A Qualitative Phenomenological Study on the Lived Experiences of Secondary Teachers Who Support Latino Newcomer Immigrant Youth in Their First Year of U.S. Schools

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Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of secondary public school teachers who have or currently support Latino newcomer immigrant youth in their first year of U.S. schools, with a specific focus on identifying effective instructional strategies and support systems that promote both academic achievement and socioemotional well-being. The problem addressed in this study was that secondary teachers often lack adequate preparation and knowledge of effective instructional strategies and support systems that promote both academic achievement and socioemotional well-being among Latino newcomer immigrant youth in grades 7-12 during their first year of school. This population often develops acculturative stress due to migration-related trauma, which adversely affects their academic and socioemotional well-being (Conway & Lewin, 2022). A purposive sample of 12 participants from two school districts provided insight into how they addressed the academic and socioemotional needs of Latino newcomer immigrant youth. The findings revealed that participants implemented a wide range of instructional strategies they deemed effective and provided socioemotional support at varying degrees, depending on their comfort levels and knowledge. However, they reported that their teacher preparation program and their workplace did not adequately prepare them for working with this population. A lack of trauma-informed teaching and culturally relevant curricula were also reported. The results suggest that school districts and other stakeholders should provide increased professional development on the socioemotional needs of this population, with a primary focus on trauma-informed teaching and the adoption of more culturally relevant curricula. This would better equip educators in reducing the acculturative stress levels of Latino newcomer immigrant youth by providing more equitable opportunities for academic growth and improved socioemotional well-being.

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Section 1: Foundation

In August of 2023, the U.S. Border Patrol had 232,972 encounters with Latino immigrants along the Southwest border (U.S. Customs and Border Protection, 2023). The latest census estimates report approximately 64 million Latinos in the U.S., making them the nation's largest ethnic minority (National Center for Education Statistics, 2021). Of these, about 20 million are Latino immigrants (PEW Research Center, 2022). This number includes families with school-aged children. While most Latino immigrants come from Mexico, the top three countries of origin for Latino Newcomer immigrant youth are Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2023). Some travel from as far south as Colombia, Peru, and Venezuela, crossing multiple borders and often fleeing their native countries due to political, domestic, and community violence (Conway & Lewin, 2022; Garcia, 2022). These pre-migration events, accompanied by traumatic experiences during the migration process, can threaten the psychological well-being of Latino immigrant youth (Cohodes et al., 2021; Garcia, 2022). The stressors of migration, along with adversities experienced in the United States, such as living in constant fear of deportation, may develop into immigrant-specific Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) among Latino newcomer immigrant youth that may continue well into adulthood (Conway & Lewin,2022; Gudiño et al., 2023; Sahbaz et al., 2022).

Latino parents may immigrate to the United States to take advantage of the educational opportunities this country offers their children (Cuevas, 2019). Parents value education and want their children to have access to opportunities they did not have in their native country (Garcia, 2022). This desire often propels them to send their children to the United States as unaccompanied minors. In 2022, 49% of Latino immigrant youth were unaccompanied minors ranging from 13-16 years of age (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2023). As

unaccompanied minors migrating alone, Latino immigrant youth are at a higher risk for physical or sexual assault by their guides or other adults traveling with their group (Conway & Lewin, 2022; Gudiño et al., 2023). Once in this country, they may find acculturation difficult without parents to provide the emotional support and structure needed to develop robust coping mechanisms (Garcia et al., 2022; Shah et al., 2021). Moreover, the language barrier, social isolation, and bias-based bullying in the school setting may contribute to acculturative stress in Latino immigrant youth and hinder their academic success (Hos, 2020; Schlaudt et al., 2021). Acculturative stress refers to the psychological and cultural changes that recent immigrant arrivals, also known as Newcomers, experience as they interact with a new culture while attempting to maintain their own (Yan et al., 2021).

Prior research in this area has largely lumped all immigrants under 18 years old as childhood arrivals (Rodriguez, 2023). Literature focusing on adolescents suggests that this population experiences unique immigrant-specific barriers that contribute to acculturative stress (Cheng & Lo, 2022; Conway & Lewin, 2022; Lilly, 2022; Miller et al., 2022; Newcomer et al., 2021; Rodriguez, 2023; Shah et al., 2021; Yan, et al., 2021; Yeung et al., 2022). These include adversities such as social isolation, family separation, and pre-migration traumatic experiences. Furthermore, studies have found that these stressors are greater for Latino immigrant youth ages 12 and above as compared to younger immigrants (Cobb et al., 2021; McInerney, 2020; Rodriguez, 2023). This is because immigrant youth simultaneously experience adolescence and immigration, two major life transitions that result in increased levels of stress and anxiety (Hos, 2020; Nair et al., 2021; Rodriguez, 2023).

Findings emphasize the importance of addressing this topic as it can lead to mental health issues (Lilly, 2022; Schlaudt et al., 2021; Yan et al., 2021). Issues such as depression, stress, and

lowered self-esteem may hinder academic achievement (Estrada & Galliher, 2022; Newcomer et al., 2020; Zeledon et al., 2023). Indeed, high school dropout rates for Latino students are the second highest in the country, representing 24% of all dropouts (U.S. Department of Education, 2021). Of this percentage, 6% are born in this country, while the other 18% of Latino dropouts are foreign-born. Interrupted schooling is also a contributing factor to high school dropout rates (Szlyk et al., 2020). For many Latino newcomer immigrant youth, a lack of formal education in their native country and disrupted schooling during migration can create an academic gap that reduces their motivation (Garcia et al., 2022). Increasing motivation is crucial, as research has shown that academically engaged youth are more likely to achieve better grades and stay in school (Smith et al., 2020).

Heightened anti-immigrant sentiment in recent years has also increased these acculturative stressors (Valencia et al., 2023; Yan et al., 2021). Anti-immigrant laws and increased animosity have created a hostile environment that has created social exclusion and threatened immigrant youth's sense of belonging (Rodriguez, 2023). The need to belong is greatest during adolescence, and immigration during this time increases acculturative stress compared to that of younger or older immigrants, because immigrant youth have already established a strong attachment to their native country (Rodriguez, 2023). Immigrant children growing up in the U.S. come to see this country as their only home because their prior experiences were short-lived. Similarly, adult immigrants tend to be more resilient, as they have already developed worldviews shaped entirely by their native country. To reduce these immigrant-specific stressors, Latino newcomer youth need greater support from schools that facilitate acculturation (Garcia et al., 2022). With a growing number of Latino immigrants in the American educational system, it is imperative that educators and other stakeholders understand

the academic and socioemotional needs of this population, as acculturative stress may decrease with preventative interventions (Schlaudt et al., 2021). Additionally, addressing these stressors may decrease dropout rates and narrow the achievement gap (Valencia et al., 2023).

Statement of the Problem

The problem addressed in this study was that secondary teachers often lack adequate preparation and knowledge of effective instructional strategies and support systems that promote both academic achievement and socioemotional well-being among Latino Newcomer immigrant youth in grades 7-12 during their first year of school (Davis et al., 2021; Lilly, 2021; Schlaudt et al., 2021; Yan et al., 2021). As the fastest-growing segment of the U.S. population, Latino newcomer immigrant youth require specialized instructional approaches and support systems that address both their academic and socioemotional needs (Cuba et al., 2021; Yan et al., 2021). However, many teachers report feeling underprepared to effectively support these students' unique challenges, including limited English proficiency, potential interrupted formal education, and cultural adjustment (Rodriguez, 2023; Yan et al., 2021; Zeledon et al., 2023). Without proper instructional strategies and support systems for Latino newcomers, they are at an increased risk for academic struggles and social isolation (Hos, 2020).

Acculturative stress affects the mental health of Latino immigrant youth (Bulut & Gayman, 2020; Carnes, 2022; Gomez & Gudiño, 2023; Hale & Kuperminc, 2021; Hos, 2020; Patel et al., 2023; Ward et al., 2020). Migration trauma, along with post-migration stress, can contribute to depression, anxiety, and symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (Patel et al., 2023). This can greatly impact immigrant youth's ability to learn, engage in school, and lower their persistence when tackling academic challenges (Patel et al., 2023). Latino students have the second lowest academic achievement in the United States, and Latino newcomer immigrant

youth are part of this statistic (Estrada & Galliher, 2023). In 2021, about half of all immigrant children were Latino (Migration Policy Institute, 2023). This study aimed to provide an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of teachers who have or currently support Latino Newcomer immigrant youth in grades 7-12 and whether they address the academic and socioemotional needs of this population.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of secondary teachers who have or currently support Latino newcomer immigrant are youth in their first year in U.S. schools, with a specific focus on identifying effective instructional strategies and support systems that promote both academic achievement and socioemotional well-being. The researcher designed a 15-question semi-structured interview to be administered to 12 secondary teachers at two southeastern Washington public schools. These potential participants supported 7-12 grade Latino newcomer immigrant youth in core classes, including Math, Social Studies, Science, and ELA. This research aimed to understand which approaches teachers perceived as most effective in supporting the academic and socioemotional needs of these students. Purposive sampling was used to recruit potential participants from two public middle and high schools. This probability sampling technique ensured that participants shared similar identifiable characteristics, which were critical to the research's purpose (Prosek & Gibson, 2021). Recruitment of potential participants began by obtaining site permission from the two school districts and the middle and high schools. A list of teachers who worked with Latino Newcomer immigrant youth was requested from the two school districts. This list was used as the sampling frame. As a first method of contact, an email was sent to potential participants, explaining the purpose of the study. Once secondary teachers agreed to participate, the data

collected were audio-recorded. Braun & Clarke's (2022) reflective thematic analysis was utilized to identify themes that answered the research questions. Potential findings may contribute to current educational practice on effective teacher preparation programs and professional development focused on supporting the needs of newcomer students (Rodriguez et al., 2020). This study aimed to address the following research questions.

Research Questions

RQ1

What instructional strategies do secondary teachers identify as effective in promoting academic achievement among Latino newcomer immigrant youth during their first year in U.S. schools?

RQ2

What support systems do secondary teachers identify as effective in promoting socioemotional well-being among Latino newcomer immigrant youth during their first year of U.S. schools?

Theoretical Framework

The two theories that guided this study were Berry's Bidimensional Model of Acculturation (1980) and Coll et al.'s, (1996) Integrative Model for the Study of Developmental Competencies in Minority Children (Coll et al., 1996). Berry (1980) developed his model to explain individual adaptation strategies used by immigrants and other cultural groups in a new society (Figure 1). In this context, bidimensional means that immigrants can adopt some elements of the host society's culture without losing their own (Schumann et al., 2020). This acculturation theory outlines the cultural and psychological adjustments that immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers undergo as they interact with a different cultural group (van der

Zee & van Oudenhoven, 2022). In 1997, Berry further developed his acculturation theory, suggesting that immigrants initiate the acculturation process through one of four pathways: assimilation, separation, integration, or marginalization (Berry & Sam, 2010). When immigrants assimilate, they adopt the host society's culture while abandoning their own (Berry & Sam, 2010). They quickly blend into the host society by mirroring its behaviors and attitudes. In contrast, separation involves behavior where immigrants reject the new culture and retain their own (Berry & Sam, 2010). Other immigrants may choose to become bicultural by integrating into the new culture while retaining their own (Berry & Sam, 2010). They strive to become an integral part of the host society while continuing to value and participate in their own culture. However, Berry (2005) stresses that biculturalism is possible only when the dominant society is open to cultural diversity and does not exert pressure to conform. Marginalization refers to immigrants who reject the new culture due to negative experiences of discrimination and exclusion and feel they have lost their sense of identity (Berry & Sam, 2010). They lose interest in connecting with others and, thus, reject both cultures.

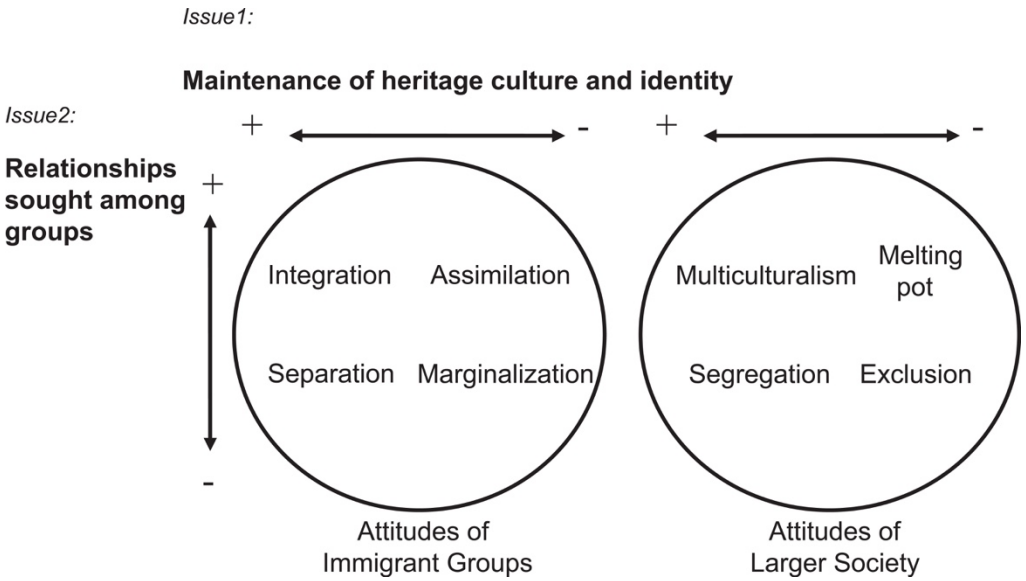
It is important to note that the acculturation process is not a brief period. Rather, it is a long-term developmental process in which cultural practices, identities, and values may evolve or change at different rates (Lee et al., 2020). A recently arrived immigrant may have a strong cultural identity; however, over time and under the steady influence of the host society's culture, their values and standards may gradually change to reflect those of the host society. Further empirical studies on acculturation and mental health have found that immigrants who integrate into the host society often exhibit better mental health in relation to those who choose to separate, and those who choose marginalization as an acculturation strategy have more mental health issues (Bulut & Gayman, 2020; Gudiño et al., 2023). These findings largely support

Berry's acculturation theory and prior research, linking biculturalism to resiliency and marginalization to the worst mental health outcomes (Bulut & Gayman, 2020).

While the two distinct cultural groups begin to co-exist and immigrants adopt acculturation strategies, the host society adopts reception strategies, a process known as reciprocal acculturation (Berry, 2005). Berry's acculturation theory suggests that the host society adopts reception strategies (Figure 1), reacting to new community members by embracing, excluding, segregating, or blending them (Berry, 2005). Berry affirms that the best scenario for new immigrants to thrive is when the host society welcomes and embraces them. When the host society acknowledges and values new immigrants, it perceives them as an asset and makes an ongoing effort to welcome them, increasing and improving community and educational services. Exclusion is the opposite of reception, in which the host society rejects new immigrants. They may view them as a hindrance and respond with anti-immigrant rhetoric. A segregation response may involve accepting immigrants, provided they remain in their own neighborhoods and maintain limited contact with the dominant society. A blending response is one in which the host society tolerates new immigrants and interacts with them in social contexts, while also encouraging assimilation. Key findings about immigrants demonstrate that 66% of Americans embrace them because they strengthen the country, while 24% feel immigrants are a burden and take away the jobs, housing, and healthcare of citizens (PEW Research Center, 2020). It is this reception of immigrants that is a major contributor to acculturative stress in Latino Newcomer immigrant youth, creating a hostile environment that inhibits the development of their academic competencies (Nair et al., 2021).

Figure 1

Berry's Model of Acculturation



Source: Berry, J. W. (2010)

Berry's acculturation theory has been the most influential conceptual framework on acculturation for over 40 years, yet growing research on this theory is producing mixed results, with some questioning its sustainability (Bulut & Gayman, 2020). For example, some empirical studies have argued that assimilation does not have to be limited to a choice between maintaining the native culture or adopting the host society's culture (Bulut & Gayman, 2020; van der Zee & van Oudenhoven, 2022; Wilczewska, 2023). Immigrants may navigate everyday life in the host society by employing various acculturation strategies tailored to their individual needs and social contexts. Other studies have critiqued Berry's acculturation theory as a one-size-fits-all for categorizing immigrants' reactions to the host society into four categories. Categorizations, they argue, disregard diversity and risk stereotyping, thereby neglecting the social and cultural differences within a group (Schumann et al., 2020). However, Berry stressed these four categories are not static and can change according to situational circumstances (Berry, 2005).

Indeed, studies have identified three, five, or six acculturation categories but have also failed to identify marginalization as a valid category, as very little evidence was found of the existence of a marginal class (Bulut & Gayman, 2020).

This study was also guided by Coll et al. (1996) Integrative Model for the Study of Developmental Competencies in Minority Children. This model was developed in response to the need for research on child development among minority children. Coll et al. (1996) argue that previous research on child development cannot be generalized, as it excludes sociocultural factors prevalent in minority populations and disregards the diversity and effects of social stratification on minority children. Furthermore, it does not take into account social positions based on class, ethnicity, and race. As such, it fails to address issues unique to minority children; hence, the validity of said research on child development is questionable (Coll et al., 1996).

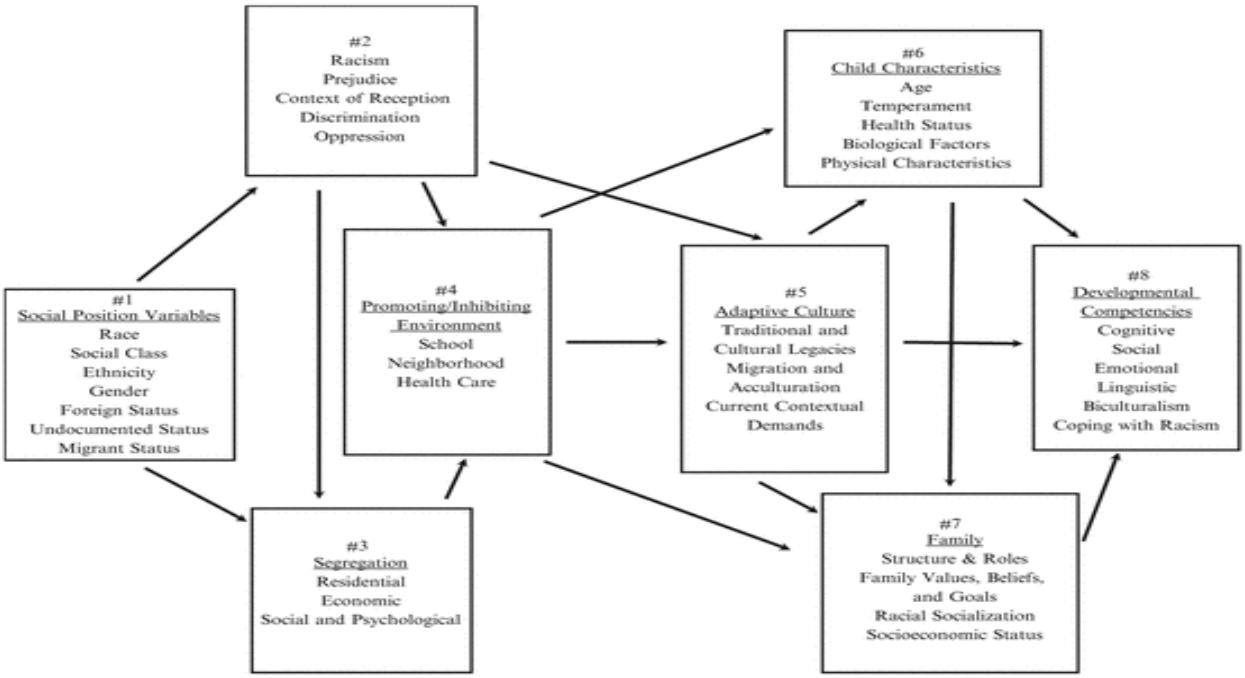
Coll et al. 's (1996) conceptual framework focuses on social stratification. It maintains that social position variables such as race, ethnicity, and class indirectly affect the social, emotional, and academic development of minority children. However, Coll et al also caution that these variables may have a direct effect on minority children's development if they live in oppressive environments where racism, prejudice, and discrimination are rampant. The framework discusses social stratification and the manner in which the relative worth, utility, and importance of groups or individuals are determined (Coll et al., 1996). The dominant society may decide who is desirable or undesirable based on an individual's or group's characteristics or attributes. In the United States, the main attributes used for social stratification are race, ethnicity, and social class (Coll et al., 1996). Race is often based on skin color, hair texture, and facial characteristics, and those with darker skin are often delegated to a lower social status (Coll et al., 1996). Based on these descriptors, impoverished, brown-skinned Latino immigrants may

be deemed as undesirables. In this case, the host society may respond by excluding or segregating this group, which aligns with Berry's acculturation theory on how the host society may receive immigrants. Moreover, this negative contact between the two cultural groups may reinforce hostility and prejudice (Coll et al., 1996). It is this type of discrimination that presents itself in the form of anti-immigrant rhetoric, a major source of acculturative stress in Latino Newcomer immigrant youth (Cheng & Lo, 2022; Cuba et al., 2021; Miller et al., 2022; Nair et al., 2021; Shah et al., 2021; Yan et al., 2021).

