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Educational Needs and Barriers for Refugee Students in the United States: A Review of the Literature

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Since 1975, the United States has resettled more than 2 million refugees, with approximately half arriving as children. Refugee children have traumatic experiences that can hinder their learning. The United Nations has specified in conventions, and researchers have concurred, that education is essential for refugee children's psychosocial adjustment. However, government officials, public opinion, and researchers have often differed about what is best for refugees' healthy acculturation. On the basis of a large-scale longitudinal study of the children of immigrants and refugees, Portes and Zhou (1993) suggested the theory of segmented assimilation, which accounts for diverse entry situations and receptions of immigrant and refugee populations. This review uses their theory to consider the needs and obstacles to education for refugees, and interventions for success.

KEYWORDS: acculturation, human rights, refugees, segmented assimilation.

Since 1975, the United States has permanently resettled more than 2 million refugees (Cutts, 2000). Admissions dropped sharply after September 11, 2001,[1] but they are slowly increasing, with just under 53,000 refugees admitted in Fiscal Year 2004 (U.S. Department of State, 2004). In the 1980s, 85% of the refugees came from Latin America, the Caribbean, and Asia, the Latin Americans constituting the largest number (Jensen & Chitose, 1994). Since the 1990s, refugees to the United States have fled war-torn Third World countries such as Afghanistan, Bosnia, Iraq, Burundi, Sudan, and Somalia (U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, 2004). Statistics published in the *2003 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics* (Office of Immigration Statistics, 2004) showed that the most approved refugee applications in Fiscal Year 2002 came from Bosnia-Herzegovina (3,874), Cuba (2,534), Iran (2,000), Afghanistan (1,635), Ukraine (1,618), and Sudan (1,054). By far, the majority of applicants for refugee status came from Somalia (24,458), Ethiopia (14,585), and Liberia (13,283).

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimated that more than half of any refugee population are children (UNHCR, 1994).Children experience numerous traumatic situations when their lives are disrupted by the refugee experience. Some suffer from family separation as they flee persecution alone or become separated from their families during flight (Boyden, de Berry,

Feeny, & Hart, 2002). Refugee children are at high risk for rape, abduction, and trafficking. Some children are forced to become child soldiers. Many girls become child brides. Refugee children become heads of households when parents or other adult caretakers are killed or die because of illness or malnutrition. They lose social stability and access to education through many of these experiences (Boyden et al., 2002; Tollefson, 1989).

Once they are resettled, refugee children tend to acquire conversational ability in the language of their new country faster than their parents (Zhou, 2001). As a result, they often must translate at school meetings, doctor appointments, and service organizations for their adult caretakers. Many refugee children write checks for mortgage and other payments. Such role reversals between children and parents create identity confusion and conflict between the generations (Zhou & Bankston, 2000; Zhou, 2001).

The UNHCR stated that education is not only a fundamental human right but also an essential component of refugee children's rehabilitation (2000). Researchers have indicated that education is crucial for restoring social and emotional healing (Eisenbruch, 1988; Huyck & Fields, 1981; Sinclair, 2001). Educators and the school environment are key in facilitating socialization and acculturation of refugee and immigrant children (Hones & Cha, 1999; Trueba, Jacobs, & Kirton, 1990). Unfortunately, when teachers have not been sufficiently trained to understand the difficulties and experiences of refugee children, they frequently misinterpret the students and their families' culturally inappropriate attempts to succeed in their new environment (Hones, 2002; Lee, 2002; Trueba et al., 1990).

Cultural misunderstandings can result in prejudice and discrimination, with the result that students, already struggling with an unfamiliar language and confusing cultural changes, must also work to overcome the impact of negative attitudes (Fisher, Wallace, & Fenton, 2000; Ogbu, 1982; Olsen, 2000; Wingfield & Karaman, 2001). Portes and Rumbaut (2001) found that discrimination was the greatest barrier to adaptation for immigrant and refugee students. Victims of discrimination can experience lasting effects on their self-perceptions, social interactions, motivation, and achievement (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001). For refugees, discrimination also affects the process of acculturation.

