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**Recent High School Immigrants' Program Placement and Academic Performance
in Texas Schools:
What Do We Know and What Do We Need to Know**

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by

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Dedication

To my dearly departed parents-in-law,

Mr. Jin-Tsz Chen and Mrs. Fang-Mei Cheng.

We love you and miss you immensely!

To Cheng-Wei (Joseph), my best friend and beloved husband

To Johnnie, my precious son

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**Recent High School Immigrants' Program Placement and Academic Performance
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Pei-Ling Lee, Ph.D.

The University of Texas at Austin, 2012

Supervisors: Martha N. Ovando and Michelle D. Young

The study explored the relationship between program placement policies regarding the education of recently immigrated students and selected outcomes for these newcomers in urban high schools located in Texas under the implementation of NCLB. In an effort to better understand the impact of such policies on immigrant learning opportunities, this research investigated how newcomers' identification and promotion, which were based upon English language proficiency testing, affected recent immigrant students' program placement, course completion and educational achievement. In addition, this study used secondary data analysis to examine how newcomers' background characteristics were associated with their grade retention rates. Finally, the relationship between students' background characteristics and newcomers' academic performance in language arts and mathematics subject areas were examined. This research attempted to answer questions including: 1) How do newly arrived youth students enrolled in newcomer programs, schools, and those enrolled in traditional English as a Second Language (ESL) programs differ with regard to characteristics, such as race, gender, socioeconomic status (SES), course completion, grade retention, and language spoken at home?, 2) How do the differences in characteristics of newly arrived youth students relate to grade retention?, 3) What is the relationship between the growth

in academic achievement and newly arrived youth students' demographic characteristics while enrolled in different programs?, and 4) What kinds of learning opportunities and educational supports are provided by traditional ESL programs, newcomer programs, and newcomer schools for newly arrived youth students in northern and central Texas? Findings indicated newly arrived immigrant adolescents are consistently the most disadvantaged group due to their later start age with limited English proficiency facing a new culture. In general, recently arrived immigrant youths appear to benefit more from teachers with ESL certification as well as even much more experience for serving immigrant adolescents in a safe and caring environment, newcomer schools.

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Chapter One: Introduction

More than one in five children in the United States has at least one immigrant parent. A total of three million foreign-born school-age children including children who are first-generation immigrants increased in the 6th-12th-grade to represent 7% of the total student population (Calderon, Slavin, & Sanchez, 2010; Capps, Fix, Murray, Ost, Passel, & Herwantoro, 2005a; Hernandez, Denton, & Macartney, 2007; Landale & Oropesa, 1995). The number of children of immigrants has doubled in the last two decades (Capps et al. 2005a; Hernandez, 2004).

High school recent immigrant students¹ with low-levels of English proficiency are often placed in either English as a Second Language (ESL)² programs or newcomer schools (Boyson & Short, 2003). Very little research has focused on learning styles, needs and outcomes of high school newcomers or the variety of educational services provided for them. This research explored the learning opportunities and educational achievement of high school recent immigrant students enrolled in two different programs: newcomer schools and ESL programs. Recognizing the struggles and challenges that foreign-born high school-age students who can speak little or no English face, this study sought to add to the empirical research base informing education policy and, in the process, to provide guidance to program planning for high school newcomer students.

Demographic Characteristics of English Language Learners (ELLs)³

While immigrants are heavily concentrated in the six states of Arizona, California, Texas, New York, Florida, and Illinois (Capps et al., 2005a), many have moved into less concentrated states such as Arkansas, Georgia, Nebraska, Nevada, North Carolina and Tennessee for jobs in manufacturing, food processing, and construction. Ruiz-de-Velasco

and Fix (2001) found that even the six most concentrated states, which are described in the literature as “traditional receiving states,” are unlikely to deliver language and other services that recent immigrant students need. Although large urban centers are home to the majority of ELLs, smaller metropolitan, suburban, and rural areas have experienced significant increases in their ELL population and often do not have the programs or teachers in place to adequately support their needs, especially in this age of education reform (Callahan, Wilkinson, Muller, & Frisco, 2009).

ELLs enter schools with a wide range of language proficiencies (in English and in their native language) and of subject-matter knowledge. They differ in their characteristics of education backgrounds, expectations of schooling, socioeconomic status (SES), and citizenship. For those who are immigrants, they also differ with regard to personal experiences coming to, and living in, the United States (Waggoner, 1999). The rapid increase of this large and very diverse demographic group has important implications for federal, state, and local education, health, housing, and family policies.

ELLs in the U.S. School

Traditionally, literature shows that ELLs lag behind native English-speaking students in all content areas on standardized assessments (Abedi & Lord, 2001), are more likely to attend schools with higher dropout rates (Watt & Roessingh, 1994), and are less likely to graduate from high school and participate in higher education (Klein, Bugarin, Beltranena, & McArthur, 2004). A large body of research suggests this achievement gap is associated with salient socio-economic factors, including background experiences, parent education and socioeconomic status (Abedi & Gándara, 2006), and significant education factors, such as appropriate instructional pedagogy, the need for a positive

negotiation of identity within school, (Gndara *et al.*, 2000; Hakuta, Butler, & Witt, 2000; McNeil, 1999; Moore & Redd, 2002), the continuity of native language development (Cummin, 1983), positive teacher-student relationships (Cummins, 1996, 2001) among a host of equitable schooling conditions (Abedi, Herman, Courtney, Leon, & Kao, 2004; Gndara, Rumberger, Maxwell-Jolly, & Callahan, 2003).

The invisibility of newly arrived students in school. Immigrant students who arrive in the middle and high school years encounter less support for language and literacy learning in school and more complex academic content in school systems that are emphasizing rigorous standards-based curricula and high stakes assessments for all students (August & Shanahan, 2006; Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007). Many immigrant adolescents struggle to succeed in U.S schools, performing less well on a variety of academic indicators, including achievement tests, grades, dropout rates, and college attainment (Gndara & Contreras, 2008). Recent immigrant youth, ELL, and Limited English Proficient (LEP)³ students share similar schooling obstacles, but each group has unique educational needs.

Neither federal nor state educational agencies view immigrants as a separate group from the large ELL population. Federal and state government agencies have rapid English acquisition for ELLs on the policy agenda; immigrant education also focuses mostly on English language acquisition indicating that immigrant education policy is primarily concerned with rapid English acquisition (NCLB, 2001). The tendency of official documentation and data to lump the large variety of immigrant groups into a single category has resulted in a narrow definition of immigrant students in school policies, a lack of understanding of immigrant students' social and demographic

backgrounds, and a lack of awareness of the special needs of immigrant students (Rong & Preissle, 2009).

Life challenges of newly arrived youth. Secondary schools have experienced greater increases in immigrant youth populations than elementary or preschool. During the 1990s the number of children of immigrants grew more rapidly in secondary than elementary schools (72% versus 39%). The foreign-born immigrant students arriving in U.S. schools in the later grades encounter more challenges than their younger peers because “the late-entering foreign-born students may have difficulty learning English, mastering academic subjects, and graduating in the limited time they are in U.S. schools. Immigrants who become discouraged by these difficulties may be inclined to drop out of school” (Calderon, Slavin, & Sanchez, 2010; Capps et al., 2005, p. 36; Hood, 2003). Recently immigrated youth not only face challenges adjusting to a new country and schooling environment (Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco, & Todorova, 2008), the transition challenges are exacerbated by the stress of acquiring English language skills while concurrently accruing the required credits for graduation in their secondary school. The immigrant youth arrive in a time of heightened developmental vulnerability (Eccles & Roeser, 2003). Together these factors create high-risk circumstances for immigrant adolescent dropout.

In addition, some immigrant adolescents who have had limited formal schooling and below-grade-level literacy in their home countries are at high risk for educational failure. These immigrant youths tend to have weak literacy skills in their native language, lack necessary English language skills and knowledge in specific subject areas, and often need additional time to become accustomed to school routines and expectations in the

United States. Some immigrant adolescents enter this nation's schools with very weak academic skills at the same time that schools are emphasizing rigorous, standards-based curricula and high-stakes assessments for all students (Boyson & Short, 2003; Rong & Preissle, 2009). Children who have to develop academic English skills and academic content in a language they do not speak well and are doubly burdened (Cummins, 1981; Wong-Fillmore, 1981).

As explained above, immigrant adolescents encounter not only many common factors, such as lower parental education and family incomes, but they are also adversely affected by factors unique to immigration, including lack of parental citizenship and English proficiency (Capps et al., 2005b; Carhill, Suárez-Orozco, & Páez, 2008; Hernandez, 2004). Immigrant youths' parents are often unprepared to assist their children with navigating a complex, foreign, and sometimes hostile educational system (Gándara & Contreras, 2008; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2008). Furthermore, U.S. secondary public schools are typically unequipped to teach recent immigrants who have low levels of literacy and limited formal schooling (Ruiz-de-Velasco & Fix, 2000), leaving these students overlooked and underserved.

Yet, the role of schools in U.S society provides a critical opportunity for immigrant youth to gain access and participate in America society. Thus, it is important that critical attention be given to how schools choose to serve newcomers. Some schools completely ignore the specific needs of their newcomers, while others have designed entire schools around the needs of newcomer students. While the perils of ignoring newcomers are clear, there is also a danger that newcomer schools can be used to segregate newcomers and hide these students and their needs (Feinberg, 2000, p. 221).

Federal, state, and local policies have attempted to address the education of ELLs by implementing different types of programs. Different models of language education, English as a Second Language, English immersion, and integration into mainstream classes, sometimes referred to as submersion, are among the most common approaches. Preferences for the types of programs have changed over time, responding to demographic and political pressures (Brisk, 2006; Crawford, 2004a).

The best way to teach ELLs English is hotly debated in today's political environment. Especially controversial is the question of whether it is better to immerse ELLs in "English only" programs or to cultivate them in a bilingual educational environment (Reagan, 2005; Simon, 1980; Trimnell, 2005). In fact, research shows there is no single right way to teach ELLs. The best way to educate these students is to build on what they already know (Gándara, 2005). Without a stable, structural, and relationally warm school environment (Roeser & Eccles, 1998; Woolley & Bowen, 2007), immigrant students find it difficult to cross cultural systems, overcome barriers, and develop the capacity to negate the risk factors described above (Phelan, Davidson, & Yu, 1993).

How Policy Meets the Needs of Immigrant Youth Schooling

The federal policy, No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 requires that all children, including ELLs, reach high standards by demonstrating proficiency in English language arts and mathematics by the 2013-2014 school year (No Child Left Behind Act, 2001). Interestingly, bilingual education⁴ has become optional to local educational agencies for educating ELLs under NCLB. Regardless, ELLs must acquire English in a short period of time and integrate into mainstream classrooms as soon as possible under the implementation of this sanctions-driven accountability system. The stated goal of this

policy is to help ELLs gain English proficiency as quickly as they can; however, the policy does not consider the diversity of the ELL population in terms of students' educational backgrounds or their cognitive academic language proficiency or readiness (Wright, 2007).

In order to meet the needs of recent immigrant students, newcomer programs have developed as an innovative way to assist in the education and acculturation of recent immigrant students who are not prepared to enter the U.S. high school system. Students are generally motivated and are willing to familiarize themselves with the culture of their new country and seek out educational opportunities. These programs offer an alternative for high schools to help prepare these students for the real world (Short & Boyson, 2004). The decisions of whether to offer an ESL program in a regular education environment or to offer a newcomer's program is a locally determined option for school districts that are deciding how to meet newcomers' needs based on existing resources.

In Texas school districts that have newcomer programs, the following set of events typically takes place. In general, when high school immigrants arrive in Texas, their home schools will contact an International Welcome Center in the district to administer a language diagnostic test to these newcomers. If newcomers perform above the required proficiency level, they are assigned to attend their neighborhood school. Otherwise, they are encouraged to attend a newcomer school or program (Texas Education Agency, 2004). Predominately, newcomer programs have been one of the solutions for recent high school immigrants by providing intensive English language and literacy development for a short period of time (Texas Education Agency, 2004).

In Texas, the total number of immigrant and migrant students was 124,115 in

2008-09 school year. Within this population, 75% of immigrant students were Hispanic and 15% were Asian, while 5.5% of the total students were White students and 4.5% were African. Around 75% of immigrant students and 96% of migrant students were identified as economically disadvantaged students in 2008-09 school year (Texas Education Agency, 2009). In 9th to 12th grades, the retention rate for disadvantaged, immigrant and migrant students has been higher than the state retention rate each year from 1994-95 through 2006-07. Overage students, or students who were older than their grade-level peers, had the highest or second highest retention rate in each secondary grade. Overage students also were retained at a rate substantially higher than the state average at every grade level. In 2006-07, the retention rate for disadvantaged immigrant and migrant students was highest in ninth grade (27%), followed by twelfth grade (17.6%) (Texas Education Agency, 2007).

What We Do Need to Know About Educating Recent Immigrants

Over 20% of all American children are children of immigrants, the fastest growing group of students in the United States (Capps et al., 2005). As an effort to help newly arrived immigrant high school students improve their English proficiency and learning issues, school districts have established language programs provided various interventions to recently arrived adolescents with limited English proficiency and the effects of program placement may affect their ability to perform in a new academic environment. Therefore, school administrators and policy makers expect that the effects of intended program placement will be reflected in newly arrived adolescent student academic performance and school adjustment. However, research shows an extremely limited knowledge base regarding how to best serve adolescent immigrant students

(Feinberg, 2000). Studies' findings have not clarified whether different program placement successfully contribute to reducing attrition rate or enhancing newly arrived youths' academic performance by improving students' English proficiency (Boyson & Short, 2003; Gándara & Rumberger, 2009; Páez, 2008). Some studies show that newcomer programs and schools have been effective in helping newly arrived youth acquire beginning English and ease their cultural and social adjustment (Boyson & Short, 2003; Schnur, 1999; Short, 2002), whereas other studies provide conflicting results regarding the effect of program placement on segregation issues and student retention and academic performance (Giddan et al., 1987; Simpson-Kirkland, 1983). In addition, research also suggested to explore "interdisciplinary evidence regarding the language acquisition outcomes and factors beyond language acquisition that contribute to achievement to raise student achievement and English proficiency" (López, 2010, p.23).

The need for research on the education and program options for adolescent newcomer students makes it even more imperative that one considers the educational background and current situation of recent immigrants. As discussed previously, educational needs and academic achievement of immigrant students vary considerably due to their background characteristics such as socioeconomic status, cultural background, experiences in their country of origin, and levels of English proficiency (Board on Children and Families, 1995; Brisk, 2006; Portes & Rumbaut, 1996; Suárez-Orozco, 1998). In order to consider the implications for attachment, social network formation, and English language acquisition, among other issues of the late middle childhood and early adolescence, research should assess the effectiveness of newcomer programs and assist school-level staff and policymakers in deciding whether such

programs are effective, can be easily adopted or adapted, and/or whether they can be home-grown (Suárez-Orozco, Gaytán, Bang, Pakes, O'Connor, & Rhodes, 2010).

Purpose of The Study

The study described in this dissertation investigated the relationship between program placement policies regarding the education of recently immigrated students and selected outcomes for these newcomers Texas under the implementation of NCLB. This research used secondary data analysis to examine how newcomers' program placement, which is based upon English language proficiency testing, affected recent immigrant students' grade retention rates and educational achievement in urban high schools in northern and central Texas. The study tracked students' progress as they moved through the high school grades and compared the programs of students placed in newcomer programs and schools to those who were not provided with such programs. The relationship between students' background characteristics and newcomers' academic performance in language arts and mathematics subject areas were examined. Finally, this study involved classroom observations and interviews with teachers to better understand the impact of such policies on immigrant learning opportunities.

The hypotheses were conjectured that if a majority of newcomers who attended newcomer schools or programs achieved greater academic success than students who were placed directly in traditional ESL programs, then the state agency should concentrate on promoting the use of high quality newcomer programs and schools. Under a high-stakes testing environment that is not necessarily designed according to their educational needs, immigrant youth must overcome English language barriers and prevail over major life challenges, such as adjusting to a new life and culture in a new country

and environment, develop and acquire academic English skills within a short time, and accomplish high school graduation requirements. Consequently, research indicates, for immigrant adolescents, the length of residence in the United States is negatively associated with academic outcomes (Hernandez & Charney, 1998; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Steinberg & Dornbusch, 1996; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 1995). In addition, first generation students placed in ESL programs are less likely to enroll in Advanced Placement (AP) courses, thus they demonstrate significantly lower rates of preparation for college (Callahan, et al., 2009). It is important for educators to know that newcomers have particular needs and that these needs vary according to factors such as the amount and quality of prior schooling, their level of native language literacy, and issues of disconnection of their schooling. Given the English fluency required to undertake academic tasks and the different social cultural environment in the U.S. secondary schools, this transition poses a severe challenge for older newcomers as well as their educators (García-Coll & Magnuson, 1997; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001). The research questions that guided this study are summarized as follows:

1. How do newly arrived youth students⁵ enrolled in newcomer programs, schools, and those enrolled in traditional English as a Second Language (ESL) programs differ with regard to characteristics, such as race, gender, socioeconomic status (SES), course completion, grade retention, and language spoken at home?
2. How do the differences in characteristics of newly arrived youth students relate to grade retention?

3. What is the relationship between the growth in academic achievement and newly arrived youth students' demographic characteristics while enrolled in different programs?
4. What kinds of learning opportunities and educational supports are provided by traditional ESL programs, newcomer programs, and newcomer schools for newly arrived youth students in northern and central Texas?

Significance of the Study

Current research only analyzes the availability of newcomer programs or schools nationwide. This study filled a glaring gap in newcomer program research in Texas. To date, little research has merged public newcomer school education data longitudinally to examine the effects that newcomer schools for older students have on academic performance in 9th to 12th grades. This study not only informs research and debate on this issue statewide, but also creates a model that can be replicated by researchers for further study. This research informs policy debate and deliberation in this regard by providing data-rich information specific to Texas. The intent of this research was to contribute to efforts of school administrators, policymakers and researchers as they work to develop better newcomer programs, make their preexisting programs more effective, or examine the outcomes of newcomer programs.

Chapter Two: Review of Literature

The study described in this dissertation investigated the relationship between program placement policies regarding the education of recently immigrated youth and selected outcomes for these newcomers in Texas under the implementation of NCLB. More particularly, whether background characteristics of newly arrived immigrant adolescents within different language programs that varied significantly in terms of grade retention rates and their academic achievement were examined. Finally, this research explored how learning opportunities and educational supports for adolescent newcomers are provided by varied programs. This chapter provides a review of related previous works in the area of the education of education of high school ELLs and newly arrived adolescents in U.S. schools.

This chapter is divided into four main sections. The first section provides a review of the historical context of language policies and how the goals of language policies have developed overtime. In highlighting the regulations and transitions of language policies, the review of language policy history addresses the problem definition of English Language Learners' (ELLs) language learning. The second section provides a review of the literature examining the current research gap studying newcomer programs and schools. This section is concluded with a discussion of what is known and what needs to be understood about goals, types, program evaluation, designing obstacles, and issues of newcomer programs and schools. The third section of this chapter includes current studies on the effects and academic outcomes of newcomer programs for newly arrived adolescents. I provide detail descriptions of selected variables that affect student

outcomes and explore the relationship between students' academic achievement and these variables. Finally, in the fourth section of this literature review provides a synthesis of the literature and offers a conceptual framework that provides a foundation for the research questions, and the methodology driving this study.

The Historical Context of Language Policies

The Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which protects the English Language Learners' (ELLs) language rights, prohibits discrimination on the grounds of race, color, or national origin in programs or activities receiving federal and state financial assistance:

No person in the U.S. shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, 1964).

Based on the Civil Rights Act, language for Limited English proficient (LEP) individuals can be a barrier to access important benefits or services, to understand and exercise important rights, comply with applicable responsibilities, or understand other information provided by federally funded programs and activities (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, 1964).

As a result of the 1974 *Lau v. Nichols* ruling, Justice William O. Douglas stated, "there is no quality of treatment merely by providing students with the same facilities, text books, teachers, curriculum; for students who do not understand English are effectively foreclosed from any meaningful Education" (U.S. Supreme Court, 1974). Local education agencies and states mandated the provision of educational services to LEP students, but the court neither mandated bilingual education as a remedy nor

prescribed a specific curriculum or methodology to restore any civil rights to LEP students. However, local schools receiving federal funding have to comply with the Lau decision. The court did place the decision as a preferred position that schools using alternative curriculum and instruction had to demonstrate that their approaches to educating LEP students were as effective as bilingual education.

Thirty-four years after the passage of the Bilingual Education Act (BEA), NCLB Act states that its purpose is to “help ensure that children who are limited English proficient, including immigrant children and youth, attain English proficiency, develop high levels of academic attainment in English, and meet the same challenging State academic content and student academic achievement standards as all children are expected to meet” (The Department of Education, 2001, Section 3102 (1)).

In 2002, the term “bilingual” was completely removed from NCLB legislation, solidifying the policy’s focus that ensures ELLs attain English proficiency in order to enter all-English instruction settings. The discouragement but not abolition of bilingual education is made clear as evidenced in the following:

...[who or what] may make instructional use of both English and a child's native language to enable the child to develop and attain English proficiency, and may include the participation of English proficient children if such a course is designed to enable all participating children to become proficient in English and a second language [Section 3301 (8)] (The Department of Education, 2001).

The purpose of using a native language, therefore, is not to assist ELLs to become bilingual but rather to help students become proficient in English, suggesting that bilingualism for LEP students is only allowable as long as LEP programs include English native speakers who are willing to learn the LEP students’ native language. During the

development of federal language policy, in fact, bilingual education for ELLs is merely an option available to local educational agencies under the NCLB. According to the NCLB rationale, ELL students should not be taught in their native language for long periods of time, they are expected to acquire English quickly. Several researchers have argued that NCLB results in promoting English-only language policy in education because of the high stakes in testing mandates (Crawford, 2004b; Evans & Hornberger, 2005; Wiley & Wright, 2004). Students are integrated into mainstream classrooms as soon as possible while their performance is scrutinized using a sanctions-driven accountability system. This rationale heavily emphasizes quick acquisition of English language proficiency by ELLs rather than considering ELLs' and other students' actual needs (Wright, 2007).

According to the federal level language policies, the best solution has been defined as acquisition of English as rapidly as possible. The existing results of such assessment clearly show that ELLs often have serious academic content learning needs. Texas requires local educational agencies to provide bilingual education programs and ESL programs in accordance with state law and regulations. Each district with an enrollment of 20 or more students of limited English proficiency in any language classification in the same grade level shall offer a bilingual education or special language program in Texas (19 TEC §89.1202(c)). Besides, all limited English proficient students for whom a district is not required to offer a bilingual education program shall be provided an English as a second language program, regardless of the students' grade levels and home languages, and regardless of the number of such students (19 TEC §89.1205(d)).

The primary goal of bilingual or English only programs is to develop English proficiency in each child as effectively as possible. There is no specific policy for meeting needs of middle and high school ELLs. More particularly, newcomers' learning needs also are viewed as a part of ELLs' learning problems. Although ELLs share one educationally similar goal—which is the need to increase their proficiency in English—they differ in language, cultural background, and family history (Rong & Preissle, 2009).

The immigrant students are mostly concentrated in a few large cities in traditional and nontraditional receiving states (Capps et al., 2005). They typically reside in high poverty and high minority areas. Some of these students arrived in the country due to the trauma of war. They have suffered the civil strife or economic deprivation. Some recent arrivals may have adequate formal schooling in their native country and have developed literacy in their first language. Others have had limited formal schooling and who have not developed literacy in their primary language. Newly arrived immigrant youth who enter the U.S must learn not only the English language but also the culture of a new country. Even though immigrant students represent a significant proportion of U.S schools student enrollments, their unique needs are only scarcely recognized by policymakers. In reality, students' social background and cognitive skills differ greatly when they first enter school. Raising the overall achievement of a whole national system and closing the achievement gap is an enormously complex problem (Rong & Preissle, 2009).

The Current Research of Newcomers' Schooling in U.S. Schools

Secondary immigrant youth come to schools with a wide range of background

knowledge. This phenomenon results from student age difference, limited ability to speak English, low level of literacy in the first language, and poor academic skills placing them at risk of education failure. Higgs (2005) indicated newcomer programs are designed for newly arrived adolescents with needs beyond those generally served by traditional bilingual or ESL programs. However, these programs may vary from school to school, district to district, and state to state.

Goals and types of newcomer programs across the nation. While all schools in America are being called upon to provide educational services for linguistically and culturally diverse students, along with the increasing numbers of newly arrived youth, many districts have established a newcomer program or new arrival program at the high school level to better serve secondary immigrant students (Short & Boyson, 2004). The goals of newcomer programs or schools are identified as programs that assist recently arrived immigrant students, who have very limited or no English language proficiency and often limited formal education in their native countries, in making the adjustment to a new language and a new way of schooling. Echevarria, Short, and Vogt (2004) also noted that because of immigrant students' varied background knowledge, it is essential that a variety of avenues of learning must be offered in order for them to meet with academic success. The main goal is to prepare the immigrant student to participate and contribute to their learning community through opportunities in accelerated language acquisition and the content areas. The design of newcomer programs depends on the district goals, sites, resources, and needs of the population.

According to Short and Boyson (2003) there are essentially three types of

newcomer programs in high schools: program within a school, separate site, and whole school. Most high schools (77%) employ a program within a school. This allows for additional educational opportunities for the immigrant student to participate in the regular school setting. These programs provide additional English language support and accelerated instruction in the content areas. The full day program assists in building students' background knowledge and experiences for transition into regular classes (Short & Boyson, 2003). Newcomer programs use different percentages of students' home language, from 100 percent to none at all, and also varying approaches that place less emphasis on language learning and more on content-area learning. Instructional strategies for language learning vary depending on learning goals.

Feinberg (2000) reports that three of the most common ways to deliver content instruction to immigrant students is through sheltered instruction, native language instruction, or a combination of both. Sheltered instruction is an approach to teaching that extends students' time for receiving English language support while they learn content subjects (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2004). When most of the students have a common native language, content area instruction can be delivered through the native language. Innovative programs, such as the newcomer programs, allow teachers and districts to use a variety of research-based strategies to deliver content area information.

Boyson and Short (2003) also reported that 89% of the programs taught content through sheltered English instruction. They identified the following features among districts in establishing a newcomer program: a cohort of newcomer students, a program distinct from the regular language support program, a plan for ESL development,

instructional strategies for literacy development, instructional strategies for the integration of language and content, courses for U.S. orientation, experienced teachers and paraprofessional support, appropriate materials, and family connections. The program models vary institutionally in the physical location, length of program, and program features. Additional factors that may impact the type of programs offered in schools are fiscal resources, materials, community support, and enrollment. A standard newcomer model has not emerged. Through assessing the needs of their immigrant students or newcomer students, districts and schools must determine which type of program is most appropriate for their communities (Boyson & Short, 2003).

