“... a well-organized volume with a strong emphasis on pedagogy.”
Trudy Smoke, Hunter College, City University of New York

“Generation 1.5 is the most interesting topic of concern in ESL today, yet publications are few and far between.... The editors clearly know what they’re doing.... They know the field, know the subject matter, and understand the problems.... This volume contributes to the thinking in the field.”
Linda Lonon Blanton, University of New Orleans

Building on the work that has been done over the past decade, this volume provides theoretical frameworks for understanding debates about immigrant students, studies of students’ schooling paths and language and literacy experiences, and pedagogical approaches for working with generation 1.5 students. Since the mid-1970s, U.S. colleges and universities have experienced a dramatic increase in the population of immigrant students who entered the educational system as children and developed complex bi- or multilingual repertoires throughout their adolescence. The term “generation 1.5” is used to describe these students because their immigrant and educational journeys position them somewhere between first generation adult immigrants and the U.S.-born second generation children of immigrant families.

**Generation 1.5 in College Composition:**
• is designed to help both scholars and practitioners reconceptualize the fields of College Composition and TESOL and create a space for research, theory, and pedagogy focusing on postsecondary immigrant ESL students
• provides *both* important new theoretical work (which lays the underpinnings for serious pedagogical innovation) and important new pedagogical approaches

Because of their varied and complex language and literacy profiles, generation 1.5 students are found in developmental English courses, college ESL courses, and mainstream college writing courses. This volume is directed to preservice and inservice teachers, teacher educators, and researchers involved with educating generation 1.5 students in these and other contexts.

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Preface

Harklau, Losey, and Siegal’s *Generation 1.5 Meets College Composition: Issues in the Teaching of Writing to U.S.-Educated Learners of ESL* (1999) set out to explore and focus the topic of generation 1.5 immigrants—a term that typically refers to English language learners who arrive in the U.S. at an early age, obtain much or all of their education in U.S. K-12 settings, and arrive in college with various patterns of language and literacy that don’t fit the traditional, “institutionally constructed” profiles of Developmental Writing, College ESL, or Freshman Composition. This volume, *Generation 1.5 in College Composition: Teaching Academic Writing to U.S.-Educated Learners of ESL*, extends rather than duplicates that scholarship; the individual chapters are written by researchers, theorists, and teachers who have actively engaged with generation 1.5 issues over the past decade. While the prior volume was intended to open a dialogue, the current volume is intended to extend that dialogue and serve as a text in teacher education courses in the field of TESOL, Composition, and Language Arts. It will help teachers-in-training (as well as current teachers who are interested in the topic) understand the breadth of scholarly approaches to the generation 1.5 topic, the current debates and controversies surrounding the topic, and most importantly, the variety of curricular and pedagogical approaches for working effectively with generation 1.5 students.

**Overview of the Volume**

Part I provides groundwork for understanding the discussions and debates surrounding the generation 1.5 topic, as well as the pedagogical and curricular approaches that are presented in this volume. These chapters will help readers understand the broader socio-political, economic, historical, and disciplinary forces that affect teaching and learning of multilingual students. They will also introduce readers to the interdisciplinary breadth of the topic: Roberge provides a teacher’s perspective on generation 1.5 and argues that the notion of “generation 1.5” can serve as a valuable heuristic in teachers’ discussions of educational access, educational equity, and student success. Harklau and Siegal discuss multilingual students from an educational policy perspective, highlighting questions about multilingual students in higher education. Louie provides an immigration studies perspective, using broad demographic data to argue that generational status is significant. Matsuda and Matsuda use archival methods to document the presence of immigrant students in higher education and they examine the
treatment of immigrants in TESOL and Composition scholarship. Benesch uses critical
discourse analysis to examine the terminology of generation 1.5 discussions.

Part II provides studies of generation 1.5 students and their schooling paths. These
chapters include a variety of research approaches and they focus on a variety of institutional settings; they illustrate not just student characteristics and experiences, but also the variety of ways that we obtain and construct information about students. Allison uses ethnographic methods (observational data collection) to study reading and writing practices in high school classes in order to examine how generation 1.5 students are prepared for college reading and writing. Frodesen uses a longitudinal case-study method to examine a single student’s academic literacy development over time. Crosby uses case-study interviews to study generation 1.5 students’ reading and writing strategies. Mott-Smith combines critical discourse analysis of university documents with interviews of generation 1.5 students to examine discourses and perceptions of writing success and writing failure. Providing a perspective from a large cross-institutional study focusing on community college students, Patthey, Thomas-Spiegel, and Dillon examine student success, student progression, and student curricular choices.

Part III presents pedagogical and curricular approaches for working with generation 1.5 students. These chapters show how teachers, curriculum developers and program administrators have responded to the changing demographics of postsecondary writing classes. Murie and Fitzpatrick offer an academic enrichment model, one that runs counter to typical deficit-based models of student instruction. Holten discusses her experience designing a course specifically for generation 1.5 students, an alternative to a deficit-based curricular approach that sees students solely as “incomplete” language learners or solely as “deficient” native speakers. Reynolds, Bae, and Wilson discuss their experiences instituting a highly individualized pedagogy by which students work with writing associates. Johns offers what she has called a “socio-literate approach” that focuses on rhetorical flexibility. Schleppegrell takes a functional linguistics approach and presents ways of working with students on grammar that focus on discourse conditions rather than form. Finally Goen-Salter, Porter, and vanDommelen provide an overview of principles and practices that they have used with generation 1.5 students in the institutional contexts of a College ESL program, a Basic Writing program and a university tutoring center.

Feature of the Volume

In selecting chapters for this volume, we have drawn on established scholars, newer researchers, and seasoned teachers from a variety of institutional contexts. What they share is an interest in immigrant students’ academic language and academic literacy development, student success, and educational equity.

We have encouraged authors to follow their own definitions of “generation 1.5” but we cautioned them to avoid deterministic descriptions of generation 1.5 students, i.e., “They are generation 1.5 students and therefore they are going to be X, Y, and Z.” Instead we have encouraged authors to describe students and teachers in real educational situations, as well as the real pedagogical and curricular approaches that have led to student success.