Resettled Refugees and the Process of Acculturation

Acculturation is the change in an individual or a culturally similar group that results from contact with a different culture. Berry, Poortinga, Segall, and Dasen (2002) pointed out that there are differences between psychological and sociological acculturation. At the individual level, changes can occur in one's sense of identity, values, and beliefs. People may experience acculturative stress, such as anxiety or depression, as they try to adapt to a new culture. At the group level, change affects social structure, economic factors, and political activity. For instance, Cubans were able to maintain their social structure and standard of living because of the reception that they received when they began arriving in the United States in the late 1950s and early 1960s. In contrast, many Nicaraguans, although highly educated, lost their ability to maintain professional jobs or to create an enclave because the U.S. government rejected their claims for asylum. In his study of World War II refugees and Hungarian, Cuban, and Vietnamese refugees, Stein (1979) proposed that occupational and economic adjustment is crucial to

adult refugees' acculturation in a new country, much as educational success is essential for refugee children's acculturation. These group processes affect one's individual sense of identity and well-being.

The terms used to describe acculturation can cause confusion because similar words are used to refer to different beliefs about the process. Proponents of assimilation frequently use the "the melting pot" metaphor, expressed in the play of the same name by English-Jewish playwright Israel Zangwill (1909), which was enthusiastically received by New York theatergoers in the early years of the 20th century.[2] Assimilation is commonly understood to be a process in which individuals give up their old culture, exchanging it for the culture of their new society. In contrast, advocates of cultural pluralism believe that newcomers acculturate best if they are able to retain cherished values of their homeland while adding the language and some customs of their new home. Related terms are *biculturalism, transculturalism,* and *additive assimilation:* One is able to move between cultures at will, depending on the situation.

Ogbu (1982) explained that adapting to a new culture was also affected by whether one was a voluntary immigrant or an involuntary immigrant (such as a slave). Ogbu placed refugees in a middle category, describing them as semi-voluntary immigrants. He claimed that voluntary immigrants view learning the language and ways of the dominant culture as desirable avenues to success, whereas people with an oppositional cultural frame of reference (such as colonized or enslaved people) view conformity as "a symbol of disaffiliation" with their own culture (p. 201). Thus members of the oppositional culture are more likely to reject the host culture, viewing separation and self-segregation as desirable goals. Gibson (1998) found that voluntary immigrants, in contrast, tend to choose an additive acculturation strategy, in which they acquire new cultural tools without rejecting their native knowledge and skills. Gibson termed this strategy "accommodation and acculturation without assimilation" (p. 623), in which the individual can draw from more than one culture to accommodate a given social context.

In his extensive review of acculturation theories, Rudmin (2003) pointed out that, since 1918, some researchers have hypothesized that a bicultural identity is psychologically beneficial and others have found such an identity to be impossible or unhealthy. Rudmin criticized the lack of empirical evidence for these numerous theories, including Berry's (1974) widely respected acculturation taxonomy, which includes assimilation (in which one takes on the majority culture and rejects the minority culture), separation (in which one clings to the minority culture and rejects the majority culture), marginalization (in which neither culture is embraced), and integration (in which components of both cultures are embraced).

Unfortunately, Rudmin (2003) did not comment on the segmented assimilation theory proposed by Portes and Zhou (1993). These researchers argued for three possible patterns of immigrant adaptation into the new society, dependent on social, political, and economic factors. The first can be described as the "straight line theory" of upward mobility, in which newcomers assimilate into the White middle-class majority (Rumbaut, 1994). Examples are Irish immigrants arriving at the turn of the 20th century or post–World War II Eastern European refugees. A second pattern is that of upward mobility and ethnic solidarity, found in successful ethnic enclaves that have established themselves through supportive governmental and social policies. Some Vietnamese and Cuban communities in the

United States fall into this category. This pattern is comparable to what other researchers call "additive assimilation."

The third, unsuccessful pattern of acculturation is a downward spiral resulting in assimilation into poverty, often into an inner-city underclass. This pattern is associated with cultural dissonance, in which children acquire the language and skills of their new culture more quickly than their parents do, resulting in family conflicts. For these children, the acculturation process is subtractive: To identify with Americans, the children join "oppositional subcultures of marginalized peers" (Gibson, 2001, p. 21) and reject the culture of their parents. This is the fate of many families that the United States refuses to recognize as legitimate refugees or immigrants. Often these families must settle in depressed urban areas with high rates of crime and unemployment. Portes and Zhou (1993) explained that refugees arriving since the late 1970s are less likely to blend into White society than their predecessors, because of their racial and ethnic origins. Without significant social support, recent refugee children are especially vulnerable to this negative pattern.

