

THE EFFECTS OF IMMIGRATION ON AMERICAN EDUCATION

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INTRODUCTION:

As Americans today we find ourselves slowly coming to the surface of an economic quagmire that has given us a financial crisis comparable only to the Depression of 1929. We are reeling from events such as the massacre in Newtown, Connecticut committed by a young American man. Our inner fears about terrorism on our own soil have again embraced us in the form of the Boston Marathon bombing allegedly by two immigrant brothers. We all watch the television news every day and hear references to murders, soldiers dying on the battlefield and “Congressional Gridlock” that seems to be paralyzing our living Constitution. Our lawmakers are involved in a debate over the status of immigration into our country as well as what to do with the millions of legal and illegal immigrants that are already here. The arguments range from purely racist attitudes to economic issues to even discussions on diluting our culture. Then, an act of terrorism in Boston involving immigrants acted like an incendiary assault on immigration reform and the education of immigrant children. Is it our intent to leave these children in a purgatory of an unfriendly system on education?

BACKGROUND:

Our country has been penned as the “melting pot”¹ for many decades and sociologists, demographic specialists, and historians have even categorized large-scale immigration into America in four distinct waves. The Fourth Wave, started about 1970, is continuing today. Even the Founding Fathers who signed our Declaration of Independence were either immigrants themselves or first generation men born in the Colonies. Thus, we can all trace our forebears back to one foreign country or another. Yet our political leaders have had among their number men such as Herbert Hoover, who in referring to Congressman Fiorella Laguardia, an Italian

¹ J. Hector St. John de Crevecoeur, *Letters From an American Farmer*, 1782. The metaphor, “melting pot”, was first used in American writing by St. John de Crevecoeur in his broadside.

American, that “the Italians are predominantly our murderers and bootleggers”. Hoover went on further and told LaGuardia “to go back where you belong”, because “like a lot of you foreign spawn, you do not appreciate this country which supports you and tolerates you.”² This form of bias, or even racism, is still prevalent in our society today and can be seen in daily actions and political positions that urge the refining of immigration laws to a point where only those that can be let into America are those that can benefit our society.

Today there are proponents of immigration as well as those against such policy and their reasons cover the gamut from cultural and economic issues to labor–related matters, education issues and even to political considerations. But the initial fact remains the same, America is a “melting pot” and also the victim of a biased and even racist predeterminating influence spawned from its puritan foundation.³

The goal of this particular study/paper is to review the problems facing the system of education in America today with an enormous amount of immigrants entering that system since 1970 and how these problems may be eliminated by changes in that system. As stated before we are in the Fourth Wave of immigrants coming to our shores but, in the first five years of the 21st century, over seven million new immigrants have become members of our society. As one can expect this, along with a continuation of large numbers of immigrants, is straining the system of education in the United States. In order to put immigration into the proper perspective we must review the history of the process since the inception of the United States. Demographers Martin and Midgely in 2003 outlined the four waves of immigration as seen here in **Addendum # 1**. This chart shows that the first three waves were primarily from European nations but we must understand that the immigration laws of America during the first three waves were controlled by quotas on a county by country basis. These laws were the personification of the Puritan nature of America and an inherent bias and even racist attitude.

² <http://millercenter.org/president/hover/essays/biography/4>

³ Berg, Philip, Racism and the Puritan Mind, *Phylon*, Vol.36, No.1 (1st Qtr., 1975, (Clark Atlanta University, 1975) p.1-7

HISTORICAL IMPLICATIONS OF IMMIGRATION:

The Fourth Wave, which is the primary focus of this study, was determined by a major change in the criteria of American Laws for immigration. In 1952 the *McCarran-Walter Act* and the *1965 Immigration Act* along with amendments to that act in 1976 virtually eliminated the country by country quotas. Based on political turmoil and economic problems in their own countries the door was now opened for an enormous amount of immigrants from Latin and Asian countries. This growth of the immigrant population is detailed in **Addendum # 2** which shows an immigrant population of approximately 33 million in 2002. The illegal immigrant population has been estimated at another 12 million. Assuming that these figures are correct, within a normal margin of error, our school systems have had to absorb several million immigrant children. The first three waves have historically shown that most of those immigrants have settled in ocean bordering states while the fourth wave has propelled the population boom in all parts of the country.

Such an enormous influx of immigrants has created a divisive series of arguments in the United States and the issues discussed are economic, social, cultural, educational and labor-related. Prior to World War One immigration served an economic and labor-related purpose to America. “Immigration policy prior to World War I was consistent with economic development trends and labor force requirements of the United States.”⁴ It was not until the mid twentieth century that statistics were kept on immigrant students in the public school systems of the United States. Even though immigrants play a significant role in the labor-force, like so many other nations, however, the U.S. population is also somewhat biased. “The United States during the fourth wave we have found a development based on bias and racism that they are not needed and take jobs from Americans. Many immigrants also receive various forms of public assistance and other benefits from the Federal, State and Local governments and that cost is approximately \$89.1 billion dollars per year to the United States Taxpayers. This is outlined in **Addendum # 3**. The opposing argument is based on the assumption that immigrants also generate a great deal of money into the American economy and that they also take service jobs that most Americans do not want. This particular series of Pro and Con arguments has been amplified by the economic