We have included authors who embrace the notion of “generation 1.5” and find it useful in promoting educational success and educational equity. We have also included
authors who are cautious about the term “generation 1.5,” authors who do not use the term at all, and authors who are explicitly critical of the notion of “generation 1.5.” The volume thus adds breadth and depth to the discussion of composition instruction and immigrant students.

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank the authors, who worked painstakingly and patiently through multiple rounds of manuscript review and revision. We would also like to thank Elizabeth Erchul, our graduate assistant, who put in countless hours preparing the manuscript for submission.
Part I

Frameworks
Over the past three decades, many U.S. colleges and universities have seen a dramatic increase in the number of students from immigrant families. This group of students is highly diverse: some students have been in the U.S. since birth while others arrived shortly before or even during their college years. Some enter college with complex bilingual or multilingual communicative repertoires while others enter college still strongly self-identifying as “ESL students.” Some have had nurturing and enriching kindergarten through twelfth grade (K-12) schooling experiences that promoted and validated their language and literacy development in both English and their home language(s) while others have experienced numerous educational injustices in the U.S.: crowded, poorly equipped, underfunded schools; monolingual English “submersion” policies that offer students little linguistic or cultural validation and little academic support; deficit-oriented “ability tracking” policies that can keep students out of “mainstream” classes and deny students access to a rich, engaging, reading and writing curriculum; and both subtle and overt racial, ethnic, and linguistic discrimination.

As this group of students has become larger and more diverse, scholarship on immigrant students has also become more complex. Researchers and theorists have developed more nuanced views of immigrant populations and explored the great variety of language and literacy histories that students may bring to their schooling. Scholars have looked at “in-migrants” from U.S. territories such as Puerto Rico (see Urciuoli, 1991; Zentella, 2000); “parachute kids” who come to the U.S. on foreign-student visas to live with relatives or caregivers and attend K-12 schools (see Lee, 2006; Zhou, 1998); “transnationals” who experience multiple back-and-forth migrations between their home countries and the U.S. (see Sanchez, 2004); “second generation immigrants,” i.e., U.S.-born children of immigrant parents (see Portes & Manning, 1986; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001); children growing up in linguistic enclave communities (see Portes & Schauffler, 1994); adolescent “unschooled” or “underschooled” immigrants who arrive in the U.S. with minimal formal schooling experience yet enter the upper levels of the U.S. K-12 school system (see Meyer, 2000; Morse, 1997); and immigrants who are speakers of “other Englishes” (see Nero, 1997). In attempting to understand and describe the diversity of students from multilingual/multicultural immigrant families, scholars have introduced new terminology to highlight socio-cultural and linguistic issues previously obscured when students were theorized and studied using more generic categories such as “immigrant,” “non-native,” or “minority.”
At the same time, scholars have become aware that existing educational and institutional labels, such as “ESL,” “Basic Writing,” and “Regular Composition,” can serve to highlight or conceal, validate or invalidate, and define or convolute the histories, experiences, and educational needs of individual students. I would argue that these institutional labels can perpetuate educational injustice: some students (typically the economically privileged as well as those who more closely fit traditional, institutionally defined profiles) receive a curriculum more tailor-made to their individual needs. Depending on the particular institution, this advantaged group may include:

- Foreign-visa students who are in intensive English programs (IEPs) or college ESL programs that are designed to build upon students’ prior English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction in their home countries and provide a transition to U.S. university instruction.
- So-called “mainstream” students who place directly into Freshman Composition classes that are designed to dovetail with the college-preparatory classes that these students have taken in high school.
- Students who place into Basic Writing classes that are designed with a bias toward the needs of monolingual English-speaking students.

Unfortunately, other students (typically those who arrive with less economic or social capital and those whose histories, experiences, and individual needs don’t match traditional institutional profiles) may be marginalized, their educational support being “outsourced” to tutoring centers, basic skills programs, or even other institutions, as is the case when universities send matriculated students “away” to community college for ESL or developmental writing courses.

It is against this backdrop that I have seen the notion of “generation 1.5” take hold. The term originated in the field of immigration studies to describe the complex social position of Southeast Asian refugee children adapting to life in the U.S. during the 1970s and 1980s (see Rumbaut and Ima, 1988). The term adds complexity to the descriptions of immigrant populations. “First generation immigrants” are those who grow up in cultural and linguistic contexts outside the U.S. “Second generation immigrants” are the U.S.-born children of immigrant parents; these children grow up solely in a U.S.-cultural contexts, often in bilingual or multilingual communities. The “1.5 generation” therefore consists of those who immigrate as young children and have life experiences that span two or more countries, cultures, and languages. These terms have allowed immigration scholars to highlight things previously unseen, such as differences in educational and economic opportunity for students arriving at different ages.

In the early 1980s the term was taken up by the Korean-American community: il cheom ose (literally “generation 1.5”) began to appear in both Korean and Korean-American media. For Koreans and Korean-Americans, the term signifies the complex cultural and linguistic position of immigrant children who are not il se (first generation adult immigrants) and not i se (U.S.-born Korean-Americans). The term also highlights the process of negotiating between two cultural and linguistic identities. In a study of Korean-American youth, Park (1999) describes the term as “a highly conscious category with complex cultural meaning,” one that expresses a self-perception.
of in-between-ness, as reflected in the title quote: “I really do feel I’m 1.5.” Anyone who has grown up in bicultural, bilingual, or binational families or has spent extended periods living in cross-cultural contexts is deeply familiar with the sense of in-between-ness and the process of identity negotiation reflected in such works.

The term “generation 1.5” entered the field of education in the late 1990s and has since become more widespread, appearing in the fields TESOL (Teaching English as a Second Language), Composition, and high school Language Arts. Like most terms in the field of education, it is used in varying ways by individual teachers and scholars, sometimes referring to all immigrant students, sometimes referring only to those in a narrower demographic range (e.g., pre-adolescent arrivals), and sometimes referring only to those who are encountering difficulties with academic language and academic literacy. Like most terms in education, it both highlights and obscures aspects of experience and identity. And like most terms within the field, it comes with its own “baggage” and its own set of controversies.

