrantes están comenzando en buen pasos desde su primer año en la escuela y si el primer año, de hecho, determina para estudiantes inmigrantes su rendimiento académico en años posteriores. Un mejor entendimiento de cómo las escuelas pueden apoyar a los inmigrantes desde el comienzo de su experiencia educativa puede resultar en cambios en cómo las escuelas estructuran su proceso de inducción y apoyan inmigrantes recientes hacia trayectorias educativas positivas.

¿Qué pasará si participo en este estudio?

Tus padres deben consentir en su participación en este estudio. Sin embargo, si tus padres dicen "sí" a tu participación, tu todavía puedes decidir no a participar en este estudio.

Si usted decide voluntariamente participar en este estudio, voy a pedirle que haga lo siguiente:

• completar un cuestionario de múltiple opciones, 8 preguntas en total.
• ser entrevistado acerca de sus experiencias como un estudiante inmigrante, en relación con su primer año escolar en los Estados Unidos.
• El distrito escolar proveerá registros para verificar que usted es elegible para este estudio basado en los criterios enumerados anteriormente.
• El distrito escolar proveerá su expediente académico y se analizará su expediente académico para determinar la suficiencia de créditos.
• Las preguntas de la entrevista por lo general serán sobre cómo considera su primer año de escuela en los Estados Unidos y lo que le parece fue beneficioso para ayudar a tener éxito en la escuela.
• Las entrevistas se llevarán a cabo en la escuela, después de la escuela para evitar perdida de tiempo en clase, durante un día mínimo o un día reducido para evitar su permanencia demasiado tarde después de la salida.
• Las entrevistas se llevarán a cabo en abril y mayo del 2014.
• El cuestionario y entrevistas combinadas tomaran aproximadamente un hora y media para completar.

¿Cuánto tiempo estaré en el estudio de investigación?

Sólo será entrevistado una vez. La entrevista tomará aproximadamente una hora y media. La longitud exacta de la entrevista depende de lo mucho que tiene que decir acerca de las preguntas. Las entrevistas se llevarán a cabo en abril y mayo del 2014.

¿Existen riesgos potenciales o molestias que puedo esperar de este estudio?

No hay riesgos previstos como resultado de su participación en este estudio. Sin embargo, se pueden presentar algunos inconvenientes e incomodidades. Al participar en este estudio, usted tendrá que quedarse después de la escuela para ser entrevistado. Para su comodidad, voy a tratar de programar las entrevistas en los días mínimos o días reducidos de la escuela. Es esencial que las entrevistas se llevan a cabo después de la escuela para que no se pierda tiempo en el aula. En segundo lugar, preguntas de la entrevista son de naturaleza personal, tocando sobre sus experiencias en los Estados Unidos. Al recordar estas experiencias puede provocar reacciones emocionales. Para su comodidad usted tiene la opción de no responder a cualquier pregunta que le haga sentir incómodo o en total dejar la entrevista. Aunque detenga la entrevista seguirá recibiendo el honorario de $ 20 y seguirá siendo elegible para ganar la iPad Mini.

¿Existen beneficios potenciales si participo?

Usted no se beneficiará directamente de su participación en este estudio.

Los resultados de la investigación pueden ayudar a generar una serie de recomendaciones a las escuelas y los distritos para una mejor prestación de servicios y apoyo a los estudiantes inmigrantes durante su primer año en la escuela con el fin de mejorar sus posibilidades de éxito académico a largo plazo. Adicionalmente, los resultados de este estudio ayudarán a los padres de los alumnos inmigrantes entender cómo apoyar a sus hijos/as, incluso desde el hogar, en su transición hacia el sistema escolar estadounidense con el fin de mejorar sus posibilidades de éxito académico.
¿Voy a recibir ningún pago si participo en este estudio?

Recibirán un honorario. Los estudiantes que participan en la entrevista recibirán un honorario de $20. Todos los participantes entrarán en un sorteo para ganar un iPad Mini, con valor estimado de $350.

Sér informació sobre mí y mi participación mantenida confidencial?

Cualquier información que se obtiene en relación con este estudio y que pueda identificarle será confidencial. Las transcripciones de la entrevista serán codificadas con un número de serie para preservar la información confidencial. Sólo yo podré rastrear la transcripción al participante. Las entrevistas se llevarán a cabo en un lugar privado en su escuela. Entrevistas sólo serán audio grabadas con su permiso. Las grabaciones de audio se destruirán después de que se transcriben. Todas las transcripciones serán destruidas al final del estudio.

Se mantendrá la confidencialidad al cambiar cualquier información descriptiva o demográfica que puede identificarlo/a a usted o a su escuela. Los seudónimos serán utilizados para identificar a los participantes. Los datos se almacenaran en un ordenador (file por su título en Ingles) protegido por contraseña que se almacena en un lugar seguro cuando no esté en uso y sólo accesible a mí. Los datos serán destruidas después de la finalización del estudio.

Clausura de participación en el estudio por el investigador

El investigador te puede retirar de la participación en esta investigación si surgen circunstancias que justifiquen hacerlo. Los participantes pueden ser retirados del estudio para proteger su seguridad, proteger a los demás o proteger este mismo estudio. Usted puede ser retirada por alguna de las siguientes razones. Si en algún momento durante el estudio el investigador cree que usted tiene malestares emocionales, puedo detener la entrevista y excusarlo de continuar. Si en algún momento durante la entrevista el investigador cree que no está respondiendo a las preguntas con la seriedad que exigen, es posible que usted sea retirado del estudio. Si en algún momento durante la entrevista se comporta en acciones o en palabra de una manera que es irrespetuosa, o que maliciosamente hace daño a otras personas, es posible que usted sea retirado del estudio.

Si es retirado del estudio después de que comience, usted recibirá el honorario de $ 20 y usted seguirá elegible para el sorteo para ganar el iPad Mini.

¿Cuáles son mis derechos si participo en este estudio?

Usted puede retirar su consentimiento en cualquier momento y dejar de participar sin sanción o pérdida de beneficios a los que tiene derecho.

Usted puede elegir si desea o no participar en este estudio. Si usted es voluntario para participar en este estudio, puede retirarse del estudio en cualquier momento sin ningún
tipo de consecuencias. Usted no renuncia a ninguno de sus derechos legales si decide participar en este estudio de investigación. Usted puede negarse a responder cualquier pregunta que no quiera contestar y aún permanecer en el estudio.

¿Quién puede responder a las preguntas que pueda tener acerca de este estudio?

Si usted tiene alguna pregunta, comentario o inquietud acerca de la investigación, usted puede hablar con uno de los investigadores.

Gregorio Verbera, Investigador Principal (Ed.D. Candidato, UCLA)
Teléfono: (562) 292-0034
Email: gverbera@gmail.com
Dirección postal: 14028 Halcourt Ave. Norwalk, CA. 90650

Presidente del Comité: Patricia Gándara, Ph.D
Dirección de correo electrónico: gandara@gseis.ucla.edu

Copresidente del Comité: Eugene Tucker, Ph.D.
Dirección de correo electrónico: etucker@ucla.edu
Dirección postal: Educational Leadership Program
Moore Hall 109, 405 Hilgard Avenue. Los Angeles, CA. 90095-1521
Teléfono: (310) 206-0558

Si desea hacer preguntas sobre sus derechos como participante en una investigación o si desea expresar cualquier problema o duda que pueda tener sobre el estudio a una persona distinta a los investigadores, por favor llame a la Oficina del Programa de Protección de la Investigación Humana (310) 825-7122 o escribir a la oficina del Programa de Investigación Humana Protección, UCLA, 11000 Kinross Avenue, Suite 102, Caja 951694, Los Angeles, CA desde 90.095 hasta 1.694.

FIRMA DEL PARTICIPANTE DEL ESTUDIO

Entiendo los procedimientos descritos anteriormente. Mis preguntas han sido contestadas a mi satisfacción, y estoy de acuerdo en participar en este estudio. Me han dado una copia de este formulario.

_____________________________________________________
Nombre del Participante

____________________________________________     _________
Firma del participante                                                               Fecha
Appendix VII

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LOS ANGELES
STUDY INFORMATION SHEET

The First Year: Understanding Newcomer Adolescents' Academic Transition

Gregorio Verbera, Ed.D. Candidate, sponsored by Patricia Gandara, Ph.D. and Eugene Tucker, Ph.D. and associates from the Graduate School of Education and Information Studies and the Department of Chicano Studies, at the University of California, Los Angeles is conducting a research study.

You were selected as a possible participant in this study because your school Principal has identified you as a possible Key Informant. Key Informants in this study are defined as school personnel who have extensive knowledge about the school processes for enrolling, assessing, programming, monitoring and the systems in place for supporting the academic success of immigrant students. Your participation in this research study is voluntary.

Why is this study being done?

This study is being done to explore whether immigrant students are getting off to the right start during their first year in school and whether that first year in fact determines how immigrant students perform in later years. A better understanding of how schools can support immigrants from the beginning of their educational experience can lead to changes in how schools structure their induction process and support newcomers towards positive educational trajectories.

What will happen if I take part in this research study?

If you volunteer to participate in this study, the researcher will ask you to do the following:

- Be interviewed once.
- The interview will take place at your school site in a private location.
- The interview will take approximately one hour.
- The interview will include mostly open-ended questions regarding the processes in place at your school for enrolling, assessing, programming, monitoring and supporting newcomer immigrant students.

How long will I be in the research study?

Participation will take a total of about one hour. Depending on the length of your responses the interview may take longer. The interviews will take place in April and May of 2014.
Are there any potential risks or discomforts that I can expect from this study?

There are no anticipated risks from your participation in this study. However, a few inconveniences can be expected. The interviews will be held during non-working hours. We will have to calendar the interviews for before school hours or after school hours to prevent you from your work or from infringing on your work.

Are there any potential benefits if I participate?

You will not benefit directly from your participation in this study.

The results of the research may help generate a set of recommendations to schools and districts for better servicing and supporting immigrant students during their first year in school in order to improve their chances of academic success in the long run. The results of this study will also help parents of immigrant students understand how to support their child, even from the home, to transition to the American school system in order to improve their chances of academic success.

Will I be paid for participating?

You will receive a $50 gift-card to your choice of a restaurant or to Amazon.com. Once you’ve decided to be interviewed, if you decline to answer questions or withdraw from the study, you remain eligible for the $50 gift-card.

Will information about me and my participation be kept confidential?

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can identify you will remain confidential. It will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law.

The transcripts from the interview will be coded with a serial number to preserve confidentiality. Only I will be able to trace the transcript to the participant. Interviews will take place in a private location at your school. Interviews will only be audio recorded with your permission. Audio recordings will be destroyed after they are transcribed. All transcripts will be destroyed at the conclusion of the study.

Confidentiality will be maintained by changing any descriptive or demographic information that might identify you or your school. Pseudonyms will be used to identify participants. Data will be stored in a password-protected computer which is stored in a secure location when not in use and only accessible to me. Data will be destroyed after completion of the study.

What are my rights if I take part in this study?
• You can choose whether or not you want to be in this study, and you may withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time.
• Whatever decision you make, there will be no penalty to you, and no loss of benefits to which you were otherwise entitled.
• You may refuse to answer any questions that you do not want to answer and still remain in the study.

Who can I contact if I have questions about this study?

• The research team:
  If you have any questions, comments or concerns about the research, you can talk to one of the researchers. Please contact:

  Gregorio Verbera, Principal Investigator (Ed.D. Candidate, UCLA)
  Phone: (562) 292-0034
  Email: gverbera@gmail.com
  Mailing address: 14028 Halcourt Ave. Norwalk, CA. 90650

  Committee Chair: Patricia Gandara, Ph.D
  Email address: gandara@gseis.ucla.edu

  Committee Co-Chair: Eugene Tucker, Ph.D.
  Email address: etucker@ucla.edu

  Educational Leadership Program mailing address:
  Moore Hall 109, 405 Hilgard, Ave. Los Angeles, CA. 90095-1521
  Phone: (310) 206-0558

• UCLA Office of the Human Research Protection Program (OHRPP):
  If you have questions about your rights while taking part in this study, or you have concerns or suggestions and you want to talk to someone other than the researchers about the study, please call the OHRPP at (310) 825-7122 or write to:

  UCLA Office of the Human Research Protection Program
  11000 Kimross Avenue, Suite 211, Box 951694
  Los Angeles, CA 90095-1694
Appendix VIII

University of California, Los Angeles

CONSENT of Key Informant TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH
(Pilot of Interview Protocol)

The First Year: Understanding Newcomer Adolescents' Academic Transition

Gregorio Verbera, Ed.D. Candidate, sponsored by Patricia Gandara, Ph.D. and Eugene Tucker, Ph.D. and associates from the Graduate School of Education and Information Studies and the Department of Chicano Studies, at the University of California, Los Angeles is conducting a research study.

