

**ADAPTATION OF IMMIGRANT
CHILDREN TO THE UNITED
STATES: A REVIEW OF THE
LITERATURE**

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**Adaptation of Immigrant Children to the United States:
A Review of the Literature**

by

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for

The New Jersey Immigrant Youth Project

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Abstract

Over the last several years, as new waves of immigrants have continued to enter the United States, the effects of immigration on the nation's economy and society have been hotly debated. Largely ignored in the debate, however, has been *the wellbeing of immigrant children*. Little is known about the adaptation process that these children must navigate, or the unique health, educational, and psychosocial consequences that emerge as they learn a new culture, new community, and often, a new language.

Recent research confirms that immigration results in enormous stress for children. The stress may come from leaving a familiar social context and extended family network, from entering a new place, culture, and language, or from harsh conditions endured before or during the transitional journey. Many immigrant children struggle to establish and re-establish themselves in the United States – redefining their roles within the family as well as their relationship to a new society – without the support of the strong kinship or friendship systems they had at home, and often without the fulfillment of their basic needs.

For adolescent immigrants, the stress can be even more intense. Intergenerational conflict can weigh heaviest on adolescents when parents begin to notice their children's quicker acculturation and to resent what they perceive as a rejection of the family's own ethnic culture. These adolescents have to balance two different worlds and move fluidly between them. Experts agree that being connected and accepted is an important component of adolescent development. Children who do not connect in some meaningful way with their peers, family, or school are at an increased risk of suicide, substance abuse, school failure and drop-out, health problems, and criminal activity. In some cases, the added pressures of the acculturation process may exacerbate these risks. In particular, immigrant children may be

alienated from school and rejected by their native-born peers because of their lack of fluency in English or their different cultural practices.

Research has typically focused on the “problems” and “maladaptive behaviors” of immigrant children. This negative orientation contributes to the idea that individual children are to be blamed for their poor adjustment or performance and often ignores the impact of institutional racism, or more broadly, the particular socioeconomic, political, and historical contexts of the host and receiving countries. In addition to these external factors, the negative approach also tends to overlook the crucial role of ethnic peer groups, social networks, and parent-child relationships in the process of adjusting to a new environment while maintaining traditional values and beliefs.

Recent studies have demonstrated that a “positivist” approach to immigration and acculturation yields important information about not only the risks but also the strengths that result from the immigration experience. For example, *bicultural competence* – the ability to function successfully in both family (“traditional”) and school (“mainstream”) cultures – can emerge as a result of immigrant children’s conflict.

While it gives reason for optimism, the research is also clear that immigrant children have unique needs, and that schools should address these needs proactively. Many immigrant students appear to overcome their obstacles and excel academically. But what is the toll on their mental health? How are they adapting psychosocially? Often, seemingly competent students are left to manage the mental and emotional stress alone, with serious consequences for their later quality of life. Other immigrant students find the obstacles too difficult to overcome. How can struggling students be better supported so that they are both better able to learn and to adapt in the long-term?

Schools, where mainstream cultural norms and values are introduced and reinforced, are often the context in which the adaptation and acculturation processes occur. While efforts have been made in the last several years to improve English acquisition and educational outcomes among immigrant children, these initiatives have only scratched the surface; they have not comprehensively supported these children as they undergo not only the usual stresses of childhood, but also the additional burden of major family transition and life change as a result of immigration.

The literature suggests the need to explore individual, group, and external forces at work in the families, communities, and schools where immigrant children are finding their places and building the foundation for their futures. Efforts to design appropriate, efficient, and effective interventions to support immigrant children will depend upon a comprehensive theoretical and practical understanding of the challenges facing immigrant children, as well as careful analysis of the practices and policies that have been implemented to date.

Introduction

It was once assumed that immigrant children could adapt to their new environment with relative ease, but in reality, educators have long struggled to meet their needs. In fact, recent research confirms not only that many immigrant children face enormous educational and psychosocial challenges, but also that the current wave of immigrant children presents an even greater challenge to American educators than earlier waves.

Children entering the United States today represent a particularly diverse range of cultures, and some have had little or no formal education in their native countries (McDonnell & Hill, 1993). First- and second- generation immigrant children are the fastest growing segment of the U.S. child population. According to the 1990 Census, young immigrants are heavily concentrated in five states – California, New York, Texas, Florida, and Illinois, and 45% of immigrant children enrolled in school are enrolled in California alone (McDonnell & Hill, 1993).

Landale & Oropesa have conducted some of the most extensive research on the origin and characteristics of America's immigrants, the majority of whom come from Central and South America (including Mexico) and Asia. Half of the Latino population and 90% of Asian children in the United States are first- or second-generation immigrants (Landale & Oropesa, 1996). More than half of first-generation Latino children are from Mexico, and there are more Mexican immigrant children in the United States than from any other country or region of the world (Landale & Oropesa, 1996). Asian immigrant children represent a more even distribution from several countries -- mostly China, the Philippines, Vietnam, Korea, and India.

At their point of arrival in the U.S., Latino immigrants exhibit more variation in their circumstances than their Asian counterparts do. Latin American immigrants from places other than

Cubans tend to come to the U.S. for manual labor opportunities with limited education, having left their countries to escape poverty. On the other hand, Cubans originally came here as refugees and were often well-educated professionals (Landale & Oropesa, 1996). Landale & Oropesa conclude that “with few exceptions, immigrant children from Asia are highly advantaged compared to immigrant children from Latin America and the Caribbean. This is largely due to differences in origin population characteristics and the type of immigrant flow—that is, the migration of highly skilled professionals entering employment-based visa preferences versus unskilled, and sometimes undocumented, labor migration (p.21).” Asian immigrants, especially Indians, Filipinos, and Chinese, tend to represent a highly educated, skilled professional group – a “brain drain” migration.

In general, all groups of immigrant children except Filipinos have higher rates of poverty than children born in the United States. According to Landale & Oropesa, the highest rates of poverty are among Puerto Rican, Dominican, and Mexican children, and this has been fueled by a high rate of single-parent households.¹ More than half of Puerto Rican and Dominican children – more than twice as many as within any other group – live with only one parent (Landale & Oropesa, 1996). Compounding their economic disadvantage, Mexicans and Dominicans are the most likely to have English language difficulties.

The most important conclusion to derive from Landale & Oropesa’s work is that there is a tremendous variation between ethnic groups and within certain immigrant populations. According to Rumbaut (1997b):

The diversity of contemporary immigration is such that, among all ethnic groups in America today, native and foreign-born, different immigrant nationalities account at once for the *highest* and the *lowest* rates of education, self-employment, home ownership, poverty, welfare dependency and fertility... These differential starting points, especially the internal socioeconomic diversification of particular waves within the same nationalities over time, augur

¹ Although Puerto Rico is technically part of the US, many studies treat Puerto Ricans as a separate group, with issues and behaviors distinct from those of the rest of the US population.

differential modes of incorporation and assimilation outcomes that cannot be extrapolated simply from the experience of earlier immigrant groups of the same nationality, let alone from immigrants as an undifferentiated whole (p.500).

It has been documented that poverty alone does not explain the variation in educational outcomes or behavioral patterns among immigrant children and adolescents (Rumbaut, 1995; Fuligni, 1997). Thus, it is important for researchers to focus on understanding *the special and diverse needs of immigrant children, above and beyond poverty*. Specifically, what are the educational and psychosocial challenges that immigrant children confront? Why do some immigrant children, in the face of tremendous adversity, adapt successfully and do well in school while others do not? What have been the schools' responses to the special educational and psychosocial needs of immigrant children? Where are the gaps in appropriate mental health services for immigrant children and their families? Pursuing these questions provides insight into a complex but critical issue not just for educators, but for the nation as a whole.

In this paper, we review the extant literature on the complex challenges faced by immigrant children and their needs in terms of psychosocial and educational support. We then examine several theories explaining immigrant children's differential outcomes – both broadly and specifically in school. Next, we trace the development of educational and mental health interventions targeted to immigrant children and youth, and highlight some of the most promising approaches that have been implemented to date. This exploration is intended to guide the work of the New Jersey Immigrant Youth Project in designing effective, efficient, cutting edge programs that will serve the immigrant children of Edison and New Brunswick and stand as “best practices” models for the rest of the state and the nation.

The Special Needs of Immigrant Children

Ethnographic research, with its very specific, detailed focus on particular immigrant populations, has revealed considerable variation in the stories and circumstances of immigrant children, families, and groups. However, these studies have also highlighted several educational and psychosocial issues and obstacles that emerge for immigrant children in general.

As Vernez (1996) points out, immigrant children face a broad array of “special” educational needs and circumstances. In addition to poverty, these challenges include “*high residential mobility*; coping with *emotional stresses* due to adjustments to new social norms and a new institutional environment, and/or *traumas* due to war, family disruptions or separations; and *inadequate social support* to compensate for broken community ties in their native countries and loss of support necessary for psychological well-being (p.3).” (See also McDonnell & Hill, 1993; Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco, 1995; Rumbaut, 1995, 1994; Olsen, 1988). The educational and psychosocial challenges faced by immigrant children in the United States today – English language acquisition, cultural and psychosocial adjustment, and for some, the effects of limited formal education – are undoubtedly complex and interconnected.

In Another Tongue: The Challenge of Learning a New Language

Most educators and social scientists agree that it is crucial for immigrant children to master the English language. Mastery of English can propel children into the educational mainstream, allowing them to excel in school and improve their chances of successful and meaningful post-graduation employment.

There is some debate, however, on how best to arrive at mastery of English. Some European researchers have documented that *mother tongue development* facilitates the acquisition of second language, and thus argue that the first step in learning English should be mastery of the mother tongue (Paulsten, 1978 cited in Cropley, 1983). These authors explain that poor immigrant children are more likely to receive limited linguistic support at home, and therefore need more support in school to acquire the mother tongue. Cropley (1983) argued that English-only instruction, neglecting the mother tongue, fails to stimulate a *general language orientation*, so that neither the native language nor English is learned well. In this view, bilingual education fosters mastery of one's native tongue as a first step, building the foundation for fluency in English.