Why would various teachers and scholars of education adopt a term that is from the field of immigrant studies and that is used by an American immigrant community? Several explanations have been proposed, some of which are less than favorable: a propensity to marginalize students through the process of “othering,” a tendency to homogenize or erase the experiences of multilingual students, a desire to valorize the notion of the “native speaker,” or even an attempt to repackage old knowledge using new terminology. However, none of those explanations can adequately account for the spread of the term or the growing interest in students who might be considered part of the 1.5 generation. This interest is particularly evident at the “grassroots level” among educators who work with generation 1.5 students. I would argue that progressive educators and scholars are using the term in a conscious and purposeful way, to accomplish something that is not accomplished by other pre-existing terms our field. So what is it that this term might accomplish?

The notion of generation 1.5 seems to have gained acceptance more readily among teachers and scholars who want to problematize the traditional institutional division between College ESL and Basic Writing. On an ideological level, both institutional categories are based on what I call a “nativist normativity,” i.e., the assumption that growing up as a monolingual native speaker is the norm. The institutional assumption in many College ESL programs is that students are monolingual speakers of their “native” language and are in the process of acquiring a second language as an overlay on the “native” language. English is construed as something that is “second” and “foreign” for students. Students are seen as learners of English rather than users of English. Similarly, U.S. culture may be seen as something that is “second” or “foreign” to students, as in those stereotypical ESL writing prompts that ask students to compare something in their “home culture” to something in “U.S. culture.” By contrast, the institutional assumption in many Basic Writing programs is that students are monolingual speakers of English who are somehow “deficient” and must be “fixed” or “remediated” so that they can go on to “regular” English classes; students are seen as “cognitively underdeveloped” native speakers of English (for a seminal critique of this cognitive reductionism see Rose’s, 1988 article).

Neither institutional construct validates bilingualism or multilingualism. In fact, neither construct reflects the histories and identities of students who see themselves as
neither “ESL” nor “native” (see Chiang & Schmida, 1999; Ortmeier-Hooper, 2008). As Valdés (2000) makes clear, a child growing up in a multilingual context is not simply a child who has two side-by-side, monolingual-like language proficiencies. Instead, the child has language practices and language proficiencies that are spread across a bilingual range in complex ways that change from one social context to another. The constructs of “native speaker” and “non-native speaker”—terms that often characterize the institutional divide of College ESL and Basic Writing—do little to describe the multiple discourse proficiencies, multiple literacies, and multiple identities that many students bring to classes (see Harklau, 2000; McKay & Wong, 1996). The notion of generation 1.5 challenges this nativist normativity and helps teachers, curriculum developers, and program administrators reconceptualize students as having complex and varied language repertoires that are rooted in the social, political, and historical contexts of students’ lives.

The notion of generation 1.5 may also gain acceptance more readily among teachers and scholars who want to problematize the distinction between “remedial” and “mainstream” students. As Rose (1985) pointed out, the notion of remediation is based on a “myth of transience” and its associated belief that the system can somehow solve the “remediation problem” and “fix” students so that they can be sent to “mainstream” classes. Even at my own university, a multicultural urban institution with an ethnically and linguistically diverse faculty and student body, this myth of transience is evident in institutional discourse. In a recent memo to the campus, a high-level administrator praised the university because a large percentage of students had been “successfully remediated within one year.” Such rhetoric belies the complexity of generation 1.5 students’ long-term language and literacy development processes. Students who exit a Basic Writing course at the end of one semester are the same students who enter Freshman Composition the next semester. Both courses are part of a long-term learning trajectory by which students develop and refine discourse proficiencies and academic literacies throughout their college careers and across the college curriculum. In short, multilingual students should not be seen as “remedial” and multilingualism is not something that can or should be “remediated.”

The term generation 1.5 may also find resonance among teachers and scholars who wish to problematize the divisions between fields of K-12 Language Arts, TESOL, and College Composition. Scholarship that spans the K-12 and postsecondary levels has been sparse; scholars typically confine themselves to one context or the other and thus cannot adequately capture the long-term language and literacy development of generation 1.5 immigrant students. The field of TESOL and its ancillary field of College ESL have tended to focus on foreign-visa students and on recently arrived immigrants; discussion about long-term U.S. resident bilinguals has also been sparse. When such students have been the focus of research, theory, or pedagogy, these students are often subsumed within larger, more generic populations, such as “immigrants” or “residents.” By contrast, the field of College Composition and its ancillary field of Basic Writing have tended to focus on monolingual students who are inexperienced writers, students who are speakers of various community dialects of English, and students who are members of politically and economically oppressed racial and ethnic groups. In such scholarship, long-term U.S. resident bilinguals are very often subsumed within more generic categories such as “ethnic minority students.” These categories highlight race and ethnicity as the defining characteristics of such students.
At my own institution I have seen the notion of generation 1.5 used to problematize and successfully challenge traditional policies, program structures, and pedagogies. Discussions about generation 1.5 have been a key factor in our:

- Developing writing courses that draw upon multilingual/multicultural students’ funds of knowledge and experiences growing up in California. (Multilingual students have the option of selecting these courses rather than more traditional ESL courses or generic “mainstream” courses.)
- Instituting self-guided placement processes. (Because we cannot assume multilingual students will have particular self-perceptions or identities, we allow students to have a voice in their own program placements.)
- Eliminating punitive remediation policies and creating intellectually enriching, credit-bearing freshman-level writing courses for students who would formerly have been sent to non-credit classes.
- Reconceptualizing our College ESL program as a program open to all multilingual students and renaming the program “Composition for Multilingual Students” to eliminate the stigmatizing “ESL” label.
- Developing workshops on editing and revising that support multilingual students in their regular Composition classes rather than tracking students into more traditional ESL writing courses or grammar courses.
- Instituting more professional development opportunities for both graduate students and faculty who want to learn to work with a wide variety of multilingual students. (The notion of generation 1.5 functions as a useful heuristic as teachers develop a more complex picture of the linguistic and cultural diversity of our student body.)
- Broadening teacher training in both the TESOL and Composition graduate programs. (New teachers coming out of both programs may have generation 1.5 students in their classes.)