⁴ Vernon M. Briggs, Jr., *Mass Immigration and the National Interest*, (M.E.Sharpe, Inc., Armonk, New York, 1992) p.58

recession of the past five years. This was also the case during and after the severe economic depression of 1883-1886 which also demonstrated issues such as wage cuts and massive unemployment. “This crisis mobilized the nativist consensus against immigration as a source of both unemployment and unrest. It is important, however, that the rhetoric of nativism was then couched in terms of the threat that immigrants posed to the moral character of the nation.”⁵

The primary cultural and societal arguments have centered on a dilution of the American ethic versus an embellishment of that ethic by immigrants from different lands. It is in this set of arguments that we find a basis of the isolationist political ideology of the early twentieth century and the open door policy of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Recently, a new issue has come to the fore reinforcing the pro immigration argument; that is, the fact that the United States population is aging and that by the year 2050 the largest part of the population will be over the age of 53. “With the exception of the United States, the UN “medium” projections show all major developed nations as either having reached their population peaks or due to reach those peaks sometime between now and 2050. The peaking of the U.S. population is so many decades into the future that projection of any such rate is unwarranted. Like all other developed nations, however, the U.S. population is also aging significantly.”⁶ This study was completed by the United Nations prior to the enormous immigrant influx between 2000 and 2005.

Prior to stepping into the foray of the tangled web of immigrant children and American education it is critical to look at another factor that is actually a very important factor in all segments of immigration related issues, namely racism. Do Americans actually have an inherent form of racism not only against people of other colors but also of people of different ethnicities? Remember the earlier quote by President Hoover. We must be aware that most Americans consider being “politically correct” to be liberal and oblivious to race. “The United States...regarded itself as the avatar of democratic values. In a world hostile to freedom, justice, and individual self-determination, the people of the United States saw themselves as a ‘city on a hill’. The United States was alone, it believed, in its combination of democratic and liberal

⁵ Keith Fitzgerald, *The Face of the Nation*, (Stanford University Press, Stanford, California, 1996) p.115

⁶ John R. Bermingham, *Immigration: Not a Solution to Problems of population Decline and Aging*, (*Population and Environment*, vol. 22, No. 4 [Mar., 2001])pp.355-363

values.”⁷ I personally believe, as do many historians, that racism is inherent to the white population in America whether or not they admit it to others or themselves. The great Scottish philosopher, David Hume, in 1748, stated the unequivocal statement as a basis for Puritan beliefs that came to America with the Pilgrims and have remained as an integral aspect of American white society.

“I am apt to suspect that Negroes, and in general all other species of men {for there are four or five different kinds) to be naturally inferior to the whites.”⁸ As we will see, as the subject of immigration and the system of education in America is discussed, this permeating racism also extends into the educational network.

Since educating the children of America is not only mandated by law but also by moral belief then it is to be assumed that immigrant children (legal and illegal) should also be able to avail themselves of an education. But these immigrant children are up against a wall of obstacles. Armando Navarro in *The Immigration Crisis*, 2009, clearly asses the blame for these obstacles. "Today a multiplicity of nativist forces--from the armed rancher vigilantes, militias, organizations, and hate groups to politicians, media personalities, journalists, and academicians, among others--have contributed to the country's immigration crisis by their concerted efforts to persecute and character-assassinate immigrants and migrants..."⁹ This type of attitude and activism permeates all facets of society and especially the education of immigrant children. The 'Latinization and Browning' of the American population will continue and, by 2040, it is predicted that Caucasians will be the minority not only in America but in the school system population. Of course this is not etched in stone and relies heavily on the current decrease in the birth rates of white Americans and the increase in birth rates of Latinos. Another unknown is whether or not the nativist activists actually take control of the political system and institute more stringent immigration laws again with country by country yearly quotas. Although this is possible, it is unlikely based on the fact that the major political parties are well aware of the size of the immigrant voting blocks and their continued expansion as citizenship becomes available to

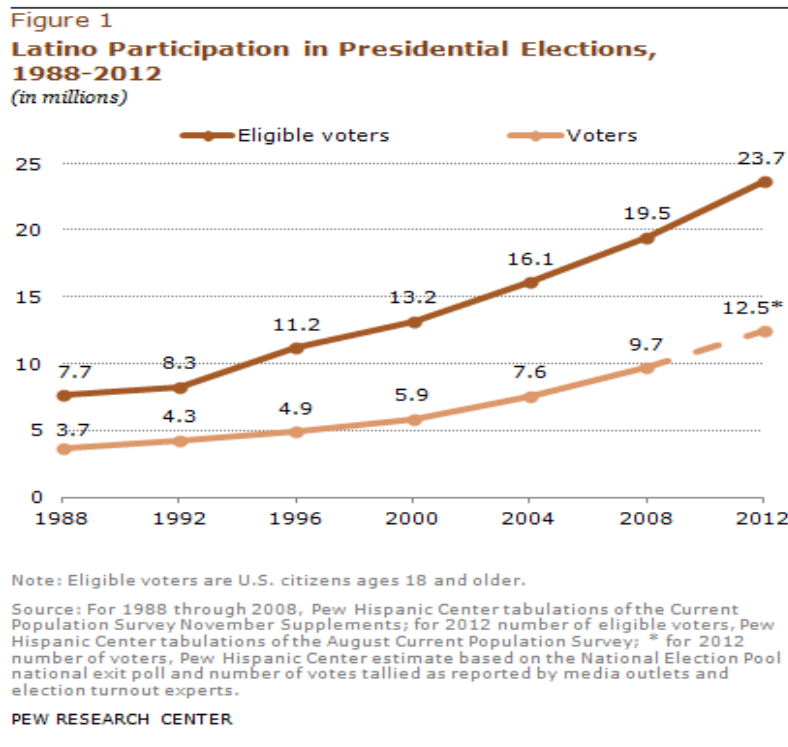
⁷ Ibid., *The Face of the Nation*, p 207