The variability in the English language acquisition process for different ethnic groups has important implications for immigrant children, especially since pre-existing English knowledge has been linked to easier assimilation and more positive educational experiences (Rumbaut, 1997). While Rumbaut (1997a) and other researchers (Olsen, 1988) have found significant pre-migration English proficiency (particularly among the Indian and Filipino ethnic groups), many Mexicans and Latinos at the time of arrival are unable to speak English at all. Rumbaut points out that language acquisition is a function of age. "Essentially, the capacity to learn and to speak a language ...is especially good between the ages of three and the early teens; immigrants who arrive before the age of 6 are considerably more likely to speak English without an accent, while those who arrive after puberty may learn it, but not without a telltale accent (p.502)." Clearly, the school environment, and the norms, values, and support offered there, plays an important role in facilitating language acquisition and adaptation in the broader sense, especially for the children who arrive with the least familiarity with the prevailing culture and language.

The Difficult Journey: The Challenge of Leaving Home

Relative to the attention given to instructional issues, few studies have looked at the impact of immigration on the mental health of children and adolescents (Padilla & Duran, 1995; James, 1997; Garcia-Coll & Magnuson, 1997; Sam, 1992 ; Laosa, 1997, 1989; Olsen, 1988). Recently, however, researchers have begun to argue that supporting the psychological adjustment and mental health of immigrant students is just as important as education-related interventions such as English language programs and multicultural teacher training programs or the social outreach efforts of newcomer centers (Padilla & Duran, 1995).

In general, children who immigrate leave behind a familiar language, culture, community, and social system. They may also suffer from the trauma of losing a familiar place, leaving one or both parents, enduring harsh travel conditions, having difficulty finding food and shelter, and for those who enter the United States illegally, the added fear of being discovered and deported (James, 1997; Castex, 1997). These psychological challenges take an even greater toll on the poorest immigrant families who have coped with the harshest circumstances. Further, Padilla & Duran (1995) found that “the psychological risks inherent in unstable and conflict-ridden environments may be intensified for children who cross national borders. Several serious mental health disorders, including depression and other psychosomatic and physical illnesses, i.e. post-traumatic stress disorder” (p.134) can arise from difficult transition in immigration. Padilla claims that Post Traumatic Stress Disorder is a notable problem among immigrant children from Central America and Asia (McNally, 1991; Castex, 1997; Olsen, 1988).

Split Decisions: The Challenge of Living in Two Disparate Worlds

Immigrant children are often described as having to straddle two cultures without fully identifying with either group. As Sam (1992) describes, immigrant children come to know “the norms, values, and customs their parents promote on the one hand, and those promoted by the host society on the other hand. These two cultures are often viewed as opposing each other, a situation which is sometimes described as ‘*cultures in conflict*.’ Immigrant children are often forced to make a painful, emotional choice between their parents’ culture and the mainstream norms they are exposed to in school. Sam elaborates on how the feeling of not belonging to either culture continues through the second- and third-generations, potentially impeding positive adaptation to mainstream culture:

Growing up in a society where their parents’ values apply to a minority group, these children can experience an acute sense of shame in practicing their parents’ culture in a society where mainstream people have different values and norms. Nevertheless, to reject their parents and their norms can be painful and result in extreme emotional problems. The child may experience guilt feelings, anxiety, and loneliness. On the other hand, rejecting the society and taking sides with the parents may also create another form of loneliness – alienation...Inability to integrate different cultural norms and values, with the child impelled to choose (or reject) sides, makes the maintenance of the ego identity difficult and the child susceptible to identity disorders (p.23).

Garcia-Coll & Magnuson (1997) argue that immigrant children, adolescents, and adults need to gain *bi-cultural competence*—the ability to comfortably and capably interact in both ethnic and mainstream cultures. According to Garcia-Coll & Magnuson, bi-culturalism has important ramifications for the second and third generation of immigrant families as well. Other researchers (Szapocznik & Kurtines, 1993; La Fromboise et al., 1993; Florsheim, 1997) have documented the importance of managing two cultural realities with ease and efficacy. According to La Fromboise et al. (1993):

Bicultural competence has several dimensions [which] include knowledge of cultural beliefs and values, positive attitudes toward both majority and minority groups, a sense of efficacy in both cultures (i.e. the belief that one has the ability to establish and maintain effective relationships in both cultures), communication ability, role repertoire (i.e. a range of culturally appropriate behaviors), and a sense of being grounded (i.e. a well-developed social support system in one or both cultures). An individual must possess a competence in these arenas in order to manage the process of living in two cultures (p.109, cited in Garcia-Coll & Magnuson, 1997).

The literature emphasizes that for better and worse, immigration is a family affair, and that the greatest struggles and problems seem to occur within the family unit (Sam, 1992; Velez & Ungemack 1995; Hovey & King, 1996; Padilla & Duran, 1995; Vega et al., 1995; Laosa, 1997; Garcia-Coll, 1997; Rumbaut 1994, 1995, 1997a; Olsen, 1988 and many others). The intergenerational conflict between immigrant adolescents and their parents is perhaps one of the most difficult problems (Padilla & Duran, 1995; James, 1997; Rumbaut 1994; Gibson 1988; Gil & Vega, 1996; Szapocznik et al. 1993; Olsen, 1988; Castex, 1997), since adolescents and their parents acculturate at different rates, leading to a “fundamental difference between what adolescents may want for themselves in the United States and what their parents want for them (James, 1997, p.99).” The fact that many parents rely on their children as interpreters compounds the family problems, because parents often resent having to rely on their children and view this reliance as eroding their parental authority (Velez & Ungemack, 1995; Szapocznik & Kurtines 1993, James 1997; Castex, 1997). Further, it means that the children, by virtue of superior language mastery, are exposed to adult issues, crises, and responsibilities.

Szapocznik & Kurtines have written numerous articles documenting the need to view the family within the macro-environment in which it resides and to focus on the relationship between culture and the individual. The contextual paradigm these authors propose is based on the concept of *nesting* the individual within the family and the family within the culture in order to explain how family dynamics develop within a multicultural environment and how changes in family dynamics are linked to emerging problems with immigrant adolescents. According to Szapocznik & Kurtines (1993):

Families exposed to a culturally diverse environment developed a classic Ericksonian challenge: a family struggle in which some family members (the youth) struggled for autonomy and others (the elders) for family connectedness. This struggle usually develops in families around the same time of adolescence, but in this case the magnitude of the struggle was considerably exacerbated by acculturational differences across generations. As a result of this struggle, children lose

emotional and social support from their families and parents lose their positions of authority. The impact of a culturally diverse environment on these families resulted in the emergence of conflict-laden intergenerational acculturational differences in which parents and youths developed different cultural alliances. These intergenerationally related cultural differences added to the usual intergenerational conflicts that occur in families with adolescents to produce a much compounded and exacerbated intergenerational and intercultural conflict (p.403).

Rumbaut (1994), in an analysis of middle school minority students, found that parent-child conflict was the strongest predictor of poor self-esteem and depression. The different sex roles in the United States compared to traditional roles of women in other cultures may cause some of this conflict. Girls in immigrant families may be pressured to follow a traditional path that does not value female education; they may also be held to a stricter set of rules and restrictions than their brothers (Olsen, 1988; Rumbaut, 1994; Gibson, 1988). Subsequently, tension may arise between immigrant girls and their parents as they try to integrate into a mainstream culture that is at odds with the traditional view of women's roles, placing immigrant girls at higher risk than their brothers for depressive symptoms and low self-esteem (Rumbaut, 1994; Phinney, 1991).

Long-term separation between parent and child due to serial migration can strain familial relationships and create mental health problems for the children. Often, children are left behind with relatives in the native country and immigrate after one or both of their parents have settled in the United States. After the initial reunification, problems can emerge between parents and children as adolescent children try to assert their authority (James, 1997; Waters, 1997). Additionally, younger children may not understand the reasons they were left behind and may have stronger attachment to the relatives who were their primary caregivers. Consequently, children may harbor mixed feelings about reunification – initial happiness over reunification coupled with sadness and grief over lost friends and caretakers--a

sense of excitement about a new life in the United States tempered by despair over the adjustment to U.S. social norms, life and school (Castex, 1997).

Up Against an Unfriendly Wall: The Challenge of Confronting Prejudice

During the period of adjustment to mainstream society, immigrant children often face racial prejudice and discrimination (James, 1997; Rumbaut, 1997a). According to Olsen (1988), a majority of immigrant students believe that Americans feel negatively toward them and are unreceptive. Almost every student in her sample reported having been called names, pushed or spat upon, or deliberately tricked, teased or laughed at because of their race or ethnicity. Interestingly, Rumbaut (1997a) reports that ethnic self-identification increases with residence in the United States, as those that have been discriminated against are more likely to identify with their ethnic origin. According to Rumbaut (1994), Mexican adolescents experience more acts of discrimination and prejudice the longer they reside in the United States, and become increasingly more likely over time to identify with their ethnic origin than with Americans in general. Gil, Vega, and Dimas (1994) claim that immigrant perceptions of prejudice and discriminations vary across generations, with second generation immigrants reporting the most prejudice. They suggest that the second generation may feel more deprived because it had higher initial expectations and aspirations (Rogler et al., 1991). The impact of discrimination and racial prejudice on the adaptation of immigrant children, especially the very young, has been a historically neglected issue and is now being recognized as crucial both for theoretical understanding of and behavioral intervention with immigrant children.

Intersecting Issues: The Challenge of So Many Challenges

As they adjust to a new life, new school, new language, and a new culture, immigrant children clearly face unique challenges. All at once, there is the pressure to make stressful adaptations to new, unfamiliar, evolving roles and relationships, both within their families and their social networks.