You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you meet the definition of a Key Informant as defined in this study, yet data from this study is not being collected from your school. Key Informants in this study are defined as school personnel who have extensive knowledge about the school processes for enrolling, assessing, programming, monitoring and the systems in place for supporting the academic success of immigrant students. Your participation in this research study is voluntary.

Why is this study being done?

This study is being done to explore whether immigrant students are getting off to the right start during their first year in school and whether that first year in fact determines how immigrant students perform in later years. A better understanding of how schools can support immigrants from the beginning of their educational experience can lead to changes in how schools structure their induction process and support newcomer immigrants towards positive educational trajectories.

What will happen if I take part in this research study?

If you volunteer to participate in this study, the researcher will ask you to do the following:

- Be interviewed once.
- The interview will take place at your school site in a private location.
- The interview will take approximately one hour.
- The interview will include mostly open-ended questions regarding the processes in place at your school for enrolling, assessing, programming, monitoring and supporting newcomer immigrant students.
- The pilot interview serves as feedback to the PI to make modifications in the questions and sequencing of questions to improve the validity of the data derived from interviews.
How long will I be in the research study?

Participation will take a total of about one hour. Depending on the length of your responses the interview may take longer. The interviews will take place in April and May of 2014.

Are there any potential risks or discomforts that I can expect from this study?

There are no anticipated risks from your participation in this study. However, a few inconveniences can be expected. The interviews will be held during non-working hours. We will have to calendar the interviews for before school hours or after school hours to prevent you from your work or from infringing on your work.

Are there any potential benefits if I participate?

You will not benefit directly from your participation in this study.

The pilot interview serves as feedback to the PI to make modifications in the questions and sequencing of questions to improve the validity of the data derived from interviews.

The results of the research may help generate a set of recommendations to schools and districts for better servicing and supporting immigrant students during their first year in school in order to improve their chances of academic success in the long run. The results of this study will also help parents of immigrant students understand how to support their child, even from the home, to transition to the American school system in order to improve their chances of academic success.

Will I be paid for participating?

You will receive a $50 gift-card to your choice of a restaurant or to Amazon.com. Once you’ve decided to be interviewed, if you decline to answer questions or withdraw from the study, you remain eligible for the $50 gift-card.

Will information about me and my participation be kept confidential?

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can identify you will remain confidential. It will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law.

The transcripts from the interview will be coded with a serial number to preserve confidentiality. Only I will be able to trace the transcript to the participant. Interviews will take place in a private location at your school. Interviews will only be audio recorded with your permission. Audio recordings will be destroyed after they are transcribed. All transcripts will be destroyed at the conclusion of the study.

Confidentiality will be maintained by changing any descriptive or demographic information that might identify you or your school. Pseudonyms will be used to identify participants. Data will be stored in a password-protected computer which is stored in a
secure location when not in use and only accessible to me. Data will be destroyed after completion of the study.

What are my rights if I take part in this study?

- You can choose whether or not you want to be in this study, and you may withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time.
- Whatever decision you make, there will be no penalty to you, and no loss of benefits to which you were otherwise entitled.
- You may refuse to answer any questions that you do not want to answer and still remain in the study.

Who can I contact if I have questions about this study?

- **The research team:**
  If you have any questions, comments or concerns about the research, you can talk to one of the researchers. Please contact:

  Gregorio Verbera, Principal Investigator (Ed.D. Candidate, UCLA)
  **Phone:** (562) 292-0034
  **Email:** gverbera@gmail.com
  **Mailing address:** 14028 Halcourt Ave. Norwalk, CA. 90650

  **Committee Chair:** Patricia Gandara, Ph.D
  **Email address:** gandara@gseis.ucla.edu

  **Committee Co-Chair:** Eugene Tucker, Ph.D.
  **Email address:** etucker@ucla.edu
  **Educational Leadership Program mailing address:**
  Moore Hall 109, 405 Hilgard, Ave. Los Angeles, CA. 90095-1521
  **Phone:** (310) 206-0558

- **UCLA Office of the Human Research Protection Program (OHRPP):**
  If you have questions about your rights while taking part in this study, or you have concerns or suggestions and you want to talk to someone other than the researchers about the study, please call the OHRPP at (310) 825-7122 or write to:

  UCLA Office of the Human Research Protection Program
  11000 Kinross Avenue, Suite 211, Box 951694
  Los Angeles, CA 90095-1694

  You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.
Appendix IX

IS THIS YOU?

* Born in Mexico?
* Attended school in Mexico?
* Migrated to the United States within the last 3 years?
* Completed at least one year of schooling in the United States
* Between the ages of 14 and 20?

If this is you, you qualify to participate in a UCLA research study being conducted here at your school. The purpose of the study is to learn about your experiences during your first year in the US, and to learn what was helpful and what wasn’t helpful to you in school in order learn how to better help recently arrived immigrant students. If you participate you will be ask questions about your journey to this country, about your classes, your friends, your teachers and your future goals and aspirations.

Participants who participate will be interviewed. Participants will receive $20 compensation for their time and be entered into a drawing for an Ipad Mini.

If you are interested in participating in this study and you meet the requirements listed above, go to Room __________ and ask for Mr. / Ms. _________________ and pick up an Assent form and a Parent Permission form. You will need to submit both of these forms to Room__________ by April 15, 2014.
¿Tu Eres Esta Persona?

* Nacido/a en México?
* Asistió a la escuela en México?
* Migrado a los Estados Unidos dentro de los últimos 3 años?
* Completado por lo menos un año de estudios en los Estados Unidos
* Entre las edades de 14 y 20?

Si tu eres esta persona, tu eres elegible para participar en un estudio de investigación de la universidad UCLA que se está llevando a cabo aquí en tu escuela. El propósito del estudio es aprender acerca de tus experiencias durante tu primer año en los EE.UU., y para aprender lo que es útil y lo que no es útil para ti en la escuela y para aprender cómo ayudar mejor a los estudiantes inmigrantes recién llegados. Si participas se te harán preguntas sobre tu jornada a este país, acerca de tus clases, tus amigo/as, tus profesores y tus metas y aspiraciones futuras.

Los estudiantes que participen serán entrevistados. Los participantes recibirán 20 dólares de compensación por su tiempo y serán entrados en un sorteo de un iPad Mini.

Si estás interesado/a en participar en este estudio y cumbles con los requisitos mencionados anteriormente, ve al Salón __________ y pregunte por el Sr. / Sra. __________________________ y recoge un formulario de Consentimiento y un formulario de Permiso de los Padres. Tu tendrás que presentar ambas formas al Salón __________ antes del 15 de abril del 2014.
Appendix X

Public Address Announcement to Recruit Participants

Good morning students, is this you? Were you born in Mexico? Did you attend school in Mexico? Did you move to the US in the last three years? Have you completed at least one year of schooling in the US? Are you between 14 and 20 years old? If this is you, we are looking for you to participate in a study. Students who participate in the study will be interviewed. Participants will receive $20 compensation for their time and be entered into a drawing for an Ipad Mini. If you are interested in participating in this study and you answered yes to all these questions go to Room __________ by April 15, 2014 to pick up a parent permission form and an assent form. These documents will provide all the details of the study.
Appendix XI

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES

ADOLESCENT (Ages 13-17) ASSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

The First Year: Understanding Newcomer Adolescents' Academic Transition

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Gregorio Verbera, Ed.D. Candidate, sponsored by Patricia Gandara, Ph.D. and Eugene Tucker, Ph.D. and associates from the Graduate School of Education and Information Studies and the Department of Chicano Studies, at the University of California, Los Angeles.

You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you
• Were born in Mexico
• Attended school in Mexico
• Migrated to the United States within the last 3 years
• Completed at least one year of schooling in the United States
• Are between the ages of 14 and 20
• Are currently enrolled as a high school student

Your participation in this research study is voluntary.

Why is this study being done?

This study is being done to explore whether immigrant students are getting off to the right start during their first year in school and whether that first year in fact determines how immigrant students perform in later years. A better understanding of how schools can support immigrants from the beginning of their educational experience can lead to changes in how schools structure their induction process and support new comer immigrants towards positive educational trajectories.

What will happen if I take part in this research study?

Your parents will have to give permission for you to participate in this study. But even if your parents say “yes” you can still decide not to do this study.

If you volunteer to participate in this study, I will ask you to do the following:
• Complete a multiple-choice questionnaire, 8 questions total.
• Be interviewed about your experiences as an immigrant student, relating to your first year of school in the United States.
• The school district will provide records to verify that you are eligible for this study based on the criteria listed above.
• The school district will provide your transcripts and your transcripts will be analyzed for credit sufficiency.
• The interview questions in general will be about how you see your first year of school in the United States and what you think was beneficial in helping you be successful in school.
• The interviews will take place at your school, after school to avoid missing classroom time, during a minimum or shortened school day to avoid keeping you too late after dismissal.
• The interviews will be conducted in April and May of 2014.
• The questionnaire and interviews combined interviews will take approximately one and a half hour to complete.

**How long will I be in the research study?**

You will only be interviewed once. The interviews will take a total of about one and a half hour. The exact length of the interviews depends on how much you have to say about the questions I ask. The interviews will take place in April and May of 2014.

**Are there any potential risks or discomforts that I can expect from this study?**

There are no anticipated risks to you as a result of your participation in this study. However, a few inconveniences and discomforts may occur. By participating in this study, you will have to stay after school to be interviewed. For your convenience, I will try to schedule the interviews on minimum or shortened school days. It is essential that the interviews take place after school so that you do not miss classroom time. Secondly, interview questions are personal in nature, touching upon your experiences in the United States. Recalling these experiences may cause emotional reactions. For your own comfort you have the option to not answer any question that makes you feel uncomfortable or to stop the interview. If you stop the interview you will still receive the $20 honorarium and you will still be entered to win the Ipad Mini.

**Are there any potential benefits if I participate?**

You will not directly benefit from your participation in this study.

The results of the research may help generate a set of recommendations to schools and districts for better servicing and supporting immigrant students during their first year in school in order to improve their chances of academic success in the long run. The results of this study will also help parents of immigrant students understand how to support their child, even from the home, to transition to the American school system in order to improve their chances of academic success.

**Will I receive any payment if I participate in this study?**

Students who participate in the interview will receive an honorarium of $20. All participants will also be entered into a drawing to win an IPad Mini, estimated value $350.

**Will information about me and my participation be kept confidential?**
Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can identify you will remain confidential. The transcripts from the interview will be coded with a serial number to preserve confidentiality. Only I will be able to trace the transcript to the participant. Interviews will take place in a private location at your school. Interviews will only be audio recorded with your permission. Audio recordings will be destroyed after they are transcribed. All transcripts will be destroyed at the conclusion of the study.

Confidentiality will be maintained by changing any descriptive or demographic information that might identify you or your school. Pseudonyms will be used to identify participants. Data will be stored in a password-protected computer which is stored in a secure location when not in use and only accessible to me. Data will be destroyed after completion of the study.

**Withdrawal of participation by the investigator**

I may withdraw you from participating in this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so. I may withdraw you from the study to protect your safety, protect others or protect that study itself. You may be withdrawn for any of the following reasons. If at some point during the study I believe that you are experiencing emotional discomforts, I may stop the interview and excuse you from continuing. If at some point during the interview I believe that you are not answering the questions with the seriousness they demand, I may withdraw you from the study. If at some point during the interview you behave in actions or in speech in a manner that is derogatory, or maliciously hurtful to other individuals, I may withdraw you from the study.

If you are withdrawn from the study after it begins, you will still receive the $20 honorarium and you will still be entered to win the Ipad mini.

