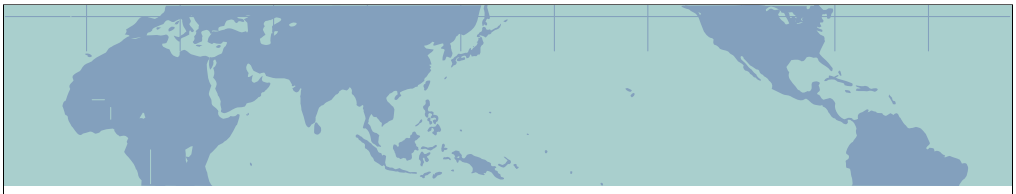

Learning a New Land: Immigrant Students in American Society

Université de Montréal
November 5, 2009

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Immigrant Youth in the U.S.

- Prevalence
  - 16 million children in immigrant families
  - Rapid Growth
    - 1970 - 6%
    - 1990 - 14%
    - 2009 - 22%
    - Projected by 2020 - 31%
- At Risk
  - Poverty
  - Low parent education
  - Limited access to health care
  - Triple segregated schools
  - Language acquisition with no systematic instruction or policy

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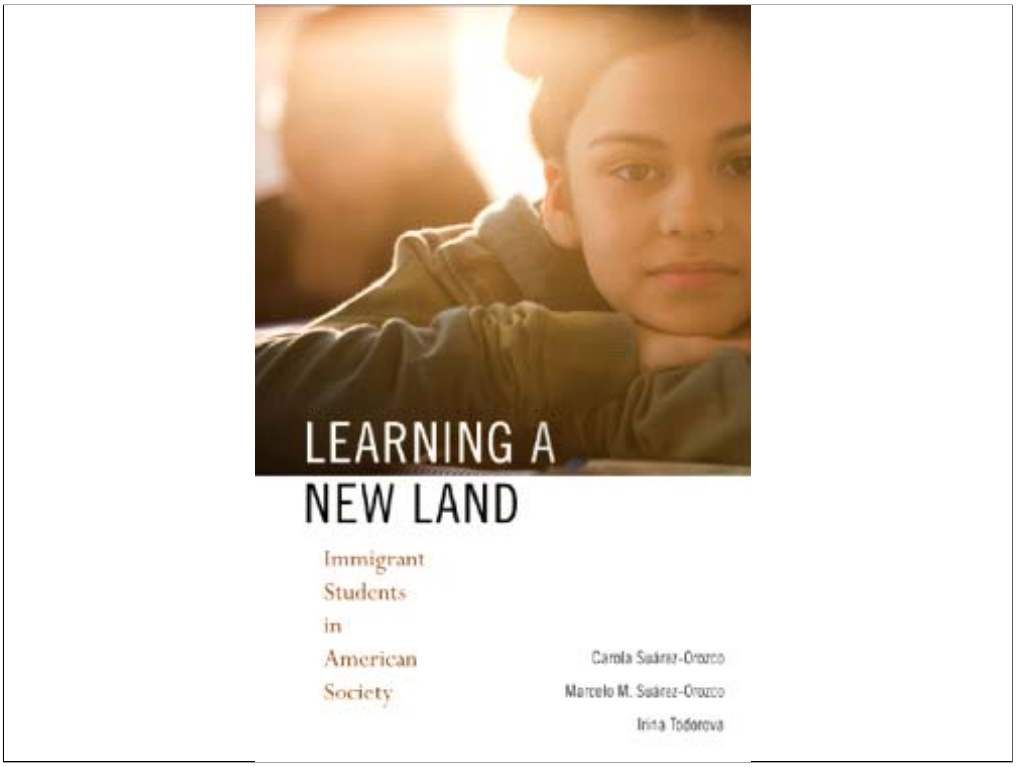

~Approximately half of newcomer immigrant youth arrive sometime during the midway point of their education, a time identified as being one of heightened developmental vulnerability.

~The middle and high schools they encounter are often ill-equipped to address their needs.

~These young people must surmount a “formidable barrier” of adjusting to a new land, developing academic English skills, and fulfilling graduation requirements in a high-stakes testing environment not designed with their educational obstacles in mind.

~Further, their parents are often ill equipped to help them to navigate a complex, foreign, and sometimes hostile educational system.

As a result, many are “overlooked and under-served.”

~In a knowledge-intensive economy in which the stakes of school failure are greater than ever before deepening our understanding of the processes that contribute to trajectories of academic success and failure has clear social implications.