Munroe-Blum and colleagues (1989) did not find any evidence of greater psychological stress among immigrants than among native-born Canadians, but Padilla & Duran (1995) contended that their instrument they used for measuring acculturative stress was inappropriate for a young immigrant population. According to Padilla, the stress-illness coping model developed by Lazarus and Folkman (1984) and Pearlin and Schooler (1978) needs to be expanded to include the assumption “that immigrants experience many of the same stressors as non-immigrants, and in addition they experience stressors due to their immigration status and minority position in the United States (p.137).”

Subsequently, Padilla and colleagues developed a life event stress instrument that included types of stressors associated with immigration. Three separate studies by Padilla and others (Alva, 1991) have documented evidence of stress among young Mexican immigrants. Padilla contends that the vulnerable students are much more common than the resilient students, adding that “new and culturally appropriate instruments are necessary if we are to completely understand the life event stressors and the sequelae of post-traumatic stress disorder (p.152).”²

Ample evidence suggests that immigrant children are at risk for psychological stress (Padilla & Duran, 1995; Alva,1991; Munsch & Wampler,1993; Coll,1997; Laosa, 1989; Canino & Spurlock, 1994). The school environment can be a source of stress for all children, especially for minority

² It is important to note that most of the research conducted to date has focused on the children who are not making the connection to the school environment, and has ignored the students who are able to rise above economic and social diversity. Particularly for Mexican Americans, the majority are having difficulty achieving academic success but some students are doing very well. Apparently, the studies on invulnerable children have shown that resiliency rests on two key issues: (1) the attitudes, skills, and knowledge children possess, and (2) the number and type of environmental resources in place to provide support and ameliorate stress. Moreover, we need to understand the protective coping responses and processes that mediate a child’s response to stressful life events and conditions. For more information, see Alva & Padilla (1995).

children. According to Harrison et al. (1990), the differences between the family ecology of minority children and the school environment are likely to produce stress because minority children are more likely to experience discontinuity between these two important contexts for development.

Consequently, they may not develop the sense of belonging to the school community which is important for educational success. According to Trueba (1988a), excessive and persistent stress in school has serious consequences for children trying to adjust to a new culture. Munsch and Wampler (1993) have suggested that there may be ethnic differences in coping with strategies for dealing with school stress. Different coping patterns may alienate immigrant adolescents from the school support networks and reduce their connectedness to the school environment. For example, Alva (1991) found a negative relationship between psychosocial stress, high school grades, and test scores in her study of Mexican American adolescents. School-based stress can set a downward spiral in motion, as academically troubled students have increased family conflicts and inter-group relationship problems, and subsequently are prone to problematic behavior and school drop-out.

Understanding Individual Variability in Immigrant Children's Outcomes

Bearing the Burden with Ease or Pain: Risk and Protective Factors

The process of immigration is potentially a severely stressful occurrence for immigrant children and families. Often, immigrant children adjust quite successfully to their new environment and even outperform their U.S. native peers in school (Fuligni, 1997). In fact, as Aronowitz (1984) has demonstrated, in terms of their adjustment to school most immigrant children do no better or worse than do their native-born peers. However, as previously cited, it is also well documented that some

immigrants adapt poorly and have difficulty connecting to the school system, complicating their future prospects and limiting their occupational opportunities.

Research supports that some immigrant children possess a resilience that sustains them in their education and adaptation, and that those who do not successfully adjust are at great risk for deviant behavior, substance abuse, educational failure, and psychological distress (Velez & Ungemack, 1995; Vega et al., 1995; Munsch & Wampler, 1993; Hovey & King, 1996; Szapocznik & Kurtines, 1993, 1989, 1980; Szapocznik et al., 1986, 1989; Rumbaut, 1994).

According to Alva's work (1991), children who are resilient, or relatively "invulnerable" (i.e. performing well academically), report that they have a social support network consisting of parents, friends, and teachers who buffer life event stressors. These students also report more positive school experiences with teachers and administrators and feel that these individuals care about them and about their academic attainment. These kinds of "protective factors" appear to be negatively associated with length of residence in the United States. In other words, as immigrants live here and adapt to U.S. culture, they lose part of their "protective shell." According to Rumbaut (1997a), the "social capital" of immigrants erodes with duration of residence in the United States, causing a decline in academic achievement and motivation. The increase in single-parent households across generations (Landale & Oropesa, 1995) appears to be one of the driving forces behind this erosion of protective factors.

Velez and Ungemack (1995) investigated several psychosocial variables to explain why Puerto Rican adolescents become at risk for drug involvement. They found that *generational status* was systematically related to differences in the occurrence of psychological risk factors for drug use. As Puerto Rican children became more acculturated to mainstream life, parental control decreases, school and church involvement declines, and parent-child problems and peer use of drugs increase. Hovey &

King (1996) documented that Latino-American adolescents who experienced a high level of *acculturative stress* also reported having high levels of depressive symptoms and suicide ideation. Florsheim (1997) and Szapocznik & Kurtines (1989) both found that Chinese and Cuban adolescents who acculturated too quickly lost their ethnic identity shortly after migration and reported high levels of both stress and maladaptive behaviors. These youths had become isolated from both their ethnic and American peers, and were caught between two worlds-- feeling that they belonged to neither.

Theoretical Perspectives on Differential Individual Outcomes

Several theoretical paradigms have been used to help explain both why some immigrants tend to adapt more successfully than others, and why some individual members of particular immigrant groups appear to come through the process more easily than others. The paradigms describe both macro-level forces and micro-level implications contributing to the variability of immigrant children's experiences.

The *developmentalist* perspective articulated by Luis Laosa, for example, takes into consideration the important role of mediating factors such as the individual characteristics of the child (temperament, developmental age, sex, cognitive appraisal, array of coping skills) and external factors such as parental reactions and the larger cultural context that have an impact on children's responses to stress and the effectiveness of those responses (Garcia-Coll & Magnuson 1997). Laosa (1989) developed a *multivariate* model which incorporates several different domains. His model highlights the interaction of variables that mediate the stresses of migration, adaptation, adjustment, and development over time for immigrant children. These variables, each critical to a child's development, include: characteristics of the *sending community* (family pre-migration lifestyle and background characteristics, the existence of "pile-up" stressors); characteristics of the *receiving community* (social supports and

networks, attitudes toward newcomers); the *school context* (available services for immigrant children, teacher expectations, parental involvement, etc.); and *cognitive appraisal* and *coping*. Gender, individual temperament, and legal status are also important.

Laosa's approach (1997) emphasizes the psychosocial and environmental process as they occur over time and views the immigrant as a "developing organism interacting reciprocally with the environment, and [takes] into account the particular point in the person's life cycle when immigration takes place (p.57)." It has been well documented that age upon arrival is important in understanding an immigrant child's adaptation and adjustment processes (Garcia-Coll & Magnuson, 1997; Rumbaut, 1994; Hirschman, 1994).

Garcia-Coll and Magnuson (1997) have argued for a *positivist* approach to the study of immigrant children and their adaptation, focusing not just on the maladaptation of children but also on "how the process of immigration can increase an individual's repertoire of coping skills, facilitate the acquisition of new and different skills, and broaden opportunities as well as world views (p.105)."

Putting the developmentalist and positivist models together to explain the relationship between migration, adaptation, and psychological stress provides a rich framework with which to analyze the migration experience. As Garcia-Coll & Magnuson state:

The impact and process of migration and subsequent acculturation will be largely dependent on a person's developmental needs and issues. It has been suggested many times that children acculturate faster, thereby implying easier, than others do, thus making the age of contact important. However, we propose that the relationship between age and speed and ease of acculturation is in most cases curvilinear rather than linear. During the infancy, toddler, and preschool years, the rate of acculturation is actually more a function of the family's acculturation rate and attitude toward the new culture than the child's actual potential for acculturation...As a child grows and begins to be exposed to influences outside the family, the characteristics of these settings also affect the rate of acculturation... As children grow into adolescents they actively determine their self-schema. Their choices, in part a reflection of their earlier socialization, are given to greater variation and independence. Consequently, during this period their choices are more reflective of their peer group and other institutions (p.126).

Adolescence, a particularly difficult time for all children, is especially difficult for immigrant children because they are trying to forge an identity in a “context that may be racially and culturally dissonant (Garcia-Coll & Magnuson, 1997, p.114).” Furthermore, as Sam (1992) points out, the establishment of “ego identity,” which is the development of one’s self, sense of mortality, worth, and feelings of acceptance as a person, is a major developmental milestone during adolescence. According to Sam (1992):

It has been suggested that difficulties in maintaining or establishing an ego identity underlie most adolescent problems. Exposing children and adolescents to overwhelming tension-producing situations, and/or the withdrawal of social support channels have been argued to be factors that could impede the development of an identity. Ego’s task of establishing links between different situations, and of synthesizing experiences from different contexts into meaningful relations become weakened when children are placed under tension and conflicting situations. Unfortunately, this is the situation of many immigrant children. These children are often the target of conflicting cultural norms and values. While adults are capable of establishing relationships between two or more cultures, it is difficult for children to do so. Children lack adult’s ability to understand that they are under two different cultural influences. They also lack the ability to identify the differential influences of these cultures, let alone how to relate to them in a meaningful way. As such, immigrant children may have difficulties in integrating the cultural norms and values of their parents and that of the host society into meaningful relations (p.22).

An inability to integrate both cultures may leave adolescents alienated and in “socio-cultural limbo,” and therefore vulnerable and at high risk for poor psychological adjustment (Florsheim, 1997; Berger, 1996) and behavioral problems (Szapocznik & Kurtines, 1993). In addition, Gil & Vega (1996) point out that retention and loss of traditional family values play important roles in the adaptation process and in the formation of identity.