A child's background has a significant influence on their learning and development in the school setting (Coll et al., 1996). Migrant status, the type of neighborhood they reside in, and the lack of adequate healthcare are just a few critical aspects of their environment that profoundly affect their development (Coll et al., 1996). Figure 2 presents Coll et al.'s model, which includes eight constructs that are salient only to minority groups and significantly influence their children's developmental competencies. Among these constructs is adaptive culture, which involves developing survival strategies or coping mechanisms in response to the environmental demands of the host society (Coll et al., 1996). The collective forces of migration and acculturation are integral to adaptive culture and can directly impact the social, emotional, and academic development of immigrant children. Awareness of social stratification constructs and their influence on the development of minority children, specifically Latino newcomer immigrant youth, will strengthen this study.

Figure 2

Integrative Model for the Study of Developmental Competencies in Minority Children



Source: Coll et al., (1996)

Berry's Bidimensional Model of Acculturation presents the theory of how different cultural groups adapt to the host country through four acculturation strategies: assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalization. It also includes four reception strategies for how the host country receives immigrants (embracing, exclusion, segregation, and blending). Further studies on this acculturation theory argue that Berry's approach does not adequately account for the diversity of immigrant groups, as it categorizes their acculturation in a manner that may be too broad. Nevertheless, Berry's acculturation theory is important for empirical research on acculturation and has heuristic value, guiding this study as its general foundation. Berry's acculturation strategies may support this study's research questions on instructional strategies and support systems identified by secondary teachers as effective in promoting academic

achievement and socioemotional well-being of Latino newcomer youth during their first year in U.S. schools. Findings may include some or more of Berry' acculturation strategies used by this population. Similarly, Coll et al.'s Integrative Model for the Study of Developmental Competencies in Minority Children will address critical environmental factors (i.e., social class, racism, and segregation) that profoundly influence the development of minority children, specifically Latino newcomer immigrant youth.

Definitions of Key Terms

This section defines key terms essential to the study. These terms will provide a deeper understanding of the study's context and important concepts in the field of education, specifically the education of multilingual and immigrant students.

Acculturation

Recent immigrant arrivals, also known as newcomers, experience psychological and cultural changes as they interact with a new culture while trying to maintain their own (Yan et al., 2021).

Acculturative Stress

The negative experiences immigrants encounter when adapting to a new environment (Quan et al., 2022).

Asylum Seeker

An immigrant who is forced to leave their country due to persecution and applies for residency in the host country (Hos, 2020). Once approved, they become official refugees in their host country. Asylum seekers may flee their country because they fear for their lives due to violence, civil war, or religious or political reasons.

Biculturalism

According to Berry's Bidimensional Model of Acculturation, it is one of four acculturation strategies used by immigrants, in which they adopt the culture of the host society while retaining their own (Berry, 2005). This is also referred to as integration.

Blending

According to Berry's Bidimensional Model of Acculturation, it is one of four reception strategies used by the dominant group in the immigrants' host country (Berry, 2005).

Embracing

According to Berry's Bidimensional Model of Acculturation, it is one of four reception strategies used by the dominant group of the immigrants' host country (2005).

Exclusion

According to Berry's Bidimensional Model of Acculturation, it is one of four reception strategies used by the dominant group in the immigrants' host country (2005).

Familismo

A deep cultural value of family ties involves dedication, commitment, and loyalty to the family unit (Hawkins, 2021).

Marginalization

According to Berry's Bidimensional Model of Acculturation, it is one of four acculturation strategies used by immigrants (2005).

Newcomer

An immigrant student from a foreign country who has recently arrived in the U.S. (U.S. Department of Education, 2021). This may be anywhere from 0-3 years.

Social Stratification

According to the Integrative Model for the Study of Developmental Competencies in Minority Children, this process places individuals into a social hierarchy based on their perceived worth or importance in society (Coll et al., 1996).

SIFE

Students With Interrupted Formal Education. This involves refugees and immigrants, mostly at the secondary level, who have had their schooling interrupted in their native country due to social, political, or economic factors (Hos, 2020). Interrupted schooling as part of the migration process is also considered part of SIFE.

Review of the Literature

The United States is perceived as the land of opportunity by immigrants attracted by a myriad of employment and educational opportunities (Leo, 2020). These are individuals who may be fleeing poverty and violence or seeking political rights they lack in their native country (Cohodes et al., 2021). This is especially true for refugee families escaping persecution, war, or violence in their country and seeking safety, hope, and opportunities in the U.S. (Carnes, 2022; Clemens et al., 2019; Conway & Lewin, 2022; d'Abreu et al., 2019). As such, countless immigrants from Latin American countries leave their country, family, and friends and travel hundreds or thousands of miles, often risking their lives (Carnes, 2022). Despite these adversities, increasing numbers of Latino immigrant families and unaccompanied minors immigrate to "El Norte" (the North), as it is commonly referred to in Latin American households. The most recent Annual Flow Report from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (2023) shows a significant increase in the number of Latino immigrants since April 2020, particularly from Central and South American countries such as Guatemala, El Salvador,

Colombia, and Venezuela. This data also reports an increase in encounters with family units and unaccompanied youth (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2023).

Educational opportunity in the U.S. is the hope many Latino immigrant parents have for their children. This means uprooting them from an established life in their native country and taking them through a long and often treacherous journey that may cause psychological trauma (Cohodes et al., 2021). A new country, culture, language, and educational system may lead to acculturative stress, making it difficult for Latino immigrant youth to adapt to their new home. Anti-immigrant sentiment by the host society and bias-based bullying in the school can further exacerbate acculturative stress and lead to social isolation (Shah, 2021). Moreover, the language barrier also becomes an issue as they struggle to communicate socially and academically.

These stressors make it difficult for Latino immigrant students to establish a sense of belonging and integrate into the American school system and their community (Shah, 2021). These adverse experiences, including those that occur before and during the migration process, can have long-lasting mental and behavioral effects (Cohodes et al., 2021). For instance, family separation may cause psychological stress from the lack of parental emotional support (Hawkins, 2021), and anti-immigrant rhetoric and bullying may lead to social isolation (Szlyk, 2020). Additionally, cultural, linguistic, and pedagogical alienation in the classroom may deter Latino newcomer immigrant youth from connecting with their new school and strengthening their sense of belonging (Narine et al., 2022). The American educational system strives to provide educational opportunities for all students, enabling them to reach their full potential. For Latino newcomer immigrant youth, this means being entitled to the same rights to an equitable education, regardless of their legal status, thus facilitating their successful integration into their host society (Angeles, 2021; Yeung et al., 2022).

The integration or acculturation of diverse cultural groups into the host society is a complex phenomenon that first garnered scientific interest in the 1800s (Sokolskaya & Valentonis, 2020). John Wesley Powell, an American ethnologist, first coined the term "acculturation" in 1880, referring to the cultural similarities arising from the interactions of different cultural groups (Sokolskaya & Valentonis, 2020). In 1932, Austrian scientist Richard Thurnwald developed a psychological perspective of acculturation, referring to it as a process with various stages of development (Sokolskaya & Valentonis, 2020). However, it was Robert Redfield, Ralph Linton, and Melville Herskovits in 1936 who formulated the definition of acculturation that serves as the foundation of subsequent definitions (Sokolskaya & Valentonis, 2020). Between the 1950s and 1960s, research on acculturation experienced significant growth. Up to this point, the focus of research had been on immigrants, refugees, and other groups and how they acculturated. Studies began to shift their focus to the receiving or host society and their reverse influence on newly arrived cultural groups (Sokolskaya & Valentonis, 2020). In the late 1970s, Soviet scientist Sergei Tokarev proposed yet another definition of acculturation. In analyzing the work of American ethnologists, he concluded that acculturation was a reciprocal process, with both cultures influencing one another through a series of integration processes (Sokolskaya & Valentonis, 2020).

Research on acculturation continued to evolve in the late 1990s and early 2000s. These changes reflected the increase in global, economic, political, and cultural interactions among diverse groups (Sokolskaya & Valentonis, 2020). The increase in intercultural encounters demanded more research on the topic. One influential contemporary study of acculturation that emerged during this time was John W. Berry's 1980 Bidimensional Model of Acculturation (Berry, 1980). His theory posits that as two cultural groups interact, both will lose aspects of

their own cultures and adopt those of the host society (Berry, 1980). Berry pointed out that not all individuals acculturate in the same way and use different acculturation strategies to adapt to the host society (Berry, 2005). These strategies include integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization. The strategy they choose depends on internal and external factors, including the reception they receive from the host society (Berry, 2005). Berry contends that a negative reception contributes to acculturative stress, as greater cultural conflict arises between the cultural group and the host society (Berry, 2005). This phenomenon becomes problematic when individuals realize they cannot simply adjust or assimilate.

The focus of this literature review was the analysis and synthesis of empirical research examining the diverse issues faced by Latino Newcomer immigrant youth and potential immigrant-specific psychological, social, and academic barriers in the educational context due to acculturative stress. The literature included was carefully selected and analyzed to ensure relevance and the most up-to-date research data and findings on the topic. Published dates were limited to the last five years and included only peer-reviewed scholarly journals. The search for appropriate scholarly literature was conducted using Google Scholar, ProQuest, Open Access, EBSCO, and the Navigator search engine through the National University Library. Multiple keywords and phrases used included *Latino youth immigrants, migration trauma, acculturative stress, social isolation, and anti-immigrant sentiment*. The literature identified was organized and presented around the following themes: (a) Psychological Barriers, (b) Social Barriers, and (c) Academic Barriers.

Psychological Barriers

Stress is often a response to uncertainty, and Latino newcomer immigrant youth face much uncertainty before, during, and after the migration process. These adverse experiences may

lead to psychological issues (Cohodes et al., 2021; Conway & Lewin, 2022; Gandara, 2020; Lilly, 2022; Rodriguez, 2020; Yan et al., 2021; Zeledon et al., 2023). Poverty and violence faced by many Latino newcomer immigrant youth in their native countries may contribute to mental health issues and impact their learning (Cohodes et al., 2021; Cuba et al., 2021; Newcomer et al., 2021; Rodriguez et al., 2020). Traumatic experiences incurred during the migration process, such as family separation (Conway & Lewin, 2022) and the subsequent negative reception of the host society (Cheng & Lo, 2022), aggravate these stressors. If unaddressed, traumatic events before, during, and after migration may develop into immigrant-specific ACEs, also known as Adverse Childhood Experiences (Conway & Lewin, 2022).

Adverse Migration Experiences

Researchers typically categorize the migration experience into three stages: pre-migration, migration, and post-migration (Roschmann, 2021). The first stage occurs when children or adolescents are still in their native country and are exposed to poverty, violence, or social unrest that may cause fear and uncertainty. During the migration stage, immigrants are in transition. There is no place they can call home until they reach their destination. While experiences can vary greatly during this stage, they often involve a dangerous migration process, including exposure to violence, harsh weather conditions, poor nutrition, and potential family separation (Roschmann, 2021). The third stage of the migration experience begins once immigrants arrive in the United States. A high degree of excitement is quickly replaced by the need to readjust. Immigrant families find themselves pressured to secure employment to repay debts due to migration expenses, and often experience downward mobility that directly affects all of the family members. It is also during this readjustment period that Latino newcomer immigrant youth in particular, develop school stressors due to the language barrier,

discrimination, and social exclusion (Roschmann, 2021). Because pre-arrival migration experiences can heighten acculturative stress, it is critical that school counselors understand the socioemotional needs of this population and how traumatic events before, during, or post-migration may adversely affect mental health outcomes (Roschmann, 2021).

Currently, there are few studies on migration-specific trauma and its impact on Latino newcomer immigrant youth (Conway & Lewin, 2022). This may be due to existing linguistic, cultural, and political barriers that make it difficult to study this population. A mixed-methods qualitative study by Castañeda et al. (2021) explored the mental health issues of Central American immigrant youth experienced before and after arrival in the United States. Researchers employed both close-ended and open-ended questionnaires to interview 37 accompanied and unaccompanied youth about their lives in their native countries and their migration experiences. Participants also filled out a Spanish version of the Child PTSD Symptom Scale (CPSS), used to screen for PTSD. The majority of youth reported having experienced traumatic events back home and during migration. While some participants' outcomes improved after arrival, researchers concluded that better access to mental health services is needed to prevent further trauma exposure (Castañeda et al., 2021). Another study by Conway and Lewin (2022) recently surveyed the ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences) of 338 Latino immigrant youth in middle school and high school. Participants answered yes or no questions on immigrant-specific ACEs, including questions on pre-migration experiences, exposure to violence, and family separation. Findings demonstrated that 89% of youth reported experiencing two or more immigrant-specific ACEs related to their undocumented status, with family separation being the most prevalent ACE documented. Early adverse experiences threaten Latino newcomer immigrant youth's psychological well-being, and traumatic experiences during the migration process intensify these

effects. (Cohodes, 2021). A recent example of migration trauma was the separation of thousands of children from their parents at Mexican American border detention centers, where parents were deported, and children were kept in holding centers for long periods of time (Rodriguez et al., 2020). Detainees reported a hostile environment where they were unable to see their parents for up to a year. School staff later reported behaviors consistent with trauma, such as persistent crying and profound fear (Rodriguez et al., 2020).

Lilly (2022) conducted a similar study on the stressors experienced by Latino immigrant youth and their coping strategies. Ten older Latino youth (17-22 years old) were provided a series of interview questions about immigrant-specific challenges they had faced. One significant challenge reported was the loneliness they experienced due to family separation after moving to the U.S. While living with extended family provided some comfort, the absence of emotional support from immediate family made the acculturation process more difficult. Lilly (2022) concluded that without parental emotional support, Latino immigrant youth are more vulnerable to social isolation. Regardless of how they are separated from family, researchers agree that Latino immigrant youth's mental health is compromised (Hawkins, 2021; Lilly, 2022).

Identity Crisis

Acculturation is problematic for Latino newcomer immigrant youth who are at an age where they are trying to establish their identity and sense of belonging (Yan et al., 2021). An unwelcoming school environment coupled with racialization tends to influence Latino newcomer immigrant youth to discard their cultural identity to fit in, causing extreme identity struggles that lead to acculturative stress (Rodriguez, 2020). A strong cultural identification is necessary for this population to develop high self-esteem and pride in their ethnicity (Hale & Kuperminc, 2021). In their longitudinal study of acculturation among Mexican-origin adolescents, Yan et al.

(2021) examined stability and change in the acculturation process among 334 middle school adolescents. Participants responded to two sets of bilingual questionnaires given in 5-year intervals. Results from this latent profile analysis demonstrated that more than half of the participants had favorable levels of adjustment. Researchers attributed these findings to participants' increasing familiarity with American culture over the study's five years, while maintaining their Latino heritage. For participants who were not psychologically well-adjusted, Yan et al. (2021) hypothesized that this was due to acculturation-related stressors stemming from negative sociopolitical events at the time of the study, such as increased anti-immigrant sentiment, deportations, and family separation. Indeed, Rodriguez (2020) concurred that anti-immigrant rhetoric stigmatizes Latino immigrant youth and increases acculturative stress such as depression, anxiety, and pervasive fear. This fear stems from the constant threat of deportation, which has increased since the 2016 election (Gandara, 2020). According to Gandara (2020), immigrant youth who have witnessed deportations of family members have demonstrated behavior and emotional problems that include crying, withdrawal, and anxiety. These deportations have also caused housing and food insecurities that have added to their psychological trauma. Thus, previous adverse experiences, adolescence, the school environment, and sociopolitical factors can heighten acculturative stress and serve as barriers to a positive acculturation experience (Gandara, 2020; Rodriguez, 2020; Yan et al., 2021).

Social Barriers

As immigrants to a new land, Latino newcomer immigrant youth and their families will undoubtedly encounter social struggles that stem from their immigrant status. Factors such as poverty can deprive them of essential community resources necessary for appropriate living conditions (Cohodes et al., 2021; Cuba et al., 2021; Newcomer et al., 2021). Anti-immigrant

rhetoric in the host society and in schools undermines their sense of belonging and hinders their ability to develop meaningful connections to their school and community (Cheng & Lo, 2022; Hawkins, 2021; Miller et al., 2022; Shah et al., 2021). Social isolation due to language barriers, family separation, and bias-based bullying causes adverse mental health issues (Hawkins, 2021; Lilly, 2022; Shah et al., 2021). These factors work together to marginalize Latino immigrant youth and become barriers to a positive acculturation experience in their school and community.

Poverty

Immigrant families often arrive in America with little to no possessions to start their new lives and tend to settle in areas of high poverty. The Center for Immigration Studies (2023) reports that immigrant students enrolled in public schools account for almost 30% of all students living below the poverty line. Cohodes et al. (2021) noted this may cause chronic stress for the entire family. For Latino newcomer immigrant youth, this likely means going to school with second-hand or improper clothing for weather conditions. Moreover, Latino newcomer immigrant youth living in poverty may not have access to basic human needs such as proper housing or medical care. Cuba et al. (2021) explored the educational experiences of Latino immigrant middle school youth. Students were interviewed about their journey through U.S. public schools. Some of the findings in this collaborative case study suggested that school personnel, such as school social workers, support the basic needs of undocumented immigrant students and their families by providing access to community- and service-based resources that offer them food, housing, healthcare, and legal assistance. Newcomer et al. (2021) also agreed that schools must have a vested interest in ensuring that students' basic needs are met. They recommended that teachers connect families to various community resources, such as food and clothing banks and free health clinics. Schools and communities working together to provide

immigrant families with essential resources can strengthen school-home relationships while helping them integrate into their community. When students' basic needs are met, they are more likely to learn and achieve in school.

Anti-Immigrant Sentiment and Bias-Based Bullying

Newly arrived immigrants may not always receive a warm welcome from the host country. This can be a significant deterrent to a successful acculturation process for Latino newcomer immigrant youth and their families. It drives home the message that they "are not wanted here". Indeed, the number of anti-immigrant hate groups has increased within the last few years due to historical events such as the 2016 presidential election, the construction of the border wall with Mexico, and the no-fly zone against Arab countries (Miller et al., 2022). The acknowledgment of recent historical events as a cause of increased anti-immigrant sentiment is echoed by Shah et al. (2021), who included the COVID-19 pandemic and the insurrection at the U.S. Capitol as additional sources. These events have made bias-based discrimination, bullying, and violence against immigrant youth more prevalent (Shah et al., 2021).