A wide range of instructional practices and strategies for ELL students is described in the reviewed literature. These trends suggest that secondary schools face special challenges since they have a larger share of children who are first-generation immigrants. Many foreign-born adolescents enroll in U.S. public schools with little English proficiency or with relatively low level of formal schooling in their home countries. These foreign-born youth often have difficulty making the academic transition into U.S. secondary schools. Moreover, foreign-born children have been raised in a different school system, so their prior schooling experience may also affect their transition into U.S. schools as well (Calderon, Slavin, & Sanchez, 2010; Capps et al., 2005). This fact puts newly arrived adolescents immediately disadvantaged upon enrollment in the U.S. schools.

As the newcomer programs continue to develop, certain issues will need to be further investigated such as: evaluating native language proficiency level, exploration of

background characteristics, integrating the content areas for more effective instruction, newcomer programs as a safe haven, investigation of linguistic diversity immigrant groups, and evaluating the program effectiveness. As the population of students change, the educational system must reform programs and practices to meet the diversity of the student population.

Evaluating native language proficiency level. Developing native language skills increases the likelihood that ELL children will also develop proper English speaking skills (August, Calderon, & Carlo, 2002). Cummins (1984) argued the bilingual education debate is more strongly based on political rather than pedagogical considerations (p. 39). Auerbach (1993) also asserted that monolingual ESL instruction has as much to do with politics rather than pedagogy (p. 29). Research shows that two-way/dual bilingual education is a theoretically sound and effective way to educate not only language-minority students but also language-majority students who have educational deficiencies. These types of bilingual programs in general are based on the pedagogical premise that children's acquisition of basic literacy skills and their comprehension of academic content is made easier if the instruction is provided in a language that is comprehensible to them or in their native language. Moreover, native language literacy and academic skills are an important support for the development of literacy and academic skills in the second language. A growing body of research of both national and international in scope, found that quality bilingualism promotes academic success with the added bonus that all students become bilingual (August & Hakuta, 1997; Bankston & Zhou, 1995; Cummins, 1979, 1981, 1986, 1989, 1996, 2000; Feliciano,

2001; Fernández & Nielson, 1986; Green, 1998; Krashen, 1982, 1999; Krashen & Biber, 1988; Lutz, 2004; Nielson & Lerner, 1986; Peal & Lambert, 1962; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Ramírez, Yuen, & Ramey, 1991; Rumberger & Larson, 1998; Stanford Working Group, 1993; Willig, 1985; Zhou & Bankston, 1998).

While students who lack English proficiency (LEP) but may have proficiency in another language suffer low levels of educational achievement and attainment (Clifton et al., 1986; Donato et al., 1991; Warren, 1996), immigrant students with high-level dual-language competency, including fluent English proficiency, have been found to experience relatively high levels of academic success (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Portes & Rumbaut, 1996; Rumberger & Larson, 1998; White & Glick, 2000; Zhou & Bankston, 1998). Research also shows older children (ages 8 to 12) who have had several years of native language schooling are the most efficient acquirers of a second language. Teenagers with solid native language schooling have equally efficient acquisition of a second language at school, except for pronunciation (Collier, 1989, p. 517). However, the goals of bilingual programs “continue to view English as the primary goal and oftentimes as the only valid medium of instruction” (Perez, 1993, p.131). Therefore, research is being ignored and native language instruction is not being utilized in classrooms to ensure the most effective learning of English literacy for ELLs.

Exploration of background characteristics. Because of the various life experiences and beliefs, cultural communication patterns, and language and educational traditions that accompany immigrant students, their increased enrollment in U.S. public schools has brought increased pressure for educational reform (Rong & Preissle, 2009).

The Bilingual Education Act intends to promote language minority children's achievement and focuses on developing their native and English language proficiency. Despite the Bilingual Education Act's efforts, state and local level policies and NCLB requirements rush ELL students to acquire English even though they typically have limited years of language learning. Forcing immigrant students to participate in high-stakes testing before they are ready increases their dropout rates. Evaluating them based on sheer years of their presence in this country pushes newly arrived youths away from schools.

Newcomers face challenges particular to the social and cultural dislocations inherent in the process of migration (Ko & Perreira, 2010; Sluzki 1979; Suárez- Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001) and the challenges of language acquisition. Wright and Li (2008) concluded that “a reasonable policy must take into consideration students’ prior learning, including: (a) the quality of education in their home country, (b) their opportunity to learn content which U.S. born students had access to in their classrooms, and (c) how language barriers may prevent equal access to core curriculum instruction once they arrive in the U.S.” (p. 262). Schools have to understand the educational background of immigrant language minority students in their home country. This includes the extent to which students had the opportunity to learn the same academic content as their grade-level peers. Students should only be held accountable for that which they had a reasonable opportunity to learn (Wright & Li, 2008).

Integrating the content areas for more effective instruction. Literacy skill development is one critical area of educational support, especially literacy strategies that

are developmentally appropriate for adolescents (Hamayan, 1994; Moran, Stobbe, Tinajero, & Tinajero, 1993; Olsen, Jaramillo, McCall-Perez, & White, 1999). The underlying assumption of language policy is without achieving the acquisition of English language, ELLs are unable to access academic content areas. However, framing of ELLs' primary language learning as a problem may not be in the best interest of ELLs with limited cognitive and English language acquisition, especially when language policies assume achieving English language proficiency is the solution for ELLs' learning obstacles and low academic performance. In fact, ELLs need access to academic English and support to assure the development of full academic language proficiency and other content areas. The design of ELLs' learning has often focused only on language acquisition and not attended to subject-area learning (Callahan, 2005; Gándara & Rumberger, 2009; Gándara, Moran & Garcia, 2004).

Wright and Li (2008) provide suggestions for changes to U.S. federal policy that accounts for the linguistic demands posed by mathematics tests and provides immigrant students opportunities to learn expected math content before taking high-stakes tests. Understanding more about ELL students' learning practices and outcomes of English proficiency and other content areas performance will contribute to the current discussion of how to increase educational access for immigrant students. Language learning alone is inadequate to ensure newly arrived high school students' success in school.

Newcomer programs as a safe haven. The educational needs of ELLs is tied to assistance in adapting to American schools and their new community. Many researchers have reported newcomer students feel the isolation and confusion in their schools upon

arrival especially for the first year (Cheng, 1998; Dufresne & Hall, 1997; Moran, et al., 1993; Olsen, et al., 1999; Pilon, 1993; Te, 1997). Newcomer students are linguistically isolated because they do not yet speak English and may only speak a native language which is not spoken by others at that school, in particular the educators. They are culturally isolated because as immigrants they are not familiar with American social customs, school practices, and attitudes of teenagers. Some students have felt ridiculed by English speakers because of their lack of English proficiency, and unfortunately shun their native language, resulting in an unnecessary loss of a potential bilingual resource (Olsen, 2000).

Many schools assign their newcomer students to existing school programs with the goal of providing students with access not only to the grade-level curriculum but also to peers with higher levels of English language proficiency. Submersing immigrant students into mainstream classrooms without any access to their first language or culture can bring negative consequences both academically and socially (Cummins, 1988). Such harsh experiences may hinder newcomer students developing relationships with their teachers and peers. As a result, newcomer students might feel isolation in their first U.S. schooling experiences because they face challenges comprehending instruction and connecting with others.

Recently arrived high school student populations with limited literacy backgrounds are at greater risk for school failure than other immigrant populations. Many immigrants arrive to this country, but each has its unique culture and language. Some immigrants were driven out by the war. Many of them evacuated and arrived in the U.S. as refugees

(Kitano & Daniels, 1995). They encountered the psychological difficulty associated with the refugee experience and the language barrier. These immigrants' experience differs entirely from voluntary immigrants before (Takaki, 1998). Due to concerns regarding the negative effects of direct program placement on newly arrived newcomer student populations, schools around the U.S have turned to alternative schooling options, like the newcomer program or school to meet unique needs of recently arrived immigrant youth (Feinberg, 2000; Jiang & Kuehn, 2001).

Newcomer programs can better provide newly arrived immigrants' educational and psychological foundation. These programs provide warm and sheltering spaces in which to care for and educate the newcomer students (Feinberg, 2000). While there are many variations, newcomer programs are typically one-year or two- year programs designed to offer a welcoming educational environment for students who are new to the U.S. The goals of these programs are to foster rapid language acquisition (in English, or sometimes in both English and the native language), acculturation, and self- confidence about schooling before students begin attending mainstream schools (Short, 2002).

On the other hand, many newcomers enter highly segregated, high-poverty, linguistically isolated schools (Orfield & Lee, 2006) that provide far from optimal conditions. Struggles with English are well presented in our data; only 7% of the participants developed academic English skills comparable to those of their native-born English-speaking peers after an average of 7 years in the United States (Carhill et al., 2008; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2008). In many cases newcomer immigrant children in this study have almost no meaningful contact with English-speaking peers. More than one

third of the immigrant students reported that they had little opportunity to interact with peers who were not from their country of origin, which clearly contributed to their linguistic isolation (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2008). When English learners are not able to participate and compete in mainstream classrooms, they often read more slowly than native speakers and struggle with double entendres and with cultural references. Their lack of language skills may also prevent them from being easily engaged in academic contexts and from performing well on “objective” assessments that are designed for native English speakers (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2008). Thus, this study found limited English proficiency to correlate with lower trajectories of academic performance. Some researchers also claimed that newcomer programs are too isolating and do not provide enough opportunity for students to interact with English speaking peers (Feinberg, 2000). Furthermore, especially when newcomer programs are not bilingual, students may not be given the exposure and access to core curriculum courses and activities open to students in regular schools. This phenomenon has serious legal implications in terms of the nation’s desegregation laws as well. In the discussion of positive and negative consequences of newcomer programs, further research is needed to evaluate the effects of program placement of newcomer programs or schools in order to figure out what programs can best serve newly arrived youth.

Investigation of linguistically diverse immigrant groups. Most research on specific immigrant populations has significant gaps in the literature. Although research has shifted away from a White centered worldview to comparison of White students’ experiences to that of African Americans, the substantial ethnic differences within certain

immigrants is not readily recognized. Unfortunately research does not provide adequate knowledge about racial/ ethnic gaps that exist in many arenas, most notably education and student educational outcomes. The unsystematic categorization of ethnic groups (e.g., Native American, Asian American immigrants, Black Americans, etc.) masks differing cultural beliefs, values, and ways of being and thus generates an ambiguous pathway for educators and policy makers to adequately assess programs and better serve specific populations (Nicolas, DeSilva, & Rabenstein, 2009).

Education broadly has gained increasing attention in curriculum and instruction and multicultural education and particularly around issues of disaggregated data of ethnicity. MacDonald (2004) reported the high school completion rates among these subgroups of Hispanic population have noted significant differences in educational outcome within the Hispanic population: Mexicans, Puerto Rican, Cubans, Central, and South Americans immigrants. In addition, according to Lee (1996) the model minority stereotype has been used as a “hegemonic device” offering the political and public policy realm ramification for silencing issues of Asian subgroups and deny the actual realities of “Asian American experiences: underachievement, illiteracy, poverty, and endurance from racism” (p. 6). Due to a lack of disaggregated data, statistics on Asian American performance tend to reflect East Asians’ academic successes and obscure the scholastic struggles of groups such as Southeast Asians and Pacific Islanders. For example, about 50 percent of Cambodians and Laotians and about 60 percent of Hmong age 25 and older who live in the United States have less than a high school education (Reeves & Bennett, 2004). Asian/American is a label attached to many drastically different subgroups, and

the data shows adverse academic achievement outcomes across several subgroups. It obscures the fact that some Asian/American students are not doing well in school (Palumbo-Liu, 1999).

According to NCLB, the law authorizes recently arrived immigrant LEP students to take native language assessments or other linguistically accommodated assessments aligned to state academic standards.” The individual has been free to select whatever language best meets his or her needs. “ For instance, there are only two language versions for LEP students in Texas, in English for all types of test formats and Spanish only for Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) assessment, respectively (Texas Education Agency, 2004). In fact, while the vast majority of LEP students are Spanish-speakers, the remaining students in the LEP population speak several different languages such as Chinese, Khmer, Arabic, Vietnamese, Pashto, Navajo, Hindi, or Urdu etc (Texas Education Agency, 2008). It is noteworthy that Asian Americans students come from different countries of origin and speak different languages. Understanding the achievement of Hispanic population subgroups and how ethnic groups of Asian immigrant students perform within newcomer programs or ESL programs will provide educators and policymakers essential information for serving newcomer students in a right way.

Disaggregating data according to ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, and home language is constantly reported when comparing academic achievement (Brandon, 2001; McKinnon & Bennett, 2005; Paisano, 1993). NCLB requires data reporting by subgroups. However, the achievement of large numbers of majority student groups can

mask the differential achievement of minority groups, presenting a universal picture of achievement even for the seemingly invisible students. Also, the specificity of the NCLB subgroups does not allow for the examination of data based on immigrant status. Limited research has been conducted on these disaggregated immigrant groups to understand the immigrant students' educational experience and performance in relation to other immigrant groups. Little research exists about more finely disaggregated data, i.e., data regarding the academic achievement of elementary and secondary immigrant students. If research continues to be conducted on broad racial groups, important ethnic group differences may go undetected.

Evaluating the program effectiveness. Secondary newcomer students' learning needs are always viewed as a portion of ELLs' learning issues. No specific policy is available to address challenges of their schooling. The creation of a newcomer program or school relies on a local school district's available resources. Ruiz-de-Velasco and Fix (2000) found a serious disparity between distribution of language resources and the grade-level distribution of immigrant children. The percentage of foreign-born immigrants who attend secondary schools is higher than the percentage of those who attend elementary schools as described above, yet the most funding for language programs were concentrated at the elementary level. Therefore, language programs at the secondary level have been minimal to meet the needs of the immigrant students. Content-based ESL classes attempt to serve all ELL students, but have not met with adequate success to help all ELL students (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2004). As a result, a significantly smaller proportion of secondary school English language learners receive

language support services (e.g., ESL or bilingual education), creating a mismatch between the number and needs of immigrant middle and high school students and the resources targeted for them.

Although much of information advocates about newcomer programs that are effective interventions, only few evaluative information is available. Evaluation is complicated by the fact that school districts often do not tag newcomer students distinctly in their accountability databases so their progress can be tracked in the program and after they exit. This makes comparisons with other English language learners, who have not been in a newcomer program, impossible. Evaluations should be conducted to help policymakers assess the effectiveness of these programs, and assist administrators in comparing academic progress in different program models and tailoring designs for different groups of newcomers (Morse, 2005).

The Effects of Language Programs

Poor performance because of poor academic preparation. Immigrant students face unique challenges related to language proficiency, cultural and social adaptation and poverty (Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco, & Todorova, 2008). Many of them have had little schooling, even in their native language, or have suffered educational disconnections (Cummins, 1981). Newcomer students have to study the required material for preparing high stakes tests (Rong & Preissle, 2009). They have a very limited time to learn English (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2008). Secondary immigrants have struggled catching up to their native English-speaking peers before graduation. They encounter challenges reaching English language proficiency in a short amount of time and

completing the required coursework to take the exit examination (Thomas & Collie, 1995). While ELLs spend so much of their high school career learning English, they do not make as much progress in their subject area classes as much as their do in English (Callahan, 2005).

Factors of Affecting Academic Achievement

Children arrive in this country at different ages and learn at varying rates. Without understanding ELLs' characteristics in terms of their learning background educators cannot make right decisions for placing those students in different school settings. ELLs' prior experiences provide essential information for preparing and planning for ELLs' schooling in the US. Limited formal schooling and low print literacy presents one of the greatest challenges to schools today because these characteristics often accompany weak native language literacy and school readiness skills. Many immigrant students struggle to succeed in the American educational system, performing poorly on such academic indicators as achievement tests, grades, dropout rates, and college attendance (Gndara & Contreras, 2008). As a result, information for the ELLs' placement should not only evaluate their English proficiency but also include their knowledge and skills of their home countries, so ELLs can be placed in the right schooling context. The explanations of influences of students' academic performance associated with several variables are described as follow: ESL & Newcomer Programs, length of residence in the U.S, SES, gender, ethnicity, country of origin, graduation rates, and grade retention.

This section provides a synthesis of the literature and identifies key factors affecting the achievement of urban high school newcomer students. The following

subsections introduce detailed descriptions of these selected variables and explore the relationship between the variables and students' academic achievement. The review of the literature of current research finding on students academic performance intertwined with selected variables offers a conceptual framework that provides a foundation for the research questions, and the methodology driving this study..

Student characteristics and academic achievement. ESL, newcomer programs and academic achievement. Callahan, et al. (2009) found that first-generation ESL students fare poorly in schools enrolling relatively few immigrants. Immigrant students were not served well in low-immigrant-concentration schools. Not all schools provide services for all students in need although the law requires doing so. However, researcher also found many of first generation immigrant youths' outperform their peers in multiple indicators of academic progress in school (Callahan, Wilkinson, & Muller, 2010). Short and Boyson (2004) also concluded that not all newcomer programs are as successful as others through the investigation of newcomer programs and schools in four school districts across the country.

Courses enrollment, completion and academic achievement. Callahan et al., (2009) report first generation students placed in ESL were significantly less likely to enroll in Algebra II and Chemistry, while mainstreamed matched counterparts with a similar propensity for ESL placement on average completed at least one of these two college preparatory requirements. First generation ESL students also demonstrate significantly lower rates of overall preparation for college.

Length of residence in the U.S and academic achievement. The length of

immigrant student residence in the United States is paradoxically associated with declining academic achievement and aspirations (Fuligini, 1997; Hernández & Charney, 1998; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Steinberg, Brown, & Dornbusch, 1996; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 1995). Research shows that it takes five to seven years to develop academic proficiency in the second language, English (Brisk, 2006; Cummins, 1981; Krashen, 1983; Muñoz, Cummins, Alvarado, & Ruef, 1984). Studies also indicated that five to seven years is a more realistic time frame for learners to reach levels comparable to their native English speaking peers (Collier, 1989; Krashen et al., 1982). Furthermore, Collier (1995) proposes non-native speakers of English with no schooling in their first language take seven to ten years or even more to reach age and grade-level norms of their native English-speaking peers. Immigrant students who have had two to three years of first language schooling in their home country before they come to the U.S. take at least five to seven years to reach native English-speaking like performance.

Within ethnic groups, researchers have noted significant differences in educational outcomes across generations. Among immigrants, Hirschman (1996) finds that length of residence in the U.S is associated with greater student enrollment. Alba and Nee's (2003) empirical research supports this perspective and has found considerable educational gains across generations in the USA. However, other research indicates that immigrants are not necessarily at an academic disadvantage relative to those born in the USA. Gibson and Bejínez (2002) found "despite their high risk for school failure, migrant students persevere in school in significantly higher numbers than non-migrant Mexican classmates", in part because of special programs directed to children of migrant

workers such as the Migrant Education Program (p. 155).

Immigrant adolescents are at least as likely as their native-born peers to be enrolled in high school and longer duration in the U.S schools is associated with lower educational outcomes (Hirschman, 2001; Rumbaut, 1997). In a longitudinal study, Contreras (2002) found that immigrant children were as likely as native-born children to be in primary and middle schools, but were less likely to attend high school. On arrival to the United States immigrants have relatively high grade point averages (GPA), but GPAs tend to decrease for some ethnic minority students after living in the country for a certain number of years (Suarez- Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2006).

Collectively, these studies suggest that the educational experiences, and consequently educational achievements, of some immigrant youths from different specific cultural backgrounds are different from those of native born American children. Given that some immigrant youths, dealing with language barriers and acculturation issues, are twice as likely as native born youth to live at or below the poverty line, SES (which is often directly related to school-related financial resources) often provides a better understanding of the notable attainment gap among various ethnic groups (Schnepf, 2007).

Parents' Social Economic status (SES) and academic achievement. In general, schools with higher percentages of ELLs have lower achievement rates, lower educational achievement, and higher dropout rates for ELLs than native English speakers (NAEP, 2006). According to the American Community Survey (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2006), foreign-born immigrants are 1.6 times more likely to live in poverty than

native (22.9 % vs. 14.4 %). The importance of family socio-economic status in educational outcomes of youth has been well documented in sociological research (Astone & McLanahan, 1991; Conley, 1999; Downey, 1995; Featherman & Hauser, 1976; Lareau, 2000, 2003; Portes & Truelove, 1987; Portes & McLeod, 1996; Warren, 1996). Asian American students perform better on school achievement tests than other ethnic groups due to higher parents' SES (Conell, Spencer, & Aber, 1994; Cranes, 2001; Desimone et al., 2004; Finn, 1998). Gndara and Contreras (2008) reported that successful Latino students are from better-resourced families with highly educated parents who can cultivate their literacy skills early. Needless to say, these students gain higher GPAs, have taken more Advanced Placement courses and participate in more extracurricular activities than their less academically successful counterparts. They also have adult and peer support for their academic pursuits and have participated in enrichment or other kinds of programs offered at school or in the community.

In contrast, Lutz (2007) found that low socioeconomic status is the primary contributor to Mexican Latinos' high-school non-completion. Mexican Latinos', the largest proportion of the immigrant population, high-school completion rates are significantly lower than non-Hispanic whites. This issue may be particularly important with respect to the educational attainment of Latinos, who tend to have higher instances of living in poverty than other groups. Immigrant youths are twice as likely as native-born youths to come from families with a low SES (Hook, 2003). In addition, Latino students are many more likely come from homes where parents do not speak English well or do not speak English at all and where parental educational attainment is low. More

than 40 percent of Latina mothers lack even a high school diploma, compared with only 6 percent of white mothers; and only about 10 percent of Latina mothers have a college degree or higher, compared with almost one-third of white mothers (Gndara & Contreras, 2008). It is difficult for parents to impart to their children experiences and knowledge that they do not have. These parents are often not able to assist their children to access and navigate a complex, foreign, and sometime unsympathetic educational system (Gndara & Contreras, 2008; Surez-Orozco et al., 2008). Although Latino students may come from loving homes, limited education and resources do affect their education outcomes. There is no better predictor of how well children will fare in school than parents' education attainment (Murnane, Maynard, & Ohls, 1981).

Lareau (2003) found that parents with lower-SES usually have low-waged positions. These parents have limited time to get effectively involved with their children because they often lack job benefits: paid leave and flexible working schedules. As it turns out, lower-SES parents have to work longer than high SES parents. This designates that cultural capital affects the level and substance of parental involvement. That is, high SES parents employ greater cultural capital: communication skills, educational experience, and stronger social capital (social network and collaboration) to amplify the effect of parent involvement (McNeal, 1999; Horvat, Weininger, & Lareau, 2003; Reay, 1999; Well & Crain, 2000). Given that some immigrant youths, dealing with language barriers and acculturation issues, are twice as likely as native born youths to live at or below the poverty line, SES (which is often directly related to school-related financial resources) often provides a better understanding of the notable attainment gap among

various ethnic groups (Schnepf, 2007).

Gender and academic achievement. Gender has been shown to be related to the educational achievement of youths. In recent years, research has demonstrated significant educational attainment gaps between males and females in the United States with males consistently doing worse in school than females (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Rong & Brown, 2001; Suarez-Orozco & Qin-Hilliard, 2004). The American Council on Education (2006) conducted surveys and found that females earn the majority of both associate and bachelor's degrees. A similar trend is noted for ethnic minorities, where 15% of women and 9% of men earn bachelor degrees.

Comparable gender differences are also found among male and female immigrant youths. In their longitudinal study, Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco (2006) found that, at the high school level, female immigrants outperformed their male counterparts in terms of GPA. Although the GPA of both groups dropped after living in the United States for five years, male immigrants' GPAs dropped more dramatically than females. Thus, gender differences in the educational attainment of youths, including minority and immigrant youths should be monitored.

Ethnicity and academic achievement. Literature on educational achievement has consistently documented racial differences in educational attainment (e.g., Campbell, Hombo, & Mazzeo, 2000; Coleman & Hoffer, 1987; Contreras, 2002; Kao & Thompson, 2003; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez- Orozco, 2006). Research has documented notable differences in the educational performance and attainment of Black and White students across the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) subjects of reading, and

mathematics. Studies present black students tend to earn lower grades than their white peers (Campbell, Hombo, & Mazzeo, 2000; Educational Trust, 2003; National Center for Education Statistics, 2003). However, race is a social construct (Helms, Jernigan, & Mascher, 2005); it is unclear whether race should be used to explain the gap where students from ethnic minority backgrounds tend to have lower levels of attainment in comparison with their White peers in educational attainment among youths (Singham, 2003).

Country of origin and academic achievement. The substantial ethnic differences within the Latino population with respect to educational outcomes need to be recognized. What is often lost in research that lumps together all students who identify as Hispanic or Latino is the relatively low level of educational achievement and attainment of Mexicans and the considerably higher levels of educational achievement and attainment of Cubans (Lewis Mumford Center, 2001). Because the group encompasses a wide variety of people of different migration and ethnic histories, there is a broad range of educational background characteristics spanning mean levels of education that are lower than Mexicans to levels that are higher than Cubans (Lewis Mumford Center, 2001). MacDonald (2004) presented the high-school completion rates of Latinos and non-Hispanic whites by group and indicated that 88.7 percent of non-Hispanic whites had completed high school in 2002, while only 57 percent of the Hispanic population had done so. However, when she broke the Hispanic population into ethnic subgroups she found that 50.6 percent of Mexicans, 66.8 percent of Puerto Ricans, 70.8 percent of Cubans, 64.7 percent of Central and South Americans, and 74 percent of other Hispanics

had completed high school. While in these data no group had an equivalent rate of high-school completion as non-Hispanic whites, these percentages underscore the ethnic variation within the larger ‘Hispanic’ category with respect to educational achievement (Lutz, 2007).

Graduation Rate and Academic Achievement. States have increasingly linked student performance on standardized tests to high school graduation, teachers are tending to teach to tests, and students are evaluating their own abilities as per their test scores (Conley, 2003). One major challenge under NCLB is that as students gain English proficiency, they exit the LEP subgroup. Thus, the most proficient students exit each year, and new LEP students enter each year. Historically, when LEP students have improved their language skills, they have been removed from the LEP category and are no longer tracked, making it impossible to demonstrate progress (Short, 2003). Moreover, the LEP graduation rate does not account for those who already exit the LEP category. While the dropout rates of immigrant students increase, the graduation rates may be higher because of the reduction of total population of increase students (Heilig & Darling-Hammond, In Press).

Grade retention and academic achievement. The assumption of retention is that students are more likely to succeed if they have prerequisites knowledge and skills before they move to next grade. On the other hand, researches found that late grade retention increases significantly the likelihood of older students’ dropping out (Jacob & Lefgren, 2009; Temple, Reynolds, & Ou, 2004). Many newcomer immigrant children are overage for their grade level because of schooling interruptions or retention; in many student

populations, being more than one year over age foreshadows later dropout (Ripple & Luthar, 2000). The newcomer students' high dropout rates and underperformance on assessments clearly indicate that gaps in language and academic content knowledge exist between newcomers and their native English-speaking classmates who have been in U.S. schools for all their educational lives. Bridging these gaps in the newcomer students' educational backgrounds is an important area for attention (Olsen, Jaramillo, McCall-Perez, & White, 1999) and has prompted educators and researchers to identify student-specific needs that programs should address.

