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ED402398 Nov 96 Immigrants and Their Educational Attainment: Some Facts and Findings. ERIC Digest, Number 116.

Author: Schwartz, Wendy

ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education, New York, N.Y.

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This digest reviews several reports about the educational experience and expectations of recent immigrants to the United States, and about the overall role of immigrants in the country. Its purpose is to dispel some myths about the impact of immigrants on American society and to provide information that can be considered in efforts to increase immigrants' educational attainment.

IMMIGRANT STUDENTS

In general, immigrant youth and parents have higher educational aspirations than do natives of the same racial/ethnic group. Individual and family factors associated with high school graduation, college-going, and college continuity are generally the same for immigrants and natives, as well as across racial/ethnic groups. Immigrant students most likely to attend college have parents with higher income and education levels, and higher educational expectations for their children. Low family income has a disproportionately negative effect on college continuity for immigrants.

DEMOGRAPHICS

According to the 1990 Census:

*There were more than 2.3 million immigrant youth in U.S. schools and colleges--about 5% of all students.

*The percentage of immigrant children enrolling in U.S. primary and middle schools was nearly equal to that of the native born--71% to 74%, respectively, before age eight; and 94% to 96%, respectively, after age eight. Immigrant and native-born youth attended high school at the rates of 87% and 93% respectively.

*Immigrant youth were twice as likely as natives to live in families with an income in the lowest quartile and to have parents with less than 12 years of schooling. Asian and white immigrants, like their native-born ethnic counterparts, were least likely to live in such families. Black youth--both immigrant and native-born--were significantly more likely than Asians and whites to live in low-income families.

HIGH SCHOOL EXPERIENCE

*Immigrant high school students are as likely as natives to graduate from high school within four years of their sophomore year.

*Immigrant youth, especially Hispanics, who enter the U.S. after the age of 15 are less likely to enter the school system or to remain until high school graduation than are immigrants who arrive when younger.

*Immigrants are more likely than native-born youth to make choices, beginning early in school, consistent with eventual college-going, regardless of race or ethnicity. They follow an academic track, take advanced courses in mathematics and science, take the SAT or ACT, and work hard to achieve their expectations.

*Variations among immigrant ethnic groups generally parallel variations among native-born groups: Asian immigrants perform better on indicators of college preparation, followed by white and black immigrants.

POSTSECONDARY EXPERIENCE

*Overall, immigrants are more likely than natives to enroll in postsecondary education, attend college, and stay continuously through four years of college. Asian immigrants are more likely to go continuously to college than any other racial/ethnic immigrant group.

*The shorter the time an immigrant youth has been in the U.S., the lower are his/her college-going and continuing rates.

*Urban immigrants are more likely to enroll in college than those in rural schools.

*Immigrant college-going is positively affected by a mother working outside the home, and negatively affected by the presence of three or more siblings.

ADULT IMMIGRANTS

DEMOGRAPHICS

*Slightly more than 1.1 million immigrants arrive in the U.S. annually. Almost half of them are female.

*About 700,000 individuals enter as lawful permanent residents.

*100,000-150,000 enter legally as refugees or asylees--individuals seeking asylum because they fear persecution in their homeland because of their political views, national origin, membership in a social group, religion, or race. Refugees apply for protection before coming to the U.S.; asylees apply after arriving. 300,000 enter without legal status (called undocumented immigrants).

*In 1993, the 10 countries (in descending order) from which the U.S. received the most legal immigrants were: Mexico, Mainland China, the Philippines, Vietnam, the former Soviet Union, the Dominican Republic, India, Poland, El Salvador, and the United Kingdom. The 10 countries from which the U.S. received the most refugees were: the former Soviet Union, Vietnam, Haiti, Laos, Somalia, Iraq, Cuba, Iran, Ethiopia, and Liberia.

*Undocumented immigrants constitute about 1% of the total U.S. population and 13% of the foreign-born population. Most enter the country legally with temporary visas and become illegal when they stay. In 1993 there were about 3.8 million undocumented immigrants in the U.S.

*Increasingly, immigrants are people of color. In 1992 the breakdown was: 44% from Latin America and the Caribbean, 37% from Asia, and 15% from Europe.

*In the 1980s, three-quarters of all immigrants settled in six states: California, New York, Texas, Florida, New Jersey, and Illinois..

*The vast majority of immigrants settle in urban areas. In 1990, 93% lived in cities.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING

*Approximately 25% of immigrants come from countries where English is the dominant or official language. Another 20% come from Spanish-speaking countries. Nearly 50% coming from other non-English dominant countries already speak English well upon arriving.

*There is a trend towards monolingual English speaking among the children of immigrants. Previously it took three generations for a family to lose its native tongue.

*English-as-a-Second-Language classes serve 1.8 immigrants annually, but the demand for them far outstrips their availability.

INCOME AND PAYMENT OF TAXES

*In 1989, immigrants earned a total of \$285 billion, or 8% of all income earned in the nation. This amount equals the immigrant share of the total U.S. population.

*Immigration does not reduce the overall job availability or depress wages. More specifically, it has little negative impact for African American workers in the aggregate, although immigrants may reduce opportunities of low-skilled workers in certain geographical areas.

*Annually, immigrants pay more in taxes than they receive in benefits such as education and public assistance: \$70.3 billion as compared with \$42.9 billion.

*Undocumented immigrants pay taxes of \$7 billion annually because their paychecks are subject to income tax and Social Security deductions. They are not eligible for benefits from most public programs, however.

*Legal immigrants' Social Security payments help keep the Social Security system solvent, since they tend to be young and have years of work ahead of them. However, the percentage of native-born elderly, who collect Social Security rather than contribute to it, is increasing.

USE OF PUBLIC SERVICES

*The Federal, state, and local costs of educating immigrant youth is about \$11.5 billion. For comparison, during the 1992-93 school year, the cost of educating all children was \$226 billion.

*Immigrants cannot enter the United States, legally without proving that they are self-sufficient and unlikely to need public assistance.

*Refugees, who comprise 10% of the immigrant population and who frequently arrive with nothing, are the most likely to require benefits: 15% receive welfare.

*Undocumented immigrants are eligible for only emergency medical care under Medicaid, and nutrition benefits. Despite eligibility for free hospital care, many pay for it themselves or have private health insurance, and thus use services less than the general population.

*About 11% of elderly immigrants (800,000 individuals) receive Supplemental Security Income, an assistance program for disabled and elderly people. More than three-quarters of them have no other source of income because they are ineligible for Social Security.

*In the 1980s, 2% of working-age immigrants, compared with 3.7% of native-born Americans of the same age, received welfare.

INFORMATION SOURCES

The source of the general information about immigrants presented here is a compilation of Fact Sheets published by the National Immigration Forum (1994). The sheets themselves cite data from a variety of sources, such as the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, and analyses by a range of immigration research organizations.

The information on the education of immigrants is drawn from a RAND analysis of data (Vernez & Abrahamse, 1996) from High School and Beyond (HSB), a national sample of more than 21,000 tenth and twelfth graders who were first interviewed in 1980 and then followed over a six-year period to determine their educational progress. The RAND report also cites U.S. Census of Population and Housing data and several smaller studies of the educational performance of immigrants and other minorities. It should be noted that the applicability of findings based on HSB data, which comprise information about students who attended high school more than 15 years ago, to the current educational

experiences of immigrants is limited for several reasons: the number of immigrants in the nation's schools has doubled since 1980, immigrant students come from increasingly diverse cultural and language backgrounds, and the ability of schools and colleges "to absorb them has arguably deteriorated" (p. xiii). However, newer data on the education of immigrants of equal validity and scope is not yet available for analysis.

National Immigration Forum. (1994). A guide to immigration facts and figures. Washington, DC: Author.

Vernez, G., & Abrahamse, A. (1996). How immigrants fare in U.S. education. Santa Monica: RAND.

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Digest

March 1998

Secondary Newcomer Programs: Helping Recent Immigrants Prepare for School Success

Deborah J. Short, Center for Applied Linguistics

Many school districts are facing increasing numbers of secondary immigrant students who have low level English or native language skills and, in many cases, have had limited formal education in their native countries. These students must learn English, take the required content courses, and catch up to their native-English-speaking peers before high school graduation. How are schools meeting the needs of these students, many of whom are placed below the expected grade level for their age?

Some districts have developed newcomer programs that serve these students through a program of intensive language development and academic and cultural orientation, for a limited period of time (usually from 6-18 months), before placing them in the regular school language support and academic programs. The rationale for establishing these programs differs across sites, but many programs were set up for one or more of the following reasons:

- Students were at risk of educational failure or of dropping out of school.
- Students were over age for their grade level placement, because of weak academic skills and limited formal education.
- Students' needs surpassed the instructional design of the regular ESL or bilingual program that was in place in the district.
- Students had low or no English or native language literacy skills.

This digest reports on data collected through a study of secondary newcomer programs, sponsored by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education as part of the Center for Education, Diversity & Excellence. It introduces the common factors and range of practices found in secondary newcomer programs across the United States. The information is drawn from program profiles found in *Secondary Newcomer Programs in the United States: 1996-97 Directory* (Short & Boyson, 1997).

Who Are the Newcomer Students?

Secondary programs vary in their definitions of newcomers, but most include recent arrival to either the United States or the school district and limited English proficiency as characteristics. Over half of the programs surveyed for the study also noted that students are below grade level or have limited formal education. Some programs rely on a definition associated with federal aid: students who have been in the United States for 3 years or less and are limited English proficient. Almost a third of the programs restrict enrollment to students who have been in the United States for one year or less.

Newcomer students at the secondary level range in age from 10 to 22 years and come from many language backgrounds. Most of the newcomers speak Spanish, but native speakers of many other languages, including Mandarin, Pilipino, Russian, Haitian Creole, Polish, Punjabi, Vietnamese, and Hindi, attend these programs as well. In fact, over half of the programs enroll students from four or more different native language backgrounds.

The number of students served by the newcomer programs ranges from 14 at one site in Connecticut to over 740 at a high school in New York City. Almost half of the programs enroll 50 or more students, and 12 programs serve over 200 students. Because of limited resources, not all newcomer programs are

able to serve all eligible students in the district.

Where Are the Programs Located?

Newcomer programs are located in 18 states; most of these have high rates of immigration, such as New York, California, and New Jersey. Over three fourths of the programs are in urban-metropolitan settings; the rest are in suburban areas and rural locales. More than half of the programs operate at the high school level. About one third serve the middle school level, and the remainder offer a combination of middle and high school services. Most of the schools draw from several attendance areas in one school district.

Most newcomer programs are designed as a separate program within a regular secondary school. This is usually the home school (i.e., the school in their designated attendance area) of most, if not all, of the newcomer students. The students may participate in some school activities outside of the program, such as physical education and art. Upon exiting the newcomer program, many students remain at the same school to continue their studies in the regular language support program, which may offer English as a second language (ESL) or bilingual services. Students from outside the attendance area may return to their home schools or go to other schools in the same district.

Twelve of the programs surveyed are not located in a regular school. Three are full-length high schools, where students enter in the ninth grade and generally remain in the program until graduation. Two programs are located at district intake centers, where language minority students are assessed and placed. For those designated as newcomers, these intake centers offer special, short-term courses before the students enter one of the schools in the district. In some districts, one newcomer center has been established at a centralized site to serve, for example, all eligible middle school students.

How Are Newcomer Programs Designed?

Program designs differ according to educational goals, site options, staff availability, and resource allocation. Most programs serve newcomer students for the full school day. This schedule provides time to offer several content area courses along with English language instruction. Other programs operate for a half day, sometimes to accommodate two groups of students at one site (e.g., middle school students in the morning, high school students in the afternoon) or to promote more interaction with the entire student body at the school. Two programs operate solely after school and students attend on a volunteer basis. Most of the programs are designed to educate students for one year, although some offer an additional summer program. Nineteen programs last more than one year; five for less than a year. One is a summer-only program. Most of the programs allow new students to enroll mid-year or mid-session if space is available.

The grade-level designation of newcomer students varies at different sites. One school, for instance, is designated as a ninth grade school. High school-aged students who enroll in the district with 8 years of schooling or less may opt to attend this school for a year. Afterwards, they move on to 10th grade in one of the other district high schools. Other high schools may serve all grade levels, assigning students as appropriate to their age and educational backgrounds. After one year, 9th and 10th grade students exit to attend other high schools. Eleventh grade students may elect to stay at the school to graduate.

How Do Newcomer Programs Address Students' Language Learning and Academic Needs?

The programs offer a range of instructional activities for students that reflect the goal of developing both language and academic skills so that students may enter the regular ESL or bilingual program, or in some cases, mainstream classes. Ninety-eight percent of the programs provide a course in English as a second language. Eighty percent offer sheltered content instruction, and 73% offer content instruction in at least one of the students' native languages. (Over 10 different languages are used for content area instruction.) Forty percent have courses in native language literacy. More than half of the programs offer both sheltered instruction and native language content instruction. In some of these sites, bilingual courses may be available for one or two high-incidence language groups, while sheltered instruction is

offered to low-incidence language groups. Because a large number of the students have limited educational backgrounds, many of the content classes are designed to help students learn the basic foundations of core subjects. While about half of the programs also participate in Title I or provide special education services, less than one fourth give newcomer students access to gifted and talented support.

Newcomer programs usually employ experienced staff trained in second language acquisition theory, ESL and sheltered instruction methods, and cross-cultural communication. Usually at least one staff member in a program is bilingual. Staff attend professional development workshops that address specific needs for the newcomer student population, like developing literacy skills, so they can improve their curricula and instructional delivery. At a number of sites, native language instruction in the content areas is provided by bilingual paraprofessionals.

How Do Newcomer Programs Address Students' Acculturation Process?

One important characteristic of newcomer programs is the attention given to familiarizing students with their new environment: the school, educational expectations, the community, and the United States. Eighty-eight percent of the programs provide courses in cultural orientation to the United States. Many of the programs supplement their classroom curricula with field trips, cultural activities, and special events. Some provide career orientation as well.

Reaching beyond the students themselves, 43% of the programs offer classes to orient parents to the United States, and 63% offer adult ESL classes either through the program or the school district. All programs view parental involvement and communication with parents as high priorities. Some sites have a home-school liaison, and others maintain a community outreach component to share information about the program and to arrange partnerships with community organizations. Many either have social workers on site or provide assistance in helping students and their families access medical and social services in the community.

How Do Newcomer Students Make the Transition Out of the Program?

Many of the programs that are one year in length automatically exit students at the end of the school year. A number of programs test students for language proficiency (and some test content areas as well) to determine whether students are ready to participate in other programs offered on the district or school. However, most programs allow some degree of flexibility for individual students. In some programs, students who make fast progress can exit before the end of the program. For students who arrive in the second semester of the school year, who have large gaps in their educational backgrounds, and may be illiterate in their native languages, several programs accommodate their needs by extending their stay.

Newcomer programs ease the transition process in several ways. At some sites, the newcomer courses are part of a continuum of services in the language support program, and students move on to higher ESL levels or into bilingual classes. Some sites have students sit in on regular courses before they exit the newcomer program. Many sites provide orientation to the regular school program, take students on school tours, and have students talk with guidance counselors. Some also pair newcomers with more advanced ESL students. A number of sites continue to monitor the newcomer students' progress for 6 months to a year after they have exited the program and may offer tutorials and mentoring.

Conclusion

The newcomer directory will be updated each year through 2000, adding new programs as they become known to the researchers. In addition, case studies of selected sites will take place to further an understanding of how these programs serve recent immigrants.

Reference

- Short, D.J., & Boyson, B. (1997). *Secondary Newcomer Programs in the United States: 1996-97*



IDRA Newsletter



IDRA Newsletter - May 1996

In This Issue: Immigrant Education

- "Immigrant Education from the Administrators' Perspective," by Pam McCollum, Ph.D., and Juanita García, M.A.
- "Creative Collaboratives: Empowering Immigrant Students and Families Through Education," by Josie Danini Supik, M.A., and Albert Cortez, Ph.D. (Includes sidebar)
- "Immigrant Education Policy: Why Attempt to Fix What's Not Broken?," by Albert Cortez, Ph.D.
- "CHIME (Clearinghouse for Immigrant Education): Service Provides Access to Information on the Education of Immigrant Students," by Aurelio Montemayor, M.Ed.
- "Dispelling Myths about Immigrant Education," by Abel Carmona, B.A.
- "Signs of Hope in Projects School," [editorial] by Tom Keene

Immigrant Education Policy: Why Attempt to Fix What's Not Broken?

Albert Cortez, Ph.D.

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In our many years of working together, I remember how Dr. Jose Cárdenas periodically would tell us the story of the child who received a hammer as a gift and subsequently "discovered" that many things around him needed a few taps with his new found instrument (whether the object to be hammered needed the tapping or not). Recent developments in Washington, D.C., related to the education of children of undocumented workers bring to mind that child as some lawmakers seek to re-visit an issue that states and the courts resolved over a decade ago.

The impetus for re-surfacing the issue of whether or not children of undocumented workers should have access to education in U.S. public schools came from members of Congress from California who had been thwarted in their efforts to deny children access to education through a state referendum, Proposition 187 (which the federal district courts found violates the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Plyler vs. Doe*). So, they sought to involve others in their exclusionary quest. Congressman Elton Gallegly from California thus introduced an amendment to HR 222, a comprehensive immigration reform proposal originally introduced by Congressman Lamar Smith of Texas. The Gallegly amendment was approved by a vote that closely followed partisan lines.

Senate leaders opted to leave the controversial measure out of their version of the immigration reform bill. Currently, a conference committee is convening to

reconcile the House and Senate versions. Media reports indicate that President Clinton is expected to sign the final bill, but the White House has expressed concern over some provisions - including the proposal that would deny children access to an education - and is pressing for changes when the conference committee meets (Lacey, 1996).

