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Christian Faltis

Arizona State University, cfaltis@asu.edu

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Immigrant Students in U.S. Schools: Building a Pro-Immigrant, English Plus Education Counterscript

Christian Faltis, *Arizona State University*

Immigrant students face myriad problems in U.S. schools, ranging from being segregated from English speakers and placed in classrooms with underprepared teachers to arriving at school underprepared in literacy and content knowledge in their primary language. In this paper, I discuss immigrant newcomer populations and their experiences with K-12 schooling with an eye toward building on a *pro-immigrant, English plus education counterscript*. I begin by setting the stage of immigration using a wave metaphor, but not just any wave. Immigration since 1965 has reached tsunami-like proportions, flooding elementary and secondary schools with immigrant newcomers. Many, if not all, schools are unprepared to meet the needs of newcomer children and youth, the majority of whom are also English learners with varying degrees of primary language formal schooling experiences (Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly, & Driscoll, 2005; Louie, 2005; Wright & Choi, 2005).

As with the approach of a tsunami, educators have known for decades that the numbers of immigrant English learners were increasing rapidly, but have done little to prepare teachers adequately for the kinds of complex schooling and instruction required to meet the challenges immigrant students present. The public backlash against immigration and immigrants, coupled with the rising tide of English-only movements nationwide, has facilitated the creation of anti-immigrant scripts, which spawn widespread fear and anxiety about loss of control or uncontrolled borders, where everything is changing in ways that threaten what was once “our world, home, community and nation” (Suárez-Orozco, 1998, p. 295). The fear of losing control is especially prevalent in America’s schools, where burgeoning numbers of immigrant students and English learners are making teaching increasingly complex and difficult for American teachers, 86 % of whom are White, and 79 % female, statistics that have changed little over the past 30 years (Allen, 2005). Many of these teachers entered the profession to

teach children who were mostly like they were: English speakers, preferably from mainstream, middle-class homes. There is, however, an expanding number of teachers nationwide who reject the anti-immigrant script and actively seek ways to improve instruction for immigrant students and English learners. Likewise, there is a growing research base on what schools can do to improve access, participation, and benefit (see DeVillar & Faltis, 1991, for a discussion of these elements of equity) for immigrant students and English learners. In this paper, I refer to these efforts and the implications they have for meeting the needs of immigrant students in U.S. schools as the *pro-immigrant, English plus counterscript*. I expand on the anti-immigrant and the pro-immigrant, English plus counterscript in the sections that follow, and end with a section of recommendations for ensuring the academic success of immigrant students and English learners.

The Sheer Numbers: A Tsunami Immigration Wave

Following the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, which granted priority to family reunification and repealed the national origins quota system that restricted immigration for selected non-White groups, the second large-scale wave of legal immigration to the United States began. Among the first immigrants under this new unrestricted policy were immigrant families from China, Taiwan, and Korea, who had been kept from entering the country for nearly 50 years (Massey, 1995). Thousands of new immigrants also came from Latin America to unite with families and to develop opportunities for earning a decent living. Fifteen years later, the Refugee Act of 1980 granted asylum to politically oppressed refugees from Central America (mainly El Salvador) and Cuba, substantially increasing the number of immigrants who entered legally into the United States from Spanish-speaking countries (McBrian, 2005). By 1985, immigrants and refugees represented 1 in 12 of all U.S. residents; within 20 years, their presence had increased to 1 in 9, and their children, foreign and U.S.-born, made up 1 in 4 of all school-aged children (Capps, Fix, Ost, Reardon-Anderson, & Passel, 2005).

Beginning in the 1990s, new refugees arrived in the United States from war-torn countries such as Afghanistan, Bosnia, Burundi, Iraq, Somalia, and Sudan. Over a third of these recent refugees, who by 2000, had reached 2 million, were school-aged children who were both poor and non-English speaking (McBrian, 2005).