The existing literature indicates that the above described variables are strongly related to student academic achievement, particularly the achievement of urban high school newcomer students. Taken together, these variables offer a conceptual framework for examining the impact of various programs on this student population.

Identification and Program Placement

Current identification measures of ELLs do not often provide the requisite information for accurate student placement. As discussed, issues such as native language proficiency, age of enrollment in U.S. schools, educational background, and mobility all affect literacy development, but are seldom elicited by home language surveys or language proficiency tests. Language proficiency tests have some limitations as well. Not only are they one-shot measures, but most districts do not include assessments in a student's home language. Yet, measures of native language oral and literacy proficiency are strong indicators of English literacy development (August & Shanahan, 2006; Genesee et al., 2006).

This dissertation sought to provide insight into four research questions that address the influence of newcomer programs or schools on the achievement of urban high school recently arrived immigrant students' learning opportunities. The study involved an examination of the relationship between educational academic achievement and individual factors, including length of residence in the U.S., SES, gender, race, and country of origin in Texas schools. Specifically, the research questions guiding this study included: 1) How do newly arrived youth students enrolled in newcomer programs, schools, and those enrolled in traditional English as a Second Language (ESL) programs differ with regard to characteristics, such as race, gender, socioeconomic status (SES), course completion, grade retention, and language spoken at home?, 2) How do the differences in characteristics of newly arrived youth students relate to grade retention?, 3) What is the relationship between the growth in academic achievement and newly arrived youth students' demographic characteristics while enrolled in different programs?, and 4) What kinds of learning opportunities and educational supports are provided by traditional ESL programs, newcomer programs, and newcomer schools for newly arrived youth students in northern and central Texas?

Immigrants arrive from widely diverse source of countries, and are increasingly likely to resettle in nontraditional states and in rural communities, areas that often have the least experience and/or infrastructure to help students learn English and adapt to their new schools and neighborhoods. In order to help newly arrived high school students with old age of arrival in U.S. schools, low levels of formal schooling, low literacy in their native language, and cultural and communication barriers, and to help schools respond to

large numbers of newly arrived youth, understanding how schools have received and served newly arrived youth students provided abundant information for assisting the naïve schools to help their immigrant students' transition smoothly.

Chapter Three: Research Design and Methodology

High school immigrant youth who arrive in the country knowing very little or no English are often placed into ESL programs (Boyson & Short, 2003), while only a limited amount of newcomer programs and schools are offered to them. The study described in this dissertation developed an understanding of the relationship between program placement policies regarding the education of newly-arrived immigrant youth and selected outcomes for these newcomers in Texas under the implementation of NCLB. This chapter introduces an intensive overview of the integration of quantitative and qualitative methods for the study. The methods and research design that were used to examine the relationship between the program placement of urban high school newcomer students and their academic success are described. Then research questions, school and district settings, participants, measures, and data analysis are discussed in the following sections.

Research Questions

In order to study the relationship between program placement policies regarding the education of recently immigrated students and selected outcomes for these newcomers in Texas, both quantitative and qualitative methods were used. Specifically, this study involved classroom observations and interviews with teachers to better understand the impact of such placement policies on learning opportunities and educational support of newly-arrived immigrant youths at three high schools as well as secondary data analysis. This research attempted to answer the following questions:

- 1) How do newly arrived youth students enrolled in newcomer programs, schools, and those enrolled in traditional English as a Second Language (ESL) programs differ with regard to characteristics, such as race, gender, socioeconomic status (SES), course completion, grade retention, and language spoken at home?
- 2) How do the differences in characteristics of newly arrived youth students relate to grade retention?
- 3) What is the relationship between the growth in academic achievement and newly arrived youth students' demographic characteristics while enrolled in different programs?
- 4) What kinds of learning opportunities and educational supports are provided by traditional ESL programs, newcomer programs, and newcomer schools for newly arrived youth students in northern and central Texas?

In addition, this study tests the following specific hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: Students in traditional ESL programs are more likely to be retained than those enrolled in newcomer programs and schools.

Hypothesis 2: Students in newcomer programs and schools is associated positively with increases in student-level academic achievement in both Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) reading and Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) mathematics as compared to those enrolled in traditional ESL programs.

Hypothesis 3: Socioeconomic status is positively related to student-level academic achievement in both TELPAS reading and TAKS mathematics.

Hypothesis 4: School academic achievement is negatively related with the proportion of Hispanics who have lower academic achievement in both TELPAS reading and TAKS mathematics.

Research Design

This study adopts a mixed-method analytic strategy (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998) in the study. The purpose of this study was to quantitatively measure and qualitatively describe the program differences and student demographics and operational measures. The rationale for utilizing of this mixing of data types, also referred to as data triangulation methodology, strengthens the validity and reliability of the study by introducing diverse research perspectives, as well as, by producing detailed comprehensive results (Creswell, 2002). In addition, based on both exploratory and confirmatory research questions in the study, this specific mixed methods design that fit a practical perspective where appropriate designs and methods are selected for answering the above stated research questions (Bryman, 2006; Teddlie & Taskakkori, 2009, 2010). Moreover, using different methods to study this particular phenomenon enabled a more comprehensive approach. The case studies can provide some of the concerns of quantitative analysis raised but were not able to address.

The goal of this study was to investigate the relationship between program placement policies regarding the education of recently immigrated students and selected outcomes for these newcomers in Texas under the implementation of NCLB. Analysis enabled the exploration of how newly-arrived adolescents' learning opportunities were structured based upon a language proficiency test as well as the exploration of the

relationship between basic disparities in grade retention and academic achievement and race, gender, SES, language spoken at home, and course completion. Classroom observations and interviews at three northern and central Texas high schools were conducted, complementing descriptive analyses, logistic regression, and multilevel regression modeling of Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) data. Both quantitative and qualitative methodologies are described in detail below.

Quantitative Analysis

To answer the first three research questions, "How do newly arrived youth students enrolled in newcomer programs, schools, and those enrolled in traditional English as a Second Language (ESL) programs differ with regard to characteristics, such as race, gender, socioeconomic status (SES), course completion, grade retention, and language spoken at home?, How do the differences in characteristics of newly arrived youth students relate to grade retention?, and What is the relationship between the growth in academic achievement and newly arrived youth students' demographic characteristics while enrolled in different programs? ", this study involved a secondary data analysis of publicly accessible data sources representing selected Texas public secondary districts, which offer newcomer programs, schools or ESL programs in Texas.

Starting with the 2006 data set, which included 4,421 newly-arrived immigrant students who were 9th graders, students were categorized according to their program placement and their TELPAS reading scores. Newcomer students' background characteristics were computed using descriptive statistics. Logistic regression was used to analyze the relationship between selected students' background characteristics and

newcomers' grade retention. In addition, the relationship between students' background characteristics and newcomers' academic achievement were examined by multilevel regression.

Data. A secondary data set was derived from multi-year, archived, aggregated campus-level information from the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) and student assessment data sets, housed by the Education Research Center at The University of Texas at Austin (the Texas ERC). The PEIMS data encompasses all data requested and received by the Texas Education Agency regarding public education including student demographic and academic performance, personnel, financial, and organizational information. The student assessment system contains TAKS and TELPAS data. The data from PEIMS includes: (a) 2006-2009 campus level student demographic data and (b) 2006-2009 campus level student assessment data.

This research began with a review of the secondary data in Texas. The analysis of data provided a cost-effective way of gaining a broad understanding of high school students' demographics. Reviewing, interpreting, and cross-analyzing the disaggregated secondary data allowed to gain a more in-depth comprehension of program placement effects on selected students' academic achievement.

Participants. From the population of students enrolled in public school in Texas, a sample ($n = 4,421$) was selected for the study. The essential student characteristics that qualified student for inclusion in this sample were: 1) the student was enrolled in one of the 518 existing Texas high schools, 2) the student was newly-arrived immigrant students who were 9th graders, and 3) the student first entered U.S. schools in 2006. The ages of

students in the sample ranged from 14 to 21 years old. The sample was 4,421 newly arrived immigrant youths including 2,018 students (46%) who had no or limited English proficiency (TELPAS reading level less than or equal level 2) and participated in traditional ESL programs (TESL), 537 students (12%) who had non- or limited English proficiency in newcomer schools (NCS), 798 (18%) students who were non- or limited English proficiency in newcomer programs (NCP), and 1,068 students (24%) in traditional ESL programs with reading proficiency level greater than 2 (TESLHR).

Measures. To test the general hypothesis of this study, the following measures for the study were selected from the previously referenced data sets from 2006-2009: (a) campus student demographic and operational measures from the Public Education Information Management System; and (b) student academic achievement measures from Student Assessment System. Table 1 includes research questions and variables for all measures created for this study. A list of criterion measures is described as follows.

Table 1

The List of Research Questions and Variables

Research Sub-questions	Demographics Gender, SES, Race	High School Immigrants' Course Completion	High School Immigrants' Language Spoken at Home	Graduation Rate	Retention /Rates	High School English Language Proficiency Assessment System Reading (TELPASR)	TAKS Mathematics (TAKSM)
Question 1: How do newly arrived youth students enrolled in newcomer programs, schools, and those enrolled in traditional English as a Second Language (ESL) programs differ with regard to characteristics, such as race, gender, socioeconomic status (SES), course completion, grade retention, and language spoken at home							
	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Question 2: How do the differences in characteristics of newly arrived youth students relate to grade retention?							
	X	X			X		
Question 3: What is the relationship between the growth in academic achievement and newly arrived youth students' demographic characteristics while enrolled in different programs?							
a.	X	X				X	
b.	X	X					X

Program placement. School-level data were calculated by aggregating data from the student-level database when possible for each school (based on the School ID). High schools which received ninth grade newly arrived immigrant youths were divided into four categories including no or limited English proficiency in traditional ESL programs (TESL), no or limited English proficiency in newcomer programs (NCP), no or limited English proficiency in newcomer schools (NCS) and high English proficiency in traditional ESL programs (TESLHR). The TESL group referred to schools that served less than 20 students and no extra language learning support. Schools offered sheltered instruction or other types of language instructional supports for newly arrived youth students were categorized into the NCP group. Schools that served newly arrived youths with no or limited English proficiency in a separated location were classified as the NCS group. Finally, the rest of newly arrived immigrant students with high English proficiency referred as the TESLHR group. This independent variable is a four-way dummy type coded variable used in this study.

Academic achievement. The dependent variables in this study were measured by two instruments, the TELPAS Grade 9th and 10th Reading Test (Spring 2007 and 2008 administration) and the TAKS Grade 9th and 10th Mathematics Test (April 2007 and 2008 administration), two state-mandated achievement examinations in Texas. The student scores in reading and mathematics with two-point designed were conducted to measure the amount of change. The growth of TELPAS reading and TAKS mathematics achievements was calculated by the 10th grade scores in 2008 which subtracted the 9th grade scores in 2007.

Grade retention. Grade retention, a dichotomous measure, was defined as students who enrolled as 9th graders in a high school in 2006 and remained enrolled for the next academic year. Newly arrived immigrant students who were retained during ninth to twelve grades were coded 1 and those not retained (continuously promoted) were coded 0. Data were based on a year-by-year comparison of individual grade placements in the fall semester of each school year.

Grade retention rate. Grade retention rate was the proportion of newly-arrived youth students required to repeat the grade in which they were enrolled the previous year. The retention rate was computed by the number of students who remained the 9th grade on a given campus divided by the total number of 9th grade newly arrived youth students.

Graduation rates. Each school's graduation rate was calculated by taking the total number of graduates on a given campus divided by the total number of students from 2007 to 2009.

Course completion. Immigrant adolescents' course completion of varied courses affects their academic achievement. Five most common courses that were completed by newly arrived youth students' first year schooling in U.S. schools were computed from the data. This variable was presented by the numbers of course completion for newly arrive immigrant youth students' first year of schooling.

Gender. The proportion of gender of students was calculated by taking the number of students on a given campus who were male or female divided by the total number of students. Females were coded 1, males 0.

Race/ethnicity. While students enrolled at schools, they reposted their ethnicity

identification. A set of dummy variables identified newly arrived immigrant students who were White, Hispanic, African American, Asian American, and American Indian.

Socioeconomic status. The definition of SES was whether students who were eligible for two categories: (1) a free or reduced price lunch, (2) not eligible. The low SES rate was the proportion of enrollment that is eligible for a free or reduced price lunch program.

Language spoken at home. Parents reported the language spoken at home for each student during the enrollment data collection while filling out the home language survey. The proportion of different language speaking groups such as Spanish, Vietnamese, Korean, English, Mandarin, Cantonese, Arabic, and French were calculated. The Other Languages category is a combination of all students who did not specify one of these eight language groups above.

Data analysis. Descriptive analyses. To address the first research question, descriptive statistics were generated, characterizing the cohort of English proficiency 9th newly-arrived students who participated in the TESL, NCP, NCS, and TESLHR programs by specific student demographic characteristics, from the PIEMS data. This first statistical analysis involved presenting differences of composition of students' characteristics with regard to race, gender, SES, grade retention rates, graduation rates, and language spoken at home for immigrant youth assigned to the TESL, NCP, NCS, and TESLHR programs though SPSS for windows, version 20. Comparing students' background results in this way allowed for a comprehensive understanding of all significant differences among the four different groups of newly arrived high school

students.

Logistic regression. To address the second research question, logistic regression was used to estimate the effects of grade retention on program placement, the TESL, NCP, NCS, and TESLHR groups, while controlling for race, gender, and SES. The very first thing was to classify the newly arrived youth individuals into retained and non-retained groups. The logistic regression model estimated the probability of an individual being retained that can be explained by a set of variables, program placement, race, gender, and SES, as explanatory variables. Thus, due to the outcome variable was a dichotomous and binary variable, logistic regression became the most appropriate statistical method for the analysis of the data.

The odd ratios are used to observe that the occurrence of any particular event will increase or decrease the probability of being retained and with what proportion as compared to the reference category. The odd ratios were defined as just two odds that are compared to determine whether one group has higher or lower odd ratios of binary outcome. A number is greater than one that means a positive association between an independent variable and the dependent variable, while a number between zero and one indicates a negative association.

Multilevel regression. To address the third research question, multilevel regression modeling techniques were used for the analysis of score changes over time because a multilevel regression allows for precise estimation of the effect of program placement between school differences in academic achievement. A multilevel regression modeling technique is intended to deal effectively with “data from nested structures (e.g.,

students nested in schools) and accounts for the interdependence of individual measures collected within the same organizational unit (e.g., students within the same school). A distinct advantage of a multilevel regression is that it partitions the variance in a dependent variable into its within- and between-school components" (Goddard, Sweetland, & Hoy, 2000, p. 694). Thus, the effect of program placement, a school level variable, occurring on only the portion of variance in student achievement can be modeled between schools while modeling the influence of students' prior academic achievement, race and ethnicity, gender, SES, and course completion without aggregating these variables to the school level.

Simultaneously, appropriately centering level 1 predictors is vital in multilevel analyses. Predictive accuracy was calculated by the grand mean, which not only facilitates the interpretation of multilevel regression results but also reduces potential problems associated with multicollinearity (Cronbach, 1987; Kreft, de Leew, & Aiken, 1995). The growth change of TELPAS reading and TAKS mathematics scores were centered at the grand mean. In other words, the individuals' score changes on the predictors became deviation scores from the entire sample mean.

The multilevel regression analyses were used to estimate the effects of program placement and perceived student background characteristics on TELPAS reading and TAKS mathematics, respectively. The fully unconditional models for TELPAS reading and TAKS mathematics determined the extent of variation between schools in student achievement. An incremental models building from null model (no predictors) to model with just student predictors were conducted. Similar to Reynolds (1992), the order of

entry was as follows: Step 1- program placement factor; Step 2 – race and ethnicity; Step 3: gender factor; Step 4 - sociodemographic factor; Step 5 - course completion factor.

These factors could be confounded with the effects of reading achievement.

A standardized measure of change in TELPAS reading between 9th and 10th grades was dependent variable for the first model. The second analysis of the growth change of TAKS mathematics score repeated the same procedure as the TELPAS reading model did. As a result, two multilevel regression models were run, regressing the two dependent variables, student score changes in TELPAS reading and TAKS math between 9th and 10th grades, on each of the student- and school-level predictors. This two-level models were performed using the SAS multilevel procedure, SAS PROC MIXED (Singer, 1998), version 9.2.

A Log Likelihood of fitted model, Akaike Information Criterion (AIC) and the Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC) statistics are used to evaluate the goodness fit of the models. When the log likelihood goes down, indicating a better fit. Both of AIC and BIC tend to descend as well. The smaller the AIC/BIC, the better fit the model provides. For the unconditional model, the AIC/BIC for reading were 1605 and -1592. The AIC/BIC for mathematics were -979 and -950, respectively.

In addition, an intra-class correlation (ICC) was computed to estimate the proportion of total of variance in the outcome that can be explained by the same unit (such as students from the same school) tends to be more alike than information from independent units (such as a data set of unrelated students). Therefore, the ICC presents the explanation of the percentage of the variation explained at student level in different

schools and at student level within the same school for TELPAS reading and TAKS mathematics scores change, respectively.

The intraclass correlation (ICC) was computed to estimate the total variance that can be explained by cluster membership within a school. The ICC in high schools was .15 for reading, meaning that 15% of the variation in the high school reading scores was between students in different schools and 85% was between students in the same school. The ICC was .47 for TAKS mathematics, meaning that 47% of the variation in the high school mathematics scores was between students in different schools and 53% was between students in the same school.

The beta (β) coefficients represent the average deviation from reading or mathematics mean associated with a 1-unit increase for each variable. In other words, are interpreted as estimates of the probability of reading and mathematics based on a one-unit change in the predictor. The full model allows predicting between-school variability in reading and mathematics achievement with academic emphasis.

Missing data. Missing data corresponds to a potentially serious methodological problem in numerous empirical researches. In this study, the percentage of missing data ranged from 22% for TELPAS reading and to 60% for the TAKS mathematics measure; the grade retention of missing data was 12%. SAS made use of deleted methods and excluded the missing cases that were not used to in the analysis.

Qualitative Analysis

To address questions in terms of the relationship between program placement policies regarding the education of newly-arrived immigrant adolescents and selected

outcomes for these newcomers in Texas, the three high schools included in this study were purposively selected based on two primary criteria: their location in densely populated newly arrived immigrant neighborhoods and the demographic features of the students enrolled at the school. Two newcomer high schools where served 100% of newly arrived immigrant student populations with no or limited English proficiency and a traditional ESL school with high percentage of students classified as English Language Learners were chosen.

Traditional ESL program and newcomer school case studies. The research used multiple methods (i.e., individual interviews, observations, archives) to explore how various types of language programs enhanced and supported newly arrived adolescents' English language and academic development. The method of inquiry included classroom interviews with teachers and archives, examining ELLs' identification, school environment, student-teacher classroom interactions, and students' learning opportunities from the traditional ESL programs and newcomer schools. Face-to-face or personal interviews are labor intensive but is one of the best ways of collecting high quality data (Mathers, Fox, & Hunn, 2002).

Classroom observations enabled the researcher to identify and understand issues and concepts which newly-arrived immigrant students had encountered. Meanwhile, visiting classrooms regularly and observing the relationship with the teachers and their students but also ultimately to develop richer and more complex portraits of individuals in this particular classroom context. Semi-structured interviews with teachers provided an exploration for issues students had faced and illustrated in depth information with regard

to teachers' experience with these students.

To address the fourth research question, "What kinds of learning opportunities and educational supports are provided by traditional ESL programs, newcomer programs, and newcomer schools for newly arrived youth students in northern and central Texas?", an archival analysis was conducted to compare criteria of newcomers' identification and learning environment among three schools (an ESL program within a large high school context, a newcomer school with ninth graders, a newcomer school with ninth and tenth graders) in northern and central Texas. The researcher also compared the students' learning opportunity differences among these three school sites through onsite observations and interviews with teachers. The design of the onsite data collection was based upon a structured observation list including observing school context and characteristics, which contained criteria used to identify ELL students, school types, physical space and building characteristics, and student demographics. Table 2 displays that the numbers of classrooms were observed and time spent among three case study sites. Each classroom observation period lasted for one to two hours. The researcher spent over six hours in 19 classrooms in three visited school sites. . The classes included English I, Reading, Algebra I, Biology, Integrated Physics and Chemistry, Chemistry, Problem Solving, and Computer Skills.

Table 2

Observation Classrooms and Hours

Classrooms/ Schools	Newcomer School North (NSN)	Newcomer School East (NSE)	Traditional ESL School (TESLS)
English I	4 Hours	2 Classrooms	16 Hours 1 Classroom 4 Hours 2 Classrooms
Reading	2 Hours	1 Classroom	16 Hours 1 Classroom 4 Hours 2 Classrooms
Algebra I	2 Hours	1 Classroom	
Biology			2 Hours 2 Classrooms 3 Hours 2 Classrooms
Integrated Physics and Chemistry	2 Hours	1 Classroom	
World Geography Studies			1 Hours 1 Classroom
Chemistry			1 Hours 1 Classroom
Problem Solving	2 Hours	1 Classroom	
Computer Skills	2 Hours	1 Classroom	
Total	14 Hours	7 Classrooms	32 Hours 2 Classrooms 15 Hours 10 Classrooms

Throughout the 19 classrooms, as a passive observer, the data collection focused on learning climate, classroom management, lesson clarity, and student engagement. Data collection enabled the gathering of documents and observations of teachers and students without disturbing the classroom situation. Attempts were made to observe the class from the margins of the classroom. Distance was maintained between the researcher and the students being observed.

Following classroom observations, teachers were invited to participate in an interview. Of the nineteen classrooms observed, sixteen teachers agreed to participate in an individual interview concerning their thoughts about newly-arrived high school students' learning and life challenges in the U.S. schools, what resources teachers have received to assist them to work with these students, and what suggestions they had for

future educators and policymakers who work with newly-arrived youth. The interviews took place in individual teachers' offices at schools, they were taped recorded and later transcribed. Table 3 explains that the numbers of interviews, gender, and language spoken at home. Sixteen high school teachers were interviewed among three high schools. Ten of the teachers were female and six were male. There were five languages spoke by these 16 teachers except English. Among the interviewed teachers were ten females and six males who spoke English, Spanish, German, Chinese, Nepalese, and Burmese.

Table 3

Interviewee Information

Teachers/Schools	School	Gender	Language Spoken	Interview Time
NSN English Teacher	NSN	Female	English, Spanish, & German	1 Hour
NSN Reading Teacher	NSN	Female	English & Chinese	1 Hour
NSN Math Teacher	NSN	Female	English & German	1 Hour
NSN Math Teacher for PELL	NSN	Male	English	15 Minutes
NSN District ESL Specialist	NSN	Female	English	1.5 Hour
NSE Principal	NSE	Female	English & Spanish	30 Minutes
NSE ESL Specialist	NSE	Female	English & Spanish	30 Minutes
NSE Reading Teacher	NSE	Female	English, Spanish, & German	15 Minutes
TESLS Principal	TESLS	Female	English	10 Minutes
TESLS Assistant Principal	TESLS	Male	English	10 Minutes
TESLS English Teacher & ESL Specialist	TESLS	Female	English & Spanish	1 Hour
TESLS Reading Teacher	TESLS	Male	English & Spanish	1 Hour
TESLS Science Teacher	TESLS	Male	English	30 Minutes
TESLS Geography Teacher	TESLS	Male	English	30 Minutes
NSN Tutor I	TESLS	Male	English & Nepalese	30 Minutes
NSN Tutor II	TESLS	Female	English & Burmese	30 Minutes
Total	16 Teachers	10 Females, 6 Males	6 Languages Use	10 Hours and 20 Minutes

Content analyses. As noted in a previous section, semi-structured general observations and open-ended interviews were conducted at each of school sites and with the research participants in an effort to develop an understanding of the school services, teachers' perceptions and experiences with newly-arrived high school youth. A structured

observation list and interview questions were developed to ensure that the same basic information was obtained from each of research sites and the informants.

The findings were analyzed using the constant comparative method. Analysis was on-going, open ended, and inductive as is appropriate for qualitative studies (Lincoln & Guba, 1986; Patton, 1990). General observations field notes were typed into pre-formatted tables to compare differences and similarities of three schools. Taped interviews were transcribed as soon after the interview as possible. After unitizing the transcripts (i.e., identifying units of information in the interview transcript), specific data units were located while the researcher identified working categories. These categories were modified as I worked through each of the interview transcripts. Comparative pattern analysis was used to illuminate recurring patterns in the data. I searched for patterns that converged into categories exhibiting "internal homogeneity" and "external heterogeneity" (Patton, 1990, p. 403).

Classroom observation information and teachers' perceptions and experiences provided complementary findings, contributing to an explanation of some of the concerns the secondary dataset analyses had raised but could not address in-depth. This use of multiple methods, also referred to as data triangulation methodology, strengthened the validity and reliability of the study by introducing diverse research perspectives, as well as, by producing detailed comprehensive results (Creswell, 2002).

Chapter Four: Results

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between program placement policies for the education of newly arrived immigrant youth and selected academic outcomes for these students in high schools located in Texas. In particular, the secondary data analysis of the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) and student assessment datasets was undertaken to analyze whether newly arrived youth in different language programs, which is based upon English language proficiency testing, varied significantly regarding background characteristics, grade retention, and their academic outcomes. Classroom observations and interviews provided an understanding of the impact of such policies on teaching and learning challenges as well as immigrant students' learning opportunities.

This chapter presents the research findings in four major sections. The first section includes a description of how newcomer students are identified and placed into one of the three different language programs for English Language Learners (ELLs) as well as a comparison of those programs, as they exist in Texas. The second section provides a demographic overview of high school ELLs in Texas as well as the specific study sample to address research question one, "How do newly arrived youth students enrolled in newcomer programs, schools, and those enrolled in traditional English as a Second Language (ESL) programs differ with regard to characteristics, such as race, gender, socioeconomic status (SES), course completion, grade retention, and language spoken at home?" The third section addresses the research question two, "How do the differences in characteristics of newly arrived youth students relate to grade retention?

“and the research questions three, “What is the relationship between the growth in academic achievement and newly arrived youth students’ demographic characteristics while enrolled in different programs? ”. This section explains the results from regression models shedding light on the relationships between student demographic characteristics, grade retention, and student academic achievement. Building on the findings presented in sections one through three, the fourth section addresses question four, “What kinds of learning opportunities and educational supports are provided by traditional ESL programs, newcomer programs, and newcomer schools for newly arrived youth students in northern and central Texas?” . Based on the data from observations and interviews at three high schools as well as the results of statistical analyses, section four illustrates the teaching challenges as well as learning opportunities and educational supports provided by traditional English as a Second Language (ESL) programs, newcomer programs, and newcomer schools from teachers’ perspectives in northern and central Texas.

A Comparison of High School Language Programs in Texas

High schools provide many different English language development programs in an attempt to meet the needs of ELLs. With the growing body of this population, the majority of programs in Texas are ESL programs because the state law does not require bilingual education at the secondary education. The following section contains an overview of how Texas high schools identified and accommodated newly arrived adolescents, at the time this study took place, and provides descriptions of three different types of language programs provided to serve this population.