The Longitudinal Immigrant Student Adaptation Study

- Longitudinal, interdisciplinary, & comparative
- Documenting continuities and discontinuities in immigration youth's educational attitudes and adaptations over time
- Youth originated in Central America, China, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, & Mexico
- Ages 9 & 14 at beginning of study
- Recruited from 51 schools in 7 school districts in the Boston & San Francisco areas *[Ethnographic observations in 20 schools]*
- Thirty graduate level bicultural & multilingual research assistants
- Funded to date by the National Science Foundation, the W.T. Grant Foundation and The Spencer Foundation

Triangulated Data Collection Strategies

- Ethnographic Observations
- Structured Interviews with Students, Parents & School Personnel
- Psychosocial Measures
  - Sentence Completions
  - Narratives
  - Open Ended Questions
  - Forced Choice Items
- Networks of Social Relations
- Bilingual Verbal Abilities Testing
- Woodcock-Johnson Test of Achievement
- Report Cards
- Teacher Completed Behavioral Checklists

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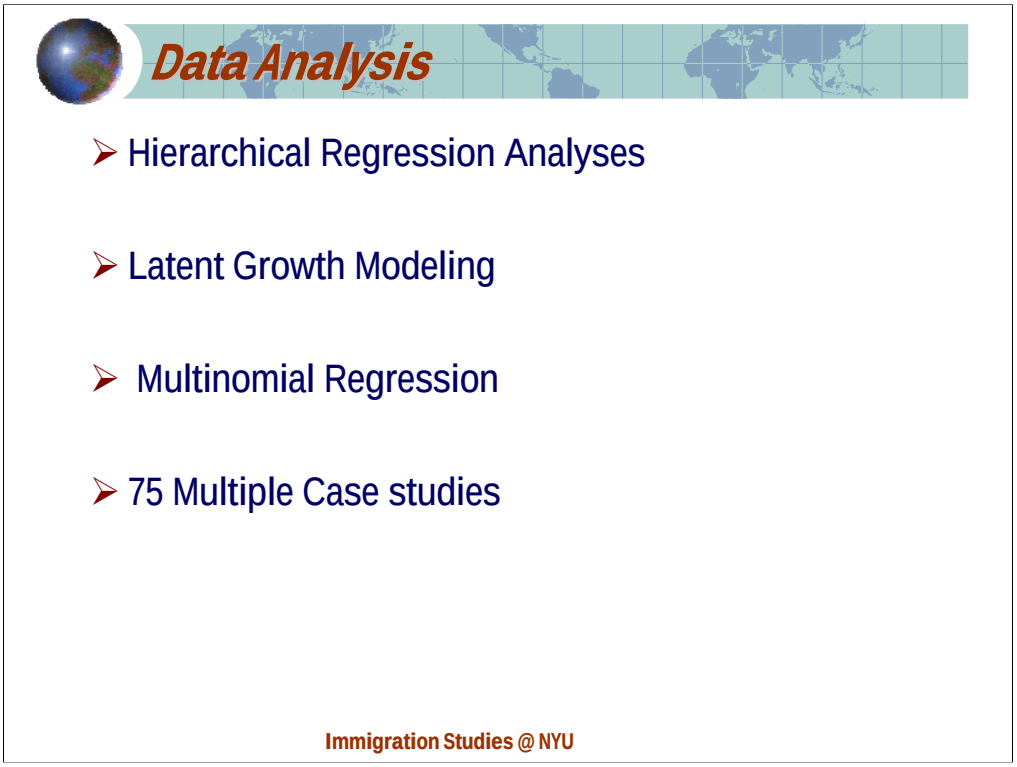
Suspect of self-report data

Interdisciplinary perspective

Used a variety of data collection strategies



Hierarchical regression analyses were used to identify the factors that contributed significantly to 2 different outcomes-- immigrant students' grades and to their academic achievement test performance

Latent growth modeling was used to describe trajectories of performance over time.

Multinomial logistic regression was then used to delineate how indicators of family capital, school characteristics, and individual characteristics were associated with academic trajectories.