The Immigration Act of 1990 promoted increased immigration of highly skilled professionals, but also had the effect of pulling in tens of thousands of new immigrants overwhelmingly from Mexico, but also from other Latin American countries, such as Guatemala, El Salvador, and the Dominican Republic, where war and desperate economic conditions pushed people to emigrate (Tienda &

Mitchell, 2006). In 2000 and 2001, prior to 9/11, the U.S. government allowed the unification of families separated by delays in the processing of immigrant visas and granted lawful permanent status to immigrants who paid a penalty and were able to prove that they had family or employment in the United States before a certain date. By 2005, more than 20 million immigrants from Mexico and other Latin American countries had taken up temporary or permanent residence across the United States, mainly in the states of California, Florida, Illinois, New York, Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona, but increasingly in the Southern states of Arkansas, Georgia, Tennessee, and South Carolina (see Archibold, 2006; Beck & Allexaht-Snider, 2001; Cornfield & Arzubigiaga, 2004; Hamman, 2001a, 2003) and in the Midwestern states of Iowa, Wisconsin, and Nebraska (Hackenberg & Kukulka, 1995; Pew Hispanic Center, 2006).

In 2005, it was estimated that an additional 11 to 12 million undocumented immigrants lived in the United States, with 80% of them coming from Mexico and other Latin American countries (Tienda & Mitchell, 2006). Mexicans accounted for nearly 60% of all undocumented immigrants. While the number of documented Mexicans entering the United States in recent years has stabilized, the number of undocumented immigrants from Mexico entering the United States has not. Presently, documented and undocumented foreign-born Mexicans add up to more than 21 million immigrants.

School-Aged Immigrant and Refugee Children and Adolescents

If the sheer numbers of immigrants in the United States are staggering, the burgeoning population of school-aged immigrant children is equally prodigious. It was already mentioned above that there are currently nearly 2 million school-aged refugee children living throughout the United States. While many of these are Spanish-speaking refugees from war-torn countries such as Colombia, El Salvador, and the Dominican Republic, more than half are from other parts of the world that have been involved in deadly conflicts and civil wars (McBrien, 2005). There are 424,422 nonrefugee, foreign-born Hispanic children ages 5-9; 590,348 ages 10-14; and 919,863 ages 15-19; or a total of 1,934,633, not counting undocumented foreign-born school-aged Hispanic children (Pew Hispanic Center, 2006). What is especially significant about these numbers is that 47.5% of all foreign-born Hispanic children are high school aged, and when you include the age bracket 10-14, which is the age range for middle and junior high school, the percentage climbs to 78%. There is no way of knowing the percentages for the various age groups of undocumented foreign-born school-aged Hispanic children, but it is probably similar to what is known about documented foreign-born Hispanic children: Greater numbers of children are in the upper grades and

secondary school. This is important to note since teachers at the secondary level are typically less prepared than elementary level teachers to teach language and literacy within their content areas (Faltis & Coulter, 2007).

The Anti-Immigrant Script

Few issues currently galvanize the American public more than immigration. There are debates in Congress and in homes across the nation about whether immigrants who came here illegally and have worked and stayed within the law should be granted amnesty. Politicians use extreme views about the costs and perils of immigration to capture anti-immigrant and, particularly, anti-Hispanic votes. Across Arizona, California, and Texas, hundreds of miles of real and virtual fences are being erected to curb entry by illegal immigrants from Mexico and Central America. Volunteer White militia, known as the Minute Men, armed with rifles, binoculars, and night vision gear, roam the border areas looking for illegal immigrants to capture and arrest. Alarmist CNN newscaster Lou Dobbs reminds viewers almost on a nightly basis that Mexican immigrants are an “army of invaders” (Dorman, 2003) who intend on reannexing parts of the Southwestern United States to Mexico, and that “the invasion of illegal aliens is threatening the health of many Americans” through “deadly imports” of diseases like leprosy and malaria (Dorman, 2005). In Arizona, State Legislator Russell Pearce (Mesa-R) recently called for a return to the 1950s racist, mass-deportation program known as “Operation Wetback” to round up and deport Mexican immigrants—men, women, and children—to Mexico (Crawford, 2006). In 1954, green Immigration and Naturalization Services vans equipped with metal cages drove through Mexican neighborhoods in Yuma, Phoenix, Tucson, and Nogales searching for people who looked Mexican to deport, without checking their citizenship. Representative Pearce would like to see a return to this practice, only on a larger scale than before.

In the Midwestern and Southern states, immigrants are often portrayed as taking good jobs from Americans (Beck & Allexaht-Snyder, 2001; Hackenberg & Kukulka, 1995). For example, David Duke, the former grand dragon of the Ku Klux Klan and founder of the National Organization for European American Rights gave a keynote speech at an anti-Hispanic immigrant rally in Siler City, North Carolina, a rural poultry processing town that had recently undergone an exponential growth in its immigrant population (Cuadros, 2000). Duke was tapping into the growing anti-immigrant script (Suárez-Orozco, 1998) to paint recent changes in demographics throughout the Southern states as a threat to the “good old days.”