The rise in hostility against undocumented immigrants has directly impacted Latino newcomer immigrant youth, whose fear and anxiety of being deported is a stark reality (Shah, 2021). Schools should be a safe haven; nonetheless, anti-immigrant rhetoric trickles down from the national level to the community and into the schoolyard in the form of bias-based bullying and is a major factor of acculturative stress for Latino newcomer immigrant youth (Cheng & Lo, 2021). Derogatory remarks in middle school hallways and deliberate exclusions by cliquish groups can lead to loneliness and social isolation among these students (Hawkins, 2021). Nonetheless, some research on this issue offers promising results. In their study on immigrant youth and bias-based bullying, Shah et al (2021) recruited middle schools with high immigrant

populations and surveyed 481 students with an immigrant background. There were 40 bullying-related items. Results from self-report questionnaires demonstrated that family cohesion and school belongingness are key in diminishing acculturative stress due to bullying. In Cheng and Lo's (2021) study of the same topic, family cohesiveness played a different role. Using data from the 2018 National Survey of Children's Health, Cheng & Lo's secondary data analysis of 19,882 immigrant and non-immigrant children revealed that family cohesion lowered the likelihood of being bullied. Implications from these studies highlight the importance of creating inclusive school structures and robust family support systems to counter hateful rhetoric.

Social Isolation

According to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, all human beings have the need to belong (Rojas, 2023). Immigrant students, in particular, face barriers such as bias-based bullying when trying to establish a sense of belonging in their schools (Shah et al., 2021). Their culture and language barrier make it difficult to develop meaningful connections with peers and staff, often leading to social isolation. In Lilly's (2022) study of Latino immigrant students and social isolation, high school students were asked to share testimonies on immigrant-related challenges. A common theme that emerged was that social isolation can be caused by various sources such as exclusion, the language barrier, and family separation. According to Hawkins (2021), Latino immigrants are especially susceptible to social isolation due to *familismo*, a deep cultural value of family ties. Family separation may include leaving all or part of their family members behind in their native country. The physical severing of family when leaving others behind may contribute to adverse mental health and behavior outcomes that affect academic achievement (Lilly, 2022). Schools can help Latino newcomer immigrant youth overcome social isolation by teaching them coping skills as part of a socioemotional learning curriculum for newcomers.

Academic Barriers

Immigrant students arrive with unique learning needs that schools are not always able or willing to address. The language barrier affects students academically, socially, and psychologically (Cheng & Lo, 2022; Hawkins, 2021; Lilly, 2022; Newcomer et al., 2021). Minimal or interrupted schooling due to the migration process and lack of educational opportunities in their native country means that Students with Interrupted Formal Schooling (SIFE), are already behind their native-born peers when they start school in America (Cuba et al., 2021; Hos, 2020; Newcomer et al., 2021; Szlyk et al., 2020) Moreover, cultural, linguistic, and pedagogical alienation in the classroom is an obstacle to an equitable and inclusive learning environment and deters immigrant students from making positive connections to their learning (Gandara, 2020; Narine et al., 2022; Newcomer et al., 2021).

Language Barrier

English is the language of mainstream America, commerce, and academia. Hence, it is essential that immigrant students master English in order to achieve academic success. The language barrier can affect immigrant students academically, socially, and psychologically (Cuba et al., 2021; Shah et al., 2021). Since school coursework is in English, the language barrier will affect Latino immigrant youth academically, even to the point of dropping out of school. The National Center for Education Statistics (2021) reports that while the dropout rate for Anglo students is 4.1 percent, the dropout rate for Latino youth is 7.8 percent, which is almost double. For comprehension to occur, they need intensive English instruction to support language and content learning (Cuba et al., 2021; Newcomer et al., 2020). The language barrier also affects immigrant students socially. Hawkins et al. (2021) noted that the inability to communicate can hinder the development of meaningful relationships among peers and staff. The language barrier

can be frustrating, as it makes it harder to make friends, which may lead to social isolation, bias-based bullying, and subsequent depression, anxiety, and hopelessness (Lilly, 2022). In a study of secondary data analysis by Cheng and Lo (2020), 19,882 immigrant and non-immigrant students were interviewed on their experiences with bias-based bullying using yes/no items. Results suggested that over half of the students had been bullied at some point during the seven-month duration of the study, and bias-based bullying was associated with mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, and behavioral issues.

Interrupted Schooling

In their study of Latino newcomer youths in the U.S. school system, Szlyk et al. (2020) discussed how many newcomers arrive in the U.S. with formal education gaps resulting from the immigration process and the lack of educational opportunities in their native countries. Szlyk et al. (2020) conducted a thematic analysis of interviews with 39 newcomers. One theme that emerged was the impact of interrupted schooling on their academic trajectory. The migration process disrupted schooling for most respondents, and some lacked pre-migration schooling; as a result, they were often years behind their native-born peers.

Interrupted schooling in their native country is also a factor for Latino newcomer immigrant youth. Lack of teachers in remote villages, poverty, and fleeing dangerous circumstances such as war and civil unrest result in limited educational opportunities (Newcomer et al., 2021). Interrupted schooling can also be due to undocumented status. Cuba et al., (2021) conducted a collaborative case study of two Latino youth who were interviewed about their educational journeys. One respondent disclosed that his immigrant status was probably the main barrier to his education. He missed a significant amount of school due to court appointments, the application process for U.S. legal status, and deportation during his 9th-grade year.

Cultural, Linguistic, and Pedagogical Alienation in the Classroom

If immigrant students are to develop a positive connection to their school and strengthen their sense of belonging, they must see their own culture reflected in the curriculum. Narine et al (2022) assert that the lack of cultural representation in curricula does not promote inclusion or equity and may cause high dropout rates and suspensions. In their study on the implementation of culturally responsive curricula, Narine et al. (2022) conducted interviews with 10 middle school principals in southern Texas to explore their culturally responsive leadership practices in implementing culturally responsive curricula. One common theme among respondents was the need for inclusive teaching and a culturally responsive curriculum to promote educational equity. All agreed that professional development on diversity was lacking. When teachers are not adequately prepared to teach linguistically and culturally diverse students, the result is limited communication and limited understanding of their backgrounds (Gandara, 2020). This lack of connection makes it challenging for teachers to determine how to effectively support students. Worse yet, it may lead to deficit-based approaches in teacher practice (Rodriguez et al., 2020). Newcomer et al. (2021) also emphasized the need for greater professional development in cultural responsiveness to help teachers gain invaluable insights into the socioemotional, academic, and language needs of immigrant students. A culturally responsive curriculum may address immigrant students' need to see people like themselves reflected in the books they read and in the content they learn. Developing a meaningful connection to the curriculum will help Latino newcomer immigrant youth integrate into mainstream America while preserving and valuing their own culture.

Conclusion

Latino newcomer immigrant youth face many adversities that begin when they are uprooted from their native country, continue during the migration process, and are exacerbated as they enter the American school system. Psychological struggles were most commonly examined by researchers as a challenging issue for Latino newcomer immigrant youth (Cheng & Lo, 2022; Cohodes et al., 2021; Conway & Lewin, 2022; Cuba et al., 2021; Gandara, 2020; Hawkins, 2021; Lilly, 2022; Miller et al., 2022; Narine et al., 2022; Newcomer et al., 2021; Rodriguez, 2020; Shah et al., 2021; Szlyk et al., 2020; Yan et al., 2021). This included the psychological issues of the migration process, specifically family separation at detention centers and how this affects children when separated from their parents. Poverty, bias-based bullying, and social isolation were also sources of psychological struggles that negatively affected the acculturation process in their host country.

In synthesizing the literature, the psychological effects of bias-based bullying and social isolation seemed to be the main threats to Latino newcomer immigrant youth's sense of belonging and connection to their school community. This was intensified by recent historical events that have increased anti-immigrant sentiment and penetrated schools in the form of bias-based bullying. A final issue revealed in the analysis of the literature was the educational barriers faced by Latino immigrant youth. The language barrier keeps them from accessing content and connecting with peers and staff and affects them emotionally when they become targets for bullies. Interrupted schooling in their country means immigrant students are already behind their native-born peers when they enter school, and the lack of culturally responsive curricula makes it difficult for students to relate. While there were some studies (Cheng & Lo, 2021; Shah et al., 2021) that highlighted family cohesion and school belongingness as protective factors against

acculturative stress, they did not consider unaccompanied minors who may not have their immediate family nearby to provide the emotional support needed to cope with social isolation (Newcomer et al., 2021). Moreover, school belongingness can be a protective factor only if schools work to build an inclusive school culture that values diversity.

For Latino newcomer immigrant youth to have an easier transition into the American culture, their academic and socioemotional barriers must be addressed by policymakers, schools, and all other stakeholders. Access to vital resources, such as mental health care and adequate housing, should be available to immigrant families (Cohodes et al., 2021; Cuba et al., 2021; Newcomer et al., 2021). School counselors and social workers should collaborate closely with families to reduce incidents of bullying and social isolation by fostering a safe, positive learning environment (Cuba, 2021). Increasing professional development on diversity and adopting culturally responsive curricula will ensure that the cultural, linguistic, and academic needs of Latino newcomer immigrant youth are being addressed (Gandara, 2020; Narine et al., 2022; Newcomer et al., 2021). Immigrant students are brought to this country for educational opportunities. However, the adversities they face in their social and academic trajectory make this experience quite challenging. Addressing these issues will result in a more equitable and inclusive learning environment. This will facilitate their integration into the host society and help them become well-adjusted and productive members of American society.

Ethical Assurances

When conducting research with human subjects, it must be conducted ethically (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1978). This means adhering to ethical principles and guidelines that protect participants' well-being and respect their dignity. Upon selecting the problem to be explored, the researcher

practiced reflexivity, weighing the risks to the potential participants and the benefits of the study. It was determined that properly designed research would lower the risk of participant harm. The researcher recognized the importance of maintaining the anonymity of potential participants in this study by referring to them as Participants, each assigned a number. Interview questions were designed to protect participants' well-being and integrity by avoiding questions that might cause unnecessary discomfort. Adhering to ethical assurances reduced the risks associated with the study.

Prior to data collection, the researcher submitted the required forms to the University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). These included a recruitment form (Appendix A), Consent Form (Appendix B), data collection instrument (Appendix C), and proof of CITI training completed within the last 3 years. Also included was permission from the two school districts, which agreed to release the necessary demographic information for this study. Participants were informed about the purpose of the research, what they would be asked to do, and how the results would be used. Once IRB approval was granted, the data collection process began.

To address confidentiality and anonymity in accordance with IRB requirements, all hardcopy collected data will be securely stored for three years. To protect participants' privacy, no real names were used, and the study was shared only with peer reviewers to build credibility. Prior to starting data collection, the researcher explained the process and the activities involved. Participants were reminded of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without consequences. Since the priority was the participants' well-being, the researcher was vigilant regarding their nonverbal expressions. If any participant became visibly upset at any point during data collection, the plan was to pause the interview, ask whether they were okay, remind them of their rights, and consider removing them from the study.

The role and responsibilities of the researcher were those of the primary instrument. This meant the researcher was the primary individual responsible for generating and interpreting data (Holmes, 2020). This role was instrumental in designing, conducting, and producing research that prioritized participants' integrity and lived experiences, ensuring the validity and trustworthiness of the findings. The researcher addressed positionality and identity in relation to this study. Disclosing values, beliefs, experiences, and assumptions was integral, as it allowed the reader to understand how the researcher's worldview might influence the research process and results (Holmes, 2020). The researcher also acknowledged how they approached every aspect of the research, including issues of power and equity in their engagement with participants. They maintained an ongoing reflexive journal throughout the research process. This included reflecting on their responsibilities to participants and on the distribution of power and equity (Holmes, 2020). To increase the validity of the study and ensure that participants' perspectives were accurately portrayed, transcripts and member checking occurred during data collection and after analysis was complete.

Summary

As the influx of immigrants to the United States continues to rise (U.S. Customs and Border Protection, 2023), it is becoming increasingly important that educators and other stakeholders prioritize the academic and socioemotional needs of school-aged immigrant children entering the American educational system. Latino newcomer immigrant youth from Mexico and Central and South America, in particular, may arrive in this country with trauma due to violence in their native country (Conway & Lewin, 2022; Garcia, 2022) and adverse experiences during the migration process (Cohodes et al., 2021; Garcia, 2022; Gudiño et al., 2023). These stressors, coupled with barriers they encounter within their first year of arrival,

such as bias-based bullying, social exclusion, and family separation, may lead to acculturative stress (Schlaudt et al., 2021; Shah et al., 2021). If not addressed, these stressors may develop into adverse mental health issues and impact their academic achievement (Schlaudt et al., 2021).

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of secondary teachers who support Latino newcomer immigrant youth in grades 7-12 during their first year in U.S. schools, with a specific focus on identifying effective instructional strategies and support systems that promote both academic achievement and socioemotional well-being. Data was collected from semi-structured interviews. To categorize data, detailed examples of this sample population's lived experiences were scrutinized using Braun & Clarke's (2006) reflexive thematic analysis. The researcher used coding to collapse code clusters and identified common themes that answered the research questions on the instructional strategies and support systems secondary teachers identify as effective in promoting academic achievement and socioemotional well-being among Latino newcomer immigrant youth in grades 7-12 during their first year in U.S. schools. These themes emerged as the key findings of the research study (Prosek & Gibson, 2021).

This study was guided by Berry's (1980) Bidimensional Model of Acculturation and Coll, Lamberty, Jenkins, McAdoo, Crnic, Wasik, and Garcia's Integrated Model for the Study of Developmental Competencies in Minority Children (1996). Berry theorizes that immigrants and other cultural groups in a new country adopt various adaptation strategies while the host society simultaneously adopts reception strategies. Several factors on both sides significantly influence whether or not this population successfully integrates into the host society. Coll et al.'s conceptual framework focuses on social stratification, maintaining that social position variables, such as race, ethnicity, and class, indirectly affect the social, emotional, and academic

development of minority children (1996). Awareness of social stratification constructs and their influence on the development of minority children strengthened this study.

To ensure the participants' psychological well-being, the researcher adhered to the ethical principles and guidelines established by the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research (1978). To minimize the risk of unnecessary harm, the researcher conducted a well-designed study by using carefully crafted questions and practicing reflexivity throughout the research process. During data collection and at the end of the study, the researcher conducted transcript and member checking to ensure participants' perspectives and lived experiences were accurately portrayed.

In Section 2, the researcher discussed the methodology and design of this study. A detailed description of the participants and the materials and instrumentation used was provided. The researcher described the data collection process, followed by the steps taken for data analysis. A reflexive thematic analysis approach was used to identify patterns in the data and develop themes. Assumptions, limitations, delimitations, and a summary concluded Section 2.

Section 2: Methodology and Design

Since 2010, Latino student enrollment in U.S. public schools has increased from 23% to 28%, and it is projected that by 2031, enrollment will increase to 30% (National Center for Education Statistics, 2023). This demographic shift is arguably the result of a significant wave of Latino immigration. In 2023, the U.S. Border Patrol had 2.4 million Southwest land border encounters, including families and unaccompanied minors (U.S. Customs and Border Protection, 2024). With such disproportionately high numbers of Latino immigrants entering the country, public schools must gain an in-depth understanding of potential immigrant-related stressors they may experience as newcomers to this country (Schlaudt et al., 2023). While this study's literature review raised awareness on the academic and socioemotional needs of Latino newcomer immigrant youth, its focus was on how their teachers strove to address these needs. The problem addressed in this study was that secondary teachers often lack adequate preparation and knowledge of effective instructional strategies and support systems that promote both academic achievement and socioemotional well-being among Latino Newcomer immigrant youth in grades 7-12 during their first year of school (Davis et al., 2021; Lilly, 2021; Schlaudt et al., 2021; Yan et al., 2021). The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of secondary teachers who have or currently support Latino newcomer immigrant youth during their first year of U.S. schools, with a specific focus on identifying effective instructional strategies and support systems that promote both academic and socioemotional well-being.

This section of the study began with an introduction and restatement of the problem and purpose statements. A brief overview of this section's contents provided the reader with a general understanding of its structure. The first section provided an in-depth explanation and rationale of

the research methodology and design used to collect and analyze the data. The second section described the population and sample from which potential participants were extracted. The third section described the materials and instrumentation used in this study. The fourth section explained how data was collected and analyzed. The fifth section discussed the assumptions and their corresponding rationale. The sixth section described the potential limitations of the study. The seventh section described the delimitations of this study along with the corresponding rationale. Finally, this section concluded with a summary of the key points presented.

Design and Method

In line with the study's aim, a qualitative research methodology was employed. The focus of this methodology was the exploration of the human experience. A researcher will select this type of research when seeking to study a phenomenon from the perspective of their participants (Bryman, 1984). This methodology was suitable for this study, as the researcher explored the lived experiences of secondary teachers who have or currently work with Latino newcomer immigrant youth in their first year in U.S. schools. A qualitative study is interactive, giving participants a voice. Through in-depth interviews, participants detailed their experiences working with Latino newcomer immigrant youth and the instructional strategies and support systems they implemented to address academic and socioemotional challenges this population may exhibit in their first year in U.S. schools. Moreover, qualitative methodology applies a social constructivist worldview, which relies on the participants' perspectives of the phenomenon under study (Abutabenjeh & Jaradat, 2018). The qualitative researcher documented these collective lived experiences in narrative form, providing an in-depth understanding of the secondary teachers' backgrounds and the phenomenon under investigation. Qualitative methodology is also fluid and flexible, accommodating each participant's unique experiences,

which may result in unanticipated findings that shift research plans in a different direction (Bryman, 1984).

Quantitative research was not selected for this study because it focuses on collecting numerical or statistical data. Rather than the human experience, a positivist approach in quantitative methodology emphasizes the use of fixed measurements, variables, and hypothesis testing (Leung & Shek, 2018). This approach views the world as a fixed reality, governed by cause and effect and predictable outcomes that can be measured under the proper conditions. Objectivity and generalizability are emphasized in quantitative data collection and analysis, and research questions seek answers about the when and where of a social phenomenon (Leung & Shek, 2018). This study aimed to explore the lived experiences of secondary teachers and their reactions to the academic and socioemotional needs of a specific population. The interest of this study was the human experience, not numbers or statistics. For these reasons, a quantitative study was not an appropriate methodology.

A mixed methodology approach was reviewed but not selected. This approach combines quantitative and qualitative methods within a single study. While not as widely used as the other two methodologies, the mix of descriptive narratives and mathematical measurements has been documented as far back as the 1600s (Maxwell, 2018). Yet, mixing both methods can be challenging for a researcher when collecting data. It may be more labor-intensive, time-consuming, and financially costly. Moreover, data analysis can be problematic, especially for novice researchers, as they must integrate and interpret two types of data. There are still questions and uncertainties surrounding the use of mixed-methodology research. Some in the scientific community have argued that this approach is not legitimate, as quantitative and qualitative research are based on different paradigms and are therefore incompatible (Maxwell,

2018). For these reasons, and given that this qualitative study did not require numerical data to answer the research question, this approach was not appropriate.

The design of this study is phenomenological. Phenomenological research is employed to describe and interpret the experiences and perspectives of a specific population, as well as the context in which these experiences occur (Mertler, 2021). Its focus is on participants' viewpoints and reactions to the phenomenon they are experiencing, rather than the event itself. The researcher builds rapport and trust through prolonged engagement with participants, which provides opportunities for honest, descriptive narratives. Phenomenology aims to describe and interpret the experiences, thoughts, and feelings of a specific population within the context in which they occur (Mertler, 2021). The focus is on the participants' perspectives and reactions to the phenomenon under study. A phenomenological design was the most appropriate for this study. It aligned with the purpose and research question because the researcher explored the perceptions and lived experiences of a specific population (secondary teachers who work with Latino Newcomer immigrant youth), the context in which these experiences occurred (in the general education classroom), and their response to the phenomenon under study (whether they used instructional strategies and support systems that addressed their academic and socioemotional needs). Since phenomenology's aim is to understand a phenomenon from the perspective of individuals who have experienced it, interviews are the primary source of data collection (Tomaszewski et al., 2020). The interaction between the researcher and participants provides a more personalized exchange of information, allowing the researcher to extract in-depth narratives by posing additional questions (Jain, 2021).