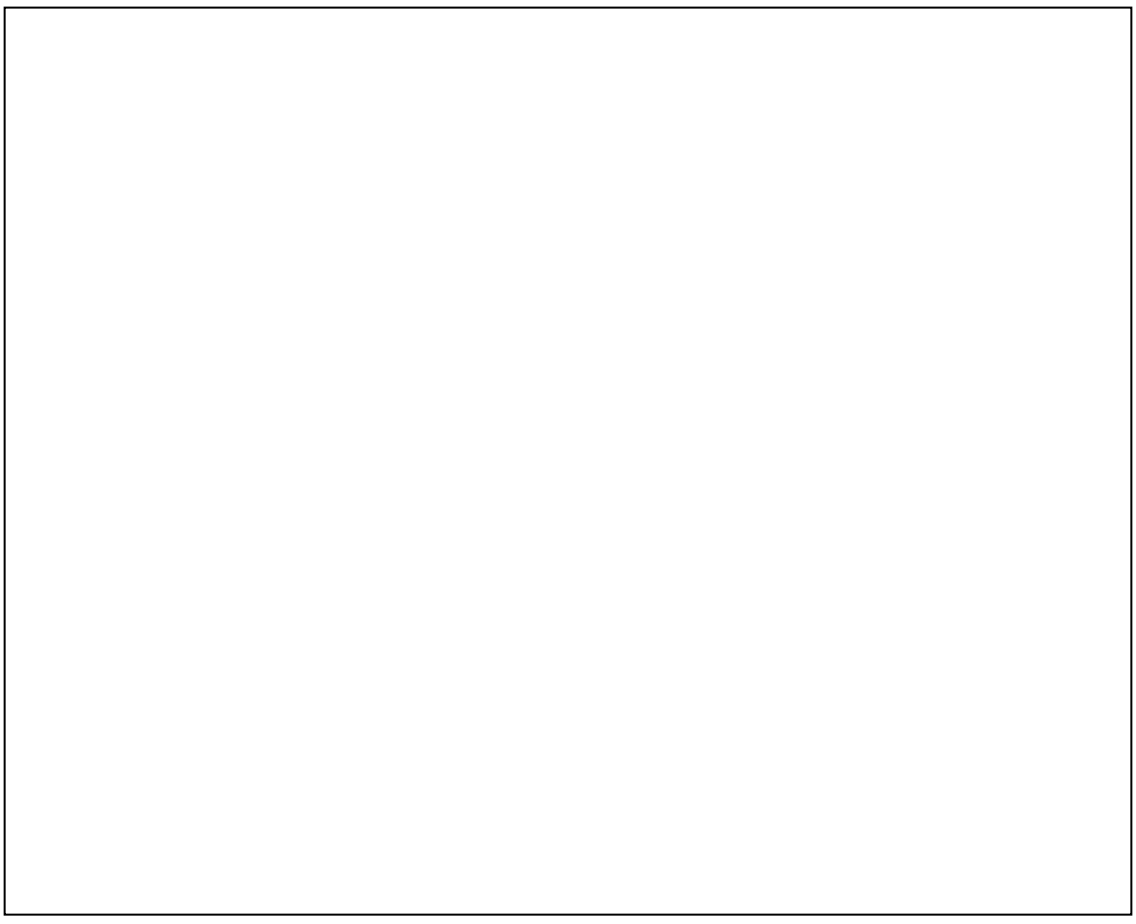
We further deepened our understanding of academic trajectories of performance by utilizing systematic analysis of 75 multiple case studies (Yin, 2003). The case studies were used to uncover unanticipated causal links, which quantitative data do not reveal, and to shed light on the developmental and interactional processes at play (Yin).

This mixed-methods approach allowed us to triangulate our findings and deepened our understanding of the challenges that newcomer youth encounter as they enter U.S. schools.

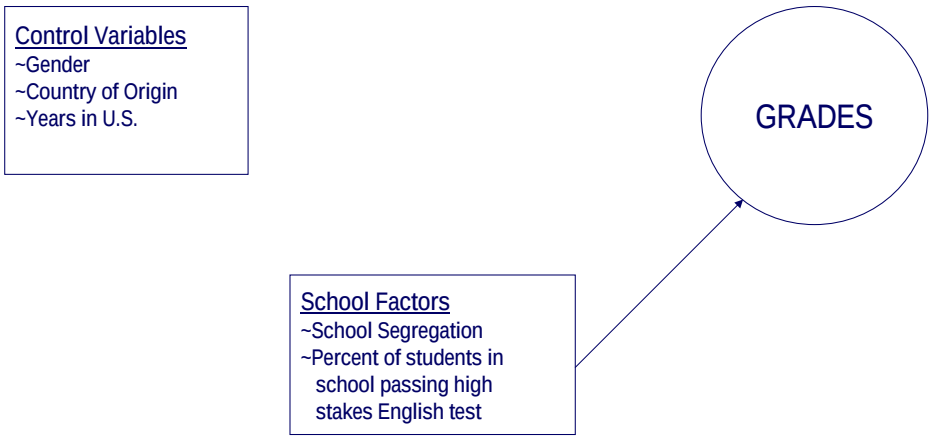
Predicting Academic Achievement Outcomes

Control Variables
~Gender
~Country of Origin
~Years in U.S.