A comprehensive model of immigrant children’s experiences, incorporating Laosa’s model as well as the most recent developmentalist and contextual perspectives, provides a broad framework with which to study the adaptation and adjustment of immigrant children. There seems to be no single explanation for these differential adaptation process and psychological outcomes. What is emerging

from recent research is a need for a *multidimensional perspective* that incorporates the numerous factors that mediate the relationship between the stresses of immigration and the child's adaptation, adjustment, and development over time. As Rumbaut (1994) and others (Olsen, 1988) have suggested, such an approach acknowledges the context of the immigration process (exit and entry) along with individual characteristics (antecedent variables). Garcia-Coll & Magnuson (1997), have argued that the contexts (political, historical, economic, and educational circumstances of the sending and receiving communities) in which children grow and develop are vital links in both the adjustment process and the subsequent process of acculturation. Only an exhaustive study, which incorporates all of these variables as well as interactions between them, can describe the complex relationship between migration, adaptation, and psychological adjustment.

Understanding Group Variability in Immigrant Children's Outcomes

Classical Assimilation Theory and its Shortcomings

Classical assimilation theory has dominated the sociological literature. According to Zhou (1997a), this line of thought assumes "that there is a natural process by which diverse ethnic groups come to share a common culture and to gain equal access to the opportunity structure of society; that this process consists of gradually deserting old cultural and behavioral patterns in favor of new ones, and that once set in motion, this process moves inevitably and irreversibly toward assimilation (p.976. Not quoted verbatim)." In other words, in order to gain access to mainstream society and move "out of the margins," immigrants gradually over generations lose their cultural and socio-cultural distinctiveness and "melt" into the American society (Landale, 1997).

Researchers have raised several objections to classical assimilation theory, which would predict that differences between ethnic groups upon arrival would even out over time and result in similar educational and occupational patterns. This has not occurred: Certain ethnic groups upon arrival are more advantaged in terms of socioeconomic status, education, and English language proficiency and these advantages have persisted, and even intensified, over generations (Zhou, 1997b). In fact, longer residence in the United States can result in worse adaptive patterns, especially for poor, dark-skinned immigrants who face multiple risks (Zhou, 1997b) for poor school performance, low achievement, low aspirations, and maladaptive behaviors (Zhou, 1997a, 1997b; Kao & Tienda, 1995; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 1995). These patterns suggest the influence of both exogenous and endogenous forces. Moreover, many individual immigrant children continue to fly in the face of the “norms” (whether of success or failure) for their ethnic group. In short, classical assimilation theory is insufficient as an explanation for the complexity of societal forces and for the anomaly of individual outcomes as immigrant children and groups take root in their new environments.

Beyond Assimilation: Alternative Frameworks for Understanding Immigrant Groups'

Differential Outcomes

Alternative frameworks have been developed because the classical assimilation theory represents an idealized model that grossly oversimplifies a complex interplay of factors. On a more conservative note, Gans (1992) advocates the *bumpy line* approach as a “modified assimilation theory.” Gans views “divergent patterns [as] various bumps (either imposed by the host society or invented by immigrants themselves) on the road to eventual assimilation into non-ethnic America. He implies that for the new second generation, especially children of dark-skinned, poor, and unskilled immigrants, ‘delayed acculturation’ may be more desirable (Zhou, 1997a, p. 980).” Postponing

acculturation may be beneficial in several ways: First, many immigrants have been forced to acculturate into very poor neighborhoods and thus become socialized among marginalized populations. This has worked to their disadvantage in so far as it has led to an incorporation of the social behaviors of an American underclass. Delaying or postponing acculturation and promoting ethnic self-identity and cohesiveness may be the best solutions for these poor immigrant families.

A second alternative framework, ‘the *structuralist* perspective,’ explains the differences in social adaptation of ethnic minority groups in terms of advantages and disadvantages inherent to social structures. In this view, successful adaptation to American society is contingent upon which social stratum absorbs the new immigrant (Zhou, 1997a). According to Zhou (1997a), “this perspective presents the American society as a stratified system of social inequality in which different social categories have unequal access to wealth, power, and privilege. The ethnic hierarchy systematically limits access to social resources, such as opportunities for jobs, housing, and education, resulting in persistent racial/ethnic disparities in levels of income, educational attainment, and occupational achievement (p.74).” Consequently, the immigrant experience and process of Americanization will not lead to middle class status for all ethnic groups. Instead, divergent outcomes will reflect the various “rungs” on the ladder of the ethnic hierarchy.

Thirdly, proponents of the *segmented assimilation* framework (Portes, 1995; Zhou, 1997a, 1997b; Bankston & Zhou, 1997; Gibson, 1997), view adaptation outcomes as segmented: “either confinement to permanent underclass memberships, or rapid economic advancement with deliberate preservation of the immigrant community’s values and solidarity (Zhou, 1997b, p.75),” and that the benefits of assimilation for immigrant youth depend on the segment of society into which children assimilate. This framework recognizes that today’s immigrant populations can be received into very

disparate social contexts that will ultimately influence their level of social mobility and adaptation. According to Portes (1995), “the process of ‘growing up American’ oscillates between smooth acceptance and traumatic confrontation, depending on the characteristics that immigrants and their children bring along and the social context that receives them (p.72).”

The segmented assimilation perspective explicitly addresses what makes certain groups more susceptible to a downward spiral into poverty, while other ethnic groups are able to avoid this marginalization. Proponents of the theory have argued that the major determinants of vulnerability include external factors such as *racial stratification*, and *economic opportunities*; intrinsic group characteristics such as *financial* and *human capital* upon arrival, *family structure*, and *community organization*; and cultural patterns of social factors (Zhou, 1997a).

More specifically, Portes (1995) has identified three features of the social context that leave groups vulnerable to detrimental assimilation: *color* (intrinsic), *location* (cultural pattern), and *mobility ladders* (external factor). As mentioned previously, discrimination creates shocking and disconcerting handicaps for nonwhite immigrants. According to Portes (1995), the heavy concentration of immigrants in large, mostly impoverished neighborhoods increases vulnerability because “it puts new arrivals in close contact with concentrations of native-born minorities...[Thus], it exposes second-generation children to the adversarial subculture developed by marginalized native youths to cope with their own difficult situation (p.73).” These racially and socially-based challenges for immigrant children are further complicated by an “hourglass” economy that limits ascendancy into the middle class. As an alternative to encouraging their youth to assimilate into a disadvantaged segment, immigrant groups may attempt to inculcate younger members with their own cultural traditions and to emphasize increased solidarity and cooperation with the immigrant community (p.510).”

Portes (1995) identifies three types of resources that operate both additively and interactively to shelter immigrant children from downward assimilation and poverty. These resources include: *government assistance programs* to ease the transition for political refugees; *exemption from prejudice* for certain groups due to their lighter skin color, higher education level, professional or political status, (such as Cubans, Hungarians, Czechs, and Russian Jews); and *ethnic networks* that provide “a range of moral and material resources well beyond those available through official assistance programs (Portes, 1995, p. 74).”

A recent study of Vietnamese-American adolescents demonstrated that limited contact with Americanized peers and native-born peers had a positive impact on the youths’ adjustment. As many of the Vietnamese American adolescents moved away from their cultural traits and closer to their native-born peers’ culture, they began assimilating into an underprivileged segment of American society. However, those Vietnamese children whose families did not encourage much contact outside of school with native-born peers adjusted well to American life. With Vietnamese cultural traditions and strong ethnic ties maintained, partial assimilation, or what Margaret Gibson (1988) refers to as “accommodation without assimilation,” took place. Gibson (1988) also found that Punjabi children did very well in school despite living in a poor rural area of Northern California, possibly due to pressure from parents to adhere to cultural traditions and have limited interaction with American peers outside of school.

These studies of Vietnamese and Punjabi youth underscore the importance of strong social networks within ethnic communities for bridging the gap between two cultures and protecting children from being assimilated into a disadvantaged segment of society. According to Zhou (1997b),

...the key is to examine the networks of social relations, namely how individual families are involved in these networks. The networks of social relations involve shared obligations, social supports, and social controls...Conformity to traditional values and behavioral standards

require a high level of family integration into a community that reinforced these values and standards. The outcomes of adaptation, therefore, depend on how immigrant children fit in their own ethnic community, or in their local environment if such an ethnic community is absent, and how their ethnic community or the local environment fit in the larger American society (p.996).

The preceding discussion of theoretical paradigms explaining individual and group differences among immigrants indicates that many variables influence the acculturation processes and subsequent outcomes. While alternative theoretical frameworks, particularly the segmented assimilation perspective, have advanced our understanding of the adaptation of immigrants, these paradigms lack a developmentalist focus. According to Landale (1997), this developmentalist perspective is essential to understanding the challenges faced by first- and second- generation children. Landale (1997) argues for creating a conceptual model that “identifies the key transitions that immigrant children face and details the ways developmental stage may influence children’s ability to successfully make those transitions (p.286).” In other words, she calls for a model that incorporates individual differences related to age and developmental stage.

School Performance: Why Do Some Immigrant Children Excel While Others Fail?

Recent research (Bankston & Zhou, 1997; Gibson, 1997, 1995; Rumbaut, 1997) has sought explanations for the marked differences in school performance of immigrant groups who are all poor, as well as for both within-group differences and second- generation decline. Educators, anthropologists, and sociologists have developed two types of hypotheses to address the different patterns of academic achievement among immigrant populations. The first focuses on the *role of the immigrant family* and *individual characteristics* as determinants of academic success or failure. The second emphasizes the

differential treatment of minority immigrant groups by the host society (Trueba, 1988a). Both angles yield important explanations of divergent school performance patterns.