Identification and classification of newly arrived youth for accommodation.

Figure1 shows that newly arrived adolescent student identification and classification process in North Independent School District (ISD), Central ISD, and Central South ISD in Texas. When recently adolescents arrive at welcome or intake centers, or enroll in their neighborhood schools within a school district, they are required to fill out a Home Language Survey (HLS). The survey alerts school personnel of the main language spoken in the student's home. If the student's first language is other than English, s/he is required to take an English language proficiency test (LAS Links or other state certified tests) at the intake center or their neighborhood schools. These students take the English language test in speaking and listening and are rated a score of Beginning, Intermediate, Advanced, or Advanced High for each individual modality. The test results provide the information necessary to determine a student's eligibility for ESL services and to classify them to language programs.

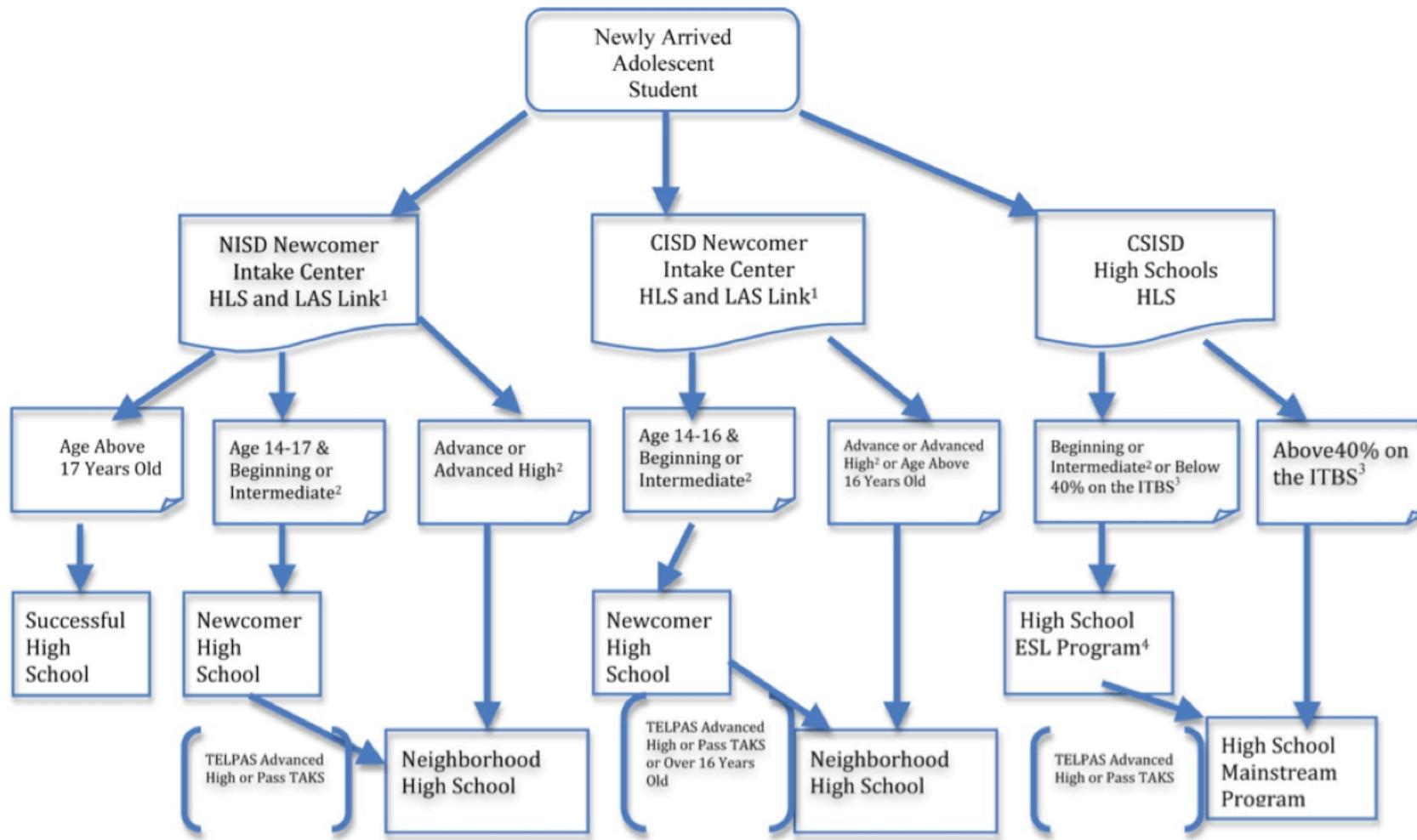


Figure 1. Newly Arrived Adolescent Student Identification and Classification Process in North Independent School District (ISD), Central ISD, and Central South ISD in Texas

Newly arrived youth, identified at either the Beginning or Intermediate levels, then go to a classroom with a teacher who has ESL certification, to an ESL program, to a newcomer program in their neighborhood school, or to a newcomer school in the school district. If they score at level three or four on the English proficiency test (i.e., Advanced or Advanced High), they have to take a standardized test such as Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS). Then, if newly arrived adolescents perform above 40% on the ITBS, they go to the regular classroom. However, if their score is below 40%, they go to the classroom where the teacher is ESL certified in an ESL program. In other words, newly arrived ELLs have to perform at advanced level or above on the English proficiency test and pass 40% of the ITBS in order to attend the mainstream classroom. Otherwise, they remain in an ESL teacher's classroom.

Newcomer high programs and schools accommodate newly arrived immigrant students who receive a language test score of Beginning or Intermediate. These newly arrived youth simply attend a newcomer program within their neighborhood school, or they attend a newcomer school housed at a separated location by a school district. Therefore, recent adolescents with no or limited English proficiency come from all high schools to one newcomer school within the same school district. Most students who attend a newcomer program or a separate newcomer school remain in the school for 1 year or less, unless the Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) recommends that they stay longer than a year. These students take the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) and their score on this exam determines if they go on to their neighborhood school.

To sum up, the program placement for newly arrived immigrant youth in Texas is based upon students' English proficiency, which is measured via English language proficiency tests that are designated by school districts. Newly arrived youths also have to take TELPAS reading, writing and Linguistically Accommodated Testing (LAT) every year. The results of these examinations allow ESL teachers to monitor the progress Limited English Proficiency (LEP) students make throughout the school year. All newcomers who fail the English language test need to take TELPAS in English reading, speaking, writing, and listening. In addition, they all have a three-year exemption from taking the TAKS. When they score Advanced High on TELPAS, they lose the exemption. Additionally, if they begin school in Texas in their junior year, then they only have a one-year exemption from taking the TAKS.

Three major types of language programs in Texas. ESL programs, a majority of language programs, can be roughly categorized into traditional ESL programs, newcomer programs and newcomer schools for serving high school ELLs in Texas. A traditional ESL program is a program in a student's neighborhood high school. This program is not designed to serve the specific needs of newcomers, because the assumptions of curriculum and instruction for high school ELLs are based on beliefs that most ELLs have literacy skills and are accustomed to U.S. high schools. ELLs are temporarily placed in grades level or grades lower than their age cohorts. The mission of ESL programs is that students learn age-appropriate content knowledge that reflects the content learning in the mainstream.

The program provides ELLs with the assistance needed to acquire language

proficiency and achieve academic success in the classroom. With the combined efforts of the classroom teacher, ESL teacher, and/or ESL tutor, students receive services according to their language needs. The high schools have dedicated ESL class periods. The current ESL programs intend to provide high school ELLs' transition into the mainstream English classes with no further instruction in the home language, although some schools provide Spanish language support when teachers are able to speak the students' native language. Students are grouped by their English language proficiency to learn English. These programs are located in students' neighborhood schools. Particularly, these programs are not designed specifically to address the unique needs of newly arrived immigrant students.

To serve newly arrived adolescents, some high schools provide a specific English language class for newly arrived immigrant students whose test results indicate a no or limited English language proficiency and others place recently immigrant students into the mainstream class with an ESL certified teacher. A program placement often depends on the numbers of newly arrived high school students, their home locations, transportation options, educational mission of the program, and the school districts' resources.

In contrast to traditional ESL programs, newcomer programs and newcomer schools have been established to bridge the gap between newcomers' needs and regular language support programs. Newcomer programs are located within the larger school setting in Texas. In newcomer programs that are provided within newcomers' neighborhood schools, newly arrived adolescents have opportunities to interact with

mainstream students for part of the day in classes other than language arts and in extracurricular activities. Many of the students who exit from this type of newcomer program remain at the same school to continue their studies in the regular language support program, which may offer ESL or bilingual services. Other students return to a different neighborhood school or attend another district school.

Similar to the nature of newcomer programs, newcomer schools are designed by districts where they find a separate location to house the language programs, serve newcomer students from more than one school, and consolidate resources. Most students who attend separate site programs remain for one year or less. Some newcomer schools allow students to remain more than one year if they are over-age for their grade level and have no or limited English proficiency, low literacy in their native language, and/or no or limited formal schooling. The goal of these programs is to develop students' English language skills, help them acculturate to U.S. schools, and make them aware of educational expectations and opportunities, etc.

Based upon the English language proficiency test, high schools identify and accommodate newly arrived youth in varied ways. Depending on numbers of newly arrived adolescents and the district's resources, the educational services and programs that these students receive vary according to those specified in the different districts. The next section provides an overview of the high school ELL population. It also reports the growth of the high school ELL population, the length of time in Texas schools, TEPLAS scores, and grade retention.

High School ELLs in Texas

Before presenting the demographics of the study sample population, it is important to understand an overview of the demographic context of the Texas ELL population. An examination of the 9-12 grade ELL population and their academic achievement overtime shows significant change in Texas high schools since 2006. More importantly, there is not only a growing body of high school ELLs but also an increasingly diverse population with regard to their educational, language, and cultural backgrounds. Yet, ELLs are often treated as a singular group, regardless of English language ability, different language spoken at home, educational experience, or current program placement. Therefore, further investigation is needed to examine how different program types and contexts impact the newly arrived youth's learning experience.

Landscapes of high school ELL population in Texas. Descriptive analyses are presented in Figures 2 to 5 to provide an understanding of demographic information of all high school ELLs in Texas. The ELL students speak around 100 different languages in Texas. Figure 2 shows a comparison of three groups of high school students, including all ELLs, LEPs, and LEPs with low English proficiency. There were around 75,000 high school ELLs, 62,000 LEPs, and 20,000 LEPs with low English proficiency in 2006. Notably, the high school student population of LEPs with lower English proficiency grew from 2004 to 2006 and decreased in 2007, while the number of all 9-12 grade ELLs and LEPs increased steadily.

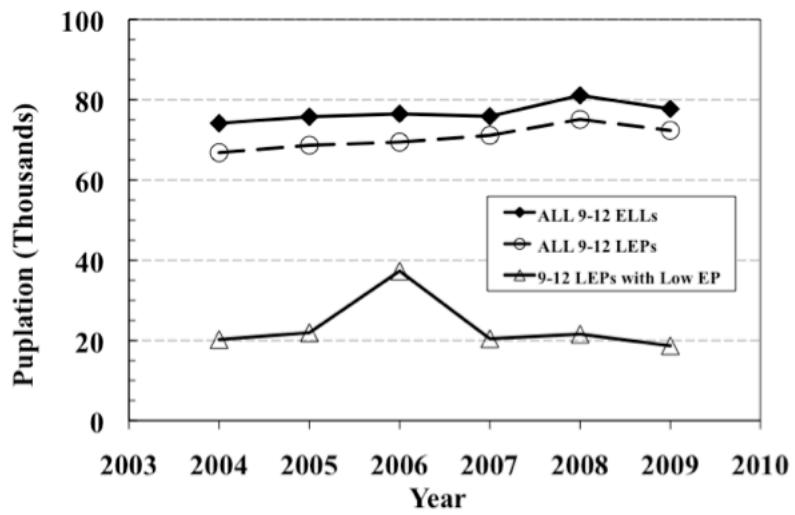


Figure 2. The 9-12 grade ELL Population Growth in U.S. high school 2004-2009

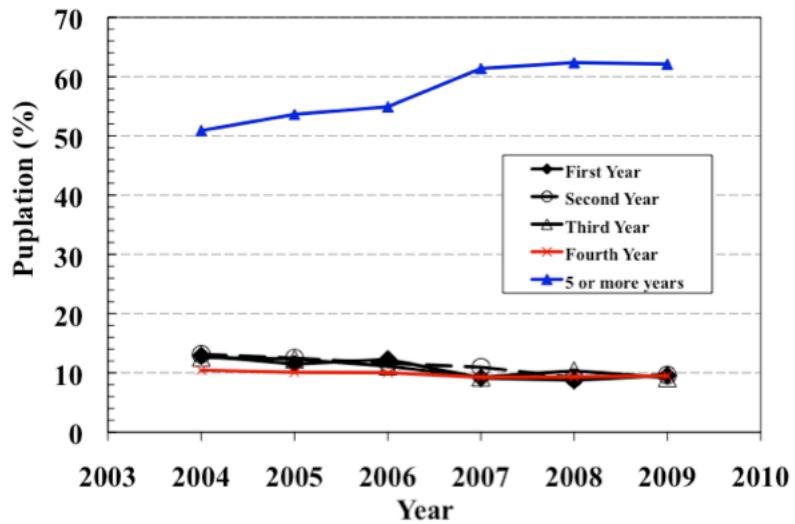


Figure 3. The Years in U.S. High Schools of 9-12 grade ELL Population in Texas 2004-2009

Figure 3 above indicates the length of years in the U.S. high schools for a percent comparison of ELLs, LEPs, and LEPs with no or limited English proficiency, first year, second year, third year, fourth year, and fifth or more than five years. According to the trends observed, around 48% of all ELLs were in U.S. schools for less than five years, while over 50% had been in the U.S. schools for five or more years. The latter group of students had continually and rapidly increased up to 60% in 2009. Around 40% of LEPs were newly arrived adolescents who had been in U.S. schools less than four years.

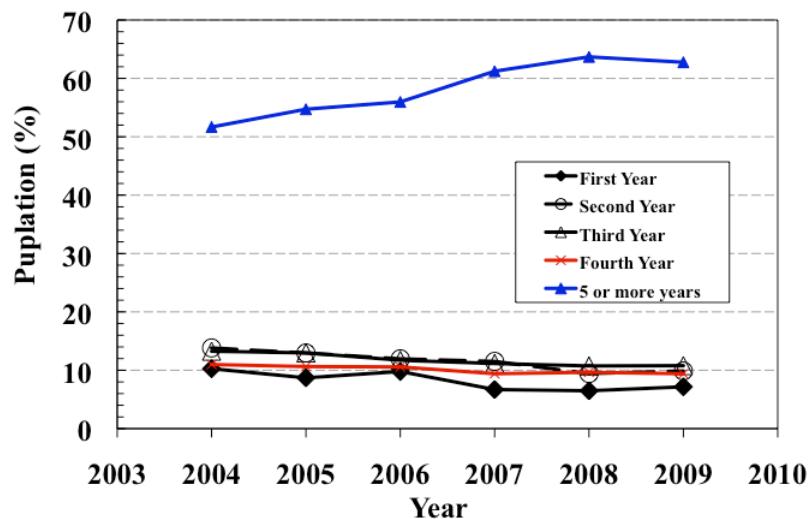


Figure 4. The Years in U.S. High Schools of 9-12 grade LEP Population in Texas 2004-2009

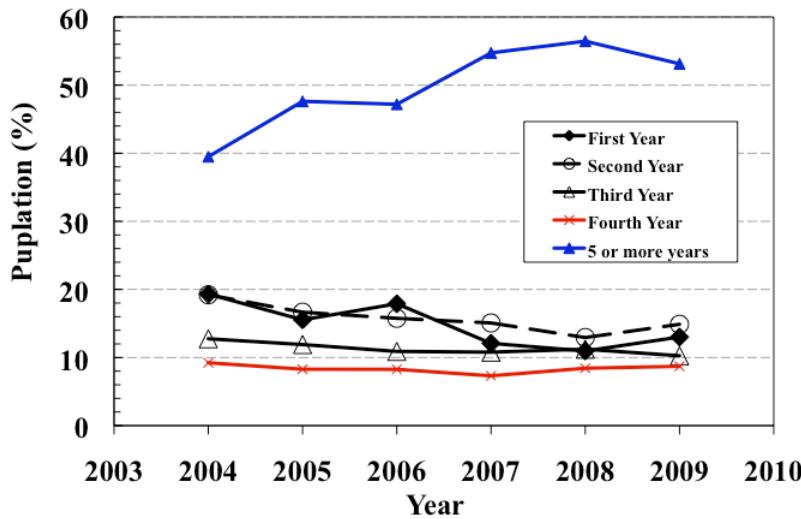


Figure 5. The Years in U.S. High Schools of 9-12 grade LEP With Low English Proficiency 2004-2009

Figures 4 and 5 show the percentages of LEPs and LEPs with low English proficiency totaling their years in U.S. high schools, respectively. Overall, 62% of the LEP and 52% of LEPs with no or limited English proficiency groups also demonstrated the same trend of the huge population of ELLs who have been in U.S. schools for more than five years in 2009. However, at the same year, there were around 48% of LEPs with no or limited English proficiency that had been in U.S. schools less than five years in comparison with 38% of newcomers in LEP groups, respectively.

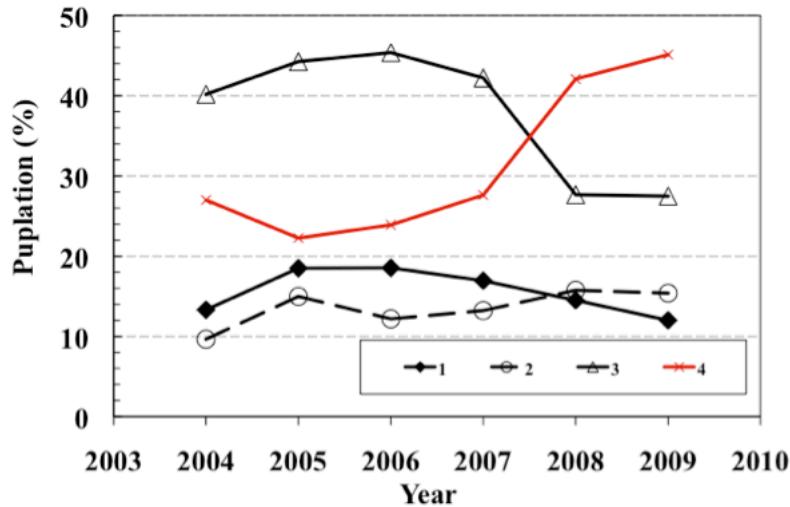


Figure 6. The TELPAS Reading Levels of ELLs in Texas High School 2004-2009

Figure 6 displays the percentage change of ELL students' TELPAS reading levels, level one as Beginning, level two as Intermediate, level three as Advanced, and level four as Advanced High in Texas high schools between 2004 and 2009. The longitudinal trend lines explain that the percentage of students who were entering schools with the higher reading level, Advanced and Advanced High, had increased gradually from level three to level four group up to 45% in 2009. Notably, the total percentage of ELLs with Advanced and Advanced High level reading had sustained around 73% overtime. In addition, 17% of the Advanced group had shifted to the Advanced High group. The percentage of ELLs with Beginning and Intermediate levels of TELPAS reading constantly remained at the same rate, 15% (that shown in Figure 6).

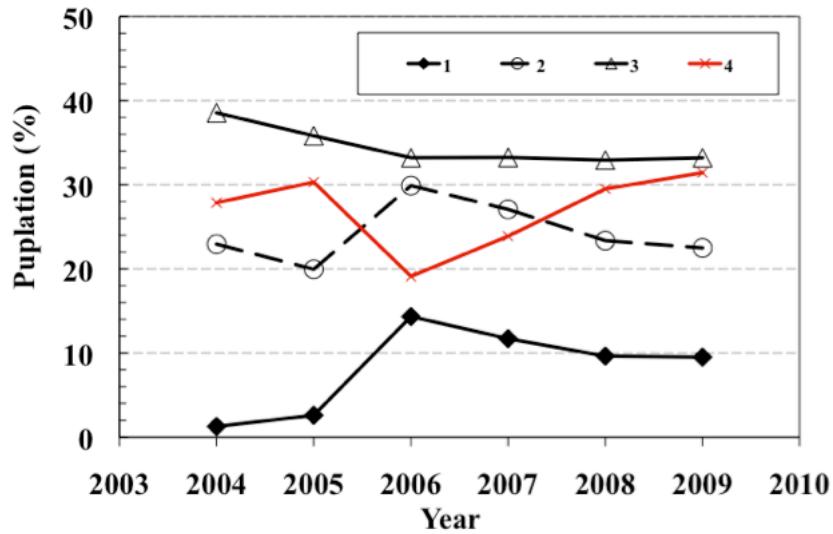


Figure 7. The TELPAS Speaking Levels of ELLs in Texas High School 2004-2009

In contrast to reading level growth patterns, Figure 7 shows ELLs' speaking progress had a similar trend with the listening progress trend (see Figure 8). The trend line of ELLs with Advanced and Advanced High level of speaking was sustained and slightly decreased later on from 68% in 2004 to 62% in 2009. However, the percentage of ELLs' listening improvement at Advanced and Advanced High level had interchanged between 20% and 30% overtime (see Figure 8). In other words, some students in the advanced group progressed to the advanced high level. The percentage of the ELL population with the Beginning and Intermediate level of TELPAS speaking made progress around 10% overtime. Figure 8 displays the increased percentage of Advanced and Advanced High level of listening from 47% in 2004 to 72% in 2009; even the ELLs with low listening levels made progress overtime.

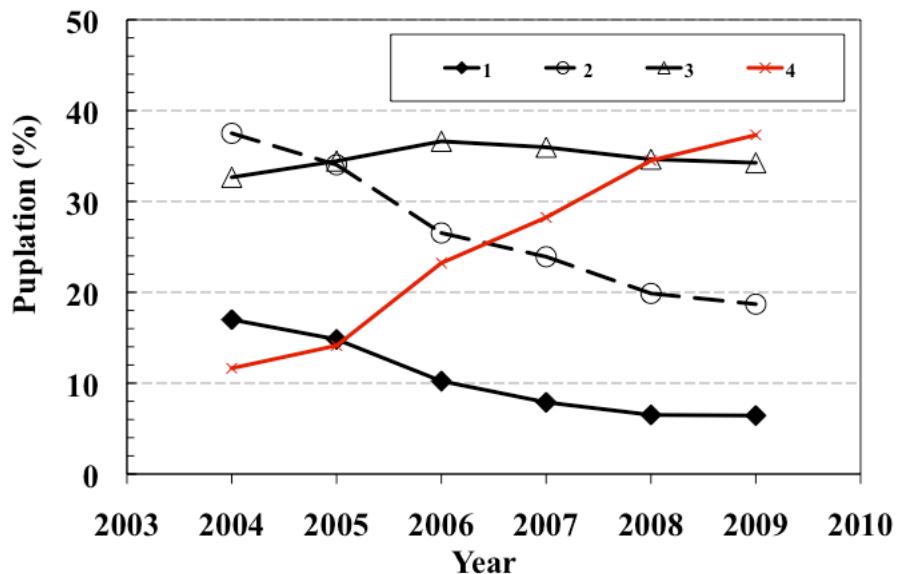


Figure 8. The TELPAS Listening Levels of ELLs in Texas High School 2004-2009

In terms of grade retention, Texas Education Agency (2011) provides a comparison of grade level retention rates from 9 to 12 grades for LEP and non-LEP students (shown in Figures 9 & 10). Across 9-12 grades of LEP and non-LEP students, the retention rates were in ninth grade LEP at 25% in 2009, in comparison to ninth grade non-LEP at 12%. Tenth grade LEP and non-LEP students were retained around 13% and 7% overtime, respectively. A similar trend applied to 11th grade LEP and non-LEP students, 13% and 5%, respectively. The retention rates decreased from the previous year in all secondary grades except the 12th grade LEP group. The retention rates of this group of students were increasing dramatically from 15% in 2004 to over 30% in 2008, in comparison to the retention rate of 12th grade non-LEP students at 6%. The percentage of 12th grade LEP and non-LEP students' retention rates were 30% and 6% in 2009.

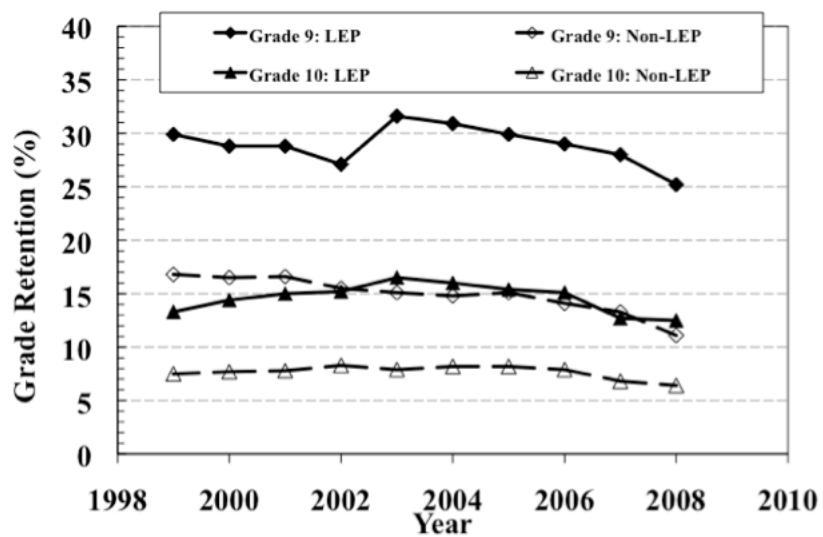


Figure 9. Grade Level Retention Rate, Grade 9-10, by LEP & Non-LEP 1999-2009 in Texas

Data Source: Texas Education Agency (2011). *Grade-Level Retention in Texas Public Schools, 2008-09*.

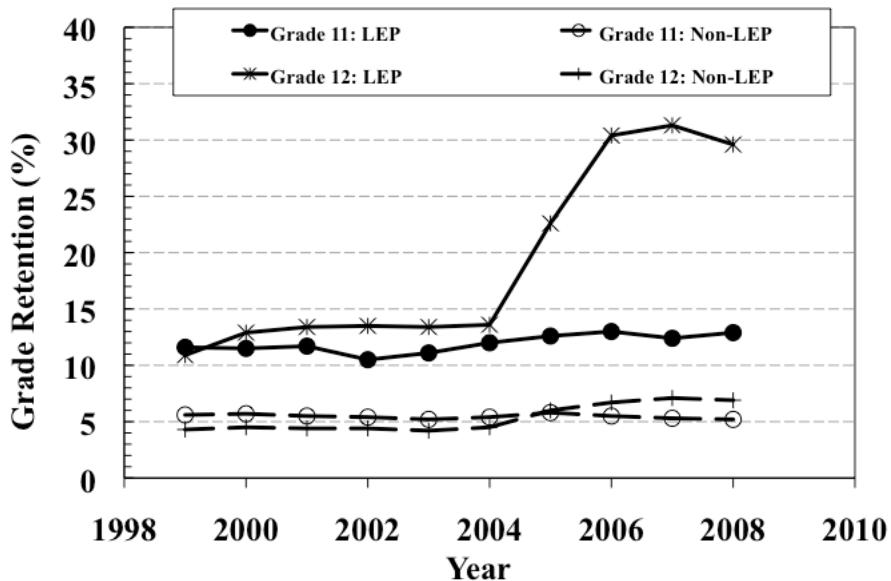


Figure 10. Grade Level Retention Rate, Grade 11-12, by LEP and Non-LEP 1999-2009 in Texas

Data Source: Texas Education Agency (2011). *Grade-Level Retention in Texas Public Schools, 2008-09*.