GRADES



Predicting Academic Achievement Outcomes



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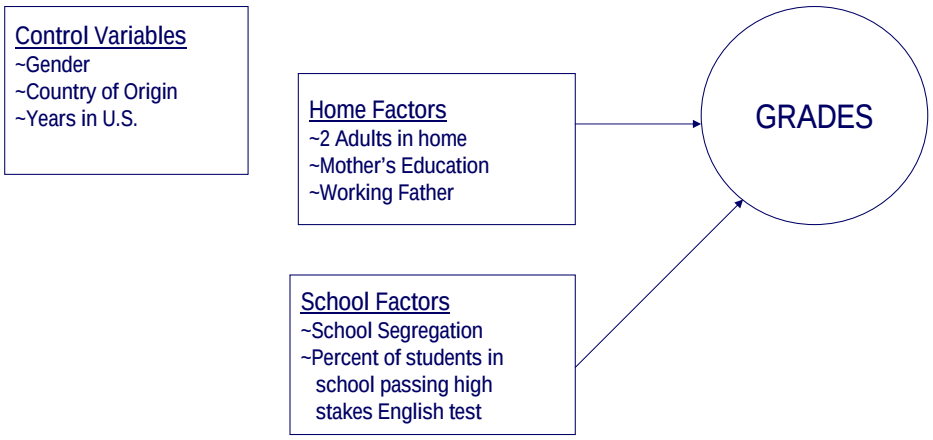
Predicting Academic Achievement Outcomes