The anti-immigrant script operates in a kind of “limited goods” ethos, where what immigrants gain is set against local citizens’ loss, fueling intense

anger and animus towards immigrants. Immigration becomes an invasion of illegal aliens, and the invasion, crossing the border, is judged to be criminal; hence, the invaders are criminals. The mental picture created from this anti-immigrant script is one of fear over the loss of control intertwined with images of waves of criminal aliens, robbing decent people of services and efforts, and contaminating schools with their diseased children who refuse to relinquish their foreign ways (Suárez-Orozco, 1998).

In the meatpacking industries of the Midwest, newly arriving immigrants from Mexico are taking jobs in slaughterhouses that were once done only by locals, mainly Whites (see Millard & Chapa, 2004, for an overview of Latinos in the Midwest). The townspeople complain that Mexican immigrants are getting benefits that should go only to (White) people who are from the area (Hackenberg & Kukulka, 1995). In this manner, the anti-immigrant script is especially appealing to the less powerful, who feel more disempowered and anxious about losing work to immigrants, regardless of their legal status (Hamann, 2003). In the chicken industries of Arkansas, Mexican immigrants are seen as hard working, which is good, but nonetheless, also as unwilling to learn English and there to take jobs that belong to locals, which is bad and which fuels anti-immigrant hostility.

The Anti-Immigrant Script in Schools

Make no mistake about it: American schools are in the assimilation business (DeVillar, 1994; Gibson, 1998), and the call for assimilationist policies and practices has intensified in direct proportion to the increasing numbers of immigrants in American schools, where the anti-immigrant script lives pusillanimously below the surface, hidden in the curriculum and within instructional practices (Constantino & Faltis, 1998). The increased demand for immigrants to relinquish any allegiances to the “old” country and to learn English quickly, preferably through English-only immersion, is a blunt response to the growing number and distribution of immigrants, who are perceived at best by many as unwilling to become Americanized and at worst as welfare-grubbing criminals.

For schools, the anti-immigrant script often plays out in battles over how much to spend on teachers and materials for immigrant students who need to learn English, and whether students who are in school illegally have the right to public education at all. In Arizona, for example, in *Flores v. Arizona*, filed in 1992, the plaintiffs argued that the state failed to provide instruction for English learners to make them proficient in English and enable them to master standard academic curriculum. When the case was initially decided in 2000, U.S. District Court Judge Alfredo Márquez ruled the state provided a funding level for English learners that was “arbitrary and capricious” and failed to provide enough

teachers, teachers' aides, classrooms, materials, and tutoring for these students. Judge Márquez ordered the state to conduct a cost study to establish the funding needed to provide effective programs for English learners. After several state cost studies, which effectively underpriced the cost of educating English learners, the legislature, in 2005, deemed the studies useless. In that same year, a new judge ordered the state to resolve the issue or face huge fines.

Still unresolved, the case went back to trial in November, 2006, almost 15 years after it was filed in court with the same result. The state of Arizona has refused to provide sufficient funding for immigrant English learners since 1992. The Arizona case is complicated by the fact that in 2001, voters passed Proposition 203, which mandates English-only instruction in schools and requires all teachers to have minimal training (65 seat hours) in structured/sheltered English immersion (SEI) (Wright, 2005). The minimal preparation of teachers, teacher aides, and instructional staff in SEI education is extremely costly, but by itself, SEI teacher preparation constitutes less than half of the amount of funding needed to address the educational needs of English learners.

In any case, the state of Arizona has been bullishly unwilling to spend money on educating English learners, all of whom are immigrant children and youth (including refugees). Arizona is not alone in its obdurate stance toward earmarking public funds for educating immigrant English learners. Georgia, Alabama, and Tennessee have also balked at setting aside sufficient funding for English learners (Cornfield & Arzubiaga, 2004; Hamann, 2003; Latinos, immigration, and public education in Georgia, 2005). The argument from legislators and politicians who control the resources to fund public education has been plain and simple, closely following what could be seen as the general anti-immigrant script:

These English learners are immigrants who are here illegally. Why should we (White people who were here first) spend money on other people's children and youth who are here illegally and who do not want to learn English or become Americans?