The Study Target

Tables 4 provides descriptive statistics for the percent of ninth grade newly arrived students' demographics including gender, race, eligibility for the federal free/reduced lunch program, and years in Texas schools in 2006 in Texas. As Table 4 illustrates, within the study sample, 4,421 ninth grade newly arrived adolescents were drawn from the PEIMS dataset that contained 53% male and 47% female students. The race compositions included 89% Hispanic, 6.8% Asian American, 2.8% Black, 1.5% White and .2% American Indian. Among them, over 77% were eligible for the federal free/reduced lunch program. Sixty-four percent of these newly arrived youth began school in the first semester and 36% of them started in the second semester in Texas

Schools (see Table 4).

Table 4

Percent of 9th Grade Newly Arrived Immigrant Students Gender, Race, SES, and Years in Texas Schools in 2006 (n = 4,421)

		<i>9th Grade Newly Arrived Immigrant Students</i>		
		Rate (%)		
Gender		Male	Female	
		2341 (53)	2080 (47)	
Race				
American Indian	Black	Asian American	Hispanic	White
8 (.2)	122 (2.8)	300 (6.8)	3924 (88.8)	67 (1.5)
SES				
		3425 (77.5)		
Years in Texas Schools 2006				
First Semester		Second Semester		
2833 (64.1)		1588 (35.9)		

In Texas, 49 languages were spoken by 4,421 newly arrived adolescents in 2006.

Figure 11 displays ninth grade newly arrived immigrant youths' language use in 2006.

The table explains that 87.9% of newly arrived teens were Hispanic who spoke Spanish.

1.7% of students used Vietnamese as their native language and 1.1 % spoke Korean. The remaining 46 languages that were used by newly arrived youths only made up 8% of the student body.

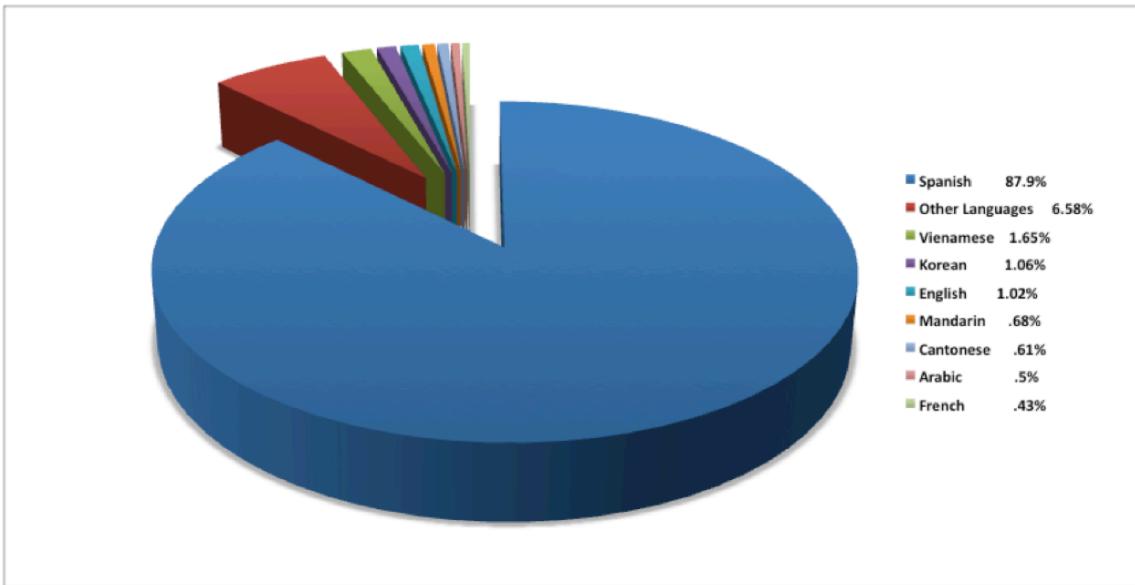


Figure 11. Ninth Grade Newly Arrived Adolescents' Native Language Spoke in Texas in 2006

In 2006, five courses which newly arrived adolescents were most likely to earn credits for were English I for Standards of Learning (SOL), Reading I, Integrated Physics and Chemistry, Algebra I, and World Geography Studies, excluding Art, Music, and Physical education. Biology was the most common course that most of newly arrived youth failed to pass at their first year of schooling in Texas schools. A high percentage of recently arrived teens were unable to receive credits for geometry and world history studies in their second year of schooling.

Table 5 illustrates the tracking in this study of the 4,421 ninth grade newly arrived immigrant students' retention, dropout, and graduate rates from 2007 to 2009. Overall, 34% of ninth grade immigrant youths were retained in 2007, 19% of them were retained in 2008, and 13% of these students were retained in 2009 (see Table 5). Regarding grade promotion, 54% of ninth graders were able to move to the next grade while there were

48% of 10th graders and 37% of 11th graders who were promoted to the higher grade. The dropout rate was about 5% across 9-12 grades. Only 28% of newly arrived immigrants graduated on time. Statistical analysis and results also drew attention to the percentage of missing data, 6% in 2007, 25% in 2008, and 21% in 2009, respectively.

Table 5

Percent of 9th Grade Newly Arrived Immigrant Students with Retention, Dropout, and Graduation 2007-2009 (n = 4,421)

		<i>9th Grade Newly Arrived Immigrant Students</i>		
		Rate (%)		
		2007	2008	2009
Retention		1488 (34)	834 (19)	561 (13)
Promotion		2395 (54)	2139 (48)	1626 (37)
Dropout		248 (6)	217 (5)	209 (5)
Graduate		8 -	148 -	1084 (28)
System Missing		282 (6)	1083 (25)	941 (21)
Total		4421	4421	4421

Newly arrived immigrants across four groups, TESL, NCS, NCP, and TESLHR. In order to gain an understanding of program effects, 4,421 students from 518 high schools were identified into four different program types, first, traditional ESL schools (TESL), second, newcomer schools (NCS), third, newcomer programs (NCP), and fourth, traditional ESL with high reading level (TESLHR). Table 6 presents the percentage of newly arrived Immigrants in each program of gender, race and SES. The percentage of male students was higher than female students across four groups.

American Indian was the smallest population. Most of Asian Americans were in the TESLHR group. NCP had more black students in comparison to the other three groups. The TESL group had a higher percent (94.7%) of Hispanic students. The higher percentage of the federal free/reduced lunch program was shown in the NCS group at 85%. Table 7 displays the percentage of newly arrived immigrants in each program type in terms of students' years in Texas schools. The NCS group was found to be the highest percentage of first semester newcomer schools, 78% compared to around 60% of newcomers in TESL and TESLHR groups just arrived at the first semester.

Table 6

Percent of Newly Arrived Immigrant in Each Program of Gender, Race and SES (n = 4,421)

Program Placement				
	TESL (n=2018)	NCS (n=537)	NCP (n=798)	TESLHR (n=1068)
Gender		Gender (%)		
Male	1080 (53.5)	305 (56.8)	419 (52.5)	537 (50.3)
Female	938 (46.5)	232 (43.2)	379 (47.5)	531 (49.7)
Race		Race (%)		
American	5	0	1	2
Indian	(.2)		(.1)	(.2)
Black	17 (.8)	17 (3.2)	60 (7.5)	28 (2.6)
Asian	61	31	35	173
American	(3)	(5.8)	(4.4)	(16.2)
Hispanic	1912 (94.7)	484 (90.1)	693 (86.8)	835 (78.2)
White	23 (1.1)	5 (.9)	9 (1.1)	30 (2.8)
SES	1585 (78.5)	456 (84.9)	648 (81.2)	736 (68.9)

Table 7

Percent of Newly Arrived Immigrant in Each Program of Years in Texas Schools (n = 4,421)

Program Placement				
	TESL (n=2018)	NCS (n=537)	NCP (n=798)	TESLHR (n=1068)
Years in Texas Schools 2006 (%)				
First Semester	1202 (59.6)	421 (78.4)	561 (70.3)	649 (60.8)
Second Semester	816 (40.4)	116 (21.6)	237 (29.7)	419 (39.2)

Table 8

Percent of Newly Arrived Immigrant in Each Program with Retention, Dropout, and Graduation 2007-2009 (n = 4,421)

Program Placement				
	TESL (n=2018)	NCS (n=537)	NCP (n=798)	TESLHR (n=1068)
Retention				
2007	692 (34.3)	210 (39.1)	423 (53)	163 (15.3)
2008	402 (19.9)	124 (23.1)	229 (28.7)	79 (7.4)
2009	264 (13.1)	81 (15.1)	156 (19.5)	60 (5.6)
Dropout				
2007	95 (4.7)	44 (8.2)	80 (10)	29 (2.7)
2008	90 (4.5)	50 (9.3)	51 (6.4)	26 (2.4)
2009	119 (5.9)	37 (6.9)	35 (4.4)	18 (1.7)
Graduation				
2009	391 (19.4)	88 (16.4)	162 (20.1)	602 (56.2)

Table 8 indicates the percentage of newly arrived immigrants' grade retention, dropouts, and graduation in each program type between 2007 and 2009. The NCP group had the highest percent of retention rates, 53% in 2007, 28.7% in 2008, and 19.5% in 2009, while the TESLHR group had the lowest retention rates (15.3% in 2007, 7.4% in 2008, & 1.7% in 2009) in all secondary years. The NCS group also had the highest dropout rate, 10%, in 2007 and the NCS had more dropouts, 9.3%, in 2008 and 6.9% in 2009. The highest graduation rate was in the TESLHR group (56.2%) in 2009 in comparison to the following groups, NCP (20.1%), TESL (19.4%), and NCS (16.4%).

Results of regression models. *Logistic regression predicting grade retention.*

Table 9 presents the results of logistic regression analysis predicting student grade retention. The logistic regression model was estimated using program placement and student demographic variables including race, gender, and SES to predict students' grade retention. The predictive value of the model was significant with the student demographic and operational measures ($R^2 = .37$, $\Delta R^2 = .31$, $F (4421) = 30.86$, $p < .05$), and explained 31% of the variance. Using the criterion of $p < .05$ to assess significance, the odds ratio (β) estimates the odds of retained students are higher when students are placed in the NCP group and NCS group than in the TESL group when controlling for race, gender, and SES. In addition, the TESLHR group was less likely to be retained in the same grade, in comparison to the TESL group.

Moreover, the odds ratio estimates the odds of female students being retained is higher than male students, when controlling for race, gender, and SES. The results demonstrated female newly arrived immigrant students were less likely to be retained

than male students. However, no statistical significance was found for race and SES variables.

Table 9

Logistic Regression Analysis Predicting Student Retention (n = 3,883)

Predicting Variables	β	S.E.	χ^2	Sig.	Odds Ratio/Exp (β)
Intercept	-.3922	.2962	1.7526	.1856	
NCS	.6875	.0996	47.6741	<.0001***	1.209
NCP	.1897	.1085	3.0588	.0803	1.989
TESLHR	-1.0664	.0966	121.9689	<.0001***	.344
American Indian	-.6216	.8883	.4896	.4841	.537
Black	.0563	.3587	.0246	.8754	1.058
Asian American	-.3320	.3242	1.0484	.3059	.717
Hispanic	.0882	.2908	.0920	.7616	1.092
Gender	-.1908	.0689	7.6701	.0056**	.826
SES	.0617	.0851	.5246	.4689	1.064

Note. * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

Multilevel regression predicting reading achievement. Table 10 illustrates multilevel regression modeling predicting students' TELPAS reading Achievement. The multilevel regression procedure was conducted to determine which student demographic and operational measures best predicted TELPAS reading achievement while controlling for the program types. Using the criterion of $p < .05$ to assess significance, it was found that the parameter (β) estimates for two of the selected predictor measures including program placement and course completion positively and significantly predicted reading

achievement. The race, gender, and SES measures were negatively and significantly associated with reading achievement (see Table 10).

Table 10

Multilevel Regression Modeling Predicting Student TELPAS Reading Achievement (n = 3,445)

Predicting Variables	β	S.E.	Sig.
Intercept	.06688	.02474	.0071
Program Placement			
NCS	.04619	.04740	.3299
NCP	.07620	.02191	0.0005***
TESLHR	.1250	.008251	<.0001 ***
Race			
American Indian	-.1315	.06098	0.0311 *
Black	-.03679	.02785	0.1638
Asian American	-.01911	.02432	0.4322
Hispanic	-.02024	.02259	0.3704
Gender			
Gender	-.01143	.005053	0.0238*
SES			
Course Completion	-.01875	.006912	0.0007***
	.01515	.002406	<.0001***

Note. * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

Controlling for these measures, the parameter estimates for the program type demonstrated that, in comparison to the TESL group, with a one point increased on TELPAS reading, students in the TESLHR group tended to perform .13 higher, the NCP group were .08 higher, and the NCS group did .05 better. In addition, while controlling for all of the student demographic and operational measures, the parameter estimates for

the race predicted while there was one point increase on TELPAS reading, white students tended to perform .02 better than Asian and Hispanic classmates, and .04 higher than black students. In addition, American Indian students continued to perform .13 lower than white students with every one point increase on TELPAS reading.

While controlling for other measures, the data revealed significant differences in the reading assessment between female and males students. The parameter estimates for the gender showed a one point increased on reading, female students were making .01 less than their male classmates. In terms of student socioeconomic status (SES), students from lower SES backgrounds continued to score .02 lower than other students with every one point increased on reading. The more courses students completed at the end of 2006-2007 school year, the higher scores they would receive on the TELPAS reading assessment.

Multilevel regression predicting TAKS mathematics achievement. Table 11 illustrates multilevel regression modeling predicting students' TAKS Mathematics Achievement. The multilevel regression model was estimated using program placement, course completion, and student demographic variables including race, gender, and SES to predict students' TAKS mathematics achievement.

Using the criterion of $p. < .05$ to assess significance, the parameter (β) estimates for the program type measure and course completion positively predict mathematics achievement and all were statistically significant. The parameter (β) estimates for the race, gender, and SES were negatively and statistically significant when associated with mathematics gains. While controlling for student demographic variables and other

measures, the parameter estimates for the TESL group performed .11 less than the TESLHR, .15 less than the NCS group, and .13 less than the NCP group with every one point increase on TAKS mathematics scores. The parameter estimates for the race predicted that for a one point increase on TAKS mathematics scores, white students had a statistical significance of .13 higher than blacks and .14 higher than American Indian students. Furthermore, Asian classmates was .01 higher than white students. In addition, Hispanic students continued to perform .07 lower than white students for every one point increase on TAKS mathematics scores.

When controlling for student demographics and other operational measures, the parameter estimates for gender, male high school students performed academically better in mathematics than female students. In addition, the score of students from lower SES backgrounds performed less well while controlling for other variables. Students who had completed more courses at the end of 2006-2007 school year had greater gains in mathematics scores than other students.

Table 11

Multilevel Regression Modeling Predicting Student TAKS Mathematics Achievement (n = 1,761)

Predicting Variables	β	S.E.	Sig.
Intercept	.6901	.03614	<.0001
Program Placement			
NCS	.1528	.1237	.2169
NCP	.1290	.05848	.0276*
TESLHR	.1105	.009065	<.0001***
Race			
American Indian	-.1446	.07315	.0482
Black	-.1270	.03582	.0004***
Asian American	.004654	.03111	.6951
Hispanic	-.06967	.02891	.0161*
Gender			
Gender	-.01724	.006882	.0124*
SES			
Course Completion	-.01045	.009807	.2870
	.01616	.004076	<.0001 ***

Note. * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

Summary of Quantitative Results

Overall, Texas high school immigrant students spoke over 50 different languages in 2006. Over 85% of high school ELLs and 88% ninth grade newcomers speak Spanish. The results indicated that the ELL student population had increased overtime in Texas. Within the ELL population, over 80% were LEPs and one-third were LEPs with no or limited English proficiency. Notably, 62% of LEPs had been in the U.S. for five or more than five years. ELLs' reading, listening, and speaking comprehension levels had grown

overtime except for students with Beginning and Intimidate levels on reading. In addition, the retention rate of 12th grade LEP students was increasing dramatically from 2004 to 2009 and was five times the retention rate of non-LEPs.

However, upon zooming in on the population of study it is apparent the newly arrived immigrant group represented a huge diverse student body with a high percentage of Hispanic students and low SES students. These newcomers spoke 49 different languages and around 90% of them were Spanish speakers. Over two-thirds of these students were eligible for the federal free/reduced lunch program. Moreover, newcomers failed to pass biology, geometry, and world history studies subject areas at greater rates. 9th to 10th grade newly arrived youth encountered the highest rate of grade retention over 30%.

As the grade increases, a significant amount of newcomer students enrollment decreased due to varied reasons such as grade retention, dropouts, etc. One limitation is that one-fifth of student data was missing in 2009. Of 4,421 newcomer youth in 2006, over one-third of ninth graders were retained at ninth grade in 2007. The dropout rate was around 5% overtime. Only less than one-third of them graduated from high schools in 2009. In terms of four-group comparison, the TESL group had the highest percentage of Hispanic students. The NCS had larger numbers of students who were also from low SES backgrounds. In addition, the NCP and NCS group had a higher percentage of students who were retained than the TESL group in 2007; however, the former two groups' retention rates significantly decreased at a greater rate overtime than the latter group. Only less than one-fifth of immigrant students in the TESL, the NCS, and the NCP

groups were able to get a high school diploma, respectively. Around half of the TESLHR students were able to graduate on time.

Furthermore, the grade retention of newly arrived immigrant students is associated significantly with program placement and gender. However, grade retention is not associated significantly with ethnicity groups and SES. Findings regarding program placement indicated students in newcomer programs and schools were more likely to be retained than students in the TESL programs. Students in the TESLHR group were more likely to be promoted to the next grade.

Quantitative findings above revealed achievement gaps in terms of reading and mathematics of newly arrived youth in Texas. Models estimated students in newcomer schools and programs academically prevailed over students in the TESL group in both reading and mathematics. Students in the TESLHR group with higher English proficiency when they arrived in Texas schools outperformed all other groups. The following section provides insights of two newcomer schools and a traditional ESL program to contextualize why newly arrived adolescents gain advantages in newcomer schools and programs, and to explain what challenges teachers face in terms of what resources and strategies best support newly arrived youth.

Findings of Observations and Interviews

This section explains findings of general observations and interviews with teachers, collected from three high schools in northern and central Texas, Newcomer School North (NSN), Newcomer School East (NSE), and Traditional ESL School (TESLS). Comparisons of three school characteristics and schools' atmosphere

observations are provided, then several themes are explored, including challenges of educating and accommodating newcomer youth and supports of teaching and learning in the classroom context. The qualitative findings present the complexity of schooling and disadvantages of being a newly arrived youth in northern and central Texas.

In 2006, Texas high schools received over 4,400 newly arrived ninth graders who spoke 49 different languages other than English. Some of these students were recent arrivals to the United States with no or limited English proficiency, with no or limited formal schooling, and below grade level literacy in their first language. High school immigrant students tend to be older adolescents ranging in age from 14 to 21 years old. The following section presents the information from three schools to address how newly arrived youths' learning opportunities have been structured, some of the life and schooling challenges these students have faced, and how teachers perceive the unique learning needs of their students.

A comparison of school characteristics of NSN, NSE and TESLS. Table 12 shows a comparison of school background characteristics of the NSN, NSE, and TESLS. General observations and interviews were conducted at these three campuses which received a large population of recently arrived high school immigrants with no or limited English proficiency in central Texas, two newcomer schools and a traditional ESL program within a high school. Making use of an abundance of data, the following sections describe the services schools provide for and how they assist newly arrived disadvantaged high school immigrant students and their families and how these students survive at schools under the pressure of NCLB.

Table 12

A Comparison of School Characteristics of TESLS, NSN, and NSE

	Traditional ESL School (TESLS)	Newcomer School North (NSN)	Newcomer School East (NSE)
Student Population	100/2400	242	236
Identify ELL	Home Language Survey	Home Language Survey	Home Language Survey
Testing Place	Welcome Center/Specialist on campus	Student Placement Center	Intake Center/Specialist on campus
Age	Under 21 years old	15-20	14-16
Grade Level	9-12	9	9-10
Testing Use	LAS Link	IPT	LAS Link
Cut Off Point	All Levels	Beginner & Intermediate	Beginner & Intermediate
Language Speak	7 languages	27 languages	12 languages
Program Type	ESOL	Newcomer Program & Preliterate ELL (PELL) Program	Newcomer Program
Students' Countries of Origins	Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Burma (Myanmar), Cambodia, Iraq, Iran, Mexico, Nepal, Somalia, Thailand	Argentina, Afghanistan, Brazil, Burundi, Burma (Myanmar), China, Republic of Congo, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Mexico, Iran, Iraq, Somalia, Tanzania, Thailand, Uganda...etc	Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Burma (Myanmar), Cambodia, Cuba, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Iraq, Ivory Coast, Mexico, Nepal, Republic of Congo, Somalia, Thailand
Class Session	50 minutes	Varied	Varied
Teacher Certification	3 English Teachers with ESL certified	All Teachers with ESL certified	All Teachers with ESL certified
Professional Development	Teaching ELL Workshops	Teaching ELL Workshops	Teaching ELL Workshops
Curriculum & Instruction	Regular ESL Instruction	QTEL - Dr. Aidi Walqui	QTEL - Dr. Aidi Walqui
Grade Promotion	1 year of attendance and 5 credits	1 year of attendance and 5 credits	1 year of attendance and 5 credits

Table 12 (Cont.)

	Traditional ESL School (TESLS)	Newcomer School North (NSN)	Newcomer School East (NSE)
Test Taking	TELPAS, TAKS, Alternative TAKS, In Class Tests	TELPAS, Alternative TAKS, In Class Tests	TELPAS, Alternative TAKS, In Class Tests
School Building	New & Individual School Building	Old & Three Schools in One Building (Two Middle Schools and One High School)	Old & Three High Schools in One Building
Resources	Church Charity (clothes, food, health check, fund raising for student in need) Paid Volunteers (who know students' native language to following students in mainstream classroom)	Church Charity (clothes, food) Paid Volunteers (help English I teachers who receive PELL students)	Social Worker Church Charity (clothes, food)

Newcomer School North (NSN). NSN was located in the North Independent School District (NISD) of northern Texas in the heart of an urban city. The language center program for middle and high school immigrant students was established in northern Texas in 1983, as the Newcomer School North. NSN provided intensive English language immersion school for newly arrived immigrants. NSN served 242 ninth grade students with a staff of 29 teachers, seven full-time staff, a part-time custodian, several aides, and volunteers. Students are from 35 countries speaking 27 different languages. All of the students were first year immigrants to the United States who ranged in age from 11 to 19. The student ethnic composition as of 2011 was 31.4% Asian (N = 127), 12.6% Black (N = 51), 7.2% White (N = 29), and 48.8% Hispanic (N = 197). NSN also

provided intensive ESL instruction as well as instruction in content-area and elective classes, through ESL methodology and/or native language support, commensurate with grade-level requirements.

All the teachers and assistants were trained in ESL and specifically to teach in the program. Dr. Aida Walqui was invited regularly to introduce Quality Teaching for English Learners (QTEL) instructional strategies (WestEd, 2010) to all teachers in NSN since 2011. The QTEL approach offers a high-challenge academic framework along with high-level supports for ELLs. The QTEL work that is grounded in sociocultural learning theory enables teachers with scaffolding strategies for their students to learn concrete ways in participating meaningful and demanding academic activity with maintaining a rigorous curriculum (WestEd, 2010).

The structure of NSN was designed so that students gradually move to their traditional home school campus after one year. The newly arrived immigrant students took all classes in the Center. The NSN was housed on a regular middle or high school campus (transportation provided as appropriate) and functions as a modified school-within-a-school design (staff functions as a team and is led by teacher leader; administration and support staff services are provided by the host school.)

Newcomer School East (NSE). Newcomer School East was established in 2006. NSE was located in a building, which contained three schools in the Central Independent School District (CISD). These three schools shared a gym, library, and cafeteria. Within this culturally responsive campus, NSE was composed of students from all over the world. NSE currently served 236 new immigrant students with 25 teachers and staff, a full-time

secretary, a full-time social worker, several aides, and volunteers. Classes were combined: 9th and 10th grades. Students who spoke 12 different languages were from 17 countries. The student demographics as of 2011 were 3.9% American Indian (N = 7), .6% two or more races (N = 1), 26.6% Asian (N = 47), 3.3% Black (N = 6), 2.8% White (N = 5), and 63.3% Hispanic (N = 114).

All teachers were ESL certified and trained by QTEL instructional strategies. The ESL specialist in NSE pointed out, “Our teachers attend trainings with Dr. Aida Walqui every month. QTEL, instructional strategies benefit our teaching and learning in the classroom.” She also stated that Spanish speakers stay with teachers who are able to speak Spanish so our teachers can make use of QTEL to communicate with our students and help them to learn effectively.

This school served students in the 9th and 10th grades between the ages of 14-16 years old. Providing a smaller community that is rich in diversity, the goal of the NSE program was to enable students to attain a high level of proficiency in academic English while acquiring the academic skills necessary to meet the societal demands of an ever-changing global society; thus, allowing students to succeed in core content area courses and meet the standards and requirements for graduation.

The newcomer schools also provided field trips into the community and their neighborhood high schools offered immigrant adolescent students the opportunity to learn about and experience important people and places in their new surroundings. Field trips constructed much needed background knowledge for these students as well. Families were important supports in the educational process of these students. The

school also provided adult literacy classes to students' families to assist them to progress in their English development. K-12 tutoring and childcare was provided during those sessions. The newcomer school intended to prepare all newly arrived ELL students for successful transition into American Schools, culture, and beyond through challenging academics and language learning by honoring all cultures and heritages, and introducing students to a new cultural environment.

Traditional ESL School (TESLS). The TESLS is a high school located in the southern part of central Texas and was established in 2007. It was opened and dedicated in the Fall of 2008 and is one of ten comprehensive high schools operated under the auspices of the Central South Independent School District (CSISD). The enrollment as of 2011 was 2,375 students with an ethnic breakdown of .2% American Indian (N = 5), .4% Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islands (N = 9), 4.4% two or more races (N = 104), 5.6% Asian (N = 134), 5.6% Black (N = 133), 29.3% Whites (N = 696), and 54.5% Hispanic (N=1294).