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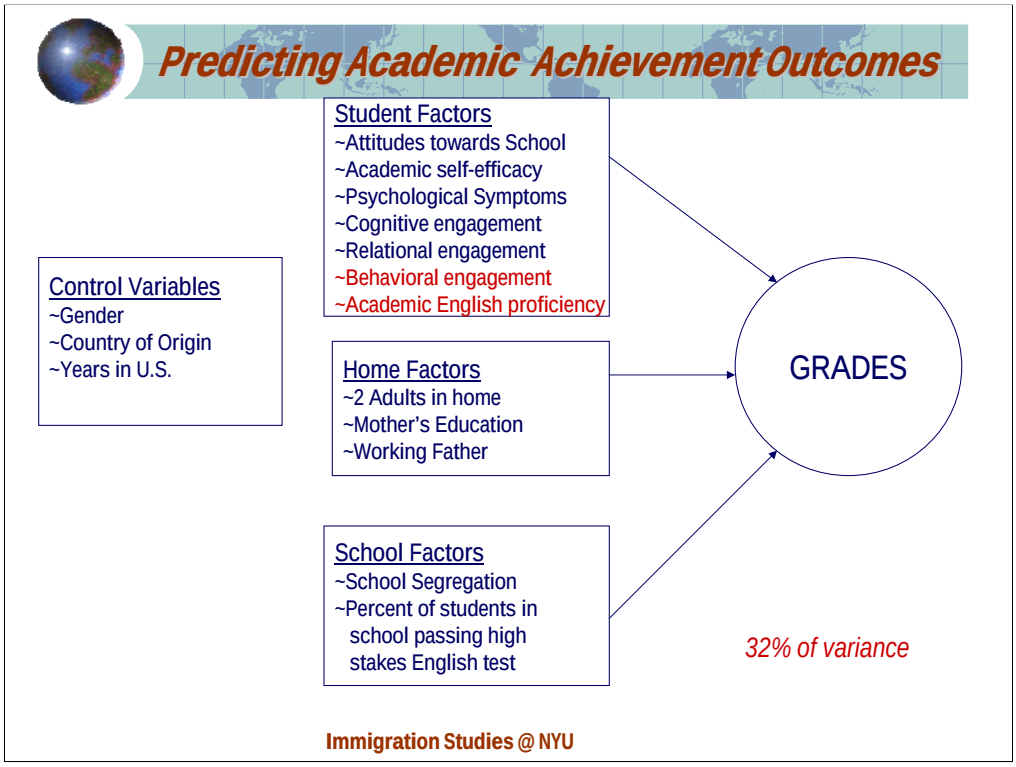
Predicting Academic Achievement Outcomes
Student Factors
~Attitudes towards School
~Academic self-efficacy
~Psychological Symptoms
~Cognitive engagement
~Relational engagement
~Behavioral engagement
~Academic English proficiency
Control Variables
~Gender
~Country of Origin
~Years in U.S.
Home Factors
~2 Adults in home
~Mother's Education
~Working Father
School Factors
~School Segregation
~Percent of students in school passing high stakes English test
GRADES
