DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 393 635 RC 020 530

AUTHOR Romo, Harriett D.
TITLE The Newest "Outsiders": Educating Mexican Migrant and Immigrant Youth.
PUB DATE 96
NOTE 33p.; Chapter 4 in: Children of La Frontera: Binational Efforts To Serve Mexican Migrant and Immigrant Students; see RC 020 526.
PUB TYPE Information Analyses (070)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Bilingual Education; Court Litigation; Educationally Disadvantaged; *Educational Needs; Educational Policy; *Educational Practices; Elementary Secondary Education; *Immigrants; *Limited English Speaking; *Mexican American Education; Mexican Americans; Mexicans; Migrant Education; *School Effectiveness

ABSTRACT

This chapter discusses the educational needs of Mexican immigrant children and effective practices that meet those needs. During 1984-92, the number of limited-English-proficient (LEP) students in public schools grew 70 percent to 2.3 million; three fourths of LEP students spoke Spanish; and 40 percent of these were born in Mexico. Increased immigration and demands on public schools have led to attempts to deny education to undocumented immigrant children, but the courts have upheld these children's access to education and mandated provision of special programs for LEP students. Case studies of two immigrant Mexican families illustrate some problems of immigrant students and how schools fail to provide necessary programs and supports. A brief overview examines the strengths and weaknesses of secondary-level program options: English for speakers of other languages, bilingual programs, and newcomers' programs providing counseling and English instruction. Characteristics of schools that effectively meet the needs of Mexican immigrant students include many that describe good schools in general. Effective practices specific to this population include valuing students' home languages and cultures, adequate assessment of language proficiency and academic needs, school leadership that makes immigrant students a priority, outreach and communication in the parents' home language, staff development to combat effects of racism, instruction based on students' previous educational experience, scheduling that includes LEP students in classes with English-speaking students, placement decisions based on adequate assessment and consultation, and social and academic multicultural programs. Also important are dropout prevention efforts, college and career counseling, and "second-chance" opportunities for education and training. Contains 88 references. (SV)

CHAPTER 4

# The Newest "Outsiders": Educating Mexican Migrant and Immigrant Youth

HARRIETT D. ROMO
SOUTHWEST TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY

*This chapter discusses the important characteristics of the secondary school Mexican immigrant population and how schools can meet the educational and affective needs of those students. Over the past decade the Mexican immigrant population has grown considerably. Forty percent of the 2.3 million limited-English-proficient (LEP) students attending public schools in the United States are of Mexican origin. The vast majority of those students live in Texas and California. Yet, few school districts have changed their policies to meet the immigrant students' special needs. A brief history of the Mexican experience in U.S. schools is presented in this chapter to demonstrate the social, cultural, and political context of schooling that has affected Mexican immigrant student achievement. The chapter also includes case studies drawn from field research conducted by the author over a span of 12 years of work with immigrant families. The experiences of these families demonstrate how human capital, i.e., the language and academic skills that students bring with them to the schools, as well as the organization of schooling, influences achievement. An overview of programs serving immigrant high school students and recommendations regarding effective strategies for educating these students are also presented.*

## Historical and Social Circumstances

The historical circumstances of Mexican immigration to the United States have had a profound impact on the ability of Mexican children to take advantage of schooling. This brief history illustrates how the immigration experience has affected access to education in the United States.

Mexican immigration to the United States and movement back and forth across the United States/Mexico border has a long history. During the early nineteenth century and into the years prior to the Mexican American War, authorities took surprisingly little notice of this movement.

Frontier contact between Anglos and Mexicans began with the opening of the Santa Fe Trail in the 1820s. Contact increased significantly with the offer of free land in the Mexican state of Texas to those who could bring in immigrant families from the United States (McComb, 1989, pp. 34-36). Anglo settlers also migrated into the Mexican borderlands as farmers, ranchers, and prospectors in search of gold and silver. Conflict occurred between the United States and Mexico over the control of the Southwest and resulted in the Mexican American War of 1846-1848.

Prior to 1848, what education there was in the U.S. Southwest—and there was little—occurred under the auspices of the church, or in the home, or abroad if a family were wealthy (Moquin & Van Doren, 1971, p. 191).

The end result of the brutal Mexican American War was that Mexico ceded most of the Southwest to the United States with the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848 and then the Gadsden Purchase of 1853. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo gave Mexicans residing in those areas the options of becoming American citizens or remaining Mexican citizens and guaranteed the protection of their religion and property rights (Hraba, 1994, pp. 248-255; Moquin & Van Doren, 1971). However, with the discovery of gold in California and with U.S. courts seldom recognizing Spanish land grants, Anglo capitalism and culture eventually dominated the region (Montejano, 1987; Rosenbaum, 1981; McWilliams, 1968).

Almost overnight, people of Mexican descent became an ethnic minority. Tensions between Anglos and Mexicans increased as the groups clashed over language, religion, food, work habits, racial prejudices, and expropriation and takeover of land (Montejano, 1987; Rosenbaum, 1981). Although a public school system was brought to the Southwest in 1848, the education of children was not a priority during these times and was a luxury even for those families who could afford private teachers or boarding schools.

Mexican workers, with their history of labor in farming, ranching, and mining in both Mexico and the borderlands, supplied the bulk of the





unskilled labor force in the Southwest. Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, labor bosses brought gangs of Mexican laborers to growers to meet their labor needs in agriculture. In southern Texas, border guards also acted as labor agents (Foley, 1988). Few Anglos were concerned about the education of the children of those workers, and exploitation and discrimination against Mexican workers were common (Acuna, 1981). The Mexican workers frequently worked together at migratory jobs and as part of recruited labor gangs, and, as a result, were isolated from workers of different ethnic backgrounds and from many of the assimilative mechanisms in the Southwest (McWilliams, 1968). When their labor was needed, they were recruited and hired at low wages; in bad economic times, they were seen as taking jobs of U.S. workers and deported. During the Great Depression, when labor demands fell off and the labor supply in the Southwest went up as U.S. migrants arrived from the dust bowl, some 500,000 Mexicans—many of them born in the United States—and U.S. citizens were repatriated to Mexico (McLemore & Romo, 1985; Romo, 1983, pp.164-165). In the 1950s, over a million Mexicans were again deported in Operation Wetback (Steiner, 1969, p. 128).

The lack of educational opportunity was compounded by the low socioeconomic status of Mexican workers. As low wage laborers and farmworkers, few Mexican families accumulated the resources necessary to prepare themselves for white-collar occupations and send their children to good schools. Migratory agricultural work often precluded the adequate education of their children. Children of migrant workers attended poorly equipped schools and often missed school to work in the fields to help their parents or to take on other family responsibilities while their parents worked. Migrant children whose families followed the various crop harvests moved from school to school on the migrant trail. Children who attended classes for only a portion of the school year, year after year, often fell behind. The large landowners, especially the big growers and railroads, and public officials had little interest in supporting schools for Mexican children. They wanted workers who would work for low wages, not an educated workforce. The wealthy parents sent their children to private schools so they had little interest in spending their taxes on better public schools for laborers' children (Barnes, 1971). In many school districts in Texas and California, Mexican children were segregated in "Mexican schools." The courts permitted English language difficulties to justify segregation despite clear evidence that school officials used the linguistic rationale as a pretext for segregating Mexican Americans from Anglos. In some cases, school districts refused to allow Mexican students to attend Anglo schools even when the Mexican students spoke no Spanish (Martinez, 1994). The pattern of poor school performance among Mexican American

students was prevalent (San Miguel, 1987, p. 104). As Mexican students moved through the U.S. school system, if they did not drop out completely, their level of educational attainment declined compared to the achievement of Anglo students. Differences were reflected in comparative drop-out rates and percentages of the respective groups that graduated from high school and college.

## Court Action Affecting Immigrant Children

Over the past 30 years, several significant court cases have addressed the lack of educational opportunities for Mexican immigrant children. The 1974 *Lau v. Nichols* case, based on the experiences of Chinese immigrant students in California, applied to Mexican immigrant and other limited-English-proficient students throughout the United States. The *Lau* decision determined that the failure of the San Francisco school system to provide English language instruction to Chinese students who did not speak English denied those students a meaningful opportunity to participate in the public educational program. The court reasoned that merely providing the same facilities, textbooks, teachers, and curriculum for students who did not understand English was not equal treatment. The court ruled that when the schools provided only regular English language instruction for limited-English-speaking students, those students were effectively shut out from any meaningful education. The court decision did not specify how the school district was to meet the special needs of these children. The decision (*Lau v. Nichols*, 1974) read "Teaching English to the students of Chinese ancestry who do not speak the language is one choice. Giving instruction to this group in Chinese is another. There may be others."