Five broad theories focus on individual and family characteristics as important determinants of academic success or failure. The *cultural discontinuity* theory holds that the language and cultural differences between home and school are so great that the disadvantage and educational subordination become too difficult to overcome (Trueba 1988a,1988b; Gibson, 1988; Rong & Grant, 1992). The *low socioeconomic status* theory holds that immigrants arrive with little social and financial capital, and thus are funneled into a disadvantaged social stratum (Trueba 1988a). The *cultural-ecological* model focuses on minority response to low status in the host country. According to this model, the collective response by minorities to their subordinate class position dictates academic success and failure (Ogbu, 1987, 1991; Ogbu & Matute-Bianchi, 1986; Gibson & Ogbu, 1991). The *role of immigrant parents*, a less often considered factor, according to Roosens (1987, cited by Trueba, 1988a), can be a determinant of children's chances of success based on their own "decision to succeed" in the host country. Finally, some have suggested that *genetic or inborn characteristics of individuals may* explain divergent school achievement patterns among immigrant groups, although this rationale is without scientific foundation and has been thoroughly discredited, except within certain conservative political circles.

According to Trueba (1988a), the above theories focus on the *general process of cultural integration* and academic outcomes but do not focus on *the specific context of academic success and failure*. Thus, an ancillary perspective has been developed that recognizes the importance of macro-level forces (historical, economic, political) in shaping the immigrant experience, but also suggests a "context-specific approach" that stresses the importance of broad psychosocial factors in the

individual's adaptation to the school environment. School context and classroom setting and curriculum are essential in the overall adjustment of immigrant children and other minorities, because they contribute to children's abilities to establish "meaningful and culturally appropriate relationships" and to "internalize mainstream cultural values (Trueba 1988b, p.282)."

Trueba's perspective focuses on the "mechanisms that allow an individual to obtain the necessary social and cultural knowledge as well as the cognitive skills to learn (p.26)," contending that:

(l)inguistic minority children need to cope with stress and they face serious social and psychological challenges (including a redefinition of self during the transition from home culture to school culture) in establishing these learning relationships. Communicative ability (requiring linguistic, social, cultural, and cognitive skills) is critical in the process of self-redefinition and adjustment. Curriculum content and level of performance are secondary during the phases of adjustment; consequently, priority should be given to increasing students' participation in communicative activities (p. 26).

Recent empirical evidence has identified several factors that influence school performance and academic achievement (Board on Children & Families, 1995; Gibson, 1988, 1991, 1995, 1997; Jacobs & Jordan, 1993; Kao & Tienda, 1995; Matute-Bianchi, 1991; Manaster et al, 1992; Rumbaut, 1995, 1997; Suarez-Orozco, C. & Suarez-Orozco, M., 1995; Valverde, 1987, Bankston & Zhou, 1997, Waters, 1997; Vernez & Abrahamse, 1996; Fuligni, 1997). These factors include:

1. Age upon arrival, length of residence in the United States, and grade level entry in United States schools.
2. Family background in the country of origin, including parent's educational and economic status, prior exposure to Western and urban lifestyles, and language spoken in the home.
3. School context in the host country and more specifically, within the local school district.
4. Educational and occupational aspirations of parents for their children.
5. Sanctions supporting school success (from both the ethnic community and individual families).
6. Individual effort and persistence (i.e. hours spent on homework, watching television, extracurricular activities).
7. Respect for teachers and trust in the school system.

8. Availability of school services such as ESL and Bilingual education.
9. Parental and community involvement and support in the school system.
10. Peer group support in promoting academic success.

Generational differences (Gibson, 1988; Szapocznik & Kurtines, 1993), *family context*, and *family cohesiveness* are also viewed as important contributors to academic achievement when examining school performance in the most inclusive light. As Rumbaut (1997) points out in his study of immigrant children in San Diego, cohesive families with low levels of parent-child conflict are significantly advantaged in many ways. In other words:

The lower the level of such friction, the higher the youths' educational achievement and aspirations, as well as their level of effort, social support, and psychological well-being...the human capital of parents and the social capital of family relationships appear to combine to yield cumulative and self-reinforcing advantages in the process of adaptation, much as this also seems to be the case in the process of migration itself (p.36).

Rumbaut also documents the impact on GPA, test scores and aspirations, of *English proficiency* and *hard work* as measured by number of hours spent on homework, and *the existence of a co-ethnic peer-group*. In his study of immigrant adolescents and their attitudes and behaviors regarding education, Fuligni (1997) documents that immigrant students who have a strong focus on academic achievement tend to be supported by both their families and peers.

Although each of these factors is important in explaining divergent patterns of academic achievement, researchers appear to be reaching a consensus that *generational status* can have a major influence on academic achievement. One's generation influences individual perceptions of social identity and the value of educational attainment as it relates to job opportunities during post-graduation.

According to Gibson (1997), "for the first generation, school performance is directly influenced by such factors as age on arrival, length of residence, the nature of previous schooling, and the support received in the host country (p. 436)." She contends that the needs of first generation immigrant

students differ greatly from those of second generation students. Gibson argues that large numbers of first generation immigrant children are able to overcome substantial economic, cultural, and linguistic barriers on their way to academic success because they (and their parents) place a high value on educational attainment. Immigrant students often view the U.S. educational system as more accessible and of higher quality than that in their native countries. They believe that academic success will result in economic rewards later in life, so they are more willing to tolerate or rationalize prejudice and discrimination both within the school environment and in the broader society.

Second-generation immigrants, on the other hand, endure many of the same economic hardships as their parents, but have less faith in the benefits of education and are less willing to tolerate economic hardship on the road to middle class life (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 1995). Many second - generation immigrants are therefore at significant risk of marginalization, school failure, and deviant behavior (Portes, 1994), or what sociologists and researchers have termed *second-generation decline*. According to Rumbaut (1997), length of U.S. residence is negatively associated with academic achievement and aspirations. He points out that there is an “association of achievement outcomes with immigrant ethos that seems to be affirmed within the context of intact immigrant families and cohesive family ties as well as co-ethnic immigrant peer groups and communities, yet that appears to erode with increasing exposure and assimilation to native norms and contexts in different sectors of American society (p.40).” Several other studies (Fuligni, 1997; Kao & Tienda, 1995; Matute-Bianchi, 1986) have confirmed this deterioration across generations. Perhaps one of the most important differences between first- and second- generation families is the increase in single-parent, female-headed households (Oropesa & Landale, 1997), especially within Latino second-generation immigrant populations.

Rumbaut calls for a more detailed delineation of immigrant children's generational status. He suggests that children should be categorized (for research purposes) as the 1.25, 1.5, and 1.75 generation where 1.25 categorizes children under the age of six upon arrival, 1.5 for ages 6 – 13, and 1.75 for adolescents. Research shows that children at both ends of the spectrum have the most difficult adjustment to U.S. culture (Garcia-Coll & Magnuson, 1997). For preschoolers and infants, the transition is difficult because these children rarely have contact with mainstream social customs and norms until entry into elementary school and then experience them as a tremendous cultural shock. For adolescents, the period of acculturation is especially difficult because it coincides with the establishment of ego- and self-identities.

The notion of second-generation decline gives credence to the segmented assimilation perspective. As Gibson (1997) points out, "this body of work suggests that the children of immigrants are at increased risk of school failure and downward assimilation when they feel pressured to Americanize more rapidly than their parents and when their parents and ethnic community lack the cultural and social resources needed to guide their educational progress and to steer them away from a deviant path (p.440)." Research has demonstrated that minority students do well in school when they feel secure in their ethnic identity *and* are able to identify with mainstream culture and expectations (Gibson, 1988). In an ethnographic study of Asian American high school students, Lee (1994) found that Koreans who were actively encouraged by both parents and ethnic organizations/role models to "Americanize" but also preserve their ethnic identity – in other words, to adopt a bicultural identity – were more likely to succeed in school. The combination of selective or additive acculturation, which promotes both the adaptation of "American" values while at school, and the maintenance of traditional values at home, appears to be the key to educational success.

The Schools' Arithmetic of Addition, Not Subtraction: Acculturation vs. Assimilation

When discussing the adaptation process of immigrant children as it unfolds in the school context, an important distinction needs to be made between *acculturation* and *assimilation*. Acculturation is a “process of cultural change and adaptation that occurs when individuals with different cultures come into contact (Gibson, 1995, p.90).” This process does not replace the old culture, but rather, it may be an additive process by which new and old cultural traits are blended. Assimilation, on the other hand, suggests a process by which old cultural traits and ethnic identity are discarded and replaced with the new culture. Immigrant parents often encourage acculturation but not assimilation. According to Gibson (1995), first-generation youths are often successful in school because they employ a strategy of “additive acculturation.” Pressure in the schools to quickly assimilate through replacement or subtractive acculturation creates a stressful adjustment for immigrant children who are caught between two cultures.

Gibson (1995) claims that:

(s)ome clash between cultures is inevitable, but the conflicts are exacerbated when immigrant children are told directly or indirectly that assimilation is the surest route to success. To fit in socially the children of immigrants may adopt the values, even the prejudices, of mainstream American peers and come to see their parents as too authoritarian, backward, and foreign. At a point in their lives when they most need parental and extended family support to find their way through a maze of colliding cultures, they may feel caught in a no-win situation. The pressures placed on them to rebel against their immigrant parents in order to be accepted by their American peers can have unintended and injurious consequences (p.91).

Historically, educational institutions have relied on assimilation strategies that reinforce subtractive acculturation as the model for educating immigrant children. Recently, however, many school districts, particularly in California (Olsen 1988, Chang 1990, Vernez and Abrahamse 1996), have begun incorporating new and innovative strategies to foster additive acculturation, both by enhancing English language skills and offering mental health support services to ease the transition both for students and their families.

The History and Current Status of School Strategies

The educational needs of immigrant children were largely ignored for most of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. At various times, bilingual education was offered to some ethnic groups but, by and large, was absent from educational policy (August & Hakuta 1997). In what has been labeled the “sink or swim” method, students were forced to immerse themselves in English-only classrooms and hope that they learned English quickly.