In my discussions with community college teachers and administrators, I have seen the notion of generation 1.5 functioning in similar ways, as part of a dialogue about educational change, by educators who want to promote access, equity, and student success.

What should we do, as teachers, curriculum directors, and program administrators, to participate more effectively such dialogues? First, we must broaden and deepen our understandings of the possible histories, experiences, and individual educational needs that students bring to their college writing classes. Similarly, we must develop a knowledge of the social, political, historical, and institutional factors that have shaped our students’ lives. Only then can we broaden our pedagogical repertoires in all classroom contexts, and begin to break down the traditional institutional boundaries of College ESL, Basic Writing, and “mainstream” College Composition, categories that do little to mirror the realities of many of our generation 1.5 students.
The Social, Political, and Economic Context of Post-1965 Immigration

To broaden and deepen our understanding of students, we must first look at the social, political, economic, and historical context of immigration. In 1965, the U.S. government finally repealed the overtly racist National Origins Act of 1924, which for 40 years had severely restricted immigration from most non-European countries (see McKay & Wong, 2000). The new 1965 Immigration Act allowed a more equitable distribution of visas to applicants throughout the world, established family unification rather than nationality as a favored selection criterion, and increased the overall number of visas issued each year. The post-1965 influx of immigrants was joined by repeated waves of refugees. New immigrants and new refugees then began to bring additional family members to the U.S. through family-sponsored visas, which now account for almost two-thirds of all new immigration visas (Office of Immigration Statistics, 2006). Currently, about one million immigrants arrive in the U.S. each year, almost one-third of whom are children under the age of 18. This represents the largest inflow of immigrant children in U.S. history. These new demographics challenge us as educators to change our paradigms about who our students are and how we teach them.

The 1965 Immigration Act increased not only the number of immigrants but also the racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity of the immigrant population. The relative flow of immigrants from Northern and Western Europe slowed considerably, replaced by an ever-growing influx of immigrants from Asia and Latin America, who now account for over three-quarters of the new immigrant population (Office of Immigration Statistics, 2006). Unlike previous generations of European immigrants, most post-1965 immigrants are “visible minorities;” their “newcomer” status is more readily apparent and thus they are more vulnerable to racial and ethnic discrimination. This increasing diversity also has fueled negative “white-nativist sentiments” (McKay & Wong, 2000) that have lead to anti-immigrant policies such as California Proposition 187 (passed in 1994) that sought to limit health and education services to undocumented immigrants and their children, and California Proposition 227 (passed in 1998) which severely restricted bilingual education programs. Such anti-immigrant or anti-bilingual legislation can now be seen in many states throughout the U.S. The accompanying racial, ethnic, and linguistic discrimination may slow the integration process for newly arrived immigrants and place them at an economic and political disadvantage, as compared to earlier generations of European immigrants (see Portes & Rumbaut, 1996; Portes & Zhou, 1993).

In the post-1965 era, the immigrant population has also become more socio-economically diverse. Some groups, such as migrant agricultural laborers, enter the U.S. with few resources or marketable skills while other groups, such as technology workers, enter with skills that are in high demand. Within-group and between-group differences have also become greater, making it difficult to generalize about the immigrant population as a whole or adopt educational policies that can better support immigrant children.

While the demographics of the immigrant population have changed considerably, so too have the economic conditions that immigrants face when they arrive in the U.S. During pre-1965 waves of immigration, a familiar (although by no means universal)
process of economic integration was available to immigrant families: first generation non-English speaking immigrants typically had access to jobs in labor. Their second generation children who were fluent in English typically had access to more highly paid skilled industrial jobs, thus moving up into the economic middle class. Their third generation grandchildren who had access to more schooling opportunities might take literacy-intensive professional jobs, thus becoming firmly anchored in the economic middle or upper-middle class. However, over the past four decades, technological changes, globalization, and the movement of manufacturing to offshore locations have eliminated many well-paying skilled industrial jobs in the U.S., cutting off traditional routes of economic integration and upward mobility. The U.S. economy has become more hourglass-shaped, with ever-growing numbers of unskilled, low-paying service sector jobs at the bottom and highly skilled, high-paying, literacy-intensive information-oriented jobs at the top.

Immigrants now face the prospect of “segmented assimilation” (see Rumbaut, 1994). Some segments of the immigrant population—those who arrive with strong educational backgrounds or those who are able to obtain high levels of education in the U.S.—achieve rapid economic integration and upward mobility. In fact, college-educated immigrants often reach income parity with native-born U.S. citizens within their lifetimes. By contrast, other segments—those who arrive without education and who are unable to obtain further education in the U.S.—make little progress toward income parity (Portes & Zhou, 1992). Some segments of the immigrant population even experience “downward assimilation” (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). In such cases, the children of immigrants end up with less social or economic capital than they would have acquired had they remained in their parents’ home countries. It is clear that the changing economic conditions in the U.S. have placed additional pressure on immigrant children. In order to avoid downward economic assimilation and to secure a place in the shrinking middle class, they are under considerably more pressure to follow an academically oriented college-bound path.

**Arrival, Adaptation, Acculturation, and Identity Formation**

Immigrant families’ arrival experiences are greatly affected by the circumstances surrounding their departure from their home countries. Immigrants who suffered oppression, who were displaced by political or economic crises, who had to leave on short notice, who spent time in refugee camps or third countries, or who were unable to bring along economic capital typically have greater difficulties establishing themselves in the U.S. Those who lack extended family in the U.S. or lack access to a cultural and linguistic enclave community (which can help maintain cultural ties and provide an extended support network) may also have more difficulties. However, regardless of families’ circumstances of departure and arrival, and regardless of individual differences, immigrants who arrive as children, the “generation 1.5ers,” share a number of common challenges.