The interpretive guidelines for the *Lau* decision published by the Office for Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (1970) clearly indicated that "school districts had to take affirmative steps to rectify the language deficiency in order to open their instructional program" to immigrant students. The guidelines were issued to clarify the government's position in Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (45 CFR, pt. 80) that provided that "no recipient of federal funds may provide services, aid, or other benefits to an individual which is different or is provided in a different manner from that provided to others under the program; or restrict an individual in any way from the advantages enjoyed by others receiving service, aid, or benefit under the program." The *Lau v. Nichols* decision required schools to "open up instruction" so that students from families in which English was not the spoken language could benefit.

In the summer of 1975, the Office for Civil Rights (U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare) offered specific remedies to eliminate past





educational practices ruled unlawful under the *Lau v. Nichols* decision. Those remedies included identifying the students' primary or home language, diagnosing the students' educational needs, and selecting a program appropriate for the students. The remedies specified that secondary students could receive instruction in subject matter in the native language and receive English as a second language (ESL) as a class component or they could receive required and elective subjects in the native language and bridge into English, learning English in a natural setting. The regulations also allowed secondary students to receive high-intensity language training in English until they could operate successfully in school in English and then bridge into the school program for all other students. While recognizing that programmatic approaches would vary from school district to school district, the *Lau* remedies recommended bilingual education as the best way to provide special aid to limited-English-proficient students.

The use of bilingual education in public schools provoked bitter political disputes throughout the 1960s and 1970s (Spring, 1991). Debates over ESL approaches versus bilingual instruction raged in the 1980s. Opponents of bilingual education argued that the programs were not successful. Some claimed that bilingual education was a self-interested and political tactic of Hispanic leaders and that the programs "blocked the integration of minority children into mainstream society" (Porter, 1990).

Supporters of bilingual education argued that children learned best in a language they could understand (Hakuta & Gould, 1987). They wanted immigrant students to function in the majority culture and at the same time maintain the traditions of their own culture. Kenji Hakuta (1986) wrote a respected and scholarly book, *Mirror of Language*, about the bilingual debate concluding that all students in the United States should be bilingual. He argued that speakers of immigrant languages should be seen as "holders of a valuable natural resource to be developed." He pointed out that the success of pluralism in the United States depended on the success of such bilingual programs. Research over time has provided strong evidence that advanced bilingualism promotes academic achievement (Bankston & Zhou, 1995; Cazden & Snow, 1990; Matute-Bianchi, 1986; Baker & Kanter, 1981).

The intent of the *Lau v. Nichols* decision was clearly to include immigrant children in the educational system by providing special English language instruction and bridging into the academic curriculum. Still, the education of Mexican immigrant students has remained controversial. In another case that went all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court (*Plyler v. Doe, 1982*), one Texas school district attempted to exclude Mexican immigrant students from public school altogether.

## The Courts and Undocumented Immigrant Children

In the *Plyler v. Doe* case, a Texas school district attempted to deny local school district funds for the education of undocumented children and, thus, deny free public education to such children. By a 5-4 vote, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down the statute as violating equal protection, arguing that the equal protection clause was intended to cover any person physically within a state's borders, regardless of the legality of his/her presence. The Court argued that while public education was not a right guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution, it was certainly more important than other social welfare benefits. Denying children an education would make them illiterate and would prevent them from advancing on their individual merit and becoming useful members of U.S. society. The Court also rejected the argument of the attorneys for Texas who claimed that undocumented children were less likely than other children to remain within the state and put their education to use there. The Court found nothing in the record to suggest that this was true (Emanuel, 1983).

The issue resurfaced in the 1990s. In November of 1994, the voters of California passed Proposition 187—"Illegal Aliens, Ineligibility for Public Services Verification and Reporting Initiative Statute." This initiative made undocumented immigrants ineligible for public school education at elementary, secondary, and postsecondary levels. It required various state and local agencies to report persons *suspected* of being illegal aliens to the Immigration and Naturalization Service. Opponents of this Proposition argued that it was not constitutional and that it was contrary to the 1982 U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *Plyler v. Doe*. Some argued that Proposition 187 violated parents' due process, because families were not given the right to contest being reported as "suspected" illegal aliens. Others argued that the reporting requirement of Proposition 187 might encourage discrimination based on race, color, or national origin. The implementation provisions of Proposition 187 also appeared to violate the restrictions of obtaining personal information about a student without prior consent of the parent. Educators argued that the proposition imposed a law enforcement function on schools that would adversely affect the learning environment for all children. The supporters of Proposition 187 claimed that the ultimate objective of the initiative was to curtail undocumented immigration by making the process of immigration less attractive. Those who opposed the proposition argued that depriving immigrant children of education was not likely to cause them to return to their countries of origin. It was more likely to cause them to become further marginalized from educational access than they already were.

The *Plyler v. Doe* case and the California Proposition 187 indicated that the public mood in Texas and California did not support the assimilation of immigrant children.





## Increased Immigration and Demands on U.S. Schools

Despite the negative climate, increasing numbers of immigrant students—with or without their families—have entered the United States in search of the advantages associated with life and work in this country (Massey, 1985; 1986). According to the U. S. Department of Education, there were 2.31 million limited-English-proficient students in public elementary and secondary schools in the 1991-92 school year. That figure represented a 70 percent increase since 1984. Almost three out of four LEP students spoke Spanish as their native language. Of the Spanish speakers at all grade levels, 40 percent were born in Mexico (U.S. Department of Education, 1993).

Increases in both legal and illegal immigration to the United States in the 1970s and 1980s, together with increases in the proportion of immigrants coming from Latino and Asian countries, has generated renewed interest in the impact of immigration on schools (Passel, 1985; 1986; Massey, 1981). One result of this concern has been heightened immigration restrictions. The 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) has been referred to as the "most sweeping revision of the nation's immigration laws since 1965" (Goodis, 1986).

With increasing immigration, the public education of immigrant students is of particular concern because the schools have historically been the key institution responsible for integrating immigrants and their children into the larger society. Interestingly, little of the literature on the impact of immigration has focused specifically on education. Most studies have addressed the complexity of counting undocumented immigrants, immigrants' impact on the U.S. workforce, their use of health and social services, and the effects of changes in the immigration laws on immigrant flows to the United States.

Many of the analyses of the 1986 immigration reforms suggested that immigration restrictions did not substantially lessen the influx of immigrant students. Through a general amnesty provision for those able to demonstrate continuous residence in the United States after January 1, 1982, IRCA allowed about 1.7 million persons immediately to apply for legalization. Experts estimated that 87 percent of those applying for the general amnesty were Mexican (Hoefer, 1989). Massey, Donato, and Liang (1990) found that as the immigrants obtained legal status they were more likely to send children to public schools in the United States. Thus, the use of public school services was expected to significantly increase as a result of the amnesty provision. Massey and his colleagues estimated that 5 years after legalization, some 42 percent of all amnesty recipients would enroll children in U.S. public schools. Given that the number of amnesty recipients was in the millions once family members were included and that

those qualifying for amnesty were highly concentrated in California (55 percent) and Texas (18 percent), the enrollment of Mexican immigrant children in public schools was expected to increase sharply in those states (Massey, Donato, & Liang, 1990, p. 207).

Several other factors about immigration added to the school-age population in the 1990s. Increased *legal* immigrant quotas added more to the growing numbers of school-age children and youth. During the 1980s, almost 600,000 immigrants each year were granted lawful permanent residence in the United States (Bean, Edmonston, & Passel, 1990). In 1990 alone, the United States legally admitted 1.5 million immigrants, exceeding the record high set in 1907 of nearly 1.3 million (Donato, 1993). Moreover, a growing number of these legal immigrants were young adults in the prime of their childbearing years, many of whom would require day care and education for their children. The family reunification components of immigration legislation also gave priority to children of immigrants already in the United States (Cafferty, Chiswick, Greeley, & Sullivan, 1984). The 1990 Immigration Reform Act left virtually intact the family unification provisions of previous law and provided for legalization of sizable numbers of family members of persons previously legalized under IRCA (Bean & Fix, 1992). In addition to increases in *legal immigration* of young Mexicans, *undocumented migration* among Mexican women and children increased to even higher levels than those preceding the passage of the Immigration Reform and Control Act (Bean, Espenshade, White, & Dymoski, 1990).