**What are my rights if I take part in this study?**

You may withdraw your assent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty or loss of benefits to which you were otherwise entitled.

You can choose whether or not you want to be in this study. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may leave the study at any time without consequences of any kind. You are not waiving any of your legal rights if you choose to be in this research study. You may refuse to answer any questions that you do not want to answer and still remain in the study.

**Who can answer questions I might have about this study?**

If you have any questions, comments or concerns about the research, you can talk to the one of the researchers.

Gregorio Verbera, Principal Investigator (Ed.D. Candidate, UCLA)
If you wish to ask questions about your rights as a research participant or if you wish to voice any problems or concerns you may have about the study to someone other than the researchers, please call the Office of the Human Research Protection Program at (310) 825-7122 or write to Office of the Human Research Protection Program, UCLA, 11000 Kinross Avenue, Suite 102, Box 951694, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1694.

SIGNATURE OF STUDY PARTICIPANT

I understand the procedures described above. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

______________________________
Name of Participant

______________________________    __________________________
Signature of Participant                  Date
UNIVERSIDAD DE CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES
ADOLESCENTES (Edades 13-17) CONSENTIMIENTO PARA PARTICIPAR EN LA INVESTIGACIÓN

El Primer Año: Entendiendo la Transición Académica de los adolescentes recién llegados

Se le pide que participe en un estudio de investigación realizado por Gregorio Verbera, Ed.D., candidato, patrocinado por Patricia Gándara, Ph.D. y Eugene Tucker, Ph.D. socios de la Escuela de Graduados en Educación y Estudios de Información y el Departamento de Estudios Chicanos de la Universidad de California, Los Angeles.

Usted ha sido seleccionado/a como posible participante en este estudio, ya que
• nacido en México
• asistió a la escuela en México
• emigró a los Estados Unidos dentro de los últimos 3 años
• completado por lo menos un año de educación en los Estados Unidos
• están entre las edades de 14 y 20
• actualmente está inscrito como un estudiante de secundaria

Su participación en este estudio no es obligatoria.

¿Por qué se realiza este estudio?

Este estudio se está realizando para explorar si los alumnos inmigrantes están comenzando en buen pasos desde su primer año en la escuela y si el primer año, de hecho, determina para estudiantes inmigrantes su rendimiento académico en años posteriores. Un mejor entendimiento de cómo las escuelas pueden apoyar a los inmigrantes desde el comienzo de su experiencia educativa puede resultar en cambios en cómo las escuelas estructuran su proceso de inducción y apoyan inmigrantes recientes hacia trayectorias educativas positivas.

¿Qué pasará si participo en este estudio?

Tus padres deben consentir en su participación en este estudio. Sin embargo, si tus padres dicen "sí" a tu participación, tu todavía puedes decidir no a participar en este estudio.

Si usted decide voluntariamente participar en este estudio, voy a pedirle que haga lo siguiente:

• completar un cuestionario de múltiple opciones, 8 preguntas en total.
• ser entrevistado acerca de sus experiencias como un estudiante inmigrante, en relación con su primer año escolar en los Estados Unidos.
• El distrito escolar proveerá registros para verificar que usted es elegible para este estudio basado en los criterios enumerados anteriormente.
• El distrito escolar proveerá su expediente académico y se analizará su expediente académico para determinar la suficiencia de créditos.
• Las preguntas de la entrevista por lo general serán sobre cómo considera su primer año de escuela en los Estados Unidos y lo que le parece fue beneficioso para ayudar a tener éxito en la escuela.
• Las entrevistas se llevarán a cabo en la escuela, después de la escuela para evitar pérdida de tiempo en clase, durante un día mínimo o un día reducido para evitar su permanencia demasiado tarde después de la salida.
• Las entrevistas se llevarán a cabo en abril y mayo del 2014.
• El cuestionario y entrevistas combinadas tomarán aproximadamente un hora y media para completar.

¿Cuánto tiempo estaré en el estudio de investigación?

Sólo será entrevistado una vez. La entrevista tomara aproximadamente una hora y media. La longitud exacta de la entrevista depende de lo mucho que tiene que decir acerca de las preguntas. Las entrevistas se llevarán acabo en abril y mayo del 2014.

¿Existen riesgos potenciales o molestias que puedo esperar de este estudio?

No hay riesgos previstos como resultado de su participación en este estudio. Sin embargo, se pueden presentar algunos inconvenientes e incomodidades. Al participar en este estudio, usted tendrá que quedarse después de la escuela para ser entrevistados. Para su comodidad, voy a tratar de programar las entrevistas en los días mínimos o días reducidos de la escuela. Es esencial que las entrevistas se llevan a cabo después de la escuela para que no se pierda tiempo en el aula. En segundo lugar, preguntas de la entrevista son de naturaleza personal, tocando sobre sus experiencias en los Estados Unidos. Al recordar estas experiencias puede provocar reacciones emocionales. Para su comodidad usted tiene la opción de no responder a cualquier pregunta que le haga sentir incómodo o en total dejar la entrevista. Aunque detenga la entrevista seguirá recibiendo el honorario de $ 20 y seguirá siendo elegible para ganar la iPad Mini.

¿Existen beneficios potenciales si participo?

Usted no se beneficiará directamente de su participación en este estudio.

Los resultados de la investigación pueden ayudar a generar una serie de recomendaciones a las escuelas y los distritos para una mejor prestación de servicios y apoyo a los estudiantes inmigrantes durante su primer año en la escuela con el fin de mejorar sus posibilidades de éxito académico a largo plazo. Adicionalmente, los resultados de este estudio ayudarán a los padres de los alumnos inmigrantes entender cómo apoyar a sus hijos/as, incluso desde el hogar, en su transición hacia el sistema escolar estadounidense con el fin de mejorar sus posibilidades de éxito académico.

¿Voy a recibir ningún pago si participo en este estudio?
Recibirán un honorario. Los estudiantes que participan en la entrevista recibirán un honorario de $20. Todos los participantes entrarán en un sorteo para ganar un iPad Mini, con valor estimado de $350.

Será información sobre mí y mi participación mantenida confidencial?

Cualquier información que se obtiene en relación con este estudio y que pueda identificarle será confidencial. Las transcripciones de la entrevista serán codificadas con un número de serie para preservar la información confidencial. Sólo yo podrá rastrear la transcripción al participante. Las entrevistas se llevarán a cabo en un lugar privado en su escuela. Entrevistas sólo serán audio grabadas con su permiso. Las grabaciones de audio se destruirán después de que se transcriben. Todas las transcripciones serán destruidas al final del estudio.

Se mantendrá la confidencialidad al cambiar cualquier información descriptiva o demográfica que puede identificarlo/a a usted o a su escuela. Los seudónimos serán utilizados para identificar a los participantes. Los datos se almacenaran en un ordenador (file por su título en Ingles) protegido por contraseña que se almacena en un lugar seguro cuando no esté en uso y sólo accesible a mí. Los datos serán destruidos después de la finalización del estudio.

Clausura de participación en el estudio por el investigador

El investigador te puede retirar de la participación en esta investigación si surgen circunstancias que justifiquen hacerlo. Los participantes pueden ser retirados del estudio para proteger su seguridad, proteger a los demás o proteger este mismo estudio. Usted puede ser retirada por alguna de las siguientes razones. Si en algún momento durante el estudio el investigador cree que usted tiene malestares emocionales, puedo detener la entrevista y excusarlo de continuar. Si en algún momento durante la entrevista el investigador cree que no está respondiendo a las preguntas con la seriedad que exigen, es posible que usted sea retirado del estudio. Si en algún momento durante la entrevista se comporta en acciones o en palabra de una manera que es irrespetuosa, o que maliciosamente hace daño a otras personas, es posible que usted sea retirado del estudio.

Si es retirado del estudio después de que comience, usted recibirá el honorario de $ 20 y usted seguirá elegible para el sorteo para ganar el iPad Mini.

¿Cuáles son mis derechos si participo en este estudio?

Usted puede retirar su consentimiento en cualquier momento y dejar de participar sin sanción o pérdida de beneficios a los que tiene derecho.

Usted puede elegir si desea o no participar en este estudio. Si usted es voluntario para participar en este estudio, puede retirarse del estudio en cualquier momento sin ningún tipo de consecuencias. Usted no renuncia a ninguno de sus derechos legales si decide
participar en este estudio de investigación. Usted puede negarse a responder cualquier pregunta que no quiera contestar y aún permanecer en el estudio.

¿Quién puede responder a las preguntas que pueda tener acerca de este estudio?

Si usted tiene alguna pregunta, comentario o inquietud acerca de la investigación, usted puede hablar con uno de los investigadores.

Gregorio Verbera, Investigador Principal (Ed.D. Candidato, UCLA)
Teléfono: (562) 292-0034
Email: gverbera@gmail.com
Dirección postal: 14028 Halcourt Ave. Norwalk, CA. 90650

Presidente del Comité: Patricia Gándara, Ph.D
Dirección de correo electrónico: gandara@gseis.ucla.edu

Copresidente del Comité: Eugene Tucker, Ph.D.
Dirección de correo electrónico: etucker@ucla.edu
Dirección postal: Educational Leadership Program
Moore Hall 109, 405 Hilgard Avenue. Los Angeles, CA. 90095-1521
Teléfono: (310) 206-0558

Si desea hacer preguntas sobre sus derechos como participante en una investigación o si desea expresar cualquier problema o duda que pueda tener sobre el estudio a una persona distinta a los investigadores, por favor llame a la Oficina del Programa de Protección de la Investigación Humana (310) 825-7122 o escribir a la oficina del Programa de Investigación Humana Protección, UCLA, 11000 Kinross Avenue, Suite 102, Caja 951694, Los Angeles, CA desde 90.095 hasta 1.694.

FIRMA DEL PARTICIPANTE DEL ESTUDIO

Entiendo los procedimientos descritos anteriormente. Mis preguntas han sido contestadas a mi satisfacción, y estoy de acuerdo en participar en este estudio. Me han dado una copia de este formulario.

________________________________________________________________________

Nombre del Participante

________________________________________________________________________

Firma del participante                     Fecha
Appendix XII

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES

“Pilot Test” ADOLESCENT (Ages 13-17) ASSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

The First Year: Understanding Newcomer Adolescents' Academic Transition

You are asked to participate in the pilot test of the interview protocol for a research study conducted by Gregorio Verbera, Ed.D. Candidate, sponsored by Patricia Gandara, Ph.D. and Eugene Tucker, Ph.D. and associates from the Graduate School of Education and Information Studies and the Department of Chicano Studies, at the University of California, Los Angeles.

You were selected as a possible participant in this pilot test of the interview protocol for this study because you meet some but not all of the criteria below:

• Were born in Mexico
• Attended school in Mexico
• Migrated to the United States within the last 3 years
• Completed at least one year of schooling in the United States
• Are between the ages of 14 and 20
• Are currently enrolled as a high school student

Your participation in this research study is voluntary.

Why is this study being done?

This study is being done to explore whether immigrant students are getting off to the right start during their first year in school and whether that first year in fact determines how immigrant students perform in later years. A better understanding of how schools can support immigrants from the beginning of their educational experience can lead to changes in how schools structure their induction process and support new comer immigrants towards positive educational trajectories.

What will happen if I take part in this research study?

Your parents will have to give permission for you to participate in this study. But even if your parents say “yes” you can still decide not to do this study.

If you volunteer to participate in this study, I will ask you to do the following:

• Complete a multiple-choice questionnaire, 8 questions total.
• Be interviewed about your experiences as an immigrant student, relating to your first year of school in the United States.
• The school district will provide records to verify that you are eligible for this study based on the criteria listed above.
• The school district will provide your transcripts and your transcripts will be analyzed for credit sufficiency.
• The interview questions in general will be about how you see your first year of school in the United States and what you think was beneficial in helping you be successful in school.
• The interviews will take place at your school, after school to avoid missing classroom time, during a minimum or shortened school day to avoid keeping you too late after dismissal.
  • The interviews will be conducted in April and May of 2014.
• The questionnaire and interviews combined interviews will take approximately one and a half hour to complete.

How long will I be in the research study?