The argument is flawed on at least five counts. First, large numbers of English learners in schools nationwide are legal residents (Pew Hispanic Center, 2006). Second, the fact that a child was born outside the United States is not sufficient reason to deny him or her access to public education. The Supreme Court ruled in *Plyler v. Doe* (1982) that it is illegal to deny free public education to illegal immigrant children; to do so is in violation of the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. Third, the argument has racist overtones, privileging Whites who control education and school financing at the expense of poor, undereducated minorities, whose schooling needs are believed to pull from a limited resource

pool that should rightly fund those children who were already here, who already speak English, and who are American. Fourth, it incorrectly assumes that the only way immigrant children learn English and become Americans is through total immersion in English-only, American-based curriculum, in which they necessarily reject their primary language and culture and only take on identities and behaviors that are considered mainstream American. (For alternative views, see Alba & Nee, 2005; Crawford, 2004; DeVillar, 1994; Gibson, 1998; Pérez Pascoe, 2006; Suárez-Orozco, 2005). And fifth, White Americans were not “here first”; Native Americans were.

Another way the anti-immigrant script has played out in schools is through its association with the English-only movement. The goal of this movement is to make English the official language of the United States and to restrict the use of non-English languages in schools (and other government services, such as interpreters and voting materials) (Faltis, in press). The English-only movement is based on the belief that an encroachment on English by minority language speakers has reached such a level that English is in danger of losing its primacy as the nation’s dominant language. However, as a recent study by Rumbaut, Massey, and Bean (2006) shows, most Spanish-speaking immigrants in Southern California, near the Mexican border, lose their ability to speak Spanish by the third generation, which is defined as being born in the United States of U.S.-born parents. Accordingly, not only does Spanish not encroach on English, it usually ends up in the linguistic graveyard with all of the other minority languages that die out by the third generation, not endangering English at all (Portes & Rumbaut, 2006).

To date, the English-only movement has successfully eliminated all forms of bilingual instruction (except in a small number of dual language immersion approaches) in three states with large immigrant populations: California, Arizona, and Massachusetts. In these states, teachers are allowed to use minimal amounts of their students’ primary language for noninstructional purposes; they must use English for instruction, and all instructional materials must be in English. This effectively precludes all emerging and beginning English learners from any meaningful participation in and benefit from academic content learning activities (see Wright, 2005).

Twenty-three states currently have English-only laws. While bilingual education is not officially banned in schools in English-only states, there are severe restrictions on the use of non-English languages for instructional and assessment purposes (Crawford, 2004). Moreover, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 allows states to assess reading and language arts achievement in non-English languages for up to three years only. After that, all assessment must be conducted in English, even if students are still considered to be English learners. Most states, however, assess yearly achievement only in English, a practice that not only leads to poor ratings in schools with large English learner and immigrant

populations, but also fails children and youth because it disregards what they already know as important for optimal learning.

An anti-immigration script in schools also has a pernicious effect on where and the conditions under which immigrant students and English learners attend school. A majority of immigrant students and English learners are in segregated schools and classrooms, with little access to English speakers, which limits the development both of positive social networks among diverse peers and of proficiency in English. The concentration of immigrant students and English learners in segregated schools and classrooms compromises these students' opportunities to have a range of models of children and youth who achieve moderate to high levels of English proficiency and to interact with native English-speaking peers about social as well as academic topics (DeVillar & Faltis, 1991). Finally, research has shown that teachers in segregated schools with high concentrations of immigrant students and English learners tend to be underqualified to meet the language and academic needs of these students, and they leave the profession within 5 years (Darling-Hammond, 2002). Schools with high teacher turnover rates also tend to have high administrative turnover rates, which affects leadership stability.

Toward an Educational Counterscript for Being Successful with Immigrant Students and English Learners

Despite this rather bleak picture for immigrant students and English learners nationwide, there are elementary and secondary schools and educators who are committed to working in a pro-immigrant, English plus counterscript that believes in the value of immigrant children and youth and supports a culture of success in school for immigrant students. The pro-immigrant, English plus counterscript values bilingualism, the role of the primary language for learning in English, safe learning environments, and teachers who are well qualified and prepared to teach a variety of immigrant and English learners. Working within a pro-immigrant, English plus counterscript requires significant, radical changes in how schools work and what teachers need to know and be able to do to ensure successful learning in English *plus* all of the other academic content areas needed to achieve in school (Combs, 2006).