Since 1990, twice as many people have come to the United States each year than arrived during the "Great Immigration" of European immigrants a century ago (Macionis, 1996). In some cities the impact of immigration has already been proportionately greater. In Los Angeles, San Francisco, Dallas, Houston, and Miami, foreign-born residents now make up between a fifth and a third of the total population (Valdez, DaVanzo, Vernez, & Wade, 1993). These immigrants make their largest service demands on education (Vernez, 1994). Immigrants' concentration in urban centers and their relatively high fertility rates add to the pressures on American public schools. A contemporary portrait of immigration patterns shows that the recent flows of immigrants have relatively low levels of education. This increases the challenge to schools to educate immigrant children who speak little English and arrive with differing levels of sophistication (Portes & Rumbaut, 1990).

The ability of the immigrant population to participate in the United States as future citizens depends on the quality of the instruction and training that their children receive and the measures taken to promote their integration into U.S. society. Low levels of education command low wages and lead to greater employment instability that may last over the duration of





the immigrant's working life in the United States (Vernez, 1993). Uneven access to preschool programs and low expectations of those Mexican immigrant students who do attend school perpetuate the low educational attainments of large numbers of second- and third-generation Mexican Americans (Chapa, 1990).

Mexican immigrant children will play an important role in the United States as the total U.S. citizen population ages and the working population contracts in the coming years (Cafferty, Chiswick, Greeley, & Sullivan, 1984). As the restrictive immigration policies begin to have an impact, the United States has several recourses for meeting the need for skilled workers. To succeed without bringing in new immigrant labor, our schools will have to assure that all youth residing in the United States are well educated and trained.

## Immigration and Educational Policy

The approaches regarding the education of immigrants range from assimilationist to exclusionist, reflecting different perceptions of how society should be structured. Prior to 1965, immigration was regulated by the 1924 Quota Act, which determined the national groups allowed to immigrate based on the percentage of the national groups already in the United States. The act was passed during a period of extreme racism in the United States, and the clearly stated purpose of the act was to limit immigration of non-White populations. During this time of primarily White immigration, U.S. educational policy was assimilationist. The mission of the schools was to "Americanize" immigrant children. Jane Addams, speaking of public education, claimed, "The public schools in the immigrant colonies deserve all the praise as Americanizing agencies which can be bestowed upon them" (Addams, 1910). The immigrant education programs of the 1920s emphasized the teaching of English and the American way of life, including pledging allegiance to the flag, eating American foods, and the superiority of the United States' form of government (Glazer, 1985).

The educational response to immigration since 1965 has been quite different. Post-1965 immigration has been largely Asian and Hispanic rather than European in origin. According to Reimers (1985), the Western Hemisphere ceiling on immigrants debated in 1968 was a clear desire for restricting Hispanics, Black English-speaking and Creole-speaking West Indians, and other Caribbean and Latin American peoples. In the 1970s, much of the public and political concern over immigration centered on Hispanics who entered in growing numbers after 1965. In 1974, *U.S. News and World Report* wrote about the "newest Americans," claiming that the United States was experiencing "a second Spanish invasion."

The United States' response to the question of how to educate the children of these recent immigrants has been complicated by court decisions and political divisions. Public support and funding for bilingual education have emphasized the early elementary grade levels, especially kindergarten through third grade (San Miguel, 1987). In 1992, only 22 states (43 percent) provided state funds designed specifically for instructional services to limited-English-proficient students. Only 17 percent of the schools offering services offered intensive LEP services that included significant native language use (U.S. Department of Education, 1993).

Most middle school and secondary bilingual programs offer only a few core subjects of reading, writing, and basic math, and few high schools offer an expansive course offering or college preparatory courses in the bilingual track. Plus, a shortage of certified bilingual teachers in many secondary school subject areas adds to the difficulty of implementing effective secondary level bilingual programs. In 1992, about 80 percent of all districts reported having "some" to "a lot" of difficulty recruiting bilingual teachers of Spanish and other languages. Over half (53 percent) reported having the same difficulty hiring English-as-a-second-language (ESL) teachers. Only 10 percent of the teachers of LEP students were certified in bilingual education and 8 percent in ESL instruction (U.S. Department of Education, 1993).

Complicating program choices is the reality that the educational backgrounds of Mexican immigrant adolescents vary considerably. Upon arrival, some adolescents have attended *Secundaria* in Mexico (approximately 7th-9th grade in the United States), giving them a comparatively strong educational background. Many others, however, have attended only a few years of *Primaria* (grades 1-6), while still others have never enrolled in school in Mexico. This latter group of adolescents have few literacy skills. The need to learn English characterizes most new Mexican immigrants, but it is a skill that most seek willingly.

## Case Studies

As discussed earlier, the Mexican immigrant population in the United States is extremely heterogeneous. Immigrants can be temporary migrants, border commuter migrants, long-distance migrants who stay for several years at a time, legal migrants who may or may not return to their country of origin, permanent legal residents who have decided to remain in the United States, or undocumented immigrants who entered the United States clandestinely.

The following case studies show how inadequate educational programs, lack of counseling support, and insufficient vocational training leave immi-





grant students with less than adequate skills. Earning enough to be self-sufficient or to improve the lives of their children is difficult without a good education.

Information about these families has been collected from field work within an immigrant community in Texas over the past 15 years. Through several research projects, the author followed a small number of immigrant families longitudinally from the time they first arrived in the United States until their children left the U.S. school system. While there have been considerable improvements in the education of immigrant children, especially at the elementary school level, the failures of the school systems in meeting the needs of many youth are cumulative and result in severe educational disadvantages. The following case studies illustrate how this occurs.

### The Gómez Family

Sra. Gómez was married in Mexico at age 12 and had 15 children. Three of her oldest sons worked in the United States for several years and earned the money to bring the rest of the family to the United States. Although Sra. Gómez did not want to leave her home in Mexico, she felt the younger children would have better opportunities in the United States. Neither she nor her husband ever attended school and did not read or write. When the Gómez family came to the United States, they had seven children living at home. Oton was 16. He had arrived 3 years earlier and went immediately to work with his brothers helping to earn the money to bring his parents. He did not enroll in school. Another 14-year-old son also went to work instead of enrolling in school. A 13-year-old daughter was placed by the school district in a class for the mentally retarded. An 11-year-old was enrolled in a fourth-grade class and began having disciplinary problems at school because he did not understand his English-speaking teachers. The 9-year-old was placed in a second-grade class and was considered for grade retention at the end of the year but was passed on to the third grade. The 6-year-old was placed in a full bilingual program and was doing well at the end of the year. A 5-year-old was not enrolled in school because the family felt he was too young.

At one interview in her apartment, Sra. Gómez told the author she suffered from migraine headaches and felt anxious and depressed. She explained in Spanish, "First a problem with one, then a problem with another. And when I need help there is no help here, all the problems come together. I wish I could die. I don't have any other desire for myself, nothing else. If it weren't for them, it would be better if I would die. I came here, but I am worse off than in my home in my own land. Here because I don't know how to read, I don't know how to write, I can't do much here. I

t a terrible headache, my whole chest hurts, I feel the pain will never go away." (Interview 6/83)

She seldom left her apartment. The youngest children were bused across town to a predominantly Anglo school, and without a car or a telephone she worried about them constantly. She attended a school meeting when the author accompanied her, but never spoke up. She talked afterward with bilingual staff and urged them to take care of her children. Her children told her about problems with teachers and other children.

The family remained in the United States and the mother and children qualified for legal residency under the amnesty provision of the 1986 Immigration Reform Control Act. Only one of her children, the 11-year-old, graduated from high school. He got a job working in construction with his older brother. The 9-year-old, Enrique, learned English well and won achievement awards at his school in the 7th grade. When Enrique was in 9th grade, the parents joined the citrus crop migrant stream and the father was injured in the fields. Enrique dropped out of school to help support his parents. In his job at a restaurant, he earned $4.35 per hour, about the same as the brother with the high school diploma in his construction job. He argued that the restaurant job was better because he worked in air-conditioning and did not get dirty.