⁸ Winthrop B. Jordan, *White over Black*, (Penguin Books, Inc., Baltimore, Maryland, 1968) p.253. Jordan is one of the foremost historians on the subject of racism in America.

⁹ Armando Navarro, *The Immigration Crisis*, (Altamira Press, New York, 2009) p.377

these immigrants. The arguments for and against immigration are a microcosm of issues that are part of our general society today. From a discussion on gay unions and openly gay immigrants and their rights to precluding citizenship from illegal immigrants, the battle goes on. The main political parties in America are more than cognizant of the immigrant voting bloc and how it can have a profound influence on elections. The debate goes to the core of American ideals and is not a debate of liberal versus conservative. Basic values, whether overt or subliminal, are controlling the debate.¹⁰ In figure 1.1 the marked influence of Hispanics since 1988 on our elections is exemplified and clearly shows the effects of the fourth wave of immigrants coming to America.

Figure 1



¹⁰ http://nbcpolitics.nbcnews.com/_news/2013/05/09/18127888-immigration-reforms-enemies-allies-prepare-battery-of-amendments?lite

With this explosion in population in mind many Americans are using the argument that the United States economy simply cannot afford to increase education funding to a level that will allow it to become more culturally expansive to all children. But, many believe that the financial issues are a fallacy. Navarro further points out that "According to Justice for Immigrants, a former Federal Reserve chairman pointed out that because 70 percent of immigrants arrived to the U.S. in prime working age, it meant the country spent nothing on education yet it was projected that they will contribute \$500 billion toward maintaining the liquidity of the country's Social Security system over the next twenty years."¹¹ However, a cost to educate immigrant children can easily be assessed as the same per pupil yearly cost as any other student in the local school districts. This per student cost today is averaged at \$10,591.00 per student in K-12. (As shown in a U.S. Dept. of Education graph) Fig. 1.1 and with the approximate number of both legal and illegal children in the schools, estimated at approximately 8.5 million, the cost of their education is approximately \$90 billion dollars per year.

Along with fiscal issues in educating immigrant students, issues of cultural immersion and identity, racism, special needs of immigrant students and political posturing all contribute to the problems in the American system of education today. "Economic self-interest and symbolic prejudice have often been treated as rival explanations for attitudes on a wide variety of issues but it is plausible that they are complimentary on an issue such as immigration."¹²

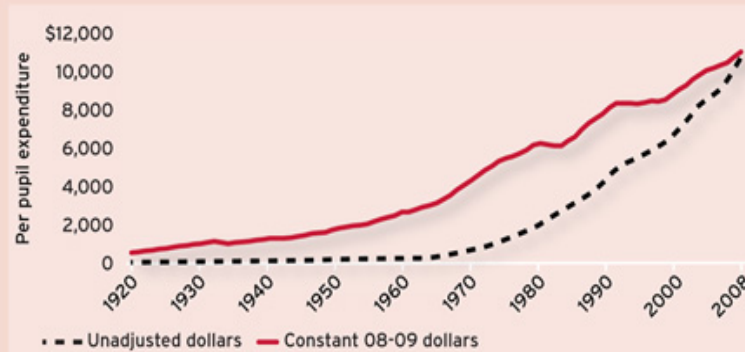
Figure 2

¹¹ *ibid.*, p.380 , Found on Immigrant Workers Freedom Coalition website, stats cited from National Immigration Forum, <http://www.iwfr.org/fact.asp>

¹² Peter Burns and James Gimpel, *Economic Insecurity, Prejudicial Stereotypes, and Public Opinion on Immigration Policy*, (Political Science Quarterly, Vol. 115, No.2 [Summer, 2000]), pp 201-225

Almost a Perfectly Steady Rise (Figure 1)

Adjusted for inflation, increases in per-pupil spending over the last century averaged 2.3 percent per year.



NOTES: Values in 2007 and 2008 represent straight averages across states; finance data expressed in real 2008 dollars.

SOURCES: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Biennial Survey of Education in the United States, 1919-20 through 1955-56; Statistics of State School Systems, 1957-58 through 1969-70; Revenues and Expenditures for Public Elementary and Secondary Education, 1970-71 through 1986-87; and Common Core of Data (CCD), "National Public Education Financial Survey," 1987-88 through 2007-08. (This table was prepared November 2010.)

This type of assumption can easily be attributed today to reasons for the inability of the education system in America to properly integrate immigrant students. Further, as noted before, economic conditions often dictate how people feel about immigration as well as immigrant students in our schools. It has been postulated that the inherent racism in young children is a product of what they see and hear at home and they take this attitude to school with them.