Other qualitative designs, such as case study, grounded theory, narrative, ethnographic, and descriptive, were reviewed but ultimately not chosen for this research. As with

phenomenology, a case study is an in-depth exploration of a phenomenon as it occurs; hence, data accuracy is not lost over time (Behar-Horenstein, 2018). Both involve thick narratives and use thematic analysis. Due to these similarities, a case study was initially considered. However, further readings revealed significant differences. Whereas a case study focuses on developing thick descriptions, phenomenology is more about understanding the essence of the phenomenon being explored (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Case studies involve a bounded system with clearly defined limitations, including specific time frames or physical boundaries (Tomaszewski et al., 2020). This study did not specify a time frame for data collection, as its duration depended on the number of participants and their schedules or prior commitments. Physical boundaries were not limited, as data were collected in two different public school districts, an office, and a residential setting. In case studies, multiple data sources, including interviews, observations, documents, and artifacts, are utilized (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Conversely, a primary source of data in phenomenology is interviews. The use of interviews in this study contributed to a deeper understanding of the phenomenon and the participants' lived experiences and perspectives. In educational contexts, single- and multiple-case studies are frequently employed for evaluative purposes or to investigate educational interventions (Tomaszewski et al., 2020). In this study, the researcher did not evaluate or research interventions. For these reasons, a case study was not selected.

Grounded theory is a systematic process considered both a method and an approach to data analysis (Behar-Horenstein, 2018). This method is employed to generate a theory through the collection of subjective data and conceptual analysis (Urcia, 2021). It originates from the constructivist paradigm, which posits that knowledge is constructed through social interactions (Urcia, 2021). In other words, people construct their own worldviews through language,

behavior, and communication shared via interactive experiences. Conversely, a major distinction between grounded theory and phenomenology is the latter's philosophical foundation, specifically in transcendental philosophy (Urcia, 2021). Through this lens, a researcher conducts interpretative and inductive research into the lived experiences of their participants. This permits readers to acquire significant insights into the lived experiences of a phenomenon (Urcia, 2021). Since this study intended to explore participants' lived experiences rather than develop a theory, a grounded theory approach was not appropriate.

Narrative, as with grounded theory, is a constructivist approach in that meaning is established through social interactions (Behar-Horenstein, 2018). It follows a structured method for collecting and presenting data that describes the participants' lives. It considers the chronological order of events and other factors, such as the context, environment, conditions, and time of year, as causal links (Behar-Horenstein, 2018). A major difference between narrative and phenomenology lies in the way participants' lived experiences are retold. A narrative is structured and may retell participants' stories in myriad ways. For example, they can be retold in chronological order, as a biographical study, or as a personal narrative (Behar-Horenstein, 2018). In phenomenology, retelling participants' stories verbatim is crucial to the validity of the study and to honor their lived experiences. For this purpose, a narrative approach was not suitable.

Ethnography is culture-based. It concerns the description, analysis, and interpretation of a cultural group's patterns, behavior, beliefs, and language (Behar-Horenstein, 2018). Its constructivist origin holds that meaning is not pre-existing; rather, it is created through shared experiences. Ethnography evolved from anthropology, and as such, its focus is on the social dynamics of a cultural group and how interactions influence group behavior (Behar-Horenstein, 2018). Ethnography differs from phenomenology in that it focuses on studying a group that

shares a common culture, whereas phenomenology studies a group that shares similar experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Although this study's participants were secondary teachers working with the same cultural group (Latino Newcomer immigrant youth), it was not limited to Latino teachers. They came from different cultural backgrounds and had varying years of teaching experience. For these reasons, ethnography was not selected as the research method for this study.

A descriptive design was also reviewed but not selected for this study. Collected data may involve measuring frequencies and trends of the sample using longitudinal data collection methods or cross-sectional data to compare the sample with other groups (Siedlecki, 2020). For this study, the researcher limited the sample to participants who shared the same phenomenon. Because the primary goal was to gain an in-depth understanding of the sample's lived experiences with the phenomenon under study, numerical data or comparisons with other groups were not considered. The two main data collection methods in descriptive studies are observations and surveys (Siedlecki, 2020). The observations are non-invasive because they are conducted remotely, and surveys typically involve large sample sizes. In this study, personal interactions with a small sample were necessary to establish rapport, gather in-depth narratives, and address the research questions. For these reasons, a descriptive design was not appropriate for this study.

Population and Sample

The population of interest for this study was secondary teachers working in U.S. public schools. The target population was secondary teachers who work with Latino immigrant students enrolled in public middle and high schools in southeastern Washington state. The public schools where participants were employed were located in a small, agriculture-based city in southeastern

Washington state. Many of the participants' students came from households whose parents were farm workers or worked in the dairy industry. The school district served over 6,000 students, of whom 92% were Latino. Of these, about 80% were from low-income households, and 33% were Multilingual Learners (MLs). These were students whom participants taught and interacted with daily.

The study sample was derived from two neighboring school districts, one of which the researcher was employed as a teacher, and involved three middle schools and two high schools. Participants worked with recently arrived Latino Newcomer immigrant youth who had been in the country for 1 month to 1 year. Interview data revealed the extent to which secondary teachers implemented instructional strategies and support systems that supported newcomers' academic and socioemotional needs, and whether they felt teacher preparation programs and/or professional development were adequate. Since Latino immigrants are the most prevalent immigrant group in southeastern Washington, this increased the feasibility of the study. While participants were limited to secondary teachers who work with a specific population, the rationale for the sampling was both ethical and critical to the study's purpose. Secondary teachers were selected as the sample because they worked with Latino students, who made up the majority of immigrants in the study area. The sampling frame was a directory of all employed secondary teachers from the two school districts at the time of the study. From this directory, 45 potential participants were recruited. This amount was sufficient to extract and select a sample of 12. The following inclusion criteria were drawn from the sampling frame:

- Male and female secondary teachers
- Taught grades 7-12

- Had one or more years of secondary teaching experience in a Washington State public middle or high school
- Had worked or currently worked with Latino Newcomer immigrant youth (13-17 years old) in their first year of U.S. schools.

Exclusion criteria included those participants who were:

- Primary teachers
- Taught grades K-6
- Worked with Non-Latino Newcomer immigrant youth
- Secondary teachers who worked with Latino immigrant youth who had been enrolled in U.S. public schools for more than a year

The sampling procedure used for this qualitative study was a non-probability sampling technique. This type of sampling was appropriate for this study because the researcher purposefully selected individuals whose lived experiences were relevant to the research questions (Bickman & Rog, 2008). In this study, the aim was to discover how secondary teachers described their lived experiences of working with Latino newcomer immigrant youth in their first year of U.S. schools. Purposive sampling allowed the study to focus on participants who shared similar identifiable characteristics critical to the research purpose (Prosek & Gibson, 2021). The inclusion criteria ensured all participants worked with Latino newcomer immigrant youth and shared the same phenomenon. Given that the purpose of this study was to explore the lived experiences of secondary teachers who support Latino newcomer immigrant youth in their first year in the U.S., purposive sampling was an appropriate sampling method, as the aim was to discover commonalities or themes among participants experiencing the same phenomenon.

After obtaining IRB approval and consent, the researcher began recruiting participants by sending emails that detailed the study's purpose and what participants would be asked to do. They also included an explanation of how the findings would be used. This sampling strategy was accomplished through interactions. Field notes taken on their personal characteristics informed the researcher of their level of comfort during interviews. Reflexivity was used to select a sample of 12 participants, while a large pool of potential participants was maintained for future reference.

Materials and Instrumentation

This qualitative phenomenological study used semi-structured interviews as the primary data collection tool. In-depth interviews, conducted with semi-structured questions, are the primary data collection method in phenomenological research (Bloomberg, 2023). Open-ended questions elicited in-depth narratives from participants about their lived experiences, perceptions, and perspectives. Conducting semi-structured interviews in this study allowed the researcher to add probing questions, which elicited more descriptive responses from participants. Diverse inclusion criteria for interviews, including a mix of different genders, varying years of teaching experience, and grade levels, resulted in a wider range of perspectives.

An audio recording device was used to capture participants' responses to the semi-structured questions designed by the researcher. As they shared experiences, field notes were taken to record their behavior, including body language and facial expressions. Participants' responses were transcribed verbatim after individual interviews were completed. The researcher conducted informal transcript checking during data collection by paraphrasing the participants' responses and asking, "So what I'm hearing you say is…" This allowed participants to correct or affirm their responses in real-time. Transcript checking also occurred after the interviews,

during which participants reviewed verbatim transcripts of the audio recordings. Asking participants to review their interview transcripts increased data accuracy. For validation purposes, member checking was conducted after data analysis. Attesting to the truthfulness of the research findings ensured adequate representation of participants' lived experiences and increased the study's credibility (Stahl & King, 2020; Nassaji, 2020).

Data Collection and Analysis

To begin this part of the study, the researcher needed approval from the dissertation committee and from the National University Institutional Review Board. Moreover, they secured permission to conduct the study at both the district and building levels. This included permission to gain access to the building directories where potential participants were employed. This information was essential for developing the sampling frame for this study. The researcher then completed and submitted the required documents to the IRB, including an up-to-date CITI training certificate for human research.

After the dissertation committee and IRB reviewed and approved this study, the researcher began recruitment. The district provided the necessary data: the names of potential participants and the buildings where they taught. This was used as the sampling frame and was limited to teachers who met the inclusion criteria. They were asked to sign the consent form if they decided to participate. Copies of the recruitment forms were provided to teachers for their records, in case they needed to contact the researcher or the IRB.

Once recruitment was complete and consent obtained, the researcher contacted participants via email to arrange a convenient date and time for the interviews. Participants' classrooms or a neutral site selected by the participants served as a safe, permissive environment, which was essential to participants' comfort and willingness to share. To respect the participants'

work contracts, the interviews were planned after school. Before beginning the interviews, the researcher helped participants feel at ease by engaging in small talk and providing refreshments. They were reminded that responses would be audio-recorded, that participation was voluntary, and that they had the right to discontinue the interview at any time.

The researcher began by asking them demographic questions such as years of teaching experience, grade levels and subjects taught, and experience working with Latino newcomer immigrant youth. After each interview question, participants were given time to reflect before answering. The researcher actively listened as the participants answered questions. To extract more descriptive data, they strategically added probing questions or comments, such as “tell me more about that.” Field notes taken during the interviews included any observable verbal and nonverbal communication. To close out the interview, the researcher reviewed the study's purpose and asked participants to reflect on the interview as a whole by answering the question, “Is there anything else you would like to share about your experience working with Latino newcomer immigrant youth that we haven’t discussed?”

Interviews were scheduled to last 60-90 minutes and included open-ended questions (Appendix C) about participants’ experiences working with Latino newcomer immigrant youth and how they addressed their academic and socioemotional needs. In the role of the interviewer, the researcher was mindful of prioritizing ethics over knowledge, respecting the integrity of the interviewees. They refrained from using coercive tactics and paused the interview when the participant became visibly upset. Participants were reminded they had a right to stop the interview at any time without being reprimanded. Subsequent interviews were conducted once the researcher had had ample time to transcribe each audio recording.

For this study, Braun and Clarke's reflexive thematic analysis was applied to code and analyze data (Braun & Clarke, 2022). This method involves identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns or themes within a dataset (Braun & Clarke, 2022). While the principles of reflexive thematic analysis are applicable to several qualitative methods, including grounded theory and ethnography, some scholars argue they are particularly suited for phenomenology (Kiger & Varpio, 2020). This is because, in reflexive thematic analysis, as with phenomenology, the researcher seeks to discover common or shared experiences related to a phenomenon. In qualitative studies, researchers must work diligently to minimize bias. However, in this analysis approach, the researcher's subjectivity is not problematic; rather, it is viewed as a valuable part of the analysis process (Campbell et al., 2021).

At the conclusion of the data collection process, all data were gathered, including field notes taken during interviews. Field notes are an integral part of rigorous qualitative research, serving as a written record of observations, descriptions, and insights that are not captured in audio recordings (Burkholder & Thompson, 2020). They also serve as a reminder of the physical context in which the study took place and participants' nonverbal communication. Field notes were descriptive and reflective in nature. In descriptive notes, observations of participants' behaviors and actions are documented. Reflective notes include assumptions, questions, or thoughts the researcher may have on what is being observed. Thus, field notes facilitate researcher reflexivity on positionality and subjectivity (Burkholder & Thompson, 2020). Precise, detailed, and thorough notes accurately described the physical setting and participants' verbal and nonverbal communication, including facial expressions and body language.

After each interview, the researcher listened to the audio recording once for familiarity. Next, they immediately transcribed each participant's responses, noting any inflections, breaks,

or pauses during the audio recording from both the interviewer and the participant (Braun & Clarke, 2022). For example, a pause from the participant may have indicated that they were thinking about how to respond, unsure how to respond, did not understand the question, or felt uncomfortable with the question, at which point the researcher would check their emotional well-being. The coding process used an inductive approach to Braun and Clarke's reflexive thematic analysis. This is a data-driven approach in which the researcher develops and adds codes as they proceed with data analysis (Proudfoot, 2022). A deductive approach was not considered, as it involves predetermined codes (Proudfoot, 2022). Entering research with preconceptions may introduce bias and lead the researcher to overlook valuable insights. Braun and Clarke's reflexive thematic analysis involves six phases (Braun & Clarke, 2022; Campbell et al., 2021). They are as follows:

1. Data familiarization
2. Generate codes
3. Construct themes
4. Review potential themes
5. Define and name themes
6. Report production

Using this analysis approach, the researcher first familiarized themselves with the data by listening to the audio recordings of the participants' responses. Then, they conducted a close reading of the text, highlighting, annotating, and circling keywords or phrases (Braun & Clarke, 2022; Campbell et al., 2021). Preliminary notes during this phase served as a form of reflexivity about the data (Braun & Clarke, 2022). Notes include thoughts, feelings, and questions about the

responses. This process was adhered to throughout the entire analysis. Multiple readings helped the researcher immerse themselves in the data's content and begin searching for patterns.

The second phase involved generating codes to organize the data. These initial codes include meaningful words, sentences, or data-driven paragraphs (Braun & Clarke, 2022; Campbell et al.). Careful attention was given to each data set in order to label and organize them into meaningful groups. As the researcher generated codes, they did so with the research questions in mind. Hence, any data deemed useful for addressing the research questions was coded. This process helped the researcher determine which codes to discard and which ones to develop into potential themes (Braun & Clarke, 2022).

In the third phase, a coding scheme helped to refine code clusters (Braun & Clarke, 2022; Campbell et al., 2021). After all the data had been analyzed, new coding took place. This iterative process allowed the researcher to generate common themes among participants (Braun & Clarke, 2022; Campbell et al., 2021). This was accomplished by sorting codes and identifying relationships between codes. Using a diagramming graphic organizer was helpful in developing themes and defining their properties (Figure 3). As themes continued to emerge, the researcher had to consider which themes could be discarded or consolidated. Themes should be able to come together to produce a coherent and clear picture of the dataset (Braun & Clarke, 2022).

Next, the researcher reviewed the themes generated from individual transcripts and the entire dataset to examine how these themes related to one another (Braun and Clarke, 2022; Campbell et al., 2021). This was done by collapsing and refining overlapping themes. This phase involves two levels of review (Braun & Clarke, 2022). First, the researcher reviewed the relationship between data items and codes. If there was a coherent pattern, it was assumed the theme was relevant to the data. In the second review, the researcher analyzed the themes in

relation to the data set. They had to provide the best interpretation of the data that would answer the research questions.

Finally, the researcher described and named the themes. This phase requires a deep analysis of the data items underlying each theme (Braun & Clarke, 2022). For each identified theme, the researcher went beyond the descriptive phase and constructed a detailed analysis of the meaning of each theme and how it fit within the broader scope of the dataset. The researcher alternated between the data and identified themes to organize the narrative. This process continued until no new themes emerged. Once data saturation was achieved, the researcher produced a concise and engaging report, both within and across themes, that addressed the research questions (Braun and Clarke, 2022; Campbell et al.). This was a detailed and compelling narrative that went beyond a simple description of the themes. This study produced excessive data, prompting the researcher to consider using NVivo, a qualitative data management software. However, issues with navigating this software and the resulting data loss led the researcher to return to manual coding.

Assumptions

Based on my professional experience and background working with secondary teachers, four initial assumptions were made regarding this study. The first assumption was that all participants would provide honest responses. This assumption was based on the premise that teachers want all students to be successful; therefore, they would be willing to share truthful experiences so that immigrant student populations, such as Latino newcomer youth, may benefit from this study's findings in the future. Another assumption was that the sample size of 12 would be sufficient to reach data saturation. This was based on the premise that the general range for a phenomenological study is 5-25 participants, and the sample size of 12 was within this

range. Additionally, trust built with participants would result in the collection of thick descriptive data sufficient for data saturation. A further assumption was that a participant would decide to opt out. This was based on the premise that they would fear being reprimanded if they thought there was a possibility that the district might get access to their data. The result would be incomplete data, in which case I would need to restart data collection with another participant from the sampling frame. A final assumption was that data collection would be a challenge due to scheduling conflicts between the researcher and the participants. This was based on the premise that work schedules and/or after-school commitments varied. For example, they may be involved in extracurricular activities, such as coaching, tutoring, or after-school clubs.

Limitations

Limitations are constraints that are usually beyond a researcher's control and may influence the interpretations and results of a study (Bloomberg, 2023). Awareness of the inherent limitations in this qualitative phenomenological study helped the researcher consider ways to minimize their impact. A significant limitation of this study was the researcher's role as a former immigrant with a similar linguistic and cultural background to the students with whom participants worked. This had the potential to increase researcher bias and influence data collection and analysis methods. The researcher acknowledged their role and responsibilities as the primary instrument and strove to maintain the integrity of the study. As such, they bracketed themselves by practicing reflexivity throughout the research process. They also conducted transcript checks during data collection to ensure accuracy and prioritized the safety and integrity of participants. Member checking, following the overall findings, allowed participants to review the data interpretation and ensure that their perspectives were accurately portrayed.

Another limitation was that the researcher was a teacher in one of the school districts where the study took place. Some participants were coworkers and may have been influenced to provide responses they perceived as agreeable to the researcher. To address this limitation, the researcher-built trust and rapport before collecting data. Participants were reminded of the importance of honesty and how their findings may one day benefit immigrant students from diverse backgrounds. They also ensured that the interviews took place in a neutral or natural setting, selected by the participants. A safe environment encouraged participants to take risks in open and honest discussions. For the location of the interviews, the majority of participants selected their classrooms, while one chose their office and another a residential setting. While generalizability is not the primary goal of qualitative research, the findings were limited to a small sample, potentially reducing the study's transferability and credibility. Limiting this study to two school districts was also a limitation, as this study excluded other districts with similar demographics. Two neighboring school districts were sent Permission to Conduct Study requests, but only one responded, which was beyond the researcher's control.

Another limitation arose during data analysis. Participant H's demographics and responses were significantly different from those of others in the dataset, making them an outlier. Participant H reported that although they had five years of teaching experience, this was their first year working with Latino newcomer immigrant youth. In contrast, the other participants reported having worked with this population throughout their teaching careers. Next, unlike the other eleven participants who worked in one school, Participant H was a teacher who traveled between their two secondary schools, as their district did not have a high school ELL teacher. They worked with students from 6th to 12th grade, which translated to teaching seven different grade levels within the same year. This was vastly different from the other eleven participants, as

the average number of grade levels they taught was three. Participant H also provided very short responses as compared to the other eleven participants. The researcher assumed this was due to their lack of experience working with newcomers. Despite the researcher's probing questions, they primarily provided one-sentence responses. These vague responses deprived this study of thicker descriptions, lowering the validity and transferability of the findings. Finally, the researcher acknowledged the challenges teachers experience when working with populations whose native language is other than English. Hence, the communication barrier between participants and their newcomer students may have influenced their perceptions of the impact their instructional strategies or support systems had on their academic and socioemotional needs.