During the time the Gómez children were attending school, anti-immigrant sentiment around immigration reform spilled over into the school. One of the boys was involved in a fight at the high school campus when other students called him "wetback." He was expelled for several days for fighting. He explained:

> When I was in school it was basically all Hispanics were together and all the Whites were together.... If you saw a Hispanic you couldn't talk to him. They would call them wetbacks. That would hurt me. I would get into a fight. I did not like to be called a wetback. (Interview 2/93)

**Commentary.** This case study brings up several dilemmas facing a great many immigrant students. One is the choice of staying in school or working to help the family. Despite being good students, economic pressures frequently cause immigrant youth to leave school.

The two girls in the family had less success in school than the boys. The parents took the mentally retarded daughter out of school because peers teased her and they worried about her safety at school. The other daughter dropped out of school and started a family. She found a job with her brother at the restaurant.

With proper programs, immigrant students can overcome tremendous obstacles and succeed in school. Despite entering U.S. schools with no





English or academic skills, two of these children learned sufficient English to do well in school. One, who was in a partial bilingual program, managed to earn a high school diploma. The other, who received full bilingual instruction in first through sixth grade, earned awards for his scholarship. The award-winning student was unable to continue in school because of his family's lack of economic resources. His counselors could only offer him encouragement to remain in school; they offered no programs to allow him to work part-time and continue in school. The counselor did not try to work with his family to convince them to support their son's academic efforts.

When students arrive and enroll in U.S. schools at young ages, their opportunities for success are greater. The older sons, who never enrolled in U.S. schools, continued to work in landscaping and construction jobs. They learned basic English at their worksites, but, because they worked primarily with other Mexican workers and lived in predominantly Mexican neighborhoods, they found few opportunities to gain advanced English or other acculturation skills. One of the brothers had an opportunity to move up in his job as manager, but because he could not read or write, he was unable to go beyond the rank of job supervisor.

The role of family is obvious in this case. These parents lacked literacy and English skills and could not intervene for their children when they experienced problems at school. The mother struggled with her own mental health problems associated with immigration and had little energy left to encourage her children. The obligations of the older youth to help support the family, especially in times of economic or family crisis, remained strong values in immigrant families. The older sons worked to bring the other family members to the United States, and the younger sons and daughters were expected to do their share to support the family, even at the expense of school.

Although at least two of these youth demonstrated the ability to succeed academically in school, the parents and older siblings were unable to give them the information or resources needed to complete high school or go to college. The son working in the restaurant was able to use his bilingual skills to his advantage. Yet, when the younger brothers and sisters compared the high school graduate with his brothers, they did not see that the diploma paid off in a job advantage. They saw little incentive to remain in school and struggle with peers and English-speaking teachers.

The family experienced negative repercussions from the *Plyler v. Doe* ruling and the desegregation efforts of the school district. The children were called *wetbacks* and were bused across town to desegregate predominantly Anglo schools. The demands of living in a community where their presence was not valued, but rather disparaged, had an effect on the children and the parents. A strong family network helped counter some of

these negative effects, but the obligations to family came at the cost of staying in school.

### The Juárez Family

The grandfather and father in the Juárez family had a long history of working as migrant workers in the United States before Sr. Juárez brought his wife and six children to join him. Both men had spent long periods in the United States without their families and sent the majority of their earnings to Mexico to support their children. None of the adults in the family had attended school.

The family crossed into the United States without immigration documents and, with the help of other family members already living in the United States, found low-cost housing in a predominantly African American neighborhood. The oldest child, a 13-year-old daughter, had attended a few years of school in Mexico but spoke no English. She was placed in a fifth-grade classroom in a school that offered no bilingual education. The 11- and 9-year-old daughters were both placed in the third grade and bused across town to a predominantly Anglo school. They received pull-out bilingual instruction together with other immigrant students for two periods in the morning and then returned to an English-speaking teacher for the remainder of the day. The 7-year-old boy began school in first grade with a bilingual teacher. The 4-year-old was enrolled in a preschool program also with a bilingual teacher. A 3-year-old remained at home. Two other children were born in the United States within the first three years of the family's arrival. Those children were automatically U.S. citizens.

Urban renewal forced the family to move to the Mexican barrio across town about a year after their arrival. The move meant that the children had to change schools. Several months later, they moved a third time in the same area to try to find better housing. Sra. Juárez found out about a housing program that allowed the family to purchase a house owned by a federal Housing and Urban Development program because of foreclosure. The family moved again, this time across town, which required another school change for all of the children.

The father was picked up at his construction work site and deported by the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service. The family had to borrow money from relatives to cross the father back into the United States. The mother began working as a hotel maid to help pay expenses. The father and sometimes the older girls assumed responsibility for caring for the youngest children while the mother worked. Although both parents wanted their children to do well at school and did not like for them to miss classes, the daughters had to miss school to help out when the father could not care for the babies.

The oldest daughter was much more mature physically than the other





fifth graders, who were about two years younger than she. The teacher considered passing her to the seventh grade at the end of the first year of school, but decided not to do so because she had not mastered English well enough. The teacher promoted her to sixth grade. The 11-year-old was embarrassed to try to speak English and received several notes home complaining of a poor attitude and refusal to do work. Her teacher recommended that she repeat the third grade. The mother requested that the child be transferred to a bilingual classroom. This required that she be transferred to a different school. The school arranged for both sisters to be transferred and their achievement and behavior improved. The 9-year-old made the "second honor roll," achieving mostly B grades. The first-grade child was identified as "gifted and talented" and brought home positive school reports. The mother worried about the preschool child because he seemed to be having a difficult time remembering Spanish, but he got good reports from the school.

Ten years later, the oldest daughter had dropped out of school at the seventh grade. She had learned basic English skills and worked in a fast food restaurant with other Mexican workers. She had two children. The daughter who had the disciplinary problems earned a high school diploma, but was not allowed to participate in the graduation ceremonies because she was pregnant at the time. She married, had her child, and worked with her mother cleaning office buildings at night. The honor roll student dropped out of school in 10th grade and got pregnant. She had her baby and attempted to return to school but, with work and child-care problems, dropped out again. The "gifted-and-talented" son became involved in gang activities, was expelled for fighting and truancy, and stopped attending school in the seventh grade. He tried to enroll in an alternative school to make up credits, but transportation problems and lack of motivation caused him to miss too many days of classes to continue. The three youngest children continued in school. The child who had begun in preschool could not communicate well in Spanish. The younger girls were doing average academic work but had been harassed by peers, causing the family to change their telephone to an unlisted number.

The parents struggled financially but managed to keep their house payments current with the help of their daughters' earnings. Both parents were disappointed that only one of their children had earned a high school diploma.

**Commentary.** The oldest daughter faced problems common to immigrant students who arrive in their early teens with little previous schooling. The school placed her with younger students because of her low level of skills in academic areas, but she was physically much more mature than her classmates. She left school as soon as she had learned basic English skills.

...r parents relied on her to translate for them and deal with paperwork in English.

The daughter who received negative notes from her teacher explained that she did not understand the work and, therefore, could not do what her teacher expected. The teacher did not know the capabilities of this student and did not understand the difficulties that a student who spoke no English and had little previous schooling might encounter in her classroom. When this child was placed with a bilingual teacher, she was able to complete her work and went on to earn the credits for her diploma.

The two children who did well in school, one making the honor roll and the other, identified as "gifted and talented," did well in the elementary grades, but had difficulties when they reached middle school and high school. The boy became involved in gang fights that caused him to be expelled from school. Gang members often harassed immigrant students in his neighborhood. The girl got pregnant and struggled with child-care problems when she attempted to return to school. The parents could not intervene for their children at the upper grade levels and could not control the negative peer influences.

Although this family was not migrating because of agricultural work, their frequent moves within the city because of housing problems resulted in disruptions in the children's schooling. The access to bilingual teachers and instruction varied from school to school and grade level to grade level. Although several of these immigrant students demonstrated exceptional potential in the early grades, they encountered numerous problems at the secondary levels. Their schools lacked programs to help them make a successful transition from elementary to secondary school. Their parents, without English and literacy skills, could not act as advocates for their children in the school context.

### Analysis of the Cases

These children and their families, like many other immigrants, remained in the United States and now have legal resident status and families of their own. Their children are U.S. citizens. The opportunities to work with these youth in our public schools is a short-term investment. In the long run, we will have made a good investment if they are able to find better jobs and can provide solid family support for their children.