32% of variance
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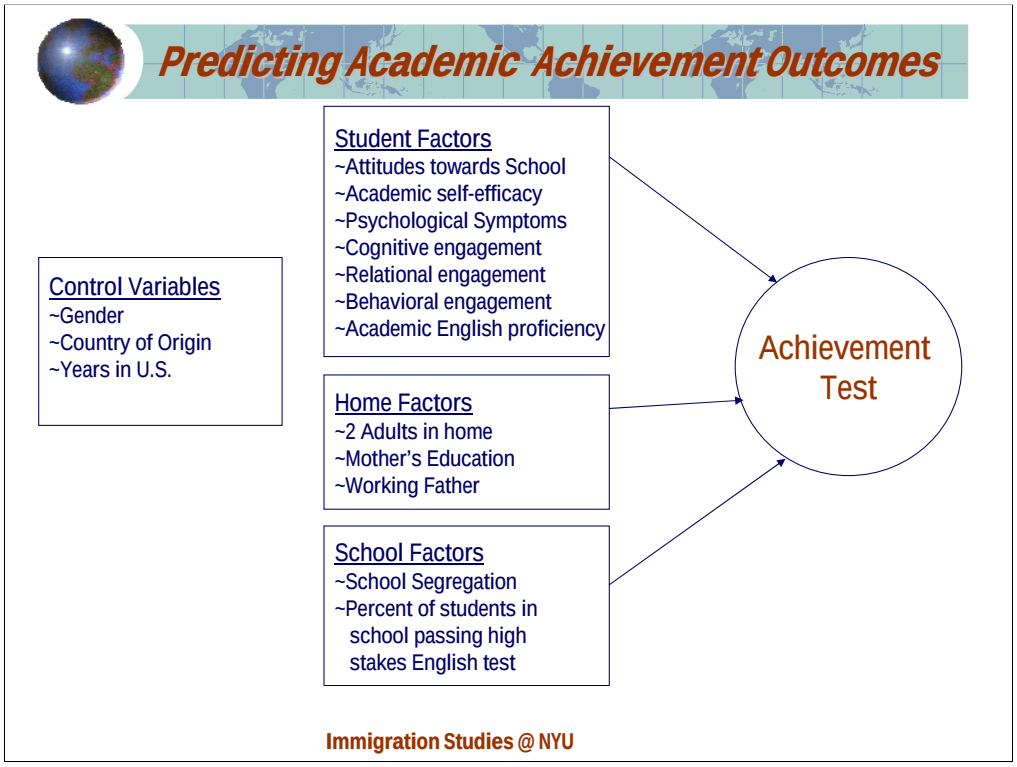
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Achievement Test
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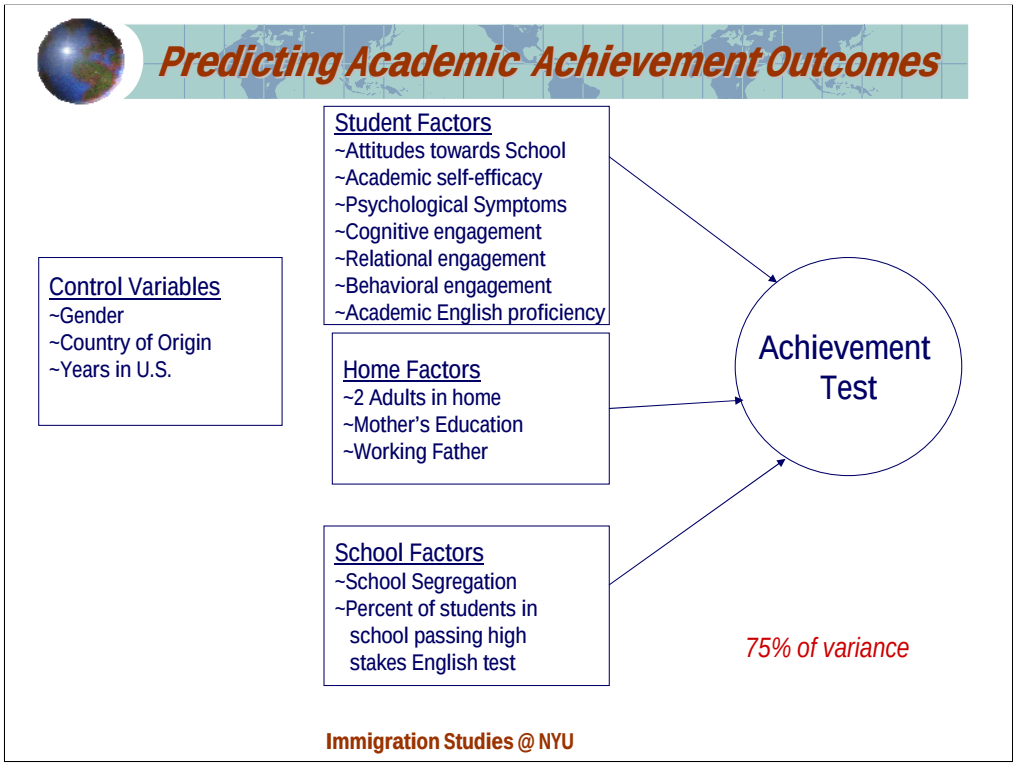
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~Percent of students in school passing high stakes English test
Achievement Test
75% of variance
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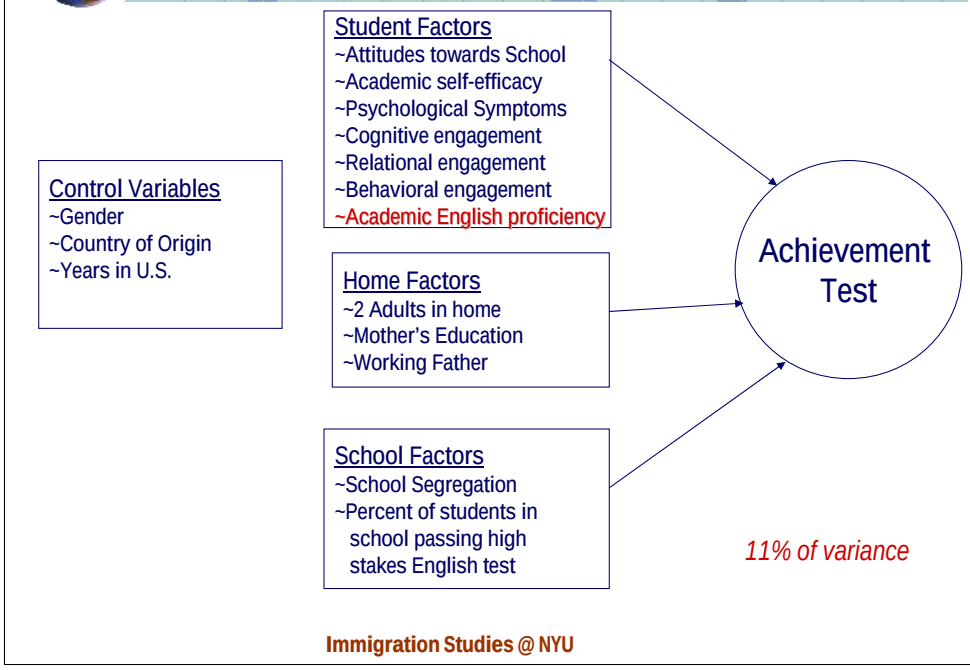
Predicting Academic Achievement Outcomes