Illogical Rationale

As IDRA tracked the debates around the immigrant education issue, we noted the rationale used to defend this punitive and discriminatory treatment of immigrant children. Proponents of the measure justified their position by suggesting that the *Plyler vs. Doe* decision had rested in part on the "lack" of a clear position by the Congress on the issue of immigrant children's access to education. They contend that the new amendment makes explicit a congressional position that leaves the decision to provide or deny access to education strictly to the states (civil rights issues and due process concerns notwithstanding).

Conveniently, the proposal leaves the decision to deny access to children of undocumented workers to the states. Perhaps the reason is to ensure that the inevitable legal challenges that follow are directed to the state governments (versus federal government). Perhaps it is to ensure that any political fallout associated with such inhumane treatment of children can be blamed on someone other than those who merely set the stage for subsequent state action. Possibly, it could be to set a defense for a cut-off of federal funding for immigrant impact aid, since the states would themselves be responsible for all future enrollments of all immigrant students.

Whatever the rationale, if the exclusionary legislation is adopted, it will re-surface the bitter debates that surrounded the initial debate of the issue in the 1980s. We have learned much about immigrant education in the decade since the *Plyler vs. Doe* decision, and we should consider those lessons before we attempt to un-do rational public policies.

Lessons Learned

The numbers are never what anti-immigrant proponents claim. Much of the debate around immigrant student enrollment focuses on the estimated numbers and the presumed effects that these enrollments have on local public schools. There is no consensus on actual numbers, but history has demonstrated that proponents of exclusion are not hesitant to use grossly inflated figures.

In the Texas case, the proponents of exclusion estimated that more than 100,000 children of undocumented workers would enroll in Texas public schools. When required to admit them, the total enrollment of such children (as reported to the state agency by local school districts) totaled less than 16,000. This is 16 percent of the number first touted (Cortez, 1981). Not only were the numbers far less than that originally claimed, but the number of schools actually enrolling immigrant students also represented less than a quarter of Texas' 1060 school systems.

The savings are also a fraction of the amounts often predicted by anti-immigrant groups. Since the actual numbers of immigrant students enrolling in schools turn out to be a fraction of those estimated, states do not experience the inflated cost estimates used to justify the exclusion of children. If all immigrant pupils had been excluded from Texas schools, the net savings available for each student still enrolled in Texas schools would have come to less than \$15 per pupil. When this is divided by the 200-plus instructional days, this net savings would come to 7.5 per pupil per day.

Immigrant families are unlikely to alter their plans based on state education policies. While Texas was in the midst of enforcing its exclusionary doctrine in the years before the legal challenge to this practice, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) did not report any major decrease in the number of immigrants coming to the United States.

Contrary to some misguided assumptions, immigrants come to the country seeking employment and opportunity. They do not come so their children can attend U.S. schools. Earlier, while some families expressed concern about the state's exclusionary practices, there was no great exodus from Texas as a result of the enforcement of the state's discriminatory treatment of immigrants. The assumption that giving states the option of denying schooling to young children will contribute to reduced migration remains unsubstantiated and misguided.

The costs of exclusion may actually exceed any small benefits derived. Even conservative groups representing local law enforcement recognize the dysfunctional affects of keeping students out of school and thus in unsupervised settings while parents are away at work. Major national groups have expressed their concerns about the proposed new policies, citing the unintended consequences associated with having thousands of unsupervised youth left out of school with nothing to fill their time. While the numbers remain in dispute, any number of school age youth denied access to the system can create disruptions in local communities (witness the concerns expressed by shopping mall owners and downtown merchants about out-of-school youths in many communities throughout the country). The problem that would only be exacerbated by denying youth access to local public schooling.

Such Measures are Unconstitutional

In the 1982 *Plyler vs. Doe* decision, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that it is unconstitutional to deny children access to public education because of their citizenship status. When the Gallegly amendment was debated, IDRA distributed an informational alert about this and similar measures. The alert stated that the Supreme Court arrived at its decision because such practices:

- **Victimize innocent children** - Children of undocumented workers do not choose the conditions under which they enter the United States. They should not be punished for circumstances they do not control. Children have the right to learn and be useful members of society.
- **Hurt more than they claim to help** - Denying children access to education will not eliminate illegal immigration. Instead, it ensures the creation of an underclass. Without public education for children, illiteracy rates will increase, and opportunities for workforce and community participation will decrease. Research has proven that for every \$1 spent on the education of children, \$9 is returned.
- **Turn public school teachers and officials into INS agents** - Rather than teaching students, school officials could spend their time asking our 44 million school children about their citizenship status. States will be forced to spend millions of dollars to do the work of the INS.
- **Promote misinformation** - Incorrect assumptions and inappropriate figures have been used to blame immigrants and their children for economic problems. In 1992, undocumented immigrants comprised only 1.3 percent of the total U.S. population.
- **Support racism and discrimination** - Historically, financially troubled times breed increased racism. Children of undocumented workers should not be the scapegoats.

"Denying children of undocumented workers access to an education is unconstitutional and against the law," the alert stated.

If Not Based on Rationality and if Unconstitutional, Then Why Proceed?

If the consequences far outweigh the benefits, then why do some push the change in public policy. Several thoughts come to mind. Official frustration over control of immigration has led some to look for easy "solutions," with immigrant children perceived among the most helpless and thus easy to victimize. The fact that some school officials and staff complain about immigrant enrollments in some communities serve only to exacerbate existing tendencies.

The notion that denial of education will somehow discourage immigration is also a contributing factor, despite the fact that no research exists that substantiates such assumptions.

Exclusionary practices targeting children may also be perceived as politically easier to promote than other options. Some proponents of immigration reform have long argued that the way to discourage undocumented immigration is by creating mechanisms that impact the employment prospects for those who enter the country illegally. One idea supported by many includes employer sanctions aimed at discouraging those who hire undocumented workers. Such efforts however are often met with fierce opposition from private sector interests who depend on immigrant labor. Immigrant children have no lobbyists to ensure their rights.

In addition to what is known or has been learned in the wake of the *Plyler vs. Doe* decision are our fundamental beliefs about children, justice and simple decency. Should anyone propose that our children be denied some things as basic as an education, we could anticipate a general uproar. Why would it be acceptable then to discriminate against *some* children?

IDRA believes that education is a fundamental right and that education should be available to all children. To deny even one child such access is bad public policy. To allow states the prerogative to exclude any child access to education is also bad policy, dysfunctional and counter-productive. Add to it the complexities required to enforce exclusion and the unintended consequences for students and communities, and it becomes apparent that current attempts to "fix" immigration by victimizing children will not work. While many educators and children's advocates have let their voices be heard over the din that is contemporary Washington, all of us who are concerned about children must be prepared to add our own voices to the national conversation. While it may be in vogue to question past public policies, we should never let go unchallenged fundamental beliefs about children's rights.

In explaining the basis for his decision on education funding equity litigation, Judge Scott McCown observed that while some worried only about providing an adequate education for "their children," all school age persons in Texas were the responsibility of the state of Texas - thus *all* children were *our* children (McCown, 1987). Immigrant students who find themselves residing in Texas (and other states) simply because they are part of an immigrant family, also happen to be our children. We must speak out more loudly in their defense. For, if we - educators who see their faces every day and those who see their hopes, fears, joys, aspirations and heartbreaks - do not speak, then who will?

Resources

Cortez, Albert. "The Distribution of Undocumented Pupils in Texas Public Schools: A First Analysis," *IDRA Newsletter* (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, August 1981).

McCown, Judge Scott. *Edgewood ISD, et al. vs. Kirby, et al.* (1987).

Lacey, Marc. "Senate Approves Broad Assault on Illegal Immigration," *Los Angeles Times* (May 3, 1996).

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- "Immigrant Education from the Administrators' Perspective," by Pam McCollum, Ph.D., and Juanita García, M.A.
- "Creative Collaboratives: Empowering Immigrant Students and Families Through Education," by Josie Danini Supik, M.A., and Albert Cortez, Ph.D. (Includes sidebar)
- "Immigrant Education Policy: Why Attempt to Fix What's Not Broken?," by Albert Cortez, Ph.D.
- "CHIME (Clearinghouse for Immigrant Education): Service Provides Access to Information on the Education of Immigrant Students," by Aurelio Montemayor, M.Ed.
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Dispelling Myths About Immigrant Students

Abel Carmona, B.A.

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One of the most controversial political and economic issues in the United States today is the impact immigrants entering the country will have on the population. Some people believe immigrants are an uneducated, unskilled burden on our economy and take advantage of many of the government funded programs established for the benefit of U.S. citizens. Opponents of the U.S. policy on immigration believe that "drastic steps" must be taken to curb the number of immigrants entering the United States. Politicians are expressing their willingness to support measures that would close the borders and deny children of undocumented workers an education. There continues to be a movement to make English the official language of the country known throughout the world as the "nation of immigrants." In California, for example, the citizens passed legislation restricting government funded programs from serving undocumented immigrants, and other states are attempting to implement similar measures.

Unfortunately, many of these xenophobic attitudes and false negative beliefs about immigrants are fueled more by media hype and people's fears about the economy than by reality. History has shown us that as the economy declines, immigrants become less and less popular and to some degree are blamed for the economy's sluggishness. How accurate and fair are these myths? Does the immigrant population of today differ that much from that of the past? Does it really constitute such a great burden on our economy? Are they as uneducated as they are perceived and do they unfairly benefit from government funded program established for "Americans?"

Economy and Jobs

It is true that the number of immigrants entering the United States is increasing. There are many people who believe that because our present economy does not appear to be able to support the current native U.S. population, the added influx of immigrants would not only hurt our economy but would also create unemployment and financial hardships for many U.S. citizens. What they fail to see is that as the immigrant population creates more demands on the economy, the economy adjusts accordingly and even spawns the creation of new industries to meet those demands.

As for those skeptics who claim the immigrant population will "steal" jobs from native workers, "there is no empirical evidence documenting that the displacement effect [of natives from jobs] is numerically important" (Borjas, 1990).

Studies show that immigrants contribute to the economy through tax payments, job creation, entrepreneurial activity, consumer spending and neighborhood revitalization. The Alexis de Toqueville Institute states that immigrants also create jobs by raising the productivity of U.S. businesses (Wong, 1994). According to RAND and the U.S. Department of Labor:

"The immigrant workforce keeps labor-intensive industries competitive and helps keep jobs in our country. Immigrants made crucial contributions to the California economy over the last 20 years and have saved the furniture, garment and shoe industries in Southern California and the textile industries in Los Angeles, New York and San Francisco" (Wong, 1994).

The Urban Institute states that immigrants add twice as many jobs to the country as does the native-born population and contribute to local employment more than non-immigrants (Wong, 1994). According to *Business Week*, "By setting up businesses and buying homes, immigrants generate both taxes and employment opportunities while encouraging further investment in the inner city" (Wong, 1994).

Public Assistance

In terms of how immigrants benefit from and contribute to government-funded programs, the majority of immigrants, because of their age, make proportionately larger contributions to the public fund than they will ever receive in terms of benefits. The cost of government services received by immigrants is significantly less than their contributions (Simon, 1995). According to a report by Michael Fix and Jeffrey S. Passel, immigrants create a surplus of \$25 billion to \$30 billion annually. Most do not qualify for social security benefits, and those who do are not granted public assistance until three years after their entry into the United States. Other studies - including reports by the California Research Bureau, the California State Office of Research, the U.S. Department of Labor, and the U.S. Department of Justice, Immigration and Naturalization Service - show that, despite high poverty rates, immigrants use less public benefits than average and are less likely to become dependent on welfare (Wong, 1994).

Education Level and Labor

Another false perception many people have of immigrants is that they are uneducated and unskilled. The immigrant population is similar to the U.S. population in that it includes people with varying degrees of education. Some

have less than eight years of formal education and others have doctorates. The educational level of immigrants today is higher than those of the past and continues to improve. On average, the proportion of immigrants with post-graduate degrees is greater than the proportion of people with post-graduate degrees in the native population (Simon, 1995).

Just as the privileges that our society affords to its educated people serve as incentives for people to become educated, it also so serves as an incentive for some to emigrate here, even for those who are from countries as prosperous as this. As a consequence of this phenomenon, the United States has experienced a growth in our pool of people who excel in the technological fields such as engineering, mathematics and science (Stewart, 1993). With this growth, the United States has the potential of increasing its productivity and expanding into frontiers in many fields of study, particularly in technology and science.

Implications for Schools

In view of these facts, the negative myths of immigrants is unwarranted and unfair. Immigrants are educated, are skilled and do contribute positively to the U.S. economy. Lawrence Katz, a Harvard economics professor and specialist on the economics of immigration, proclaims, "There's no doubt that immigration has a positive effect overall [on the U.S. economy]" (reference, date).

As the influx of immigrants continues and the number of immigrant children enrolling in the public education system grows, educators will need to grow along with them. Statistics show that, in spite of the many obstacles immigrant children must overcome as new students in a new country, they persevere and some do as well if not better than U.S. natives. As they complete their public education, many choose to pursue their education further and enroll in colleges and universities. Interestingly, although immigrants are less likely to have graduated from high school, they are more likely to graduate from college when compared to the U.S. native population.

Many in the education field believe that "the education system is poorly prepared to meet the special needs of linguistically and culturally diverse students, and problems are especially acute in the secondary level," (Christian, 1994). The need for programs that are better able to educate children with varying cultural and ethnic backgrounds will require educators to create new and innovative means of educating these students.

In times like these it is especially important that organizations, such as IDRA, that are dedicated to improving the educational opportunities of *all* children, families and communities, to continue to serve as strong advocates of immigrant education and children, particularly those who are at a disadvantage through no fault of their own.

President Lamar of the Republic of Texas said in 1838, "It is admitted by all that a cultivated mind is the guardian of democracy and while controlled by virtue the noblest attribute of man." Although some people may believe the present attitudes concerning immigration are justified or rational, we should keep in mind that the Equal Protection Clause of the United States Constitution which affords us the right to an education also allows this protection to be "extended to all persons in the country, regardless of citizenship, residence or documented status" (Cárdenas, 1993).

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How Immigrants Fare in U.S. Education

Georges Vernez and Allan Abrahamson

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Preface

Continuing increases in the number of immigrant children and youths in American schools and colleges raise the dual questions of how they affect these educational institutions and how they perform in them. These youths will eventually enter a national economy that is in transition and that will demand more educated workers and fewer less-educated workers. This report examines the participation and performance of immigrant children in U.S. primary, secondary, and higher education. It also identifies the individual and family factors that are associated with immigrants' and natives' educational attainment.

This report is one of three RAND reports that examine the participation of immigrants in the nation's educational system. The other two reports focus on the effects of increasing immigration on U.S. schools and on higher education institutions, respectively:

Lorraine M. McDonnell and Paul T. Hill, *Newcomers in American Schools: Meeting the Educational Needs of Immigrant Youth*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, MR-103-AWM/PRIP, 1993. ←

Maryann Jacobi Gray, Elizabeth S. Rolph, and Elan Melamid, *Immigration and Higher Education: Institutional Responses to Changing Demographics*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, MR-751-AMF, 1996.

The project was sponsored by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the RAND Institute on Education and Training with funds from the Lilly Endowment.

This report and its companions should interest anyone involved in the interactions between immigration and the U.S. educational system including federal, state, and local policymakers and administrators; advocates; school and college administrators and teachers; and researchers.

Summary

A growing number of immigrant children and youths have entered the country over the past 25 years. In 1990, there were more than 2.3 million immigrant children and youths in U.S. schools and colleges--about 5 percent of all students.

Many of these children have to overcome poor academic preparation in their country of origin and nearly all have to learn English and new institutional and cultural customs and norms. As a result, there are growing concerns about how these children are performing in U.S. schools and postsecondary institutions and in turn about the new set of demands they are placing upon these institutions. These concerns are exacerbated by the increasing diversity of languages and cultures that these students bring with them and their high concentration in a few areas of the country. About 75 percent of these children are concentrated in California, Florida, Illinois, New York, and Texas. California's educational institutions alone are currently educating more than two out of five of the country's immigrant children and youths.

This study is the first effort to systematically describe and analyze the experience and performance of immigrant children and youths in the U.S. educational system. Two companion studies have explored the new demands these children and youths are placing on U.S. primary and secondary schools and on colleges, respectively, and how those institutions are responding to these demands.[1]

Methods and Limitations

We used data from "High School and Beyond" (HSB), a national representative sample of more than 21,000 10th and 12th graders first interviewed in 1980 and followed over a six-year period through their high school years, graduation, and postsecondary education in U.S. colleges. These data were complemented with data from the 1970, 1980, and 1990 U.S. Census of Population and Housing to analyze participation in U.S. education across all age groups and over time.

Throughout this study we compare the participation and performance of immigrant children and youths in U.S. educational institutions to that of their native counterparts overall and within each of the four major racial/ethnic groups: Asian, black, Hispanic, and white.

The HSB data have two major limitations. First, they provide information on immigrant students and natives who began their education before 1980. The number of immigrant children in the nation's schools has doubled since then, and schools' and colleges' ability to absorb them has arguably deteriorated. Hence, today's immigrants may perform differently from those of 15 years or so ago. Second, HSB findings are restricted to immigrants who were in a U.S. school by the 10th grade. Immigrant youths who entered the U.S. education system after that grade are not included.