EDUCATOR RACISM:

But, one issue that seems never to be discussed in academic literature is that specific teachers may also be victims of this attitudinal adjustment that has its roots in their own childhood. Subsequently, immigrant students may find themselves at an inherent disadvantage in our schools based on economic conditions and a well-imbedded racism among students and teachers alike. The role of educators in this matter may have a bifurcated basis, if the educator is inherently racist or simply not knowledgeable in the area of diversity. “ This conception suggests that most White teacher candidates are deficient learners who lack resources for learning about diversity. This review reframes this conception through an examination of three bigger pictures of white teacher candidates, the lack of research regarding pedagogies for multicultural teacher

education".¹³ This is only one side of the educator issue and may aid in ending racist attitudes of teachers or not. It does seem that most school districts are reluctant to admit that they may have racist teachers working in their systems. Since teachers themselves are part of our society and culture it would be reasonable to believe that racist teachers do, indeed, exist. "In addition to the tendency to view immigrant education as a purely technical or methodological 'problem' vis-à-vis the 'limitations of students', responses by educators often reflect an outdated assimilationist ideology suggesting that all immigrants, regardless of race/ethnicity and prior socio-economic status level, must eventually assimilate and blend into the dominant white Eurocentric culture".¹⁴ This form of stereotyping is more of an American tradition than a fully learned state of mind as is incorporating people into stereotypes. "Briefly, stereotypes are widely used to generalize about the characteristics of groups of people through the assignment of simple labels that purportedly represent group traits."¹⁵ Immigrant students can be victims of both ethnic and racial stereotyping and, as a group, can cause those who are placing them in these categories, to attempt to control public policy from the classroom level to the federal government. An example would simply be the fact that our government categorizes the immigrants as "ethnic minorities" rather than simply people or students. Although I understand why it is necessary for these students to be categorized in this manner it becomes a serious issue when their ethnicity is an issue in the classroom unless that issue is advancing a multicultural education.

ASSIMILATION V. PLURALISM:

At this point we can see that the immigrant students may be at a disadvantage even before they walk through the doors of our schools based on economic conditions and an inherent stereotyping. Once in the classroom they are also the subject of arguments on "assimilation and pluralism". First of all, the concept of assimilation involves the elimination of the ethnic boundaries of the immigrant student and the total "Americanizing" of the student with no

¹³ Karen Lowenstein, "The Work of Multicultural Teacher Education: Reconceptualizing White Teacher Candidates as Learners", *Review of Educational Research*, Vol. 79, no. 1 (Mar. 2009) pp. 163-196

¹⁴ T. Enrique & Lilia Bartolome, Editors, *Immigrant Voices, In Search of Educational Equity*, (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., Maryland)

¹⁵ Edited by H. Giles and W.P. Robinson, *Handbook of Language and Social Psychology*, (John Wiley & Sons Ltd, NY, 1990)

reference being made to his/her original culture. Pluralism, on the other hand, attempts to accommodate the cultural ethnicity of the immigrant student and actually to educate the child, and others, on that culture. Ronald Takaki, an eminent academic and ethnic scholar, "summarizes two different visions of the United States: a melting pot with a single American identity and a pluralistic cultural democracy".¹⁶ Since 1790 whatever the laws of the time in the United States dictated how immigrant children were educated. If immigrants were needed for the work-force then their children would be educated under a pluralistic method and, if public sentiment was anti-immigration then strong assimilation techniques would be used. But we should be more interested today in how the immigrant children in our schools are educated. Unfortunately for immigrant students emotions on the overall subject of immigration in America can be easily affected by outside issues.

The events of September 11, 2001, have had a tremendous effect on the attitude of the American population on all immigrants and their children. We have all seen this in the media and even on the streets of our country yet the numbers of immigrants are constantly increasing and the educational issue deserves to be settled. Because a terrorist act has roots in a foreign country or group it does not mean that millions of immigrant students should try and survive without a proper education. Our own American Revolution was considered a terrorist act by the British and even today we have suffered losses in America by citizens who believe in mass murder. An isolationist society in America, based on its inception, is not possible.

Even though the student base in America is composed of 67% non-Hispanic whites, immigrant and minority children are divided as follows: 12.8% African-Americans, 4.3% Asian, 14.4% and 14.4% Hispanic.¹⁷ While we have seen that inherent racism is presented in both non-Hispanic white students and even some teachers what we have not taken into account is a somewhat different sociological issue, namely, that African-Americans who have lived for generations in America, are assuming the same negative attitudes toward immigrants as American whites. It has also been shown that, even if the white students have a bias against

¹⁶ Sage Publications, www.sagepub.com/upm-data/27680_Rong_Chapter_1.pdf

¹⁷ SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau (2007)

African-American students, it is not the same as the bias they (whites and African-Americans) have against the immigrant children.

We have now reviewed the issues of cultural problems, racist issues, and economic factors relative to immigrant students in our schools. But there does exist an over-riding issue that is both a position of debate as well as a the selfish aspect of "political pragmatism". Our politicians, from the federal government to the local school districts have taken postures in the immigration arguments. These range from "nativism" to very liberal positions. Some politicians are well aware the size of the immigrant voting blocks and how these blocks can now direct how an election will be determined. Not only do we have political groups focussing on immigration and how immigrant students and their education are handled we also have very large immigrant organizations that want to be heard on these issues. From a sociological point of view we have found that the immigrants themselves still seem to desire to keep their ethnic identity and this has been demonstrated by the creation of 'immigrant neighborhoods" in our cities. Thus, unless the local school districts attempt to integrate their schools as Boston did in the 1960's with African-American and white students, certain schools will be primarily immigrant students and teachers must be found who can accomodate the students cultural and language requirements.