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Challenge of Learning English

- Highly motivated to learn
- 99% said it was very important to learn English
- 93% liked learning
- But 1/3 though it was “very hard”
- English is _____
  - ~ very important for the future
  - ~ important to succeed
  - ~ important to get ahead
- Open Ended tasks
  - Main impediment for getting ahead in the US?--56% said English
  - Main impediment for going to college--45% said English
- TAT Card 1-- Many told narratives of struggles of learning

What does this all mean?

Sometimes the participants explicitly superimposed the task of learning English onto the task of learning to play the violin:

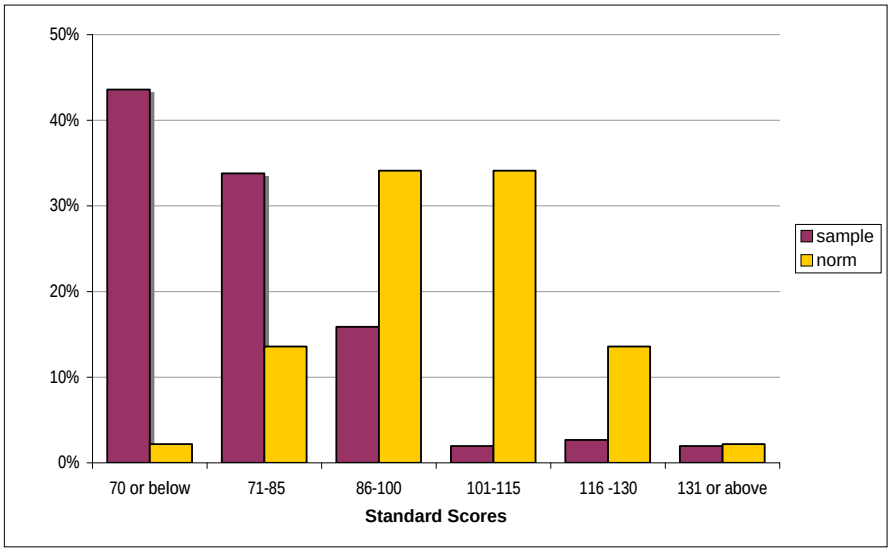
~The boy is sad. He looks sad. He doesn't know look very happy. He has a problem with his parents or someone in his family. Or he is sad because Proposition 227 passed. Perhaps he doesn't know how to speak English. Perhaps now he can't learn English. It becomes harder for him. Perhaps in the future he could speak English. But he can't do math or science in English.

In other cases, while the students talked specifically about learning to play the violin, the preoccupations about learning English do not take much imagination to detect. These narratives make evident the desire to learn coupled with the profound sense of inadequacy the task of learning English can evoke.

~There's a person in the picture. He/she came to the U.S. from China as well. When he was in China, he/she liked to play violin, and he played well. People liked to listen to him play. But after he came to the U.S. He doesn't know how to read the scales. That is why he hates English and he doesn't play violin anymore.

~This person didn't know how to play the instrument. He was thinking of what to do. He asked others to teach him. He practiced often and finally learned how to play violin. He was feeling that it was very difficult in the picture.

English Language Proficiency



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Recognition that academic language takes time!!!

After having been in the US on average 7 years, the mean English Language Proficiency Standard score for our sample was 74.7

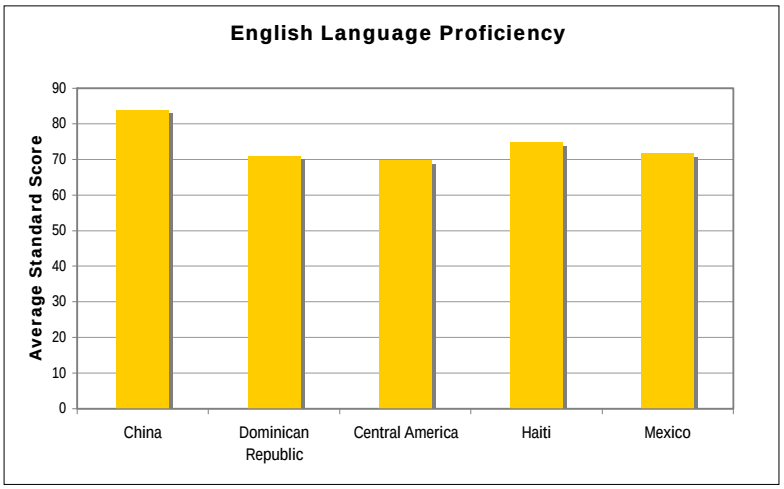
Only 7.1% of students scored at or above the average level of that of their native speaking peers

75.7% of students scored below the 85 percentile (one standard deviation below average for native-speaking peers)

Only 17.2% of students scored within one standard deviation of same-age native-speaking peers

Standard Score	sample	norm
70 or below	43.6%	2.2%
71-85	33.8%	13.6%
86-100	15.9%	34.1%
101-115	2.0%	34.1%
116 -130	2.7%	13.6%
131 or above	2.0%	2.2%

Academic English :Country Comparisons Year 5



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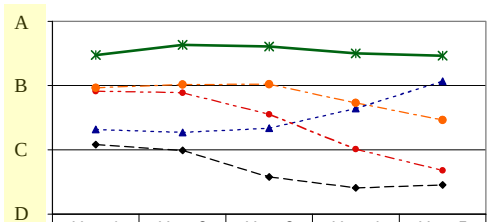
At Year 5, after had been in US on average 7 years, no difference on average on Academic English between Countries of Origin!