These cases demonstrate that many immigrant children began school in the United States with the ability to achieve and with high motivation. As these immigrant children moved through the U.S. school system, the programs and supports they needed were missing.

At the secondary level, school-related violence, in some cases reflecting anti-immigrant sentiments, affected immigrant students. The gangs who





harassed several of these students targeted immigrant youth. The schools refused responsibility, claiming that the fights occurred outside of school.

When family needs pressured students to leave school, there were no work-study programs to allow the students to earn money and continue their education. Frequent school changes also contributed to ultimate school dropout.

After the students dropped out of public school, there were few programs to allow them to continue their education. The alternative schools did little to help the isolation and lack of achievement that immigrant youth often experience. These schools placed truant students together with students who had more serious disciplinary problems. The alternative school's location also created transportation problems.

Emotional and financial stress associated with extreme poverty (poor housing; mobility; the need for adolescents to help their families financially; unemployment; and, when employed, long work hours that left parents little time to supervise their children) affected both families.

The schools cannot resolve all the problems facing immigrant students. However, the schools must do a better job of educating immigrant youth if we expect them to provide financially for their own families later on. The schools must invest in these youth if we want to alleviate some of the same problems in the second and third generations of immigrant families. The social and economic consequence of not educating these students is their entry into the labor market without job skills. They leave school early at a time when unskilled jobs are sharply on the decline and when workers require at least a high school education from the very beginning of their work lives. Their inability to adapt to U.S. labor market demands and to provide adequately for their families will affect all of us. The consequence of neglecting their education is to perpetuate an underclass of immigrants and their children.

## Program Types

What are the program options? What can secondary schools do to improve the achievement of immigrant students? The following overview of programs looks at strengths and weaknesses of the various options. Bilingual programs are available at the elementary level when there are large numbers of immigrant students and, in some states, such as Texas and California, such programs are mandatory. Once immigrant students reach the middle school and high school level, however, the program offerings at their schools frequently do not meet their needs. Some secondary schools have offered no special programs for immigrant/migrant students. A high percentage of students drop out before reaching the middle school because

instructional support services and counseling are not available (Dryfoos, 1990).

When secondary schools have established programs, they have tended to be either intensive English-for-speakers-of-other-languages (ESOL) classes; bilingual programs that teach subject courses in the students' native language as they learn English; or newcomers' schools, which try to address the cultural and academic adjustments of immigrant students. Quality of instruction is hampered in each of these programs by the students' varying levels of academic skills and English proficiency and a curriculum that usually does not parallel that provided to English-speaking students. Each program approach has strengths and weaknesses.

**ESOL classes.** These classes are typically found in schools that enroll students whose native languages vary widely. ESOL tends to focus on goals that are immediately useful to, and appreciated by, students; this feature constitutes both a strength and a shortcoming. Immigrant students and their parents have a strong desire to learn English for its economic utility—opening up more and better job opportunities in the United States (Romo, 1984). Immigrants are, therefore, eager to participate in ESOL classes. The disadvantage of ESOL programs is that they tend to emphasize oral language and do not cultivate students' reading and writing skills, more specific academic needs (such as specialized high school courses), or critical thinking.

**Bilingual programs.** These programs teach academic concepts in a student's strongest language while simultaneously teaching English language skills. The catch for adolescent immigrants is that bilingual programming is more comprehensive in elementary schools (San Miguel, 1987). As a result, most secondary bilingual programs are limited to the core subjects of reading, writing, and basic math. The shortage of certified bilingual faculty to teach specialized subjects at the high school level means that, no matter how great the need, providing expansive course offerings in the bilingual track is very difficult.

**Newcomers' programs.** These programs provide a series of transition courses, allowing recent immigrants to learn about American culture and to receive counseling on adjustment problems. They teach English language skills that will help students make the transition into the regular school program. The programs facilitate adjustment, but being grouped with other newcomers cannot by itself give immigrant students access to mainstream activities and social groups.

A common feature of each of these programs is that they tend to segregate immigrant students from their English-speaking peers and track them away from academic or college-prep courses. This tendency is





particularly objectionable in the case of gifted immigrant high school students. Those students, most particularly, need a broad-based program of intellectual challenge and cultural enrichment. Special attention should be provided in areas that will help these students graduate from high school, attain high scores in examinations, enroll in 4-year colleges and universities, and attain advanced college degrees.

## Characteristics of Good Practice

Investing in the education of immigrant children is the best way to assure that youth become productive citizens. Education involves teaching skills, but it also involves the transmission of the adult culture of a society to the young. It is the process of selecting the most significant parts of our cultural heritage, including skills, knowledge, attitudes, and values, then teaching them to the next generation. If the immigrant youth have opportunities to socialize with English-speaking American youth, some social information—such as conversational English, ways of interacting with others, and good taste—will be absorbed without formal instruction. Recent studies have suggested, however, that the options of assimilation are less clear-cut for Mexican immigrant children, compared to those of earlier European immigrant groups. Mexican immigrant children may not have the opportunity to gain access to White middle-class society, no matter how acculturated they become. Portes and Zhou (1993) suggest that the deterioration of public schools in urban areas and the adversarial culture of many minority youth in inner cities contribute to an environment with fewer incentives and opportunities for second-generation immigrant children to get ahead. Without a good education and the exposure to American society that comes with attending school, immigrant children will continue to experience subordination and disadvantage and remain segregated in their ethnic communities (Hraba, 1994; Hirshman, 1994). If we expect Mexican immigrant youth to fully participate in U.S. society, they must be given the opportunity to gain strong academic skills and be exposed to the values that make this society distinct (Hurn, 1993).

The United States is not alone in struggling with policy issues related to the education of immigrant youth. European countries have worked together through the United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (1986, 1988, 1989) to study these issues and have made numerous recommendations. In the United States, the work of Carter and Chatfield (1986); Garcia (1994); Lucas, Henze, and Donato (1990); Moran and Hakuta (1995); and Olsen and Dowell (1989) reports the positive characteristics of programs that effectively meet the needs of Mexican immigrant students. Such characteristics include many that de-

scribe good schools in general (e.g., high expectations for academic achievement for all students, high levels of parental involvement, and strong instructional and organizational leadership). Other important characteristics discussed below are effective with this population.

**Valuing the students' home languages and cultures.** Problems of cultural identity underlie many difficulties of immigrant students. This inevitably occurs when immigrant students enter U.S. schools where learning English and socialization are emphasized. Reactions sometimes include an attitude of failure, rejection and hostility toward school, delinquency, and social and family problems. Often these issues are intensified for second-generation immigrant youth whose parents are determined to preserve cultural or religious traditions that mean little to their U.S.-schooled children. Helping these students to maintain a positive link with their culture of origin is the most appropriate way to provide a good education and a strong value for U.S. society. This can include incorporating the home culture into the classroom, including materials on the culture, building on the home language in instruction, and observing the values and norms of the home culture while teaching the majority culture norms.

**Adequate assessment of language proficiency and academic needs.** One of the most troublesome practices for new immigrants is the use of standardized testing (Valencia & Aburto, 1991). A basic principle of testing immigrant students is that assessment should be embedded in teaching and learning and should be used to inform more skillful and adaptive teaching that leads to greater student success, not to sort students into low-level classes.

Language assessment can help schools identify the immigrant students in their schools and recruit them to the programs that can best meet their needs. However, the availability of adequate tests for language-minority students remains a problem (Masahiko & Ovando, 1995). The most common methods used by schools to determine a student's English-language proficiency are tests of oral proficiency in English that primarily test vocabulary, grammar, and ability to produce basic English sentences. Few tests assess students' reading and writing skills. Many schools also use a home language survey that asks students to report the language most often used in their homes, the language they first learned, and the students' dominant language. Whether formal tests or informal teacher assessments are used, to best meet the students' needs, a district should determine students' proficiency in their native languages and their academic achievement in the native language as well as in English.

Standardized tests in English cannot provide an accurate assessment of the skills of immigrant students who are learning a new language, adjusting





to a new culture, and dealing with traumas of immigration. These students may need more than the usual 9 months to achieve a grade level's worth of learning as measured on standardized tests (Stevens & Wood, 1992, p. 97). Secondary school programs also need a sound way of sending achievement information with migrant students when they move from school to school. Schools must be able to document assessment results, courses taken, and courses recommended, as well as partial and complete credits awarded for work completed. This information is essential if school staff are to meet the educational needs of the secondary migrant student.