Experience in Primary and Secondary Education

Immigrant children and youths are as likely as natives to enroll in U.S. primary and middle schools. However, they are somewhat less likely than natives to attend high school: In 1990, participation rates were 87 and 93 percent, respectively. All of this differential is accounted for by immigrant youths of Hispanic origin, primarily from Mexico. In 1990, one of every four immigrants from Mexico in the 15-17 age group was not in school--a rate nearly 20 percent lower than that for any other immigrant group and 17 percent lower than that for natives of Mexican origin.

We present evidence suggesting that the relatively low in-school participation rates of Mexican immigrants of high school age is primarily due to their not "dropping in" to the school system in the first place rather than their "dropping out" of school. By age 15, Mexican immigrants have already been out of school in Mexico for two years on average. They do not enroll in U.S. schools either by choice, because of inability to catch up with others their age or their native counterparts, or by economic necessity because they must support themselves and their families.

Conditional on having been enrolled in a U.S. high school by grade 10, immigrant students are more likely than their native counterparts to make choices consistent with eventually pursuing a college education. They are more likely to follow an academic track and take advanced courses in math and sciences. These differences in course-taking patterns hold not only in the aggregate but also within each racial/ethnic group. However, there are variations among immigrants of different racial/ethnic groups just as there are such variations among natives. Asian immigrants generally performed best on indicators of preparation for college, followed by white and black immigrants. Hispanic immigrants performed the lowest on nearly all indicators of college preparation.

Immigrants in U.S. high schools are also more likely to plan to go to college and to report working hard to achieve their expectations. Similarly, the immigrant parents of immigrant children report higher educational expectations for their children than native parents do.

Immigrant children and parents of all racial/ethnic groups studied have higher educational aspirations than their native counterparts. However, this difference in aspirations is three times greater between immigrants and natives of Hispanic origin than it is between immigrants and natives in other groups. This significant decline in the educational aspirations of Hispanics in the United States has also recently been noted by other researchers. Its causes, however, have yet to be thoroughly investigated.

High School Graduation and College-Going

Whatever difficulties immigrant children and youths might face adjusting to the language and

institutional and cultural norms of this country, their educational attainment has equaled if not exceeded that of native children and youths. Immigrant high school sophomores were just as likely as natives to graduate from high school within four years from their sophomore year--with Asians more likely to graduate than whites, blacks, and Hispanics, in that order.

Immigrant high school graduates were also more likely than their native counterparts to enroll in postsecondary education, attend college, and stay continuously through four years of college. Immigrants' higher rates of participation in higher education hold within each racial/ethnic group. But there are differences between immigrants of different racial/ethnic groups that mirror the well known differences between natives of different racial/ethnic backgrounds. Asian immigrants and natives scored generally the highest on all indicators of college-going and Hispanic immigrants and natives scored consistently the lowest on indicators of college-going with whites and blacks in between. The differences are large. Four of every five Asian high school graduates go on to college, compared to one of every two Hispanic high school graduates.

In multivariate analyses, we found that the individual and family factors associated with college-going were generally the same for immigrants and natives as well as across racial/ethnic groups. High school graduates whose parents have higher income, higher levels of education, and higher educational expectations for their children are more likely to pursue a college education than others. This confirms the importance of family background and family attitudes toward education in determining children's eventual educational attainment. Also, a student's positive attitude toward working hard in school was found to be positively associated with college-going for all groups. All else equal, immigration status per se was not found to be associated with college-going.

The fact that Hispanics have lower scores than Asians, whites, and blacks on nearly all key family and individual characteristics--income, parental education, and educational aspirations--helps explain their lower educational attainment.

Policy Implications

Our findings suggest that there is no need to develop policies targeted *uniquely* on immigrants. This does not mean, however, that the increasing number of immigrants in U.S. schools does not place new and unique demands upon the educational institutions serving them. Two companion studies (McDonnell and Hill, 1993; Gray and Rolph, 1996) have documented the difficulties that schools and colleges are having meeting the special language and social support needs of immigrants and the resource strains they place on schools' overall operations. The growing presence of immigrants in U.S. educational institutions also raises fundamental questions regarding graduation requirements, most particularly with regard to English proficiency, equity in the allocation of financial aid, and the definition of "disadvantaged" and "underrepresented" students in the face of increased diversity. Until now, these questions have been either ignored or addressed ad hoc, leading to inconsistencies within and across institutions. They should now be addressed.

Beyond that, the continuing large discrepancy in educational attainment between Hispanics and other racial/ethnic groups should be cause for concern. After 25 years of continuous and growing immigration, Hispanics are rapidly becoming the largest minority in the United States. Already one out of three high school students in California is of Hispanic origin and this proportion will continue to grow in years to come regardless of whether or not there is continuing immigration. It is not going too far to suggest that the educational attainment Hispanics eventually reach will in large measure determine the quality of the future labor force and the demand for public services in key states of the country.

Enhancing the educational achievements of Hispanics--and other similarly situated students--will require policies that go beyond the classroom. Income assistance and financial assistance can alleviate the income gap between Hispanics and those of other groups. But public funding for these programs is being reduced and at the same time college tuition and fees are going up rapidly. Also, low levels of parental education and low educational expectation of parents and students may not be easily amenable to change. Programs directed at increasing parental involvement in the education of their children and adult education programs including English language instruction, high school equivalency classes, vocational

education, and workshops on effective parenting are steps in the right direction. But demand for these programs far exceeds supply.

We also need to understand why the educational expectations of parents and students are declining across generations of immigrants, most particularly Hispanics. This understanding is necessary if strategies are to be developed to effectively address this problem.

Finally, strategies need to be developed to encourage Hispanic immigrant youths age 14 to 17 to pursue their education in this country. Failure to do so will result in hundreds of thousands of youths without a high school diploma with no prospects for economic mobility over their lifetime.

[1] McDonnell and Hill (1993) and Gray and Rolph (1996).

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Have Inflows of Immigrants Diminished Natives' Educational Attainment? A Review

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References

1. Introduction

The increasing gap between the education levels of immigrants and U.S. natives has received intense attention from the research and policy communities over the past ten years.

Most of this research has focused on the question of whether inflows of relatively unskilled immigrants depress wages among *all* less-skilled workers in the United States, but there has been no definitive answer. In a study of the "Mariel boatlift" of a large number of relatively unskilled Cubans to the Miami area, Card (1990) found little evidence that these inflows lowered earnings for less-skilled natives in the area. Although a spate of subsequent studies has not been able to nail down a precise estimate of the effect, a number of studies have found evidence that immigrants do drive down wages for less-skilled native workers. See, for example, Borjas (1998), Butcher (1998), and Reimers (1998).

More recently, researchers have started to ask another question: whether immigrants affect the level of education (i.e., years of schooling) that natives obtain. In theory, inflows of less-skilled immigrants

could either decrease, increase, or leave unchanged the educational attainment of natives.

Immigrants might decrease the level of education obtained by natives if the presence of immigrants affects the quality of education. If the effectiveness of public schools declines when the student body becomes more heterogeneous, as, for example, when classrooms contain a mix of fluent English speakers with others who are Limited English Proficient (LEP), the entire class may make slower progress. If large numbers of LEP students at the school create a less effective learning environment, the native student who was already right at the margin of dropping out may decide to leave school and join the work force.

However, there is a countervailing force that could increase the level of education of native students: If large inflows of immigrants lower the wages of less-skilled workers in the area, this native student may decide to stay in school due to his or her relatively weak prospects in the labor market.

So, the influence of immigration on young natives' level of education could be either negative or positive, depending on which of these two opposing forces is the more powerful. Since theory is ambiguous about the direction of the effect, we must take this issue to the data.

2. Setting the Scene: The Educational Attainment and Destinations of Recent Immigrants

To understand how immigrants might affect natives' years of schooling, it is necessary to compare the educational attainment of natives and immigrants and to identify the locations to which immigrants have moved.

Educational Attainment of Immigrants Relative to Natives

Table 1 below, taken from Betts and Lofstrom (forthcoming), shows that, on average, immigrants have fewer years of schooling than natives, and that between 1980 and 1990 the gap widened. As Betts and Lofstrom also show, the main differences between the immigrant and native populations occur at the lower end of the educational distribution, where immigrants average far fewer years of schooling than natives attain. At the top end of the educational distribution, immigrants and natives tend to have highly similar levels of education.

Table 1. Mean Years of Schooling Obtained by All Natives and Immigrants Ages 16-64 in the United States

Year:	1970			1980			1990		
	Native	Immigr	Gap	Native	Immigr	Gap	Native	Immigr	Gap
All Men	11.36	10.59	0.77	12.42	11.61	0.81	12.69	11.28	1.41
All Women	11.26	10.05	1.21	12.17	11.00	1.17	12.61	11.06	1.55
Source: Betts and Lofstrom (forthcoming, Tables 1 and 2)									

The widening gap in education between natives and immigrants suggests that inflows of immigrants are likely to have the greatest effect on less-educated portions of the native population. Specifically, native-born *minorities* are the people whose education is probably most affected by immigration, for three reasons.

First, if an influx of immigrants into the local area puts a strain on public services such as schooling, families of higher income can move to more affluent areas or enroll their children in private schools. Minorities are less likely than whites to have the financial resources for either of these alternatives.

Second, *within* schools, minority students are more likely than white students to be in classes with recent immigrants because schools group students by initial achievement, [1] and minority students and immigrants are more likely than native whites to have lower achievement.

Third, disadvantaged immigrant students are eligible to participate in federally financed Title I programs. The goal of this spending is to provide remedial education to disadvantaged children. In a study of school districts in Oakland, Houston, Boston and Washington, D.C., Fix and Zimmerman (1993) concluded that an influx of immigrants to each of these school districts in the 1980s did not crowd native-born students out of participation in Title I programs. However, they did find evidence that the influx of immigrant schoolchildren during this time expanded the number of children receiving Title I services, which had the effect of reducing spending per pupil on remediation. This reduction in remedial spending is likely to be felt most strongly by minority students [2] For all three of these reasons, it is plausible that the effects of immigrants on educational attainment of natives should be greatest on minorities.

Destination of Immigrants

A second important fact to consider is that the inflows of young immigrants have varied dramatically across states. For instance, looking at changes in the immigrant-to-population ratio for the age group 19-25 between 1980 and 1990 by state, Betts (1998) found that the unweighted average increase in this ratio across the lower 48 states and the District of Columbia was 0.017, or 1.7 percent. But three states (California, Texas and Nevada) and the District of Columbia witnessed increases of over 5 percent in the immigrant-to-population ratio between 1980 and 1990. Another eight states experienced increases of 2.5-5 percent. (These states were Arizona, Florida, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, and Oregon.)

Interactions Between the Destination of Immigrants and Their Level of Education Relative to Natives

The uneven flow of immigrants across regions does not tell the whole story. It is quite likely that the average educational attainment of immigrants also varies significantly across states. For example, tabulations (Betts, in progress) based on Census and Current Population Survey data indicate that in 1970 immigrants living in California and the rest of the nation had virtually identical average years of schooling. By 1996/97, however, a large skills gap had opened up: Adult immigrants in the rest of the nation had an average of 11.8 years of education, whereas immigrants in California had only 10.9 years of education. If it is true that inflows of immigrants decrease the educational attainment of natives, states such as California should feel the effects particularly strongly.

As will be discussed in Section 6, all of these patterns--the lower level of educational attainment of immigrants, their geographic concentration, and the variations in immigrants' skill levels by regions--suggest a need to develop education policies, for both immigrants and natives, that are tailored to local populations.

3. Have Inflows of Immigrants Increased High School Dropout Rates of Native-Born Minorities?

In Betts (1998), I tested the hypothesis that the presence of immigrants in local schools discourages native minorities from staying in school. Using 1980 and 1990 Census data, I modeled the probability that native-born blacks and Hispanics in the age group 19-25 have finished high school. I tested for a relationship between the proportion of immigrants in this age group in the local area and the native's probability of graduating from high school. I conducted these analyses by measuring the immigrant-to-population ratio at the state level and at the metropolitan-area level.

In all studies of this type, it is crucial to control for other factors that might determine the young native person's decision about whether to finish high school. If some omitted trait of the state or metropolitan area is related both to native-born students' probability of graduating and to the share of immigrants in the population, then the estimated effect of immigrants on natives' educational attainment might be too high or too low. Therefore, I tested for a relationship between *changes* in natives' probability of graduating between 1980 and 1990 and *changes* in the share of immigrants during this period in each of

the states or the 132 metropolitan areas. This test fully controlled for all unobserved traits of each area that are constant over time.

In addition, I controlled for several other potentially confounding factors. A key example is the socioeconomic status of the generation of older blacks and Hispanics who parented the young black and Hispanic students in the regression sample. Many researchers have found that an improvement in the socioeconomic status of parents leads to higher educational attainment among their children. Accordingly, I proxied for the socioeconomic status of the parents of young blacks and Hispanics by controlling for the income per capita and the proportion of the adult population (aged 35-64) that holds a high school diploma in the relevant minority group. I also controlled in some models for the pupil-teacher ratio in public schools, since there is some evidence in past research that higher pupil-teacher ratios are correlated with lower educational attainment among students. [3]

Table 2 shows the results from the analysis conducted at the state level. The first row shows the increase in the immigrant-to-population ratio in the age group 19-25 between 1980 and 1990, weighted first by the number of young native blacks living in each state and second by the number of young native Hispanics living in each state. Interestingly, the increase in young native Hispanics' "contact" with young immigrants was much higher in this period than it was for native blacks, largely due to large inflows of immigrants to California and the large native-born Hispanic population in California. Next, I predicted the drop in the probability that a native black or Hispanic would graduate from high school, given the change in the immigrant-to-population ratio (1980-90). The results appear in line two of the table. The probability that native blacks graduated from high school is predicted to have dropped by 0.73 percentage points between 1980 and 1990. The effect on native Hispanics is somewhat larger, with a 3.67 percentage point predicted drop in the probability of graduating.

In sensitivity analyses, these results continue to hold. Notably, repeating this analysis after dropping California, I found that the results for native blacks continued to hold, while the results for native Hispanics became statistically insignificant. To some extent, this is not surprising, since almost 30 percent of native Hispanics in the sample lived in California. However, it seems that the negative effect of immigration on natives' educational attainment is a national phenomenon for native blacks and largely a California phenomenon for native Hispanics. Why is the effect of immigration on native Hispanics' educational attainment restricted to California? One possible explanation is the fact that immigrants living in California have significantly lower skill levels than do immigrants elsewhere (Betts, in progress). In this way, California immigrants are likely to have placed relatively greater demands on the resources of local schools than have immigrants in the rest of the nation.

Table 2 . Estimates of the Predicted Drop in the Probability of Graduation Given a Rise in the Ratio of Immigrants to the Overall Population

Native Group for Which Graduation Probability Modeled:	Black Natives	Hispanic Natives
Change in Proportion of Immigrants in Local Population Aged 19-25, 1980-1990	0.0296	0.0638
Predicted Change in Probability that Natives of Given Group Graduate from High School	-0.0073	-0.0367
Source: Betts (1998, Table 8.5)		

4. Have Immigrants Reduced Native-Born Minorities' Attendance at U.S. Colleges?

Caroline Hoxby (1998) examined whether immigrants have "crowded" minority natives out of postsecondary institutions in the United States. She speculates that immigrants could displace native minorities from universities and colleges in two ways. First, universities might fulfill their affirmative action goals by admitting minorities who are not American citizens. Second, to the extent that immigrant and minority native enrollees in postsecondary institutions compete for remedial resources, immigration might lessen the benefits of attending college for native minorities.

Hoxby finds evidence that immigrants diminish attendance of native blacks and Hispanics through competition for affirmative action positions at elite universities, but not at intermediate or non-selective colleges. She also finds some evidence that immigrants discourage native minorities from attending college through competition for remedial resources at intermediate colleges, but not at elite or non-selective colleges.

5. Broader Tests for a Link between Immigration and the Educational Attainment of All Natives

Betts and Lofstrom (forthcoming) extend the work of Betts (1998) and Hoxby (1998). The paper models not simply the probability of high school graduation (as in Betts, 1998) or college attendance (as in Hoxby, 1998), but total years of schooling obtained, along with models of the probability of high school graduation, attendance at college, and graduation from a four-year college program. The analysis uses Census data from 1970, 1980 and 1990. The analysis also extends the prior work by estimating models for all major racial/ethnic groups: whites, blacks, Hispanics, and Asians.

Betts and Lofstrom find evidence in favor of the hypothesis that immigration lowers educational attainment for native blacks, Hispanics, Asians, and whites. An increase of 0.05 in the proportion of immigrants in the young population is predicted to lower average years of education by 0.29 year for Asians, 0.17 year for Hispanics, 0.10 year for blacks, and 0.06 year for whites.

In section 2, I listed three reasons why the educational attainment of native minorities was more likely than the educational attainment of whites to respond to immigration. This predicted pattern appears quite clearly in the results listed above. One of the reasons why white students' educational attainment might be less sensitive to immigration is that, on average, this group has greater financial resources than do minorities. As noted above, this could allow white parents a greater ability to move away from areas where school resources are strained by inflows of LEP students or to enroll their children in private schools. In work in progress, Fairlie and Betts find some evidence that inflows of school-age immigrants in the 1980s are correlated with native parents sending their children to private school — at the high school level, but not at the primary school level. White families account for almost all of the predicted shift into private schools that correlates with inflows of immigrants to the metropolitan area.

Betts and Lofstrom (forthcoming) also study the tiers of the educational system at which the negative relation between immigration and natives' educational attainment is most apparent. Intriguingly, most of the negative effect of immigration on natives' educational attainment appears to occur in grade school. There is evidence that immigrants reduce the attainment of native Hispanics and native Asians in postsecondary as well as secondary education, but only at the sub-baccalaureate level. (This may help to explain the particularly large estimated effect of immigration on the overall years of education obtained by Asians that is reported above.)