In 200 years of public schooling, elementary and secondary schools generally have been unable (and in some cases, unwilling) to overcome the serious differences in access, participation, and benefit between poor, language minority students and English-speaking White middle-class students. Hispanic students, especially those from poor, uneducated backgrounds, who enter school not speaking English are still 3 times more likely to drop out before completing high school than White students (Gándara, 2005). However, there are schools where

immigrant students and English learners are successful, not only staying in school, but also learning English and doing well academically in all other content areas (Casanova, 2006; Freeman & Freeman, 2002; Gándara, 2004; Gibson, Gándara, & Peterson Koyama, 2004). It is to these successful schools and committed teachers, operating within a pro-immigrant, English plus counterscript, that we turn.

The Pro-Immigrant, English Plus Counterscript in Action

Teachers, educators, and researchers who care about immigrant children and youth know what needs to happen to create powerful learning environments for immigrant students and English learners. There is now a solid body of knowledge and research on how children and youth acquire a second language in school, on how long it takes to acquire academic language in a second language, and on the role of first language literacy and formal schooling on how well and how fast students progress in a second language. The research points to what has to happen first so that the subsequent actions taken have a chance to succeed: Teachers and schools must know who their students are and be able to look beyond the unitary label “English learner.” While most immigrant students are English learners, they differ in the primary languages they speak and prior experiences with English, in the socioeconomic and cultural groups they come from, and in the kinds of prior formal schooling they have had as well as their experiences coming to the United States.

Of particular relevance to classroom teachers are the kinds and extent of literacy and formal schooling experiences of immigrant students. Faltis and Coulter (2007) distinguish between immigrant students with parallel and nonparallel schooling experiences. Immigrant students with parallel schooling experiences typically enter school at grade level or above and may have had prior exposure to English in school or at home with tutors. These students tend to have smooth transitions into school culture, and they often excel academically. Zhou (1998), for example, discusses “parachute kids” in Southern California, transnational immigrant children and youth from high achieving families in China and Taiwan who “drop in” to American schools and live with relatives. These immigrant children and youth have parallel formal schooling experiences, and they come to the United States to seek a better education. Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco (2001) document how Salvadoran immigrant children with parallel schooling experiences do very well academically in school once they gain oral and written proficiency in English.

Immigrant students with nonparallel schooling experiences and long-term English learners present the greatest challenges for schools and classroom teachers. Within this group are also what Hamann (2001b) refers

to as *sojourner students*, students who move back and forth from Mexico throughout the school year and who may also follow migrant work itineraries. *Nonparallel immigrant students* are typically at least two grade levels below where they should be for their age group (Faltis & Coulter, 2007). These students face many barriers in school. Not only do they enter school knowing little or no English, they often cope with conflicts between family values and those promoted by school (Gibson, 1998). Moreover, many of these students enter school with minimal knowledge of and experience with computer technology, which for secondary students is essential for successful schooling (Suárez-Orozco, 2005).

Long-term English learners are immigrant students who have been in English learning programs for at least 5 years, and they remain English learners, largely incapable of participating in and benefiting from mainstream English-only classrooms without significant changes in instructional practices (Freeman & Freeman, 2002). These students need a schooling environment that is inclusive and supportive of their specific language and literacy needs.

Given the variation in immigrant students and their formal experiences with school, it is important for schools to have a comprehensive and flexible approach that spans early childhood to secondary education. No single program for immigrant students and English learners is suitable for all types of learners (Olsen, 2006). The best schools have an understanding of their immigrant students and English learners and provide programs and services based on the population of immigrant students enrolled. For example, schools serving large numbers of newly arrived immigrant learners have an orientation program, with teachers and counselors who assess, monitor, and provide transitioning services. Schools primarily serving long-term English learners and students with nonparallel experiences focus their attention on providing an engaging curriculum, with specialized services based on students' home language and literacy and English learning needs (Davies Samway, 2006; Faltis, 2005; Faltis & Coulter, 2007). The following section describes six research-based components that schools seeking to create effective programs for immigrant students and English learners can look to for guidance and adjust according to their immigrant student and English learner populations.

Six Components for Creating Successful Schooling for Immigrant Students and English Learners

Component 1

Preschool education that is culturally and linguistically responsive and that is organized around a developmentally and language rich curriculum must be available to immigrant families. Among the most effective preschool programs for immigrant children are those that support and build on a child's home language and that provide support and opportunities to learn in both the home language and in English. The teachers that work in preschool education programs are highly proficient bilinguals who are culturally knowledgeable of the families and communities being served (see Crosnoe, 2006).