You will only be interviewed once. The interviews will take a total of about one and a half hour. The exact length of the interviews depends on how much you have to say about the questions I ask. The interviews will take place in April and May of 2014.

Are there any potential risks or discomforts that I can expect from this study?

There are no anticipated risks to you as a result of your participation in this study. However, a few inconveniences and discomforts may occur. By participating in this study, you will have to stay after school to be interviewed. For your convenience, I will try to schedule the interviews on minimum or shortened school days. It is essential that the interviews take place after school so that you do not miss classroom time. Secondly, interview questions are personal in nature, touching upon your experiences in the United States. Recalling these experiences may cause emotional reactions. For your own comfort you have the option to not answer any question that makes you feel uncomfortable or to stop the interview. If you stop the interview you will still receive the $20 honorarium and you will still be entered to win the Ipad Mini.

Are there any potential benefits if I participate?

You will not directly benefit from your participation in this study.

The results of the research may help generate a set of recommendations to schools and districts for better servicing and supporting immigrant students during their first year in school in order to improve their chances of academic success in the long run. The results of this study will also help parents of immigrant students understand how to support their child, even from the home, to transition to the American school system in order to improve their chances of academic success.

Will I receive any payment if I participate in this study?

Students who participate in the interview will receive an honorarium of $20. All participants will also be entered into a drawing to win an IPad Mini, estimated value $350.
Will information about me and my participation be kept confidential?

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can identify you will remain confidential. The transcripts from the interview will be coded with a serial number to preserve confidentiality. Only I will be able to trace the transcript to the participant. Interviews will take place in a private location at your school. Interviews will only be audio recorded with your permission. Audio recordings will be destroyed after they are transcribed. All transcripts will be destroyed at the conclusion of the study.

Confidentiality will be maintained by changing any descriptive or demographic information that might identify you or your school. Pseudonyms will be used to identify participants. Data will be stored in a password-protected computer which is stored in a secure location when not in use and only accessible to me. Data will be destroyed after completion of the study.

Withdrawal of participation by the investigator

I may withdraw you from participating in this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so. I may withdraw you from the study to protect your safety, protect others or protect that study itself. You may be withdrawn for any of the following reasons. If at some point during the study I believe that you are experiencing emotional discomforts, I may stop the interview and excuse you from continuing. If at some point during the interview I believe that you are not answering the questions with the seriousness they demand, I may withdraw you from the study. If at some point during the interview you behave in actions or in speech in a manner that is derogatory, or maliciously hurtful to other individuals, I may withdraw you from the study.

If you are withdrawn from the study after it begins, you will still receive the $20 honorarium and you will still be entered to win the Ipad mini.

What are my rights if I take part in this study?

You may withdraw your assent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty or loss of benefits to which you were otherwise entitled.

You can choose whether or not you want to be in this study. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may leave the study at any time without consequences of any kind. You are not waiving any of your legal rights if you choose to be in this research study. You may refuse to answer any questions that you do not want to answer and still remain in the study.

Who can answer questions I might have about this study?

If you have any questions, comments or concerns about the research, you can talk to the one of the researchers.
Gregorio Verbera, Principal Investigator (Ed.D. Candidate, UCLA)
Phone: (562) 292-0034
Email: gverbera@gmail.com
Mailing address: 14028 Halcourt Ave. Norwalk, CA. 90650

Committee Chair: Patricia Gandara, Ph.D
Email address: gandara@gseis.ucla.edu

Committee Co-Chair: Eugene Tucker, Ph.D.
Email address: etucker@ucla.edu

Educational Leadership Program mailing address:
Moore Hall 109, 405 Hilgard, Ave. Los Angeles, CA. 90095-1521
Phone: (310) 206-0558

If you wish to ask questions about your rights as a research participant or if you wish to voice any problems or concerns you may have about the study to someone other than the researchers, please call the Office of the Human Research Protection Program at (310) 825-7122 or write to Office of the Human Research Protection Program, UCLA, 11000 Kinross Avenue, Suite 102, Box 951694, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1694.

SIGNATURE OF STUDY PARTICIPANT

I understand the procedures described above. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

________________________________________
Name of Participant

________________________________________   ______________________________
Signature of Participant                       Date
UNIVERSIDAD DE CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES
“Prueba Piloto” ADOLESCENTES (Edades 13-17) CONSENTIMIENTO PARA PARTICIPAR EN LA INVESTIGACIÓN

El Primer Año: Entendiendo la Transición Académica de los adolescentes recién llegados

Se le pide que participe en la prueba piloto de el protocolo de entrevista de este estudio de investigación realizado por Gregorio Verbera, Ed.D., candidato, patrocinado por Patricia Gándara, Ph.D. y Eugene Tucker, Ph.D. socios de la Escuela de Graduados en Educación y Estudios de Información y el Departamento de Estudios Chicanos de la Universidad de California, Los Angeles.

Usted ha sido seleccionado/a para participar en la prueba de el protocolo de entrevista de este estudio como posible participante en este estudio, ya que satisface algunos pero no todos los requisitos siguientes:
• nació en México
• asistió a la escuela en México
• emigró a los Estados Unidos dentro de los últimos 3 años
• completado por lo menos un año de educación en los Estados Unidos
• están entre las edades de 14 y 20
• actualmente está inscrito como un estudiante de secundaria

Su participación en este estudio no es obligatoria.

¿Por qué se realiza este estudio?

Este estudio se está realizando para explorar si los alumnos inmigrantes están comenzando en buen pasos desde su primer año en la escuela y si el primer año, de hecho, determina para estudiantes inmigrantes su rendimiento académico en años posteriores. Un mejor entendimiento de cómo las escuelas pueden apoyar a los inmigrantes desde el comienzo de su experiencia educativa puede resultar en cambios en cómo las escuelas estructuran su proceso de inducción y apoyan inmigrantes recientes hacia trayectorias educativas positivas.

¿Qué pasará si participo en este estudio?

Tus padres deben consentir en su participación en este estudio. Sin embargo, si tus padres dicen "sí" a tu participación, tu todavía puedes decidir no a participar en este estudio.

Si usted decide voluntariamente participar en este estudio, voy a pedirle que haga lo siguiente:

• completar un cuestionario de múltiple opciones, 8 preguntas en total.
• ser entrevistado acerca de sus experiencias como un estudiante inmigrante, en relación con su primer año escolar en los Estados Unidos.
• El distrito escolar proveerá registros para verificar que usted es elegible para este estudio basado en los criterios enumerados anteriormente.
• El distrito escolar proveerá su expediente académico y se analizará su expediente académico para determinar la suficiencia de créditos.
• Las preguntas de la entrevista por lo general serán sobre cómo considera su primer año de escuela en los Estados Unidos y lo que le parece fue beneficioso para ayudar a tener éxito en la escuela.
• Las entrevistas se llevarán a cabo en la escuela, después de la escuela para evitar perdida de tiempo en clase, durante un día mínimo o un día reducido para evitar su permanencia demasiado tarde después de la salida.
• Las entrevistas se llevarán a cabo en abril y mayo del 2014.
• El cuestionario y entrevistas combinadas tomaran aproximadamente un hora y media para completar.

¿Cuánto tiempo estaré en el estudio de investigación?

Sólo será entrevistado una vez. La entrevista tomará aproximadamente una hora y media. La longitud exacta de la entrevista depende de lo mucho que tiene que decir acerca de las preguntas. Las entrevistas se llevarán a cabo en abril y mayo del 2014.

¿Existen riesgos potenciales o molestias que puedo esperar de este estudio?

No hay riesgos previstos como resultado de su participación en este estudio. Sin embargo, se pueden presentar algunos inconvenientes e incomodidades. Al participar en este estudio, usted tendrá que quedarse después de la escuela para ser entrevistados. Para su comodidad, voy a tratar de programar las entrevistas en los días mínimos o días reducidos de la escuela. Es esencial que las entrevistas se llevan a cabo después de la escuela para que no se pierda tiempo en el aula. En segundo lugar, preguntas de la entrevista son de naturaleza personal, tocando sobre sus experiencias en los Estados Unidos. Al recordar estas experiencias puede provocar reacciones emocionales. Para su comodidad usted tiene la opción de no responder a cualquier pregunta que le haga sentir incómodo o en total dejar la entrevista. Aunque detenga la entrevista seguirá recibiendo el honorario de $ 20 y seguirá siendo elegible para ganar la iPad Mini.

¿Existen beneficios potenciales si participo?

Usted no se beneficiará directamente de su participación en este estudio.

Los resultados de la investigación pueden ayudar a generar una serie de recomendaciones a las escuelas y los distritos para una mejor prestación de servicios y apoyo a los estudiantes inmigrantes durante su primer año en la escuela con el fin de mejorar sus posibilidades de éxito académico a largo plazo. Adicionalmente, los resultados de este estudio ayudarán a los padres de los alumnos inmigrantes entender cómo apoyar a sus hijos/as, incluso desde el hogar, en su transición hacia el sistema escolar estadounidense con el fin de mejorar sus posibilidades de éxito académico.
¿Voy a recibir ningún pago si participo en este estudio?

Recibirán un honorario. Los estudiantes que participan en la entrevista recibirán un honorario de $20. Todos los participantes entrarán en un sorteo para ganar un iPad Mini, con valor estimado de $350.

Será información sobre mí y mi participación mantenida confidencial?

Cualquier información que se obtiene en relación con este estudio y que pueda identificarle será confidencial. Las transcripciones de la entrevista serán codificadas con un número de serie para preservar la información confidencial. Sólo yo podré rastrear la transcripción al participante. Las entrevistas se llevarán a cabo en un lugar privado en su escuela. Entrevistas sólo serán audio grabadas con su permiso. Las grabaciones de audio se destruirán después de que se transcriben. Todas las transcripciones serán destruidas al final del estudio.

Se mantendrá la confidencialidad al cambiar cualquier información descriptiva o demográfica que pueda identificarlo/a a usted o a su escuela. Los seudónimos serán utilizados para identificar a los participantes. Los datos se almacenaran en un ordenador (file por su título en Ingles) protegido por contraseña que se almacena en un lugar seguro cuando no esté en uso y sólo accesible a mí. Los datos serán destruidas después de la finalización del estudio.

Clausura de participación en el estudio por el investigador

El investigador te puede retirar de la participación en esta investigación si surgen circunstancias que justifiquen hacerlo. Los participantes pueden ser retirados del estudio para proteger su seguridad, proteger a los demás o proteger este mismo estudio. Usted puede ser retirada por alguna de las siguientes razones. Si en algún momento durante el estudio el investigador cree que usted tiene malestares emocionales, puedo detener la entrevista y excusarlo de continuar. Si en algún momento durante la entrevista el investigador cree que no está respondiendo a las preguntas con la seriedad que exigen, es posible que usted sea retirado del estudio. Si en algún momento durante la entrevista se comporta en acciones o en palabra de una manera que es irrespetuosa, o que maliciosamente hace daño a otras personas, es posible que usted sea retirado del estudio.

Si es retirado del estudio después de que comience, usted recibirá el honorario de $ 20 y usted seguirá elegible para el sorteo para ganar el iPad Mini.

¿Cuáles son mis derechos si participo en este estudio?

Usted puede retirar su consentimiento en cualquier momento y dejar de participar sin sanción o pérdida de beneficios a los que tiene derecho.

Usted puede elegir si desea o no participar en este estudio. Si usted es voluntario para participar en este estudio, puede retirarse del estudio en cualquier momento sin ningún
tipo de consecuencias. Usted no renuncia a ninguno de sus derechos legales si decide participar en este estudio de investigación. Usted puede negarse a responder cualquier pregunta que no quiera contestar y aún permanecer en el estudio.

¿Quién puede responder a las preguntas que pueda tener acerca de este estudio?

Si usted tiene alguna pregunta, comentario o inquietud acerca de la investigación, usted puede hablar con uno de los investigadores.