Even though the evidence that immigrants reduce natives' educational attainment is stronger at the secondary level than the postsecondary level, Census data can shed no light on whether immigration causes native minorities who do attend postsecondary education to shift between universities. Hoxby (1998) finds evidence that at very selective and extremely selective colleges (with average SAT scores in the observed student population above 1100 and 1200, respectively), immigrants do tend to crowd out American-born minorities. Taken together with the above results based on Census data, the implication is that a rise in immigration might not necessarily prevent native minorities from attending four-year colleges, but it may diminish the quality of colleges that they do attend. This finding is extremely relevant for policymakers, given findings by James et al. (1989) and Loury and Garman (1995) that the quality of university attended influences a student's future wages positively.

6. Conclusion and Policy Implications

The recent work by Betts (1998), Hoxby (1998), and Betts and Lofstrom (forthcoming) suggests that inflows of immigrants to the United States in the 1980s may have diminished the educational attainment of native minorities by meaningful amounts. Betts and Lofstrom (forthcoming) show further that this

negative effect applies to *all* American natives at the secondary level, but that the effects are concentrated among native minorities. Although we now have three pieces of evidence pointing in this direction, all of the analyses to date have used indirect means to infer whether immigrants directly or indirectly dissuade natives from attending educational institutions. More direct studies at the school level would be required to confirm these findings. More to the point, school-level (or even college-level) research might indicate educational reforms through which we might minimize these negative effects on natives' educational attainment.

The existing research suggests few specific policy prescriptions for legislators. Nevertheless, two general observations may be germane. Existing federal aid to school districts that provide an educational home for immigrant schoolchildren is large overall, but it is rather small on a per capita basis. Congress passed the Emergency Immigrant Education Act of 1984 in a bid to provide supplemental funding to school districts that had a large fraction of immigrant students. Although the existence of this Act illustrates public recognition that additional funding is needed to cope with inflows of immigrant schoolchildren, the funding disbursed under the law makes at best a modest contribution. In the 1989-1990 school year, average disbursements under the Act were \$62 per eligible immigrant student (General Accounting Office, 1991). This sum is slightly more than 1 percent of the current expenditures per pupil in average daily attendance in public schools in that year, which totaled \$4,939 (National Center for Education Statistics, 1991, p. 155). A larger program directed toward immigrant schoolchildren is Title VII funding for bilingual education. In 1990-91, spending in this program amounted to \$158.5 million, or about \$70 per LEP student in the country. Of course, in many states, these funds are supplemented by state money to aid districts with large numbers of LEP students. But it is quite important that we learn more about the effectiveness of this rather limited spending, and whether a boost in funding for affected school districts would increase the educational progress not only of immigrants but of natives as well.

The geographic concentration of immigrant inflows and the gap between the educational attainment of immigrants in California and the rest of the nation, both described in Section 2, lead to a second observation that is relevant for policy. None of the three existing studies tests for non-linear effects of immigrants, but it seems likely that the extent to which immigration reduces natives' educational attainment increases more than proportionately as the immigrant-to-population ratio rises. For this reason, it makes sense for Congress to focus its funding on the most severely affected states, and within states, on the most severely affected school districts. These districts are mostly located in metropolitan areas that act as "gateways" for immigrants, such as Los Angeles, Miami, and New York. Funding under the Emergency Immigrant Education Act of 1984 already concentrates on the most heavily affected districts. This approach probably makes good sense, for both the immigrants and their native counterparts in these schools.

The passage in both the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives of "Ed-Flex" legislation in March 1999 may represent another step that will allow a tighter geographical focus of educational funding. The Education Flexibility Partnership Act of 1999 allows states greater flexibility in how they spend federal funds for programs such as Title I. It may give states greater freedom to focus on the school districts that are the most heavily affected by immigration and by disadvantaged students more generally. However, it remains unclear how, in practice, states will react to this increased flexibility. [4]

A more geographically targeted education policy for immigrants and native minorities might also alleviate somewhat the extraordinary increases in income inequality in the United States in recent years. Reed (1999) establishes that this trend toward greater inequality has been particularly strong in California. She also establishes that the two leading explanations of rising inequality in California are the rising gaps in wages between workers of different skill levels and between immigrants and natives in particular. It stands to reason that increased geographic targeting of both state and federal education dollars to the schools attended by immigrants and by disadvantaged natives could make a tangible contribution to reducing inequality.

[1] The use of tracking to group together students who are at similar levels of achievement is a widespread practice in American public schools. Betts and Shkolnik (forthcoming), using a

representative national panel of 6000 students from 1987 to 1992, found that approximately three-fourths of the schools' principals reported that a formal tracking policy was used in math classes. Yet the range of mean academic achievement across classes was similar in schools which reported using tracking and those which claimed that they did not. This finding suggests that to some degree, most American schools track students, even if no formal tracking policy is in place.

[2] For instance, Fix and Zimmerman (p. 49, 1993) report that in 1989-90 29 percent of Title I enrollees were black and 23 percent were Hispanic. These proportions are far larger than the proportions of blacks and Hispanics in the overall population.

[3] See for instance Betts (1996) for a review of the literature on how school spending affects both years of schooling completed and students' subsequent wages. Estimates that use state of birth to infer the level of school resources experienced by a worker while in school tend to find that school resources positively affect both years of schooling and earnings. Studies that measure actual resources at the school attended tend to yield much weaker results.

[4] See Robelen (1999) for a review of the Ed-Flex bills.

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Highlights

- About 9.5 million immigrants entered the United States in the 1980s;
- Some 93% of immigrants resided in metropolitan areas in 1990 while 73% of the general population did;
- Poverty increased among immigrant families by 42% between 1980 and 1990 compared to 11% among the general population;
- Almost half of all recent immigrants into the United States live in the Great Cities of Los Angeles, New York, Miami, Chicago, District of Columbia, Houston and San Francisco;
- The number of Hispanic students enrolled in the GCS increased 48.6% between 1982-83 and 1992-93;
- Some 15.8% of GCS students were limited-English proficient in 1992-93 compared to 4.9% of the general national enrollment;
- Students who have difficulty speaking English are more likely to lag behind their peers in dropout rates and academic achievement; and
- The number of school-aged children of immigrants is expected to rise from 5 million to 9 million between 1990 and 2010.

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THE EDUCATION OF IMMIGRANT CHILDREN IN NEW YORK CITY

Francisco Rivera-Batiz

Nearly one third of the total student population in New York City schools are immigrants, and the proportion is rising steadily. This digest presents an overview of all the factors that influence the education of immigrant children, concentrating on the students' needs, aspirations, and attainment, and on the public policies directed at them.

Demographics

The number of immigrants recently flocking to New York City has been massive. Between 1980 and 1990 about one million people from over 160 countries moved to the City. Now, over one-third of the City's population is comprised of immigrants (New York City Department of Planning, 1992).

For the purpose of securing aid, the City Board of Education takes an annual Federal Emergency Immigrant Education Census, counting children attending a school for three years or less whose total immigrant enrollment is at least three percent of its total enrollment. In the 1995-96 school year, the Census identified nearly 135,000 students-almost four times the number counted only five years before (Board of Education of the City of New York, 1996). These students represent only a portion of the total number of immigrants in New York City schools. In fact, using statistics from the 1990 U.S. Census of the Population, it is estimated that about 320,000 immigrant children attended City schools in 1995-96.

Linguistic Diversity and Education of Immigrant Children

As a result of immigration, the number of Limited English Proficient (LEP) students in City schools has risen sharply, to about 180,000 in Fall 1994. The Board of Education identifies LEP students by administering a Language Assessment Battery (LAB), which tests a student's English proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Through Federal and state legislation, LEP students are entitled to participate in an English as a Second Language (ESL) program. In addition, LEP students in schools where there are 20 or more students in the same grade with the same language are assigned to bilingual education programs, which include ESL and also native language communication arts instruction.

Educational Attainment and Achievement of Immigrant Children

Lack of English language skills is a major stumbling block in the adjustment of many immigrant children to their new schools, affecting their reading comprehension test scores especially, but also other test scores. For example, in 1992, only 13 percent of LEP students, compared with 56 percent of all

students, achieved at the 50th percentile or higher on the standardized Degrees of Reading Power test. The difference between the scores in the ninth grade Regents mathematics test of LEP students and students overall was not as great-40 percent of LEP students and 53 percent of all students passed (Board of Education, 1994).

Another reason why immigrants do not achieve in school is their lower socioeconomic status, which affects the financial and parental support that children have at home, and which is a proven factor in academic performance (Coleman, 1987). More advantaged students have educational supports such as encyclopedias and personal computers. They are also likely to have better educated parents who can help them with homework, and can set an example of academic achievement.

Immigrant students in general have higher dropout rates than the native-born. Here, again, English language proficiency plays an important role. For example, a 1994 U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) study found that the dropout rate of Hispanic immigrants was 49 percent for those who did not speak English well, but only 12 percent for those who spoke it very well.

Attitudes and Motivation of Immigrant Students

Newer immigrant children are highly motivated to attend and succeed at school, while more acculturated immigrants and the offspring of immigrants have higher dropout rates (see, for example, Suarez-Orozco, 1995, for a study of Mexican American adolescents in the U.S.). There are two major hypotheses for the discrepancy. The first is that immigrants in general are a highly motivated population that uses education for upward mobility (McDonnell & Hill, 1993). The second hypothesis considers the comparison between immigrants and U.S. born minorities who share the same low economic status and English proficiency (Ogbu, 1991; Solomon, 1992). According to this view, immigrant children perform above "involuntary minority" children, because the latter experience a historically-rooted discriminatory treatment in both society and educational institutions.

A random survey in four heavily immigrant schools, covering students' desire to be in school, interest and attentiveness in class, and belief that they were learning a lot, indicated that immigrants are more motivated than other students.

Policies and Programs to Promote Immigrant Student Achievement

Public Support

Federal and state funding specifically targeted to the education of immigrant children is quite limited. The major Federal program is the Emergency Immigrant Education Act. Immigrants can also benefit from the substantial Federal and state legislation targeting LEP children or children from low-income families. An example is Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which awards funds for promising programs for LEP students. Title I of that Act funds educational services to poor children. In 1995 the New York City public school system received \$376 million in Title I funds, and much of it was used to provide bilingual and general educational services to immigrant children.

There are also some programs financed by state and local educational agencies that affect immigrant children. Paradoxically, the most important of these were forced on districts by litigation in Federal courts. For example, in 1974, in what is called the Lau Decision, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that schools receiving Federal funds could not discriminate against LEP students by denying them special instructional programs that would allow their full participation in school while they were learning English.

School Programs

Students who receive language services may face problems because of their identification and separation as LEP students. In order for students to escape the stigma of LEP classes, to have equal access to the services available to students in mainstream programs, and to get an advanced level education, they must leave the special bilingual track. Unfortunately, however, many students are not monitored and tested frequently, and they languish there. In fact, only seven percent of students entering bilingual classes in the sixth grade test out within three years, and many students who enter them in junior or senior high school never do so (Dillon, 1994). Logically, programs for immigrant students must be intensive and transitional in nature, and avoid the "dumbing down" tracking implicit in multi-year programs.

Newcomer Schools

There are currently seven schools for immigrants in New York City and more are planned. All restrict admission to recent immigrants with limited English proficiency. Evidence suggests that their students will best be served if the schools closely follow the mainstream curriculum and work toward moving them into regular schools as quickly as possible (see the survey by Glenn, 1992).

Staff

There is a serious shortage of qualified bilingual teachers in New York City, partly as a result of the rapid enrollment growth of LEP students. In some City schools, teachers face students from as many as 45 different countries who use almost as many languages. The staff needed to sustain effective programs and maintain good student-to-teacher ratios is growing rapidly, so a sizable effort must be made to recruit and retain more bilingual teachers (Board of Education, 1991).

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General
immigrants



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SUMMARY

Throughout its history, the United States has been a nation of immigrants. The door may not always have been wide open, but it has never been completely shut. The current debate over the wisdom of high rates of immigration is not new; it stretches back even to colonial times. There are concerns about the effect of immigration on the economic prospects of native-born residents, on population growth, and on the ability of immigrants to interweave themselves into the social fabric of the nation.

Responding to these concerns, Congress in 1990 appointed a bipartisan Commission on Immigration Reform to review the nation's policies and laws and to recommend changes. In turn, the commission in 1995 asked the National Research Council to convene a panel of experts to assess the demographic, economic, and fiscal consequences of immigration. The panel was not asked to answer all the current questions about immigration, let alone to set out alternative policies or to make recommendations among them. Rather, it was asked to lay a scientific foundation for policymaking on some specific issues, to provide as rich a background as possible against which the commission could do its work.

The panel's charge was to address three key questions:

- * What is the effect of immigration on the future size and composition of the U.S. population?
- * What is the influence of immigration on the overall economy?
- * What is the fiscal impact of immigration on federal, state, and local governments?

This report summarizes the panel's work.

As long as there is a virtually unlimited supply of potential immigrants, the nation must make choices on how many to admit and who they should be. Throughout U.S. history, legislation and regulation have dealt with five generic issues: how many immigrants to admit; within that number, who should be let in and who should be excluded; how to deal with refugees; how to handle illegal immigrants; and whether immigrants and citizens should be treated the same.

The modern era of immigration policy dates from the 1965 Immigration and Naturalization Act. This act removed the quotas for immigrants based on national origins and replaced them with a preference system based primarily on family unification and, to a lesser extent, on occupational skills. One consequence of the 1965 legislation has been a decline in the labor market skills of new immigrants relative to those of native-born workers. This decline has accompanied a decrease in immigration from more prosperous Western Europe and a rise in immigration from Asian and Latin and South American countries. Recent legislation, notably the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, restricted access to public assistance programs for noncitizen legal immigrants, and set a lifetime limit on public assistance for all residents.

In 1994, there were nearly 800,000 legal immigrants. This number is considerably smaller than the number in the peak year of the early twentieth century wave of immigration--1.3 million immigrants in 1913. Moreover, since the resident population

has more than tripled during the course of the twentieth century, the number of immigrants in the earlier decades represented a much higher proportion: 13 immigrants per 1,000 resident population in 1913, compared with 3 immigrants per 1,000 residents in 1994. However, immigration now plays a greater role in population growth than it did eight decades ago: it accounts for 37 percent of total growth, partly because of the decline in the fertility rates of residents.

Besides legal immigrants admitted for permanent residence, there were in 1994 some 22 million visits by aliens admitted for short stays--students, tourists, short-term employees of international companies. Most stay no more than a few weeks, but others live in the United States for several years; some overstay their allotted time and swell the number of illegal immigrants.

Between 200,000 and 300,000 illegal immigrants enter the United States each year, 40 percent of whom first enter legally as nonimmigrants. Mounting concerns about illegal immigration led to the passage of the Immigration and Control Act of 1986. First, by requiring employers to check prospective employee's legal U.S. immigrant status and by setting financial and legal penalties for employers who knowingly hire an illegal immigrant, it sought to reduce the attraction of jobs in this country for illegal immigrants. Second, it provided for legalizing the status of those illegal immigrants who could prove their long-term residence--estimated to be nearly 3 million.

In census and survey data, it is not always clear whether foreign-born persons are legal or illegal immigrants or whether they are nonimmigrants who are temporarily in the United States. In this report, we refer to either foreign-born persons or immigrants, unless we wish to distinguish a particular type of immigrant.

IMPACT OF IMMIGRATION ON THE U.S. POPULATION

What influence will immigration have on the size and composition of the U.S. population over the next half century?

To answer that question, the panel developed a demographic model that projected the population to the year 2050. This model projects an initial population under various assumptions about fertility, mortality, and international migration. It places special emphasis on understanding the effects of immigration on the total population, its age structure, the size of the foreign-born population, and the ethnicity of its descendants. The model adds a generational perspective to demographic projection by distinguishing immigrants and their descendants, along with the current native-born population, using data on fertility, mortality, exogamy (rates of intermarriage), and ethnic affiliation that vary by generation and ethnicity.

In our projections, we used five alternative assumptions about the numbers of immigrants in the coming decades: a continuation of the current number of net immigration, high and low immigration (a 50 percent increase and decrease from current levels), and two extremes--zero net immigration and twice the current rate.

If net immigration continues indefinitely at its current levels, there will be 387 million people in the United States in 2050, 124 million more than at present. Immigration will play the dominant role in that growth, accounting for 80 million, or two-thirds, of the increase. Even if net immigration were halved, to 410,000 a year, the population would still rise to 349 million. And if it were increased by half, to 1,230,000 a year, the population would be 426 million by the middle of the 21st century.

Immigration will also affect the age distribution of the resident population, with crucial implications for public policy. Under current immigration policy, enrollment in kindergarten through grade eight will increase to 53.7 million by 2050, 17 percent more

than the 36.8 million in 1995. If immigration were cut in half, that number would be 47.3 million; and if it were 50 percent higher, it would be 57.6 million. High school enrollments will rise from 14.0 million in 1995 to 20.3 million under the medium assumption about immigration--and to 2.5 million more or less than that under the high or low assumptions.

The U.S. population is aging: the number of persons aged 65 years and older is expected approximately to double between 1995 and 2050, no matter what immigration policies are adopted. With a low immigration assumption, the absolute size of the population aged 65 and over will be 73.0 million in 2050; with the high immigration assumption, it will be 80.6 million. The proportion of older people in the total population will be smaller with higher immigration, however: there will be 27 older people for every 100 people aged 20 to 64 years in 2050 assuming high rates of immigration, compared with 30 assuming low rates of immigration.