Many Americans are under the mistaken impression that immigrant children adapt relatively easily to new cultural and linguistic surroundings. However, research suggests that immigrant children experience numerous psychological and social challenges that are often overlooked. (For an overview, see James, 1997.) Such challenges may be
exacerbated by the fact that many immigrant families are reticent to make use of social services, due to cultural and linguistic barriers, practical obstacles such as a lack of availability in local neighborhoods, experiences with discrimination, and in the case of undocumented immigrants, legal issues.

School counselors note that immigrant children often experience anxiety and depression as they leave behind their familiar homeland and their established social relations (James, 1997). Various stage models of cross-cultural adjustment have been proposed; researchers have documented various stages of acceptance and rejection of the new cultural surroundings (e.g., Wait, Roessingh, & Bosetti, 1996). What such models and studies have in common is the recognition that cross-cultural adjustment and bicultural identity development are complex, long-term, open-ended processes. Educators cannot assume that these processes are somehow “complete” simply because a student has been in the U.S. for a long time.

Studies indicate that immigrant children often shoulder significantly more responsibilities than U.S.-born children (see Orellana, 2003). Many immigrant parents work long hours in multiple jobs in order to make enough money to support their families in the U.S. Therefore, many immigrant children fend for themselves to a greater extent than non-immigrant children. When parents are away from home, older siblings often must play a parenting role for younger siblings. Furthermore, immigrant youth are sometimes under pressure to begin work at an early age so that they can support their families. Many immigrant children also do a significant amount of language brokering and literacy mediation for their non-English speaking parents, thus taking on adult responsibilities at a very early age (Tse, 1996). Therefore, many immigrant students will have significantly more responsibilities than non-immigrant students—responsibilities that may take away from the time and energy they can devote to schooling.

Perhaps the most commonly recognized challenge for immigrant children is that of intergenerational values conflict. Although immigrant children tend to experience considerable cognitive and emotional stress in adapting to a new culture, they usually reposition themselves more readily than their parents. This repositioning may bring children into conflict with their parents’ expectations, especially regarding traditional gender roles, traditional parent–child relationships, and schooling (see Kibria, 1993; Zhou & Bankston, 1998). Immigrant children thus often need to navigate between two very different social worlds on a daily basis, worlds with conflicting norms, values, and expectations.

The process of acculturation and identity formation is particularly complex for generation 1.5 children who arrive at a very young age. Acculturation has traditionally been seen as a “zero sum game” of assimilation in which immigrant children progressively give up their home culture and accept American culture. (For a review of assimilation theories and controversies, see Alba & Nee, 1997.) However, scholars now realize that immigrant children negotiate complex multicultural identities (see McKay & Wong, 1996). An immigrant who arrives at a young age faces a twofold task—continuing to develop a “home culture” identity, while simultaneously developing a U.S. cultural identity. When this process is successful, immigrants develop confident bicultural identities with strong attachments to both cultures (see Rotheram-Borus, 1993). When the process is unsuccessful, immigrants may become dually alienated. In

Over the past several decades, the process of identity negotiation has become more complex as hyphenated identities (e.g., “Asian-American”) have become more important in U.S. society. For example, a generation 1.5 child who arrives from Vietnam must negotiate at least a threefold identity: as a Vietnamese, as an American, and as an Asian-American. Similarly, a generation 1.5 child from Mexico negotiates aspects of Mexican, American, and Chicano (Mexican-American) identities. While immigrant children tend to identify primarily with their national heritage identities, U.S. society tends to impose ethnic and racial identities (see Kibria, 2000) upon individuals. Thus Dominicans are seen as simply “Latino,” Cambodians are seen simply as “Asian,” etc. New immigrants often resist these ethnic or racial labels, especially when they entail a self-perceived loss of status, identity, or heritage. The process of negotiating a multicultural identity may be especially difficult for immigrant children who come to the U.S. before they have had significant life experiences in their home countries. These children must negotiate their home-culture identity, in spite of the fact that they may have little memory of their home countries. This problem is highlighted when ESL teachers assign typical newcomer-oriented ESL tasks such as comparing America with one’s “home country.”

Recently, scholars have noted a new pattern of acculturation and identity formation among immigrant children: acculturation without assimilation. In other words, both generation 1.5 immigrants and U.S.-born second generation immigrants have increasingly maintained aspects of their home culture identities instead of rapidly “Americanizing.” (For a review and critique of assimilation theories, see Alba & Nee, 1997.) This phenomenon has led immigration scholars such as Rumbaut (1996) to refer to today’s U.S.-born children of immigrants as “the new second generation,” a generation that no longer follows the traditional multigenerational path of linguistic, cultural, and economic assimilation. This new pattern is particularly visible among ethnolinguistic groups that see themselves as part of transnational diasporas; the pattern challenges the notion that assimilation is a prerequisite for success (Gibson, 1998; see also Hinkel, 2000; Sridhar & Sridhar, 2000). Educators must resist the defunct notion that assimilation and school success go hand in hand.

Complicating identity development issues is the fact that generation 1.5 children often experience linguistic, cultural, and racial discrimination in their schools, their communities, and society at large. In school, teachers may harbor conscious or unconscious prejudices and thus underestimate immigrant students’ potential (see Valdés, 1998). Conversely, teachers may place undue expectations on students; this is often the case with Asian immigrants who feel pressured to live up to the “model minority” stereotype (Conchas & Pérez, 2003; Suzuki, 1994). Students may also experience fourfold discrimination from their classmates:

- U.S.-born white classmates may regard generation 1.5 students as “foreigners.”
- U.S.-born same-ethnicity classmates may see generation 1.5 students as being too “backward.” (For example, some students report being disparagingly called “F.O.B.” or “fresh off the boat” by their U.S.-born, same-ethnicity classmates.)
Recently arrived immigrants who still have strong linguistic and cultural ties to their homelands may regard generation 1.5 students as “too Americanized.” Members of other U.S. minority groups may perceive generation 1.5 students as “competing” for access to an increasingly limited array of economic and social opportunities within U.S. schools and society.