Portes and Rumbaut (2001) elaborated further on segmented assimilation theory with their analysis of the Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study, a 10-year project in which the researchers gathered data from more than 5,200 youth enrolled in 49 schools in Fort Lauderdale/Miami and San Diego, whose parents came from 77 countries. The purpose of the study was to examine the adaptation processes of second-generation immigrant youth (their sample included voluntary immigrants and refugees). Rumbaut and Portes explained that segmented assimilation patterns are dependent on four factors: (a) the situation of the first generation that immigrates; (b) the pace at which parents and children acculturate; (c) cultural and economic barriers confronted by immigrant youth; and (d) resources (family and community) available to manage the barriers. Some recent refugees cannot "melt" into the dominant culture because of the stigma of their religious garb or their phenotype. As a result, governmental and societal policies that encourage or discourage welcoming refugees from various countries play a prominent role in their success. All of these factors and patterns ultimately affect children's access to education and opportunity.

The Purpose of this Review

In considering ways to help refugee students to not only survive the trauma of the refugee experience but thrive as new young residents in the United States, the following questions must be addressed:

1. What do refugee students need to succeed in U.S. schools?
2. What are the obstacles to their success?
3. What can be done to help refugee students overcome the obstacles?

The purpose of this article is to review research findings on refugee children who are resettled in the United States in order to gain an understanding of their unique needs, their obstacles to success, and the interventions that are promising for overcoming the barriers that they face. I conclude with a brief discussion about areas in which more research and assistance are needed. This review will focus on refugee students, as distinct from other immigrant students, because differences between refugees and other immigrants make this group the most vulnerable for

school failure. I will begin with background information on differences between the two groups to demonstrate why refugee students merit attention apart from other immigrants.

Background Information

Much research has grouped refugees together with immigrants (see Cheng, 1998; Cowart & Cowart, 2002; Delgado-Gaitan, 1994; Hones & Cha, 1999; Pryor, 2001; Rong & Preissle, 1998; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). In their research on Iranians in the United States, Bozorgmehr and Sabagh (1991) suggested that refugees and immigrants have similar motivations and characteristics. Both groups have to deal with the disruption of migrating to a new country and adjusting to a different culture and lifestyle. For students, this may include struggling in school while trying to learn the language of instruction. Many newcomers, because of race, ethnicity, religion, or cultural differences, encounter discrimination and racism (Asali, 2003; Rumbaut & Portes, 2001; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001). In addition, both immigrant and refugee teens are faced with a crisis of identity as they try to meet the cultural demands of their parents and of their new peers (Delgado-Gaitan, 1994; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Zhou & Bankston, 2000), although Berry, Kim, Minde, and Mok (1987) found that acculturation stress is considerably higher among refugees.

Defining Refugees

Of course, as people who are coming into the country in order to resettle, refugees can be categorized as immigrants. In fact, the ways in which people are categorized as voluntary or involuntary immigrants or refugees depend on the definitions one chooses to use for these terms, and the definitions are often politically motivated. For instance, Suárez-Orozco (1989; see also Fernández-Kelly & Curran, 2001) pointed out that many adolescents who fled to the United States from Central American countries did not have the protection of refugee status because the United States would not recognize them as refugees, even though they had left their homelands to escape war and violence. Therefore, they fit the United Nations definition of refugee (see below) but would be termed "illegal immigrants" by U.S. authorities. Reviewing the literature that argues in favor of various definitions for immigrants and refugees could easily be the topic of a separate article. For the purposes of this review, I will adopt the United Nations definition used by the 1951 Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol. By that definition, a refugee is a person

> who, owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it. (Convention and Protocol, 1951/1996)

The U.S. Refugee Act of 1980) reflects this definition, even though political scientists debate whether the United States applies the definition equally and justly.