Bilingual education emerged at the forefront of educational debate in the 1960s when the Ford Foundation funded a program in Florida in response to the massive arrival there of Cuban exiles. Subsequently, the Bilingual Education Act, as Title VII of the Hawkins-Stafford Elementary and Secondary Education Act, was signed. It authorized funds for local school districts to establish programs for limited English proficient students (LEP) (August & Hakuta 1997, Board on Children and Families 1995). An emphasis on bilingual education increased throughout the 1970s, with the courts defending the legality of bilingual education, the implementation of the Lau remedies (established under the Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, entitling LEP students to special assistance to allow them to participate equally in school programs), and the existence of a pro-bilingualism administration (McDonnell & Hill, 1993). According to August & Hakuta, however, the 1980s saw a steadfast retreat from bilingualism back to English-only teaching, led by conservative legislators, educators, and researchers.

As a result of the 1980’s backlash, schools are now relying on bilingual/ESL and LEP programs to educate immigrant children.³ However, these programs vary tremendously across districts in terms of

³ The definitions of bilingual education and English immersion programs have taken on different meanings as the debate over the efficacy of bilingualism has occurred in political and educational circles. In general, English immersion programs do not involve using the children’s native language. Often this takes the form of “sheltered

philosophy, financing, and structure, and they represent an ad hoc approach to meeting immigrant children's needs (Olsen, 1988).

Several important studies during the late 1980s and early 1990s documented the special educational needs of immigrant children and recommended policy changes (Olsen, 1988; First, 1988). The National Coalition of Advocates for Students issued a report, entitled *New Voices: Immigrant Students in Public Schools*, that presented comprehensive recommendations for action at the federal, state, and local levels. This report advocated a *comprehensive program developed at the federal and state levels*, and called for the following localized implementations (First, 1988):

- School districts should provide comprehensible information about the schools to immigrant parents through culturally-appropriate means.
- School districts should help “front-line” personnel, such as school secretaries, gain cultural sensitivity and understand the legal rights of immigrant children and their families.
- Where significant numbers of immigrant children are present, districts should create a centralized intake and assessment center, with a trained staff that includes individuals skilled in the language and cultures of the new immigrants.
- School districts should organize elementary schools so that children progress through broad cross-age groupings, rather than through rigid grade levels.
- School districts should provide supplementary services to students with limited proficiency in English, through the “English Plus” approach.⁴
- Districts should provide multicultural education for all students.
- Districts should make it clear that teachers should supplement, not replace, an immigrant child's first language and culture by teaching English language and American culture.
- Districts should hire bilingual/bicultural staff members.

English” programs, “structured immersion” programs, and “pull-out immersion.” Bilingual education programs fall into three groups: (1) transitional bilingual, (2) maintenance bilingual, and (3) two-way enrichment bilingual education. For more information, see Stewart (1993).

⁴ The League of United Latin American Citizens developed “English Plus” to make use of special strategies to supplement existing ESL programs. These strategies include providing language support for children as they learn English and their other subjects in an all-English program, and using either teachers who speak the students' native tongue or peer or adult tutors. This approach shows respect for a student's primary language and culture.

- Districts should forge links with community-based agencies, advocacy groups, and self-help organizations to insure the availability of physical and mental health services for immigrant families.
- School psychologists must be encouraged to become active advocates for the provision of appropriate educational services for immigrant children within regular classrooms.

Other studies (McDonnell & Hill,1993; Educating the Newest Americans, 1989; Olsen 1988, 1995; Dentler & Hafner) support these claims. According to August and Hakuta (1997), the following attributes are associated with effective schools and classrooms: “a supportive school-wide climate, school leadership, a customized learning environment, articulation and coordination within and between schools, some use of native language and culture in the instruction of language minority students, a balanced curriculum that incorporates both basic and higher-order skills, explicit skills instruction, opportunities for student-directed activities, systematic student assessment, staff development, and home and parent involvement (p.162).”

Laurie Olsen of California Tomorrow, an outspoken critic of the educational system’s traditional (ad hoc) approach to educating immigrant children, argues that schools must be fundamentally restructured if they are to “correct inequalities in school experiences and outcomes among children of different cultural, linguistic, and racial backgrounds and ensure that all children have access to quality public education (Olsen, 1995, p.209).” She found evidence that the educational system is biased, providing differential access based on race, ethnicity, and culture. According to Olsen (1995):

Grouping practices track students by race and language. This produces a situation in which “lower-tracked” students (disproportionately African Americans, Filipinos, Southeast Asians, and Hispanics) receive a curriculum that has been watered down by teachers’ low expectations; teacher inexperience; inequitable financing formulas which assign immigrant children in urban areas to overcrowded, underfinanced, and ill-equipped schools; barriers to a close and appropriate relationships between the schools and parents of minority cultures and experiences; inflexible, lockstep age-grade relationships and expectations that cannot accommodate immigrant children coming from foreign school systems or interrupted schooling... (p.210).

This pattern of structural inequity has far-reaching consequences for the immigrant student at the secondary level because the system becomes increasingly fragmented and departmentalized, preventing the kind of comprehensive approach that is imperative for meeting immigrant adolescents' specialized needs. Olsen also criticizes the standard four-year high school model as inappropriate for immigrant students because it assumes a level of academic knowledge and skill that many immigrant students do not have. Other scholars have echoed Olsen's criticisms. To explain the high dropout rate for Hispanic high school students, many advocate a shift away from blaming the individual toward a more thorough analysis of the school context (Mehan, 1997; Natriello, 1995; Rumberger, 1987, 1995; Trueba et al., 1989). According to Mehan (1997), a student's withdrawal from school may stem from a "fairly astute analysis of inequality-producing institutional practices and the socioeconomic circumstances surrounding schools (p.7)."

Research on restructuring schools to meet the needs of immigrant children has received attention and support from foundations and state agencies. The focus, however, has been at changing individual school sites or district-specific problems, and not on systemic change (Olsen, 1995). Some (McDonnell & Hill 1993; Olsen 1988, 1995; First, 1988; Adelman & Taylor, 1997) advocate for *broad-based systemic change*, both at the district level and in the establishment of a national education policy. Currently, several innovative programs show promise in meeting the needs of immigrant children.

Bilingual education and LEP programs are widely though variably implemented throughout the country. Federal laws have mandated bilingual education since the 1960s and there have been numerous additions to this act (Crawford, 1997). Bilingual education has been well researched and found to be highly effective for developing English language skills (Hakuta & Gould, 1987; Ramirez,

1985; Purkey & Smith, 1983). Research has highlighted some of the most important components of effective schools for language minority students (Crawford, 1997; Fashola et al. 1997, McDonnell & Hill, 1993; Garcia, 1987,1989):

1. School climate and context:

- Administrative leadership where principals are actively engaged in curriculum planning, staff development, and instructional issues.
- Culturally sensitive teachers, who embrace cultural diversity and maintain high achievement expectations for all students.
- Trained teachers/counselors/administrators in multicultural education and curriculum.
- Strong bilingual/ESL classes with effective teachers.
- An orderly and safe environment that is conducive to learning.
- More appropriate curriculum planning and development. At the elementary level, the focus should be on the acquisition of basic skills. Instruction takes into consideration students' linguistic and cultural attributes.
- Clearly-stated academic goals, objectives, and plans.
- System to monitor school input and student outcomes.
- Development of a sense of community. Involving students in the school community to reduce feelings of loneliness and alienation.
- School-wide recognition of academic success.
- Culturally-sensitive placement and achievement tests.

2. Importance of home and the community:

- Parental involvement both at home and in the school.
- Community organizations that can act as liaisons to the schools.

Including parents in the school environment may be one of the most important prerequisites for immigrant students' academic achievement and successful adaptation to their new schools and society

(Olsen, 1988; Rosado, 1994; National Coalition for Advocates for Students, 1988). A culturally-sensitive school context is an important mediator of immigrant children's academic achievement, but on its own may not be enough to address the cultural barriers faced by language minority children.

The educational research and social science communities are increasingly acknowledging the need for *comprehensive* and *integrated* approaches to addressing the barriers to student learning (UCLA Center for Mental Health in Schools, 1997; Olsen, 1995) and for understanding the learning process within a context of social, economic, political, and cultural factors. As Adelman and Taylor note, such a framework is built on “holistic and developmentalist perspectives that are translated into an extensive continuum of programs focused on fostering the well-being of individuals, families, and the contexts in which they live, work, and play (UCLA Center for Mental Health in Schools, 1997, App.B-1).”

The current focus of the educational community has involved improving instruction and school management, test scores, high school graduation rates, and grade point averages. This approach assumes that children who perform well in school have adjusted well to U.S. society and mainstream culture, and therefore may fail to meet the enormous psychosocial needs of immigrant children and families. Indeed, it places them at significant risk for depression, suicide, or alcohol/drug abuse. As Phelan and colleagues (1991) point out, a “student's competence in moving between settings has tremendous implications for the quality of their lives and their chance of using the educational system as a stepping stone to further education, productive work experiences, and a meaningful adult life (p.224).” Researchers are beginning to recognize the magnitude of the challenge for immigrant children, and are advocating the integration of school based mental and physical health services within the schools.

For More than Good Report Cards:

School-based Mental Health Services for Immigrant Children

The provision of basic health care in the schools has been implemented since the early part of this century. Comprehensive services began in earnest in the 1980s, in response to high adolescent pregnancy rates (Flaherty, et al., 1996). For several reasons, mental health services within the schools have expanded rapidly in recent years; these reasons include the emergence of HIV and AIDS, increased rates of sexually transmitted diseases within the adolescent population, the problem of teenage pregnancy, increase in drug and alcohol abuse, increasing rates of adolescent suicide, and high drop-out rates (Flaherty et al., 1996). School-based programs may be the best way to offer services that are both holistic and comprehensive in an environment that is both familiar and comfortable (Gullotta & Noyes, 1995).