All of the above factors result in a multispeed, multidimensional process of adaptation, acculturation, and identity development. The post-1965 immigrant children thus tend to follow more complex and varied paths of linguistic, cultural, social, and economic integration, with more varied options and outcomes, even children within the same family. In fact, identity itself has become an increasingly complex phenomenon as immigrants now face numerous “identity options” that they can, to a certain extent, freely negotiate (see Kibria, 2000). Educators must develop an awareness of the identity options that students face and the factors that shape their identity choices; at the same time educators must remain aware that each student will follow a unique path in negotiating these choices.

K-12 Schooling and the Pathway to College

Immigrant children typically confront more disruptions and discontinuities along their pathway from kindergarten to college than do U.S.-born children (see ESL Intersegmental Project Commission, 2000). Immigrants who arrive before first grade experience a disruption when they enter U.S. schools, encounter an English-dominant culture, and are forced to navigate mainly or solely in English. Immigrants who arrive during elementary school, middle school, or high school may experience a disruption when they face a new schooling system, a curriculum that may not align with the curriculum of their home countries, a new language of instruction, and a new school culture. The disruption can be even greater for immigrants who have received little or no schooling in their home countries when they enter the U.S. (Morse, 1997) and for refugee children who have missed years of schooling during their migratory process (Bosher & Rowecamp, 1998). In addition, new immigrants to the U.S. often relocate several times before finding a permanent place to live; their children thus experience additional interruptions as they switch between schools that have differing placement policies, programs, and instructional practices.

Most K-12 schools assess incoming immigrant students to determine whether they need specialized language support. However, the quality of the assessment varies considerably between states and between school systems within a given state. In California, schools use the “Home Language Survey,” a series of questions about the child’s use of languages other than English. A “yes” answer to any of the survey questions is supposed to trigger a more thorough assessment process. Unfortunately, there may be a significant delay between initial identification and the more thorough assessment; during this time period, a child may languish in an inappropriate classroom at an inappropriate level (ESL Intersessional Project Commission, 2000). Even when assessments are carried out in a timely manner, the effectiveness of assessment tools is often questionable. Especially at the younger grade levels, assessment tools can mistake minimal oral fluency for English proficiency, thus denying students access to special instructional support.
Even when effective assessment mechanisms are used, placement options and services for immigrant students may be limited. One commonly favored option is the “newcomer school” or “newcomer program” where recently arrived immigrant children may be placed while adjusting to U.S. school life and learning English. The value of newcomer schools and programs has been debated. Critics argue that such schools and programs may enhance segregation, add yet another disruption to students’ long-term schooling path, and delay students’ entry into mainstream school life (see Feinberg, 2000). Advocates claim, on the other hand, that such schools and programs provide an entry point for newcomers, assist them with the adaptation and acculturation process, affirm the value of home cultures, and help newcomers build confidence and self-esteem (see Herzberg, 1998).

When newcomer programs are unavailable or inappropriate, ESL or bilingual classes often serve as the initial placement and the nexus of support for immigrant students. However, ESL and bilingual classes vary greatly in scope and function. Some classes take on a more general educational empowerment mission with teachers serving as advisors and intermediaries between the students and school personnel (see Harklau, 1994a). Other classes have a more limited scope, focusing merely on language instruction. As educators, we must be aware that students’ prior experiences in newcomer, ESL, and bilingual programs will greatly shape their perceptions of classes targeted toward multilingual students.

As immigrant students advance along their educational pathways, they face a bewildering variety of programs, classroom placements, and instructional approaches (bilingual, ESL, immersion, two-way immersion, sheltered content, remedial/developmental, pull-out, and mainstream). This occurs because multilingual students are treated in different ways within each segment of the K-to-college pathway (ESL Intersegmental Project Commission, 2000). In California, most immigrant students start out designated as “English Learners” (ELs). Students are typically redesignated as “English Proficient” (EP) within a few years. However, generation 1.5 immigrants may be redesignated as English language learners as they move along their pathways. When students enter high school, community college, and 4-year colleges, they are particularly vulnerable to redesignation as “ESL students,” a prospect that most students find highly demoralizing because they feel they have already “made it out of ESL.” It is imperative that schools create curricular options for students that do not bear the stigmatizing “ESL” label.

In K-12 schools, immigrant students may face two equally problematic English placements—premature mainstreaming on the one hand and long-term ESL tracking on the other. In the era of No Child Left Behind and high stakes accountability, schools are under pressure to mainstream students long before the students are fully equipped to deal with the language and literacy demands of mainstream classes. In such classes, immigrant students may receive little or no instructional support. On the other hand, when immigrant students are tracked into ESL classes for years on end, they may have little contact with native English speakers and may receive an education consisting only of mechanical grammar drills, worksheet pedagogy, and seatwork. Harklau (1994b) documents how certain groups of ESL students manage to navigate their way out of the ESL track and find strategies for succeeding in the college-prep track. However, some groups of students remain “stranded” in the ESL track for much
longer; such segregation may arise from latent racial and ethnic prejudices of school officials (see Valdés, 1998). When students enter an English class, their prior experiences with premature mainstreaming or long-term ESL tracking can greatly complicate the attitudes they will have toward their current placement.

Those immigrant students who successfully exit K-12 ESL classes face two additional problematic placement options: high track classes (sometimes called academic, honors, or college-bound) and lower track classes (sometimes called basic, regular, or remedial). In high track classes, students may receive richer linguistic input, more opportunities for oral interaction, and more stimulating instructional practices. However, students must “compete” with U.S.-born native English speakers for the floor, a prospect that can be quite daunting if the instructor fails to structure activities to accommodate students of varying oral proficiencies in English. In lower track classes, students may find the tasks and the oral interaction more manageable. However, linguistic input in low track classes is generally poorer, tasks are more mechanical, and classroom interaction tends to be minimal, as many teachers avoid interactive activities in order to control “behavior problems” (see Oakes, 1985). Multilingual students entering a college English class will thus have a broad range of educational histories; some will have followed educational pathways that have fostered success and prepared them well for college while other students have experienced trajectories full of discontinuities and problematic placements.