Given the Convention definition, there are important distinctions between refugees and voluntary immigrants. The circumstances that bring refugees to a new

country create unique needs and problems that are not prevalent among voluntary immigrants. Voluntary immigrants choose to reside in a new country, and many are highly educated (Rong & Preissle, 1998). Usually, they have time to think about their choice, and they may have visited the country of choice on past occasions (Cowart & Cowart, 1993, 2002). Many immigrants have sufficient financial means and are aware of family members, friends, or other people from their native country with whom they can settle in a community (Delgado-Gaitan, 1994).

Unlike most immigrants, refugees do not leave their homes by choice (UNHCR, 2000). Refugees are forced out of their native countries, often in violent circumstances such as civil war, and many homeless refugees must take up residence in temporary refugee camps (Cowart & Cowart, 1993; Huyck & Fields, 1981). Living conditions in the camps are frequently poor, with inadequate food, shelter, and medical care (Westermeyer & Wahmanholm, 1996). The living conditions contribute to significant, often chronic ailments, such as tuberculosis, hepatitis, malaria, kidney damage, and liver damage (Trueba et al., 1990). Many refugees suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder after enduring rape or torture and witnessing killings, often including the brutal murders of family members (Hones & Cha, 1999; Tollefson, 1989).

People who flee their countries out of fear of persecution can apply for "Convention refugee" status. Whenever possible, voluntary repatriation is the UNHCR's preference. However, political and civil turmoil in many countries may endure indefinitely. In these cases, the UNHCR seeks to settle refugees in their country of first asylum, the country to which they fled. The last solution chosen is permanent resettlement in a third country. Refugees may live in camps for years before they receive notice that a country is willing to resettle them (Hones & Cha, 1999; Tollefson, 1989). Except in special circumstances, they are not able to choose the new country (Cowart & Cowart, 2002). Many refugees are poor and have few possessions to bring to their new life (Caplan, Choy, & Whitmore, 1994; Zhou, 2001). Those with deficient language skills in their new country often suffer from high levels of alienation (Nicassio, 1983).

Kunz (1973) distinguishes between anticipatory refugee movements, in which refugees foresee upcoming strife in their homeland, and acute refugee movements, in which danger is immediate. Anticipatory refugees have more time to plan their departure and may be able to learn some of the language of the country to which they will flee. Like voluntary immigrants, refugees in this group tend to be educated and financially solvent (Rumbaut & Portes, 2001). An example would be the first wave of Vietnamese refugees who arrived in the mid-1970s, immediately after the fall of Saigon. Most of those refugees were well-educated professionals whose children excelled academically. Their successes contributed to the "Asian model minority" stereotype (Caplan, Whitmore, & Choy, 1989). Aside from their phenotype, this first group from Vietnam resembled what Stein (1981) described as traditional refugees. Historically, traditional refugees are represented by Eastern Europeans fleeing persecution during the Cold War. They tended to be more culturally and ethnically similar to those in the host countries, and many could locate kin who had migrated previously. They were also well educated and had skills that were valued by their host country. A similar group was the first wave of Cuban refugees who arrived in the early 1960s (Huyck & Fields, 1981; Pérez, 2001).

Later refugees from Vietnam were categorized by Kunz (1973) as part of an acute refugee movement. They arrived in greater numbers and were lacking in

education, job skills, and finances (Zhou, 2001). This second wave of refugees, most of whom arrived from 1978 to the mid-1980s, became known as the "boat people." Those who did not die at sea arrived in Thailand, Malaysia, and Hong Kong, where they awaited resettlement. In addition, hundreds of thousands of Khmer fled the Pol Pot regime, and thousands of Laotians and Hmong escaped from the Pathet Lao. These refugees went to Thailand, and more than 300,000 were resettled in the United States.

Since the 1990s, most refugees from violence in Iraq, the Balkans, sub-Saharan Africa, and Afghanistan have belonged to the acute refugee category. People from these countries are unlikely to have high levels of education or vocational skills. Many recent refugees have two additional barriers to overcome: (a) many are Black Africans with significant cultural differences from African Americans, yet they are often perceived by native-born White Americans to be in the same cultural group; (b) many refugees from Africa and the Middle East are Islamic, a religious tradition that many Americans have come to fear and despise, associating it with violence and terrorism (Asali, 2003; Carter, 1999; McMurtrie et al., 2001; Wingfield & Karaman, 2001).