Delimitations

Delimitations are the initial, intentional choices the researcher makes about the study's overall design, defining the research's conceptual boundaries (Bloomberg, 2023). These research decisions encompass the scope of the research problem, its purpose, the population, and the questions to be asked of participants (Bloomberg, 2023). The research problem addressed in this study was that teachers often lack adequate preparation and knowledge of effective strategies and support systems that promote both academic achievement and socioemotional well-being among Latino Newcomer immigrant youth in grades 7-12 within their first year of U.S. schools. Not addressing the socioemotional and academic needs of this population may lead to mental health issues that can greatly impact immigrant youth's ability to learn, engage in school, and lower their persistence when tackling academic challenges (Patel et al., 2023). This problem was selected because it relates to the researcher's current position working with Latino Newcomer immigrant youth. Observations of students and their day-to-day experiences with acculturation and the language barrier motivated this research problem. This led to the purpose of this study,

which was to explore the lived experiences of secondary teachers who have or currently support Latino Newcomer immigrant youth during their first year in U.S. schools. Through this study, the researcher aimed to identify and understand successful instructional strategies, support systems, and best practices that promote both academic achievement and socioemotional well-being among Latino newcomer immigrant youth. The aim was also to discover commonalities among this sample of their experiences in working with this population. These participants were selected because they work with the most prevalent immigrant group in the region where this study took place, thereby increasing the feasibility of the study. Interview questions were carefully selected with the research questions in mind. Asking purposeful questions about relevant topics, including teacher preparation programs, professional development opportunities, and instructional strategies they implement, was essential to answering the research questions.

This study allowed participants to share their perceptions about their lived experiences related to the phenomenon being explored. An in-depth understanding of this sample's lived experiences may motivate educators and other stakeholders to increase professional development targeted to the students they serve. It may also lead to a more equitable and inclusive learning environment for Latino newcomer immigrant youth (Rodriguez et al., 2020). The primary purpose of this study was not to inform the scientific or academic community about the socioemotional and academic needs of Latino newcomer immigrant youth; rather, it was to provide insight into the lived experiences and perspectives of secondary teachers who work with this population and how they addressed these immigrant-specific issues in the classroom.

Summary

This study employed a qualitative phenomenological design, using purposive sampling, with secondary teachers from two southeastern Washington state public school districts. The

purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of secondary teachers who support Latino newcomer immigrant youth in grades 7-12 during their first year in U.S. schools. This study aimed to understand how the implementation of instructional strategies and support systems may impact the socioemotional and academic well-being of these students. A purposive sample of 12 secondary teachers from middle and high schools was recruited from sampling frames obtained from two neighboring school districts. Participants were teachers who support Latino newcomer immigrant youth in grades 7-12 in their first year of U.S. schools and had one or more years of secondary teaching experience.

Data collection was conducted through in-depth, semi-structured interviews. Open-ended questions allowed participants to share descriptive insights into their lived experiences and perceptions of working with Latino Newcomer immigrant youth, as well as the instructional strategies they implemented to address their academic and socioemotional needs. As the primary instrument in data collection and analysis, the researcher bracketed themselves by practicing reflexivity, acknowledging how prior experiences, assumptions, and beliefs might influence their decisions. Transcript checking during and after data collection increased the accuracy of the data interpretation. Braun and Clarke's reflexive thematic analysis was applied to generate and identify patterns and themes, helping to answer the research question. A manual approach to analyzing raw data was initially attempted; however, excessive data required the use of the data analysis software NVivo. The use of this software proved problematic, as the researcher experienced issues navigating the software, and some critical data were lost. This motivated the researcher to return to manual coding.

Assumptions, limitations, and delimitations were acknowledged. Assumptions included honest responses from participants, the sufficiency of the sample size for achieving data

saturation, and participants' work schedules, which posed a challenge to data collection. Limitations included increased researcher bias due to sharing a similar background with the participants' students, the potential for participants to provide answers influenced by the researcher's position as a coworker, the study's limitation to two school districts, and the presence of an outlier in the collected data. Delimitations included the scope of the research problem, purpose, and population, as well as the interview questions selected for data collection.

Section 3: Findings, Implications, and Recommendations

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of secondary teachers who have or currently support Latino newcomer immigrant youth during their first year in U.S. schools, with a specific focus on identifying effective instructional strategies and support systems that promote both academic achievement and socioemotional well-being. The problem addressed in this study was that secondary teachers often lack adequate preparation and knowledge of effective instructional strategies and support systems that promote both academic achievement and socioemotional well-being among Latino newcomer immigrant youth in grades 7-12 during their first year of school (Davis et al., 2021; Lilly, 2021; Schlaudt et al., 2021; Yan et al., 2021).

This section presents the study's data results. The researcher applied Braun and Clarke's six phases of reflexive thematic analysis to identify preliminary codes and develop themes (Braun & Clarke, 2022; Campbell et al., 2021). The researcher then discussed the implications or outcomes of the study's findings. This included an explanation of how findings may contribute to future research and their application in current practices or policies. After objectively presenting the findings, the researcher provided a brief discussion of the entire study, explaining the measures taken to maintain its integrity and trustworthiness. Based on the study's findings,

the researcher provided recommendations for stakeholders, including policymakers, administrators, and educators, that may help decrease the socio-emotional and academic barriers faced by Latino newcomer immigrant youth in their first year of U.S. schools. Findings presented in this study were in relation to the research questions. Thick descriptions significantly contributed to the overall themes, and an evaluation of the outcomes determined whether the research questions were properly addressed. This section also includes a discussion on how the findings contributed to the current literature and how they were applied to educational practices.

Findings

To examine how secondary teachers describe their lived experiences working with Latino Newcomer immigrant youth in their first year of U.S. schools, a purposive sampling method was used to recruit participants. The 12 participants in this study were male and female secondary school teachers who taught either English Language Learners (ELL), ELA, Math, History, or Science. Participants who taught core courses were selected because these are classes where Latino newcomer immigrant youth struggle academically due to the language barrier, as assignments are expected to be completed in English. ELL teachers were also selected as participants because they often have deeper insights into their students' lives, as they have smaller classes and more opportunities to work with them individually. Five participants were high school teachers, and seven were middle school teachers. Ten participants were of Latino descent, and two were Caucasian. The gender ratio was 10 females to two males. Ages ranged from the mid-20s to the early 60s, with the two males near retirement.

General teaching experience varied among all participants, ranging from five to 38 years. Experience working with Latino Newcomer immigrant youth ranged from one to 38 years, as some teachers previously taught in other school districts with non-Latino newcomers. All

participants held a master's in education. Nine of the 12 participants were bilingual and spoke fluent Spanish. The other three stated they understood very little Spanish but could identify all of the profanities. Five of the 12 participants held a bilingual endorsement, and one also had a Spanish endorsement. The other seven participants reported having some previous professional development on working with Multilingual Learners (MLs), which includes both newcomer and Long-Term MLs. However, they stated these workshops were not required, and many teachers opted not to attend. Four participants were National Board-Certified Teachers. Nine participants were from the school district where the researcher initially planned the study, and the other three participants were from the neighboring district. Two of them were high school math teachers, and the other one was a traveling ELL teacher who worked with Latino newcomers in the middle and high schools.

Table 1

Participant Demographics

Codename	Years Teaching	Courses Taught	Gender	Level of Education	Bilingual	ELL Endorsed
A	34	Math 7	Male	Masters	Yes	Yes
B	31	Math 7	Female	Masters	No	No
C	14	Math 8	Female	Masters	Yes	No
D	21	Sci 9-12	Female	Masters	No	No
E	38	His 11-12	Male	Masters	No	No
F	24	ELL 6-12	Female	Masters	Yes	Yes
G	8	ELL 6-8	Female	Masters	Yes	Yes
H	1	ELL 6-11	Female	Masters	Yes	No
I	9	Math 9-12	Female	Masters	Yes	No
J	13	Science 7	Female	Masters	Yes	Yes
K	6	History 8	Female	Masters	Yes	No

L	12	Math 9-12	Female	Masters	Yes	Yes
Average	17.6					

The researcher conducted 12 semi-structured interviews as the primary data collection tool. Participants were initially contacted via the school districts' email system. Information provided to potential participants included an introduction to the researcher, the study's purpose, the criteria for participation, and their role in the study. The National University's official Recruitment Letter was attached to the email. Participants were instructed to thoroughly read the letter and respond if interested in participating. Participants were slow to respond. To ensure a healthy sample, the researcher contacted other district superintendents and received permission from a neighboring district.

In setting up the interviews, the researcher practiced mindfulness by allowing participants to choose the date, time, and location that were most convenient for them. Most interviews were conducted after school in the classroom. One interview was on a Saturday to accommodate Participant C. This interview took place in the researcher's residence. The researcher maintained flexibility, as some participants had to reschedule. Due to scheduling conflicts, data collection for Participant J had to be conducted on two separate dates. A span of 4 days between the two parts of the interview delayed the return of the transcript for review.

A safe and relaxing environment was created by providing a basket of snacks and beverages and encouraging light-hearted conversation before the interviews. Prior to the interviews, the researcher emphasized the importance of honesty, as transparency was crucial to the accuracy of the results. Participants were given think time between questions and directed to ask for clarification if they did not understand. During the interviews, the researcher maintained

a neutral tone, refrained from nodding in agreement, and limited eye contact to avoid showing emotion and potentially influencing the participant's responses.

While the Consent Form stated that interviews would be 60-90 minutes, the actual time varied across participants, ranging from 39 minutes to 2 hours and 21 minutes. The total time spent gathering data was approximately 15 hours, and the digital audio recordings yielded 221 transcript pages. Despite the probing questions, some participants provided brief responses, while others rambled on. The researcher did not attempt to stop them, as longer interviews were more likely to contain essential information. The data collection process took approximately three months, from initial contact with superintendents, building principals, and potential participants, to the last participant returning their transcript and receiving their gift card.

Traveling out of town was not something the researcher anticipated, as the initial plan was to limit potential participants to one school district. However, due to the slow response time and the approaching end of the school year, the researcher realized that a larger pool of participants was needed. This meant restarting the recruitment process. Emails were sent out to two superintendents, detailing the purpose of the study with the recruitment letter attached. After one week, only one superintendent responded and granted permission. He shared the research information with the building principals. This was followed by another week of wait time before receiving their middle and high school master teacher schedules and school emails. The researcher identified all teachers who taught ELL, Science, Math, and History, and sent them an email outlining the purpose of the study and the recruitment letter. As with the previous recruitment, the researcher waited and did not send email reminders or influence them in any way. One ELL (middle and high school) and two high school Math teachers responded within a week, and interviews were scheduled at dates and times most convenient for them.

Since participants were from two different school districts, the researcher traveled multiple times. The first visit was to collect data. Audio recordings were transcribed using TurboScribe, converted to PDFs, and uploaded to a Word document. For transcript checking, transcripts were printed, stapled, placed in a folder, and given to the participant the next day. If the interview was on a Friday, transcript checking was the following Monday. After work, the researcher drove to the participants' schools, met them in the office, and gave them the transcripts to review for accuracy. When they finished, the researcher returned to pick them up and gave them a gift card to a local coffee shop or eatery. At times, it was necessary to use personal time and leave work early, as school hours differed between both districts and the researcher did not want to inconvenience participants.

Table 2

Participant Interview Data

Codename	Interview Date	Location	Duration in Minutes	Transcript Pages	Transcript Checking
A	4/5/25	Classroom	132	20	Yes
B	4/7/25	Classroom	39	8	Yes
C	4/12/25	Residence	141	36	Yes
D	4/14/25	Classroom	58	15	Yes
E	4/15/25	Classroom	64	17	Yes
F	4/17/25	Office	129	31	Yes
G	4/21/25	Classroom	57	15	Yes
H	5/27/25	Classroom	44	9	Yes
I	5/29/25	Classroom	58	15	Yes
J	5/30/25	Classroom	58	16	Yes
K	6/3/25	Classroom	83	20	Yes

L	6/6/25	Classroom	72	19	Yes
Average			77.9 min	18.4 pages	

This study sought to answer the following research questions:

RQ1

What instructional strategies do secondary teachers identify as effective in promoting academic achievement among Latino newcomer immigrant youth during their first year in U.S. schools?

RQ2

What support systems do secondary teachers identify as effective in promoting socioemotional well-being among Latino newcomer immigrant youth during their first year of U.S. schools?

Trustworthiness

Careful measures were taken to ensure an ethical and trustworthy approach to collecting and analyzing data. The researcher attempted to establish credibility by accurately recording the data. During data collection, the researcher often restated participants' words, such as "so what I am hearing you say is that…" and "just to clarify, you are saying that…" Interviews were audio-recorded and immediately transcribed. To ensure accuracy, transcripts were returned to each participant within 1-2 days of their interview, allowing them to review the content while their memory was still fresh. Transcript checking increased the credibility of this study. Transcript checking after data collection involved providing participants with a verbatim transcript to read and revise as needed. Once the transcripts were returned, the researcher thoroughly reviewed them, applying the participants' changes to the original transcripts.

Transferability was enhanced by extracting thick descriptions from participants. This was accomplished by incorporating probing questions into the semi-structured interview, providing detailed participant demographics, and clearly outlining the sampling procedures. Thick descriptions of the participants' demographics and the study's findings provide the reader with a deeper understanding, thus increasing transferability to a similar group. Dependability was practiced by maintaining consistency during data collection. The set criteria for participant selection were strictly followed, and each interview question was asked in the same manner, with the same probing questions. Additionally, digital audio recordings ensured that the collected data was verbatim. Confirmability was practiced through reflexivity. The researcher made a conscious effort to collect and analyze data by maintaining a reflexive journal, documenting the process and reasoning behind each decision, and acknowledging how prior experiences may have influenced the results. Reducing researcher bias was prioritized to ensure the study's findings stemmed from participants' lived experiences rather than the researcher's own interpretations.

Preparation of Raw Data for Analysis

The primary data collection tool used for this study was a 15-question semi-structured interview. It was audio-recorded with participant consent, then converted to text using TurboScribe, an AI audio transcription service. Before printing transcripts for participant review, the researcher reviewed each transcript and removed any identifiable information. Raw data was also collected from descriptive and reflective field notes taken during the interview and from an artifact collection of photos depicting instructional strategies on participants' classroom walls. The researcher attempted manual coding of the transcripts but found it laborious and opted to use NVivo, a data analysis software approved by the university. Since the researcher was unfamiliar

with the software, they attended individual and group workshops offered by the university. Once all transcripts were complete, the researcher uploaded them to NVivo and continued data analysis through multiple readings, searching for codes and developing themes. NVivo proved to be difficult to navigate, as the researcher lost input data on multiple occasions. As a result, they returned to manual coding.

Reflexivity

Practicing reflexivity is a crucial aspect of qualitative research, as it helps build credibility. When a researcher acknowledges how their own experiences and perspectives may influence any or all phases of the research process, their transparency indicates that they have made a conscious effort to minimize researcher bias and produce findings that accurately represent participants' perspectives. Notwithstanding, the researcher acknowledged that working in the same profession as participants and sharing a similar background with the students they served introduced a certain level of bias that could not be ignored. Yet, this was not too concerning, as in the reflexive thematic analysis approach, the researcher's subjectivity is not problematic; rather, it is viewed as a valuable part of the analysis process (Campbell et al., 2021). Having worked with Latino newcomers for over 30 years, both in general education and currently as a middle school ELL teacher, the researcher was well-versed in their linguistic, academic, and socio-emotional needs. They also observed the adversities newcomers often faced and how decisions made at the district and state levels were not always research-based or in their best interests.

As a member of a team of teachers who share common students, the researcher heard many teachers voice their frustrations. While they had the best intentions, they felt overwhelmed and unsure of how to provide appropriate language support to Latino newcomers in their core

classes. This knowledge inspired the researcher to bridge this student-teacher disconnect by exploring instructional strategies and support systems that secondary teachers identified as effective in promoting academic achievement and socioemotional well-being among Latino newcomer immigrant youth during their first year in U.S. schools. As an ELL middle school teacher and advocate for immigrant students, the researcher attempted to minimize their influence by bracketing themselves during the research process. This was accomplished by reflecting on the topic before, during, and after the study, and considering how personal background and perspectives may influence the data collection and interpretation. The researcher also maintained a reflexive journal throughout the research process, documenting every decision and rationale. These included reflecting on participant interactions, data collection and analysis, and their interpretation of the findings.

Data Analysis

12 secondary teachers from two neighboring school districts participated in this study. All worked or currently work with Latino newcomer immigrant youth in their first year of U.S. schools. Data was collected over a three-month period. Braun and Clarke's reflexive thematic analysis was used to analyze data for this research study (Braun & Clarke, 2022; Campbell et al., 2021). The researcher applied the six phases of reflexive thematic analysis to identify preliminary codes and develop themes. These included: (1) Data Familiarization. (2) Generating Initial Codes. (3) Constructing Themes. (4) Reviewing Potential Themes. (5) Defining and Naming Themes. (6) Report Production. Through this process, the researcher sought to identify codes and develop themes related to the research question and the study design. In the next section, the researcher outlined the steps of the data analysis and findings.

Data Analysis Procedures

Phase 1: Familiarization of Data

Following Braun & Clarke's reflexive thematic analysis process, the researcher began by actively listening to each interview audio recording once. The goal was to gain an in-depth understanding of participants' responses, and therefore, we did not take notes. The researcher exercised patience and listened attentively to ensure that no crucial information relevant to the research question was missed. The interviews averaged 77 minutes and took one week to listen to all of them. Data analysis was conducted during the summer; hence, the researcher was able to listen to two audio recordings a day. This allowed time for processing and reflecting on each individual audio. Reflections for each transcript were added to the reflexive journal.

After listening to all of the audio recordings, the researcher initiated a close reading of each interview transcript. These were organized by the date on which they occurred. They reflected on each participant's demographic data and how this may affect their responses. As each transcript was read, annotations were made, such as circling recurring words and phrases related to the research question (Table 3). Margin notes included inferences on why or how a participant may have said something in particular.

Table 3

Study Participants' Recurring Words and Phrases

Participant	Words/Phrases
A,B,C,D,F,G,H,I,J,K,L	visuals
A,F,H,J,K,L	buddy system
A,B,E,H,I,J,L	turn and talk
A,B,C,D,E,G,J,K	cooperative learning

A,B,F,G,H,J,L	cognates
A,C,D,E,F,G,H,I,L	language leveling
A,D,F,G,H,J,K,L	hands-on
A,C,H,I,J	entry/exit task
A,B,F,G,H,J,K	charts
A,C,E,F,H,I,J,K,L	technology
A,B,C,D,E,F,G,H,I,J,K	group work
A,B,C,E,F,G,H,I,J,K,L	translation
A,C,D,F,I,L	seating arrangement
A,B,C,D,F,H,I,J,L	partner work
A,B,C,D,I,J,K	personal connections
A,B,C,D,E,F,G,I,J,K,L	vocabulary
A,B,C,D,F,G,H,I,K	social-emotional check-ins
A,B,C,F,H,I,J,K,L	getting to know students
A,B,C,D,F,G,H,I,J,K,L	culture
A,B,C,E,K,L	withdrawn
A,B,C,D,E,G,I,J,L	note-taking
A,C,F,I	empowered students
A,C,H,J,K,L	native language
A,C,G,H,J,K	safe

Preliminary margin notes included thoughts and inferences on participants' responses observed through multiple readings. For example, Participant A had several long pauses before answering questions and began some responses with "That's a good question" and "Like I mentioned earlier…". Based on past experiences, the researcher inferred that this participant was nervous and unsure about their responses. The researcher would have appreciated an honest answer by simply stating, "I don't know the answer to that question." Interview time varied by participant. An initial assumption was that participants with the most years of teaching experience would provide the longest and most descriptive responses. This was not the case. While Participant E had the most years of teaching experience, his interview lasted 1 hour and 4 minutes. In contrast, Participant F, with 24 years of teaching experience, lasted two hours and

nine minutes. They had worked with newcomers and other Multilingual Learners (MLs) throughout their teaching careers. They held an ESL (English as a Second Language) endorsement, a K-12 bilingual endorsement, a master's degree in education with a specialization in ESL (English as a Second Language), and their National Board certification in English as a New Language for Early Young Adulthood. The researcher realized that descriptive data for this study were not about years, but about the experience and specialized training in working with newcomers and other MLs. Participant H provided the shortest interview at just 44 minutes. The responses were brief and vague. Even probing questions were answered with one to two sentences. While Participant H was in their fifth year of teaching, it was their first year working with newcomers. The researcher concluded Participant H's short responses were due to their lack of experience working with this population. The voice inflections of other participants reflected their perspectives toward newcomers. Participant F spoke passionately about their students, stating, "I am an English learner myself." This statement was a testament to their connection with their immigrant students and their ability to relate to potential academic, socio-emotional, and linguistic issues. Participant K referred to their students as family and became emotional when stating that one of their students had an upcoming immigration appointment and was worried about being deported. Participant K's voice demonstrated empathy toward their students.