Our demographic model also projects the racial and ethnic composition of the future population, divided into four mutually exclusive groups: non-Hispanic whites, blacks, Hispanics, and Asians (American Indians, Eskimos, and Aleuts are excluded from presentation in the report, but are included in the analysis for the total population). In addition to the rates of immigration and levels of childbearing, these projections depend critically on two parameters--rates of intermarriage and racial/ethnic affiliation, which is the extent to which individuals of multiple ancestry choose to identify with a given racial/ethnic group.

Under any immigration scenario, both the absolute and the relative sizes of the Asian-ancestry and Hispanic-ancestry populations will grow rapidly. Assuming continued net immigration at current levels, the size of the Asian population will increase from 9 to 34 million in 2050 (growing from 3 to 8 percent of the population). This growth stems mainly from the large fraction of Asians in the immigrant population. Similarly, fueled by higher fertility, high rates of immigration, and high attribution rates, the Hispanic population will grow substantially over this period. Assuming continued net immigration at current levels, and current rates of intermarriage and ethnic affiliation, the Hispanic population will rise from 27 million in 1995 (about 1 in 11 of the population) to 95 million in 2050 (about 1 in 4 of the population).

These projections incorporate the assumption that current levels of intermarriage will continue, and thus that the proportion of people with multiple ancestry will increase. Multiple ancestry adds complexity and ambiguity to ethnic definitions, and it is possible that, by the middle of the next century, ethnic and racial lines will be even more blurred.

ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF IMMIGRATION

The second charge to the panel concerned the impact of immigration on the U.S. economy. Economic theory points to possible effects on the employment and wages of domestic workers, U.S. trade with other countries, the growth rate of the economy, and the prices people pay for goods and services. To address these issues, the panel relied both on theoretical insights on what the likely effects would be, and on empirical estimates of the magnitude of the actual effects.

Using a basic economic model, with plausible assumptions, we show that immigration produces net economic gains for domestic residents, for several reasons. At the most basic level, immigrants increase the supply of labor and help produce new goods and services. But since they are paid less than the total value of these new goods and services, domestic workers as a group must gain.

The gains to the domestic economy come from a number of sources. On the production side, immigration allows domestic workers to be used more productively, specializing in producing goods at which they are relatively more efficient. Specialization in consumption also yields a gain.

Immigration thus breaks the rigid link between domestic consumption and domestic production. From this perspective, the effects of immigration are comparable to those of international trade. That the two processes are so similar suggests that, when trade is relatively free, any change in the number of immigrants will affect the incomes of domestic workers less than it would have without trade.

In our baseline analysis, we assume that the U.S. economy is characterized by constant returns to scale--that is, growth in the size and scale of the economy neither reduces nor increases the productivity of labor and capital. Existing research has not convincingly demonstrated that, in the aggregate, either decreasing returns due to fixed factors or congestion effects, or increasing returns, are more compelling alternatives. We caution, however, that we would not extrapolate far beyond current levels and say that immigration flows much larger than those considered in our demographic projections would always produce economic gains. With far larger flows, and over long periods of time, the uncertainty about increasing or decreasing returns to scale would have to be resolved with sound empirical evidence.

Even when the economy as a whole gains, however, there may be losers as well as gainers among different groups of U.S. residents. Along with immigrants themselves, the gainers are the owners of productive factors that are complementary with the labor of immigrants--that is, domestic, higher-skilled workers, and perhaps owners of capital--whose incomes will rise. Those who buy goods and services produced by immigrant labor also benefit. The losers may be the less-skilled domestic workers who compete with immigrants and whose wages will fall. To the extent that immigrants specialize in activities that otherwise would not have existed domestically, immigration can be beneficial for all domestic residents. In this case, there is little substitution of new immigrant workers for domestic workers, and domestic consumers gain from the lower prices of these services.

In the long run, assuming constant returns to scale, immigrants can affect rates of economic growth only to the extent that they differ from the native-born--if, for example, they arrive with a different mix of skills from those of native-born workers. To have an effect on growth rates, this difference between immigrants and natives must persist over each new generation. If the children of immigrants--or, if not the children, the grandchildren and great-grandchildren--come to be just like the native-born, then all that immigration does is augment the population and the scale of the economy; it does not change the rate of growth of income per capita.

Overall, in the massive and complex U.S. economy, immigration is unlikely to have a very large effect on relative earnings or on gross domestic product per capita. Among the legions of factors that affect the economy, many are far more critical than immigration, including savings and investment and the human capital of U.S. workers. Immigration over the 1980s increased the labor supply of all workers by about 4 percent. On the basis of evidence from the literature on labor demand, this increase could have reduced the wages of all competing native-born workers by about 1 or 2 percent. Meanwhile, noncompeting native-born workers would have seen their wages increase, and both competing and noncompeting workers may have benefited as consumers.

Overall, barring sizable immigration-induced economies or diseconomies of scale, the most plausible magnitudes of the impacts of immigration on the economy are modest for those who benefit from immigration, for those who lose from immigration, and for

total gross domestic product. The domestic gain may run on the order of \$1 billion to \$10 billion a year. Although this gain may be modest relative to the size of the U.S. economy, it remains a significant positive gain in absolute terms.

Potentially, immigration may have much larger effects on certain parts of the labor market--workers in geographic areas that receive large numbers of immigrants or those with low levels of education. However, comparisons of geographic areas with different levels of immigration show only a weak relationship between native wages and the number of immigrants in a city or state. Furthermore, in these studies the numerically weak relationship between native wages and immigration is observed across all types of native workers, skilled and unskilled, male and female, minority and nonminority. The one group that appears to suffer substantially from new waves of immigrants are immigrants from earlier waves, for whom the recent immigrants are close substitutes in the labor market.

While some have suspected that blacks suffer disproportionately from the inflow of low-skilled immigrants, none of the available evidence suggests that they have been particularly hard-hit on a national level. Some have lost their jobs, especially in places where immigrants are concentrated. But the majority of blacks live elsewhere, and their economic fortunes are tied largely to other factors.

There are a number of problems with studies based on local labor market analyses. If native workers and firms adapt to the entry of immigrants by moving to areas offering them better opportunities, then there is no reason to expect local-level correlation between the wages of natives and the presence of immigrants. The wages of all competing native workers would fall, not just the wages of natives working in the cities where immigrants cluster.

Some studies have investigated the impact of immigration on aggregate labor markets, rather than on local labor markets. Such studies estimate the effects of changing the relative proportions of skilled to unskilled workers to simulate the effects of the supply increases brought about by immigration. This approach also has its limitations, as it relies on an assumed underlying model of the economy. But plausible estimates based on this second approach show that, since 1980, immigration has been partly responsible for increasing the supply of high school dropouts by 15 percent, relative to the supply of workers with at least a high school education. Based on previous estimates of responses of wages to changes in supply, the supply increase due to immigration lowered the wages of high school dropouts by about 5 percent, that is, about 44 percent of the total decline in wages of high school dropouts observed between 1980 and 1994. This wage reduction is concentrated in a declining proportion of American workers. By 1995, high school dropouts represented less than 10 percent of the American workforce.

The evidence points to the conclusion that immigration has had a relatively small adverse impact on the wage and employment opportunities of competing native groups. This effect does not appear to be concentrated in the local areas where immigrants live, but instead is dispersed across the United States. This dispersal comes about in part because competing native workers migrate out of the areas to which immigrants move. Over the last two decades, immigration thus played some role in explaining the declining wages of high school dropouts, but little part in the expanding wage inequality for any other group of native workers.

Immigration most directly affects the welfare of the immigrants themselves. Immigrants expect to gain from immigration, or they would not come. Wages are higher in the United States than in less economically developed countries, such as Mexico and the Philippines. In addition, the spread of wages is broader in the United States than in most of the developed sending countries, such as Western Europe and Canada. Because of these differences, emigration to the United States should be

attractive to most workers from less developed countries and to more highly skilled workers from many developed countries.

Once in the United States, the foreign-born on average earn less than native workers. This gap between foreign-born and native workers has widened recently. Among both men and women, those who have arrived most recently and those who come from Latin America earn the lowest wages. Even though recent new arrivals are better educated than their earlier counterparts, the education of the native-born has improved even more, so that the gap in skills, and thus in wages, has widened. This relative decline in immigrant skills and wages can be attributed essentially to a single factor--the fact that those who have come most recently have come from poorer countries, where the average education and wage and skill levels are far below those in the United States.

Part of this growing wage gap may stem from the influx of illegal immigrants, who are generally more poorly educated, but it is not due exclusively to them. There is also evidence of widening in the gap among legal immigrants, brought about not only through shifts in their countries of origin, but also through changes in the composition of refugees and more severe limits on the entry of certain highly skilled immigrants (specifically, physicians). Over time, the wage gap closes for some--significantly for immigrants from Europe and Asia, and at least modestly for some others--but not at all for those from Mexico.

Employment rates of recent immigrants have also fallen relative to those of natives. However, immigrants catch up to natives relatively quickly, so that after some years in the United States their employment rates are quite similar to those of natives.

What jobs do immigrants do? A higher proportion of immigrants than of the native-born work in many jobs that call for high levels of education: they are college teachers of foreign languages, medical scientists, economists. But they are even more disproportionately represented in many of the lowest-paying jobs: as waiters and waitresses, agricultural graders and sorters, private household workers. Immigrants also account for a disproportionate number of workers in many occupations that require little education but much skill, such as tailors, dressmakers, and jewelers.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF IMMIGRATION

How do immigrants affect the revenues and expenditures of the various levels of government in the United States? Does additional immigration raise the amount that current residents must pay in taxes to receive a constant level of government services? Fiscal impacts are a much more important policy issue today than for earlier immigrant waves, because the relative size of all levels of government is so much larger.

Fiscal impacts are typically measured through estimates of the annual difference between taxes from immigrant households and the cost of government services and benefits to those households. The panel outlined how the fiscal impacts of immigrants on the native-born should be measured within a single year, and then directed a study based on that methodology for California. In addition, the panel made use of an existing study of annual fiscal impacts on New Jersey that also follows the same general methodology.

These annual calculations provide one picture of the United States today as a consequence of past immigration policies, but they cannot be used to predict the long-run cost to taxpayers of admitting additional immigrants. For this reason, the panel also directed a study of the long-term fiscal consequences of new immigrants. The long-term analysis takes the annual calculations as a starting point, and then projects revenues and expenditures into the future, under various assumptions about the course of immigration policy, fiscal policy, and the economic assimilation of immigrants and

their descendants.

Measures of Annual Impact

The panel's calculations of annual fiscal impact required data on government spending, taxes, household income, and program participation by household members. They also required assumptions and estimates about the incidence of business and real estate taxes, the degree to which the costs and benefits of various public services are affected by additional beneficiaries, and other characteristics of the economy. The panel's calculations for the annual fiscal impacts were made for households as the unit of analysis, rather than individuals, because households are the primary units through which public services are consumed and taxes paid. Ideally, the revenues from and expenditures on U.S.-born children of immigrants should be included in estimating the fiscal impact of immigrants, and this procedure was followed in the panel's estimates of long-run fiscal impacts. However, for the annual estimates, only those U.S.-born children who remain in the parent's household were included. As a result, the analysis tends to overstate the net fiscal burden of past immigration, because it generally includes U.S.-born children of immigrants in immigrant households when they are of school age (and hence costly), while excluding them once they have reached working ages and moved out on their own to become contributors (or at least a lighter burden).

At the state and local government levels in New Jersey, the net fiscal burden from immigrant-headed households in the 1989-90 fiscal year is estimated to be \$232 per native-headed New Jersey household, measured in 1996 dollars. A similarly constructed estimate for California from the 1994-95 fiscal year gives a net fiscal burden of \$1,178 per native-headed California household, again measured in 1996 dollars. On average, immigrant-headed households from these two states make small positive net contributions to the federal government, equivalent to a reduction of \$2 to \$4 per year in federal taxes for resident households nationwide. (There are indications, however, that immigrants outside California have a more substantial positive impact at the federal level.)

New Jersey and California both have large numbers of immigrants and, as a consequence, the net fiscal burden on native residents in those states imposed by immigrant-headed households is relatively high. If the net fiscal impact of all U.S. immigrant-headed households were averaged across all native households in the United States, the burden would be considerably lower--on the order of \$166 to \$226 per native household.

There are three main reasons why immigrants receive more in services than they pay in taxes in these annual calculations: (1) immigrant-headed households include more school-age children than native households on average, and therefore currently consume more educational services; (2) immigrant-headed households are poorer than native households on average, and therefore receive more state and locally funded income transfers; and (3) immigrant-headed households have lower incomes and own less property than native households on average, and thus pay lower state and local taxes.

Across the immigrant population, the size of the net fiscal burden imposed on native residents varies significantly. It is by far the heaviest for households of immigrants originating in Latin America. Immigrants from Europe and Canada actually make an average net fiscal contribution. These differences arise because households of Latin American immigrants tend to have lower incomes and to include more school-age children than do other immigrant households.

Looking forward, any fiscal burden from new immigration will be shared by the households of current immigrant residents as well as native households. For example, if

the United States added 916,000 new immigrants per year--an increase of about 10 percent in current immigration--and with those households located the way current immigrants are, they would increase the annual net fiscal burden on New Jersey households by about \$20 per household, and they would increase the burden for California households by about \$90 per household. For all U.S. native households, the net fiscal burden would be about \$15 to \$20 per household.

These estimates of the current-year fiscal impact of immigrant households do not provide an estimate of the long-term effect of immigration on public finances, for three reasons. First, new immigrants who are a net cost to the public sector in the current year's accounting (for example, those with children in school) may ultimately offer a net contribution, as their children finish school and become workers and taxpayers. And new immigrants who are helping to solve the nation's funding problem in the near term for Social Security and Medicare through increased payroll taxes are likely to become recipients of Social Security and Medicare benefits later in life, and so could turn out to represent a fiscal burden over their lifetimes.

Second, the fiscal benefit or burden from additions to the U.S. population depend crucially on the future paths of government spending and tax rates. Burdens today can be shifted onto future residents, both native and immigrant, through government borrowing. Only a long-term fiscal accounting can reveal these redistributions across generations, and hence offer an accurate picture of the long-run consequences of new immigration.

Third, the economic characteristics of the different generations of current foreign-born residents differ substantially. The annual measures for the current year combine the taxes and government expenditures associated with older immigrants who have been in the United States for many years with the taxes and spending associated with younger, recent arrivals.

Long-Term Measures of Fiscal Impact

Only a forward-looking projection of taxes and government spending can offer an accurate picture of the long-run fiscal consequences of admitting new immigrants. The methodology used by the panel for these long-run measures is an extension of the methodology of the annual calculations. Initially, tax payments and benefit receipts are estimated for individuals by immigrant status, age, education, and time in the United States; those estimates are then used to determine how adding an individual with particular characteristics would change government spending or revenues. Moving to an estimate of the long-term fiscal impacts requires making assumptions about future taxes and expenditures; the characteristics of new immigrants; how the differences between immigrants and natives in factors such as fertility rates and earnings change over time; and the discount rate used to combine costs and benefits in different years into a present value. The panel considered a variety of assumptions, which in turn generated a range of estimates. These illustrate how estimates of the fiscal impacts of immigration depend on future decisions about how many and which immigrants are admitted and about how the United States deals with the serious budget imbalances expected when the baby-boom generations retire.

The difference between immigrants and the native-born in program participation and program expenditures per capita varies greatly across types of government programs. For some programs, such as Social Security and Medicare, immigrants receive proportionately lower benefits than the native-born. For other programs, such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), and food stamps, they receive proportionately more. Combining the costs of benefits from all programs, there is little difference between immigrants and the native-born. Immigrants are more costly than natives during childhood because of the

costs of bilingual education, and they are less expensive than natives in old age. Over a lifetime, these differences tend to balance out. Program participation is affected by policy changes such as those made by the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act, which denied means-tested benefits to noncitizen immigrants. If we assume that immigrants are naturalized after the required five-year waiting period, these restrictions turn out not to increase significantly the present dollar value of the long-run fiscal benefits of admitting a new immigrant.

On balance, the panel's estimates of the fiscal impact of immigration are affected more by differences in future earnings between immigrant families and the native-born than by differences in program participation. The lower earnings of immigrants mean that they pay lower taxes, and these tax differences are much more substantial than the differences in benefits.

Taking the difference between taxes paid and benefits received at each age, immigrants (like others) are costly in childhood and in old age, but are net payers of taxes during their working ages. For this reason, the long-term net fiscal impact of an immigrant (measured as a present dollar value) varies greatly with age at arrival. Immigrants arriving at ages 10 to 25 produce fiscal benefits for natives under most scenarios, whereas immigrants arriving in their late sixties generally impose a long-term fiscal burden. In fact, most immigrants tend to arrive at young working ages, which partly explains why the net fiscal impact of immigration is positive under most scenarios.

The long-term fiscal impact of an immigrant also depends on his or her education: immigrants with more education have more positive long-term fiscal impacts. For example, under one set of plausible assumptions, the net present value of the fiscal impact of an immigrant with less than a high school education is -\$13,000; in contrast, the net present value for an immigrant with more than a high school education is +\$198,000.

If the only policy goal were to maximize the positive contribution of immigration to public-sector budgets, that could be achieved by policies favoring highly educated immigrants and not admitting immigrants over age 50.

Although the average fiscal impacts of new immigration measured in present values are found to be positive under most scenarios, the impact of an increase in the annual flow of immigrants would initially be negative overall for a couple of decades before turning positive. The timing and extent of such a period depends crucially on federal fiscal policy. Given that near-term fiscal burdens will be offset by later fiscal gains, the present-value estimates of the long-term fiscal impact will be sensitive to the choice of a discount rate for comparing future expenditures and revenues with current ones.