Response to Refugees: Welcoming or Rejecting

Refugees' resettlement experiences vary considerably and are affected by environmental factors and the resources that refugees can summon to combat barriers to their adaptation. Banks (1988) pointed out that new waves of immigration at the turn of the 20th century generated a nativist movement, in which previously settled immigrants from northern and western Europe viewed newcomers from southern and eastern Europe as a threat to the United States. Irish, Italians, and Russian Jews were targets of religious intolerance (Perlman, 1988). Nativist views became strengthened by governmental policy. The Immigration Acts of 1917 and 1924 created quotas that effectively stopped mass migrations from Southern, Central, and Eastern Europe and prevented migration from Africa and Asia.

Not until the Immigration and Nationality Act Amendments of 1965 did the United States again experience massive immigration of ethnic diversity, including more than a million Southeast Asians by 1985 (Banks, 1988). Refugees from the Vietnam War, along with hundreds of thousands of undocumented immigrants largely from the Caribbean and Central America, brought support for a new movement of nationalism and an English-language movement. Even though many refugees fled to escape Communism, they were often associated with the political regime of their native country and stereotyped as political enemies. Recent refugees were also confronted with policies centered on expecting students to acquire English quickly and with decreasing educational supports (Gibson, 1998; Olsen, 2000). Gibson noted a public belief that use of a child's native language in school slows the child's educational progress. As Olsen pointed out, the push for rapid English acquisition reflects public fears about an increasingly diverse U.S. population.

Stephan and Stephan (2000) explained that prejudice and discrimination can arise from perceiving members of an outgroup as a real or symbolic threat. Political and social processes affect people's attitudes toward newcomers. For example, Pérez (2001) explained that early Cuban refugees were welcomed into Florida because of the strong anti-Communist sentiment in the United States in the early

1960s. Attitudes can shift over time, however, as can be seen in the development of public opinion against the use of Spanish in communities with large numbers of Spanish-speaking residents, reflected in the "English-only" movement and California's Proposition 187, intended to deny public health care, social services, and education to illegal immigrants.

Pérez (2001) suggested that the enclave approach to community building among Cuban refugees in Miami insulated them from discrimination.[3] In addition, Cuban refugees received support from the U.S. government. In contrast, Haitian and Nicaraguan refugees in Florida experienced high levels of discrimination. In response to the negative reception and their parents' desire to retain control over them, many Haitian students became alienated from their cultural heritage (Stepick, Stepick, Eugene, Teed, & Labissiere, 2001). Nicaraguan children often responded by clinging to their heritage (Fernández-Kelly & Curran, 2001). However, as was true of Haitians, intergenerational conflicts were also common in Nicaraguan refugee families.

As was mentioned earlier, many new refugees are Muslim, and their faith is one that many U.S. citizens equate with terrorism as a result of political events and media images (Wingfield & Karaman, 2001). Islam corresponds to the third type of stigma as defined by Goffman (1963/1997), the tribal stigma of religion. Many of the girls cannot hide their Muslim affiliation, as their families require them to wear *hijab,* a scarf and conservative clothing (McBrien, 2005). Others become obvious as they fast for the month of Ramadan or try to find secluded places for ritual prayers during the day. As a result, this stigmatized part of their identity is conspicuous and likely to bring rejection and discrimination from many members of the host culture. Rejection corresponds to a greater likelihood of school dropout.

The categories of stigmatization discussed by Link and Phelan (2001)—"labeling, stereotyping, separation, status loss, and discrimination" (p. 367)—were as applicable to the Vietnamese refugees of the 1980s as to more recent U.S. refugees. Zhou (2001) referred to hate crimes committed against Vietnamese adults and students, motivated in part by Americans' ambivalence about the Vietnam War. Since the attacks of September 11, 2001, Muslim students (and students perceived to be Muslim) have reported being the victims of name-calling, physical assaults, and hate crimes (McBrien, 2005; "Muslim Students in New York," 2001). They feel segregated from their non-Muslim peers, and fear prevents them from participating in school activities. They express both their concerns that their religion has been stereotyped as one of violence and their wishes that others would believe, as they do, that it is a peaceful religion. Name-calling and teasing isolate refugee children further, contributing to their sense of loneliness and lowered self-esteem (Kirova, 2001).