After listening to all the audio recordings, the researcher reflected on the verbal and non-verbal responses, including word choice, response length, pauses, and voice inflections. For word choice, when speaking about words that are similar in English and Spanish, Participant L said, "…students have learned to pick out, they have a name, the conjugates, they've been able to pick them out and break down." The word they were referring to was "cognates," which are words that have the same language origin, similar spellings, and meanings. This participant was

a high school Math teacher and may have confused the word cognates with the verb "conjugates". As with the interviews, the length of responses also varied between participants. For instance, when asked to provide a specific example of how they implement instructional strategies effective with Latino newcomer students, Participant H responded with the sentence, "I do a lot of turn and talks, a lot of visuals, a lot of scaffolds, differentiation at their levels, a lot of picture cards, observation charts, pictorials, and gradual release." They provided a list of what they did but did not elaborate. Conversely, Participant K provided a very detailed example, answering the same question in 46 sentences. This demonstrated their extensive knowledge of effective instructional strategies and support systems for newcomers.

Descriptive and reflective field notes were taken during the interviews and analyzed during this phase. Multiple readings provided more context and deeper immersion in the data. The researcher also reviewed nonverbal data documented during each interview, including facial expressions, posture, and body language. For most of the interview, Participant C, a secondary math teacher in their 15th year of teaching, sat in an upright position and either gestured with their hands or slid their hands into their pockets. Field notes on this participant indicated that certain questions led the participant to feel "excited" or "relaxed". This demonstrated confidence in their area of expertise. Other field notes described the physical learning environment. Participant B's classroom had desks arranged in groups of four. Expectations were clearly visible, and all materials were organized. Graphic organizers with pictures and vocabulary words were displayed on the walls as resources for newcomers. With 30 years of teaching experience, their classroom was set up for student success. This participant understood that learning is not done in isolation; rather, students work together to achieve the desired outcomes. Cooperative learning groups provided their newcomer students with the linguistic, academic, and social

support they needed to facilitate learning. Their organized learning environment provided structure and predictability that lowered newcomers' anxiety levels. Graphic organizers and other visuals on their walls facilitated comprehensible input.

Phase 2: Generating Initial Codes

In this phase, the researcher initiated the coding process. Manual coding was initially attempted; however, the excessive amount of data prompted the researcher to continue the coding process using NVivo. Participant transcripts were imported into this data analysis software, where the researcher conducted five readings to identify short, descriptive, and interesting phrases relevant to the research question. Notwithstanding, the researcher began experiencing issues navigating the software and losing imported data; therefore, they elected to return to manual coding, where they continued with the data analysis. To maintain subjectivity, the researcher purposely kept the participants' identities out of view and used pseudonyms, referring to them as Participant A, B, C, and so on. Additionally, each transcript was read systematically and provided equal consideration. They were organized and read by interview date, from earliest to last. Each response, whether related to the research question, was given the same importance and time for processing and reflection. Field and reflexivity notes were analyzed for commonalities and inconsistencies to minimize researcher bias.

The researcher selected inductive coding as an approach to data analysis to reduce any initial bias from pre-existing themes or code clusters. They began the initial coding process with a data-driven approach, hoping to discover patterns, codes, and themes as the data unfolded. Through multiple readings, approximately 221 initial codes related to the research questions were identified, many of which repeated across the transcripts (Appendix D). Some examples included peer support, safe environment, cultural affirmation, technology integration, and

socioemotional check-ins. Other codes that emerged included seating arrangements, relationship-building, Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) integration, native-language use, and empathy. These initial codes related to ***RQ2*** in the form of support systems, such as SEL integration and cultural affirmation. Initial codes related to ***RQ1,*** such as visuals and cooperative learning groups, were reported as effective instructional strategies used with Latino newcomer immigrant youth in their first year of U.S. schools.

After reviewing the initial codes, the researcher reduced some of them by consolidating similar codes. For example, “visual attached to content,” “use of pictures for vocabulary,” and “use of images” became “visuals”. These were organized into code clusters, including Cultural Responsiveness, SEL Support, Inclusive Environment, Use of Technology, and Instructional Scaffolding (Appendix D). For example, codes including “classroom materials reflect cultural backgrounds,” “personal stories,” shared language and culture,” and “teaching cultural content and contributions,” became part of the code cluster of Cultural Responsiveness, as these demonstrated how participants validated students’ diverse cultural backgrounds and incorporated them into their instruction. Codes such as “SEL check-ins”, referral to counselors”, “behavior observations,” and “advocacy in and out of class” became part of the code cluster SEL Integration, as these were examples of how participants addressed the socioemotional needs of their students. Codes such as “student-created classroom norms,” “popsicle sticks for equity”, “creating a sense of unity,” and “opportunities for working with other students” were added under the cluster code Inclusive Environment, as these demonstrated how participants created a sense of belonging for Latino newcomer immigrant youth. Codes such as “online learning and assessments,” “translation services,” “AI content creation,” and “media with subtitles” became part of Technology Integration, as all participants relied on technology as a regular part of their

toolkit to enhance classroom instruction and assessment as well as to facilitate teacher-student communication. Codes such as “use of notebooks”, “word banks”, “visuals”, “cognates”, and “sentence stems” were included in Instructional Scaffolding because they were all language acquisition strategies. Recurring patterns observed included the use of visuals as strategies, peer support, bilingual instruction, and technology-supported practice. The researcher observed that some of these patterns were also present in the recurring words and phrases initially identified during the first close reading of the transcripts.

Phase 3: Generating Themes

In the previous phase, the researcher identified initial codes, reduced them by consolidating similar ones, and organized them into code clusters. This phase also involved developing code clusters into themes relevant to the research questions, focusing on the effective instructional strategies and support systems used by secondary teachers who work with Latino newcomer immigrant students in their first year of U.S. schools. The researcher began this process by reviewing and evaluating code clusters. To facilitate this phase, the researcher created a thematic analysis map (Figure 3). Cultural Responsiveness emerged as a potential theme for a Culturally Responsive Classroom, as 11 of the 12 participants sought to create a support system within the classroom by integrating students’ cultural backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives into their teaching strategies and curriculum. Creating a culturally responsive environment is important because it values and respects students’ cultural identity. This fosters pride in students’ identity, enhances academic outcomes, and boosts engagement. A code leading to this theme included “sensitivity to cultural aspects”. When asked about this topic and culturally relevant materials, Participant A stated, “We have a mathematics curriculum, but it’s not culturally sensitive, so I have material in my classroom that I can draw from to demonstrate

our sensitivity to cultural aspects". Based on their response, this participant appeared to understand that a curriculum must be culturally relevant to promote a sense of belonging and be meaningful to students' cultural identities. A culturally sensitive curriculum is a crucial component of an inclusive and equitable learning environment.

Other participants, although not from the same culture, attempted to create connections with their students by sharing commonalities. For example, Participant B shared that they knew bits and pieces of students' cultures because they were married to a Latino. They discussed food they had learned to make that surprised students. This participant felt that sharing their experiences would strengthen their student-teacher relationship. They demonstrated the belief that teachers do not necessarily have to share the same culture with students to build trust and create meaningful connections; however, they must be willing to make an extra effort to learn more about their students' diverse cultural backgrounds.

Some participants discussed how they supplemented their curriculum because it lacked sufficient culturally relevant content. Participant C reported that although it took more time, they liked using AI to create their own questions tailored to student needs and added, "there's just not a lot of options, I would say that are going to be like culturally sensitive or something that's culturally connected to students." This participant was also aware of the need for a culturally sensitive curriculum and went out of their way to enhance it by utilizing other resources, such as AI. Participant D shared that they brought their own personal items to post on the walls. These included posters that reflected the cultural identity of Latino students. Participants E, F, I, and K asserted that their curriculum often lacked cultural sensitivity but found other ways to make those cultural connections with their students, such as modifying context questions to be more culturally specific and reflecting students' own personal experiences. These responses

exemplified teachers' efforts to make cultural connections in their teaching when working with deficient curricula.

Other participants attempted to use differentiated instruction that supported students' cultural backgrounds and pride. Participants H and L provided opportunities for project-based learning, allowing students to further explore their cultures. Participant L added, "I did it this year and I do it every single year…And it's very cultural because they pick things that their family might like or their cousins might like, the language they speak. So, I guess they're just more enthusiastic about doing it. They're more engaged." Hands-on learning offers low-risk activities that enhance engagement and motivation, ultimately leading to a deeper understanding of the content. This type of differentiation is essential for students learning a new language because it lowers their affective filter and accelerates language acquisition. All students learn best in a relaxed and safe environment.

Of the 12 participants interviewed, only Participant J found their curriculum culturally relevant. Students were exposed not only to their own culture, but also to others. They expressed, "We are lucky that our curriculum has cultural relevant material that is relevant to different cultures. So, my students are not only identifying with their own culture, but they are also exposed to other cultures, which I think is important to do…" A similarity among those participants who reported a lack of curriculum was that they made an effort to supplement or modify parts of the curriculum to make it more relevant. Based on prior research and participants' responses, the researcher assumed that the mainstream curricula used by these participants were written and published by entities that emphasized the perspectives of the dominant culture. Excluding diverse cultures in curricula results in cultural bias and the inability of minority students to engage and connect to their school and community.

For the theme Culturally Responsive Classroom, the researcher did not consider Participant G in the above responses, as their responses were vague. When asked about culturally relevant materials they had or used in the classroom, they stated, “I don’t have any of that, I don’t.” When asked whether their curriculum was culturally relevant, they responded, “Well, it’s been state-approved, district-approved, so I’m assuming it’s culturally, you know.” Based on these responses, the researcher excluded this participant from this phase of the data analysis, as their response was not relevant to ***RQ2***.

SEL Integration emerged as a potential theme for SEL Support because it involved strategic activities and decisions made by participants to address observed students’ socioemotional needs. All participants reported they monitored and responded to these needs through various methods. A common code underlying this theme was “SEL check-ins,” in which students were asked how they were feeling based on teacher observation or daily school-wide check-ins. Addressing students’ socioemotional needs in the classroom is crucial to their overall well-being, resulting in a positive learning environment where students feel safe, supported, and empowered. When asked how they addressed the socioemotional behaviors they observed, all 12 participants reported seeking support from other staff members, including paraprofessionals, former teachers, and the school counselor, to gain background knowledge. Participants A and J asserted that they went beyond referring students and also contacted parents. These participants’ responses reflected their willingness to make the extra effort to ensure students’ socioemotional issues were being properly addressed. Oftentimes, teachers refer students to a counselor and that is where their support ends. Parent input is a vital part of helping students (especially those who arrive with trauma), as they have valuable background knowledge that both teachers and counselors need to better support the unique socioemotional needs of immigrant youth.

Participants B and J relied heavily on paraprofessionals to obtain background knowledge on students' socioemotional status. These individuals often followed their students' daily class schedules to provide language support in general education courses such as Math, Science, Social Studies, and English Language Arts. Hence, they came to know their students more deeply and were able to provide detailed, essential narratives about each student. These participants recognized that paraprofessionals possessed a wealth of knowledge regarding students' backgrounds and utilized them as a resource to access crucial information needed to provide students with appropriate socioemotional support. Paraprofessionals who provided language support were an essential part of immigrant newcomers' lives at school. Through regular interactions and observations of students, they provided valuable input on any concerning patterns of behavior and shared their insights with teachers.

While the above participants accessed student information from their paraprofessionals, Participants C and F addressed socioemotional needs by creating strong student-teacher relationships. Getting to know their students on a personal level and making connections encouraged trust. After working with newcomers for 14 years, Participant C noted that some of these needs arose due to the significant change in environment, and learning about their stories was quite powerful. They added, "Just learning about each student's unique, you know, story and what their experiences are can give me a chance to understand that student better. Why maybe they're acting like they're in survival mode, or why they're sometimes mentally checked out." Participant F echoed the importance of really knowing students beyond the surface level and the essential piece of addressing their socioemotional needs. These participants understood that Latino newcomer immigrant youth arrive with unique challenges beyond the language barrier.

Teachers who made a genuine effort to get to know these students were able to address the root cause of their challenges, thereby increasing their academic success and overall well-being.

Participant G acknowledged that when a student is dealing with trauma, there is no learning involved, and they must address the issue. They maintained, “there are incidents where as a teacher, I do have to address it because there is no learning involved because it’s such a strong emotion…I had two students who shared with me their trauma when they were put in those camps isolated from their family. That to me was something. And then when school started, I did talk to the counselor about them so they could get that support.” When asked what training they received in trauma-informed teaching, this participant admitted they had zero training and was unsure how to address trauma, except to refer students to the counselor. The researcher must reiterate the importance of school districts providing trauma-informed professional development for teachers. This should include a comprehensive plan for identifying and screening newcomer students who may arrive in the U.S. with trauma from their native country or the migration process, as well as connecting families to mental health services in their community. Not doing so can negatively affect students’ academic and social skills and lead to long-term mental health issues (Lilly, 2021; Schlaudt et al., 2021; Yan et al., 2021).

The theme of an Inclusive Environment emerged as a potential focus, specifically a Safe and Inclusive Classroom Environment, as it encompassed support systems created by participants to ensure students felt like valued members of the classroom. Inclusive environments increase a strong sense of belonging, reduce acculturative stress, and promote academic success. The code “creating an inclusive and supportive environment” demonstrated a myriad of ways participants attempted to create an inclusive and safe learning environment. When asked how they supported inclusion in their classroom, 11 of the 12 participants provided different

examples, such as allowing their students to create classroom norms. Participants A and F felt strongly that allowing students to create classroom norms increased ownership and accountability. This fostered a strong sense of community in which all students' voices were heard and valued. Participant A stated, "For students to be able to feel like they have ownership and empowerment of the class, I allow students to create their own rules in the class." Participant F created a culture of belonging by establishing a system for welcoming newcomers to their class. They had their students brainstorm ways to help their new classmate. This strategy helped recently arrived newcomers feel welcome and benefited other students by teaching them empathy. Newcomers also participated in the student-created classroom norms. Collaborating with their peers increased their sense of belonging and reduced the acculturative stress that came with being in a new country, culture, community, and school.

For Participants D and H, assigning newcomers to a bilingual buddy was essential for community building. Participant H was strategic when assigning bilingual buddies. They selected students who were also newcomers, but at a higher level of language proficiency. The researcher inferred that this participant paired newcomers with a student who could relate to their experiences, thereby building an instant connection. Identifying and assigning bilingual buddies who were willing to help newcomers adjust to an unfamiliar school system was a crucial part of creating a safe and welcoming environment. More importantly, a bilingual buddy served as an instant friend, helping reduce a newcomer's acculturative stress and making their new school feel less daunting.

While Participant J saw the benefits of pairing a bilingual buddy with a newcomer, they also shared legitimate concerns. They said, "I feel like my student who is consistently helping that student, their grade drops because they're trying to also keep up with their work, but also

trying to maybe interpret at the same time for them. And so, I still do that, but I just have some concerns about it." It is certainly a justifiable concern when the other student's grades are negatively impacted when translating rather than focusing on their own academic performance. In this situation, a possible solution would be to rotate bilingual buddies so they don't miss too much work. Newcomers would also benefit from working with other students, as getting to know them would hasten community building.

To encourage collaboration and interaction with their peers, Participants B, C, and J reported that they incorporated cooperative learning groups into their instructional regimen as a regular part of their instruction. Participant J maintained that cooperative groups happened at least once a week in their classroom. Students were assigned different roles, such as speaker, writer, or materials manager. They added, "They have to select their job and discuss who's doing what. And they're all accountable for that." Cooperative learning groups are an effective way to build a safe and inclusive learning environment. They are particularly beneficial for newcomers, as they promote community through peer collaboration. Additionally, working in groups is a low-risk way to develop language skills while learning new content, and newcomers feel empowered when they realize their contributions are valued and important.

Participants E and K promoted inclusivity by upholding a zero-tolerance policy toward oppressive behavior. Participant E stated, "I want every student to know that they're welcome here and I don't tolerate, you know, other students, you know, belittling or putting down other students…so I want them to know that everybody's important in some way." Participant K established a familial learning environment in which students supported and respected one another. They also allowed both languages (English and Spanish) to be spoken freely and tried to enhance student-teacher relationships through a shared language and culture. All students

deserve the right to feel safe and valued; educators have a duty to ensure this. When a teacher takes on the role of advocate, they embrace diversity and send a message to students that they matter, regardless of their legal status, country of origin, or language. Participant I felt that consistent routines helped newcomers feel safe in their new school system. They began and ended their class in the same way, and the class flow was consistent. Students felt calmer because they knew what to expect. A predictable learning environment was vital to newcomers who may have found school mentally and emotionally challenging.

For Participant L, focusing on newcomers' strengths, particularly their prior experiences, also fostered a supportive learning environment. They asserted, "I try to develop an inclusive class by having them have freedom in what they can learn, not focusing on deficits but on assets, recognizing them and who they are and what they bring to the class, and using different strategies for them to work together. So, they can see each other as peers, as people, and as academic partners in the whole learning process." This asset-based approach boosted newcomers' self-confidence, validated their identities, and helped them feel like valuable members of the classroom. The researcher did not consider including Participant G's responses, as they were vague and did not elaborate. When asked how they supported inclusion in their classroom, this participant replied, "Well, I would say going back to the respect, responsible, and safe. We address that with every student." This statement did not provide specific examples of how they promoted inclusivity in the classroom; therefore, the researcher excluded it from this phase of data analysis.

Use of Technology became the potential theme "Technology Integration" because all 12 participants shared how they integrated technology as a tool to enhance instruction, create assessments, and address language barriers. When asked how they integrated technology to

support Latino newcomer immigrant youth's content and language learning, all participants reported they relied heavily on technology for translation purposes. This included translation of assessments, reading texts, and assignments written by newcomers in their native language. Participant C appreciated that online assessments provided instantaneous feedback, reducing the time spent grading multiple assessments. They stated, "I try my best to include a lot of the technology piece because it gives them that instant feedback that is very difficult to do in a 1 to 30 ratio…one of Marzano's strategies, like top 10 strategies, is to provide feedback to that student. And the quicker, the better, you know?" They added that, prior to online assessments, students might not see their results until they had already moved on to a different concept. With instant feedback, students could take action right away. This participant capitalized on the fact that most adolescent students enjoy video games and used technology to make learning more engaging and non-threatening.

Participant D primarily used technology for translation purposes. They used it to create their own assessments, which students then translated. Participant E stated that technology has become the norm for everyone, and in their case, all assignments and assessments were online. There were no more pencil-and-paper assignments because technology made everything easier. While technology has become an integral part of teaching and learning, its exclusive use to teach language and content may not be the best practice for newcomers and other multilingual students. Newcomers bring with them unique background experiences as well as linguistic, academic, and socioemotional needs. All of these factors can contribute to their success or failure if not properly addressed. Teachers can bridge this gap through differentiated instruction that involves research-based practices. These include various assessment types, project-based

learning, collaboration opportunities, flexible groupings, visuals, and ongoing informal assessments to inform instruction.