Note: The omnibus test did not find statistically significant differences between country of origin groups. $F(4, 280)=2.4$, $p<.51$

Academic Performance Pathways



	Year 1 Mean	Year 2 Mean	Year 3 Mean	Year 4 Mean	Year 5 Mean
Low [14.4%]	2.08	1.99	1.58	1.41	1.45
Improving [10.9%]	2.32	2.27	2.34	2.64	3.06
Precipitous Decline [26.8 %]	2.91	2.89	2.55	2.01	1.68
Slow Decline [24.3%]	2.96	3.02	3.02	2.73	2.47
High [23.6 %]	3.47	3.63	3.61	3.50	3.46

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In the book we used Multiple-Case study analysis strategy along with chi-square & ANOVA comparisons between groups to predict difference between the various trajectories of performance

Since then we have conducted two sets of Multinomial Logistical Regression Modeling, confirming the findings in LNL

Forthcoming *Developmental Psychology* & *International Journal of Behavioral Development*

Characteristics of Pathways

- Decliners
  - Less educated parents
  - Attending poor quality schools
  - Gaps in English language proficiency
  - Most family conflict
  - More likely to have protracted separations
  - Endorsed psychological symptoms
  - Higher levels of undocumented status
  - Few supportive school relations
  - Low behavioral engagement
  - Difficulty sustaining incoming hope & drive
- Low Achievers
  - Come in with gaps in literacy & schooling
  - Attended worst schools
  - Significant family problems
  - Few supportive school relations
  - Lure of work
  - Never find their academic bearings

Characteristics of Pathways

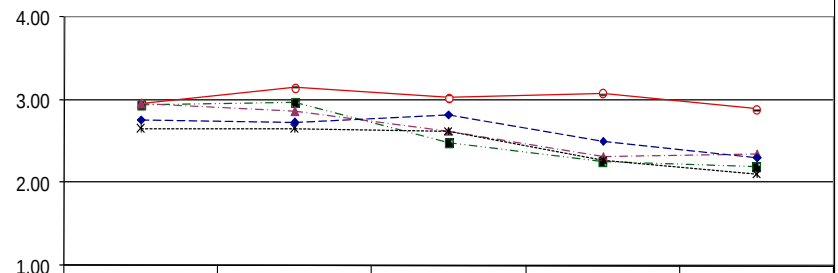
- Improving
  - Initial transplant shock
  - Often had undergone pre-migration trauma
  - Attended better schools than decliners or low achievers
  - More likely to have intact families & working parents
  - More likely to connect with a mentor
- High Achievers
  - Most educated parents
  - Least family separations
  - Better family relations
  - Best emotional wellbeing
  - Attended best schools
  - Most supportive school based relationships
  - Best English language skills
  - Highest behavioral engagement

Policy Implications

- "Sink or Swim" integration policies
- The DREAM Act
- Rigorous 21st century education
- Teacher education
- Second language education
- High-stakes testing
- After-school programs
- Significance of mentorships
- Systematic college pathway instruction

Question & Answer

Comparisons by Country of Origin



	GPA Yr 1	GPA Yr 2	GPA Yr 3	GPA Yr 4	GPA Yr 5
China	2.96	3.15	3.03	3.08	2.89
DR	2.94	2.97	2.48	2.25	2.19
Cen Am	2.95	2.86	2.63	2.32	2.35
Haiti	2.65	2.65	2.63	2.28	2.11
Mexico	2.76	2.73	2.82	2.51	2.31

Chinese Exceptionalism

- Fewer & shorter family separations
- Bimodal parental education with some highly educated
- Less likely to be undocumented
- Less likely to attend highly segregated/high poverty schools
- Transfer of cultural model of high stakes academic pathway game of strategy
- Cultural brokers with high social capital
- Higher behavioral engagement
- Teacher expectations of the model minority