One's beliefs regarding successful acculturation will certainly determine one's answers to the research questions posed as the purpose for this review. I have chosen to use the framework of segmented assimilation and to consider the conditions explained by Portes and Rumbaut (2001) as factors that affect the rate and success of acculturation by refugees. Their theory allows for a complexity of factors that create numerous paths to acculturation. In addition, their work is supported by a substantial and current database of information on children, including both immigrants and refugees.

Continuing social upheaval in countries such as Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Sudan, Somalia, and Sierra Leone keeps demand for resettlement in host countries high.

Given the large percentage of refugees who are children, and given that Article 22 of the Geneva Convention requires states to provide equal schooling opportunities to refugee children (as does Article 13 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, to which the United States is a signatory), education must rank high on the list of provisions required for the successful relocation of refugee children. At present, teachers are frequently unaware that they have refugees in their classrooms, and they do not realize the kinds of experiences that these students have survived before their arrival in the United States (McBrien, 2005). Hones's (2002) work in dialogic teacher research indicated that teachers became more compassionate and willing to work with refugee and immigrant students when they became knowledgeable about their backgrounds. This review is significant in providing background necessary for teachers in the field and for those in universities who are preparing new teachers to provide educational opportunities in a caring way to the students about whom the least is known, yet who may require the greatest patience and teaching expertise.

Methods

I began a search of existing literature by using the general terms "refugees," "immigrants" (because information on refugees is frequently found in articles about immigrants), "acculturation," and "Muslim," in combination with "academic achievement," "students," and "education," on the databases of Anthropology *Plus*, ERIC, PsycINFO, Dissertation Abstracts, Social Sciences Abstracts, Sociological Abstracts, Web of Science, and reference sections in those articles located in the databases. I read the articles that I had determined to include information on refugee students. Sometimes this determination was based on my own knowledge and not on language used in the article. For instance, Gitlin, Buendía, Crosland, and Doumbia (2003) do not use the word "refugee" in their research, but they probably included refugee students in the term "immigrant students," as the students in their research came from Bosnia, Vietnam, Laos, Sudan, Somalia, and Russia, as well as Mexico.

I restricted the scope of my review to refugee students resettled in the United States. Much of the literature on that group centered on children from Southeast Asia. However, I also included research on refugee students from Cuba, Central America, Eastern Europe, and Africa.

Because of the nature of the subject, much published research centers on medical and psychiatric needs. As has been briefly discussed, refugees are differentiated from voluntary immigrants by the likelihood that they suffer from trauma and physiological illnesses. However, I did not include articles from medical journals in this review or studies published before 1980.

I coded articles and book chapters using the keywords "identity," "language acquisition," "ESL," "encouragement," "peer interaction," "stereotype," "acculturation," "cultural consonance" (or dissonance), "beliefs," "encouragement," "expectations," and others. From there, I looked for patterns by which to group keywords into themes that addressed my central questions. The theme of *needs* thus encompassed keywords such as "psychosocial adjustment," "social services," "acculturation," "assimilation," "ESL," and others. *Obstacles* included "stereotypes," "prejudice," "discrimination," "misinformation," "parental involvement," "parent beliefs," and others. *Overcoming obstacles* included "positive educational

methods," "teacher support," "agency support," and so on. I used some keywords in more than one category when necessary. For instance, some references to parent involvement described helpful support for children, but others exemplified barriers.

I then created a matrix of my research questions with Portes and Rumbaut's (2001) factors affecting segmented assimilation. My first question—What do refugee students need to succeed in U.S. schools?—included elements from Portes and Rumbaut's discussion of family acculturation patterns and outside support services. My second question—What are the obstacles to their success?—reflected Portes and Rumbaut's explanation of cultural and economic barriers such as prejudice, discrimination, and unwelcoming environments. My third question—What can be done to help refugee students overcome the obstacles?—included Portes and Rumbaut's discussion of family and community resources, as well as individual strengths. There is some overlap among these categories. For instance, success in U.S. schools may include overcoming obstacles, and outside supports may contribute answers to the second and third questions as well as the first. I placed the discussion of each study in the category where the research best fit and organized the literature review according to my questions.