Participants F and K integrated technology in other ways. Participant F worked with Latino newcomer immigrant youth for 24 years. They stated that smart boards, a type of interactive whiteboard, are highly beneficial educational tools for teaching language and content to newcomers. They added, "Technology has been a great integration to our teaching…I think those smart boards have huge potential. That's technology integration in the classroom where you have students come up to the board and really become engaged with what you're doing." Smartboards cater to different learning styles and language modalities, as they are interactive (students can write and draw), visual, and enable students to see and listen to multimedia content. Participant K used Canva, an online platform that allows students to perform different functions such as creating individual or group presentations with visually appealing graphics. Students can also create videos, storybooks, and other projects. Participant K said students really enjoy working on Canva as opposed to paper and pencil work because "It's forgiving. You can remove, you can add, you can insert." Canva can also support newcomers' language needs, as it has a built-in Google Translate app and includes an AI voice generator that provides instructions in the student's primary language. Teachers can access a variety of graphic organizers and visually appealing icons and images to create vocabulary cards for introducing, practicing, or reviewing language and content learning.

Participant J admitted that, until recently, they had not integrated many technologies into their teaching, except for translation purposes. Although their science curriculum was entirely online, they preferred paper-and-pencil activities. They stated, "I mainly print things out for my students because I feel it's more powerful for them to write, use a pencil, that brain to write in

connection…So, I don't really need to have them use that technology because I think the paper copy is better in that case for them." Conversely, Participant L reported that technology played a significant role in teaching mathematical language and content. They seemed very tech-savvy and provided a long list of ways they integrated technology, allowing students to draw, annotate, and collaborate with peers, as well as create and explore visual representations of geometric and algebraic concepts. Visual aids in any subject area are an effective instructional scaffold in the early stages of language acquisition, as they increase student engagement and make new language and content more accessible.

All 12 participants integrated technology in varying degrees and for different purposes. While all participants reported using technology primarily for translation services, most also reported using it to enhance their curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Teachers supplemented the curriculum by creating more engaging lessons that included videos, movies, games, and visually appealing projects. Digital assessments, as opposed to pencil-and-paper formats, provided instant feedback that enabled participants to make informed instructional decisions and helped students see their performance in real time. The researcher acknowledged that not all participants praised the use of technology in the classroom, as some had legitimate concerns that it might hinder students' learning. The data for Participants G, H, and I were not included in this potential theme. Although they reported using technology in the classroom, the primary reason for doing so was to provide translation support. They did not provide specific examples of how they used it to support language and content learning. For these reasons, the researcher found insufficient evidence to answer ***RQ1***.

The last potential theme that emerged from the code cluster, Instructional Scaffolding, was "Effective Instructional Strategies." 10 of the 12 participants provided detailed examples of

instructional strategies they used to support language development in their classroom. By providing differentiated instruction to Latino newcomer immigrant youth, participants acknowledged that this population had unique linguistic and socioemotional needs that must be addressed if productive learning was to occur. These strategies are crucial to academic success, as they provide access to an equitable learning environment where language and content are made more comprehensible. One common code underlying this potential theme was "visuals". Participants utilized visuals in various ways across different subjects and for diverse purposes. Math teachers incorporated visuals into word problems, new vocabulary, and tables and diagrams. Participant A stated, "I use a lot of visuals…I also draw pictures for the students. That seems to really help my second language learners. That seems to help my monolingual Spanish students grasp the concepts a lot faster, and they stay permanent or solidify in their understanding." Science and Social Studies participants found visuals quite useful. Participant J, a 7th grade Science teacher used observation charts for accessing prior knowledge and added, "the ones that I feel that are very useful, especially for teaching science, are the observation charts because those tell me a lot about what my students know, especially the vocabulary. And because they're picture based, I know that they will have input in that." Participant K provided a long list of visual aids they used, including drawings, posters, one-pagers, and hands-on activities. These participants recognized that newcomers may arrive with strong mathematical and literacy skills, and visuals help bridge the language disconnect.

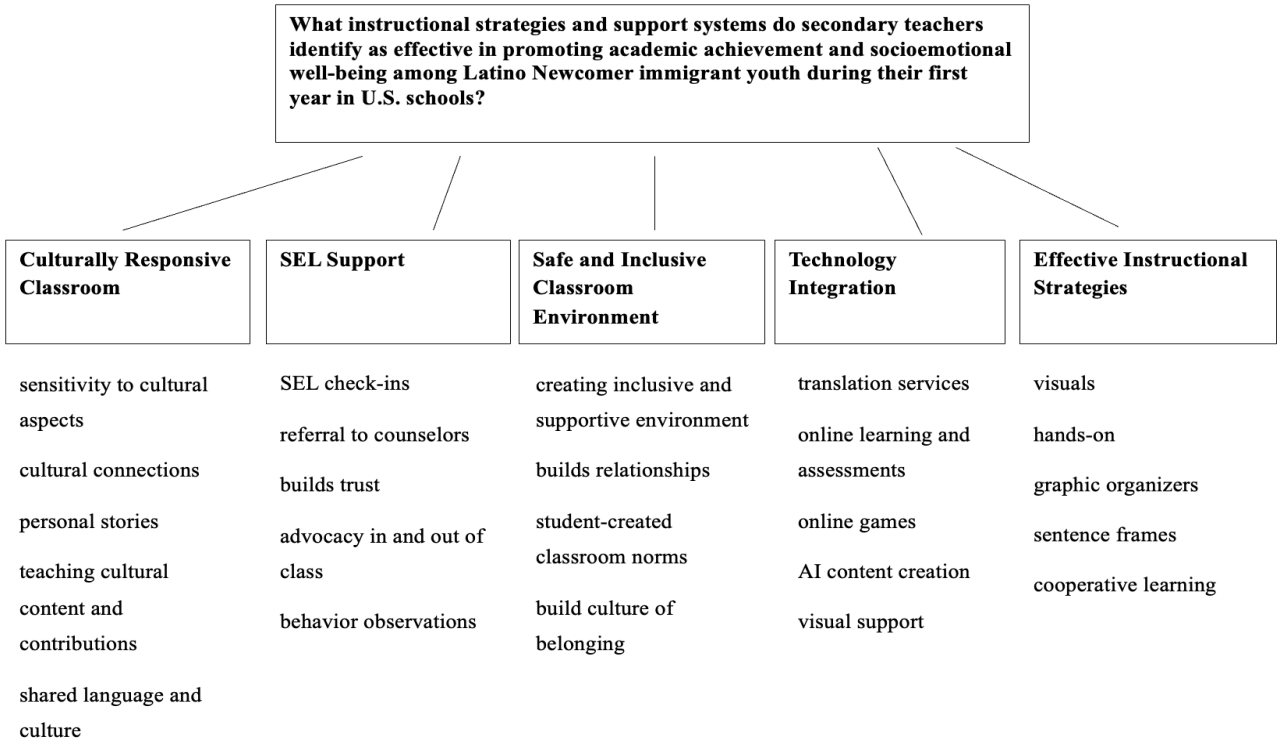
Other effective instructional strategies used by most participants were hands-on projects, cooperative learning groups, and differentiated formative assessments. Rather than traditional pencil-paper assessments, these participants provided newcomers and other MLs, with opportunities to demonstrate their understanding of language and content through oral, project-

based, or visual assessments. A majority of participants reported having received special training in GLAD (Guided Language Acquisition Design) and AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination), and they integrated these strategies into their regular instruction. GLAD is an instructional model that uses research-based strategies to develop MLs' academic and language skills. AVID, on the other hand, is a college- and career-readiness program for underserved and low-income students, aiming to close the achievement gap.

Participants D and E responses were not included, as they did not mention using visuals as effective instructional strategies. This is not to say they did not. The researcher owes this to their lack of expertise in interviewing and asking probing questions; thus, they may have missed key opportunities to extract more descriptive data. Participants using visual aids understood that these are essential to the comprehension of new vocabulary and content. Visuals used included drawings, posters, visual dictionaries, visual diagrams, and tables. They benefit students by accelerating their language acquisition, lowering their affective filter, and increasing their motivation and confidence. To illustrate how major code clusters became potential themes, the researcher created a thematic analysis map (Figure 3).

Figure 3

Initial Thematic Analysis Map: Code Clusters to Potential Themes



Phase 4: Reviewing Potential Themes

In this phase, the researcher conducted two levels of review: First, they reviewed individual code clusters in each theme to determine if there was indeed a correlation to their respective potential themes. At the second level, they reviewed the potential themes that emerged from the code clusters to determine whether they formed a coherent pattern, were relevant to the research questions, and needed revision. During this review of potential themes, the researcher also examined them to determine which needed to be removed, adjusted, or consolidated. They used Braun and Clarke's key questions to assess the quality, boundaries, and relevance of the themes to the research question. Field notes, including verbal and non-verbal data, transcript annotations, and reflexive notes, were revisited to ensure that the participants' lived experiences were accurately represented. After this process, the researcher identified three themes as

appropriate. They consolidated “Culturally Responsive Classroom” and “Safe and Inclusive Classroom Environment” into the new theme, “Culturally Responsive Teaching”, as both had similar codes. For example, the code “creating inclusive and supportive environment” fit under the potential theme “Culturally Responsive Classroom” because teaching cultural content and contributions strengthens newcomers’ sense of belonging and pride in their identity. The potential theme “SEL Support” became “Socioemotional Interventions”, as the code clusters described the different support systems participants implemented to improve the socioemotional well-being of newcomers. Examples included building trust, conducting behavioral observations, conducting SEL check-ins, and collaborating with counselors, paraprofessionals, former teachers, and parents. The potential themes “Technology Integration” and “Effective Instructional Strategies” were combined into “Effective Academic Instructional Strategies”. Although “Technology Integration” was primarily used for translation services, the majority of the participants also reported using it to enhance their teaching of language and content, albeit in varying degrees. Examples included creating online assignments and assessments, finding images to accompany vocabulary words, using smart boards, and using digital software and curricula.

In creating themes from code clusters, the researcher also considered the two theoretical frameworks guiding this research. The first theory, Berry’s Bidimensional Model of Acculturation (1980), was developed to explain the different individual adaptation strategies used by immigrants and other cultural groups in a new society. The potential themes that emerged revealed the support systems that secondary teachers practiced, which facilitated these acculturation strategies. For example, some immigrants may integrate into the new culture while retaining their own. According to Berry (2005), this biculturalism is possible only when the host

society is open to cultural diversity. Several initial codes such as “teaching cultural content and contributions”, “classroom materials reflect cultural backgrounds”, and “Mayan contributions in Math”, reflected participants’ efforts toward developing cultural sensitivity. Participant A stated, “I have posters of mathematics, because much of what we know was done by the Mayans and the Aztecs. For example, the Mayans were the ones who devised the concept of zero.” He continued, “We have a mathematics curriculum, but it’s not culturally sensitive, so I have material in my classroom that I can draw from to demonstrate our sensitivity to cultural aspects.” Participant J voiced a different experience, mentioning that their curriculum included culturally relevant materials. They said, “All of our units have a certain scientist who is going to bring about a problem for us. And so the scientists go from being a Latino to being white American to being Asian, African American. So it’s different cultures involved in our units.” Whether a teacher added culturally relevant materials to a curriculum that was already culturally competent or a null curriculum, these examples demonstrated how participants made an effort to be open to cultural diversity; hence, indirectly promoting the integration or biculturalism of Latino newcomer immigrant students.

The second theory guiding this study was Coll et al.’s (1996) Integrative Model for the Study of Developmental Competencies in Minority Children. This conceptual framework’s central focus is on social stratification and maintains that social position variables such as race, ethnicity, and class indirectly affect the social, emotional, and academic development of minority children. Latino newcomer immigrant youth are included in these variables as individuals having foreign, undocumented, or migrant status. Themes revealed how their social position as immigrants negatively affected their socioemotional and academic development. Initial codes such as “advocacy in and out of class”, “empathy”, and “SEL checks” demonstrated how

participants attempted to address newcomers' socioemotional needs. When asked how they balanced academic and socioemotional support, Participant C mentioned frequent conversations outside the classroom with behavior and support staff and with parents. They stated, "My conversations with parents give me so much. They can be lengthy, especially if the parent just feels the need to share. But I do find that I learn a lot from talking to the parents and guardians." Their team of teachers advocated for the students they shared when they noticed a student was struggling academically or socioemotionally. They added, "There's been times where like we (team of teachers) just put money in a pot and go get them, you know, shoes, clothes, you know. It doesn't always have to be resources that exist out there. There's a lot of adults who care about kids, and sometimes just rallying the troops can be really powerful." Participant D added, "I've had kids that have had issues, like family issues. Like one boy, his family didn't have power, and so I couldn't help him, but I referred them to…and other counselors, people that do have, you know, the ability to help them out with different things or resources." These participants demonstrated empathy and advocated for their newcomer students because they understood that a child's background significantly influences how they learn and develop in the school setting (Coll et al., 1996). Providing students with basic needs, such as suitable clothing, may mitigate the negative effects of their position in the social stratification hierarchy and enhance their academic and socioemotional well-being.

Phase 5: Refining and Naming Themes

In this penultimate phase of Braun & Clarke's reflexive thematic analysis, the researcher conducted a deeper analysis of the codes and code clusters as part of a final revision. Transcripts were revisited to identify any significant codes related to the themes that may have been overlooked in previous readings. After no new codes were found, the researcher studied the

existing code clusters and potential themes to see if any other codes needed to be condensed, removed, or repositioned. The researcher was satisfied that all codes were situated under their respective themes. In this final review, the researcher also determined which data items provided the most descriptive and compelling account of each named theme. Additionally, they ensured these themes aligned with the RQ and the two theoretical frameworks guiding this study, Berry's Bidimensional Model of Acculturation (1980) and Coll et al., (1996) Integrative Model for the Study of Developmental Competencies in Minority Children. Berry's acculturation theory aligns with Theme 2, "Culturally Responsive Teaching," as all 12 participants reported engaging in culturally responsive teaching to varying degrees (Table 4). By being open to cultural diversity and refraining from exerting pressure to conform, participants fostered a bicultural approach. According to Berry, this adaptation strategy is the most effective in facilitating the process of acculturation. Coll et al's (1996) Integrative Model for the Study of Developmental Competencies in Minority Children aligned with Theme 1, "Socioemotional Interventions," and Theme 3, "Effective Academic Instructional Strategies". As immigrants, Latino newcomer youth develop survival strategies to meet the demands of this country. The collective forces of migration and acculturation may directly affect their academic and socioemotional development. All 12 participants described the support systems and strategies they used to address the academic and socioemotional needs of Latino newcomer immigrant youth (Table 4).

Table 4

Themes

Theme 1: Socioemotional Interventions: All participants described conducting formal or informal SEL check-ins and referred students to the counselors if they observed concerning behaviors. Four participants also communicated with parents to share their concerns and find out if any familial issues were affecting the student's behavior. Four participants stressed the importance of gaining students' trust by getting to know their

students and making connections. Eleven participants described how they created a safe and inclusive learning environment to increase newcomers' sense of belonging. These included enforcing expectations for all students, student-created norms, cooperative learning groups, a buddy system for newcomers, praise, rewards, establishing routines, native language use, and a zero-tolerance policy for anti-immigrant bullying.

Theme 2: Culturally Responsive Teaching: Seven participants described their curricula as culturally responsive and even added other cultural aspects, such as multicultural posters and images, and tailored some of the content to make it more culturally relevant. Three participants did not have a formal curriculum, but they added cultural projects or changed the questions to be more culturally relevant. Two participants used a curriculum that was culturally responsive to a lesser degree and did not attempt to add cultural aspects to their teaching.

Theme 3: Effective Academic Instructional Strategies: All participants described using differentiated instruction at varying degrees. Nine participants reported using formative assessments that provided their newcomers with alternative options, such as oral and project-based assessments. Six participants were trained in AVID strategies and regularly used focused notes and graphic organizers. Seven participants were trained in GLAD strategies they used, such as the cognitive content dictionary for vocabulary, and observation, pictorial, and inquiry charts. Eleven of the participants reported they used visuals as a scaffold for instruction. Nine participants said they included hands-on learning whenever possible, and seven stated they regularly used cooperative learning groups. All participants described integrating technology to teach language and content. This included translation services, software apps, smartboards, learning games, images, digital curricula, and using AI to enhance their instruction.

Phase 6: Evaluation of the Outcomes

In this final phase of reflexive thematic analysis, the researcher formulated a report of the findings. They reflected on the order of the three themes named in phase five. Braun and Clarke dictate that themes should be ordered in such a way that each build upon previous themes (Byrne, 2022). The researcher initially ordered the themes as follows: Theme 1, Culturally Responsive Teaching; Theme 2, Socioemotional Interventions; and Theme 3, Effective Academic Instructional Strategies. After careful analysis, the researcher switched the order to

Theme 1: Socioemotional Interventions, Theme 2: Culturally Responsive Teaching, and Theme 3: Effective Academic Instructional Strategies. This order reflected the themes' priority levels.

The researcher reported the theme "Socioemotional Interventions" first because, for any learning to occur, acculturative stress must first be addressed, especially if a newcomer arrived with trauma. A safe and welcoming environment will promote their well-being and positive integration into their school community. This was the sentiment of Participant K when they expressed, "Social emotional is the most important thing. Academics is important to me as well. But you could not get academic growth in a student that is not okay socially and emotionally. So for me, it is never a question what comes first. It is 110% always social-emotional well-being that comes first." It is evident that this participant strongly believed that addressing students' mental health needs is a priority for learning to occur.

The theme "Culturally Responsive Teaching was reported as the second most important theme in this research study. During Phase Four, the researcher condensed five initial themes into three and struggled with whether to include culturally responsive teaching as part of the "Socioemotional Interventions" theme or to maintain it as a separate theme. This was because both themes shared certain characteristics. For example, both SEL and culturally responsive teaching involve creating a safe and welcoming environment that incorporates students' culture and native language and acknowledges their identities. After practicing reflexivity, the researcher decided to leave them as two separate themes, as culturally responsive teaching goes beyond what the teacher does in the classroom. It also consists of adopted curricula that may or may not be culturally responsive, as well as professional development offered to teachers. This was reflected in a myriad of participant responses. Participant B reported having limited access to culturally relevant materials and a lack of voice in the adoption of their curriculum. Conversely,

Participant J stated, “We are lucky in that our curriculum has cultural relevant material that is relevant to different cultures. So my students are not only identifying with their own culture, but they also are exposed to other cultures…I also bring in to be culturally relevant to the majority of my students or even the minority. I’ll bring in things in my, or I’ll put things in my quizzes that are relevant”.

Of the 12 participants, 10 added cultural aspects to their instruction. When asked whether they had culturally relevant materials in their classrooms, the other two participants stated they did not. One said they only used what they were given, and the other assumed the curriculum had cultural aspects because it was state and district-approved. Since the researcher did not ask participants whether they had prior training in culturally responsive teaching, the researcher could only infer that the two participants were unfamiliar with the cultural competencies needed to honor and value students’ cultural backgrounds. Culturally responsive teaching is a critical support system for newcomers’ academic success, as it promotes inclusion and equity (Nadine et al., 2022).

Culturally responsive teaching is tied to academic success, which is also enhanced through differentiated instruction. Theme 3 detailed effective instructional strategies that facilitated newcomers’ language and content learning. The most commonly used instructional strategies among participants were visuals (11), cooperative groups (7), and hands-on learning (9). GLAD and AVID strategies were also regularly used by seven participants and six participants, respectively. All participants reported integrating technology in different degrees to teach language, content, and as a translation tool. All three themes were aligned to and answered the research questions: ***RQ1***

What instructional strategies do secondary teachers identify as effective in promoting academic achievement among Latino newcomer immigrant youth during their first year in U.S. schools?

RQ2

What support systems do secondary teachers identify as effective in promoting socioemotional well-being among Latino newcomer immigrant youth during their first year of U.S. schools?

