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Learning in a New Land: Immigrant Students in American Society		
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Learning in a New Land: Immigrant Students in American Society investigates the development pathways of first-generation immigrant students using the Longitudinal Immigrant Student Adaptation Study (LISA). A focus on Central American, Chinese, Dominican, Haitian, and Mexican students represents the origins of most new-arrivals in the United States. However, authors are cautious to not become complacent with generalizations regarding achievement trends by country of origin or gender and instead focus on the networks of support in which each immigrant student operates, giving weight to methods of identity construction, meaningful relationships, and issues of inner-family communications. The duration of the study (five years) allows for these topics to be explored, in relationship to academic achievement, as dynamic journeys rather than as a static grid of factors and stakeholders. Findings are delineated through five school-performance profiles which emerged during the course of the study: low achievers, slow decliners, precipitous decliners, improvers, and high

achievers. Contextualized vignettes of specific students within each profile type permit a complex discussion of qualitative and quantitative data as it pertains to the student's academic achievement.

The authors conclude that first-generation immigrant students who are able to “float between” identities (p. 307), as opposed to complying to a single, fixed identity or to a hybrid of multiple identities at a single point in time, are more likely to be classified as high achievers. These students, along with improvers demonstrate skills of negotiation between the multiple layers of the immigrant schooling experience. When networks of support were fractured or remained stagnant and unsophisticated, first-generation immigrant students were likely to fall into an achievement profile of precipitous decliners, slow decliners, or consistently low achievers. One of the differences between these three latter profiles is the level of tension between students and parents which often rifts along lines of communication styles, frequency, and depth. Low achievers were seldom received into a highly supportive, multi-layered networks where both students and parents spoke a common dominant language over the five year-span, and decliners often began with positive foundations and attitudes, but found it difficult to sustain as quality relationships waned and networks became misaligned.

It becomes clear that the academic achievement of a first-generation immigrant student is highly dependent of his/her ability to negotiate different spaces and operate with a sustained degree of agency. One of the ways Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco, and Todorova saw such agency created and maintained was through culturally responsive pedagogy within the classroom, viable language policies, alignment of support networks both in and out of the school building, and the propensity toward hyphenated-identities.

Space emerges as a central theme in the book. Specifically, it attends to how a first-generation immigrant student travels within this space that is arguably highly influential in predicting academic achievement. The student who is able to resist total submersion at a loss of home-culture identification and sustain agency in the face of an objectifying hybridity, is often found among the high achieving. The work of Carter (2005) lends additional insight into the role of the school in creating what she terms, multicultural navigators. Like Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco, and Todorova, Carter (2005) finds that multilayered networks of support that validate a student's multiple identities provides the most hospitable space for sustained growth and achievement. However, where Carter (2005) focuses on race and ethnicity, Suárez-Orozco, et al (2008) go a step further with regard to language acquisition, the role of language on identity construction, and the added complications of language policy. An aligned network, where the goal for student achievement is maintained in terms of support for immigrant students, can be further understood in light of the research of Monahan (2005) who finds that it is not only physical space, but also technological and political space that can either create or destroy barriers to personal agency and the alignment of educational goals. This complicates prescription, but also protects from oversimplification and exclusionary practices for English language learners.

In terms of English language learners, such dialogue takes on additional complexity. The higher achieving students in *Learning in a New Land* (2008) are able to transcend such barriers, often due to conscious dispositions of teachers, mindful language policy, and what Delpit (1995) and Ladson-Billings (1994) refer to as culturally responsive curriculum and instruction. What is clear is that the success of any student, but in particular a first-generation immigrant student, is highly depended upon the space in which they live, work, play, and study. Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco, and Todorova (2008) lend invaluable expertise and discussion into this contentious space with complex discussion and insight on how to positively influence the academic journey of this important group of students in the United States.

This text is highly recommended for all public school teachers, administrators, and teacher educators. Education policy makers should move this book to the top of their reading list, for policy that neglects the needs of first-generation immigrant students neglects the future of this nation.

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