Finally, under most scenarios, the long-run fiscal impact is strongly positive at the federal level, but substantially negative at the state and local levels. The federal impact is shared evenly across the nation, but the negative state and local impacts are concentrated in the few states and localities that receive most of the new immigrants. Consequently, native residents of some states, such as California, may incur net fiscal burdens from immigrants while residents of most states reap net fiscal benefits.

SOCIAL DIMENSIONS OF IMMIGRATION

How well are immigrants and their descendants integrated into American society, and how does immigration affect important American institutions? These are complex research issues, in which speculation and public discourse often run ahead of conclusive research findings. Despite fears in the past about the effects of immigration on the social fabric of the nation, few socioeconomic differences now separate the descendants of immigrants from Europe. Whether the same generational progress will characterize

present-day immigrants and their children remains to be seen. Early readings suggest that some recent immigrants and their children--especially Asian Americans--match native-born whites in education and occupation, although not in incomes, fairly quickly.

Residential segregation is another visible measure of social distance. Recent immigrants tend to cluster in neighborhoods with others from their country of origin. But with convergence in socioeconomic status across generations, most immigrants disperse from the ethnic neighborhoods where they first tend to settle, and integrate with the overall population.

This residential movement has parallels in intermarriage among immigrant groups. Today, the children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren of immigrants from various European countries and of various religions--once so distinct as to be referred to as "races"--have intermarried to such an extent as to virtually erase differences in education, income, occupation, and residence.

The picture is similar on the sensitive issue of the English language. Many immigrants arrive with at least a working knowledge of English. The 1990 decennial census found that three-fifths of the immigrants who came in the 1980s spoke English well or even very well; and of those who had been here 30 years or more, only 3 percent reported that they could not speak English well.

Attempts to draw empirical conclusions about the relation between immigration and crime rates founder on problems of measurement. Crime rates rose from the 1960s until about 1990, and since then have declined; there is no obvious link with trends in immigration in this period. Studies at the local level have found no association of immigrant concentrations with crime rates, with the exception of high rates of nonviolent crime near the borders.

Americans have always been ambivalent toward immigration, welcoming flows of foreigners in one era, blocking them in the next. In the past 50 years, polling data have charted a deepening opposition to immigration, linked in part, it appears, to economic concerns. Interethnic tensions have surfaced, especially in areas of high unemployment and poverty. Attitudes are by no means monolithic, however: Americans of African, Hispanic, and Asian descent are more accepting of immigration than non-Hispanic whites are. At present, about 68 percent of non-Hispanic whites favor decreasing immigration, compared with 57 percent of blacks. Asians and Hispanics are even more favorable toward immigration than blacks. Persons with more education tend to accept immigration more than those with less education. Finally, attitudes toward immigrants are no more negative in states with large immigrant populations than in the rest of the country.

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Immigrants: Providing a Lesson In How To Adapt

By Lynn Schnaiberg

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"Immigration Plays
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Chicago

The 20-room annex at William G. Hibbard Elementary School shows just how much immigration has changed the 1,200-student school.

Before the annex opened here last fall, some class sizes hovered in the 40s. Students, mostly immigrants and the children of immigrants, attended classes in stairwell landings and hallways.

The Northwest Chicago neighborhood where the pre-K-6 school sits has long been a port of entry for new immigrants. Assistant Principal Ron Lyons, who has worked at Hibbard for more than two decades, recalls an influx of Greek immigrants early in his tenure. These days, the students' names printed on paper snowmen hanging outside Nancy Samra's 1st grade classroom represent a range of nations: Carlos, Ruqia, Cuong, Vannak, and Walid.

Almost half of Hibbard's students lack proficiency in English. The school's English-as-a-second-language program enrolls children who speak 17 different languages. Hibbard offers bilingual programs that teach students partly in their native languages: Spanish, Bosnian/Serbo-Croatian, Arabic, Vietnamese, and Khmer--for now.

"We're always in a state of flux here," Lyons says.

Beginning with the huge influxes of immigrants to the United States in the early part of the century, public schools have had to adapt to immigrant students--however reluctantly--and, in turn, help those students adapt to America. And the politics of the day have always helped shape the schools' response to the newcomers.

While the 1990s are likely to hit a century high in the sheer number of immigrants, 1910 remains the high point for the percentage of the U.S. population made up of those born elsewhere. That year, 14.7 percent of Americans were foreign-born; last year, the figure was 9.8 percent.

In the century's first decade, 9 million immigrants arrived in the United States, most from Southern, Central, and Eastern Europe. At the close of the century, immigrants are most likely to come from Latin America and Asia.

The trends are no fluke.

Beginning with the huge influxes of immigrants to the United States in the early part of the century, public schools have had to adapt to immigrant students, and, in turn, help those students adapt to America.

Laws passed in the 1920s to restrict immigration set a downward curve that didn't reverse itself until the 1970s. A 1965 law undid the national-origin quotas set in the early part of the century that barred virtually all Asian immigrants and favored those from Northern and Western Europe.

In 1990, compared with 1910, proportionately more foreign-born residents had been in the United States 10 years or less. Such new arrivals are less likely to be fluent in English. And Jeffrey S. Passel, an immigration expert at the Urban Institute in Washington, points out that the issue of illegal immigration is relatively new. Immigrants here illegally, he says, are more likely to fear contact with institutions such as school.

Immigration is still largely an urban phenomenon--about half of all immigrants arriving in the 1980s lived in just eight metropolitan areas--but far from exclusively so. Immigration has touched suburban and rural schools and communities as well as urban areas. ("Growth in the Garden")

How schools accommodate their immigrant pupils is inextricably linked to broader societal attitudes about immigration. And schools throughout the century have found themselves in a recurring pendulum swing between assimilation and pluralism.



Students representing 19 nations line up for a group photo at a New York City public school in 1926.

--Corbis-Bettmann

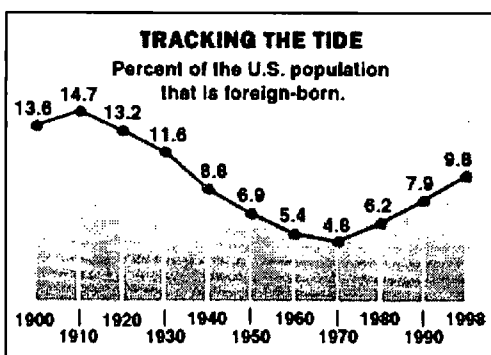
Becoming Americans

It's easy to point to schools' explicit adaptations to immigrant and non-English-speaking students: bilingual and ESL classes, most obviously. But some aspects of school now considered "mainstream" emerged in the century's early years at least partly in response to the flow of immigrants.

"Immigration really has the impact of introducing and enlarging a new set of things we now commonly take for granted in school," says Marvin Lazerson, an education historian at the University of Pennsylvania. "It broadened the definition of what schools ought to be about."

In the early 20th century, urban schools, to a large degree, were about helping immigrant children become better and healthier citizens.

Immigrants served as a partial trigger--or at least a crucial clientele--for a range of social services in school: from hygiene lessons and vaccinations, to extended-day and summer programs, to school meals and playgrounds. Schools were seen as one of the best places to reach and assimilate newly arrived immigrant students and their families.



Source: U.S. Department of Commerce

Education historians say such newcomers also gave added impetus to the expansion of kindergarten, vocational education, and civics.

Compulsory-attendance laws were crafted in part to reach immigrant children, who figured disproportionately in big cities' truancy rosters. Immigrants were not the exclusive motivator for attendance laws, "but a very powerful one," says David B. Tyack, an education historian at Stanford University. "The notion was: How can they become American if they don't go to school?"

Some school adaptations that seem decidedly modern have roots in the early part of the century. Today's newcomer programs for recent immigrants share some parallels with "steamer" or "vestibule" classes the New York City schools held to give new arrivals a crash course in English. Newcomer programs today often offer intensive language help and an orientation to the American school system and the cities where their students live.

While policymakers continue to grapple with difficult issues of ensuring such students' equal access to a good education, the question of school access at the turn of the century was often a starkly literal one: Many immigrant students were turned away because there was simply no room.

Schools across the country varied widely in how much they were affected by immigration and, in turn, how they responded to it. But the perception of the immigrant as a distinct "other"--early in the century when Southern and Eastern European ethnic groups were considered "races"--helped shape the ways schools adapted.

Historians point to a movement among educators in the first quarter of the century--supported by the U.S. Bureau of Education and such civic and community groups as the YMCA--to foster the "Americanization" of immigrant students. Schools were seen as places where polyglot populations went to be homogenized and absorbed into the larger society.

Published accounts of New York City schools in the early 20th century talk about classes to eliminate foreign accents, courses on "manners and conduct of life," and instruction in home economics and sewing to teach girls how to maintain an American home. Schools reached out to Americanize immigrant parents, too, by offering naturalization classes and free lectures.

Some historians view Americanization as coercive, nativist, and

denigrating. Others see it as having provided immigrants needed structure and direction in a difficult new environment.

But most agree that the movement took on a harsher bent as anti-foreign tensions heated up at the time of the First World War. Many states passed laws banning German in classrooms, on the street, and in church. In the wake of the war, many states legislated English as the basic language of instruction or forbade foreign-language study in the elementary grades.

But as the flow of new immigrants waned in the 1930s, so too did society's fears. A new movement took hold in what some describe as a gentler approach to assimilation. Without waves of newcomers to manage, the leaders of the "interculturalism" movement of the 1930s and 1940s focused on "the second-generation problem."

With the push for "multicultural" education, schools again would have to confront tensions surrounding assimilation, unity, and diversity.

Progressive educators, academics, and race-relations experts introduced school programs to reduce racial, ethnic, and religious tensions and incorporate minorities on equal terms into the American mainstream.

Interculturalists talked about "our history" and "our American way of life" and how various immigrant groups contributed to that collective notion.

But pluralism had its limits.

Some interculturalists pushed to affirm cultural diversity; others wanted simply to acknowledge it and keep the affirmation muted lest it disrupt national unity.

In 1945, Stewart Cole, the director of a group promoting intercultural education, warned: "National cultural unity must not be jeopardized by an exaggerated development of the forces of cultural diversity."

The intercultural movement foreshadowed another shift of the pendulum, spurred by the civil rights movement of the 1960s. With the push for "multicultural" education, schools again would have to confront tensions surrounding assimilation, unity, and diversity.

The Language Debate

The civil rights movement was a turning point, pushing American society and its schools to address inequities among the poor and racial and ethnic minorities--and, eventually, language-minority students.

A slew of court rulings and federal laws securing equal access to school programs focused attention on the needs of immigrant and non-English-speaking children. Special programs were designed to help youngsters who, in the inelegant jargon of the experts and bureaucrats, were labeled "limited English proficient," or lep.

The debate over language instruction for LEP students, however, is not a new one.

Contemporary bilingual programs, in which students learn some academic

subjects in their native languages, bear some resemblance to German-language programs in such heavily German cities as Cincinnati and Indianapolis from the mid-19th century to the early 20th century. The programs were offered largely as a means of luring German immigrants away from parochial schools, which often taught in German.

Such programs were not without their critics. In 1870s St. Louis, the district offered a German-language kindergarten and offered German study in the elementary grades. Opponents, especially the Irish, denounced such classes as costing too much, interfering with the regular curriculum, and threatening the standing of the English language.

The anti-German sentiment incited by World War I ended whatever was left of the early language accommodation in schools.

But in the past quarter-century, two U.S. Supreme Court rulings have radically reshaped the school landscape for LEP and immigrant children.

In its 1974 decision in *Lau v. Nichols*, the court held that the San Francisco schools had to offer special help to enable LEP students to participate equally in school. In its argument to the high court, the San Francisco district reflected the view of many schools at the time, says Peter Roos, a civil rights lawyer based in that city.

"The kids had to adapt to the school, not the other way around. The argument then was there's no obligation to adjust in any way the district's educational program," which was designed for English-speaking "Anglo" students, Roos says.

Then in 1982, the Supreme Court ruled in *Plyler v. Doe* that schools could not deny illegal-immigrant children a free public education.

This decade in California, the state most heavily affected by immigrants, voters approved a ballot initiative in 1994 to deny illegal immigrants access to most public benefits, including a free education, and another in 1998, to virtually eliminate bilingual education in the public schools. The first measure has been blocked in the courts; the second is being carried out while court battles continue.

So, as the century draws to a close, immigrants again are making their presence felt and pushing questions to the fore: What does it mean to be an American? What is it immigrants should be assimilating to? And on whose terms?

Such questions are immediate ones for Chicago's Hibbard Elementary. Black-and-white photographs and stories of several students and their families who have immigrated to the city's Albany Park neighborhood hang in the school hallway.

In addition to promoting diversity with its "Changing Worlds" project, Hibbard plans to use the project to make the curriculum more relevant to its mostly immigrant population.

"We highlight the different cultures, but yet we're always promoting patriotism and talking about what it means to be American," says Roquel Landsman, Hibbard's curriculum coordinator. "We're promoting tolerance. It's not 'us and them' at this school. We're all 'them' here."

On the Web

Read a summary of "The New Americans: Economic, Demographic, and Fiscal Effects of Immigration," a 1997 report from the National Research Council. Or, the full text of the report, from the National Academy Press.

See a chart outlining federal budgets and requests to accommodate bilingual and immigrant education spending, from the U.S. Department of Education Web site. See in particular, additional costs of immigrant education. ✓

"Watching America's Door: The Immigration Backlash and the New Policy Debate,"
Roberto Suro examines the political reactions to immigration and calls for a more responsive national immigration policy.

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EDUCATION WEEK on the WEB

IN CONTEXT THE ARCHIVES TEACHER MAGAZINE THE DAILY NEWS SPECIAL REPORTS PRODUCTS & SERVICES



Rural N.C. To Get Aid For LEP-Student Influx

By Kathleen Kennedy Manzo

A decade ago, the only immigrants in Lee County, N.C., aside from some transplanted Northerners, were a small group of migrant farm workers and their families. With only a couple dozen language-minority students--mostly Hispanic children whose parents moved with the cycle of harvests throughout the South--the 8,000-student school system in the state's smallest county gave little thought to providing special language services.

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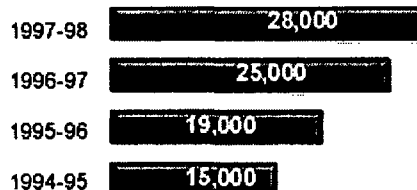
THE
A Look Back
CENTURY
At 100 Years
SERIES
Of American Public Education



Read our two Commentaries on bilingual education: "Is It 'Lingual,' or Is It 'Education'?", and "Repair It, Don't Replace It," Aug. 5, 1998.

But an explosion in the population of non-English-speaking residents over the past few years--lured to the rural community in central North Carolina by the strong economy and an abundance of low-skill jobs--has made such services essential in the district's 13 schools.

LEP Students in N.C. Classrooms



SOURCE: North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.

School officials in Lee County, and others throughout North Carolina, have had to scrape together resources to serve the ballooning ranks of children with limited English proficiency. Without state aid for such programs, they have squeezed money from local budgets to hire translators and buy

For background, previous stories, and Web links, see our Issues Page on Bilingual Education.

instructional materials, borrowed teachers from foreign-language classes, and tapped federal bilingual education programs to pay for professional development.

Finally, however, help has arrived. After four years of pleas from the state school board for assistance, lawmakers answered in the state's fiscal 1999 budget approved last fall. It lays out statewide standards for serving LEP students and provides \$5 million to help districts meet them.

"We've been having to make hard choices about how to [allocate] money," said Linda S. Higgins, the Lee County district's director of special programs and projects. "It's often a question of what do we give up if we can't get any other funding."

Population Boom

Though non-English-speaking immigrants have been relocating to rural communities elsewhere in the country since the early 1990s, many district and state officials in North Carolina were caught off guard by the rapid influx of newcomers there. In the Lee County schools this year, more than 1,100 students speak one of 18 languages other than English

and have completed varying levels of formal education. Approximately 28,000 LEP students were enrolled in schools throughout the state in the 1997-98 school year--nearly double the number just three years earlier. Together, they represent up to 200 different languages.

The state's urban centers, such as Raleigh and Charlotte, have long served students with varying degrees of English proficiency. But the booming food-processing and furniture-manufacturing industries that have spread the state's prosperity to outlying areas have enabled workers from Central America, Asia, and the West Indies to gain residency and lay down roots in rural districts. The state's tiniest school systems, with fewer local resources, are the least prepared to address the evolving patchwork of academic needs, according to Frances S. Hoch, the director of English-as-a-second-language services for the state education department.

Many lawmakers are just starting to understand the pattern of change in the state's 2,000 schools.

"I was absolutely amazed at the problem we found," said Sen. Howard N. Lee. The Chapel Hill Democrat visited schools throughout the state during the past year to assess academic needs. "I visited several schools where students were isolated in the classroom because they couldn't speak English, and no one in the school spoke their language. There was one girl whose language couldn't even be identified," he said.

Other states, such as Arkansas, Delaware, Georgia, and Iowa, have also felt the burden of unexpected waves of immigration, especially in their rural communities. ("Immigration's Final Frontier," Feb. 23, 1994.)

Georgia officials, for instance, have seen the number of students in state-financed second-language programs grow by 180 percent, to more than 20,000, during the past six years. The greatest proportion of such students is in Georgia's most sparsely populated districts, according to state officials.

The phenomenon has emerged over the past five years or so, according to Jeffrey S. Passel, a demographer for the Urban Institute in Washington.