Themes 1 and 2 represented the support systems participants provided to newcomers to improve their socioemotional well-being. Participants reported that the instructional strategies in Theme 3 were effective in promoting newcomers' academic achievement.

Implications and Recommendations for Practice

Berry's Bidimensional Model of Acculturation (1980) and Coll et al's (1996) Integrative Model for the Study of Developmental Competencies in Minority Children were the two frameworks guiding this study. Berry's theoretical framework focuses on the idea that immigrants and other cultural groups may adopt any of four acculturation strategies after arriving in the host country. According to Berry, the ideal strategy is to integrate into the new society, becoming an integral part of it while continuing to value and participate in their own culture. Berry cautions that this biculturalism is not possible unless the host society is receptive, welcomes, and values cultural diversity. Coll et al.'s Integrative Model for the Study of Developmental Competencies in Minority Children is a conceptual framework that suggests the existence of social hierarchies and inequalities may negatively affect the developmental competencies of minority children, including their social, emotional, and academic development.

In this qualitative phenomenological study, the participants shared lived experiences and perspectives that directly addressed Berry's acculturation theory. They provided support systems focused on improving educational inequities through culturally responsive teaching. By incorporating these classroom practices, participants decreased acculturative stress and built newcomers' cultural pride. The researcher can only infer that these practices increased newcomers' engagement and motivation, leading to higher academic success. This study also aligned with Coll et al's social stratification theory. A major source of acculturative stress in Latino newcomer immigrant youth is anti-immigrant rhetoric (Cheng & Lo, 2022; Cuba et al., 2021; Miller et al., 2022; Nair et al., 2021; Shah et al., 2021; Yan et al., 2021). Participants attempted to address this issue by embracing them, a reception strategy in Berry's acculturation theory (Berry, 2005). They created an inclusive learning environment where newcomers felt safe and part of a larger community. Some participants also reported maintaining and enforcing a zero-tolerance policy on bullying. Inclusive environments foster a sense of belonging where newcomers feel empowered and confident to take academic risks.

Participants selected for this study reported embracing Latino newcomer immigrant youth. They implemented a variety of instructional strategies tailored to meet their academic needs. However, they reported feeling unsure or uncomfortable when it came to providing appropriate socioemotional support, primarily when it involved migration trauma. Furthermore, many participants described the need to supplement their curriculum with culturally relevant materials. Some practical implications arose from these findings. First, school districts and policymakers may be prompted to consider whether their adopted curricula accurately reflect the diverse populations they serve. The information provided by this study may also reveal the districts' strengths (sufficient training on instructional strategies) and areas for growth (the need

for trauma-informed teaching) in the professional development they currently offer to educators and other staff. It may motivate them to listen to teacher feedback when planning for trainings. Teacher preparation programs may also consider adding education courses on the socioemotional needs of students in marginalized populations, including immigrant youth. Findings also suggest that school districts are not doing enough to address acculturative stress in immigrant youth, which is imperative in raising educational equity for this population.

Based on the findings of this study, the recommendations are: (a) school districts with high levels of immigrant and refugee students should increase professional development opportunities for secondary educators on the unique socioemotional needs of newcomer immigrant youth, primarily those who arrive with trauma (b) teacher preparation programs need to include more courses on teaching marginalized populations, specifically newcomers and their linguistic, socioemotional, and academic needs (c) school districts should take measures to adopt culturally responsive curricula that reflect and value the positive contributions of diverse populations and promote inclusivity.

Recommendation 1: School districts with high levels of immigrant and refugee students should increase professional development opportunities for secondary educators on the unique socioemotional needs of newcomer immigrant youth, primarily those who arrive with trauma.

Newcomers arrive with unique socioemotional needs that may serve as a barrier to their academic success. They may arrive with trauma resulting from their pre-migration, migration, or post-migration experiences. One of the questions asked of participants was how much professional development on childhood trauma they had received. Ten of the 12 participants reported receiving little to no professional training in trauma-informed teaching. This may

explain why participants reported feeling unsure or uncomfortable about how to address newcomers' socioemotional needs. Hence, school districts need to increase the number of professional development opportunities focused on the socioemotional needs of this population, so secondary teachers are better equipped with a holistic approach to teaching the whole child.

Recommendation 2: Teacher preparation programs need to include more courses on teaching marginalized populations, specifically immigrant students and their linguistic, socioemotional, and academic needs.

Participants in this study were asked how well their college preparation program prepared them to work with newcomers. Nine of the 12 participants reported receiving little to no preparation for working with this population. Of these participants, one mentioned learning about ELD (English Language Development) standards, but none of the strategies, while another one said their learning was limited to surface-level knowledge. Teacher preparation programs must prepare teachers to work with all students, including those from marginalized populations. When teachers understand the unique needs of newcomer students, they can begin to break down barriers and create a more equitable environment that fosters academic success.

Recommendation 3: School districts should take measures to ensure they adopt culturally responsive curricula that reflect and value the positive contributions of diverse populations, promoting inclusivity.

While some participants reported using a culturally responsive curriculum, they still felt the need to supplement it with additional materials to enhance or fill perceived gaps. Those without a district-adopted curriculum had to create their own and did not mention adding culturally relevant literature or materials. Participant responses demonstrated a need for school districts to ensure that their adopted curricula include sufficient cultural relevance, so that

teachers do not have to incorporate supplemental materials. Students from diverse cultural backgrounds need to learn about and see individuals who look like them in the literature they read from different subject areas. This helps them connect to their school and community, builds pride in their culture, and strengthens their sense of belonging, resulting in a more positive acculturation experience in their school and community.

Recommendations for Future Research

The problem addressed in this study was that secondary teachers often lack adequate preparation and knowledge of effective instructional strategies and support systems that promote both academic achievement and socioemotional well-being among Latino newcomer immigrant youth in grades 7-12 during their first year of school (Davis et al., 2021; Lilly, 2021; Schlaudt et al., 2021; Yan et al., 2021). While this study demonstrated that participants employed multiple effective instructional strategies, it also highlighted inadequate teacher preparation programs and limited professional development in socioemotional support systems, including DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) and SEL, particularly in trauma-informed teaching. The research presented in this phenomenological study was limited to 12 secondary teachers working with Latino newcomer immigrant youth in two Eastern Washington public school districts. Subsequently, evident gaps were identified in the findings, and further research on the phenomena experienced by these participants will be necessary to address them. Future research should investigate various cases of secondary teachers working with Latino newcomer immigrant youth in different public school districts across the United States. These may include rural and inner-city public schools with similar teacher and student demographics, allowing for an examination of how participants' lived experiences and perspectives differ from those in larger, more urban cities. Moreover, future research in public school districts that prioritize the

socioemotional well-being of all students through DEI and SEL professional development would be essential in filling some of the gaps identified in this study.

Conclusions

At the beginning of this study in 2021, statistics demonstrated a high number of border encounters with Latino immigrants. In January of 2025, the current administration imposed harsher border protection policies, dramatically lowering the number of undocumented immigrants entering the country. The latest statistics demonstrate that the number of border encounters has decreased dramatically to 26,191 as of August 2025 (U.S. Customs and Border Protection, 2025). Despite the lower number of encounters and ICE raids throughout the country, the fact remains that public schools continue to enroll immigrant children and adolescents. Under federal law, they have the obligation to provide equal access to a public education to all children regardless of their legal status, including educational and supportive services such as English language acquisition programs for newly arrived immigrant children (U.S. Department of Education, 2025). Supportive services include professional development on effective instructional strategies that address Latino newcomer immigrant youth's linguistic needs, as well as socioemotional support systems that combat any immigrant-related trauma and act as a barrier to a positive acculturation experience. On this side of the border, rampant nationwide ICE raids and forced removals are tearing up families and instilling acute fear in children to the point where they are afraid to go to school, worried their parents will not be there when they return home (Ayon et al., 2025). These current immigration enforcement practices include cases where immigrant children are witnessing their family members being apprehended (at times with excessive force) as they wait to pick them up from school. This has become yet another source of

immigrant-related trauma that adversely affects the academic and socioemotional well-being of immigrant students.

The findings of this research study yielded substantial data on the use of effective instructional strategies among secondary teachers in two public school districts serving Latino newcomer immigrant youth in grades 7-12. However, findings also revealed a lack of adequate teacher preparation programs, culturally relevant curricula, and professional development on working with this population. For Latino newcomer immigrant youth to experience an easier transition in this country, their linguistic, socioemotional, and academic barriers must be addressed by schools, policymakers, and other stakeholders. Increased training to meet the unique needs of Latino newcomer immigrant youth will narrow existing gaps and increase educational equity. Yet no strategy taught in a college classroom or in a professional development workshop is as effective as empathy.

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Appendix A

Recruitment Form

National University IRB
9338 Lightwave Ave., San Diego, CA 92123
irb@nu.edu

Information Letter - ADULTS

I am Maria Isabel Zesati-Castro, a doctoral student at National University (NU). Throughout my teaching career with the _____ School District, I have worked at the elementary, middle school, and high school grade levels. Currently, I hold a role as the 6-8 ELL Teacher at _____.

I'm asking you to take part in a research study about secondary teachers who have or currently work with Latino Newcomer immigrant youth. The name of this research is "A Qualitative Phenomenological Study on the Lived Experiences of Secondary Teachers Who Support Latino Newcomer Immigrant Youth in Their First Year of U.S. Schools"

This form will give you information about the research to help you decide whether you would like to participate and/or your data to be used. Please read this form and ask any questions you have.

What will happen during the research?

If you agree to participate in the research, you will do the following things:

- Complete a 60-90 minute interview in the classroom setting or a neutral location of your choice. As a participant in this research study, you will be audio-recorded to ensure the accuracy of collected data.
- Allow photographs of instructional strategies you use in your classroom, such as graphic organizers and vocabulary logs.

Why is this research being done?

- The purpose of this research is to explore the lived experiences of secondary teachers who have or currently support Latino Newcomer immigrant youth during their first year in U.S. schools.
- You were selected as a possible participant because (1) you are a male or female secondary teacher, (2) you teach a grade between 7-12, (3) you have one or more years of secondary teaching experience in a Washington state public middle or high school, (4) you have or currently work with Latino Newcomer immigrant youth (13-17 years old) in their first year of U.S. schools.

How many people will take part?

If you agree to participate, you will be one of 12 participants from three middle schools and two high schools taking part in this research.

National University IRB
9338 Lightwave Ave., San Diego, CA 92123
irb@nu.edu

What are the potential risks of taking part in the research?

While participating in the research, the risks, side effects, and/or discomforts include:

- Some of the questions may make the participant feel embarrassed.

To decrease the impact of these risks, you can (1) tell the researcher that you feel uncomfortable or that you do not want to answer a particular question, (2) opt out at any time.

What are the potential benefits of taking part in the research?

The benefits to participation in the research that are reasonable to expect are (1) Provide insight into the lived experiences and perspectives of secondary teachers who work with Latino Newcomer youth, (2) Motivate educators and other stakeholders to increase professional development targeted to the students they serve, (3) Promote a more equitable and inclusive learning environment for this population. Additionally, this research will help me identify and understand successful instructional strategies, support systems, and best practices that promote both academic achievement and socioemotional well-being among Latino Newcomer students.

Taking part in the research is voluntary

You may choose for your data to not be included in the research. This decision will not result in any penalty or affect your relationship with the researcher. If you do not want your data used for this research, please let me know at _____ or email: _____.

How will my information be protected?

I cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality. Efforts will be made to keep your personal information confidential:

- Your personal information may be disclosed if required by law.
- No information that could identify you will be shared in publications about this research and databases in which results may be stored.
- The people who will have access to your information are my dissertation chair and my dissertation committee.
- I will secure your information with these steps: (1) Data will be collected anonymously. Participants will be referred to as "Participant 1" and so on. (2) Any hardcopy collected data will be securely stored for three years. (3) All digital interview data will be kept in a password-protected computer folder.
- After 3 years, all data will be destroyed.

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Will my information be used for research in the future?

Information collected from you for this research may be used for future research studies or shared with other researchers for future research. If this happens, information which could identify you will be removed before any information is shared. All data about you will be de-identified.

Will I be paid for participation?

Participants will receive compensation in the form of a gift card to local coffee shops or eateries. Gift cards will be personally delivered to participants at the end of the data collection process.

Will it cost me anything to participate?

There is no cost to you for taking part in this research.

Who should I call with questions or problems?

For questions about the research, contact the researcher, Maria Isabel Zesati-Castro at _____. You may also contact me by email at: m.zesati-castro7752@o365.ncu.edu

For questions about your rights as a research participant, to discuss problems, complaints, or concerns about research, or to obtain information or to offer input, please contact the NU Institutional Review Board at irb@nu.edu.

Can I withdraw from the research?

If you decide for your data to not be included in this research, you can change your mind and decide to remove your data from the research at any time in the future. Please let me know that you no longer wish for your data to be included, and I will delete all data collected from you.

Opt Out

If you would like to "opt out" your data from this research, please contact Maria Isabel Zesati-Castro. Phone:
Email: _____

Appendix B

Consent Form

National University IRB
9338 Lightwave Ave., San Diego, CA 92123
irb@nu.edu

Consent Guidelines and Template

The purpose of a consent form is to ensure that the subject understands what is being asked of them before they agree to it. It can seem like a balancing act when you are trying to include the essential information while also making it readable. Refer to the guidelines below for guidance on achieving this balance.

1) **Informative** – To protect the subject from harm, as well as yourself and your institution from liability, the following components are critical:

   - Your name, affiliation, and contact info
   - Purpose of study
   - Description of research activities, location, and expected duration
   - Confidential
   - Risks and Benefits
   - Participation is voluntary
   - IRB contact info

2) **Readable** – It is not enough to simply include each item listed above. You must take every measure to ensure your subject comprehends it. Consider the following tips:

   - Consider your audience
   - When possible, replace technical terms with common ones
   - As a default, write to an 8th grade reading level
   - Use simple sentences, avoiding the passive voice
   - Organize content into categories with bold headings

Guidance for Multiple Participant Groups

If you have multiple participant groups, you will use a separate consent form for each group.

Can I get feedback on my consent form?

Yes, you can get feedback in the IRB group writing sessions. We recommend that you attend the sessions on eligibility criteria and recruitment materials before the session on consent materials.

What should I check for before submitting my consent form to the IRB?

Before submitting to the IRB, please make sure that:

- Your eligibility criteria and research activities are **exactly, word-for-word the same** across your consent form, recruitment material/s, and IRB application.
- The document is ready to give to a participant: remove all instructions, highlighting, comments, previous feedback, and optional sections that are not relevant to your research study

Appendix C

Interview Script

Introduction: Thank you for participating in this study about supporting Latino Newcomer immigrant youth. This interview will take approximately 60-90 minutes. I will audio-record our conversation to ensure accuracy. You may skip any questions or stop the interview at any time. Do you have any questions before we begin?

Demographic Questions:

1. How many years have you been teaching?
2. What subject(s) and grade level(s) do you currently teach?
3. How many years have you worked with Latino Newcomer immigrant students?
4. What is your highest level of education?
5. Do you speak Spanish or any other languages? If so, at what level of proficiency?
6. Have you received any specialized training or certification for teaching Multilinguals?

Main Interview Questions:

Academic Achievement Strategies

1. What specific instructional strategies do you implement that are effective with Latino Newcomer students in your classroom? Probes:
    - Could you provide a specific example of how you implement these strategies?
    - How did you develop these approaches?
    - What makes these strategies particularly effective?
2. How do you scaffold your instruction to increase their understanding of content? Probes:
    - What types of scaffolds have you found most effective?
    - How do you determine when to adjust scaffolding?
    - Could you walk me through an example of how you scaffold a typical lesson?
3. What tools do you use to develop their academic vocabulary? Probes:
    - How do you select which vocabulary to focus on?
    - How do you assess vocabulary development?
    - What role does native language play in vocabulary development?
4. How do you integrate technology to support their language and content learning? Probes:
    - What specific technologies have you found most helpful?
    - How do you ensure technology enhances rather than hinders learning?
    - What challenges have you encountered with technology integration?

Socioemotional Support and Classroom Environment

5. How do you address any socioemotional needs you observe in Latino Newcomer students? Probes:
    - What specific signs or behaviors do you look for?
    - How do you balance academic and socioemotional support?

    - What resources do you utilize to support these needs?
6. What strategies do you use to create an inclusive and supportive learning environment? Probes:
    - How do you establish classroom norms that support inclusion?
    - What physical aspects of your classroom promote inclusivity?
    - How do you handle situations that might threaten inclusivity?
7. What strategies do you use to encourage collaboration and interaction with their peers? Probes:
    - How do you structure group work?
    - How do you address language barriers in peer interactions?
    - What types of collaborative activities have been most successful?
8. How do you build teacher-student relationships and trust that encourages academic success? Probes:
    - What specific approaches do you use to build rapport?
    - How do you maintain these relationships over time?
    - How do you navigate cultural differences in relationship building?

Trauma-Informed and Cultural Approaches

9. How do you address potential challenges of immigrant students who may be dealing with trauma, fear, or instability? Probes:
    - What training have you received in trauma-informed teaching?
    - How do you identify when students might need additional support?
    - What resources or referral systems do you use?
10. What culturally relevant materials do you have in your classroom or use in your lessons? Probes:
    - How do you select culturally relevant materials?
    - How do you ensure materials are authentic and appropriate?
    - What impact have you observed from using these materials?

Assessment and Progress Monitoring

11. What formative or summative assessments do you use to evaluate academic progress? Probes:
    - How do you modify assessments for language learners?
    - How do you communicate progress to students and families?
    - What role does native language assessment play?

Collaboration and Support Systems

12. How do you collaborate with colleagues and the ELL teacher to support student needs? Probes:
    - What structures are in place for collaboration?
    - How often do you meet or communicate?
    - What aspects of collaboration have been most beneficial?

Professional Development and Preparation

13. How well did your college teacher preparation program prepare you for working with this population? Probes:
    - What specific aspects were most helpful?
    - What do you wish had been included?
    - How have you supplemented your initial preparation?
14. What professional development opportunities have helped improve your teaching strategies? Probes:
    - Which specific trainings were most impactful?
    - How have you implemented what you learned?
    - What additional training would be helpful?

Impact and Success Stories

15. Could you describe a successful experience where your strategies positively impacted a student? Probes:
    - What specific strategies contributed to this success?
    - How did you know the impact was positive?
    - What did you learn from this experience?

Closing Question:

16. What additional support or resources would help you better serve Latino Newcomer students?
17. Is there anything else you would like to add that we haven't discussed?

Closing Script: Thank you for sharing your experiences and insights. Your contributions will help us better understand how to support Latino Newcomer immigrant youth. Would you be willing to review a transcript of this interview for accuracy? Do you have any questions for me?

Appendix D

Initial Codes/Code Clusters

Cultural Responsiveness	SEL Integration	Inclusive Environment	Use of Technology	Instructional Scaffolding
Mayan contributions to Math	SEL check-ins	builds relationships	enhances instruction	visuals
use of native language	referral to counselors	student-created classroom norms	online learning/ assessements	posters
classroom materials reflect cultural backgrounds	builds trust	leadership roles	translation services	hands-on
cultural connections	students perceived as warriors	validate students' culture/language	vocabulary development	cooperative learning
personal stories	positive feedback	seating arrangement promotes inclusion	language learning	turn and talk
shared language and culture	advocacy in and out of class	buddy system	independent projects	collaboration
shared experiences	makes connections	translation support	intentional use	cognates
cultural foods	empathy	equity in participation	visual support	bilingual instruction
cultural music	using humor	build culture of belonging	AI content creation	graphic organizers
teaching cultural content and contributions	withdrawn students	grouping by	online games	sentence frames
real-life context adaptation	trauma awareness	language levels	chromebooks/ iPads	picture cards
family involvement	behavior observations	accountability	media with subtitles	modeling
		safe and supportive	misuse	entry/exit tasks
		celebrations		journaling
				note taking
				flexible assessments