Although not the norm, some schools in America are still dominated by the assimilation model and attempt to force immigrant students to assume an American identity and the English language. In short, they look for a tranformation of these students. The assimilation model was initiated, formally, by Ellwood Cubberly early in the 20th century. " He believed that Americanization required breaking up immigrant groups or settlements, assimilating and amalgamating these people into an American "race" and implanting in their children the Anglo-Saxon conceptions of righteousness, law and order, public decency and popular government." ¹⁸ Of course, as it is today, most Americans preferred citizen status of the immigrants and their children.

The Plualism model utilized by most schools today, allows for assimilation but with the cultural characteristics, race and the social structures they come from all tantamount in the manner they become American students. The local American societal authority is also important

¹⁸ Ibid., *Sage Publications*

to these immigrants and they must learn how our society operates from a grass roots level. Erasing their cultural experience is not accepted in Pluralism models. The key in the Pluralism Model is to allow the students to be assimilated but not by denying their original culture.

The Assimilation Model is handled by the school and the teachers with an effort to "make" the students American." A degree of assimilation is necessary to foster the children's growth in their new environment. But eliminating their cultural heritage is not the methods to utilize. Disassociating them from their heritage could also lead to separating themom their families.

Though seemingly very different, both models of immigrant incorporation share a common understanding that immigrant groups have suffered persecution, isolation, and stigmatization."¹⁹ But school administrators, without regard to what philosophical approach to utilize, find the situation as difficult as the immigrant children do. First of all the administrators are heavily influenced by governmental agencies that want to subdue the immigrant students from using their native language; secondly, the administrators are often criticized by governmental groups as well as immigrant advocacy groups over such things as school curriculums and the inability of many teachers to become acclimated to the cultures of these students. And, of course, these same administrators are victimized by budget considerations on the local, state and federal levels. Schools may lack the space and facilities as teachers may lack the training to accomodate the varied groups of immigrant students. Although many Americans have attempted to revive a form of nativism so have certain immigrant activists who believe that nativism is the only was the funding issues on the local levels.

The numerous arguments for and against mass citizenship for immigrants still leaves the children in American schools in a quandry riddled with changes and modifications that may or may not be successful. The *No Child Left Behind* legislation passed, in 2002, has not reached all of its expectations to date. The law was promoted as a way to close the gaps between non-hispanic white and immigrant children in our public schools. The goals and an explanation of this legislation is outlined in **Addendum #4**. The cause of certain failures of the law have been blamed on two issues; the very large population of immigrant children and fiscal issues primarily at the local district level. One issue that is facing immigrant children is the fact that 95% attend

¹⁹ *ibid.*, Sage Publications

urban schools. This major demographic change in the United States has fallen on schools that are extremely diverse and more susceptible to fiscal priorities. Two studies, (**Capps, Randy, Michael Fix, and Julie Murray. 2005. *The New Demography of America's Schools: Immigration and the No Child Left Behind Act.* Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute.**) And (**Cosentino de Cohen, Clemencia, Nicole Deterding, and Beatriz Chu Clewell. 2005. *Profile of US Elementary Schools: LEP Concentration and School Capacity.* Washington DC: the Urban Institute.**), have outlined the challenges facing urban schools in their attempts to meet the guidelines of the new law.

1. *One challenge has been a sharp rise in the number of children who have at least one parent born outside the United States; these children now compose one of five children enrolled in K-12.*
2. *Another challenge for urban schools has been the dispersal of the immigrant population. The vast majority of the immigrant population in America is in six states. Thus it is in these states that a concerted effort must be made for modification of the educational system.*
3. *A third challenge is the age distribution of the newcomer children in the United States and their relatively high concentration in secondary schools.*
4. *The fourth challenge is the increasing poverty of immigrant families.*
5. *A fifth challenge is a group of students that teachers refer to as “long-term LEP’s (limited English proficient), many of whom were born in the United States. These are children who have not learned English even after seven or more years in U.S. schools.*
6. *The majority of LEP students in the United States are not just attending schools that are economically and ethnically segregated, but also schools that are linguistically isolated.*
7. *The seventh and last challenge is based on the fact that LEP children seem to be victims of linguistic isolation in their homes*

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In short, NCLB has only had limited success and the accountability of schools under this law is placing a severe strain on the American education system. Even though we are, as a country, in active debate on new immigration laws, it is necessary to deal with the issue of immigrant children, whether legal or illegal, whether citizens or not, in a manner that personifies the “high

²⁰ Michael Fix, Migration Policy Institute & Randy Capps, The Urban Institute;

<http://www.migrationinformation.org/usfocus/print.cfm?ID=347>

moral road”. But this is not the case in some states: “Sweeping legislation similar to Arizona’s SB 1070 has now passed in Georgia, Utah, Indiana, South Carolina, and Alabama, criminalizing the presence of undocumented immigrants in schools and communities. Alabama’s HB 56—the toughest enforcement measure to date—outlaws undocumented immigrants from attending public colleges, and requires K–12 public school teachers to verify their students’ legal status and report them to the state education board.”²¹ It is a series of laws such as this that flaunt the ideals of the American Constitution. Could this posturing, by certain states, be a personification of racism or is it purely based on economic issues? Taking a position of anti-immigrants, as these states have done, negates any progress that is being made in the education of immigrant students.