Component 2

Specialized support for newcomers. Welcoming and transitional services become increasingly important at the upper grades and for refugees and students with nonparallel schooling experiences. Students who are entering U.S. schools for the first time need a variety of support services to help them become adjusted to school rules and attuned to English. Among the most important services are home language assessments that reveal information about prior educational experiences and academic abilities, as well as health screening with language-appropriate referrals.

For students with nonparallel schooling, it is essential to have intensive home language literacy programs, coupled with access to English classes that allow students to become accustomed to oral and written English. When home language literacy programs are not available or feasible, it is important to provide support for the home language whenever possible. This can be done by hiring community liaisons who are native speakers of the non-English language to work in both classrooms and communities. Teachers' aides who are native speakers can work with classroom teachers to provide extra support for newcomers.

Newly arrived immigrant students, parallel and nonparallel alike, should also have access to information about the routines, school policies and procedures, and classroom behaviors that most American students take for granted. Table 1 gives a list of some of the topics that newly arrived immigrant students at the secondary level need to know to be able to function safely and appropriately. How much time and effort are spent on these topics depends on a student's experiences with formal schooling and American schools.

Table 1. What Newly Arrived Immigrants Need to Know about School Routines and Practices

During School Hours	After School Hours
School passes and how to use them (including tardy and detention slips)	The nature of parent conferences and attendance
How the cafeteria works: Line formation, lunch passes	Parent teacher organizations
Fire drills and exit plans	School dances, proms, special events
Assemblies, pep rallies, awards, and award ceremonies	Field days, types of permission required
Holidays, festivities, and traditional celebrations	After-school and Saturday tutoring programs
Fund-raisers	Clubs, honor societies, sports activities
Health examinations and screening for vision and hearing	How detention and suspension work
What in-school suspension means; disciplinary methods	Summer school options
Guidance counseling for course selection and college	Extracurricular activities such as sports (competitive level in high school, not necessarily for beginners)
How to qualify for free lunch	
Sex education and physical education	

In order to positively integrate newcomer immigrant students into the school system, teachers, working in teams, can help students transition into their new settings by talking with students about class and lunch schedules; showing them where the nurse, library, and bathrooms are; introducing them to the kinds of extracurricular clubs and sports programs that are available; and helping them with the kinds of classroom study materials and books that will be required for each of their classes.

Once newcomer students are placed in their classrooms, it is important to monitor their progress in English language development and academic content learning. Just as important, the school should also be in close contact with the teachers who have newcomer students to offer them opportunities to participate in staff development activities related to teaching adolescent English learners. Oftentimes, these teachers have bilingual paraprofessionals to assist them throughout the day. Paraprofessionals should also be encouraged to participate in English learner-related staff development activities (Chang, 1990).

Most newcomer centers and welcoming programs provide family-oriented events and activities designed to acclimate newcomer families to the school and community (Boyson & Short, 2003). In addition to helping newcomer students with social and health services, newcomer centers and programs can reach out to families in these critical areas by using bilingual community workers and school liaisons. A majority of newcomer centers and programs offer adult-level English-as-a-second-language classes either at the newcomer school site or at a nearby location within the school district boundaries. Typically these ESL classes also provide parents with an orientation to school routines, policies, and practices, along with information about American society.

Component 3

School leadership with an overt pro-immigrant, English plus, and success-oriented mission for all students. The principal, assistant principals, counselors, librarians, instructional leaders, and at the secondary level, department chairs need to have a team commitment to the sustained success of English learners and immigrants (Casanova, 2006; Faltis, 2005; Freeman & Freeman, 2002; Olsen, 2006). A team approach is also referred to as distributive leadership, where responsibility for ensuring high quality instruction and providing an inclusive and affirming school climate is placed on several school leaders rather than one (Harris & Chapman, 2002). Leaders in schools that are effective with immigrant students and English learners have a strong background in multicultural and language education. School leaders understand that professional development needs to have a sustained and intense focus on instructional and assessment practices that are geared to improving learning for immigrant students and English learners. This sustained emphasis on improving instruction and assessment leads to development of a strong professional culture of teachers within the school.