**School leadership that makes immigrant and migrant students a priority.** When teachers and counselors have negative feelings about immigrant students, those feelings tend to be reflected in their expectations of the immigrant pupils. The controversies over court cases, such as *Lau v. Nichols* and *Plyler v. Doe*, and the debates surrounding bilingual education spill over into the classroom and school interactions. Many of the conditions affecting the immigrant students' integration in the schools, such as educational guidance given to them and teachers' attitudes toward them, result from the overall school attitude and staff behaviors towards immigrant students. Successful teachers have high expectations of immigrant students and confidence in their ability to teach all students. Making these students a priority means offering special programs to meet their distinct needs. One successful program in Colorado provided health education and counseling at the school site during school family nights and in homes on other nights (Migrant Education Health Program, 1992). After these sessions, staff made sure that needed follow-up was provided. A program in Indiana provided summer school programs that included clubs, school enrichment activities, junior leader programs, and educational trips to enhance the quality of life for migrant students (Pilat, 1992). These programs provided strong academic programs and opportunities for caring adults to interact with immigrant youth.

**Outreach and communication in the parents' home language.** Illiterate mothers, and undereducated parents in general, frequently come up against difficulties that undermine their own self-respect. These parents are often dependent upon their children to navigate the schools and learn the language of the host country. A strong factor in the immigrant child's school success is the educational level of the immigrant parents, especially the mother. Overall, teachers report that parents of immigrant students are substantially less involved in school functions or as school volunteers than parents of nonimmigrant students. Involvement of parents of immigrant students is highest in elementary schools. A good program will recognize the family's vital role in a child's education and encourage parents to

participate. This will often require providing information in a language the parent understands and working with a wide range of parental education levels, including those who cannot read or write or even sign their names. It may also involve recognizing that many immigrant youth do not have parents who can become involved in their schooling. Many of the decisions that parents would normally help youth make become the responsibility of immigrant adolescents when they live with siblings or unrelated adults instead of their biological parents. Parents may have remained in the sending country or may have followed the migrant stream, leaving older children behind to attend school. In focus group meetings that the author conducted with immigrant students, one high school student explained that her parents attended activities at the primary school with her younger brothers and sisters, but at the high school level there were no activities they felt comfortable participating in because of their poor English skills. Since she was the oldest child and knew some English, she was expected to resolve her own school problems and help her parents resolve those of her younger siblings. Other adolescents reported that they lived with older brothers and sisters or relatives and had no parents to become involved in their education. School staff must be sensitive to these immigrant family structures and accommodate them in their outreach efforts.

**Staff development to help teachers and other staff serve immigrant students more effectively.** The influence of racism and experiences of segregation and discrimination at school are decisive educational barriers for immigrant students. Mexican immigrant students are more likely to attend segregated schools today than they were in the 1950s when the Brown decision desegregated schools (Garcia, 1992). Whether they attend all Hispanic schools or ethnically mixed schools, immigrant students are easily identifiable and are often the targets of racism at school. Their experiences with discrimination are often reflected in their general feelings of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with school. Students who have experienced racism from peers or negative attitudes from teachers are less motivated to go to school than students who have not suffered in this way. Teachers and counselors need to be aware of the effects of negative attitudes and should have skills to help students mediate these situations.

**Instruction based on previous educational experience.** Studies have shown that certain problems of adaptation of immigrant children are closely related to age of arrival and length of residence in the host country. Language difficulties, interrupted education, the conditions under which immigration has taken place, plus lack of previous school experience all affect immigrant students' school achievement. Knowledge of the English language remains one of the major educational problems of immigrant students in the United States. Although the situation improves with time,





this problem particularly affects children who enroll in U.S. schoo older ages (Cummins, 1981). Cummins' work suggests that it takes i grant students at least 6 years to get sufficient command of English strong academic work in that language. Pre-high school experience essential factor in increasing immigrant students' high school suc Immigrant students who arrive at older ages without previous s experiences are definitely at a disadvantage, both socially and aca cally. Both the primary schools and the secondary schools must remedial programs in place for older students who enroll without app ate grade-level skills. In most situations, U.S. high school teachers a prepared to deal with adolescent students who cannot read in Spani English and do not know the alphabet. Teachers will need special tra to teach basic literacy skills to young adults.

**Scheduling that includes immigrant students in classes wit glish-speaking students.** Programs that track all low-achieving stu together deprive those students of the most interesting classes and the talented teachers. Because many of the newest immigrant paren poorly educated or lack English skills, they are likely to be tracked in lowest level classes. A good educational program will attempt to int immigrant children with high-achieving students in at least some o classes.

**Placement decisions made with adequate assessment and con tion.** School staff need adequate assessment tools to determine lan proficiency and academic achievement levels of immigrant stude order to place them in appropriate classes. Problems of academic p mance of new arrivals who know little English should not be confuse the achievement problems of second-generation immigrants who mastered English but lack strong reading, writing, or math skills. M immigrant students have too often been viewed as lacking intell ability instead of lacking English proficiency. IQ tests, standardize and more recently competency tests have been greatly misused wi guage-minority students, channeling them into low-level classes, la them as mentally retarded, and discouraging them from higher edu Effective programs recognize the wide range of language proficienci academic skills among immigrant students and address those needs a ingly. Schools should maintain achievement data on immigrant st and compare their achievement with that of the general student popu so that their programs for immigrant students can be improved necessary. They should also maintain follow-up achievement d former immigrant students, so that they can see how these students p over time.

**Programs that address multicultural concerns (both social and academic).** Effective programs for immigrant students recognize that individuals cannot change their culture without losing their identity. Immigrant students should not be faced with a choice between assimilating in order to do well at school and rejecting their own culture, which often leads to failure in school (Manaster, 1992). The Manaster study found that successful students were more stably acculturated, had a clearer sense of themselves, had higher occupational aspirations, and desired stable, responsible jobs. The students' cultures must be incorporated in the learning environment to help them make that positive transition. Teaching must take into account our increasingly complex understanding of U.S. culture as a multicultural reality (Fishkin, 1995). In the Southwest, U.S. culture has evolved in common with Mexican culture, and this multiculturalism provides an interesting and healthy base for high school curriculum.

## Transitions from School to Work: Postsecondary and Vocational Programs

Although most jobs that offer the prospect of upward mobility require graduation from high school, the transition from school to work precedes high school graduation for many Mexican immigrant students. Many enter school late in a school year and withdraw early in order to migrate with their families. Others drop out of school, but try to return when their lives are more stable. A successful schooling experience for migrant students demands that teachers, counselors, and administrators have sensitivity and understanding of the mobile life of migrant students and their families. Flexible instructional programming that allows students to "stop out" of school to work or take care of family responsibilities, and then allows them to return and pick up their academic work without penalties, is essential for immigrant student success. Multiple "second-chance" opportunities for education and training at worksites, community centers, churches, and school sites should be available. This flexibility also demands that these projects coordinate their instructional programs.

Flexible options, along with programs and services to combat high dropout rates, are essential at the secondary level. The Migrant Attrition Project estimates a 45 percent national dropout rate for migrant students. Conditions leading to early school leaving are (1) over-age grade placement, (2) poverty, (3) interrupted school attendance, (4) inconsistent record keeping, and (5) limited English proficiency (Salerno, 1991).

Counseling that encourages academically successful immigrant youth to consider 4-year college and community college vocational options is also important. Several programs have been successful in this area. The





University of Texas at Austin (1994) Migrant Student Program provides information on course materials and services available for migrant students. The program focuses on courses that meet the high school graduation requirements. Students can work on the courses at their own pace at any location and earn high school credit through correspondence courses, examination, or having the university where the student enrolls grade the courses. The university program offers explanation for the instruction and helps with course work through an 800 telephone number. The university trains tutors, teachers, and administrators; and provides student progress reports and follow-up services. The program includes visits to the campus and assistance to students in preparing for the exam the students must pass to graduate from high school and to enroll in college. Other programs, such as the International High School, a collaborative curriculum project developed by New York colleges and public schools, and special summer programs, such as Upward Bound, that bring immigrant high school students to college campuses for tutoring and college orientation, help bridge the gap between high school graduation requirements and college entry expectations.