**Student Success in K-12 Schools**

A number of theories have been advanced to explain immigrant students’ success (or lack of success) in K-12 schools. Ogbu’s theoretical construct of *voluntary versus involuntary* minorities is perhaps the best known (see Ogbu & Simon, 1998). Ogbu suggests that children from immigrant families tend to have a success orientation toward school because their families come to the U.S. voluntarily to seek out economic opportunities and better living conditions. Conversely, he suggests that children from non-immigrant minority groups (e.g., African-Americans and native peoples) tend to have an oppositional orientation toward school because these children are part of groups that have been colonized, oppressed, or brought to the U.S. involuntarily. While voluntary minorities tend to accept the power structures of school and society as legitimate, involuntary minorities tend to resist these structures because they are well aware of the oppressive nature of such structures. However, as Gibson (1998) points out, immigrant children who come at an early age do not fit into Ogbu’s dichotomy. Generation 1.5 students may share traits of both voluntary and involuntary minorities. Their experiences with racial, ethnic, and linguistic discrimination may lead them to identify with other U.S.-born minority groups and thus they may develop a general attitude of resistance toward schooling and viewing school as an instrument of social oppression.

Home–school mismatch theories have also been proposed to explain the success and failure of immigrant children. Such theories are predicated on the notion that different socio-economic and socio-cultural groups belong to different discourse communities (see Gee, 1990). U.S. school structure and instructional practices generally fit closely with the values, norms, and behaviors of middle-class white families,
thus giving their children a significant advantage when they enter school. Students who come from other linguistic, cultural, and economic backgrounds may have more difficulty negotiating the academic environment because school discourse practices do not affirm and build upon the discourse practices that students bring from their home communities (see Heath, 1983).

It has also been suggested that acculturation is a determinant of success in K-12 schools. Traditionally, both school personnel and scholars in the field of education have assumed that immigrant children’s educational successes were correlated with their level of cultural and linguistic assimilation into U.S. society. However, over the past 20 years, a number of scholars have shown that strong home culture identity is positively correlated with motivation and academic performance. In fact, rapid cultural and linguistic assimilation has been linked to educational failure, rather than success, particularly among certain segments of the immigrant population (Bosher & Rowecamp, 1998). This may be due to the fact that students who rapidly give up their home language or home culture identity cut themselves off from valuable support and funds of knowledge in their home communities.

Overall, immigrant children experience the same segmented assimilation that is experienced by the general immigrant population. Some children use schooling as a path for upward mobility while others flounder in U.S. schools or drop out. Bankston and Zhou (1997) have referred to this pattern as the “bifurcation of immigrant youth.” In their study of schooling in New Orleans, they discuss how Vietnamese youth faced two socially imposed identities, which the authors characterize as “valedictorians” and “delinquents.” Some youth identified more with the success-orientation that is part of the Asian-American “model minority” myth, while others identified more with the youth gang identity.

Language Acquisition and Language Practices in Home, School, and Community

New immigrants to the U.S. tend to settle in specific regions. Over the past several decades the most important magnet regions have been in California, New York, Texas, Florida, New Jersey, and Illinois. Within magnet regions, immigrants often settle in ethnolinguistic enclave communities that are characterized by complex patterns of linguistic interaction. These communities contain monolingual home language speakers, monolingual English speakers, and multilinguals who range from home language dominant to English dominant (Valdés, 2000). Within these communities, the functions of English and the home language are particular to specific social contexts and they are spread over a variety of registers and domains. To be a full member of the community and participate in all social institutions, children must both maintain their home language and develop English proficiency (see Zentella, 1997). They must also adapt to the localized language practices of the community, practices that generally differ from language use in the home country. Within an enclave community, both the home language and English undergo modification and influence each other through such processes as semantic extension and linguistic borrowing (see Ardila, 2005). In addition, interlocutors often use complex patterns of code-switching that require speakers to be proficient in both languages. As members of bilingual/diglossic
communities, generation 1.5 children thus develop complex linguistic repertoires that go far beyond the “academic English” that is valued in school settings.

Until the 1960s, many scholars thought that the acquisition of a second language at an early age carried negative cognitive consequences, “overloading” and “confusing” the child. In fact, many educators advised immigrant parents to switch to English when addressing their children, even in cases where the parents had only a minimal command of English. Scholars now recognize that children navigate multilingual development without negative cognitive repercussions, and that the multilingualism can actually promote cognitive development.

As generation 1.5 children acquire English, they face all challenges characteristic of any second language acquisition process. Their English competence goes through a long interlanguage stage as it gradually approximates the English of their fellow interlocutors and their environment. This interlanguage is characterized by a high degree of diachronic and synchronic variability based on factors such as task difficulty, emotional state, or context. Learners may experience periods of apparent “backsliding,” as their interlanguage develops and “reorganizes” itself. Learners’ linguistic performance may be quite uneven, with some areas and domains highly developed and others underdeveloped. Both the rate of acquisition and the ultimate state of English proficiency vary greatly from individual to individual due to social and psycholinguistic factors that are still only partially understood. Some learners develop English proficiencies that are similar to those of U.S.-born monolingual students while others retain a distinct “non-native-like” feature, a process that has traditionally been referred to as “fossilization” (see Fidler, 2006; Han & Odlin, 2006).