Because this review spans 25 years, researchers reflected varying opinions on what constitutes key concepts such as successful acculturation or second language instruction. For instance, Sokoloff, Carlin, and Pham's (1984) conclusion that Vietnamese refugee children were adjusting well included the observation that the children had lost touch with their original culture and language. Many current researchers would classify such an adjustment as subtractive acculturation, arguing that the children had lost a valuable part of their identity. Nguyen and Henkin (1980) also used the traditional concept of assimilation as a marker for acculturation success, although more recent researchers would find the reverse—additive acculturation—to be a sign of positive adjustment. Such differing viewpoints reflect changing beliefs about healthy identity formation. Wright (2005) explained significant historical changes in federal policies on English language acquisition that reflected changing social and political opinions about successful cultural integration. He demonstrated that every reauthorization of the Bilingual Education Act (Title VII) before 2001 increased the flexibility of bilingual education methods and appreciation for the cultures of language minority students.[4] These federal policies also reflected educators' growing emphasis on multicultural education and meeting the needs of increasingly diverse student populations.

What Are the Needs of Refugee Students?

In her survey of education designed for emergency situations, Sinclair (2001) argued that education should be viewed as an essential element of humanitarian response to crisis. Although funders often view education as a luxury alongside the essential needs of water, food, and shelter, Sinclair reviewed reports of psychosocial trauma in young children and concluded that early educational responses support emotional and social healing as they help restore a sense of normalcy and hope. An evaluation of the Rapid Response Education Program—developed to help children from Freetown, Sierra Leone, after the 1999 violence—indicated healing measures in just 2 weeks after implementation of the program. Recurrent mental pictures of traumatic events were reduced by 8%, sleep difficulties declined by 49%, and more than half of the children interviewed (the number is not given)

reported a sense of relief when they drew pictures, wrote, or talked about their war experiences.

Although Sinclair's (2001) research centered on education for refugee children before their resettlement to the United States (and other countries), it revealed a major need for successful adjustment: meeting the psychological and social needs of stressed and traumatized children through education. The psychosocial well-being of refugee students—a predominant theme that I found in the category of needs—includes a sense of safety, a sense of self, and an adjustment to the cultural expectations of a new country while maintaining a connection to their heritage. The second most common theme in the category of needs was language acquisition. I will discuss the literature on these themes in this order.

Psychosocial Well-Being

An early study on Vietnamese refugee children's adjustment after 5 years in the United States concluded that the children were doing better than the researchers had anticipated (Sokoloff et al., 1984). A close examination of the subjects explains why. More than 90% of the 643 children included in the study arrived in 1974 or 1975; thus Sokoloff, Carlin, and Pham examined those arriving in the first wave of exodus from Southeast Asia, generally those from the educated and financially well-off classes. In addition, 72% were adopted by American parents; only 8% were with their own refugee parents (20% were foster children); and the mean age was 5 years, 5 months. Therefore, the majority were welcomed into U.S. families as infants and toddlers. The researchers gathered information using three questionnaires (two completed by parents, one by any children over the age of 10, which excluded approximately half of the children from participating). Sokoloff and colleagues found that most adjustment difficulties were experienced and overcome in the first year after migration. The researchers concluded that the children and their families were thriving physically, developmentally, emotionally, and socially.

Because of contextual differences between this population and refugee children arriving later, the study is not generalizable to most groups of Southeast Asian refugee children who arrived in the later waves or to arrivals who would fit the description of Kunz's (1973) acute refugee category. Sokoloff et al. (1984) defined "thriving" by stating that initial physical and mental health problems had dissipated, the children were making good progress in school, and very few families reported negative reactions to the children. They also found that most of the children no longer understood Vietnamese. Because the children were quite young at the time of the study, one could not really determine any identity struggles. According to Portes and Rumbaut's (2001) framework of segmented assimilation, the receptive situation was positive and welcoming. Most of the children grew up in U.S. homes, largely separated from their first culture. Because they were babies upon arrival, they had not yet learned the cultural heritage of their homeland. Most did not speak Vietnamese. Thus most of the children in this study were highly assimilated into U.S. culture in a subtractive but upwardly mobile sense, and they were provided with family and social resources to accommodate their assimilation.