Gregorio Verbera, Investigador Principal (Ed.D. Candidato, UCLA)  
Teléfono: (562) 292-0034  
Email: gverbera@gmail.com  
Dirección postal: 14028 Halcourt Ave. Norwalk, CA. 90650

Presidente del Comité: Patricia Gándara, Ph.D.  
Dirección de correo electrónico: gandara@gseis.ucla.edu

Copresidente del Comité: Eugene Tucker, Ph.D.  
Dirección de correo electrónico: etucker@ucla.edu  
Dirección postal: Educational Leadership Program  
Moore Hall 109, 405 Hilgard Avenue. Los Angeles, CA. 90095-1521  
Teléfono: (310) 206-0558

Si desea hacer preguntas sobre sus derechos como participante en una investigación o si desea expresar cualquier problema o duda que pueda tener sobre el estudio a una persona distinta a los investigadores, por favor llame a la Oficina del Programa de Protección de la Investigación Humana (310) 825-7122 o escribir a la oficina del Programa de Investigación Humana Protección, UCLA, 11000 Kinross Avenue, Suite 102, Caja 951694, Los Angeles, CA desde 90.095 hasta 1.694.

FIRMA DEL PARTICIPANTE DEL ESTUDIO

Entiendo los procedimientos descritos anteriormente. Mis preguntas han sido contestadas a mi satisfacción, y estoy de acuerdo en participar en este estudio. Me han dado una copia de este formulario.

_______________________________________________  ___________________
Nombre del Participante                                                               Fecha
Appendix XIII

University of California, Los Angeles

PARENT PERMISSION FOR MINOR TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

The First Year: Understanding Newcomer Adolescents' Academic Transition

Gregorio Verbera, Ed.D. Candidate, sponsored by Patricia Gandara, Ph.D. and Eugene Tucker, Ph.D. and associates from the Graduate School of Education and Information Studies and the Department of Chicano Studies, at the University of California, Los Angeles is conducting a research study.

Your child was selected as a possible participant in this study because he or she has volunteered and has been identified to meet the requisite criteria for participation in this study. The criteria for participation is the following.

- Born in Mexico
- Attended school in Mexico
- Migrated to the United States within the last 3 years
- Completed at least one year of schooling in the United States
- Are between the ages of 14 and 20
- Are currently enrolled as a high school student

Your child’s participation in this research study is voluntary.

Why is this study being done?

This study is being done to explore whether immigrant students are getting off to the right start during their first year in school and whether that first year in fact determines how immigrant students perform in later years. A better understanding of how schools can support immigrants from the beginning of their educational experience can lead to changes in how schools structure their induction process and support new comer immigrants towards positive educational trajectories.

What will happen if my child takes part in this research study?

If you agree to allow your child to participate in this study, we would ask him/her to:

- Complete a multiple-choice questionnaire, 8 questions total.
- Be interviewed about their experiences as an immigrant student, relating to their first year of school in the United States.
- The interview questions in general will be about how they see their first year of school in the United States and what they think was beneficial in helping them be successful in school.
• The school district will provide records to verify that they are eligible for this study based on the criteria listed above.
• The school district will provide their transcripts and their transcripts will be analyzed for credit sufficiency.
• The interviews will take place at their school, after school to avoid missing classroom time, during a minimum or shortened school day to avoid keeping them too late after dismissal.
• The interviews will be conducted in April and May of 2014.
• The questionnaire and interviews combined interviews will take approximately one and a half hour to complete.

How long will my child be in the research study?

Participation will take a total of about an hour and a half. Your child will only be interviewed once. The interviews will take a total of about one and a half hour. The exact length of the interviews depends on how much they have to say about the questions I ask. The interviews will take place in April and May of 2014.

Are there any potential risks or discomforts that my child can expect from this study?

There are no anticipated risks to your child as a result of their participation in this study. However, a few inconveniences and discomforts may occur. By participating in this study, your child will have to stay after school to be interviewed. For their convenience, I will try to schedule the interviews on minimum or shortened school days. It is essential that the interviews take place after school so that your child does not miss classroom time. Secondly, interview questions are personal in nature, touching upon their experiences in the United States. Recalling these experiences may cause emotional reactions. For their own comfort they have the option to not answer any question that makes them feel uncomfortable or to stop the interview. If they stop the interview, they will still receive the $20 honorarium and they will still be entered to win the Ipad Mini.

Are there any potential benefits to my child if he or she participates?

Your child will not directly benefit from their participation in this study.

The results of the research may help generate a set of recommendations to schools and districts for better servicing and supporting immigrant students during their first year in school in order to improve their chances of academic success in the long run. The results of this study will also help parents of immigrant students understand how to support their child, even from the home, to transition to the American school system in order to improve their chances of academic success.

Will my child be paid for participating?
Your child will receive an honorarium of $20 for participating in this study. All participants will also be entered into a drawing to win an IPad Mini, estimated value $350.

**Will information about my child’s participation be kept confidential?**

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can identify your child will remain confidential. It will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law.

The transcripts from the interview will be coded with a serial number to preserve confidentiality. Only I will be able to trace the transcript to the participant. Interviews will take place in a private location at your school. Interviews will only be audio recorded with your permission. Audio recordings will be destroyed after they are transcribed. All transcripts will be destroyed at the conclusion of the study.

Confidentiality will be maintained by changing any descriptive or demographic information that might identify you or your school. Pseudonyms will be used to identify participants. Data will be stored in a password-protected computer which is stored in a secure location when not in use and only accessible to me. Data will be destroyed after completion of the study.

**What are my and my child’s rights if he or she takes part in this study?**

- You can choose whether or not you want your child to be in this study, and you may withdraw your permission and discontinue your child’s participation at any time.
- Whatever decision you make, there will be no penalty to you or your child, and no loss of benefits to which you or your child were otherwise entitled.
- Your child may refuse to answer any questions that he/she does not want to answer and still remain in the study.

**Withdrawal of participation by the investigator**

I may withdraw your child from participating in this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so. I may withdraw your child from the study to protect their safety, protect others or protect that study itself. Your child may be withdrawn for any of the following reasons. If at some point during the study I believe that your child is experiencing emotional discomforts, I may stop the interview and excuse your child from continuing. If at some point during the interview I believe that your child is not answering the questions with the seriousness they demand, I may withdraw your child from the study. If at some point during the interview your child behaves in actions or in speech in a manner that is derogatory, or maliciously hurtful to other individuals, I may withdraw your child from the study.

If your child is withdrawn from the study after it begins, your child will still receive the $20 honorarium and you will still be entered to win the Ipad mini.
Who can I contact if I have questions about this study?

- If you have any questions, comments or concerns about the research, you can talk to the one of the researchers.

  Gregorio Verbera, Principal Investigator (Ed.D. Candidate, UCLA)
  **Phone:** (562) 292-0034
  **Email:** gverbera@gmail.com
  **Mailing address:** 14028 Halcourt Ave. Norwalk, CA. 90650

  **Committee Chair:** Patricia Gandara, Ph.D
  **Email address:** gandara@gseis.ucla.edu

  **Committee Co-Chair:** Eugene Tucker, Ph.D.
  **Email address:** etucker@ucla.edu
  **Educational Leadership Program mailing address:**
  Moore Hall 109, 405 Hilgard, Ave. Los Angeles, CA. 90095-1521
  **Phone:** (310) 206-0558

- **UCLA Office of the Human Research Protection Program (OHRPP):**
  If you have questions about your child's rights while taking part in this study, or you have concerns or suggestions and you want to talk to someone other than the researchers about the study, please call the OHRPP at (310) 825-7122 or write to:

  UCLA Office of the Human Research Protection Program
  11000 Kinross Avenue, Suite 211, Box 951694
  Los Angeles, CA 90095-1694

  *You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records. SIGNATURE OF PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN*

________________________________________________________
Name of Child

________________________________________________________
Name of Parent or Legal Guardian

________________________________________________________
Signature of Parent or Legal Guardian  Date
El Primer Año: Entendiendo la Transición Académica de los adolescentes recién llegados

Su hijo/a es invitado a participar en la prueba piloto de el protocolo de entrevista que se utilizará en este estudio conducido por Gregorio Verbera, Ed.D. Candidato, patrocinado por Patricia Gándara, Ph.D. y Eugene Tucker, Ph.D., y socios de la Escuela de Postgrado en Educación y Estudios de Información y el Departamento de Estudios Chicanos en la Universidad de California, Los Angeles está realizando un estudio de investigación.

Su hijo/a fue seleccionado como posible participante en esta prueba piloto del protocolo de entrevista que se utilizará en este estudio porque él o ella se ha ofrecido voluntariamente y satisface algunos pero no todos de los criterios exigidos para la participación en este estudio. Los criterios de participación son los siguientes.

• Nacido en México
• Asistió a la escuela en México
• Emigró a los Estados Unidos dentro de los últimos 3 años
• Ver completado por lo menos un año de educación en los Estados Unidos
• Entre las edades de 14 y 20
• En este momento está inscrito como un estudiante de secundaria.

La participación de su hijo/a en este estudio de investigación es voluntaria.

¿Por qué se está haciendo este estudio?

Este estudio se está haciendo para explorar si los alumnos inmigrantes están comenzando en buen pasos durante su primer año en la escuela y si el primer año, de hecho, determina el rendimiento académico de los estudiantes inmigrantes en años posteriores. Un mejor entendimiento de cómo las escuelas pueden apoyar a los inmigrantes desde el principio de su experiencia educativa puede conducir cambios en cómo las escuelas estructuran su proceso de inducción y como apoyan a nuevos inmigrantes hacia trayectorias educativas positivas.

¿Qué pasará si mi hijo/a participa en este estudio de investigación?

Si está de acuerdo a permitir que su hijo/a participe en este estudio, nosotros le pediríamos que él / ella:

• complete un cuestionario de opción múltiple, 8 preguntas en total.
• sea entrevistado/a acerca de sus experiencias como un estudiante inmigrante, en relación a su primer año de escuela en los Estados Unidos.
• El distrito escolar proveerá registros para verificar que su hijo/a es elegible para este estudio basado en los criterios enumerados anteriormente.
• El distrito escolar proveerá el expediente académico de su hijo/a y se analizará para determinar la suficiencia de créditos.
• las preguntas de la entrevista, en general, serán acerca de cómo su hijo/a ve su primer año de escuela en los Estados Unidos y lo que considera beneficioso a su éxito en la escuela.
• Las entrevistas tomaran acabo en la escuela, después de la salida de la escuela para evitar la falta de tiempo en clase, o durante un día escolar más corto o mínimo para evitar mantenerlo/a demasiado tarde después de escuela.
• Las entrevistas serán conducidas en abril y mayo de 2014.
• El cuestionario y las entrevistas combinadas tomarán aproximadamente una hora y media en completarse.

¿Cuánto tiempo estará mi hijo/a en el estudio de investigación?
Participación en este estudio tomará aproximadamente una hora y media. Su hijo/a sólo será entrevistado una vez. Las entrevistas tomarán aproximadamente una hora y media. La duración exacta de las entrevistas depende de que tanta información comparta su hijo/a. Las entrevistas tomarán lugar en abril y mayo del 2014.

¿Existe riesgos potenciales o molestias que mi hijo/a puede esperar de este estudio?
No hay riesgos anticipados para su hijo/a como resultado de su participación en este estudio. Sin embargo, pueden aparecer unas pocas inconveniencias y molestias. Al participar en este estudio, su hijo/a tendrá que quedarse después de la escuela para ser entrevistado. Para su conveniencia, voy a tratar de programar las entrevistas en los días de horario mínimo o corto. Es esencial que las entrevistas tomen acabo después de la salida de la escuela para que su hijo/a no pierda tiempo fuera de clase. En segundo lugar, las preguntas de la entrevista son de naturaleza personal, tocando sobre sus experiencias en los Estados Unidos. Recordando estas experiencias puede causar reacciones emocionales. Para su propia comodidad, su hijo/a tiene la opción de no contestar cualquier pregunta que le haga sentir incómodo/a o parar la entrevista. Si su hijo/a para la entrevista, todavía recibirá los $ 20, y todavía se registrarán para ganar el Ipad Mini.

¿Existen beneficios potenciales para mi hijo/a si él o ella participa?
Su hijo/a no se beneficiará directamente de su participación en este estudio.