Other provisions that have helped keep immigrant students in school include coordinated social services, counseling, tutoring, enrichment activities, health service referrals, and job training and placement. Self-paced curriculum, workplace English and literacy instruction, and evening school classes help ensure that Mexican immigrant students have access to programs that allow them to continue learning skills needed for decent employment (Neubert & Leak, 1990). Initiatives that lead to associate degrees (or to other certification from community or technical colleges) are important options for many immigrant students. Knowledge of career options, program quality, support services, interagency coordination, and family influence must be considered as educators help immigrant students plan vocational training (Imel, 1989).

## Conclusion

The UNESCO discussions on the education of immigrant children urged that we move beyond the stereotyped thinking of immigrants as problems. Instead we should think of immigrants as individuals trying to make a better life for themselves and their families. They come with human problems, and they are diverse. They are not all poor. They come for economic, personal, and social reasons. Some are unskilled and some are highly skilled; many will make significant contributions to our country. Investing in the education of immigrant children is the best way to assure that these youth are productive future citizens.

Immigration continues to make many demands of our public schools even in times of major and sustained fiscal difficulties at all levels. As we deal with immigrant students from non-European backgrounds, the cultural ethnocentrism and assimilation roles of our schools are being questioned. We are being called upon to deal with diversity and complex social relations in our schools. The majority of the financial responsibility for educating immigrant students is located at the state and local level where people have the greatest vested interest in their schools. While it is not unreasonable to expect the federal government, the unit of government that makes decisions about immigration policy, to bear the responsibility to cover some, if not all, of the costs of educating immigrant children, the implementation of adequate programs will remain the responsibility of local school districts. Despite the immediate costs, the education of immigrant youth is an investment in the future of our communities.

California, Texas, and the rest of the United States are not alone in struggling with the predicament of how to deal with immigrant youth. Most industrialized nations are dealing with similar issues. What we are experiencing in the United States is part of a global phenomenon. The question of how to educate immigrant students is not one that can be addressed simply with reforms in immigration laws. The immigrant children who will be enrolling in our schools in most urban areas in the next 5 years are already born and residing in our communities. Programs must be in place when they arrive in our classrooms.

To make the transition from "outsiders" to respected members of the U.S. workforce and society, immigrant youth must acquire cultural and technical skills through formal education. Cummins (1986), Brice-Heath (1986), Ogbu (1987), and Trueba (1987) have suggested that the schooling of immigrant children must be understood within the broader context of society's treatment of these students and their families in and out of schools. No quick fix is likely, under present social and schooling conditions. There is no single attribute that is the only variable of importance in the education of immigrant youth. A more comprehensive view, one that includes an understanding of the relationship between home and school and one that integrates students' values, beliefs, histories, and experiences into the educational strategies employed, is essential for the educational success of Mexican immigrant students.

All trends suggest that immigrant students in our high schools will remain here as long-term U.S. residents and may eventually become citizens (Borjas, Freeman, & Lang, 1991). The longer these students reside in the United States, the more likely we will see their inclusion in terms of occupation, residence, and intermarriage. We must also consider today's students' children and grandchildren as they form their own families and begin to pass educational advantage on to their descendants (Featherman &





Hauser, 1978). Unless our public schools serve these immigrant youth well, there will be a mismatch of the skills of young and poor immigrant residents and the educational requirements of the growing and better-paying jobs (Stolzenberg, 1990). There will also be a mismatch of their skills to participate as informed and active citizens and to meet the demands of democracy in an increasingly diverse United States.

## References


Addams, J. (1910). *Twenty years at Hull House* (4th Printing, 1961). New York: Macmillan.

Acuna, R. (1981). *Occupied America: A history of Chicanos* (2nd ed). New York: Harper & Row.

Baker, K., & de Kanter, A. (1981). *Effectiveness of bilingual education: A review of the literature.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Budget, and Evaluation.

Bankston, III, C. L., & Zhou, M. (1995). Effects of minority-language literacy on the academic achievement of Vietnamese youths in New Orleans. *Sociology of Education, 68*, 1-17.

Barnes, P. (1971, June). The great American land grab. *The New Republic, 164*, 19-24.

Bean, F. D., Edmonston, B., & Passel, J.S. (1990). *Undocumented migration to the United States: IRCA and the experience of the 1980s.* Los Angeles and Washington, DC: The Rand Corporation and The Urban Institute.

Bean, F. D., Espenshade, T., White, M., & Dymoski, R. (1990). Post-IRCA changes in the volume and flow of Undocumented Migration to the United States. In F. Bean, B. Edmonston, and J. Passel (Eds.), *Undocumented migration to the United States: IRCA and the experience of the 1980s* (pp. 111-158). Washington, DC: The Urban Institute Press.

Bean, F. D., & Fix, M. (1992). The significance of recent immigration policy reforms in the United States. In G. Freeman and J. Jupp (Eds.), *Nations of immigrants: Australia and the United States in a changing world* (pp. 41-55). New York and Sydney: Oxford University Press.

Borjas, G., Freeman, R., & Lang, K. (1991). Undocumented Mexican-born workers in the U.S.: How many, how permanent? In J. Abowd and R. Freeman (Eds.), *Immigration, trade, and the labor market* (pp. 77-100). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Brice-Heath, S. (1986). Sociocultural contexts of language development. In (n.a.) *Beyond language: Social and cultural factors in schooling language minority students* (pp. 197-230). Los Angeles, California: California State University, Evaluation, Dissemination, and Assessment Center.

Cafferty, P. San Juan, Chiswick, B. R., Greeley, A. M., & Sullivan, T. A. (1984). *The dilemma of American immigration: Beyond the golden door.* New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books.

California Proposition 187. (November, 1994). Illegal Aliens, Ineligibility for Public Services Verification and Reporting Initiative Statute.

Carter, T., & Chatfield, M. (1986). Effective bilingual schools: Implications for policy and practice. *American Journal of Education, 95*, 200-232.

Cazden, C., & Snow, C. E. (1990). English plus: Issues in bilingual education, Preface. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 508*, 9-11.

apa, J. (1990). The myth of Hispanic progress. *Journal of Hispanic Policy, 4*, 3-18.
Cummins, J. (1986). Empowering minority students: A framework for intervention. *Harvard Educational Review, 56*(1), 18-35.
Cummins, J. (1981). The role of primary language development in promoting education success for language minority students. In *Schooling and language minority students: A theoretical framework* (pp. 16,23-28). Los Angeles: California State Department of Education, National Evaluation, Dissemination and Assessment Center.
Donato, K. M. (1993). *U.S. policy and Mexican migration to the United States, 1942-92.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Sociological Association in Pittsburgh, PA: revised for Second Binational Conference on Mexico-U.S. Migration, sponsored by the Latin American Studies Department at the University of Chicago.
Dryfoos, J. G. (1990). *Adolescents at risk: Prevalence and prevention.* New York: Oxford University Press.
Emanuel, S. (1983). *Constitutional law.* New York: Emanuel Law Outlines, Inc.
Featherman, D., & Hauser, R. (1978). *Opportunity and change.* New York: Academic Press.
Fishkin, S. F. (1995, March 10). The multiculturalism of 'Traditional' culture. *The Chronicle of Higher Education, Point of View, A48.*
Foley, D. E. (1988). *From peones to politicos: Class and ethnicity in a South Texas town, 1900-1987 (Rev. ed.).* Austin: University of Texas Press.
Garcia, E. (1994). *Understanding the needs of LEP students.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
Garcia E. (1992). Hispanic children: Theoretical, empirical, and related policy issues. *Educational Psychology Review, 4*(1), 69-93.
Glazer, N. (1985). Immigrants and education. In N. Glazer (Ed.), *Clamor at the gates: The new American immigration* (pp. 213-41). San Francisco: Institute for Contemporary Affairs.
Goodis, T. A. (1986). *A layman's guide to 1986 U.S. immigration reform: Impacts of immigration in California policy.* (Discussion Paper PDS-86-4). Washington, DC: Urban Institute.
Hakuta, K. (1986). *Mirror of language: The debate on bilingualism.* New York: Basic Books.
Hakuta, K., & Gould, L. J. (1987). Synthesis of research on bilingual education. *Education Leadership, 44*(6), 38-44.
Hirshman, C. (1994). Problems and prospects of studying immigrant adaptation from the 1990 population census: From generational comparisons to the process of "becoming American." *International Migration Review, 28(Special Issue)*, 690-713.
Hoefer, M. D. (1989, March 29). *Characteristics of aliens legalizing under IRCA.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Population Association of America, Baltimore, MD.
Hraba, J. (1994). *American ethnicity (2nd edition).* Itasca, IL: F. E. Peacock Publishers.
Hurn, C. J. (1993). *The limits and possibilities of schooling.* Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
Imel, S. (1989). The New Workforce (Trends and Issues Alerts). Columbus, OH: ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 312 412)
*Lau v. Nichols*, 414 U. S. 563 (1974).
Lucas, T., Henze, R., & Donato, R. (1990). Promoting the success of Latino language-