"This trend did not appear on the 1990 census," he said. A greater dispersal of immigrants, particularly those from Mexico, is occurring "in rural areas, small towns, and small cities," he said, concentrated around the food-processing and poultry industries and agriculture.

'Piddling Amount'

Sen. Lee led North Carolina's legislative efforts to target state money to the most affected districts. But the money comes late for many districts, Mr. Lee said, and is a "piddling amount" compared with the \$30 million to \$60 million some educators and legislators say is needed.

Because most jurisdictions are suffering growing pains, the need for help has few detractors, according to John N. Dornan, the executive director of the Public School Forum of North Carolina, a nonprofit research center in Raleigh.

Mr. Lee hopes legislators will double funding next year. "We need to respond to the needs of these children," Mr. Lee said. Inevitably, he

predicted, "we are going to face a legal directive to do so."

The state's belated action headed off a lawsuit by the North Carolina Education and Law Center in Raleigh, which advocates improved educational opportunities for at-risk students. The organization argued that the state had not fulfilled its duty to provide a high-quality education to students who speak little or no English, said Greg Malhoit, its director. Mr. Malhoit, who contends that the state's response is still inadequate, expects to refile the lawsuit in the coming months.

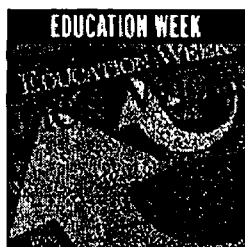
"There has been substantial improvement in the setting of guidelines and expectations for schools" in serving LEP students, he said. "The problem is that school systems don't have adequate resources to meet the mandate."

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February 23, 1994

EDUCATION WEEK on the WEB



IN CONTEXT

THE ARCHIVES

TEACHER MAGAZINE

THE DAILY NEWS

SPECIAL REPORT

Immigration's Final Frontier

By

Lynn Schnaiberg

A Hispanic man clad in the uniform of a poultry-plant worker--chocolate-brown shirt and khaki pants--squeezes through the glass door at a local post office.

At the small corner table he pulls out a crumpled envelope, a handwritten letter in Spanish, and a check.

After laboriously printing a Zacatecas, Mexico, address on the envelope, he finally reaches the mail clerk.

He says simply: "Stamp."

In such places as Los Angeles, Miami, Chicago, or New York City, this event would pass without notice. But not at this post office.

Not in Rogers, Ark.

Tucked into the northwest corner of a state that immigration observers call part of the nation's final frontier, this Ozark town is home to 30,000 residents, 97 percent of whom are white. Things have pretty much been that way since the town was settled in 1881 and named for the superintendent of the St. Louis-San Francisco Railway, which created a livelihood for local farmers by shipping their apples across the country.

Over the past five years, however, an estimated 10,000 to 15,000 Hispanics, mostly Mexicans, have moved into the region, and a number of them--no one knows how many--now live in Rogers.

For the first time, schools in Rogers are grappling with how to educate a population of students who speak little or no English, who may not even be proficient in speaking or writing their native tongue, and who are just as likely to drive in from Los Angeles or El Paso as from Guadalajara or Durango in Mexico.

A community that prides itself on unity is being forced to deal with people who look, speak, and act differently.

The parents come for jobs, mostly as line workers in one of the many poultry-processing plants that dot the landscape--dominated by Tyson Foods Inc., the nation's biggest such processor, run by a local boy turned multimillionaire, Don Tyson. Jobs in the area are plentiful, and unemployment runs only around 3 percent.

In what may be a historic trend, the availability of jobs is helping push immigrant families from more traditional immigration and migration routes into previously homogeneous, mostly rural territory in Arkansas and across Middle America. Andre L. Guerrero, the director for civil rights and bilingual education at the state education department, calls Rogers a "latter-day Ellis Island."

To an urban eye, Rogers still has room to grow, with fields of cows and horses not just on the edge of town but inside it. But many residents say they feel crowded, that things are outgrowing themselves too quickly.

Rogers is already reeling from a population explosion. It is Arkansas's fastest-growing city--its population has nearly doubled over the past decade--and the Hispanics' arrival is only the latest chapter in that story.

Vestiges of an older Rogers sometimes manage to peek through its newer industrial sprawl; the brick facades of the old downtown have been painstakingly restored. Although the letters from H.L. Stroud's general store (founded in 1899) were removed after it closed last year, nearly a century of sun faded the surrounding brick so that the name is indelible.

Attracted by the state's right-to-work status and a seemingly limitless water supply from

Beaver Lake, industry flocked to Rogers from nearby states. Many fields that have not yet been filled by plants and parking lots for such industries as Wal-Mart, J.B. Hunt trucking, Daisy Manufacturing Company, and First Brands Corporation bear signs announcing the arrival of a new housing development or industrial park.

Rogers's prosperity has pulled many of its longtime residents into higher-paying manufacturing jobs, leaving to Hispanics the jobs of killing, stripping, hanging, cutting, and cooking birds.

Officially, from the school superintendent to the Mayor, the town's new cultural diversity is a resource, not a problem. They want the newcomers integrated into the community. But most people in Rogers are just waking up to the reality that their community is in the process of a historical transformation. And some clearly are not ready for it.

Around the 1920's, Rogers had a brief experience with Mexican farm laborers who came to the area to harvest apples. In contrast to the families flocking to Rogers today, those were single men harvesting for a few months and returning to Mexico.

In the late 1970's, after the fall of Saigon, the federal government resettled thousands of Vietnamese refugees in the Fort Smith area, about 70 miles south of Rogers. Some families trickled north to Rogers, but many of them already spoke English and were so few in number--peaking at 24 in 1981--that they were easily served, school officials note.

Such is not the case today.

At the beginning of the 1991-92 school year, the district had 35 limited-English-proficient students. By the end of the year, there were 84. The following year, the figure jumped to 148. This school year, the total hovers around 300, out of a total enrollment of 8,060.

While the L.E.P. students make up a relatively small percentage of the total enrollment, they pose a big challenge to the district.

Schools in the district are already crowded, and officials are considering a year-round calendar. The district is also building at a rate equivalent to one new elementary school a year. It has in place a baffling busing schedule of nearly 60 routes that traverse its 258-square-mile territory, shuffling some students from one side of town to another to comply with the state's maximum classroom sizes. This dilutes the district's already thin services for L.E.P. students by forcing programs to follow students to more places.

Katy White, the principal of Lowell Elementary School, where many of the first Hispanic students showed up, recalls her first thoughts.

"My first worry was just getting the kids home, finding out where they lived, and getting them off at the bus stop," she says.

To do that, she called a local woman who spoke Spanish, who came armed with a Rogers map. But other issues were a bit more complicated. "Do we have to pay attention to them having a green card or not? We really just had to familiarize ourselves with the law," White says.

Since that time, the district has held a few English-as-a-second-language seminars, offered some basic-Spanish classes to staff members, and bought software to translate written English into Spanish.

Theoretically, something is in place at every grade level to provide at least some special help for L.E.P. students, although the state education department has raised questions about the program's overall efficacy. Since the numbers of students with limited English are still relatively small, district officials say, there is no practical way to group students by ability or grade level within those programs.

The district has no means of assessing students in their native language--many students show up to register with no previous academic records--and must rely on the judgment of teachers and principals who admit they have no expertise in such assessment. There is no consensus on appropriate curriculum, no official policy on how to promote students to the next grade, no organized meetings to keep mainstream teachers updated on what students are learning in their specialized pullout classes.

"By no means do we say that we're doing everything we should," admits Deputy Superintendent Joe Mathias. "We're just operating on a trial-and-error basis."

When the district looks to the state for help, it finds that the education department itself has scant resources for districts like Rogers. It, too, is just now dealing with the notion that Arkansas even has an L.E.P. population to serve.

With no certified "experts" on bilingual education, E.S.L., or multicultural issues, the district relies on a select group of teachers to muddle through how to best reach these students.

Teachers charged with serving the district's L.E.P. students take very different approaches to their task.

One wall of Katie S. Kraner's low-ceilinged classroom in a former National Guard armory displays a world map with red arrows connecting pupils' names and their home countries or states. The names from Mexico far outnumber those from Vietnam, El Salvador, California, and Texas. Kraner's is the only name from Ohio. Next to this, a U.S. map holds a sign saying: "You are here: Rogers, Arkansas."

Children ages 5 to 13 file through the back door, sliding off winter coats and brightly colored backpacks en route to their desks. They recite the Pledge of Allegiance by heart, then sing "My Country 'Tis of Thee" as Kraner, clad in a crisp white blouse and wool skirt, beams approvingly.

After they have been drilled on their phone numbers and addresses, it's time for journal writing, and the students whisper softly in Spanish among themselves. Hugo Garcia, a 3rd grader who arrived in Rogers four months ago from Mexico City, pages through his journal, gently fingering the gold chain around his neck. His Oct. 14 entry says: "I am sad when I moved from Mexico."

Hugo, who counts on his fingers the 16 family members and friends who share a house in Rogers, explains in Spanish that he understands "a little" of his other classes, but he likes playing soccer during gym class because he does not have to talk.

Kraner speaks almost no Spanish and is not trained in E.S.L., but she once taught an English-immersion class for the wives of Japanese executives brought in by a Honda motorcycle plant in Anna, Ohio. "But they [the Japanese] have a stronger drive than the Hispanics," she says.

When she has a discipline problem, she visits the student's home, bringing along a relatively bilingual 7th grader to translate.

Some of her pupils have little proficiency in their native Spanish, which bilingual-education experts say makes it difficult to learn a second language. Yet, Kraner says that learning English is paramount.

"With so many other things to be consumed with, I don't think native-language proficiency should be at the top of our list," she says. "The central office has given me a lot of flexibility to do what I think works."

Kraner's approach is not unusual in the district.

Ron T. Highfill, who teaches high school Spanish, says that when he started his peer-tutoring class for L.E.P. students two years ago, "the district was totally mainstreaming these students. They were just sitting in class staring at the teacher; they couldn't even understand the instructions. I wanted them to at least utilize their time."

Highfill, who taught English in Mexico for two years, uses his lunch hour, planning period, and time between classes to hunt down some of the students' other teachers to discuss their progress. But there's no way to keep tabs on all of them.

He says he and one of the counselors shepherd the L.E.P. students, looking for classes they can pass with teachers who can handle them. Counselors at other schools report making similar arrangements.

"I haven't gotten any guidelines or restrictions," Highfill says. "They just figure I'll use my common sense."

Like Kraner, Jeanne Couey designs her own curriculum, but she opts for a bilingual approach.

For 50 minutes, Couey and her students--Hector, Fermin, Claudia, Jaime, Alejandro, and Leslie--speak freely in Spanish and English. Reviewing for an upcoming test, they staple together "three-dimensional study sheets" that ask for words in both languages.

"If we had kids from Turkey, Greece, and India, we'd have to think about different 'immersion' programs, but we only have one language here," she points out. She thinks the L.E.P. students would be better served if the district assigned them all to a few schools rather than bus them across town.

One eye monitoring the students' project, Couey ticks off the different proficiency levels in this class: no written skills in either language but speaks both; low self-esteem but fairly bilingual; well-educated in Mexico but having some adjustment problems here. The list goes on.

Managing the challenge of Rogers's new residents takes its toll on teachers.

Couey has to remain mobile. Each school day, she shuttles between six classrooms in two different junior highs. After classes, she's off to a student's home or yet another school that needs help translating a letter, telephoning, or collecting a signature from an L.E.P. student's family.

Born in San Diego to a Native American mother and Swedish father, Couey worked for three years as an E.S.L. teacher for a community center in Dade County, Fla., although she never was certified in the specialty. The Rogers district hired her three years ago part time to work with L.E.P. students, though she says she never got any formal title.

At first, she visited nearly every student's home to make initial contact. She would write about three letters a day seeking free materials in Spanish--ranging from guides to prescription drugs to information on applying for Social Security--to bring along on those visits. But today there are too many students, and she is tired.

Particularly frustrating are the calls she occasionally gets from a principal asking, "Have my students learned English yet?" after only a few months of lessons. Many bilingual-education experts say it takes from five to seven years to develop "academic proficiency" in a second language, although it can take as little as one year for a student to be conversational.

"It's like they want you to 'fix' them and send them back when they're ready," Couey says. "It just doesn't work like that."

Later this day, Couey pulls up to the Quintana home, one in a row of neat, low-slung brick houses, to check in on Leslie, a 7th grader. "I always tell my students never to forget their Spanish," Couey says, slinging her bloated briefcase over her arm. Above the door is a sign that says "La Familia Quintana."

The Quintanas, originally from El Salvador, moved to Rogers in 1991 from Los Angeles on the advice of Nelson Quintana's half brother. Leslie's father says Los Angeles was "jail-like" and he feared for his daughters' safety around the gangs in their predominantly Hispanic neighborhood.

Both parents got jobs with local poultry plants and today live in a predominantly Anglo neighborhood. Mr. Quintana says being in a more "American" environment will help daughters Leslie and Mirna, a 3rd grader, learn English more quickly.

Still, Leslie says her first day of school was a shock.

"I just saw white faces everywhere," she says.

Teachers have relied on the girls to tutor other Hispanic students in their classes as part of the district's "buddy system." Both help translate for their mom, Gloria, who speaks little English, when they go grocery shopping or do other errands.

As the Quintana parents talk with Couey in Spanish, Mirna climbs onto the teacher's lap.

"I wish there were more people like Senora Couey here, good people," Gloria Quintana says in Spanish. "I see that she appreciates my daughters a lot and for that I appreciate her."

Without a set game plan for dealing with its new Hispanic children and families, Rogers relies heavily on the personal interest of teachers and others active in the community to manage its newfound diversity.

For the 13 families she gets paid to work with, and the 15 to 20 more she does not, Efigenia Jett, a native of Panama, is a lifeline to the schools and community.

The school district pays her to help prepare Hispanic children for kindergarten by teaching parents to teach their children school-readiness skills using the Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY). Roughly 10 percent of Rogers's kindergartners are Hispanic.

Jett has also been called at 2 A.M. to accompany a pregnant woman to the delivery room, and stayed with her all night and the next day until she gave birth. She has been asked to mediate marital problems, translate letters, order pizza, and, sometimes, just to give advice. Those are the tasks for which she does not get paid.

"They don't like to go to just anybody," Jett explains en route to a home visit. "They're very proud, but they trust me."

Passing the carbon-copy brick homes of Rogers's newer developments, she pulls off the smooth black pavement onto a gravel road, stopping in front of a dull-white wood house. The closest neighbor on one side is a Tyson plant, white smoke billowing over the houses' roofs. The car parked outside still has a California license plate.

Teresa Guzman answers Jett's knock, a smile spreading over her face as the two women hug and walk through a sparsely furnished living room.

At the kitchen table, Jett opens her binder and begins the lesson, pulling out bags of crayons, plastic shapes, and plastic tableware because most of the families she visits do not have such things.

The lesson deals with spatial relationships, and the two women laugh as Jett orders Guzman around the room.

"I'm next to the door," Guzman says in Spanish. "I'm between the table and the chair."

Guzman timidly pushes together the pieces of a puzzle, Jett laughing softly when she misplaces a piece.

After the lesson, which Guzman is to use with her 5-year-old daughter Maira for about 20 minutes five times a week, the two women move into the living room to chat.

The Guzman family moved to Rogers seven months ago from Fresno, Calif., where they lived for eight years after leaving Zacatecas, Mexico. Her husband leaves the house at 6:15 A.M. to get to his job at a turkey plant in Springdale. He returns home just in time to kiss his wife goodbye as she leaves for the Tyson plant next door, where she works until around 12:30 A.M.

She calls Jett her adopted family.

On the day of Jett's first visit, Guzman says she was afraid she wasn't going to speak Spanish.

"I didn't want to answer the door because I thought, How am I going to say anything?"

Guzman says her daughter cried all day during her first weeks of kindergarten, but was relieved when Jett comforted her in Spanish.

"I don't know what we would do without her," Guzman says of Jett. "I don't know who we would talk to or do anything with."

While the family's financial situation is tight--both parents make about \$6.35 an hour and pay \$350 a month in rent--the mother says she likes Rogers because, unlike Fresno, it has no gangs.

But there they lived in a neighborhood where nearly everyone spoke Spanish. Here, she recalls, when her girls ran down the street to play with some neighborhood children, their mother pulled them inside and shut the door before Maira and Elizabeth could get there.

As they say goodbye, Jett makes Guzman promise to call if she needs anything, reminding her that she is her "eyes and ears" for detecting learning problems in her children.

Over lunch at the rustic War Eagle Mill, Superintendent Roland M. Smith lays out his long-term plan for the district: Beef up the math, science, and foreign-language offerings; update the computer labs; and institute a Saturday Scholars program.

Smith, who retired to the Rogers area after working for 15 years as superintendent in Plainfield, Ill., about 40 miles from Chicago, also wants to start mandatory Spanish classes for students in grades 1 through 6, a program being piloted this year at one elementary school.

But how will that help the L.E.P. students?

"Achievement follows self-esteem," Smith says in a still-intact Chicago accent. "I want to see those Hispanics using their resources to help the Anglos, so it's not just the Anglos helping the Hispanics."

He has delegated much of the policymaking and planning for the L.E.P. students to his deputy. He does not seem fazed by the L.E.P. influx, nor does he seem pressed to rapidly make sweeping changes in the current programs.

Next year, he will deploy an assistant to try to recruit five Hispanic, Spanish-speaking teachers, most likely from Texas.

"We're not crying that we're out of money," he says. The district this year will have spent about \$109,000 out of a \$25 million budget to provide L.E.P. students with special materials and services.

"Give us a few years and this will be in place," he says. "We plan to lean on the state for help," he adds.

Which may be a problem.