Los resultados de la investigación pueden ayudar a generar una serie de recomendaciones a las escuelas y los distritos para dar mejor servicio y apoyo a los estudiantes inmigrantes durante su primer año en la escuela y lograr mejorar sus oportunidades de éxito académico a largo plazo. Los resultados de este estudio también ayudarán a los padres de los estudiantes inmigrantes a entender cómo apoyar a sus hijos, incluso desde el hogar, para la transición al sistema escolar Americano con el fin de mejorar sus posibilidades de éxito académico.
¿Mi hijo/a será pagado por participar?
Su hijo/a recibirá un honorario de $20 por su participación en este estudio. Todos los participantes también participarán en un sorteo para ganar un iPad mini, valor estimado de $350.

¿La información sobre la participación de mi hijo/a se mantendrá confidencial?
Cualquier información que se obtenga en este estudio y que pueda identificar a su hijo/a se mantendrá confidencial. Solamente será compartida con su permiso o como sea requerido por la ley.

Las transcripciones de la entrevista serán codificadas con un número de serie para preservar la información confidencial. Sólo yo voy a poder rastrear la transcripción a el participante. Las entrevistas se llevarán a cabo en un lugar privado en su escuela. Entrevistas sólo serán audio grabadas con el permiso de su hijo/a. Las grabaciones de audio se destruirán después de que se transcriben. Todas las transcripciones serán destruidas al final del estudio.

Se mantendrá la confidencialidad al cambiar cualquier información descriptiva o demográfica que podría identificar a usted o a su escuela. Seudónimos se utilizarán para identificar a los participantes. Los datos se almacenan en una computadora protegida por contraseña que se almacena en un lugar seguro cuando no esté en uso y sólo accesible para mí. Los datos serán destruidas después de la finalización del estudio.

¿Cuáles son mis derechos y los de mi hijo/a si él o ella toma parte en este estudio?
• Usted puede elegir si desea o no desea que su hijo/a participe en este estudio, y usted podrá retirar su permiso y suspender la participación de su hijo/a en cualquier momento.
• Cualquier decisión que tomen, no habrá ninguna pena a usted o a su hijo/a, y ninguna pérdida de beneficios.
• Su hijo/a puede negarse a contestar cualquier pregunta que él / ella no quiera responder y todavía permanecerá en el estudio.
• Su hijo/a puede suspender su participación en este estudio en cualquier momento.

Retirada de participación por el investigador
Puedo retirar a su hijo/a de esta investigación si se presentan circunstancias que justifiquen hacerlo. Puedo retirar a su hijo/a del estudio para proteger su seguridad, proteger a los demás o proteger el estudio. Su hijo/a puede ser retirado por cualquiera de las siguientes razones. Si en algún momento durante el estudio creo que su hijo/a tiene malestares emocionales, puedo detener la entrevista y excusar a su hijo/a de continuar. Si en algún momento durante la entrevista, creo que su hijo/a no está respondiendo las preguntas con la seriedad que exigen, puedo retirar a su hijo/a del estudio. Si en algún momento durante la entrevista su hijo/a se comporta en acciones o en discurso de una manera irrespetuosa, o maliciosamente que hace daño a otras personas, yo puedo retirar a su hijo/a del estudio.
Si su hijo es retirado del estudio después de que comience, su hijo/a seguirá recibiendo los $ 20 honorarios y usted todavía será registrado para ganar el iPad mini.

¿Con quién puedo comunicarme si tengo preguntas sobre este estudio?
• Si usted tiene alguna pregunta, comentarios o preocupaciones sobre la investigación, usted puede hablar con uno de los investigadores.

Gregorio Verbera, Investigador Principal (Ed.D. Candidato, UCLA)
Teléfono: (562) 292-0034
Dirección de correo electrónico: gverbera@gmail.com
Dirección postal: 14028 Halcourt Ave. Norwalk, CA. 90650

Presidente del Comité: Patricia Gandara, Ph.D
Dirección de correo electrónico: gandara@gseis.ucla.edu

Copresidente del Comité: Eugene Tucker, Ph.D.
Dirección de correo electrónico: etucker@ucla.edu
Dirección del Programa de Liderazgo Educacional:
Moore Hall 109, 405 Hilgard, Ave. Los Angeles, CA. 90095-1521
Teléfono: (310) 206-0558

• UCLA Office of the Human Research Protection Program (OHRPP):
Si tiene alguna pregunta acerca de los derechos de su hijo/a durante su participación en este estudio, o si tiene dudas o sugerencias y quiere hablar con alguien que no sean los investigadores sobre el estudio, por favor llame a OHRPP al (310) 825-7122 o escriba a:

UCLA Office of the Human Research Protection Program
11000 Kinross Avenue, Suite 211, Box 951694
Los Angeles, CA 90095-1694

Se le dará una copia de esta información para sus registros.

FIRMA DEL PADRE O TUTOR LEGAL

________________________________________________________________________
Nombre del niño

________________________________________________________________________
Nombre del Padre o Tutor Legal

________________________________________________________________________
Firma del Padre o Tutor Legal    Fecha
Appendix XIV

University of California, Los Angeles

“Pilot Test” PARENT PERMISSION FOR MINOR TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

The First Year: Understanding Newcomer Adolescents' Academic Transition

Your child is being asked to participate in the pilot test of the interview protocol to be used in this study being conducted by Gregorio Verbera, Ed.D. Candidate, sponsored by Patricia Gandara, Ph.D. and Eugene Tucker, Ph.D. and associates from the Graduate School of Education and Information Studies and the Department of Chicano Studies, at the University of California, Los Angeles is conducting a research study.

Your child was selected as a possible participant in this pilot test in this study because he or she has volunteered and has been identified to meet some but not all the requisite criteria for participation in this study. The criteria for participation is the following.

- Born in Mexico
- Attended school in Mexico
- Migrated to the United States within the last 3 years
- Completed at least one year of schooling in the United States
- Are between the ages of 14 and 20
- Are currently enrolled as a high school student

Your child’s participation in this research study is voluntary.

Why is this study being done?

This study is being done to explore whether immigrant students are getting off to the right start during their first year in school and whether that first year in fact determines how immigrant students perform in later years. A better understanding of how schools can support immigrants from the beginning of their educational experience can lead to changes in how schools structure their induction process and support new comer immigrants towards positive educational trajectories.

What will happen if my child takes part in this research study?

If you agree to allow your child to participate in this study, we would ask him/her to:

- Complete a multiple-choice questionnaire, 8 questions total.
- Be interviewed about their experiences as an immigrant student, relating to their first year of school in the United States.
- The interview questions in general will be about how they see their first year of school in the United States and what they think was beneficial in helping them be successful in school.
• The school district will provide records to verify that they are eligible for this study based on the criteria listed above.
• The school district will provide their transcripts and their transcripts will be analyzed for credit sufficiency.
• The interviews will take place at their school, after school to avoid missing classroom time, during a minimum or shortened school day to avoid keeping them too late after dismissal.
• The interviews will be conducted in April and May of 2014.
• The questionnaire and interviews combined interviews will take approximately one and a half hour to complete.

How long will my child be in the research study?

Participation will take a total of about an hour and a half. Your child will only be interviewed once. The interviews will take a total of about one and a half hour. The exact length of the interviews depends on how much they have to say about the questions I ask. The interviews will take place in April and May of 2014.

Are there any potential risks or discomforts that my child can expect from this study?

There are no anticipated risks to your child as a result of their participation in this study. However, a few inconveniences and discomforts may occur. By participating in this study, your child will have to stay after school to be interviewed. For their convenience, I will try to schedule the interviews on minimum or shortened school days. It is essential that the interviews take place after school so that your child does not miss classroom time. Secondly, interview questions are personal in nature, touching upon their experiences in the United States. Recalling these experiences may cause emotional reactions. For their own comfort they have the option to not answer any question that makes them feel uncomfortable or to stop the interview. If they stop the interview, they will still receive the $20 honorarium and they will still be entered to win the Ipad Mini.

Are there any potential benefits to my child if he or she participates?

Your child will not directly benefit from their participation in this study.

The results of the research may help generate a set of recommendations to schools and districts for better servicing and supporting immigrant students during their first year in school in order to improve their chances of academic success in the long run. The results of this study will also help parents of immigrant students understand how to support their child, even from the home, to transition to the American school system in order to improve their chances of academic success.

Will my child be paid for participating?
Your child will receive an honorarium of $20 for participating in this study. All participants will also be entered into a drawing to win an IPad Mini, estimated value $350.

**Will information about my child’s participation be kept confidential?**

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can identify your child will remain confidential. It will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law.

The transcripts from the interview will be coded with a serial number to preserve confidentiality. Only I will be able to trace the transcript to the participant. Interviews will take place in a private location at your school. Interviews will only be audio recorded with your permission. Audio recordings will be destroyed after they are transcribed. All transcripts will be destroyed at the conclusion of the study.

Confidentiality will be maintained by changing any descriptive or demographic information that might identify you or your school. Pseudonyms will be used to identify participants. Data will be stored in a password-protected computer which is stored in a secure location when not in use and only accessible to me. Data will be destroyed after completion of the study.

**What are my and my child’s rights if he or she takes part in this study?**

- You can choose whether or not you want your child to be in this study, and you may withdraw your permission and discontinue your child’s participation at any time.
- Whatever decision you make, there will be no penalty to you or your child, and no loss of benefits to which you or your child were otherwise entitled.
- Your child may refuse to answer any questions that he/she does not want to answer and still remain in the study.

**Withdrawal of participation by the investigator**

I may withdraw your child from participating in this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so. I may withdraw your child from the study to protect their safety, protect others or protect that study itself. Your child may be withdrawn for any of the following reasons. If at some point during the study I believe that your child is experiencing emotional discomforts, I may stop the interview and excuse your child from continuing. If at some point during the interview I believe that your child is not answering the questions with the seriousness they demand, I may withdraw your child from the study. If at some point during the interview your child behaves in actions or in speech in a manner that is derogatory, or maliciously hurtful to other individuals, I may withdraw your child from the study.

If your child is withdrawn from the study after it begins, your child will still receive the $20 honorarium and you will still be entered to win the IPad mini.

**Who can I contact if I have questions about this study?**
• If you have any questions, comments or concerns about the research, you can talk to the one of the researchers.

Gregorio Verbera, Principal Investigator (Ed.D. Candidate, UCLA)
Phone: (562) 292-0034
Email: gverbera@gmail.com
Mailing address: 14028 Halcourt Ave. Norwalk, CA. 90650

Committee Chair: Patricia Gandara, Ph.D
Email address: gandara@gseis.ucla.edu

Committee Co-Chair: Eugene Tucker, Ph.D.
Email address: etucker@ucla.edu
Educational Leadership Program mailing address:
Moore Hall 109, 405 Hilgard, Ave. Los Angeles, CA. 90095-1521
Phone: (310) 206-0558

• UCLA Office of the Human Research Protection Program (OHRPP):
If you have questions about your child’s rights while taking part in this study, or you have concerns or suggestions and you want to talk to someone other than the researchers about the study, please call the OHRPP at (310) 825-7122 or write to:

UCLA Office of the Human Research Protection Program
11000 Kinross Avenue, Suite 211, Box 951694
Los Angeles, CA 90095-1694

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

SIGNATURE OF PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN

Name of Child

__________________________________________

Name of Parent or Legal Guardian

__________________________________________

Signature of Parent or Legal Guardian     Date
Universidad de California, Los Angeles

“Prueba Piloto” PERMISO DE LOS PADRES DE MENORES PARA PARTICIPAR EN LA INVESTIGACIÓN

El Primer Año: Entendiendo la Transición Académica de los adolescentes recién llegados

Su hijo/a es invitado a participar en la prueba piloto de el protocolo de entrevista que se utilizará en este estudio conducido por Gregorio Verbera, Ed.D. Candidato, patrocinado por Patricia Gándara, Ph.D. y Eugene Tucker, Ph.D., y socios de la Escuela de Postgrado en Educación y Estudios de Información y el Departamento de Estudios Chicanos en la Universidad de California, Los Angeles está realizando un estudio de investigación.

Su hijo/a fue seleccionado como posible participante en esta prueba piloto del protocolo de entrevista que se utilizará en este estudio porque él o ella se ha ofrecido voluntariamente y satisface algunos pero no todos de los criterios exigidos para la participación en este estudio. Los criterios de participación son los siguientes.