minority students: An exploratory study of six high schools. *Harvard Educational Review, 60*(3), 315-339.
Macionis, J. (1996). *Society: The basics.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Simon & Schuster.
Manaster, G. (1992). Mexican American migrant students' academic success: Sociological and psychological acculturation. *Adolescence, 27*(105), 123-136.
Martinez, G. A. (1994, Spring). Legal indeterminacy, judicial discretion and the Mexican American litigation experience: 1930-1980. *U.C. Davis Law Review, 27*(3), 555-618.
Masahiko, M., & Ovando, C. J. (1995). Language issues in multicultural contexts. In J. A. Banks and C. A. McGee Banks (Eds)., *Handbook of research on multicultural education* (pp. 427-444). New York: Macmillan Publishing.
Massey, D. S. (1981). Dimensions of the new immigration to the United States and the prospects for assimilation. *Annual Review of Sociology, 7*, 57-85.
Massey, D. S. (1985). The settlement process among Mexican migrants to the United States: New methods and findings. In D. Levine, K. Hill, and R. Warren (Eds.), *Immigration statistics: A story of neglect* (pp. 255-292). Washington, DC: National Academy Press.
Massey, D. S. (1986). Settlement of American migrants in the U.S. *American Sociological Review, 51*, 670-684.
Massey, D. S., Donato, K. M., & Liang, Z. (1990). Effects of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986: Preliminary data from Mexico. In F. D. Bean, B. Edmonston, and J. S. Passel (Eds.), *Undocumented migration to the United States: IRCA and the experience of the 1980s* (pp. 183-210). Washington, DC: Urban Institute Press.
Matute-Bianchi, M. E. (1986). Ethnic identities and patterns of school success and failure among Mexican-descent and Japanese-American students in a California high school: An ethnographic analysis. *American Journal of Education, 95*, 233-55.
McComb, D. G. (1989). *Texas: A modern history.* Austin: University of Texas Press.
McLemore, S. D., & Romo, R. (1985). The origins and development of the Mexican American people. In R. O. De La Garza, F. D. Bean, C. M. Bonjean, R. Romo, and R. Alvarez (Eds.), *The Mexican American experience: An interdisciplinary anthropology* (pp. 3-32). Austin: University of Texas Press.
McWilliams, C. (1968). *North from Mexico: The Spanish-speaking people of the United States.* New York: Greenwood Press, Inc.
Migrant Education Health Program. (1992). Final Report, Colorado State Dept. of Health, Denver. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 363 465)
Montejano, D. (1987). *Anglos and Mexicans in the making of Texas, 1836-1986.* Austin: University of Texas Press.
Moran, C. E., & Hakuta, K. (1995). Bilingual education: Broadening research perspectives. In J. A. Banks and C. A. McGee Banks (Eds.), *Handbook of research on multicultural education* (pp. 445-462). New York: Macmillan Publishing USA.
Moquin, W., & Van Doren, C. (Eds.). (1971). *A documentary history of the Mexican Americans.* New York: Praeger Publishers.
Neubert L. E., & Leak, D. A. (1990). Serving urban youth with special needs in vocational education: Issues and strategies for change. *TASPP Bulletin*, pp. 1-3 (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 326 695)
Ogbu, J. U. (1987). Variability in minority school performance: A problem in search of an explanation. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly, 18*, 312-334.
Olsen , L. & Dowell, C. (1989). *Bridges: Promising programs for the education of immigrant children.* San Francisco, CA: California Tomorrow. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 314 544)

Passel, J. S. (1985). Undocumented immigrants: How many? In *Proceedings of the Social Statistics Section of the American Statistical Association, 1985* (pp. 65-71). Washington, DC: American Statistical Association.

Passel, J. S. (1986). Undocumented immigration. *Annals, American Academy for Political and Social Sciences*, 487, 181-200.

Pilat, M. (1992). *4-H youth programs: Enhancing the quality of life.* (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 359 449)

*Plyler v. Doe*, 457 U. S. 202 (1982).

Porter, R. P. (1990). *Forked tongue: The politics of bilingual education.* New York: Basic Books.

Portes, A., & Rumbaut, R. (1990). *Immigrant America: A portrait.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Portes, A., & Zhou, M. (1993). The new second generation: Segmented assimilation and its variants. *Annuals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences*, 530, 74-96.

Reimers, D. M. (1985). *Still the golden door: The third world comes to America.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Romo, H. (1984). The Mexican origin population's differing perceptions of their children's schooling. In R. Garza, F. Bean, C. Bonjean, R. Romo, and R. Alvarez (Eds.), *The Mexican American experience: An interdisciplinary anthology* (pp. 635-650). Austin: University of Texas Press.

Romo, R. (1983). *East Los Angeles: History of a barrio.* Austin: University of Texas Press.

Rosenbaum, R. J. (1981). *Mexicano resistance in the Southwest.* Austin: University of Texas Press.

Salerno, A. (1991). Migrant students who leave school early: Strategies for retrieval. ERIC Digest. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 335 179)

San Miguel, Jr., G. (1987). *Let all of them take heed; Mexican Americons and the campaign for educational equality in Texas, 1910-1981.* Austin: University of Texas Press.

Spring, J. (1991). *American education: An introduction to social and political aspects.* New York: Longman.

Steiner, S. (1969). *La Raza: The Mexican Americans.* New York: Harper & Row.

Stevens, E., Jr., & Wood, G. H. (1992). *Justice, ideology, and education: An introduction to the social foundations of education (2nd ed.).* New York: Mc Graw-Hill.

Stolzenberg, R. M. (1990). Ethnicity, geography and occupational achievement of Hispanic men in the United States. *American Sociological Review, 55,* 143-154.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Departmental Regulation (45 CFR Part 80).

Trueba, H. (1987). *Success or failure? Learning and the language minority student.* Cambridge: Newbury House.

UNESCO. (1988, December). *Annotated bibliography: Education of immigrants.* Paris: Author.

UNESCO. (1989, April). *The socio-educational situation of the children of migrants.* Paris: Author.

UNESCO. (1986, October). *Programme of exchanges between educators of migrant workers in the host countries and educators in the countries of origin.* Paris: Author.

UNESCO. (1989). Meeting of specialists on the socio-cultural and linguistic integration of the children of migrant and former migrant workers. Yugoslavia: Author.





University of Texas at Austin. (1994). *Migrant student program receiving school guide.* (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 352 234)

U. S. Department of Education. (1993). Descriptive study of services to limited English proficient students (provided for the 1993 reauthorization of the federal elementary and secondary education programs). Washington, DC: Office of the Under Secretary.

U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Office of the Secretary. (1970, May 25). Memorandum from J. Stanley Pottinger to school districts with more than five percent national origin-minority group children. *Identification of discrimination and denial of services on the basis of national origin.* Washington, D. C.

U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Office for Civil Rights (1975, Summer). *Task force findings specifying remedies available for eliminating past educational practices ruled unlawful under* Lau v. Nichols. Washington, DC: Office of the Secretary.

U. S. Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA).

*U.S. News and World Report.* (1974, July 8). The newest Americans: The second "Spanish invasion," 34-36.

Valdez, R. B., DaVanzo, J., Vernez, G., & Wade, M. (1993 June). Immigration: Getting the facts. (RAND Issue Paper, No. 1). Los Angeles: The RAND Corporation.

Valencia, R. R., & Aburto, S. (1991). The uses and abuses of educational testing: Chicanos as a case in point. In R. R. Valencia (Ed.), *Chicano school failure and success: Research and policy agendas for the 1990s* (pp. 203-251). New York: The Falmer Press.

Vernez, G. (1993). *Mexican labor in California's economy: From rapid growth to likely stability.* Palo Alto, CA: Stanford Press.

Vernez, G. (1994). *Undocumented immigration: An irritant or significant problem in U.S.-Mexico relations?* (Labor & Population Program, Reprint Series 94-18). Los Angeles: RAND Corporation.