School leaders are responsible for creating an inclusive and affirming environment that permeates the entire school, from classrooms to the cafeteria. There is a school mission statement that explicitly refers to the value of diversity and academic achievement. Teachers are hired who represent the students'

communities and languages. There are concerted efforts to promote intergroup interaction and cooperation among students of diverse backgrounds (Gibson, Gándara, & Peterson Koyama, 2004). Finally, there is a zero-tolerance policy on harassment, racial epithets, and discrimination based on language, ethnicity, or gender (Olsen, 2006).

Component 4

Counseling and counselors are readily available to all students. In schools that have large newcomer and refugee student populations, it is critical to provide culturally and language-appropriate counseling and support services to address culture shock, post-traumatic stress syndrome, and cultural mourning (Ainsle, 2005) and family separation (Jaes Falicov, 2005; Olsen, 2006). Family and newcomer counselors work closely with teachers in welcome and newcomer centers (Chang, 1990). Counselors can provide important information to parents about community resources as well as how to navigate through school and basic social services.

At the secondary level, English learners and immigrant students, especially those whose families have little or no experience with higher education, need a team of counselors who speak their home language and communicate with students, teachers, and parents (McDonough, 2005). Academic counselors need to ensure that English learners and immigrant students enroll in challenging coursework that leads to high school graduation (see Casanova, 2006). This requires academic counselors to work closely with individual students, their parents, and their teachers, and most importantly, counselors who are bilingual. Academic counselors need to be located in prominent areas in the school with easy accessibility to all students.

Component 5

High expectations abound for immigrant and minority students and English learners. There are behavioral expectations and academic expectations. Behavioral expectations, developed with input and support from parents, are communicated through clear, consistent, and fair rules for classroom and school behavior. Counselors and newcomer teachers make sure that new immigrant students understand expected classroom behaviors, dress codes, and rules for movement on the campus. Once newcomer students enter regular classrooms, there is continued communication among the counselors, newcomer teachers, and the classrooms about behavior issues and actions.

Academic expectations for immigrant students and English learners are high. Teachers are knowledgeable about oral and written language development

in English learners and make adjustments accordingly, while keeping learning intensive, challenging, and flexible (Samway, 2006). Teachers are also knowledgeable about the benefits and detriments of testing and assessment for English learners and use multiple forms of assessment to guide instruction (Faltis, 2005; Faltis & Coulter, 2007).

Gifted programs are open to students regardless of their English proficiency. Likewise, placing students into special education is done carefully and with full attention to the potential for misdiagnosing a language issue as a cognitive one. At the secondary level, tracking is either eliminated or kept to a minimum to ensure that immigrant and minority students and English learners have access to challenging classes (Oakes & Rogers, 2006). Advanced placement and honors classes are open to a wide range of students, and additional support is provided for tutoring after school and on Saturdays.

Component 6

A comprehensive English language plus program. Immigrant students need to learn English. They also need to participate in and benefit from classroom activities in the content areas that are taught in English. This means that English learners need an English language development curriculum to help them acquire and improve their oral and written English language proficiency. Instruction aimed at English language development should be made available to students who are in the early and intermediate phases of learning English.

English plus means that students have the opportunity to learn English and participate fully in academic content classes. For this to happen, all teachers in the school need to have specialized preparation in teaching literacy and academic language and content to English learners as well as being highly qualified as elementary or secondary level teachers (Faltis, 2005).

In schools where there are many newcomers to English, there is a dedicated English language development curriculum, focusing primarily on students' acquisition of oral and written English language proficiency, to enable students to use English for multiple purposes in a safe learning environment, in preparation for academic content classes. Students have structured opportunities to read and write in English with developmentally appropriate experiences that tap into and build upon what they already know (Samway, 2006). The English language development curriculum addresses variation in levels of English proficiency, from true beginners to learners who are communicatively fluent, but need help with academic literacy.

An English plus comprehensive program requires teachers who are well prepared to address the needs of all types of immigrant students and English

learners. English learners placed in grade-level content classes achieve academically when teachers rely on principles of practice and use appropriate resource material and instructional support in the students' home language to support participation. Among the principles of practice that provide English learners with a safe learning environment, help them make sense of school, and identify favorably with school practices are the following (Faltis, 2005; Faltis & Coulter, 2007):