- Nacido en Mexico
- Asistió a la escuela en México
- Emigró a los Estados Unidos dentro de los últimos 3 años
- Ver completado por lo menos un año de educación en los Estados Unidos
- Entre las edades de 14 y 20
- En este momento está inscrito como un estudiante de secundaria.

La participación de su hijo/a en este estudio de investigación es voluntaria.

¿Por qué se está haciendo este estudio?

Este estudio se está haciendo para explorar si los alumnos inmigrantes están comenzando en buen pasos durante su primer año en la escuela y si el primer año, de hecho, determina el rendimiento académico de los estudiantes inmigrantes en años posteriores. Un mejor entendimiento de cómo las escuelas pueden apoyar a los inmigrantes desde el principio de su experiencia educativa puede conducir cambios en cómo las escuelas estructuran su proceso de inducción y como apoyan a nuevos inmigrantes hacia trayectorias educativas positivas.

¿Qué pasará si mi hijo/a participa en este estudio de investigación?

Si está de acuerdo a permitir que su hijo/a participe en este estudio, nosotros le pediríamos que él / ella:

- complete un cuestionario de opción múltiple, 8 preguntas en total.
- sea entrevistado/a acerca de sus experiencias como un estudiante inmigrante, en relación a su primer año de escuela en los Estados Unidos.
• El distrito escolar proveerá registros para verificar que su hijo/a es elegible para este estudio basado en los criterios enumerados anteriormente.

• El distrito escolar proveerá el expediente académico de su hijo/a y se analizará para determinar la suficiencia de créditos.

• Las preguntas de la entrevista, en general, serán acerca de cómo su hijo/a ve su primer año de escuela en los Estados Unidos y lo que considera beneficioso a su éxito en la escuela.

• Las entrevistas tomarán acabo en la escuela, después de la salida de la escuela para evitar la falta de tiempo en clase, o durante un día escolar más corto o mínimo para evitar mantenerlo/a demasiado tarde después de escuela.

• Las entrevistas serán conducidas en abril y mayo de 2014.

• El cuestionario y las entrevistas combinadas tomarán aproximadamente una hora y media en completarse.

¿Cuánto tiempo estará mi hijo/a en el estudio de investigación?

Participación en este estudio tomará aproximadamente una hora y media. Su hijo/a sólo será entrevistado una vez. Las entrevistas tomarán aproximadamente una hora y media. La duración exacta de las entrevistas depende de que tanta información compartan su hijo/a. Las entrevistas tomarán lugar en abril y mayo del 2014.

¿Existen riesgos potenciales o molestias que mi hijo/a puede esperar de este estudio?

No hay riesgos anticipados para su hijo/a como resultado de su participación en este estudio. Sin embargo, pueden aparecer algunas pocas inconveniencias y molestias. Al participar en este estudio, su hijo/a tendrá que quedarse después de la escuela para ser entrevistado. Para su conveniencia, voy a tratar de programar las entrevistas en los días de horario mínimo o corto. Es esencial que las entrevistas tomen acabo después de la salida de la escuela para que su hijo/a no pierda tiempo fuera de clase. En segundo lugar, las preguntas de la entrevista son de naturaleza personal, tocando sobre sus experiencias en los Estados Unidos. Recordando estas experiencias puede causar reacciones emocionales. Para su propia comodidad, su hijo/a tiene la opción de no contestar cualquier pregunta que le haga sentir incómodo/a o parar la entrevista. Si su hijo/a para la entrevista, todavía recibirá los $20, y todavía se registrarán para ganar el Ipad Mini.

¿Existen beneficios potenciales para mi hijo/a si él o ella participa?

Su hijo/a no se beneficiará directamente de su participación en este estudio.

Los resultados de la investigación pueden ayudar a generar una serie de recomendaciones a las escuelas y los distritos para dar mejor servicio y apoyo a los estudiantes inmigrantes durante su primer año en la escuela y lograr mejorar sus oportunidades de éxito académico a largo plazo. Los resultados de este estudio también ayudarán a los padres de los estudiantes inmigrantes a entender cómo apoyar a sus hijos, incluso desde el hogar, para la transición al sistema escolar Americano con el fin de mejorar sus posibilidades de éxito académico.
¿Mi hijo/a será pagado por participar?
Su hijo/a recibirá un honorario de $20 por su participación en este estudio. Todos los participantes también participarán en un sorteo para ganar un iPad mini, valor estimado de $350.

¿La información sobre la participación de mi hijo/a se mantendrá confidencial?
Cualquier información que se obtenga en este estudio y que pueda identificar a su hijo/a se mantendrá confidencial. Solamente será compartida con su permiso o como sea requerido por la ley.

Las transcripciones de la entrevista serán codificadas con un número de serie para preservar la información confidencial. Sólo yo voy a poder rastrear la transcripción a el participante. Las entrevistas se llevarán a cabo en un lugar privado en su escuela. Entrevistas sólo serán audio grabadas con el permiso de su hijo/a. Las grabaciones de audio se destruirán después de que se transcriben. Todas las transcripciones serán destruidas al final del estudio.

Se mantendrá la confidencialidad al cambiar cualquier información descriptiva o demográfica que podría identificar a usted o a su escuela. Seudónimos se utilizarán para identificar a los participantes. Los datos se almacenan en una computadora protegida por contraseña que se almacena en un lugar seguro cuando no esté en uso y sólo accesible para mí. Los datos serán destruidas después de la finalización del estudio.

¿Cuáles son mis derechos y los de mi hijo/a si él o ella toma parte en este estudio?

• Usted puede elegir si desea o no desea que su hijo/a participe en este estudio, y usted podrá retirar su permiso y suspender la participación de su hijo/a en cualquier momento.
• Cualquier decisión que tomen, no habrá ninguna pena a usted o a su hijo/a, y ninguna pérdida de beneficios.
• Su hijo/a puede negarse a contestar cualquier pregunta que él / ella no quiera responder y todavía permanecerá en el estudio.
• Su hijo/a puede suspender su participación en este estudio en cualquier momento.

Retirada de participación por el investigador
Puedo retirar a su hijo/a de esta investigación si se presentan circunstancias que justifiquen hacerlo. Puedo retirar a su hijo/a del estudio para proteger su seguridad, proteger a los demás o proteger el estudio. Su hijo/a puede ser retirado por cualquiera de las siguientes razones. Si en algún momento durante el estudio creo que su hijo/a tiene malestares emocionales, puedo detener la entrevista y excusar a su hijo/a de continuar. Si en algún momento durante la entrevista, creo que su hijo/a no está respondiendo las preguntas con la seriedad que exigen, puedo retirar a su hijo/a del estudio. Si en algún momento durante la entrevista su hijo/a se comporta en acciones o en discurso de una manera irrespetuosa, o maliciosamente que hace daño a otras personas, yo puedo retirar a su hijo/a del estudio.
Si su hijo es retirado del estudio después de que comience, su hijo/a seguirá recibiendo los $20 honorarios y usted todavía será registrado para ganar el iPad mini.

¿Con quién puedo comunicarme si tengo preguntas sobre este estudio?

• Si usted tiene alguna pregunta, comentarios o preocupaciones sobre la investigación, usted puede hablar con uno de los investigadores.

Gregorio Verbera, Investigador Principal (Ed.D. Candidato, UCLA)
Teléfono: (562) 292-0034
Dirección de correo electrónico: gverbera@gmail.com
Dirección postal: 14028 Halcourt Ave. Norwalk, CA. 90650

Presidente del Comité: Patricia Gandara, Ph.D
Dirección de correo electrónico: gandara@gseis.ucla.edu

Copresidente del Comité: Eugene Tucker, Ph.D.
Dirección de correo electrónico: etucker@ucla.edu
Dirección del Programa de Liderazgo Educativo:
Moore Hall 109, 405 Hilgard, Ave. Los Angeles, CA. 90095-1521
Teléfono: (310) 206-0558

• UCLA Office of the Human Research Protection Program (OHRPP):
Si tiene alguna pregunta acerca de los derechos de su hijo/a durante su participación en este estudio, o si tiene dudas o sugerencias y quiere hablar con alguien que no sean los investigadores sobre el estudio, por favor llame a OHRPP al (310) 825-7122 o escriba a:

UCLA Office of the Human Research Protection Program
11000 Kímross Avenue, Suite 211, Box 951694
Los Angeles, CA 90095-1694

Se le dará una copia de esta información para sus registros.

FIRMA DEL PADRE O TUTOR LEGAL

__________________________________________________________
Nombre del niño

__________________________________________________________
Nombre del Padre o Tutor Legal

__________________________________________________________
Firma del Padre o Tutor Legal ____________________________ Fecha ____________________________
Appendix XV

University of California, Los Angeles

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

The First Year: Understanding Newcomer Adolescents' Academic Transition

Gregorio Verbera, Ed.D. Candidate, sponsored by Patricia Gandara, Ph.D. and Eugene Tucker, Ph.D. and associates from the Graduate School of Education and Information Studies and the Department of Chicano Studies, at the University of California, Los Angeles is conducting a research study.

You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you
• Were born in Mexico
• Attended school in Mexico
• Migrated to the United States within the last 3 years
• Completed at least one year of schooling in the United States
• Are between the ages of 14 and 20
• Are currently enrolled as a high school student

Your participation in this research study is voluntary.

Why is this study being done?

This study is being done to explore whether immigrant students are getting off to the right start during their first year in school and whether that first year in fact determines how immigrant students perform in later years. A better understanding of how schools can support immigrants from the beginning of their educational experience can lead to changes in how schools structure their induction process and support new comer immigrants towards positive educational trajectories.

What will happen if I take part in this research study?

If you volunteer to participate in this study, I will ask you to do the following:
• Complete a multiple-choice questionnaire, 8 questions total.
• Be interviewed about your experiences as an immigrant student, relating to your first year of school in the United States.
• The school district will provide records to verify that you are eligible for this study based on the criteria listed above.
• The school district will provide your transcripts and your transcripts will be analyzed for credit sufficiency.
• The interview questions in general will be about how you see your first year of school in the United States and what you think was beneficial in helping you be successful in school.
• The interviews will take place at your school, after school to avoid missing classroom time, during a minimum or shortened school day to avoid keeping you too late after dismissal.
• The interviews will be conducted in April and May of 2014.
• The questionnaire and interviews combined interviews will take approximately one and a half hour to complete.

How long will I be in the research study?
You will only be interviewed once. The interviews will take a total of about one and a half hour. The exact length of the interviews depends on how much you have to say about the questions I ask. The interviews will take place in April and May of 2014.

Are there any potential risks or discomforts that I can expect from this study?
There are no anticipated risks to you as a result of your participation in this study. However, a few inconveniences and discomforts may occur. By participating in this study, you will have to stay after school to be interviewed. For your convenience, I will try to schedule the interviews on minimum or shortened school days. It is essential that the interviews take place after school so that you do not miss classroom time. Secondly, interview questions are personal in nature, touching upon your experiences in the United States. Recalling these experiences may cause emotional reactions. For your own comfort you have the option to not answer any question that makes you feel uncomfortable or to stop the interview. If you stop the interview you will still receive the $20 honorarium and you will still be entered to win the Ipad Mini.

Are there any potential benefits if I participate?
You will not directly benefit from their participation in this study.

The results of the research may help generate a set of recommendations to schools and districts for better servicing and supporting immigrant students during their first year in school in order to improve their chances of academic success in the long run. The results of this study will also help parents of immigrant students understand how to support their child, even from the home, to transition to the American school system in order to improve their chances of academic success.

Will I be paid for participating?
Students who participate in the interview will receive an honorarium of $20. All participants will also be entered into a drawing to win an IPad Mini, estimated value $350.

Will information about me and my participation be kept confidential?
Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can identify you will remain confidential. The transcripts from the interview will be coded with a serial number to preserve confidentiality. Only I will be able to trace the transcript to the participant. Interviews will take place in a private location at your school. Interviews will only be audio recorded with your permission. Audio recordings will be destroyed after they are transcribed. All transcripts will be destroyed at the conclusion of the study.

Confidentiality will be maintained by changing any descriptive or demographic information that might identify you or your school. Pseudonyms will be used to identify participants. Data will be stored in a password-protected computer which is stored in a secure location when not in use and only accessible to me. Data will be destroyed after completion of the study.

