

Supporting Newcomer English Language Learners in Secondary Schools

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Introductions

- How do you define “newcomer” in your school/district
- What experience do you have with newcomers?



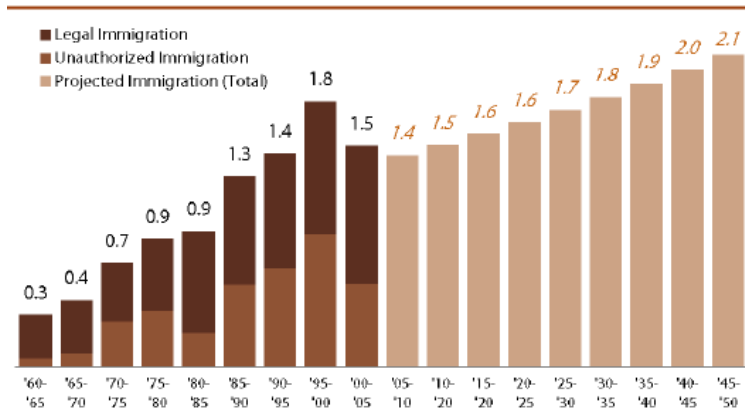
Session Objectives

- To identify the practices and policies that facilitate and hinder newcomers':
 - Initial transition to U.S. high schools
 - High school graduation
 - College preparation and transitions



The U.S. Immigrant Population Is Growing and Is Largely Latino

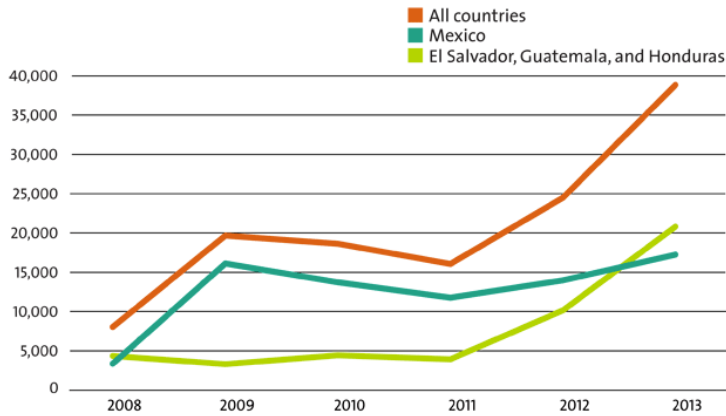
Actual and Projected Immigration: 1960–1965 through 2045–2050
(average annual immigrants in millions)



74,000 Unaccompanied Minors Entered the U.S. in FY 2014

The Child Migrant Surge

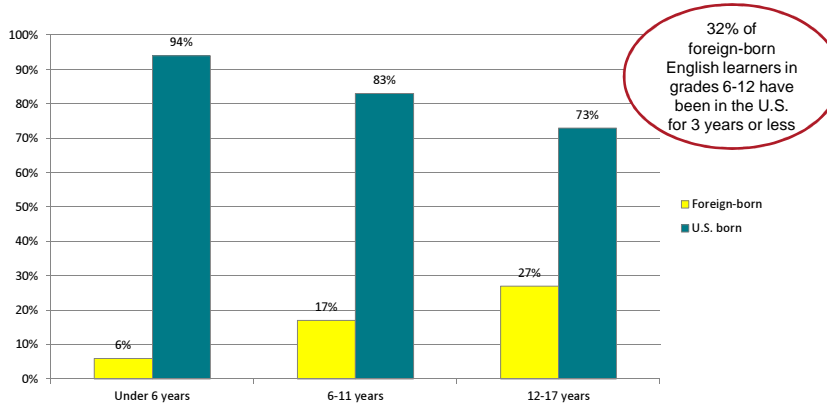
Unaccompanied children caught at the US border, 2008-13



Source: US Customs and Border Patrol



Immigrant Youth are More Likely to be Older and Recent Arrivals



Newcomers Encounter Many Challenges in U.S. High Schools

- Structural issues
 - Immigration policy
 - Language policy
 - Poverty
 - Segregation
- Educational challenges:
 - Valid and reliable assessments
 - Teachers prepared to teach immigrants
 - College preparatory courses
 - Counseling



Attention to Newcomers at the Secondary Level Is Critical

- High school staff members need to know more about how to meet the needs of these students
- More research is needed on immigrants and English Learners in the secondary grades
- Efforts to increase college readiness and college completion should focus on immigrant students



Sharing Your Experiences

- What do you see as the biggest challenges for newcomers in your school/district?



Tracing the Pathways of Newcomers

- Participants in a pilot demonstration project
 - Bilingual college preparatory math and science courses
 - Counseling interventions
 - Parent training courses
- Implemented in 2008-2012 in four Southern California high schools
- 451 total students served
- **This study sampled from the 169 students in the 2011 and 2012 graduation year cohorts—it is *not* a representative sample of all newcomers**



What's a SOL Classroom?