The TESLS served around 2,400 students in 2011. Within the student population, over 100 students were ELLs. Sixty of them were resettlement students from Southeast Asia countries. The school had a newcomer team to give students basic English instruction with three ESL teachers with training to receive newcomers. Members of a Catholic Church Charity volunteered to help students. After school tutoring sessions and late bus services were provided for newcomers. Classes were combined: 9th and 10th graders, and 11th and 12th graders. ELL students are immigrants who are learning English and receive extra instruction, so their class days went from 8:50 a.m. to 3:05 p.m. The

length of each class was 45 minutes. Newcomers and LEP students stayed with three teachers who were ESL certified for English I, reading, and geography. After they completed these classes, students went to the mainstream classroom. These three ESL certified teachers offered regular ESL curriculum and instruction for all LEP students.

The design of this ESL program model was adapted from another high school, that accommodated ELLs for more than ten years. The school administrator delegated all responsibilities for ELL students to the ESL specialist and strongly supported developing a sound program towards meeting the specific needs of their ELLs. The ESL specialist and other two ESL teachers also worked hard to serve individual ELL students well. However, subject area teachers have limited understanding and knowledge about the ELL population and lacked experience for working with varied ELLs. The following section presents culture differences of teachers' experiences between TELS and NSN & NSE, with newly arrived youth and challenges both teachers and students encountered in classrooms.

School atmosphere observation. *Newcomer schools.* NSN was located in an urban city and shared a building with a middle school. Because of the small student population, the principal, staff, and teachers could recognize their students in classes or in the hallway. Staff members interacted effectively with students, because they knew their students well. Students used simple English to write essays and studied trees posted outside of the classrooms. The length of class time was about two hours each class. In the classroom, teachers had longer class time to teach each class and students actively participated in classroom activities and projects. In addition, the school held an awards

ceremony every month to encourage students' positive behavior. Teachers nominated their students and invited students to go to the party. Each student was recognized and students earned rewards from their various classes.

Similarly, NSE shared school buildings with other high schools. Students had to take turns to use the cafeteria and the library. At the right side of this school entrance, a building map was a helpful guidance for students and visitors to get to different campuses. The receptionist, everyone called her Grandma, warmly greeted everyone who entered the building. Visitors had to sign in and out with Grandma. Sometimes teachers, the principal, and staff members brought food and had lunch together at the front office. From their conversation, the atmosphere of the school appeared friendly and welcoming. Although there were people in the office, it was quiet and peaceful. Parents were patiently waiting for their kids and teachers for a meeting.

Students' artwork and writing pieces were posted outside of the English I classrooms. They were talking about "Immigrants" and "who are immigrants from 1800-1920s?" Some students were discussed locations such as south, eastern Europe, religions, and economics, etc. In addition, in the front of the advanced English classrooms, students' were writing about the, "Dream Act. What is it? This policy aims to make children who were illegally brought to the U.S. by their parents to become the U.S. citizens." Before entering a science classroom, posters on the right side of the wall, presented the Carbon Dioxide Cycle with pictures to show the cycle and sample sentences right next to each vivid picture.

Teachers, staff members, and students were sensitive to the presence of visitors at school. A librarian asked the researcher why she was walking around the library. Moreover, a female student stopped by and had a conversation with the researcher about her family, friends, and her career goals, because she assumed the researcher shared similar experiences as an immigrant . Three Thai male students said, “How are you?” in Chinese to greet the researcher, laughed, and then went away. This school appeared to have a friendly and convivial environment for visitors.

Correspondingly, both of the two newcomer schools’ principals indicated they wanted their schools to feel warm as well as welcoming. Office staff, teachers, and volunteers were responsible for making sure students felt welcomed. Both school buildings were old but comfortable and comforting, although not much advanced technology was used in the classrooms. The principals in two newcomer schools studied were somewhat multi-lingual using their students’ native languages, such as Spanish and some greeting words in Burmese to greet them in the hallways in the cafeterias. Newcomers’ classrooms were all located in one side of the building. Most of their classrooms were just across the hallway, so they could navigate classrooms well.

TESLS. This program was located at a high school campus, which contains three wings of buildings. The new school was surrounded by advanced digital technology. In the reception area, there were two flat panel TVs on each side of the wall. Visitors signed in and out by themselves. Trophies, medals, and flags for sport awards were displayed on both sides of the hallway. It was impossible to know exactly who were the teachers, staff, or other school personnel at any given time because so many people worked and

congregated in the school building. As can be seen, the school was busy and overwhelmingly huge for a visitor. The ESL specialist had to lead the researcher to each classroom. Otherwise, it was so easy to get lost at the campus.

Due to the large student body, the school was crowded during break time. The newcomer classrooms were located in the third wing of the building sites. Students rushed to go to the next classroom, because each class session was 45 minutes and five minutes were allotted to travel to the next classroom. It was easy for students to not pay attention and remain unaware of student differences, especially that of students who were not their classmates or friends, because the student body was massive. Everyone was passed each other hurriedly in the hallway. When the bell rang for classes to begin, the learning atmosphere in the school was much calmer and focused almost immediately, creating an academically competitive atmosphere.

The inside of this brand new high school looked so clean and bright. Each classroom had a room number with the teacher's name on the door. No artwork or writing samples were found outside of classrooms. Advanced technology tools were used to assist teaching and learning. Newcomers were encouraged to learn how to use computers immediately once they entered the school, and the RosettaStone software was used for newcomers to practice their conversation at their own pace. The advanced technology was used at classrooms to benefit not only native English speakers but also the newcomers.

As shown above, the environments of the NSN and NSE were much more alike, warm and welcoming; the learning pace was slow. In the TESLS, the atmosphere of

school was calm and highly competitive for all students. The uniformed system created a competitive school culture for motivation and learning for all students. Differences in the student bodies among these three schools existed and the schools appeared to have dramatically different atmospheres, especially between newcomer schools and the TESLS. The following section presents challenges that teachers of newcomer adolescents encounter and what supports these students received among the three different schools. The findings in the subsequent sections are solely from the teachers' perspective.

Challenges of educating and accommodating newcomer youth. In the TESLS classrooms, it was common that teachers always found two extreme situations in regards to students' learning progress, mixing adolescent newcomers with native English speaking peers in the same classroom. While the teacher was questioning ELLs regarding their understanding of the questions or course content, native English speakers were often ready for the next step of the curriculum. For instance, when the teacher started clarifying math problems for ELLs, some of their native peers already completed the in-class practices. ELLs became quiet so quickly because their native English peers absorbed the content much faster than they did. On the other hand, subject area teachers seemed to not be aware of the necessary usages of their appropriate content-specific language for ELLs in order to provide appropriate interventions for this specific group of students.

English language issues: What is that? What is next? ELL students were mixed with native English speakers for the elective classes in the TESLS. When ELLs enrolled in mainstream academic courses most of time, two tutors took turns to go to these classrooms to help them out, since these courses lacked an ESL focus. Teachers in other

content areas had to spend extra time to explain class content for these students. In particular, it was very difficult for science teachers to serve these students in a mainstream classroom. A science teacher in the TESLS said:

My Biology I class has one-third LEP students. This is very tough situation for a teacher who tries hard not only to stratify the two-thirds of kids and not bore them but also to figure out how to appropriately serve them at the same time. Although I have a tutor to assist me in the class, but his assistance is very limited. For instance, some LEP students do not even know how to pronounce “Enzyme” and how can they recognize the meaning of it, but most native English students in the class are ready to learn the process of “Enzyme”. The gap between LEP students and other students is huge. This is the gap I think we need to work on it with ESL teachers. I am also thinking to get an ESL certification to meet LEP students’ needs.

Enormous gap of background knowledge between newcomers and native speakers. Numbers are the universal language, but ELLs were not able to figure out math reasoning and problem solving without a firm understanding of basic math vocabulary. In mainstream math class within in the TESLS, Algebra I, there were 25 students in this class. The math teacher explained terms such as analogy, congruent, corresponding, and proportion. Then he demonstrated how to solve over 12 math problems within 30 minutes. Students had 15 minutes to solve questions on a practice sheet, which was given by the math teacher. The class pace was very fast and the information from the slides was abundant. The teacher asked questions and explained answers by flipping different slides back and forth.

Most of native English speakers seemed to do very well in the right side of the classroom. Three ELLs sat aside next to a tutor in the left side of the classroom. They never asked or answered questions in the class. That was a real quiet zone of the class. One of three ELL students was struggling to understand the questions on the practice

sheet. The tutor just stood beside her in case she needed help. The other two ELL students could follow the teachers' instruction, but they got lost sometimes. Some of the native English speakers (at least three students) turned in their practice sheets to the teacher in ten minutes before the bell rang. The tutor in the TESLS stated:

I only inquired about ELL students' needs during the practice time in class. The female student is so quiet all the time. She should be placed in a special education class because she has emotional problems. She never speaks up in the class and does not communicate with others as well. I asked her about $6 - 10 = ?$ She said 5. I was wondering whether she understood what the question was or not. Or she has to learn more about addition and subtraction. In a big class like this, the teacher has no time to pay attention to each individual student. It is hard to know ELLs' understanding of what the teacher tried to deliver. I only can help, if some of ELLs are willing to come to after school tutoring. I am at the classroom until 6 pm. These students really need more time to practice.

Another TESLS teacher described the learning gap between newcomers and their native English peers:

In my class, I designed three levels of written tests: Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced. Twenty students are working on their test at the same time. One student turned in his answer sheets about 10 minutes. Second student also turned in his stuff right after that. Most students finished the test about a half-hour. Three ELL students needed more time to do the test, so I asked them to go to the administration office to do the test. Otherwise, students finished the test early and had to remain on their seats to wait for the rest of students' completion.

Additionally, a chemistry teacher reviewed and prepared her class for taking the TAKS. Three ELLs in the class were from Thailand, Nepal, and Burma, respectively. Two of them were doing fine in the class, but the Thai student did not study at all. He just did nothing in the classroom. The teacher put three of them together as a group in the middle of classroom, so she could explain the practice sheet and monitor how they were doing. The chemistry teacher in the TESLS expressed:

Not only English language, the content of chemistry is also challenging. Three ELLs, two 11th grade female has been in the U.S school for three years and a 10th grade male student has been here for two years. Two female students have learned fast, but the 10th grader was not doing well. In fact, he is really smart. He just refused to learn and to do any work in class.

While the teacher was tutoring three ELLs in class, the rest of the students were finishing up the practice sheet. After a while, most of students had completed the practice sheet and got bored. They started talking to each other. Three ELLs were still struggling from finishing the practices. Therefore, the achievement gap between ELLs and native English speakers is huge, not to mention the newly arrived youth with no or limited English proficiency.

Teachers cannot teach what they do not know. Challenges for newcomers in content area learning were hotly discussed among teachers in three visited schools, especially in the TESL school. Mathematics, science, and social studies teachers are experts in their fields. They definitely can illustrate content knowledge and skills in English to native English speakers, because they are subject matter experts. However, science and social studies include whole new bodies of knowledge with content-specific vocabulary for the newcomers and that presents major challenges for them. It is not just learning English but understanding the new concepts embedded in each subject area. Although math is a universal language, newcomers may know the concepts in their native language but not in English. Teachers have to be aware of appropriate content area language for ELLs. The TESLS ESL specialist stated:

I am the first ESL certified teacher in this school and have trained other two ESL teachers as well. For teaching ELLs, the conversation between student and teacher has to slow down. Teachers have to make sure ELL students understand what teachers are saying. Our teachers have a bachelor's or master's degree in their

subject areas, but some of them have not worked with ELLs before. So I have to support them sometimes in their classes. They are discipline experts in their subject matter and know how to illustrate examples to make points clear to their students. I always ask they to speak slowly and clearly to their ELLs.

Another TESLS teacher expressed challenges of lacking experience for teaching newcomer adolescents:

Most of our content area teachers are only aware of that newcomers' adolescents with limited English proficiency are so quiet, because they could not understand what teachers say and respond. Most important of all, our teachers do not participate in any training about incorporating language objectives in the content area lessons for ELLs. Some teachers might give the regular instruction and only allow newcomers extra time to finish tests and homework. Others would provide extra materials as a supplement for newcomers. It all depends on teachers themselves.

As has been noted above, if teachers do not acquire an awareness of their newly arrived youths' linguistic developmental and cultural differences, they are unable to provide appropriate instruction for their students. In comparison with distinguished differences between newcomers and their English native peers in the same classroom, newcomer schools' teachers were more aware of how to apply instruction to newcomer students' background knowledge and cultural cues and differences to guide them through the system.

What do educators take for granted about newcomers? Newcomers arrived with varied background knowledge about not only academic learning but also life experiences in their home counties. In newcomer schools, educators were more aware of the fact that their newcomer students and their families had a variety of experiences living in the U.S. and factors that hindered their schooling. Similarly, they seemed to better understand the needs of newcomers and their families. A group of the NSE staff members and an

administrator were sharing their first expression about a family from a refugee camp and their students:

One day a mother brought her son to our school from the mid Eastern Asia. He had very limited English proficiency and his mother could not speak English at all. We barely could understand their body languages. The son used his pointer finger to show his mouth and to pretend to drink something. I guessed they were thirsty and took them to the water fountain in the hallway. They just stood in front of the water fountain, were staring at it, and had no idea about what the water fountain was. Then I pushed the button and the water shoot out of the hole on top. The mother and her son said “Wow...”. The son tried to catch the water with his palms together like a bowl. I told him “No...” and showed him how to drink water from the water fountain.

A teacher in the TESLS reported about her students' computer usage experience:

Can you believe that? My students have not seen computers before they came to the U.S. You know what? During first several weeks of the first semester, it was terribly hard for me to get my students on computers to practice the software. Most of time, I tried to resolve problems regarding showing what the computer is. Also, I had constantly to teach how to turn the computer and monitor on/off and how to plug in the headphone. However, their learning ability is amazing. After several weeks, they were on their own.

An ESL specialist in the NSE described a life situation of refugee students who just arrived in U.S.:

Most of our refugee students came with nothing except flip-flops and the clothes they wore. Fortunately, we have churches to provide clothes for them, but I had to pick clothes for them with appropriate style without any insult words on it. There were grocery stores that donated food for these families as well. You know. Our teachers and I had to go to our students' places to show them how to consume the food. For example, a lot of them had not seen whipped cream before and did not know how to eat it. They used to grow vegetables and raised cows, chicken, sheep, etc. in their home countries, so they were not familiar with industrial food products.

A NSN teacher pointed out difficulties for getting her students into school:

One of the bigger problems at our school is absences because of shots. The school requires students have certain shots. Next year they are hoping to have somebody from the health department to come here and have a shot clinic right here. The

parents can sign permission for students to come here to get a shot taken, but what happens is these students left campus and are required to get these shots and have forms filled out before they come to school. If they do not have it within certain number of days, they are not allowed to come to school. When they go to the clinic they have to get there during a certain time, they only give first shots to 25 students that day. So students pass that, they send them home and say come back tomorrow. It is complicated, so our students miss too much school for getting one or two shots. The fact is that they are coming from foreign countries and they are required a lot of shots. Plus just normal students who go to school have serious shots. That is an issue that we try to work on.

Finally, the ESL specialist in the NSN commented:

Teaching them, you really need teachers who are not afraid of mental work of walking through observing the kids and making sure they understand what these kids' needs really are. You need a teacher who is flexible enough that they will evaluate their own performance and evaluate the class, and think about was this just a bad day or what was going on, or did I do something, and I can do better next time. You know was something I should not have done or we would just shoot flies today, because it is the Friday before spring break. I think it is really to be someone who is unafraid as a professional to examine themselves and their own practices. And then it needs to be somebody who is excited about learning will not try to be on the stage and not try to be the center of the classroom. It really has to be a place where the kids come first and where the kids are the center. If the teacher is old school; it is my room; I am in charge; you all sit down and shut up, and they are no going to learn English. This has to be a place that people who let the kids do learning. You do not see that problem here much.

Being aware of teachers' own assumptions about social and cultural background knowledge of newcomers and their parents as well as schooling challenges of newly arrived youth, newcomer schools' teachers were more likely to perceive what the problems were and figure out appropriate ways to teach and engage their newcomer students.

High enrollment rates of newcomers with a high risk of dropping out. In English I class, the teacher constantly received new students every week. Lacking effective strategies for arranging newcomers, the teacher felt frustrated and helpless. In

particular, a teacher who received newcomer students on a daily basis was in need of assistance not only for making the class more organized and better structured, but also for designing effective instruction to fit these students' needs. On the other hand, even after newly arrived youth made great progress in English proficiency, some still permanently left school for various reasons. One of the NSE teachers reported:

I have gone through stretches of time where every other day, or every week, I get a new student in class that is tested as a Beginner. This is the fourth week of this semester. I feel I can move the curriculum to the next level and some new students just arrive. This is really hard for me. I am coaching other ESL teachers, but I still have not figured out an effective way to do this. Right now I separate new students from the rest of the class as a group itself. I need someone to take care of them and guide them through the school environment such as the locations of restroom, main office, cafeteria, etc. For some non-Spanish speaking kids, I do not even know how to communicate with them yet. Most of the time, I make use of body language to talk to them, but it is not effective.

A NSN teacher found that:

We find students...I have maybe four Hispanic students that the family culturally was not oriented towards education being a high priority. They need money for the families and so if the boy can go to work as a bus boy and make some money and support, you know, help support the family. They were excited about that. The boy maybe works long hours after school and then comes to school tired everyday. Eventually, he just decided: "I am too tired" and dropout.

Another teachers in the TESLS also described:

I want to tell you about one of my students who is dropping out. Tomorrow is his last day at school. When he came to me and told me that he is going to dropout, because he needs to make money to support his family. He is the oldest one of his eight siblings. I literally cried in front of him. He is the smartest student in my class. I also knew his younger brother, but his brother is not doing as great as he does. This situation happens a lot; when these kids arrived in the country with limited English proficiency. We spent tons of efforts to educate them. Once they have reached the conversational level English, then they go to find jobs and leave the school. After a newcomer student knows a little bit of English, we felt we were ready to advance the kid, his family just decides to move to another place because of job offers and other economic reasons. It happens a lot here. New students come and go.

A teacher in NSE stated:

Aadi came to our school three months ago. The water fountain surprised him last time. He and his mother could not speak a word in English at that time. Aadi has made great progress in English. Today, his mother is using a cellular phone to ask their friend to help with the communication with our school registrar. His mom is here to transfer him to a school in Minnesota, because his parents need jobs and lots of meat and poultry processing factories are located in northern states. My student's family knew someone there, so the parent received a manufacture job offer. They are moving toward north. I am so sad about his leaving. Anyway, I have to ask our social worker to bring them to the church and find some jackets and coats for them because of you know, the weather changes.

One more TESLS teacher shared a similar story:

The situation may be different, if their family needs their help financially. Then they have to make some decisions, but I recommend they stay in school as long as they possibly can. The world is changing. In old times, the military accepted everyone who wanted to join. Nowadays, military has high standards for who wants to join. I always tell my kids "You want to find a job and you better have a college degree or high school diploma."

Schools encountered problems of constantly receiving adolescent newcomers with no or limited English proficiency for the beginning classes. These students were in need of customized, appropriate, and effective curricula. In addition, students and parents need more information about college pathways in the U.S. educational system society and career development and upward mobility of the U.S. society in order to make better decisions for their children.

Variation of formal schooling and country of origins among newcomers.

Although the intake center filtered newcomers, newcomer schools serve no or limited English proficiency students. Without a survey about newcomers' prior schooling experiences in their home countries, teachers had no idea what their newcomers' prior

formal schooling was and how limited that level of their English proficiency may be. An NSN teacher said:

The preliterate students during the first semester usually are very quiet for about the first two, three weeks. All students have quiet periods or silent periods that you are familiar with that they go through when they come to the country, but the preliterate students seem to have this time longer. I do not think it is so much that they are reluctant to speak as there was just so much to take in.

The preliterate students, one thing that is really important depending on which country they come from is they get accustomed to a letter. If they come from a country that does not have alphabets, the letter is not made the same way like we do, it takes a long time for them to form those letters. For example, the student that speaks Arabic, there is accustomed to writing from the right to the left and they use symbols that are so different than the letters. Their symbol is whole a lot different. The students from Thailand and from Burma, they have very round letters. They look a lot different. Viennese students do not seem to have as much difficulty, because their letters and numbers are similar.

Mixed in newcomers without considering their prior formal schooling. Newly arrived youth were not tested by their native language due to several operational reasons that included diverse language speaking, lack of specific language speaking experts to test students, and limited funding to support the testing program in different languages. Schools accepted what the parents could bring to the teachers, for instance, transcription in their native language, reports cards, and any documentation related to students' formal schooling in their home countries. However, most of all, teachers received nothing regarding to their students' formal schooling. Disconnection between students' formal schooling and their current education provides obstacles and challenges to newly arrived immigrant youths' class placement.

Thus, newly arrived youths are already disadvantaged in learning English. Needless to say, newcomers came with no or limited formal schooling in their native

language. A ten-year experienced teacher served newcomers who had no or limited English proficiency and felt stressed in the NSN. She had no experience with teaching preliterate students before coming to this school five years ago; although she had taught ESL students for five years with ESL certification. When she received students with limited formal schooling and a classroom mixed with other newcomers, she felt exhausted and had no clues about how much knowledge and information her students absorbed and digested.

I feel like I face the class that has four or more preliterate students that are mixed with other student populations. It is difficult. That is not an “A” situation. I had a class that has seven Pre-literate English Language Learner (PELL) mixed with others, a total of 24 students. That was just overwhelming. I felt I do not know that I did the student justice. It was hard for me. Emotionally, I felt drained. Then I may have another class that only has ten students in it. So it very confusing to me whenever there is... I wonder how can I meet these seven students’ needs and how the other students feel... I wonder what they feel like. They had been hold back, because I am going to focus on so much these kids’ needs. Some of the time I just hope those kids get it and I move on and teach others. So I teach toward higher level of students then towards the one must need at that point.

Another NSN teacher shared:

In a normal classroom, you have different levels and you have to differentiate your instruction a lot, but I think in our school it is like ten times of that. Some of our students come in with zero education from their home country. And on the top of no education they are also learning a second language. You know. And some of them do not know to write in their home language. They do not have frames of reference. Teaching kids like that it is not necessarily that is their problem. In the same classroom with kids that have eight years education they are ready to move on and you do not want to hold them back. If you have kids at the same level, that is fine. We can work with that. It is just that you have a big classroom with kids who are ready to move fast and you want to push them and challenge them, but you also have kids who are not sure of all the letters. Things like that. You know. It is like they have really different foundations. That is probably one of the challenges mostly.

Furthermore, newcomer adolescents have to comprehend the information in a text by drawing upon their prior knowledge in order to effectively engage in the learning process. In other words, newcomer students need to integrate new material into their existing knowledge base, and then build on their existing conceptions and beliefs to reconstruct a new understanding. Therefore, newcomer students who lack sufficient background knowledge about their native languages, the English language, and the U.S. educational system may struggle to access, participate, and progress in schools.

Misplaced PELL students in the regular classroom. Teachers in the NSN were responsible for identifying their students' English proficiency beyond using the home language survey and the language proficiency test for educational program placement.. An inexperienced teacher would easily misdiagnose newly arrived adolescents, because they were all quiet at the beginning of schooling. One teacher in the NSN stated:

We identify them as preliterate, not the intake center. We usually would like to do it within a couple of weeks, but realistically it takes maybe about a month. Maybe longer than that. The only situation would be there is an alert that comes in. That said there is evidence that the student had never been in school or that the student has not been in school for two years. The information is from the student placement center when they registered. Most districts only use HLS to place students. If students speak a language other than English, they are automatically placed into an ESL program. They gave some testing. In any district, they are required to test their ELLs in some ways. But I mean, this particular student had an ideal proficiency test which is a language test. You can tell there is an interrupted schooling pattern that make them eligible for PELL class if they had service interruption in their academic history. There are several flaws in it. Just rely on the language survey. One of the flaws is that some of the students come in here and it ends up they have enough language and they can be successful and they can just be moved on at their home schools. On the other hand, sometimes parents may decide they go ahead and go to the regular schools, and when these students are not really ready schools sent them back to us.

The ESL specialist in the NSN further pointed out:

When teachers get kids in class and see how they actually perform at the classroom, they have some concerns. Then they can ask for the student to be evaluated again. We have students retake some math tests and some writings. Our evaluation team will look at those again and decide whether or not, you know, look at how they are doing in their classes and talking to teachers where they have class and look at these for further evaluation. Compare them to the first one and talk about these things. And then they will decide whether or not this child needs more support or they are going to get in the regular classroom. Then we can move them to what is called “PELL” program, Pre-literate English Language Learner.

Another teacher in NSN also stated:

I am trying to figure out a student’s situation. I have asked a female student about the male student who has a behavior problem and has been acting silly. His teacher said he is a smart and a very intelligent boy, but he just acts like a child. Other teachers said he has no education, but I knew he knows how to read and write. He also knew math and science. The female student came from the same country with the boy. She told me he had some education before he came to the U.S.

Without an accurate assessment for evaluating newly arrived adolescents’ formal schooling and their English proficiency, appropriate placement is even more difficult. Given that newly arrived youth have limited time for their learning, it is imperative to place them in the right program at the beginning of schooling. In addition, the diagnosis depends on experienced teachers’ own knowledge to judge their students’ abilities. That places much pressure on the shoulders of these teachers.

Teachers have limited communication with parents due to language barriers.

One teacher expressed the difficulties of communication with parents who were not able to speak English. Even though teachers attempted to figure ways out to translate documentation for parents, it was still an extremely difficult task for them due to the varied languages their students spoke in the class. A teacher in the NSN noted:

It is tough. Um. We do not have regular communications like you would think like in the normal public schools. We are pretty limited and we aren’t able to do

because of language barriers. Um. Spanish is always translated, because we have easy access to that. Now we have an Arabic translator that works here, but other than that we don't we just use our limited English. We use other students to help like. For example, when we have disciplinary problems, we have this, we tell them, "Hi I am the teacher from the school. Your son or daughter is going to tell you what problems they are having and they have it written done." The students are able to talk to their parents and kind of translate that way, but it is the major resource that we most needed translators to translate the letters that we send home. They are only translated in two languages now, Spanish and Arabic. We asked students to do translation for causal things, but you cannot pull them out of classes to ask them to translate formal letters or work for us. It is a legal issue. We have to hire official translators, which is very expensive to do.

One of the times, I go online to freetranslation.com. I write in English and cut and paste it in and hopefully it translates correctly. A lot of languages in here are different from the normal list. They are common languages, but a lot of our kids speak dialects such as Karan... I do not know, so I never use it again. We do have so many variations of languages and dialects here. We cannot even find a dictionary for them. Our students have to go to their home country and get it. We do have odd languages here. Yeah, the population we work with. It is hard to find a dictionary for them. Even online and Amazon... It is hard.