What are my rights if I take part in this study?

• You can choose whether or not you want to be in this study, and you may withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time.
• Whatever decision you make, there will be no penalty to you, and no loss of benefits to which you were otherwise entitled.
• You may refuse to answer any questions that you do not want to answer and still remain in the study.

Who can I contact if I have questions about this study?

• The research team:
  If you have any questions, comments or concerns about the research, you can talk to the one of the researchers. Please contact:

  Gregorio Verbera, Principal Investigator (Ed.D. Candidate, UCLA)
  Phone: (562) 292-0034
  Email: gverbera@gmail.com
  Mailing address: 14028 Halcourt Ave. Norwalk, CA. 90650

  Committee Chair: Patricia Gandara, Ph.D
  Email address: gandara@gseis.ucla.edu

  Committee Co-Chair: Eugene Tucker, Ph.D.
  Email address: etucker@ucla.edu
  Educational Leadership Program mailing address:
  Moore Hall 109, 405 Hilgard, Ave. Los Angeles, CA. 90095-1521
  Phone: (310) 206-0558

• UCLA Office of the Human Research Protection Program (OHRPP):
  If you have questions about your rights while taking part in this study, or you have concerns or suggestions and you want to talk to someone other than the researchers about the study, please call the OHRPP at (310) 825-7122 or write to:
You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

SIGNATURE OF STUDY PARTICIPANT

__________________________________________
Name of Participant

__________________________________________  ____________________
Signature of Participant                  Date

SIGNATURE OF PERSON OBTAINING CONSENT

__________________________________________
Name of Person Obtaining Consent

__________________________________________
Signature of Person Obtaining Consent

__________________________________________  ____________________
Contact Number                  Date
El Primer Año: Entendiendo la Transición Académica de los Adolescentes Recién Llegados

Se le pide que participe en un estudio de investigación realizado por Gregorio Verbera, Ed.D., candidato, patrocinado por Patricia Gándara, Ph.D. y Eugene Tucker, Ph.D. socios de la Escuela de Graduados en Educación y Estudios de Información y el Departamento de Estudios Chicanos de la Universidad de California, Los Angeles.

Usted ha sido seleccionado/a como posible participante en este estudio, ya que
- nacieron en México
- asistió a la escuela en México
- emigró a los Estados Unidos dentro de los últimos 3 años
- completado por lo menos un año de educación en los Estados Unidos
- están entre las edades de 14 y 20
- actualmente está inscrito como un estudiante de secundaria

Su participación en este estudio no es obligatoria.

¿Por qué se realiza este estudio?

Este estudio se está realizando para explorar si los alumnos inmigrantes están comenzando en buen pasos desde su primer año en la escuela y si el primer año, de hecho, determina para estudiantes inmigrantes su rendimiento académico en años posteriores. Un mejor entendimiento de cómo las escuelas pueden apoyar a los inmigrantes desde el comienzo de su experiencia educativa puede resultar en cambios en cómo las escuelas estructuran su proceso de inducción y apoyan inmigrantes recientes hacia trayectorias educativas positivas.

¿Qué pasará si participo en este estudio?

Si usted decide voluntariamente participar en este estudio, voy a pedirle que haga lo siguiente:

- completar un cuestionario de múltiple opciones, 8 preguntas en total.
- ser entrevistado acerca de sus experiencias como un estudiante inmigrante, en relación con su primer año escolar en los Estados Unidos.
- El distrito escolar proveerá registros para verificar que usted es elegible para este estudio basado en los criterios enumerados anteriormente.
- El distrito escolar proveerá su expediente académico y se analizará su expediente académico para determinar la suficiencia de creditos.
- Las preguntas de la entrevista por lo general serán sobre cómo considera su primer año de escuela en los Estados Unidos y lo que le parece fue beneficioso para ayudar a tener éxito en la escuela.
Las entrevistas se llevarán a cabo en la escuela, después de la escuela para evitar pérdida de tiempo en clase, durante un día mínimo o un día reducido para evitar su permanencia demasiado tarde después de la salida.
Las entrevistas se llevarán a cabo en abril y mayo del 2014.
El cuestionario y entrevistas combinadas tomarán aproximadamente un hora y media para completar.

¿Cuánto tiempo estará en el estudio de investigación?

Sólo será entrevistado una vez. La entrevista tomará aproximadamente una hora y media. La longitud exacta de la entrevista depende de lo mucho que tiene que decir acerca de las preguntas. Las entrevistas se llevarán acabo en abril y mayo del 2014.

¿Existen riesgos potenciales o molestias que puedo esperar de este estudio?

No hay riesgos previstos como resultado de su participación en este estudio. Sin embargo, se pueden presentar algunos inconvenientes e incomodidades. Al participar en este estudio, usted tendrá que quedarse después de la escuela para ser entrevistados. Para su comodidad, voy a tratar de programar las entrevistas en los días mínimos o días reducidos de la escuela. Es esencial que las entrevistas se llevan a cabo después de la escuela para que no se pierda tiempo en el aula. En segundo lugar, preguntas de la entrevista son de naturaleza personal, tocando sobre sus experiencias en los Estados Unidos. Al recordar estas experiencias puede provocar reacciones emocionales. Para su comodidad usted tiene la opción de no responder a cualquier pregunta que le haga sentir incómodo o en total dejar la entrevista. Aunque detenga la entrevista seguirá recibiendo el honorario de $ 20 y seguirá siendo elegible para ganar la iPad Mini.

¿Existen beneficios potenciales si participo?

Usted no se beneficiará directamente de su participación en este estudio.

Los resultados de la investigación pueden ayudar a generar una serie de recomendaciones a las escuelas y los distritos para una mejor prestación de servicios y apoyo a los estudiantes inmigrantes durante su primer año en la escuela con el fin de mejorar sus posibilidades de éxito académico a largo plazo. Adicionalmente, los resultados de este estudio ayudarán a los padres de los alumnos inmigrantes entender cómo apoyar a sus hijos/as, incluso desde el hogar, en su transición hacia el sistema escolar estadounidense con el fin de mejorar sus posibilidades de éxito académico.

¿Voy a recibir ningún pago si participo en este estudio?

Recibirán un honorario. Los estudiantes que participan en la entrevista recibirán un honorario de $20. Todos los participantes entrarán en un sorteo para ganar un iPad Mini, con valor estimado de $350.

Será información sobre mí y mi participación mantenida confidencial?
Cualquier información que se obtiene en relación con este estudio y que pueda identificarle será confidencial. Las transcripciones de la entrevista serán codificadas con un número de serie para preservar la información confidencial. Sólo yo podrá rastrear la transcripción al participante. Las entrevistas se llevarán a cabo en un lugar privado en su escuela. Entrevistas sólo serán audio grabadas con su permiso. Las grabaciones de audio se destruirán después de que se transcriben. Todas las transcripciones serán destruidas al final del estudio.

Se mantendrá la confidencialidad al cambiar cualquier información descriptiva o demográfica que puede identificarlo/a a usted o a su escuela. Los seudónimos serán utilizados para identificar a los participantes. Los datos se almacenan en un ordenador (file por su título en Ingles) protegido por contraseña que se almacena en un lugar seguro cuando no esté en uso y sólo accesible a mí. Los datos serán destruidos después de la finalización del estudio.

¿Cuáles son mis derechos si participo en este estudio?

Usted puede retirar su consentimiento en cualquier momento y dejar de participar sin sanción o pérdida de beneficios a los que tiene derecho.

Usted puede elegir si desea o no participar en este estudio. Si usted es voluntario para participar en este estudio, puede retirarse del estudio en cualquier momento sin ningún tipo de consecuencias. Usted no renuncia a ninguno de sus derechos legales si decide participar en este estudio de investigación. Usted puede negarse a responder cualquier pregunta que no quiera contestar y aún permanecer en el estudio.

¿Quién puede responder a las preguntas que pueda tener acerca de este estudio?

En caso de una lesión relacionada con la investigación, por favor póngase en contacto de inmediato con uno de los investigadores que figuran a continuación. Si usted tiene alguna pregunta, comentario o inquietud acerca de la investigación, usted puede hablar con uno de los investigadores.

Gregorio Verbera, Investigador Principal (Ed.D. Candidato, UCLA)
Teléfono: (562) 292-0034
Email: gverbera@gmail.com
Dirección postal: 14028 Halcourt Ave. Norwalk, CA. 90650

Presidente del Comité: Patricia Gándara, Ph.D
Dirección de correo electrónico: gandara@gseis.ucla.edu

Copresidente del Comité: Eugene Tucker, Ph.D.
Dirección de correo electrónico: etucker@ucla.edu
Dirección postal: Educational Leadership Program
Moore Hall 109, 405 Hilgard Avenue. Los Angeles, CA. 90095-1521
Teléfono: (310) 206-0558

Si desea hacer preguntas sobre sus derechos como participante en una investigación o si desea expresar cualquier problema o duda que pueda tener sobre el estudio a una persona distinta a los investigadores, por favor llame a la Oficina del Programa de Protección de la Investigación Humana (310) 825-7122 o escribir a la oficina del Programa de Investigación Humana Protección, UCLA, 11000 Kinross Avenue, Suite 102, PO BOX 951694, Los Angeles, CA 90095-694.

FIRMA DEL PARTICIPANTE DEL ESTUDIO

Entiendo los procedimientos descritos anteriormente. Mis preguntas han sido contestadas a mi satisfacción, y estoy de acuerdo en participar en este estudio. Me han dado una copia de este formulario.

_______________________________________________________
Nombre del Participante

Firma del participante __________________________ Fecha

FIRMA DE LA PERSONA QUE OBTENER SU CONSENTIMIENTO

A mi juicio, el participante es voluntaria y conscientemente aceptar participar en este estudio de investigación.

_____________________________________________ Numero de teléfono
Nombre de la persona obteniendo consentimiento

Firma de la persona obteniendo consentimiento __________________________ Fecha
Appendix XVI

Table 4.1- Participants’ Ages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age in years</th>
<th>number of participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14 years old</td>
<td>6 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 years old</td>
<td>8 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 years old</td>
<td>7 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 years old</td>
<td>6 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 years old</td>
<td>2 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 years old</td>
<td>1 participant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 years old</td>
<td>0 participant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2- Years of Residency in the United States

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Completed Years of Residency</th>
<th>Number of Student Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>19 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>8 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>3 participants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.3 - First Grade of School in the United States

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enrolling Grade</th>
<th>Number of Student Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7th grade</td>
<td>2 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th grade</td>
<td>7 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th grade</td>
<td>21 participants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.4- Years of School Attendance in Mexico

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years of School Attendance in Mexico</th>
<th>Number of Student Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>2 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>0 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 years</td>
<td>2 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 years</td>
<td>1 participant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 years</td>
<td>8 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 years</td>
<td>9 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 years</td>
<td>6 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 years</td>
<td>2 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 years</td>
<td>0 participant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.5- Current Grade Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Grade</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9th grade</td>
<td>10 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10th grade</td>
<td>18 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade</td>
<td>Participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11th grade</td>
<td>2 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12th grade</td>
<td>0 participants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.6- Experienced Parental Separations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experienced Parental Separations</th>
<th>Number of Student Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is experiencing or has experienced separation from parents for an extended period of time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>30 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>0 participants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.7- Current Legal Guardianship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legal Guardian</th>
<th>Number of Student Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Both parents</td>
<td>6 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One parent</td>
<td>12 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older sibling/s</td>
<td>5 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grandparents</td>
<td>2 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Relatives</td>
<td>5 participants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.8- Highest Level of Parental / Guardian Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Level</th>
<th>Number of Student Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K-8th grade</td>
<td>12 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some High School</td>
<td>9 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Grad</td>
<td>4 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college</td>
<td>3 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Grad</td>
<td>1 participant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Graduate</td>
<td>1 participant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.9- Parent / Guardian Employment Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment Status</th>
<th>Number of Student Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed and looking</td>
<td>2 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>2 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed part-time</td>
<td>6 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed full-time</td>
<td>17 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>3 participants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
References


Orfield, G., & Ee, J. (2014). *Segregating California’s future: Inequality and its alternative 60 years after brown v. board of education.* Civil Rights Project, University of California, Los Angeles.