Broad-based evaluations of school-based services have been scarce for a variety of reasons, however. According to Flaherty et al. (1996), evaluations of the impact of mental health services, aside from services associated with grant-funded research programs, are limited. These authors found no studies specifically evaluating the impact of school-based mental health services other than guidance counseling services.⁵ Clearly, a comprehensive evaluation of the effectiveness of past and existing school-based mental health services is needed..

The current system of care is episodic and crisis-oriented, and plans inadequately for follow-up care (Gullotta & Noyes, 1995, Adelman & Taylor, 1993). It is burdened by programs that overlap but are not coordinated with each other, ineffective at identifying children who suffer from internalized

⁵ This is not to say that evaluations of school health programs have not been conducted. In fact, there have been numerous studies advocating the importance and effectiveness of school health programs. For more information, see McGinnis, J. (1993). *The Year 2000 Initiative: Implications for Comprehensive School Health*. *Preventive Medicine*, 22, 493-498.

problems such as depression, anxiety, and social withdrawal, unable to engage parents and family members, and unsuccessful in linking with other community organizations (Gullotta & Noyes, 1995; Flaherty et al., 1996). For all the shortcomings of the status quo, the potential and importance of school-based mental health services cannot be ignored.⁶ Well-designed, integrated, and planned youth interventions can work effectively to benefit not only individual children, families, and school districts, but also society at large through reductions in welfare payments, unemployment, and adult mental health problems.

Many researchers have advocated for a comprehensive approach to school-based mental health services. Adelman and Taylor, who have spent years researching and developing school-based mental health programs, are at the forefront of this research.⁷ They are in favor of multifaceted programs designed to meet the greatest number of students efficiently and effectively by coordinating school and community resources into a continuum of relevant programs (Adelman & Taylor, 1993).⁸

Although many schools now offer social services and mental health services for the entire student population, these do not necessarily focus on unique needs of the immigrant students (Padilla and Duran, 1995). In fact, no comprehensive school-based approaches designed specifically to facilitate the adaptation of immigrant children are currently in place anywhere. The essential components, however, have been identified.

⁶ For more information on school-based centers, see: Office of Technology Assessment (1991). *Adolescent Health, Volume I*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office. (OTA) H-468. Riessman, J. (1991) school-based and school-linked clinics: The Facts. Washington D.C.: Center for Population Options. Levy, J.E. and Shepardson, W. (1992). A look at current school-linked efforts. *The Future of Children: U.S. Health Care for Children*, 2(2), 44-55 (This volume dedicated to this subject).

⁷ For more information, see Adelman HS, and Taylor, L. (1994). Mental health facets of school-based health center movement: Need and opportunity for research and development. *Journal of Mental Health Administration*, Adelman, HS. and Taylor, L. (1988). *Clinical child psychology: Fundamental intervention questions and problems. Clinical Psychology Review*, 8, 637 – 655.

⁸ For a detailed description, see Adelman & Taylor, 1993.

Transitional support for immigrant children is the first step in the process. Cardenas, Adelman & Taylor (1993) advocate for transitional support teams to help counter mental health and educational problems by providing a sense of welcome and social support. “School wide strategies to ensure school adjustment of newly entering students and their families can reduce adjustment problems, ease bicultural development, enhance student performance, and establish a psychological sense of community throughout the school (UCLA Center for School Mental Health, 1997a).” According to this report, such interventions have three overlapping components: (1) general procedures to welcome and facilitate adjustment, (2) personalized assistance for those individuals in need, and (3) more intensive focus on those who remain uninvolved and not connected to the school community (p.2). Assessment and guidance programs can serve as the first contact point for newly arrived immigrants to determine the special needs of the student and family. *Newcomer schools* offer a unique opportunity for immigrant children, because they are specifically designed not only to educate them, but also to address the challenges and obstacles that they and their families face in their acculturation process.⁹ Overall, the research underscores the importance of services that can better appraise the initial needs of children and their families and are channeled in an appropriate, positive way.

Beyond the transition phase, *comprehensive, culturally-sensitive counseling services* that include cross-culturally trained counselors, translators, and mediators are critical (Esquivel & Keitel, 1990). Proponents of such services emphasize the need for schools to develop and implement preventive and early intervention programs for problems related to initial culture shock, acculturation and ethnic identity confusion, and social and behavioral problems. The programs that have been implemented in clinical settings and in specific schools have not incorporated comprehensive counseling

⁹ For more information on the development of a welcome/transition team, see UCLA Center for School Mental Health, 1997a, and Cardenas, J., Adelman, HS, and Taylor, L. (1993). Transition support for immigrant students. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development*, 21, 203 – 210.

services targeted to immigrant children. Some promising approaches include *ethnotherapy*, emphasizing the development of a healthy sense of ethnic identity in minority children; *co-ethnic peer models*; and *bicultural identity development*.

Bicultural identity development, in combination with other school-based services such as the welcoming and transition teams, may offer the best intervention strategy for two reasons. First, bicultural identity appears to be related to positive adjustment and educational achievement (Laosa, 1989; Szapocznik & Kurtines, 1993; Gibson, 1997; Padilla & Duran, 1995). Second, it may address the serious needs of second-generation immigrant children who are at high risk for low educational achievement, school drop-out, poor decision-making skills, and subsequent deviant behavior (Szapocznik, Kurtines, & Fernandez, 1980; Szapocznik, Santisteban, Kurtines, Perez-Vidal, & Hervis, 1984). According to Sadowsky et al. (1995), ethnic identity is a function of how one locates one's membership in a reference group, or in other words, is based on a perception of how one relates to that group. The dimensions of ethnic identity are: (1) self-identification, (2) sense of belonging and attachment, (3) strength of feelings toward one's ethnic group, and (4) participation in ethnic activities and practices. The development of a positive ethnic identity and the ability to adapt to mainstream society are crucial elements in the adaptation process of immigrant children.

Szapocznik & Kurtines (1993) maintain that children and families need to be viewed by therapists and psychologists within both the macro- and micro-context in which they function, and have developed a therapeutic intervention model called Bicultural Effectiveness Training (BET), which aims at addressing the intergenerational cultural differences between parents and children. The goals of BET are to (1) enhance the bicultural skills for both parents and children, (2) improve abilities to manage cultural difference within the family, and (3) help families function well in a culturally diverse environment

(Szapocznik & Kurtines, 1993). It uses a set of psycho-educational interventions to restructure the family and reduce the intergenerational conflict. While most of the BET work has focused on Cuban families, it appears it may have important ramifications for all immigrant families as they attempt to negotiate the acculturative process.¹⁰ In sum, psychosocial services within the school context hold important potential for addressing the particular needs of immigrant students and their families. While research suggests high under-utilization rates of mental health services by minority populations, school-based centers offer ease and accessibility that adolescents and students prefer (Adelman & Taylor, 1993). Since the school environment itself may be associated with stressful experiences for immigrant children, psychosocial interventions within this context must be coordinated to explicitly and effectively address the stresses and conflicts inherent in the educational, familial, and social lives of immigrant students.

Conclusion and Implications for the New Jersey Immigrant Youth Project

The literature confirms that immigrant children do indeed have special needs as they adjust to a new culture. Why some immigrant groups and individuals make the adjustment with relative ease while others struggle remains more elusive. Why some immigrant students (in the face of tremendous adversity) out-perform their U.S.-native counterparts academically, while others are not able to compete, is equally puzzling. The tremendous inter- and intra-group variation makes it difficult for researchers to draw conclusions. Recent findings, however, offer clues to these perplexing issues, and depict a complex web of factors associated with both macro and micro-level forces.

¹⁰ For a detailed description of this intervention, see Szapocznik & Kurtines, 1993.

Immigrant children's adaptive and acculturation processes can be analyzed on three levels: the larger socioeconomic and political context, the community, and the individual and family. On the macro-level, a combination of pre-migration factors and the post migration economic and political context impact the ability of immigrant groups to connect with U.S. mainstream society. The receiving community context is also very important. According to many researchers (Portes, 1995; Zhou, 1997a, 1997b; Zhou, & Bankston, 1997), the segment of American society into which immigrant groups merge determines their adaptive patterns. Prejudice, racism, and oppression, locally as well as nationally, also play roles. Within the domain of the family, the prevailing structure, values, beliefs, and SES level all affect adjustment for both parents and children. In addition, the age and temperament of a child influences his or her adjustment to a new culture and environment.

The New Jersey Immigrant Youth Project (NJIYP) has identified two school districts in New Jersey that are representative of the state's diverse immigrant population--Edison and New Brunswick. Edison Township has a mixed immigrant population, consisting of primarily Chinese, Hispanics, and Asian Indians. The Asian Indian population is an especially interesting ethnic group not only because it has not been well researched, but also because, like other Asian groups, it has often been labeled as a "model-minority." This type of labeling is concerning because children and parents may often hide their problems for fear of not living up to the stereotypical "well-adjusted and high achieving" Asian Indian (Lee, 1994). In the New Brunswick school district, Hispanics represent the largest and most diverse immigrant population. Nationally, they represent the largest-growing sector of the population and have the largest dropout rate of any major group in U.S. population (Lockwood, 1996). As researchers have demonstrated, the Hispanic population displays tremendous inter and intra-group variation. For Hispanic immigrants, who are largely integrating into poor, urban ghettos where single-parent

households are on the rise and traditional values appear to be in free-fall, length of stay in the United States appears to be seriously eroding pre-migration protective factors.