The expectation gap of newcomer youth about their performance at U.S.

schools. Newly arrived immigrant youth may be very excited to finally go to school regularly, and may have high expectations for their ability to work and be able to support their family; however, they eventually find out they are far behind their native English peers. Even when they are able to make great academic progress, they are still chasing to catch up with their English-speaking, grade-level peers, but their peers are continuing to learn as well. Newcomer youth then realize that meeting their goals would be harder than expected. On the other hand, because of the language barriers and the lack of understanding of the structure and operation of U.S. educational system, newcomer youth's parents are not able to navigate the system for their kids. In contrast, parents need their kids to translate English for them and assist them to make any decisions.

A TESLS ninth grade student was very smart and doing better than other newcomer peers. In his math classroom, he had a better understanding in math. He was very proud of himself, since he got an 86 on the quiz. In fact, several of his native peers had received 110. Another female newcomer student in the same class did get her practice sheet right. She asked the researcher, “Don’t you think Asian students are doing much better on math, because we are smart?” The researcher responded to her, ”Asian students are not all smart, but most of them work very hard.” In English class, a teacher in the NSN shared:

Sarah is a very smart kid and she learns so fast. She is making great progress in comparison to her other two sisters. Her parents insisted on transferring her to her neighborhood high school at the beginning of this semester. She was not doing well, since her English proficiency was not good enough to scaffold for learning content-area subjects yet. So they sent her back to us. Now she stays with me and I let her help other new students to build up her confidence.

The teacher in NSE also stated:

Our students are the medium for teachers and parents. Most parents are not able to speak English; their kids become the bridge of school and the family. My kids are important messengers for their parents. However, it is hard for me sometime, when I tried to communicate with the parents about their kids’ behavior problems at school. So I would contact a professional translator if the service was available. For most of time, my kids help to make decisions for their families.

Living in a community school with trust and caring. Although teachers were not able to speak their students’ native language, they still needed to do their best to communicate with parents. Teachers indicated that they joined community activities to build relationships with parents and showed caring to understand newcomers’ needs. Newcomer schools were able to partner with the community to serve parents and families.

The ESL specialist in the NSE stated:

Parents meetings mainly focus on how to understand the student report card, students' attendance, counselor support, immunization and common illness, and where and what to get the medicine. We did provide Spanish and English version. We also had four different language translations for parents who are from Asian and African countries. At parents' night, we also talk about summer school. It is important for these kids to continue practicing English without interrupting. Learning in summer is critical for them without two months gap. That helps a lot. We are fortunate enough to get funding, but we do not know this year because of the budget cut. In terms of food, our families used to be supported by Whole Food Company during Thanksgivings and Christmas. Families got food baskets.

In addition, a TESLS teacher attended activities:

According to my experience, the most important thing is to build trust with parents and students, so I go to their apartment complex every Thursday to sing with them. I play guitar. I do not speak their languages, but I can get to know them very well. They can trust me.

Another teacher in the TESLS visited her kids:

I always bring my son with me to visit my students' apartments and check on what they are doing. Just driving around the housing complex, my students recognize my little red car. They would come to my car and wait for me there, if they see it.

The impact of NCLB Act on newcomer adolescents. The issue of newcomers' learning is far more complex than we can imagine, considering the fact that research indicates that it takes five to seven years to attain academic proficiency in a second language learning (Brisk, 2006; Cummins, 1981; Krashen, 1983; Muñoz, Cummins, Alvarado, & Ruef, 1984). NCLB mandates high standards of learning and instruction on one hand; in other words, the law requires newcomers to make adequate yearly progress after three years and pass the state standardized test to obtain a high school diploma. Schools are facing the dilemma of meeting the requirements of NCLB or addressing unique leaning needs of newcomer adolescents for true learning progress at schools.

The teacher indicates issues the U.S. educational system has with adequately accommodating these students as shown below. When newcomers arrive in the U.S., they are obligated to go to a school in their neighborhood if they are under age 21. Without a robust system to accommodate newcomers with no or limited English proficiency, U.S. educational system is designed to fail them. A NSN teacher illustrated that some newcomers are trapped. They are going nowhere. She said:

The situation is for newcomers to get enough credits to graduate. They do need to move on to go get to other schools, so they can be given the kind of courses that they need in order to get credits. If they stay here much longer, they would not get credits for this time. They are just repeating the same class again and again. That is why we need to push them on. However, because of the age of students if they are not likely to graduate anyway, they might let them stay [in school] longer if needed. Just let them master what they are doing and they get more social skills. One thing is hard is that students come to the U.S. and they are already 18 years old or 17 years old. The public school system is hard for them to fit in, because it takes four years actually (9, 10, 11, and 12) for even the best student to graduate. So if they come in and they are already 19 years old and they are only allowed to stay in the public school system through 21 years old. Then the school would be reluctant for them to move on in their school, because that hurts their dropout rate. Even that thought, that sounds cruel, the school does not want their spending to be cut yearly. They are going to dropout after one year and the dropout rate goes up....So their school performance level goes down, so they are saying, not take them.

Supports of teaching and learning in the classroom context. *Learn English, not just about the language.* Language mediates all learning. Understanding the English language becomes the only key for opening the door of learning other content areas for newly arrived youth. In fact, language learning should be more purposeful. More specifically, teachers use content-specific vocabulary in certain content areas such as mathematics, science, and social studies. They have to make sense to newly arrived youth, not only learning English, but also content area knowledge.

Consequently, newly arrived adolescents have to participate in mainstream classes and pass the state tests, plus obtain conversational skills and academic English. The evidences of challenges in classroom are explained in the following conversation. Newcomer students had a hard time understanding whole English sentences in the TESLS when they just arrived. These students were not able to answer questions in complete sentences, either. In the first semester, they needed a structure and effective learning design for guiding them on the classroom board. In geography class, twelve students were watching the “Western Europe” video.

Teacher: Do you know what “Travel” is about?

Student: Germany, France, New England...

Two-thirds students in this class slept or were doing other things. The teacher told the researcher they were not ready to learn geography. They needed more English.

Field notes: [The researcher also observed that a teacher asked all students to write down what she put on the whiteboard. She saw You-Seo, one of the newcomers, sit there and did nothing. The researcher told her to write down what the teacher was writing now. She smiled and shook her pencil. Then the researcher pointed her finger on her notebook and Angela said “Copy” and she pointed to her notebook. The researcher said “Yes”.]

Correspondingly, a NSN teacher tried to explain what “crowded” means in an English I class. All the students in this class were identified as Beginners for their English proficiency. The following conversation was between the teacher and her students. Amy is a student who came from an East Asian country and had been in the U.S. for four months. Her native language is Arabic and she had very limited formal schooling. She was so quiet in the classroom and smiled all the time.

Teacher: What does “crowded” mean?

One student: A lot of people.

Another student: Many people are at cafeteria, in the bus, people in line.

Teacher: Amy, can you give us an example about “crowded”?

Amy: Teacher.

Teacher: Can you tell us where is crowded?

Amy: Student.

However, a math teacher in the NSN who has taught ninth grade limited English proficiency to newcomer youth for more than five years shared her experience:

I have my way of sending a message to communicate with the kids. However, if the kid does not comprehend, there is always a kid possibly from the same language group that can help translate. I do not see anything wrong if the translating is needed, when we talk about the first year English learner. I allow that to happen. Like I said the kid in math they need to understand the concepts before they can even use the dictionary or books. If they do not understand the concepts, then I do not see their progress. If the kid does not understand something, there is a kid from his language group who can help. That makes a difference. I would say bilingual tutors who are trained by using ESL strategies. That would also help a lot. We want to enable our kids to be successful right, but only if you can. Then I would allow translating. That is how I see it.

Now when it comes to the PELL kids the first and second semester, they go to the special PELL programs. And we do have a great math teacher who covers the basic topics and the curriculum has been made for the kids. So you now prepare them as much as we can for the regular high school. Of course, it is a gap, but it is off track for the kids who want to come to Algebra, even though they are unprepared. Most of them are 15 years old, so most of them have full operation of a concrete brain and they can trust us. They can absorb the information, process information, and they can think for themselves. It is not the same thing like teaching a baby. They can learn fast.

Teachers also reported it is difficult to increase newcomers' knowledge and skills in mathematics, science and social studies during a short amount of time, because these three subjects definitely need more academic English to understand discipline-specific words to acquire the content. Newcomers have to learn advanced vocabulary and understand how to use it in context. However, experienced teachers with a customized and effective instruction and curricula, which are designed to meet specific needs of newly arrived youth, would accelerate their academic progress.

Teachers who can speak students' native languages help their students learn. A teacher who spoke newcomers' first languages helped them learn and understand content area knowledge and skills by using code-switching methodology. Also, the teacher only used students' native language to translate content for them when needed. One NSN teacher said:

I do know Spanish and German as well. It helps a little bit to understand the cognitive and which word could help them to remember in English better, and I would also help them to know how English is different from their home language, the syntax, and the order of the word in the sentence may be different. I know that in the Spanish many times the adjective comes after the noun, but not always, many times in a language.

Another NSE teacher also mentioned:

I speak Spanish to newcomers when they first came to my classroom. It was very helpful. These students can understand easily and follow what I was saying, while other students who speak a language other than English and Spanish struggled with the meaning of words and did not know what to do during the conversation. Um. I also tried to limit the use of Spanish, when I found they are able to talk in English. We do want them to learn English.

Unique techniques accelerate newcomers' learning. In newcomer schools, teachers spoke slowly and clearly to make sure their students understand. They made use of pictures and body languages to express what they tried to deliver to students. Also teachers made use of activities to make the lesson fun and maintain the students' interests, to keep them engaged in the instructional activities. They always paired students up who spoke the same native language, so students could help each other. While students worked on their project, the teacher walked around each table to make sure that students understood and knew what they were doing.

In addition, the teacher asked each student to pronounce vocabulary words after her one by one. Teachers also encouraged student engagement. Teachers tried hard to get students to speak up and gave them time to react and reflect. It took a longer time for students to process what they heard and gave them time to reflect on ways to react. Moreover, one reading teacher designed the instruction to encourage their students to share the culture of their country of origins with others students. Newcomers introduced their home county's cultures and customs with each other. Furthermore, in content areas, NSN provided a math problem solving class for newcomer youth to build basic math concepts and increase their vocabulary before they took Algebra I. One NSN math teacher with ten years teaching experience said:

There are topics here embedded in math curriculum. One particularly important topic is probability statistics. So if the kids are coming here in ninth grade or other grade level, he is still missing probability statistics. I like the problem solving class where we can teach the concepts that are regularly not covered. Even the kid is at the grade level. Does that make sense? The thing is when the kids are coming and they are not at grade level, the thing needs to be built in math such as teaching them ratios. They need to understand the concept of proportion. Then you can teach them ratios. You can teach them fractions. Then you can teach decimal numbers. It is an assumption that they know all of it before they enter Algebra in one class. In my personal experience, once again, I am only speaking for myself. I like it when we have opportunities to teach Problem Solving class for the first semester that covers those basic topics, which we know they did not have and they need for the Algebra class.

New teachers have all the theories, but they need a lot of concrete examples. With the visual support and reading parts, students have conceptual understanding. Visualize as much as you can for teaching newly arrived immigrant students. If they see it, they are exposed to the knowledge. Then they would get it. It takes time to prepare the curriculum for them. Once you do it well, you can just modify them. Say it in different ways. It takes a little work.

Another NSN teacher pointed out:

So anyway, we give opportunity to write words and to write just alphabets. We have alphabets to display as much as you can see in the elementary school. Even this is a high school. We have it out there for. And this may seem unusual for teachers who are teaching at regular high school, because the amount of pictures they see all round is for elementary level, but the fact is what they need. So we give it to them. We try to provide dictionaries in different languages as many as we can. If they are preliterate it is not going to help, because they can read and write in their first language. So you put the dictionary out there, they cannot use it. They are unable to do that. One thing I like to do is to get them all opportunity to speak, to take turns, to do the strategy that I said it and they repeated, to do while they said it to their neighbor, and their neighbor to say it to their next neighbor. That is a chaining technique vocally.

Specific professional development for educating newcomers. Although school districts offer professional development, it does not meet the needs of teachers at newcomer schools. Teachers not only have to understand what requirements for teaching ELLs, but also know how to teach newcomers in this specific context. A teacher in NSN shared her experience:

I have taught ESL about ten years all together, in this school, five years. All teachers in this school are ESL certified. But that, there is quite a bit of difference, you can take a test and get an ESL certification. Or you can do some background work at your college to take some classes to prepare you to teach ELLs. Before I actually took my certification test, I had to take four classes at college to prepare. It did not help me so much on the test as it did, but it helps in my class to understand how words are formed phonetically and psycho-linguistics helps me to understand how language works, you know.

Another experienced math teacher in NSN indicated:

The ESL professional development is not so much useful for addressing the brand new immigrant students. They are different groups. If you have ESL students like you and me who do not need time to translate, while we have brand new kids who cannot even say their names in English. The district has been bringing the expert, Dr. Aida Walqui, and she has conducted training throughout the school year. That is what we need. I think at this particular moment my needs are met. In addition, my Algebra curriculum for the district also has suggested the ESL modification for ESL students. So I think within the lessons I can look at the ESL modification and suggestions and see if I can implement them. And then through all these years working with my kids, I do have my own strategies that work well.

The other teacher in the NSN also requested the need for specific professional development:

They are pretty good about doing professional development. The only thing I would say sometimes I face a little frustration, because our school is pretty unique. And a lot of time the professional development is based on, you know, the general school sometimes, and our school is very different. A lot of things do not transfer exactly. It does not meet our needs. We just sit there for hours. They are talking about you can do all these different activities. I was like, our kids are learning how to write letters. You know. So sometimes it does not match, but they do have another one just specific for ESL or ELL learners. You know. So they are more helpful. A lot of general ones, we cannot express to people until they come in and see how the population is so different. They have to spend a day here to really know what it is like. You can tell them ESL students. Sometimes they insist and say no you can do this, you can do that, but it is like okay come to my classroom and do it. See what it is like. I am willing to learn it. It is just that it is a lot harder than what you thought. It is different.

Summary of Qualitative Data

The school settings and atmosphere were different among three observed schools, because the mission of newcomer schools, NSN and NSE, were to serve only newly arrived immigrant adolescents, while the TESLS accommodated all high school students including high school ELLs in their neighborhood. The design of newcomer schools was an attempt to accelerate newly arrived youth's academic adjustment and learning; however, the ESL program in TESLS intended to meet ELLs' needs within a regular high school.

Although different designs of newcomer schools and ESL programs existed, teachers in the three schools encountered tremendous challenges of educating newly arrived immigrant students. For instance, the English language gap between ELLs and native English speakers was huge in the TESLS classroom. Subject area teachers had

limited understanding about the needs of these students due to teachers who were not aware of ELLs' background knowledge. Moreover, subject area teachers did not recognize embedded concepts and skills in the subject areas that should be integrated to newcomers' teaching and learning. As a result, inappropriate classroom management for ELLs and subject content that lack ESL focus caused disadvantages for newly arrived youth in the TESLS. As a matter of fact, it is impossible for mainstream class teachers to speak slowly and clearly to newcomers and give them extra time to absorb the content in class, since the class pace was designed for native English speakers.

In contrast to teachers in the TESLS, newcomer schools were more aware of their own assumptions about their students and understanding unique needs of newly arrived adolescent students. For example, teachers in newcomer schools not only perceived newcomers' formal schooling affected their English language learning, but also knew the importance of indentifying PELL students as soon as possible, right after newcomers arrived. They also shared effective techniques such as student engagement, pairing, reflections, visualizations of concepts, and English-Native language dictionaries for assisting newcomers' learning. Furthermore, newcomer school teachers had a better understanding of newly arrived youth's living experience in the U.S. and recognizing their students' learning challenges. Most important of all, teachers were able to spend more time with each student in the classroom, since the class size was small and the class period was about two hours.

Teachers in both newcomer schools and the TESL school emphasized the importance of incorporating language objectives into content area learning for newcomer

adolescents. Professional development is the main vehicle to deliver accurate knowledge and skills to teachers who are going to serve newly arrived adolescents. Teachers in newcomer schools had expressed their needs to obtain more new knowledge for teaching newcomer youth in both language and subject areas.

Conclusion

Research showed some immigrants are voluntary immigrants who chose to immigrate to the United States in search of a better life and others are refugees who have been forced to flee their home countries because of political conflicts or wars. Newly arrived youth and their families are new to the United States, community, culture and tradition, school, and the language. This is a diverse group, composed of immigrants and refugees representing many different languages, cultures, and socioeconomic backgrounds (Cummins, 1981; Sluzki 1979; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2008; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001). Under additive schooling in subtractive times and disadvantaged circumstances (Bartlett & Garcia, 2011), newly arrived high school immigrant adolescents face severe challenges not only in their academic development but also to the adjustment of a new life in a new land.

To gain a deeper understanding of what challenges teachers faced and what supports teachers provided to their students, this study allow us to identify underlying reasons of why newcomer adolescents performed differently among different programs. Findings that discussed teachers' perspectives on challenges and supports of teaching newly arrived youth among different programs enable policy makers and educators to understand the significant effects of different program placement on newly arrived youths'

schooling in Texas. Thus, the analysis of this study discovered program placement is one of many important factors for newly arrived youth's academic success. In chapter five, the researcher will explore the connections between these research questions as well as potential explanations for some of the relationships revealed through the analyses presented in this chapter.

Chapter Five: Discussions and Policy Implications

The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of program placement on the educational outcomes of and challenges faced by and support provided to recently arrived immigrant youth in Texas high schools. This chapter presents a summary of these research results, organized in a way that clearly connects them to contemporary educational concerns on newly arrived immigrant adolescents. Specifically, the chapter includes a data synthesis, discussion, policy implications, limitations, future research, and conclusions. Significantly, the findings of this study identify the features of effective language programs, providing policy makers and educators with a deeper, research-based understanding of how to meet the educational needs of recently arrived immigrant youth.

Summary

Nationally, secondary schools have encountered a rapid increase in the percentage of immigrant adolescents who are categorized as English Language Learners (ELLs) (Calderon, Slavin, & Sanchez, 2010; Capps et al., 2005; Fry, 2007). Recently arrived immigrant students have made up a historically diverse segment in U.S. schools. This heterogeneous group of students arrives in schools with a wide range of educational background knowledge. These students are unique in many ways, including language speaking, generational status, amount of formal education, race and ethnicity, national origin, and family socio-economic status (SES) (Nicolas, DeSilva, & Rabenstein, 2009; Short & Boyson, 2004; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2008).

Newly arrived immigrant youths are likely to start their education with considerable disadvantages, while they are entering U.S. schools at a later start age with

no or limited ability to speak English, low level of literacy in the first language, and poor academic skills placing them at risk of educational failure (Cummins, 1981; Rong & Preissle, 2009; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2008). In particular, recently arrived adolescents with no or limited English proficiency are considered four times more likely to drop out of high school (Carolina & Amen, 2004; Fry, 2003). Their learning problems are not merely linguistic issues; rather, they are dealing with challenges particular to the social and cultural dislocations inherent in the process of migration (Calderon, Slavin, & Sanchez, 2010; Ko & Perreira, 2010; Sluzki 1979; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001), including the challenges of language acquisition, which block their access to high quality education in U.S. schools.

A high quality secondary education has been viewed as a gateway to college and/or a better career for all students. Learning English and obtaining a high school diploma are often equated with assuring the realization of the “American dream” for newly arrived immigrant youth and their families. More importantly, research has shown that the successful acquisition of, not only English proficiency, but also of academic content in quality educational programs, is one of the most important predictors of success for newly arrived immigrant youths. To address newly arriving adolescents’ linguistic needs and enable them to succeed academically, the instruction must simultaneously integrate content areas and English (Callahan et al., 2009; Cho & Reich, 2008; Crandall, Bernache, & Prager, 1998; Lucas, Henze, & Donato, 1990; Walqui, 2000).

With the intention of ensuring a high quality education for ELLs, at the federal level, No Child Left Behind (NCLB) mandates that States improve and strengthen the educational outcomes of ELL students. In reality, this does not always happen. For example, bilingual education for ELLs is merely one of several options available to local educational agencies (No Child Left Behind, 2001). Although, bilingual education can serve the needs of newly arrived immigrant adolescents well, it is not always available. Due to a scarcity of resources and supports, Texas requires local educational agencies to provide bilingual education programs only at the elementary level, whereas English as a Second Language (ESL) programs are required at the secondary level. Furthermore, there is no specific policy for meeting newly arrived youths' unique learning needs.

Regardless of the politics of ELL education in the United States, in theory, the purpose of language programs is oriented toward creating a schooling environment in which immigrant adolescent students can begin to learn English in a warm, caring, and secure learning environment. Then as they build their English skills and become more familiar with the U.S. school system and American culture, they transition to mainstream classes in a less painful manner. However, in planning and implementing language programs, many schools face a dilemma of providing appropriate services for newly arrived immigrant adolescents via available resources on the one hand and preparing them to obtain English as soon as possible to meet the requirements of accountability policy on the other. As such, newly arrived youth, who arrive with various background knowledge and educational experiences, pose a significant challenge for U.S. schools under the high stakes testing pressure of the NCLB era (Bartlett & Garcia, 2011; Boyson

& Short, 2003).

Currently, the language programs provided for newly arriving youths vary institutionally in the physical location, length of program, and program features. The availability of program types offered in schools, are also dependent upon fiscal resources, materials, community support, and enrollment. The decision regarding what kind of educational program will be available for newly arrived immigrant students is made by districts and schools with considerations of resources and capability (Boyson & Short, 2003). Unfortunately, the quality of programs serving newly arrived youths has not been examined to any significant degree. Therefore, research and discussions of the effects of newcomer programs on recently arrived teens are limited (Gndara & Rumberger, 2009; Pez, 2008).

This research attempted to answer four research questions including 1) How do newly arrived youth students enrolled in newcomer programs, schools, and those enrolled in traditional English as a Second Language (ESL) programs differ with regard to characteristics, such as race, gender, socioeconomic status (SES), course completion, grade retention, and language spoken at home?; 2) How do the differences in characteristics of newly arrived youth students relate to grade retention?; 3) What is the relationship between the growth in academic achievement and newly arrived youth students' demographic characteristics while enrolled in different programs?; and 4) What kinds of learning opportunities and educational supports are provided by traditional ESL programs, newcomer programs, and newcomer schools for newly arrived youth students in northern and central Texas? To contribute to this gap in the existing research

literature, this study made use of a mixed-method research design that integrated quantitative and qualitative data to triangulate the findings. To answer the first three questions, descriptive statistics and multiple regressions were examined. To address the research question four, observations and interviews were conducted. Specifically, qualitative data was used to make sense of the results achieved through quantitative analysis of the state data and to provide more fruitful information for designing effective language programs for newly arrived adolescents.

Data Synthesis

Findings of this study have brought attention to the teaching and learning challenges for a growing high school ELL and foreign-born immigrant youth population in the state of Texas. In 2006, high school ELL students in Texas spoke around 100 different languages. Within this ELL population, fourth-fifths were identified as Limited English Proficient (LEP) students. Almost two-thirds of LEP students attended high schools for more than five years. This phenomenon reflects the learning issues of LEP students that are often overlooked and underserved.

Moreover, the data shows while ELL students' English speaking capacity and listening proficiency had improved over time, this trend did not hold for progress in reading proficiency. While ELLs entered high school with Beginning or Intermediate English proficiency in reading, they were unable to advance to higher levels of proficiency in a short period of time. Regardless of whether newly arrived adolescents were clever and enthusiastic to learn, teachers in this study constantly emphasized that newly arrived teenagers with no or limited English proficiency or/and limited formal

schooling were not able to make progress in the first few years of schooling. More importantly, these students were not appropriately placed in classrooms due to the absence of their formal schooling records and incapacity of speaking English.

Turning to the descriptive findings of this study, informants indicated that a high percentage of ninth grade foreign-born youth with no or limited English proficiency were Hispanic and that over two-thirds of these students were from low SES backgrounds. Not surprisingly, the majority of the students examined for this study spoke Spanish as their first language, while 10% of the students spoke 48 other languages. Teachers in this study explained how the large number of languages created challenges and difficulties for them in designing effective curriculum as well as for interacting with their students. Mostly teachers used body language and concrete objects to communicate with students and their parents. In addition, English-Native language dictionaries became the most common resource (for some students, the dictionaries were the only medium), for making connections with students' prior knowledge.

Next, the retention rate of all LEP and non-LEP students in the state of Texas demonstrated that more 9th and 12th grade LEP students were retained than 10th and 11th grade LEP students. LEP students were more than twice as likely to be retained than the non-LEP students in the 9th, 10th, and 11th grades. Surprisingly, 12th grade LEP students were five times more likely to be retained than their non-LEP peers. Data analysis also illustrated that one-third of ninth grade newcomers were retained after their first year of schooling. Newcomers in the Newcomer Program (NCP) group had the highest retention rate after the first year of schooling among all groups. Newcomers in the Newcomer

School (NCS) and the NCP groups were significantly more likely to be retained than students in the Traditional English as a Second Language (TESL) group. After two years' of schooling, the retention rates of the NCS and NCP groups were reduced to the same rate as the TESL group. Teachers in this study expressed newcomer schools only accommodated newly arrived youths for one or two years so newcomer schools may not be able to provide sufficient courses to meet the needs of newcomers' grade promotion. However, research has uncovered some evidence supporting the idea that students, who were retained for the first year, made great gains in reading and mathematics; conversely, research also indicates that this growth disappeared the second year and a later retention occurred (Jacob & Lefgren, 2004; Roderick & Nogaoka, 2005).

Subsequently, one of the important findings of this study is that the percentage of missing student data tripled from 6% in 2007 to 21% in 2009, although the dropout rate was around 5% over time across the four studied groups. Teachers' responses also noted that newly arrived adolescents were dropping out due to family financial needs or family relocations due to parents' searching for job opportunities. When newcomers' family financial and cultural issues were unstable, students left school and did not return the following year.

Importantly, the Traditional English as a Second Language with High Reading (TESLHR) group newcomers with higher reading proficiency prior to their arrivals in U.S. schools, consistently had the lowest retention rates, dropout rates and the highest graduation rates. For immigrants who had reached advanced or advanced high levels in English before entering U.S. schools, their performance prevailed over those who had no

or limited English proficiency. Immigrant adolescents' prior schooling predicted their English learning progress. Newcomers may acquire content-specific vocabulary more quickly and effectively if they already had the equivalent grade level formal schooling in their home countries; however, newcomers with limited prior schooling face both the challenge of learning a new language and of having to conceptualize new concepts that contain whole new bodies of knowledge. There is no question that these challenges are significant for newcomer students.

Consequently, this study found that newly arrived youths who were placed in either the TESLHR, NCS, or NCP groups outperformed significantly those students in TESL in reading and mathematics. In other words, students in the TESL group gained less in terms of reading and mathematics scores than did other newcomer students. This may be because the newcomer programs and schools are specifically designed to meet the unique needs of newly immigrant youths. Specifically, the environment of newcomer schools provides a more warm, welcoming, and caring atmosphere so that newly arrived youths are able to make connections with supportive adults in school, to catch up with their background knowledge, and to access assistance as they adjust socially and culturally (Suarez-Orozco, Rhodes, & Milburn, 2009). Thus, newly arrived adolescents were served better in the NCS and the NCP groups than in the TESL group.