1. Teachers enable all students (through invitation and nudging) to participate actively in social and academic classroom practices.
2. Teachers socially integrate students of diverse language and social backgrounds (using a variety of whole-class and small-group strategies) to build on the unfolding identities, prior knowledge, and interests students bring with them, and to affiliate to new ways of understanding and using academic content.
3. Teachers integrate language and literacy acquisition strategies into all academic content learning activities so that as students actively participate in academic practices, they also gain greater proficiency in their new language. Home language literacy is promoted to the extent possible, based on solid research that literacy learned well in the home language transfers to English (August & Shanahan, 2006).
4. Teachers assess what students are able to do well and where they need additional assistance, using a variety of approaches, and when needed, use systems for evaluation and accountability, including performance assessment based on local standards and home language assessment.
5. Teachers invite and promote critical consciousness within the classroom, the school, and the community to confront racism, social stratification, and exclusionary practices that may occur (e.g., tracking and limited access to gifted and advanced placement classes).

These principles of practice have been found in all effective programs for English learners (see Akhaven, 2006; Casanova, 2006; Gándara, Rumberger, Maxwell-Jolly, & Callahan, 2003; Olsen, 2006; Sadowski, 2004). In addition to these principles, schools that create strong English plus programs for immigrants and English learners develop a lasting relationship with community members and parents of students in school. Unlike most schools with parental involvement approaches, these schools understand that involving the parents and local community in school-related activities requires a deep understanding of the cultural ways that families and communities have for making sense of education, a sense that may be quite different from mainstream, middle-class patterns

(Delgado-Gaitán, 1987; Faltis, 2005; Schechter & Bayley, 2002; Valdés, 1996).

At the secondary level, the principal, counselors, department chairs, and content teachers work together to ensure that immigrant and English learners have access to the academic classes needed for graduation. The curriculum is challenging, but flexible enough to include English learners who vary in oral and written language proficiency. There are a range of support services and alternative routes to academic success: tutoring, Saturday school, after-school programs, and one-on-one access to teachers (Casanova, 2006; Gándara, Rumberger, Maxwell-Jolly, & Callahan, 2003).

Building Counterscript Policies to Promote Immigrant Student and English Learner Success

The time is now to begin building counterscript policies for creating and implementing pro-immigrant, English plus programs for immigrant students and English learners. There is a strong and growing research knowledge base for what schools can do to ensure that these students are successful in school. There is no excuse for the long-term gaps between English learners and White, English-speaking students. Part of the challenge is how to share with educators and politicians what is known about effective practices for immigrant students and English learners. While there will continue to be political battles over the education of immigrants and English learners, from an advocacy point of view the following policy goals need to be continually addressed if educators and policy makers have the political will to ensure the success of all students:

Policy Goal No. 1: Pre-service and in-service teacher education needs to focus its energies on preparing teachers who understand second language development, the integration of language learning with content teaching, the value of physical and social integration for language learning and the development of social networks, and ways to teach that create connections with diverse students and their families.

This goal requires leadership in colleges of education and among school district administrators and school building principals. Professional development is a long-term investment to focus on theoretical foundations, understandings, and instructional practices that teachers need to effectively teach English learners, regardless of their oral and written English proficiency. In-service teachers need to be involved in workshops, reading groups, and classroom demonstrations to deepen their knowledge and practices. There should be opportunities for teachers to try ideas out with supportive mentors and classroom

coaches, and peer observations. Superintendents and principals need leadership development and involvement in learning groups geared to understanding and teaching immigrant students and English learners so that they can lead their schools toward effective immigrant and English learner programs, instruction, and assessment.

Policy Goal No. 2: Schools need to have in place a meaningful accountability system for English learners, their teachers, and their parents. For practically all English learners, state-developed and state-mandated annual achievement tests are largely inadequate because they were developed for native English-speaking, English literate students. There need to be academic achievement testing instruments developed in the primary home language for students who are not ready to be assessed in English. The accountability system should include indicators of the extent to which English learners have been provided opportunities and support for learning material they are expect to learn (Olsen, 2006).

Policy Goal No. 3: The research community needs to make a concerted effort to share widely new models of successful school programs and contexts for immigrant students and new learners. Sufficient knowledge exists about what works well with immigrant students and English learners and their families. Schools desperately need access to practices and programs to support their efforts in the areas of professional development of administrators and teachers. Colleges of education, the research community, and school district professional development specialists need to work together to build better programs, safer learning climates for immigrants and English learners, and stronger understandings of and connections to immigrant families and communities. In other words, making certain that immigrant students learn English plus participate in and benefit from a strong academic curriculum in a happy school setting is a distributed professional responsibility.

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