Whatever issues exist in the states mentioned we are still faced with the dilemma on how to properly adhere to the law, expand our schools as needed and to supplement our educational programs to meet the needs of immigrant children. Although some form of assimilation is certainly needed to allow these students to become integrated into our multi-ethnic society it is also critical to us to allow them to maintain their ethnic identities. Along with the guiding laws on the subject educators must assume the direct responsibility to aid immigrant children in their adaptation to American culture, learning the English language and help them in their academic progress. This can be accomplished in two manners, in-school programs and after-school programs.

First of all educators and administrators must be knowledgeable of the different needs of the various ethnicities of immigrant students. Programs must be established within the schools that allow the new students to become acclimated to their new school and their new country as well as to the language of the country. This can be accomplished by creating an atmosphere in the school where the new students associate with peers of their own ethnicity who have already been in the school for a time and who have experienced the initial confusion. Learning to speak English will also allow these new students to become socially integrated with all students and can even be accelerated.

Let me describe three programs that aid immigrant students in transitioning to American schools. The *Belmont High School Newcomer Center* in Los Angeles offers students a program

²¹ Harvard Educational Review: <http://hepg.org/her/abstract/826>

where they can supplement the English learning classes in their school with outside after school and weekend classes at the Center where special care is taken to also help the students to learn with their native language. *The Manhattan Comprehensive Night and Day High School in New York City* offers courses on a flexible schedule to students who have not attended school for an extended period of time. They are offered opportunities to help them gain skills that will allow them to eventually find work or higher education while taking into account their time away from formal education. *The Literacy Enrichment Academic Program* developed by the Toronto School Board prepares immigrant students for integration into the public school system by helping them in language and mathematical skills.²² In looking at these programs it is evident that the learning of English is critical to students, especially since most teachers cannot be multi-lingual. Most researchers in this area believe that a systematic and long-term support of learning English is necessary but new programs also need to be developed. One such innovative program has been attempted in several schools and it is analogous to “throwing a young child in a swimming pool and hoping that he/she can swim”. This form of immersion involves teaching immigrant students together in large groups with students of various levels English proficiencies and hoping that this type of immersion will teach those who are not as proficient. This type of program seems to be working well.

Educators must also be trained in utilizing some of the abilities that the immigrant children may already have, such as the possibility that some may already be multi-lingual based on where they have come from and their family situations. An ability such as this may also help in teaching American students a second or even third language. It also could have an effect of diminished stress on the immigrant students by showing them that they also have something to offer their new host country.

With the programs that have been discussed here we can see that a joint approach, including assimilation and pluralistic techniques is critical to these students. Their immersion must be fostered by educators with a well-defined method of accepting and supplementing the immigrant students cultural roots as well as integrating them into their new culture. This concept cannot be limited to the class day. After school programs for these students are also necessary. These

²² NYU Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development Report (2005) , http://icy.gseis.ucla.edu/pathways/towards_youth

programs can help students reinforce their own identities while learning their new American identity, learning academic, athletic and social skills and better understanding their American peers. These programs must be developed by a convergence of avenues, local, state and federal programs along with community-based participation. From a purely academic position teachers must realize that the vast majority of immigrant students are not able to avail themselves of parental help when doing their homework. After school support programs can offer help with this critical area of learning. We have already discussed the significant deficiencies that most immigrant students have when they arrive in this country. Of course the actual school facility is the best location for these after school support services because the student is already familiar with the school. Athletics, whether team or intramural playing, are also important. Athletics seems to have a language of its own that bridges the language barrier between students.

It is also important for American educators and administrators to look beyond our own borders in search of model programs that have had a success. Australia and Canada have been very successful in implementing programs that have supported the integration of immigrant students while supporting the cultural roots these students have. For example, *The Department of*²³*Education and early Childhood Development in Victoria, Australia*, offers translation services to public schools for students and parents alike. I sought out such a program in the United States but could only find one such program In the Portland Oregon Schools. This program , although designed to help immigrants in general, also does help new students in integrating into school. The lack of such programs in the United States schools can easily be seen as a detriment to integrating non-English speaking children. *The African Youth Program in British Columbia* works on giving immigrant youths confidence and a self-image that will help them in their integration.²⁴ Many such programs exist but fiscal constraints often inhibit school districts from implementing their own programs. This is the main reason why community involvement and corporate sponsorships are critical. It is not only the duty of government to assume responsibility but also the private sector. It is these student immigrants that will one day work in our society

²³ <http://www.pps.k12.or.us/departments/interpretation-translation/4671.htm>

²⁴ Ibid, http://icy.gseis.ucla.edu/pathways/towards_youth

and the better their chances for success the more important it is to our growing multi-cultural society.