- [Project SOL YouTube Video](#)



Postsecondary Survey Respondents

- Students
 - Majority of their K-8 schooling took place outside of the U.S.
 - Schooling experiences varied
 - Average age at migration was 13
 - 66% graduated high school
 - Time in U.S. ~ 6 years as of fall 2013
- Households
 - < 1 in 4 parents had graduated high school
 - 96.6% reported household income below \$35,000



Initial Transition: Disconnected Educational Systems

“Porque hacen que tomes álgebra1 otra vez y en realidad allá, desde que estás como en 5to o 6to te dan álgebra 1 ya. Como álgebra 1 yo pienso que deberían como de hacerla valida aquí también y ya pasar directamente a geometría.

–*Alma*

Initial Transition: Disconnected Educational Systems

- Lack of alignment and communication between U.S. and Mexican educational systems
- Transfer documents underutilized
 - 41% had a transfer document, 36% received credit
- Impact
 - Course repetition
 - Low morale



Initial Transition: Minimal Orientation

- Students noted important differences in school structure, rigor, retake policies, and respect for teachers
- Reliance on peers and bilingual teachers and counselors for critical information



Recommendation: Smooth Students' Initial Transitions to the U.S.

RECOGNIZE AND VALIDATE NON-U.S. EDUCATION

- Consistent use of Transfer Document
- Transfer credit for prior schooling as appropriate
- Primary language assessments
- U.S.-Mexico curriculum alignment

ORIENTATION TO U.S. EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

- For students and parents, in their home language
- Deliver key information multiple times and in multiple formats

Navigating High School: Tracking Into Electives and Extended Courses

“En México...tomas las clases que necesitas graduarte. No te dan cosas que no necesitas, o sea, lo que tomas es lo que vas a necesitar para graduarte. Y aquí hay materias que las tomas y no las vas a usar.”

– Hugo



Navigating High School: Tracking Into Electives and Extended Courses

- Over-placement into electives that did not fulfill graduation requirements
- Extended math and science sequences



Navigating High School: Reclassification as a Gatekeeper

- Most students were reclassified as Fluent English Proficient at some point in their senior year
 - In LAUSD, reclassification was a prerequisite for entry to mainstream English courses
 - At border region high schools, some students were permitted to take mainstream English courses prior to meeting reclassification criteria



Navigating High School: English Credits Required to Graduate

- Variations in how much ESL/ELD courses counted toward graduation requirements
 - CA universities/colleges permit one year of ELD to count toward the required four years of English
 - Many districts are moving toward a default “college preparatory” curriculum
 - Border districts counted up to three years of ESL/ELD toward English graduation requirement



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Navigating High School: English Credits Required to Graduate

Alfonso: Fueron muchas clases ESL, como el básico, ESL 1, ESL 2, ESL 3, el 4 y así, hasta el 10, 11 y 12.

Entrevistadora: Las clases de inglés fuera de ESL ¿y cómo lo hiciste? ¿Tomaste 10, 11 y 12 todo en el último año?

Alfonso: Si, todo . . . Sí, el último año estaba tomando puras clases de inglés porque eran las que faltaban, entonces casi todos mis periodos eran prácticamente de inglés.



Navigating High School: Access to Bilingual Courses

- All schools provided some bilingual math and science courses through intervention
- Border region high schools also offered bilingual, college preparatory social science, lab science, and math courses



Recommendation: Support High School Graduation

ACCESS TO COURSES AND CONTENT

- Expand college preparatory bilingual course offerings
- Provide ELA credit for ELD/ESL courses
- Prioritize teacher training in literacy across subjects
- Provide multiple entry points to mainstream classes

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Recommendation: Support High School Graduation

FOSTER A SENSE OF BELONGING

- Provide targeted supports for newcomers
- Develop peer support networks
- Implement heterogeneous classrooms and groupings

ENGAGE AND INFORM PARENTS

- Communicate regularly in the parents' home language
- Offer parent empowerment classes
- Listen for solutions

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College Preparation and Transitions

- 8% completed requirements for entry into four-year college
- 83% of HS grads went to college
 - 80% of college goers went to community college
 - 80% required remediation, 28% required ESL in college
- Placement testing issues
 - Unprepared for exams
 - Barriers to challenging results



Recommendation: Prepare for College

ACADEMIC SKILLS AND TECHNIQUES

- Develop study skills across curriculum
- Encourage help seeking
- Establish concrete educational goals
 - Linked to career aspirations

COLLEGE KNOWLEDGE

- Provide information early
- Educate about U.S. higher education options
- Hands-on assistance with applications

Sharing Your Experiences

- What have you done in your own school/district to support newcomers?
- What other programs/practices have you heard of?



Core Issues for Leaders

- How does your school/district . . .
 - Recognize and validate non-U.S. educational experiences?
 - Orient newcomers and their parents to the U.S. educational system?
 - Provide access to rigorous content as students are acquiring English?
 - Foster a sense of belonging for newcomers and their families?



How Education Northwest Can Support Schools and Districts

- English learner program review
- Evaluation of literacy initiatives
- SIOP equity academy
- Professional development to improve mathematics instruction for English learners



For more information

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