In general, contemporary Asian Indian immigrants represent the Westernized elite from India who already speak English upon arrival. They live mainly in large urban centers in New York, New Jersey, Texas, California, Pittsburgh, and Pennsylvania, and often establish Hindu Temples and “ethnic associations” such as special groups of Gujaratis, Bengalis, or Punjabis. Hindu Indians represent the largest bulk of the population both in India and the United States, with Muslim and Sikh representing minorities. The three share many elements of common regional culture: The Punjabi Sikh, mostly poor farmers from a region near Pakistan, represent the earliest immigrants to the U.S., have settled mostly in agricultural locations in Northern California. Much of the research regarding Punjabi Indians has been conducted by anthropologist Margaret Gibson whose ethnographic study (mentioned previously) described the unique acculturative process of many immigrant Punjabis. She labeled the process “accommodation without assimilation (Gibson, 1988),” depicting a strong desire to maintain ethnic identity through religious beliefs, family ideologies, and food preferences (Das & Kemp, 1997; Ghuman, 1997; Miller, 1995), combined with a selective acculturation to mainstream society through work and school.

Asian Indian families often have large extended kinship networks that are both fluid and flexible, with members moving in, out, and between households easily (Das & Kemp, 1997; Miller, 1995). For these families, the family unit takes priority above the individual. The family has a patriarchal authority structure, in which the eldest male makes the decisions for individual family members, and “outsider” advice is resisted. Clear gender divisions often enforce different rules and restrictions for boys and girls. Dating and secular activities are often forbidden, particularly for girls. Most marriages are arranged and

divorce rates are low. Generally speaking, the following attitudes and values appear to be important to Asian Indian families and individuals (Das & Kemp, 1997):

- Non-confrontation or silence as a virtue
- Respect for older persons and the elderly
- Devaluation of individualism and a strong sense of duty to family
- Protection of honor and face of family
- Structured family roles and relationships
- Harmony between hierarchical roles
- Humility and obedience
- High regard for learning
- Preserving the original religion

These values and beliefs may be very different from those encountered by immigrant children in the school environment and mainstream culture in general, and the discontinuity between home and school may cause tremendous stress for immigrant Asian Indian children.

Recent qualitative research conducted by the NJIYP research team with immigrant parents and educators from Edison and New Brunswick has confirmed the many of the findings discussed in this review of the literature. This research also suggests several areas that will have to be addressed in interventions that this group plans to design and implement. Bilingual education teachers and administrators alike agree that many of the challenges to educating immigrant students emerge out of the intersecting realities of devastating poverty, lack of native language skills, English language barriers, and being forced to “negotiate two worlds.” Immigrant parents, like their native-born counterparts, want their children to succeed academically, enjoy school life, and develop friendships, but they are also confronting their own insecurities, and may be unfamiliar with how to navigate the school system in the best interests of their children. Welcoming, open communication between immigrant parents and school officials must be a priority for these two districts.

The New Jersey Immigrant Youth Project has the potential to enact the best practices recommended in the literature and to comprehensively address the unique needs of two distinct populations of immigrant children. Specifically, the project will work toward filling the void in school-based mental health services, promoting not only improved educational outcomes, but also healthier youth self-images, better family relationships, and stronger bicultural identity. The Project will design *targeted* interventions that will at once (1) facilitate the adaptation of immigrant children; (2) utilize resources in a systemic, preventive (rather than *ad hoc*) manner; and (3) generate relevant data for future policy evaluation and reform. These are areas of tremendous value for Edison, New Brunswick and the State of New Jersey, where many local school districts are dealing with large influxes of immigrant populations whose success in America and the overall mental health will depend on appropriate psychosocial interventions and an awareness of both the struggles and possibilities they face.

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THE NEW JERSEY IMMIGRANT YOUTH PROJECT

Immigration to the US has been increasing dramatically since 1965, when the Immigration and Nationality Act Amendments revoked the system of national origin quotas and made visas easier to obtain in general. The influx of immigrants has been particularly pronounced in New Jersey, where in 1995 the foreign-born population rose above 1 million and represented 13.4 percent of the state's population. Between 1980 and 1990, the State of New Jersey ranked fifth in the nation in terms of the overall number of immigrants, fourth in the proportion of foreign-born, and first in terms of the diversity of its foreign-born population (Espenshade 1997). Importantly, New Jersey mirrors more closely than any other state the racial and ethnic composition of the United States as a whole.

While extant research has generally focused on the effects this immigration wave has had on school districts, social programs, taxes and other aspects of natives' lives, little attention has been paid to the wellbeing of immigrants themselves or to their children. Yet, first and second generation immigrant children, who will spend most or all of their lives here, comprise a substantial, as well as the fastest growing, group of children in the United States. As of the 1990 Census, these children numbered more than 5 million, and later figures indicate that this number has increased substantially during the 1990s. Little is known about the adaptation of immigrant children and the children of immigrants, how adaptation varies by sending country, by age, and by generation, and how adaptation affects human and social capital development. The New Jersey Immigrant Youth Project will address these gaps by (1) identifying factors that facilitate and those that impede successful adaptation of immigrant children to the US, and then by (2) implementing and evaluating school-based programs addressing the needs of immigrant children in two cities-- the City of New Brunswick and the Township of Edison.

New Brunswick and Edison have particularly high concentrations of immigrants, representing a variety of different countries of origin. Thus, these municipalities will serve as fertile laboratories for learning about the adaptation of immigrant children from a broad array of cultures and circumstances, and for testing interventions designed to meet the needs of immigrant children and to enhance their human and social capital development. Across the US, enormous resources are being spent on an ad hoc basis for interventions in schools, such as those in New Brunswick and Edison, that serve populations that happen to be heavily and increasingly foreign-born. It is far from clear, however, whether these funded programs are meeting the special needs of immigrant children.

The New Jersey Immigrant Youth Project consists of several phases. Phase I will identify the needs of and hurdles faced by immigrant children in the US as a whole and in New Brunswick and Edison in particular. This phase will involve a review of an extensive yet patchwork literature on the needs of immigrant children, a workshop in which a "panel of experts" will discuss both current research on this topic and issues particularly relevant to New Jersey, and a set of preliminary focus groups conducted with parents, children, and administrators in New Brunswick and Edison public schools. The questions we are asking in Phase 1 are: (1) Are immigrant children at special risk apart from demographic and socioeconomic factors? and (2) if so, for which subgroups is this the case?

Once this fact-finding mission has been completed and synthesized in the form of a working paper, we will launch Phase 2, in which we will conduct a more extensive set of focus groups, shaped by our findings from Phase 1. We will then use our cumulative knowledge to design and implement school-based programs in both New Brunswick and Edison to address the needs and problems, if any, that we have identified. The interventions, which will be integrated with existing school-based programs in New Brunswick and Edison, will be designed by two experts on our research team (J. Clabby and R.

Hendren) who have successfully designed and implemented school-based programs in New Jersey, in other states, and in other parts of the world.

Phase 3 of the New Jersey Immigrant Youth Project will involve impact evaluations of the interventions designed and implemented in Phase 2. These will be both short-term, measuring outcomes immediately following the intervention, and long-term, measuring outcomes one year after the end of the intervention. Since we are orchestrating both the content and evaluation of these interventions, we will have substantial control over the experimental design and will be able to focus on outcomes, such as success in school, that are policy relevant. Depending on the results from Phase 3, the intervention may serve as a demonstration project which can later be transported and adapted to other cities and states. The evaluation phase will be led by three members of our research team (M. Tienda, T. Espenshade, and N. Reichman) that have extensive experience in social program evaluation and knowledge of immigration issues. Overall, the project promises to provide information that will be increasingly useful to policymakers and educators in the upcoming decade and millenium.

The New Jersey Immigrant Youth Project represents a unique collaboration of professionals from different universities, school districts, and the community. The research team consists of the following individuals:

John Clabby. Dr. Clabby is Chief Psychologist at the University Behavioral Health Care Center at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey. He and a colleague developed a nationally recognized school-based program model that has been teacher-tested and research-validated since 1979 and designated as an Exemplary Program by the National Diffusion Network of the US Department of Education.

Thomas J. Espenshade. Dr. Espenshade is a Professor of Sociology at Princeton University. He is also one of the nation's leading experts on U.S. immigration. He recently completed a major project on the state and local impacts of immigration to New Jersey. Principal findings are contained in an edited volume, *Keys to Successful Immigration: Implications of the New Jersey Experience* (Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute Press, 1997).

Robert Hendren. Dr. Hendren is the Director of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey/Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. He has considerable experience designing school-based mental health programs. In 1992-93, he headed a World Health Organization team that developed a model framework for a comprehensive approach to mental health promotion, prevention, and treatment in schools based on published literature and expert consultations from successful programs throughout the world.

Nancy E. Reichman. Dr. Reichman is a Research Staff Member at the Office of Population Research at Princeton University. She is an economist who has conducted a substantial body of research on child health and child wellbeing, including several studies analyzing the effects of immigration and ethnicity on birth outcomes and an evaluation of a statewide Medicaid prenatal care program in New Jersey. She serves as project director for a national study of new parents and the wellbeing of their children.

William E. Reichman. Dr. Reichman is Vice Chair for Clinical Programs in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey/Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, as well as the Director of Brief Treatment Services at the University Behavioral Health Care Center. He has implemented numerous mental health programs collaboratively with state and local administrators, government agencies, other universities, and foundations. Dr. Reichman conceived of the idea for this project and assembled our research team.

Gail Reynolds. Dr. Reynolds is a clinical social worker and educator. Presently, she is Administrator for School-Based Services for the University Behavioral Health Care Center at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey. She has developed and implemented a comprehensive school-based youth services program in the New Brunswick Schools which includes a mental health clinic and a teen parenting child care center. She has worked in collaboration with the community to ensure primary health services for all children in New Brunswick.

Marta Tienda. Dr. Tienda is a Professor of Sociology and Public Affairs at Princeton University. She is a nationally renowned expert in ethnic and racial stratification, population and economic development, socioeconomic integration of U.S. immigrants, poverty and social policy, and the sociology of employment and labor markets. She is the author, coauthor, or editor of numerous books and articles on ethnic issues, including *Divided Opportunities: Minorities, Poverty, and Social Policy*, *The Hispanic Population of the United States*, and *Immigration: Issues and Policy*.