CONCLUSION:

This study has broached the subject of immigration in America as well as educating immigrant children in such a way that they become assimilated to American culture as well as understanding and maintaining their own heritage. among the problems we have seen not only are political issues attempting to control the immigration issue but also economics and racist attitudes. These same problems that affect the issue on a national level permeate down to the education of immigrant children and the inability of our education system to assimilate and educate these children.

How does one summarize a paper such as this? A paper that could easily be extended to book-length with all of the items involved in educating immigrant children in America today. The predominating factor in all of this is that America is a free country and each and every citizen is not only allowed but encouraged to express their opinions. Being intrinsically racist is not against any law unless one takes it to a level that violates a law. Thus, whether one is for or against immigration in our country is an arguable issue and one cannot be demonized for taking either side of the argument. The *No Child Left Behind Act* , although designed to not only help immigrant students through enhanced programs but also to force the proper education of teachers and their ultimate credentials has been only partially successful. Of course economics has played a major role in this mediocre success story but also the inherent racism or laissez-faire attitudes of many teachers have not helped to promulgate the law.

Although I have attempted to take an objective view as I travelled through all of the variables in the primary topic I kept coming back to how and why this country was founded. I was cognizant of our “melting pot” image around the globe and how our borders have accepted approximately 78 million immigrants since 1790. I was well aware of how most Americans can readily espouse the heritage of their own families back to where they emigrated from and when. I could not help thinking that educators, politicians and all other citizens come from immigrant roots. Although this is certainly the same in many other countries, Australia and Canada have

developed programs to help their immigrant students as we discussed earlier. While the United States has lagged behind in developing the correct programs to help these children.

The national debate is not one of liberal or conservative views on immigration as a whole with the resultant effects on our education system, but a re-affirmation of the founding principles of this country and what is morally correct. We have, at the very least, through our numerous Civil Rights Laws, significantly changed our direction as a country. "The civil rights laws represent a national commitment to end discrimination in education. The laws mandate bringing the formerly excluded into the mainstream of American education. And these laws also are designed to help deliver the promise that every individual has the right to develop his or her talents to the fullest".²⁵ Of course the immigrant children are not mentioned in these laws specifically but the essence of the laws is self-evident.

The only argument should be about how to deal with illegal immigrants. The problem here is that approximate figures show that there are 12 million of them in the United States. If we leave the primary immigration issue to our elected officials and ultimately to the great American equalizer known as "the vote" then we should direct our attention to the millions of immigrant children in our schools. How can we best educate them? Should we force their assimilation into our culture or allow them to be multi-cultural? How can we adapt our schools, especially those in urban areas, to facilitate the learning by immigrant students? For the purposes of being expeditious and less argumentative I am not going to differentiate between legal and illegal immigrant children. I am simply referring to all immigrants students in our schools as MCS (multi-cultural students). I am doing this because this paper is not a political treatise nor is it, in any way, taking a position on whether or not these children should be in our schools. MCS are in our schools and should be dealt with appropriately.

The question is, what does appropriately mean in the paradigm of creating a viable program of education? We have seen both in-school and after-school approaches in this paper but they cannot be implemented nor even function without the necessary funding, political support and also community support. But there has also arisen one very glaring issue that has not been taken care of by administrators of schools on the local level; that is, the need to educate teachers in the

²⁵ U. S. Dept. of Education, <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/impact.html>

manner and methods they utilize in teaching immigrant children. As was stated before, perhaps some teachers are products of their own ethnic backgrounds and carry with them a subliminal form of negativity relative to these children. Training both teachers and educators is vital to the success of immigrant students. Coupling that with funded programs can aid in not only the students assimilation into American education but also, hopefully, allow them to acknowledge and learn about their original cultures.

I must admit that I began this research project with misgivings about the costs of modifying our system of education for immigrant students (legal and illegal) but the research I completed has caused me to do a 180 degree turn on the matter. I truly believe that the average American has no concept at all about how many immigrant children are in our schools nor are they aware of such a deficiency in educating these children. Understandably the system has been overwhelmed, especially since the year 2000, but our own political system has been the greatest enemy of the immigrant child student. Extended debates, delays and unconventional positions on the matter have all led to a quandary on not only what is going on but how to create viable programs. I am aware that many schools across the country have, at the very least, attempted to modify their programs but the real issue lies with administrators and teachers. It is here that the education of educators must change and allow them to have the tools for teaching multi-cultural classes. Local education systems are utilizing a system of "red lining" in that they do not place importance on the education of immigrant students unless they have a sufficient number of them. We have seen that our major immigrant populations are based in six cities but that is changing and immigrants are moving more and more into the heartland of America. " Today a new form of redlining is emerging. If passed, the long-awaited Senate bill to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) would build a bigger highway between low-performing schools serving high-need students—the so-called “bottom 5 percent”—and all other schools. Tragically, the proposed plan would weaken schools in the most vulnerable communities and further entrench the problems—concentrated poverty, segregation and lack of human and fiscal resources—that underlie their failure".²⁶ But this effort must be a national effort since the impact on the system by immigrant children is a national issue that is growing. Our laws must keep pace with our growing ethnic population and the needs of the immigrant children.