Arkansas has no official policy on bilingual education, nor does it have any money set aside for such programs. Moreover, it is one of 19 states in which English, by law, is the official language.

Only three years ago, the state education department created the dual position of civil-rights and bilingual-education supervisor, which Andre Guerrero holds. There is just one federally funded bilingual-education program in place in the entire state--a cooperative of districts in the towns of De Queen, Horatio, and Wickes, south of Rogers toward the Texas border.

And little federal bilingual-education money is likely to reach Rogers's coffers soon. Eugene E. Garcia, the director of the U.S. Education Department's office of bilingual education and minority-languages affairs, says "it would be a miracle if Rogers got funded now" by his office. "I'm locked in to fund the Chicagos and Los Angeleses," he says.

In addition, the state education department does not endorse E.S.L. certification, and Guerrero knows of no place in the state where a teacher can be trained in the specialty.

All of this places this Mexican-American in a tough position as an enforcer of civil-rights law.

"It's like the chicken and the egg," Guerrero says. "Do I require districts to hire people who have no place to be trained?"

Recently, Guerrero got the state \$75,000 in federal funds to conduct a home-language survey, which found roughly 4,000 L.E.P. students across the state, speaking a total of 66 languages. Guerrero thinks the former number is an underestimate.

He emphasizes that the state is at "the beginning stages" in developing instructional guidelines for districts, and that some districts have far to go. One near the Oklahoma border, for example, recently responded to a survey by stating that it had a 100 percent "Native American" enrollment. Intrigued by what he assumed was an American Indian

enclave, Guerrero called the superintendent, who responded: "Yes, of course they're American. They're 100 percent American."

"We are growing in our awareness, but there's work to be done in just understanding who these kids are," Guerrero says.

Rogers itself is having trouble understanding its newcomers. Not only are the schools struggling, but most bank tellers, gas-station attendants, and grocery-store cashiers also cannot speak Spanish to their new clientele. And some people think they shouldn't have to.

Melody Maines, a senior in Ron Highfill's Spanish class, was drafted last year to tutor in his class for L.E.P. students. She is not pleased with the way some of her classmates have treated the new arrivals.

"People ignore the Hispanic students because they think they can't understand anything, or they make rude comments," she says. "You get to know them, and they're not just 'those Hispanics' anymore."

Her best friend is part Peruvian, but Melody says students have mistaken her for being black or Mexican. "It's pretty prejudiced," she says of some of her peers' attitudes.

People such as Betty E. Goodman, the owner of Poor Richard's confectionary shop downtown, question who needs to adapt to whom.

"I don't know why we should have to change; they should make more of an effort to be like us," she says. "It's a crime that Miami, Fla., as I understand it, is all Spanish-speaking. It's a crime that they teach that in the schools, here in the United States."

Other members of the community are trying harder. The local newspaper includes a biweekly column in Spanish, some police officers have taken cultural-sensitivity and Spanish classes, and some area hospitals and law offices now keep handy a list of translators.

Rogers isn't the kind of place where people practice bigotry overtly: It's embedded in jokes about the Wal-Mart becoming "Wal-Mex" and in a real-estate agent's complaint about so many of "them" living in one house.

Multicultural-speak hasn't hit Rogers yet. Around town, and in the schools, people mention "speaking Mexican" or "talking Hispanic." They often make distinctions between "the Americans" and "the Hispanics," despite estimates that about half the Hispanics in town are American citizens.

People talk of eventual integration, but today Anglos and Hispanics live in two separate worlds.

At the center of the community's effort to chip away at that divide is the Multi-Culture Forum, started two years ago by RuAnn Ewing, a former Spanish teacher who has lived in Rogers for 23 years. After leaving the schools, she tutored Hispanic adults and children in English and was sufficiently upset by their living conditions to want to start a community network.

Affordable housing is so scarce that some Hispanic families join together to rent homes and take turns sleeping to coincide with their shifts at the plant.

"The influx was like seeing a tornado coming, and you were just glad to see it before it hit," Ewing says. "You were the chosen person to tell others about it, and, lo and behold, they listened."

"They" are the people at the Office of Human Concern, a private, nonprofit group that coordinates social services in the area.

Starting with a small cluster of groups, the forum now boasts multiple committees and includes organizations from neighboring communities. It meets monthly at Peace Lutheran Church.

On a biting-cold Saturday morning, Reynaldo (Rey) Hernandez, a Mexican-American who works for the local newspaper's advertising department and the forum's chairman, calls the meeting to order. Jeanne Couey, the head of the education committee, is at his

side.

One by one, participants stand to share information on their new programs: a health-department official announces a new mobile health unit; a housing official describes a 62-unit, low-income apartment house to open in July; a computer programmer offers to make copies of his Spanish-language software.

Afterward, people mill about the room, sipping coffee.

Hernandez calls the forum a "shining light. It's the one thing that's kept things moving in a positive direction by keeping the community involved in the process."

But for now, it doesn't seem to be reaching the people who need to hear its message most.

Mayor John W. Sampier has lived in Rogers nearly all his life. He graduated from Rogers High School in 1965 before the population growth went "berserk."

He knew a few black people at his college in Russellville, about 2-1/2 hours away, but other than that "I've never really been in other cultures. I'm ignorant about it."

One source of the Mayor's, and Rogers's, pride are the community's six meticulously maintained soccer fields behind the bright-yellow youth center.

A few years ago, a Spanish-speaking youth-center director organized an adult Latino soccer league that now boasts about 12 teams.

The games attract up to 500 fans, mostly Hispanics, and the smell of tacos and enchiladas wafts from the concession stands there. But so did the smell of beer, in this "dry" county, so people started complaining. The beer is now gone.

Then last year, when the league won a state championship, the Mayor attended their celebration banquet.

He said a few opening words in coached Spanish and the crowd went nuts. It made news in the local paper.

"I've never been greeted that way by Anglos in the community," Sampier recalls. "I wasn't doing it to be condescending or to be something I'm not, I was doing it to be neighborly, as we say in the Ozarks."

But it didn't go over so well with some others, spurring negative letters to the editor and charges that the Mayor was catering to the new population.

Sampier says he firmly believes the new residents need to learn English, and fast, but that talking about getting rid of them or closing the door to future arrivals is "fruitless."

Virginia Vega, owner of La Mexicana grocery store in neighboring Bentonville, knows more Hispanics are coming because her customers tell her of the brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, and cousins who are packing their pickup trucks and heading for Arkansas.

Vega's store, which in the three years since she and her family moved to Rogers from California's San Fernando Valley has more than tripled in size, is the unofficial meeting place for area Hispanics. Customers come for the cascabel chiles and guava jelly, as well as for Vega's advice and aid.

The Durango, Mexico, native has lists of church phone numbers, construction jobs, and adult English classes. She scans the newspaper ads for affordable houses to suggest to her customers.

She knows that if she can't help someone, she can refer him to Sister Patricia at the Catholic church, or bilingual lawyer Alene Cox, or the Rev. Manuel Villegas, a Baptist minister who keeps a plastic cup full of \$20 bills in his right-hand drawer to help families who can't pay their electric or grocery bills.

"It's especially important to have a close community when people are so far from the places and people they love," she explains in Spanish. Certain neighborhoods are becoming solidly Hispanic, she says, and some churches now celebrate Mexican holidays.

She worries that the Hispanic community will one day be blamed for the increased crime

and other problems associated with growth.

So far, the reception has been mixed. Vega says her neighbors basically ignore her family. "I can't say that they've accepted or rejected us. They've made no effort to communicate with us whatsoever."

The owners of a Mexican food store that opened last fall in a shopping center across the street from Katie Kraner's English-immersion classes also came to Rogers via the San Fernando Valley. Juan Guerrero, the owners' son, is running the store today. He likes Rogers's small-town friendliness, but acknowledges that not all the Hispanics who decide to come will feel the same.

"If they come here with an attitude from Los Angeles or whatever, they won't fit in," he says, straightening the plastic-wrapped tortillas lining the metal shelf. During his final years of high school in Rogers, he recalls, some of the students "kind of looked at me funny."

Rogers clearly is not alone in facing an increasingly multicultural future as immigrants begin to flee urban areas on both coasts, drawn to the jobs, space, and fresh air of Middle America.

Late next year, one of the nation's largest pork-packing plants is scheduled to open in Guymon, Okla. The town's population of around 8,000 is expected to swell to close to 13,000 as a result. Most of the new arrivals are expected to be Hispanics and Southeast Asians.

The same thing happened after the world's largest beef-packing plant set up shop in Garden City, Kan., in 1980. Today, Hispanics make up some 27 percent of the city's roughly 25,000 residents.

The number of L.E.P. students has also swelled nationwide in recent years. In 1990, some 6,400 of the nation's 15,000 school districts enrolled students with limited English.

Rogers's population is expected to increase 38 percent by the turn of the century. Today the town's tallest buildings are its churches, but Mayor Sampier foresees a Rogers of skyscrapers within the next 15 or 20 years, "a big, beautiful city like Minneapolis or Seattle."

For now, however, Rogers seems to be running just to catch up with where it stands today.

You reach Anna Mae Searles' house where the two-lane blacktop of Dixieland Road thins into a bumpy dirt road. Searles, who's lived in this house since she and her husband moved to Rogers in 1939, tutored some Hispanic students after getting frantic calls from Katy White, the principal at Lowell Elementary, when the first Hispanics started arriving.

The 87-year-old Searles has watched the landscape surrounding her modest white house turn from apple orchards into parking lots for industries, the apple wagons replaced by 18-wheelers plastered with the Wal-Mart logo. She saw what was coming, so in 1988 she donated 10 acres of virgin prairie to the state so that local schoolchildren and others could explore her corner of wilderness.

Outside her front window, the prairie grasses rustle gently. Behind her house a developer is building a new housing development. Every so often the quiet is shattered by the sound of a bulldozer.

"I don't know how they're going to cope with the Hispanics, I really don't," she says, staring out the window. "We need them to work here, but nobody knows what to do with them."

Still, Searles remains optimistic. "Things have changed, and they will change again, I'm certain."

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HEADLINE: Immigration laws are education laws too.

BYLINE: Stewart, David

BODY:

Today, when more newcomers are brought in than an already-frail education system can handle, we are certainly mismanaging immigration, Mr. Stewart claims.

WHAT SINGLE piece of national legislation has had the most effect on American institutions and agencies of education in the past several decades? Not, in my view, any of the laws with "education" in their titles. Rather, this distinction belongs to the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, which did not emanate from either of the education committees of Congress and which was enacted with virtually no consideration of its possible implications for the education of immigrants and their native-born counterparts. The Immigration Act affects education because it has led to a massive increase in enrollment by immigrant students, whose presence is a major spur for school restructuring and curricular reform.

The 1965 immigration law represented a marked shift in policy. It did away with the essentially racist national-origins system of the McCarran-Walter Immigration Act, replacing it with selection criteria focusing on family reunification and desired occupational skills. The numbers of immigrants allowed to enter were substantially increased, and the nation regained its conscience as immigrants from the Eastern Hemisphere were for the first time allowed to enter the United States without regard to national or racial origin.

The effects of the 1965 legislation were as dramatic as they were unexpected. The proportion of immigrants coming from Europe declined precipitously. At the same time, huge increases were recorded in immigration from Asia and also from Latin America, with the result that today more than 80% of all immigration to the U. S. comes from these two areas.

For many of the nation's schools, these changing immigration patterns have meant not only an increase in the size of their student bodies but also a marked shift in their demographic composition. And the nearly diverse student bodies require schools to make major adjustments to accommodate them.

As immigrants enroll, far more students will need special or altered programs and services if they are to be served adequately. Bilingual education and English as a second language (ESL) programs are at the forefront of these accommodations. So are curricular changes that take a multicultural student body into account. But specialized assessment and placement centers, systems to assess language proficiency, "newcomer schools" that serve immigrant students

exclusively year-round school calendars, cultural sensitivity programs, parent outreach programs, and partnerships with community agencies and organizations are also required. And this list does not even mention the need for new physical facilities and equipment.

Generally, the need for these services and facilities is most acute in urban school districts that are least likely to have the resources to provide them. When schools do not respond to these needs, watered-down or inferior programs and overcrowding are the inevitable results. Some academic programs, as well as extracurricular activities and after-school services, may even be dropped altogether. This situation introduces a tension-building competition for resources between incoming immigrants and low-income Americans -- most often African Americans and native-born Hispanics.

In a recent series of interviews about immigrant education with school administrators and teachers, I asked this question: Do you believe that the need to provide specialized services to immigrant students has led to diminished resources and services to native-born students? In nearly every instance the answer to this question (delivered uneasily and never for attribution) was yes.

Rapid social change always brings tensions, and American schools are currently experiencing more than their share of them. An unwholesome separatism is the norm in many schools as the various ethnic groups sort themselves out and build walls that they perceive as necessary for their emotional or even physical protection. In many schools, this tension spills over into outright conflict. Anti-immigrant hate crimes are on the rise. A number of studies have shown that immigrant children almost universally report experiences of violence, intimidation, or harassment. Native-born children also express comparable fear and discomfort, with negative comments about immigrants coming as much from African American and Hispanic students as from whites.

With the heavy inflow of immigrants to many American cities and increasingly to suburbs as well, many school systems are experiencing a "tipping" phenomenon that is reminiscent of the civil rights era. Today it is not whites fleeing from blacks, but English-speaking parents who move out of the neighborhood or withdraw their children from schools in which larger and larger numbers of immigrants have limited English skills. These parents perceive that teachers have less time to spend with native children in the face of heavier demands from students with limited English proficiency; they are also uncomfortable with rising levels of tension and violence stemming in part from ethnic conflicts.

It is not only programs for children that are affected by the nation's immigration laws. Adult literacy programs are also being severely strained as demand from immigrant adults needing English-language training outpaces comparable (and much less assertive) demand from native-born clients. With limited funds and with long waiting lists of eager immigrants, directors of literacy programs have no incentive to develop (or even to continue) outreach programs aimed at often hard-to-reach native-born adults.

These difficulties are approaching crisis proportions in many localities. Indeed, they amount to "social dynamite," to borrow a phrase used by James Bryant Conant in reference to the problems of ill-educated urban youth just before the civil rights explosions of the 1960s. In an era when many more immigrants are on the way, we ignore this situation at our peril. During the 1990s the nation expects a historic high of about one million immigrants per

year when both legal and illegal immigration are totaled.

IN THE GREAT sweep of American history, immigration has proved to be good for the country. The diversity that immigrants bring is an asset in educational systems. It may bring problems, but it is not in itself a problem. Today, however, when more newcomers are brought in than an already-frail education system can handle, we are certainly mismanaging immigration. Our schools are being overwhelmed.

How did we get into this mess, and what needs to be done about it? The root of the problem lies in Congress' enacting immigration laws that it does not adequately finance. Huge increases in immigration are authorized. Yet the staggering initial costs required to educate the newcomers are for the most part passed along by the federal government to others -- generally to that weakest of contemporary institutions, the urban school.

One reason for this dysfunction has been the failure of the education subcommittees in the House and Senate to involve themselves in the development of immigration legislation. Assertive action by the chairs of the education subcommittees is surely needed to correct this oversight. Participation by the education subcommittees could be arranged with particular ease in the Senate, where Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) serves as chairman of both the Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on Immigration and Refugee Affairs and the Labor and Human Resources Committee.

To solve the basic problems, Congress will either have to provide adequate upfront funding to support the education expenditures that its immigration laws necessitate, or it will have to alter those immigration laws. The Emergency Immigrant Education Act, under which federal funds are channeled to school districts heavily affected by immigration, is pathetically underfunded (an average of \$ 43 per immigrant student and \$ 213 per refugee student per year). Given present levels of immigration, its appropriations should be very substantially increased. Sensitive adjustments in immigration law should also receive careful attention.

A moratorium on immigration, as some propose, is not the answer. Immigration has been and continues to be a source of intellectual, social, and cultural nourishment for America. The nation should also remain a haven for genuine political refugees, no matter how needy. But immigration in all its complex dimensions does need good management.

Given the sensitivities involved, Congress has long been loath to take up immigration issues until the public mood festers and outside pressure is applied. Using that gauge, the time to act is now, and the necessary pressure ought to be generated. A reduced level of immigration would be desirable. One relatively practical option would be a suspension of the 40% increase that was unwisely authorized in the 1990 amendments to a generous immigration law that already allowed high levels. More aggressive (though humane) action to control the increasing inflow of illegal immigrants would also be appropriate. Illegal immigrants, who are generally drawn from the least advantaged groups in their home countries, often arrive with disproportionately high levels of educational need. Many of them, both adults and children, have never been enrolled in school in their home nations. The costs of serving them are high -- exceeded only by the social and moral costs of not serving a segment of the population that must become a functioning part of our democracy.

Finally, we do need to act immediately for another reason -- that of staving off the present distressing backlash against immigrants. (Some 68% of the U.S. population currently believe that immigration is "bad" for the country, according to a recent Harris poll.) In the long run, a more rational immigration plan would engender a greater degree of public acceptance of and for newcomers to American shores.

DAVID STEWART is the author of Immigration and Education: The Crisis and the Opportunities (Lexington Books, 1993). He is director of program development for the American Council on Education's Center for Adult Learning and Educational Credentials, Washington, D.C.

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National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education, 1998

Summary Report of the Survey of the States' Limited English Proficient Students and Available Educational Programs and Services, 1996-97

("The SEA Report")

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Other material on NCBE's site containing '96-97 SEA Survey Data:

- **AskNCBE No. 1:** How many school-aged limited English proficient students are there in the U.S.? How many in each state?
- **AskNCBE No. 8:** How has the limited English proficient student population changed in recent years?