Regardless of how much better of an experience students in the NCS and NCP programs have, the teachers who work in newcomer schools expressed their need to obtain additional skills and knowledge to better serve and teach newcomer youths in both language and subject areas. In addition to their need for a sophisticated understanding of

the learning challenges facing newly arrived adolescents, subject area teachers need skill and knowledge development in using appropriate content area language to assist these students in achieving academic success (Cho & Reich, 2008). There is no doubt that experienced teachers, who possess such knowledge and skills, are contributing to the success of their newly arrived immigrant students. Teachers in each of the three case studies highlighted the importance of collaborating with content teachers to incorporate language objects into content area learning for newcomer adolescents. Additionally, they indicated that customized professional development that involved sharing effective teaching approaches for newly arrived youths would be the preferred vehicle for delivering accurate knowledge and skills to teachers who are going to serve this population.

Discussion

This study enhanced what we know about newly arrived immigrant youth schooling in Texas and simultaneously highlighted what we need to know about how to better serve these students. Correspondingly, research on the effects of ESL placement and academic achievement also indicates results that many first generation immigrant youths outperformed their peers in multiple indicators of academic progress in school (Callahan et al., 2010). Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco (2006) found that some newly arrived immigrants with relatively high grade point averages (GPA) on arrival to U.S. schools had lower GPAs for after living in the country for a certain number of years. In addition, newcomer students perform relatively poor if they attend schools that accommodate relatively few immigrants (Callahan et al., 2009). Both the quantitative and

qualitative data in this study have shown that newly arrived youths in newcomer schools reached higher academic achievement in reading and mathematics than the traditional ESL program. The newcomer school system and environment tended to be more friendly and welcoming than did the traditional ESL program. Nine perspectives that had drawn from the findings and possible solutions are discussed as follows to explain the effects of different language programs on the challenges of teaching and learning for educators and their students.

First, this study found that immigrant youths entered U.S. schools with disadvantaged backgrounds; meaning, they arrived at a late age, with limited literacy in English, and were more likely to be in a low SES family and performed less well academically (Gndara & Contreras, 2008; Gibson & Bejnez, 2002; Hirschman, 2001; Rumbaut, 1997). They were more likely to attain high retention rates, high dropout rates, and low academic performance in their respective schools, but they only had limited time to finish taking courses and pass the exit examinations to receive their high school diplomas under the NCLB. Due to these significant hindrances, newly arrived youths are in need of highly qualified teachers, supportive staff and administrators aware of their academic needs along with effective designs of language programs in a welcoming environment.

Second, newcomer schools provided a warm and comfortable atmosphere to newcomers, while traditional ESL program presented a culture that leaned toward competition and uniform systems to accommodate all students including newly arrived adolescents. The design of newcomer schools was an attempt to accelerate newly arrived

youths' academic, cultural, and social adjustment and then transition these students to their neighborhood schools (Short & Boyson, 2004). In contrast, the traditional ESL programs were not designed to serve the specific needs of newcomers because the assumptions of curriculum and instruction for high school ELLs are based on beliefs that most ELLs have literacy skills and are already acculturated to school. The newcomer schools in this study, in relation to the traditional ESL programs, were better structured and designed to provide interventions to help newly arrived youths to transition into the mainstream education system and American life.

Third, in the traditional ESL school, course designs and offerings were constrained by the limited resources available for a relatively small ELL population – including newcomers with no or limited English proficiency – and a small group of teachers with ESL certifications in language arts. In this study, when newly arrived immigrant youths with no or limited English proficiency went to mainstream classrooms for taking core subject areas, they experienced academic marginalization. This marginalization manifested in schedule restrictions due to the limited numbers of ESL classes and untrained subject area teachers with scheduling constraints. Newly arrived immigrant adolescents experienced academic and social marginalization not only because of their status as outsiders but also their limited English proficiency hindered their performance in the mainstream classroom. Moreover, subject area teachers' had lower expectations of the newly arriving youths' abilities based on their identification and placement in the mainstream classroom. Therefore, findings explained that the school settings of newcomer schools were better able to overcome the disadvantages of the

traditional ESL program and accommodate newly arrived youth with various backgrounds in the early adjustment stage.

Fourth, teachers in the ESL program and newcomer schools had expressed similar challenges concerning a lack of mutual communication with newly arrived youths with no or limited English proficiency. In addition, teachers' expressed their delivery of effective, comprehensive instruction was impeded by lack of information concerning students' formal schooling experiences, the absence of students' prior educational records, a lack of professional translators, and the need for additional English-Native dictionaries at the beginning of the first semester. Teachers were aware that many newcomers arrived with significant gaps in their English proficiency but they had no knowledge of their amount of formal schooling. Newly arrived youths with very limited formal schooling rarely participated in classroom activities. Teachers, especially those in the traditional ESL classrooms, were unable to provide effective, timely intervention to newcomers with no or limited formal schooling until several months had passed. This study showed that the evaluation of newcomers' formal schooling and securing aids for making connections between English and newcomers' native languages were essential to appropriate program placement.

Fifth, teachers in newcomer schools were more prepared for serving newly arrived adolescents with awareness of their own assumptions about their students' background knowledge and cultural variations. They recognized and had concerns about the linguistic needs of their students. In addition, newcomer schools' districts invited linguistic experts to provide training to teachers in efficient instructional strategies.

Moreover, the small class size settings separated Pre-literate English Language Learner (PELL) students from other newly arrived adolescents in English I, science, and mathematics classrooms. This enabled teachers to teach subject content more effectively by extending class time and speaking clearly and slowly to newly arrived youths who have varied levels of English proficiency. It also allowed newly arrived youths to have additional time to participate in classroom activities.

Sixth, understanding newly arrived youths' second language acquisition process enabled teachers to design curriculum and instruction that lead to effective comprehension. Also, teachers used resources to create contexts that maximized their students' opportunities to learn under constraints of late age arrival and limited prior schooling. The courses, even core subjects, were designed with extended explanations utilizing specific subject vocabulary, visual presentations of concepts, and longer class periods to meet the unique needs of newcomer students. Teachers' interdisciplinary collaborations integrated effective English language acquisition approaches into content area pedagogy and discourse to create explicit and purposeful teaching and learning. This study showed that learning to teach newly arrived youths was an ongoing cumulative process that required sustained, customized professional development.

Seventh, pairing students up with a language partner was a common strategy used in classrooms of traditional ESL programs and newcomer schools. A newcomer was paired with a skilled reader who spoke the same native language. The latter was able to model appropriate knowledge and skills to the former to promote their linguistic development and academic learning in the same classroom. Newcomer students often

learned language through interaction with more advanced ELLs and native English speakers. In the studied cases, the traditional ESL program provided opportunities for newcomer adolescents, who were able to practice English with native English speakers, when they went to mainstream classrooms. Moreover, these students were given opportunities for collaboration on common projects and time to discuss academic topics with native peers.

In newcomer schools, educators have to make use of pairing partners with English speakers in their neighborhood high school to increase newly arrived youths' exposure of their future school in working with their language partners. In contrast, a natural exposure to an English-speaking environment, the traditional ESL program offers the newly arrived adolescents better chances to improve their conversation skills with their native peers. To best serve the newly arrived youth, the traditional ESL programs can be designed more towards newcomer programs within students' neighborhood schools, so newcomers can be accommodated in a warm environment and transition to mainstream classroom smoothly.

Eighth, to meet newly arrived immigrants' expectations about college attainment, schools should assist newcomers to understand their career paths in order to prepare for their future success. High schools can provide opportunities for these students to visit college campuses and participate in pre-college programs. Moreover, high schools can build up partnerships with colleges and invite speakers from colleges virtually or physically to deliver knowledge and skills for college preparation.

Ninth, the missing student data demonstrated many newly arrived adolescents

had left the school system presumably due to family relocation (e.g., change in jobs and financial supports, back to their county of origin, etc.) However, the disappearance of students from the school system should be tracked to determine links with the dropout rate of newly arrived immigrant students in terms of their country of origin

The findings of this study have implications for policy and practice regarding the planning and design of ESL programs, newcomer programs and schools. Newly arrived immigrant adolescents' teaching and learning issues point to challenges for changing the federal and state policies and the structure of the current educational system in regards to ELLs' secondary education (Bartlett & Garcia, 2011). This research strengthens our understanding of the unique needs of newly arrived adolescents with no or limited English proficiency and informs the accurate design of high quality language programs with empowered teaching and learning for newcomers. The results can inform the work of policy makers and educators as they seek to promote improved newcomer educational programs in more effective ways.

Implications for Policy, Practice and Research

To know is critically important, but to know is not enough. The diverse grouping of newly arrived immigrant youths exists regarding age of arrival in U.S. schools, amount and degree of formal schooling, and level of literacy in native language; given that, school districts with varied resources and different sizes of newcomer population are struggling to educate them. The findings of this study presented the strengths and weaknesses of different programs for serving newly arrived adolescent immigrants. The results indicated that the importance of the linguistic, social, and culture challenges of

newly arrived immigrant adolescents in high schools is underestimated in current educational policy in Texas. In the section that follows, positions provide insights for policy, practice and research on improving services for newcomers while considering the availability and restraint of resources. In the implications of policy, these positions include: rethinking the importance of fully funding newcomer schools, standardizing a design of newcomer schools, devising a standard process for newcomer program placement, evaluating newly arrived youths' formal schooling and program placement. Other implications of policy include integrating content area and ESL teachers' efforts; integrating technology and the storage of analytic data, creating flexible academic paths in accordance to needs of newcomer adolescents, seeking language supports from student peers in school districts, developing a translator resources database, and limitations and future research.

Rethinking the importance of fully funding newcomer schools. Newcomer schools provide a safe, caring, and inclusive learning environment so immigrant adolescent students can start learning English for the first year of schooling. Then, as they build their English skills, they become more familiar with the U.S. school system and American culture. The critical importance of such a school's culture assists the transient student to settle in U.S. schools. Based on the availability of school districts' resources or choices, the importance of fully funding newcomer schools should be considered as the top of the priority while schools serve a large population of newly arrived immigrant youth.

Standardizing a design of newcomer schools. Newcomer schools are

intervention programs for transitions to newcomers' neighborhood schools. However, the accommodation procedures, transition processes, and educational supports for newly arrived immigrant youth at newcomer schools were various in many different ways in this study. Standardizing to a certain degree of the most effective elements of a newcomer school includes critical components and features as a model is crucial for schools and districts that are planning to design and implement a newcomer school or improve existing language programs.

Devising a standard process for newcomer program placement. The diverse paths of newcomer program placement among three different schools brought attention to issues of quality and disparity of educational supports. Some students received more educational supports than the others in the different school districts. Standardizing the program placement process that schools can help schools provide higher quality of supports and recourses for their newly arrived immigrant youths.

Evaluation of newly arrived youths' formal schooling and program placement. Research shows that newcomers' formal schooling proficiency level predicts their current academic performance. Newly arrived youths' prior learning experiences matter for their appropriate placement in classrooms in U.S. schools; without which, teachers cannot provide effective support. Some immigrant adolescents are overly introverted in the classroom. ESL teachers may assume many ELLs go through "silent periods". However, ESL teachers might not be aware of the nature or lack of formal schooling of some newly arrived adolescents. Newly arrived high school youths have limited time to graduate. Waiting until teachers recognize that some newcomers do not

make progress results in valuable learning time lost that cannot be recovered.

Teachers indicated parents were often unable to provide sufficient information about their prior schooling experience such as student transcripts from countries of origin, especially for refugee students. In order to provide early intervention to newly arrived youths, an accurate assessment instrument is necessary to measure immigrant adolescents' native language proficiency levels that can collect more detailed and richer information about their educational background prior entering to U.S. schools. In addition, newly arrived immigrant youths should receive grade level credit or course credits for their prior formal schooling in U.S. schools if they attended accredited public school and accomplished courses in their home country (Gonzalez, 2001). This would allow schools and teachers to provide accurate diagnosis for accessing newcomers' language speaking level to place students into the appropriate classes and obtaining credits would increase newly arrived immigrant youths' self-confidence and enable them to move forwards toward the graduation.

Integrated content area and ESL teachers' efforts. Research has shown solid evidence of important links between native literacy and academic skills and English acquisition (Cumming, 1981; Ramirez, Yuen, & Ramey, 1991; Thomas & Collier, 2003). To build up effective comprehension instruction that engages newcomer adolescents, develops their academic skills, and helps them negotiate their identities as bilingual learners, content area and ESL teachers can collaborate and share experiences concerning curriculum and instruction across newcomer programs, ESL programs, and mainstream classes through customized professional development to increase teachers' resources. The

content of effective comprehension instruction has to be explicit and purposeful, engage students actively, and promote students' own understanding. ESL and bilingual teaching professionals can offer classroom support, instructional advice, and general insights into second language acquisition with their peers. Even without ESL training, content area teachers also can learn effective approaches to integrate language with content instruction for immigrant adolescent students working with ESL teachers, linguistic experts, and professional development (Echevria, et al., 2004; Short & Fitzsimmons, 2005).

Integration of technology and analytic data. To acquire academic content via English, English language learners need to learn English. Since the academic vocabulary that students need in the different content areas differ, teachers can utilize scaffolding strategies to help newly arrived youths learn both the English language and the necessary content with technology assistant learning such as the RosettaStone language learning program. Furthermore, creating an analytic data warehouse for educating newly arrived adolescents will enable teachers to better serve these students with helpful and useful data sources. This analytic database can be developed by linguistic experts, ESL specialists, and experienced ESL teachers who have served newly arrived immigrant adolescents for years. This wealth of knowledge concerning teachers' practical experiences can be made available to practitioners across the country.

Creating flexible academic paths in accordance to needs of newcomer adolescents. Research reports that immigrant students, from backgrounds where the native language is not English, require five to seven years to reach academic language proficiency (Brisk, 2006; Cummins, 1981; Krashen, 1983; Muñoz, Cummins, Alvarado,

& Ruef, 1984). Gunderson (2007) indicated, “they actually seemed to need at least 5 years to contend with the English in their academic classes” (p. 268). Immigrant adolescents with no or low English proficiency, low literacy, and no or limited formal schooling who arrive at U.S. schools at late age have extremely limited time to meet the requirements of federal and state laws and to graduate from high schools. Every newly arrived individual has her/his own learning pace. Only flexible and coordinated program paths can be adapted to meet the unique needs of these students (Short & Fitzsimmons, 2006).

Seeking language supports from peer students in school districts. Lack of translations of languages other than English and Spanish resulted in ineffective teaching and learning for newly arrived immigrant youths with no or limited English proficiency. To improve these students’ learning, school districts can recruit senior immigrant students – who are able to speak affluently in the native language and English – to be the translators and parent liaisons for newly arrived adolescents’ first few weeks of schooling. Furthermore, school districts can also employ high immigrant graduates who can speak various students’ languages to be teachers’ assistants to support newly arrived youths and incoming new immigrants’ learning. Or schools can develop relationships with colleges and universities to attract international students who are able to speak the newcomers’ native languages as volunteers or employed personnel to assist these students in many ways.

Develop a translator resources database. Schools struggle to find translators for some languages that would otherwise facilitate teaching and learning in classrooms and

assist communicating with parents regarding students' learning progress. Creating a database, which contains the information of translators in diverse languages across the country, that is accessible to all schools, would be a valuable teaching and learning tool. In other words, schools and educators can request translation services by using computers or other electronic devices to meet their teaching needs at any place during any time.

The above suggestions, which are informed by the analyses conducted for this study, include an array of ideas for supporting newly arrived immigrant adolescents, including evaluating their formal schooling for appropriate program placement, integrating efforts of subject area teachers and ESL teachers to improve curriculum and instruction, integrating technology and housing analytic data to promote teaching, providing flexible academic paths for meeting their unique learning pace, seeking language supports, and developing a database of translator resources to reduce the communicative gap. This study not only informs research and debate concerning the education of immigrant newcomers, but also examined the learning factors of newcomer schools for adolescent students on academic performance in ninth grades statewide. In addition, this study also creates a model that can be replicated by researchers for further study in Texas.

Limitations and Future Research. The interpretation and generalizability of the findings is constrained given that inferences are largely based on the assumptions and limitations of this study. For example, several potentially informative issues (e.g., absence of data concerning newly arrived immigrant adolescents' prior educational experiences and limited number of informants who speak languages other than English

and Spanish etc.) were not examined in this study. These issues, however, could be incorporated into future research.

Three assumptions apply to the study: First, new arrived immigrant students' English proficiency levels provided one indicator of whether previous educational experiences in their home country or a lack of these experiences contribute to a newcomer's academic achievement in schools in the U.S. Second, the criteria for assigning schools to different program types were based on availabilities of program descriptions on schools' current websites and the number of newly arrived youths at schools. Third, the variables and data utilized in this study were measured consistently and accurately across all of the campuses and newcomer programs considered.

The first limitation of this study is that only variables available through the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) of Texas Education Agency data sets could be utilized and controlled for in quantitative portion of this study. Secondly, given that lack of data, it was not possible to determine the educational experiences of recent immigrant students prior to Texas school entry (i.e., who did or did not participate in public school programs outside the U.S.). Thirdly, the student data was analyzed in 2006 and 2007, so the current school programs may not reflect accurately what programs they had five years ago. Fourthly, at the high school level, around 100 different languages were spoken in Texas public schools. Unfortunately, the number of students speaking a given language, other than Spanish and English, was too small to allow for statistical analysis. Finally, qualitative observation and interview data were gathered from teachers

who exhibited their willingness to participate in this study in three schools, limiting generalizability of findings.

The existing limitations of this study can be a step forward for the directions of future research. First, due to limitations of time and access to different languages, this study did not utilize data collected directly from students and parents. However, it is imperative that future research include interviews and focus groups with newly arrived adolescents who attend ESL programs, newcomer programs, and newcomer schools in order to understand students' emotional and learning needs. Also, parents' perceptions of U.S. culture and schools and their decisions about their kids' education and life would also be valuable research endeavors. Second, in order to enter the inner world of newcomer adolescents to address their specific needs, studies should be conducted that seek to understand newcomer students' acclimation to their new lives in the U.S., for example, how they negotiate cultural differences, whether they experience isolation and loneliness due to limited English language skills, and how the experience of loss (familiar signs, friendships, customs, etc.) might influence their transitions in U.S. schooling.

Third, newcomers' formal schooling knowledge is encoded in their native language and prior knowledge represents a foundation for all learning; including English language and content area learning (Gunderson, 2007). Newcomers' prior knowledge predicts their academic progress. In Texas, newcomer youths were not tested for their native language proficiency. Future studies might explore ways of evaluating newcomers' fluency levels in their native language so they can be placed in an appropriate program to better meet their needs. Fourth, this study showed that students at newcomer schools had performed

better than students in the traditional ESL program, but the grade retention rates of newcomer schools were higher than in the traditional ESL program. More research is needed to examine the relationship between grade retention and academic achievement for newly arrived immigrant adolescents. Finally, to develop appropriate professional development to meet needs of newcomers' teachers, future research should focus on analyzing all current resources used by schools where newcomers are served better and share promising resources to ultimately improve newcomers' teaching and learning. Moreover, the experienced school model can be adopted to share their teachers' knowledge and skills with all pre-service and in-service teachers in Texas.

Conclusion

Studies have shown that newcomer students need a safe and caring environment where they can cope with language barriers until they are ready to express themselves within the new culture (Bartlett & Garcia, 2011; Boyson, & Short, 2004). However, the law states that LEP students are required to have the ability to listen, understand, speak, read and write English with fluency to realize their full potential in the U.S. English-speaking society (NCLB, 2001). Due to newly arrived youth being disadvantaged at the beginning of U.S. schooling under federal and state high-stakes accountability policies, the education of newly arrived youth has brought challenges that warrant changing the structure of the U.S. school system (Bartlett & Garcia, 2011).

As a matter of fact, these students' challenges to access mainstream education are not simply linguistic issues. Providing more English instruction alone will have limited impact. As this study has found, some newly arrived youths are extremely disadvantaged

within the ELL population. Their learning issues have been overlooked and they are underserved in U.S. high schools. Because the challenges that they encounter are not well known, their learning needs are misunderstood, they tend to be grouped as a single entity, and their learning issues are generally invisible for policymakers and educators.

The contributions of this study are to recognize the large achievement gap of newly arrived immigrant youths in Texas and the variation that exists in their schooling background and core knowledge levels. Most newly arrived adolescents attend high poverty, high minority, and high dropout schools. They are often placed in the low track classrooms and then are eventually retained at 12th grade. Consequently, the challenge is not simply a question of teaching students with interrupted schooling how to read or speak English; however, these are students who may also experience a high incidence of post-traumatic stress disorder, struggle with "cultural adjustment" or identity issues (Spaulding, Carolino & Amen, 2004, p.8), and need intensive literacy and content instruction as well as an introduction to "the basics of the American school/classroom culture" (p.5). Moreover, they require additional time to obtain academic English and reach academic proficiency in all content areas before entering the regular track.

The background knowledge newcomer youths bring to school greatly affects their performance. Teachers should work to understand the background understanding that newcomers have, rather than just assuming newcomers come with the same background as other ELLs or as mainstream students. Moreover, educators should create a space for newly arrived youths and teachers to learn social and cultural worlds from each other. Knowing about newcomers' formal schooling and realizing the literacy proficiency in

their native language become the key resources for accurate program placement and language interventions.

Overall, a warm, caring, and welcoming atmosphere like newcomer schools where the schools have all ESL certified teachers in all subject areas who understand the background characteristics of newly arrived adolescents with designed sheltered instruction or QTEL knowledge and skills, these teachers can better serve all newly arrived youths with no or limited English proficiency at schools. Translators and educators who can speak students' native languages can promote communication between teachers, administrators and parents to engage parents to the education of their children. In addition, a healthy and positive school culture should be established to meet the specific needs of newly arrived youths (Bartlett & Garcia, 2011), so students can feel safe and supported by their peers and educators not only in academic areas but also in their cultural and social adjustment in the U.S.

Appendix A

Definition of Terms

The following definitions of terms apply throughout this study:

1. Immigrant students refer to the legal category for students formerly residing outside the United States, and who have entered US schools within the last three years (US Department of Education, 2006).
2. ESL and ESOL are synonymous terms for English as a Second Language-- English Language Arts courses designed for intensive introduction in academic and functional English provided to English Language Learners during their first years of high school (AISD Bilingual/ESOL Handbook 2005-2006).
3. English language learner (ELL) refers to students whose level of English language proficiency is not sufficient for full participation in English-only instructional environments (No Child Left Behind Act, 2001). Although I prefer the term ELL as a positive alternative to Limited English Proficient (LEP), which connotes a deficit or “limiting” condition, LEP is used in legislation and often in research. States and school districts use different, usually more expansive definitions of LEP, based on tests that measure children’s ability to understand, speak, read, and write English.
4. Bilingual education (program) is a term that has both a specific and generic meaning with respect to children who do not know English. Not only is bilingual education a distinct instructional approach, but it is also a term that refers broadly to the assorted special efforts to educate and serve limited English proficient (LEP) students (more recently termed “English language learners” (ELL)). State and federally supported programs of instruction for English Language Learners in grades PK-6, featuring intensive English instruction, use of first or native language to instruct in content areas, development of first language literacy, and support for ELL students’ diverse cultures (Austin Independent School District Bilingual/ESOL Handbook 2005- 2006).
5. Newcomer adolescent or newly arrived immigrant youth in the study refer to ‘immigrant youth’, ‘immigrant adolescents’ or ‘recent immigrant students’ is defined as, unless otherwise noted, “individuals who are aged 14 through 21; were not born in any state; and have not been attending one or more schools in any one or more states for more than one full academic years”. They are often with limited English proficiency and some of them are with limited formal schooling.

Appendix B

Observation Protocol - School

The purposes of general observations

I would like to learn about what goes on in an English language classroom and a mathematics classroom. I am especially interested in observing the interaction between the teacher and the students. Are there any differences in regards to teacher-student interactions between newcomer and ESL programs?

Informal interview protocol with the principal:

- Tell me about your professional path.
- Tell me about the history of your school. What types of special programs do you have at this school? How do you identify ESL students?
- What teacher(s) do you recommend I observe? Are there particular meetings that would be helpful for me to attend? Do you have any advice for me on how I might go about establishing cooperative relationships here at your school?

School Context and Characteristics

- What the school looks like
 - School location
 - School type
 - Types of programs the school has
 - Physical space and building characteristics
 - Student demographics
 - Criteria used to identify ELL students
- The context of the observation (meeting, classroom, staff development session...)
- The overall environment of the observation (description of physical space...)
- How many participants were involved at different temporal points? (subject may come and go from view dependent on the context of the observation)
- What were the roles of the participants involved? (chairing the meeting, presenting papers, listening to the teacher....)
- The time of day at which the observation occurred
- The seating arrangements (in classroom, whether the students were in groups (and of what size); and in meetings who sat where)
- Who talk to who
- The timetable of events (what happened at the start, in the middle and at the end of the observation)

Observation Protocol – Classroom

What happens in a classroom?

Teacher:

Class:

Date:

Purpose:

Subject:

Place:

Classroom Observations: What happens in the classroom? How did teachers interact with students and what is the basis of this interaction?

- What languages did a teacher use in the classroom?
- Did a teacher try to communicate with the student in her/his native language?

Classroom Seating Arrangement (Visual Map)



Teacher's desk, student desks/tables, blackboard, media (overhead, projector), reference book/shelves, learning center, work tables, rug and visual texture, space dividers

The social and organizational context of the classroom is best suited for:

- Group project
- Independent work
- Lecture and discussion
- Other _____

Interaction between a teacher and students

Grasp of concepts by students

Do concepts taught in the course appear to resonate with the students?

1. Rolling of eyes?
2. Exasperated sighs?
3. Comments about applicability of what is being taught?
4. Heads nodding in agreement?

Do students seem to be getting it?

1. Unsolicited comments?
 - Positive?
 - Negative?
2. Heads nodding in agreement?
3. Frustrated body language?
4. Throwing down pencil?
5. Abruptly leaving room?

Question & Answers

Teaching skills of the teacher

1. Is the teacher an effective communicator?
2. Does students seem to understand what the teacher is talking about?
3. Are words used familiar to the students?
4. Does the teacher ask questions of the students?
5. Does the teacher encourage students' participation?
6. Allows time for students' questions?
7. Amenable to being interrupted by questions?

Question & Answers

Appendix C

Teacher Interview Questions

1. What challenges do you face while you are teaching newly arrived youth students in your classroom?
2. What strategies do you use to assist your students learn in your classroom?
3. What accommodations do you currently make for teaching newly arrived youth students in your classroom?
4. What do newly arrived youth students need the most for the first year of schooling?
5. What types of support do you provide for newly arrived youth students' learning in your classroom?
6. What types of supports and professional development do you need for teaching newly arrived youth students more effectively in your classroom?

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