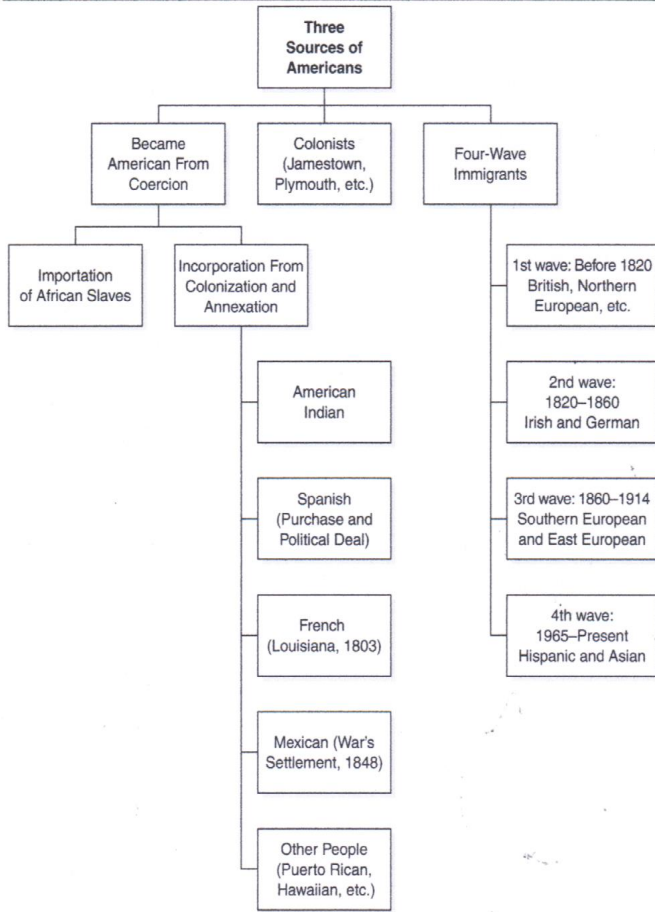
²⁶ <http://www.thenation.com/article/165575/why-congress-redlining-our-schools#>

If we trace our heritage back we find that we must adhere to the tenets of the Founding Fathers and the moral initiatives that are the responsibility of all Americans.

ADDENDUM # 1

4 Educating Immigrant Students in the 21st Century

FIGURE I.1 Who We Are and Were and Where We Came From

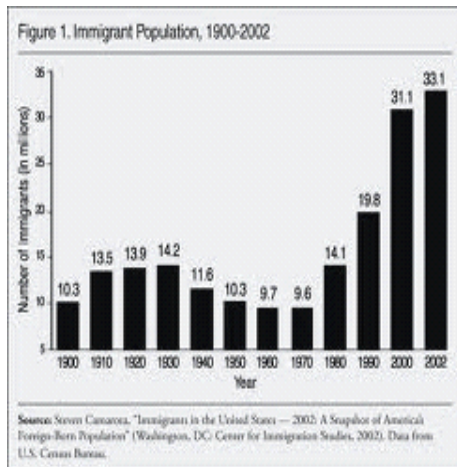


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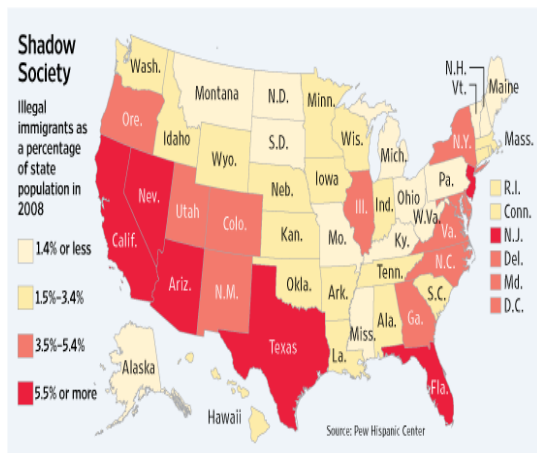
UM # 2

THE LEGAL AND ILLEGAL IMMIGRANT POPULATION IN THE UNITED STATES

THE LEGAL IMMIGRATION POPULATION IN THE UNITED STATES IS APPROXIMATELY 33 MILLION



THE ILLEGAL IMMIGRANT POPULATION IS ESTIMATED AT APPROXIMATELY 12 MILLION



ADDENDUM # 3

**Net Fiscal Cost of All Low-Skill
Immigrants to the Taxpayer**

\$89.1 billion



Single Year Net Cost for
4.5 Million Low-Skill
Immigrant Households

\$890 billion



Ten Year Cost for
4.5 Million Low-Skill
Immigrant Households

Note: Net Fiscal Cost equals the cost of Direct Benefits, Means-Tested Benefits, Public Education, and Population-Based Services received minus Taxes Paid.

ADDENDUM # 4

In brief, NCLB:

- Compels schools to report scores on statewide standardized tests separately for LEP students as well as those of low-income, minority, and disabled students;
- Allows students in schools that do not meet state standards in terms of student test performance for more than two years to transfer or receive additional instructional services;
- Forces schools to close or restructure after several years of poor performance;
- Requires that every classroom — including those with LEP students — have a "highly qualified" (i.e., full certified and properly educated) teacher; and
- Requires schools to notify parents — in the languages they speak — of their children's academic performance, their schools' progress toward meeting NCLB goals, and, in the case of LEP students, the type of language instruction they are receiving

<http://www.migrationinformation.org/usfocus/print.cfm?ID=347>

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COURSE 692

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