However, several factors may make generation 1.5 students’ acquisition processes different from those of the adult immigrant language learners. Immigrant youth often learn much of their English through informal oral/aural interaction with friends, classmates, and co-workers, through interaction with English-dominant siblings and members of their extended families, and of course, through input from media. Children who begin English acquisition after the so-called “critical period” and who acquire language predominantly through oral/aural interaction may not notice small syntactic, morphological, or lexical features of English, especially those features that are not stressed in speech. In such cases, the learner might not develop dexterity with these grammatical features. Like native monolingual English speakers who have limited experience with text, oral/aural English learners may not be aware of language features that are encoded primarily in formal written English. In their speech, they may also rely heavily on pragmatic discourse moves rather than lexical, syntactic, or morphological specificity. (Those who are bilingual are well aware that one can develop strong communication competence without attending to small grammar features.) Like monolingual English speakers, oral/aural language learners may become highly proficient oral communicators in school settings; however, they may face difficulty when confronted with school writing tasks that require attention to formal written conventions. In addition, like monolingual English speakers, oral/aural language learners generally lack the meta-linguistic terminology necessary for understanding teachers’ explanation of written linguistic conventions.

While the classroom-based language acquisition experiences of immigrant students have been studied in some detail at the elementary school level, less is known about
their experiences at the high school level (Harklau, 2000). Immigrant students who arrive during middle school and high school have often had some English instruction in their home countries. This instruction is often text based, focusing on reading and grammar. Therefore, even those who have had instruction usually arrive in the U.S. quite unprepared for the challenges of fast-paced classroom interaction. On the other hand, this prior training may give later-arrival students a meta-linguistic understanding of English, which can later facilitate their language acquisition, particularly in the area of formal academic writing. In fact, many later-arrival immigrant students report that they rely heavily on the instruction that they received in their home countries.

Socio-economic factors add complexity to the language acquisition processes and language repertoires of immigrant children. Many attend inner-city or rural schools where their interlocutors are speakers of various community dialects of English, such as African-American English Vernacular (AAEV) and Chicano English (CE). Many of their interlocutors are also language learners whose own speech is characterized by high variability. When confronted with academic writing tasks, immigrant students may produce prose that contains both learner-like features and features that mirror their peer-group interlocutors. They thus often face double censure from teachers—both for “ESL errors” and for “nonstandard errors.” When a student’s writing contains linguistic features that may be related to either language learning or dialect, it may be difficult for teachers to tailor their feedback and explanations to the individual student. When language features are related to a student’s home dialect, teachers typically want to affirm that home dialect while teaching editing strategies that will help the student produce a more formal academic prose. When language features are related to a student’s interlanguage development, teachers generally want to correct and explain what they perceive to be “errors.”

After immigrant children arrive in the U.S., their home language proficiency may follow one of two main routes. Their proficiency may continue to grow through interactions with other home language speakers and interactions with text; this is often the case for children who acquired literacy skills before immigrating to the U.S. and for children who are able to attend bilingual classes or home-language literacy programs. Conversely, an immigrant child’s home language proficiency may cease development and even backslide. In such cases, children do not develop a lexically and syntactically rich, age-appropriate command of their native language as they mature. The process of language shift and home language loss may occur quite rapidly. Of the group of immigrants who arrive between age 0 and age 14, approximately 20% will shift to English dominance within the first 5 years of U.S. residency, 40% will switch within the first 10 years, and 66% switch within the first 20 years. In fact, 10% of immigrants age 0 to 14 will eventually lose their home language completely. Those immigrants who arrive after age 15 appear to fare much better; few of these individuals lose their home language over the course of their lifetime. (See McKay & Wong, 2000 for a complete discussion of immigrant children’s language loss and the associated statistics.) Again, educators must be aware of the range of language histories that students bring to our classes. Students’ self-perceptions of their “most comfortable” language, their “preferred” language, their “best” language, their “first” language, or “second” language may not follow a pattern that educators traditionally expect.
College Experiences

Recent studies have shown that within a given ethnic group, immigrant children are more likely than non-immigrant children to attend college, even when confounding variables such as socio-economic status have been factored out (Vernez & Abrahamse, 1996). However, immigrant youth often face a number of challenges when they enter college. First, they may experience an identity change. As Harklau (2000) notes, in high school, immigrant students are often seen by teachers and administrators as the “good kids” (i.e., the most diligent) when compared to U.S.-born students. This is especially true in low-track high school classes where immigrants may be studying alongside U.S.-born students whom teachers see as “behavior problems.” However, when immigrant students arrive at college, they may find that their identity in ESL and English classes changes. If they are placed in college-level ESL classes, they may find themselves studying alongside newly arrived foreign-visa students who have come to the U.S. with ample social, intellectual, and economic capital, as well as strong meta-linguistic training. Such immigrants, whom teachers and program administrators now compare to foreign students, may be seen as “the under-prepared,” “the slackers,” or the “behavior problems,” for example, because they are already used to the informal character of U.S. schools.

Most students find that college as an institution is fundamentally different from high school. Society tends to treat K-12 education as a right; therefore, K-12 schools are characterized by an abundance of support services to help students take advantage of that right. By contrast, society tends to perceive postsecondary education more as a meritocratic institution; therefore postsecondary schools are characterized by an abundance of gatekeeping mechanisms that sort students by merit. Even with the advent of open admissions of the 1970s and the expanding “urban mission” of many public colleges, most college English departments find themselves caught between the conflicting goals of supporting linguistic minority students while at the same time maintaining what faculty and administrators perceive as traditional academic standards.

Immigrant college students also may face challenges typically associated with other so-called “non-traditional” students. Many are first in the family to go to college. Many are struggling economically, sometimes working full time to support their families when their non-English speaking parents have limited earning potential. Even when supportive of education, the families might have little understanding of what the college experience entails. Such families may pressure students to take unreasonable course loads in order to finish at an accelerated pace. In addition, recent anti-remediation mandates in many state college systems have put additional pressures on immigrant students to complete their ESL coursework “in record time” or face disenrollment or loss of financial aid.

Researchers in the field of education have noted that immigrant students are poorly served at the college level (Harklau, Losey, & Siegal, 1999; Rolph, Gray, & Melamid, 1996; Ruiz-de-Valasco & Fix, 2000). Academic services specifically targeted toward immigrants are sparse. Many institutions have an “office of international students” that supports and coordinates services to foreign-visa students. However, these services are typically unavailable to immigrant students, even recent arrivals (Reid, 1998). Within English programs, the curricular structures that track students into ESL, Basic