The findings of Sokoloff and colleagues (1984) were unique. Most discussions of psychosocial adjustment of refugees pointed to the difficulties of moving on from traumatic memories. One study indicated that after 5 years, more than 80%

still had serious concerns about their separation from missing family members; nearly 70% retained stressful memories of the war and their flight from their home country; and nearly 60% were still homesick and worried about communication difficulties with friends and families still in Asia (Stein, 1980; as quoted in Ascher, 1985). Once resettled, adults often took lower-skilled jobs with less status than those they had held in their home countries (Fernández-Kelly & Curran, 2001). The Southeast Asian fear of "losing face" deterred many from asking for help or expressing their frustration. Also, the shame of rape and culturally different gender expectations added new stresses on families (Ascher, 1985). Because adults were anxious about these concerns, they were often ill-equipped to provide their children with the emotional support and positive models that they needed to succeed socially and academically.

In a review of literature on mental health and social adjustment for refugee children, Eisenbruch (1988) found that not only personal bereavement but also cultural bereavement is an important factor in a refugee child's adjustment. Basing his work on the theories of Erikson, Eisenbruch noted the significance of "uprooting" as a disruption of a person's concept of self. Eisenbruch stated that adolescents may have difficulty in balancing loyalty to family with the American ideal of individual progress (see also Ascher, 1989). He concluded that schools can be centers for acculturation that, with effective teachers and programs, can reduce environmental barriers and increase the child's sense of competence. Eisenbruch stated that effective programs respect the native cultures of refugee children and allow them ample time to adjust and learn the language of their new host country. Eisenbruch argued that rapid acculturation can negatively affect children's ability to complete their grieving process and claim their cultural identity.

Psychosocial adjustment is difficult to measure consistently because of the changing and inconsistent definitions of key concepts over time. In one early study of Southeast Vietnamese refugees, Nguyen and Henkin (1980) worked from a theoretical framework in which subtractive cultural assimilation was the goal. Using a 5-point Likert scale, Nguyen and Henkin tested 96 Laotian and Vietnamese high school students who were completing their fourth year in a U.S. school. In rating their perceived adaptation to their new schools, Nguyen and Henkin found that the refugees did not feel that they had adjusted. The researchers found that an important factor in the students' adjustment was their perception of acceptance in the new school setting. Unfortunately, the researchers did not include information about the validity and reliability of the instrument that they had created to test students' adjustment, or about other factors that affect acculturation, such as family structures and community resources. Cultural barriers faced by youth, however, were significant in understanding the students' problems in adapting.

In a more recent quantitative study of 182 junior and senior high school Vietnamese students, Nguyen, Messe, and Stollak (1999) confined the use of the term "acculturation" to cultural pluralism, or the additive model. Nguyen developed the Acculturation Scale for Vietnamese Adolescents and the Brief Symptom Inventory to use for this study, and the authors demonstrated the tools' internal consistency and validity. They also had subjects fill out the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. The researchers found a positive correlation between U.S. cultural involvement and self-esteem, low depression, family relationships, and school grade point average (GPA). Vietnamese cultural involvement corresponded positively with family

involvement, not at all with school GPA, and negatively with personal adjustment/psychological distress. These findings contrasted with the researchers' hypothesis that adaptation to American culture would negatively affect family relationships. The findings also conflicted with the idea that bicultural identification produced positive results, because involvement in Vietnamese culture was not positively correlated with personal adjustment. Segmented assimilation could be used to explain the unexpected findings. For instance, adults and children could have experienced congruence in their adaptation to a U.S. lifestyle, with the result that U.S. cultural involvement would not affect family relationships. It is also possible that some youth held tightly to Vietnamese culture as a result of discrimination from U.S. peers. The researchers argued effectively that the study showed the importance of measuring acculturation as a complex, multidimensional process.

Mosselson's (2002) research with 15 adolescent Muslim refugee girls from Bosnia gives evidence of the complexity of the adjustment process and how all elements do not necessarily occur in sync. Mosselson found that the girls worked hard to attain high grades (all had GPAs of 3.6 or higher), and that they were cognizant that their high achievement status moved them from being viewed as alien to an identity that could blend into the general culture. In this case, many stated that they worked hard in order to avoid the spotlight that academic deficits would create. A problem with this anonymity was that the girls' depression was also overlooked. Many of their experiences in U.S. schools were negative. One girl spoke of how alienated she felt in an all-girl Catholic school in which "everyone is blonde and everyone wants to get married and have babies" (p. 192). The same student said that teachers asked questions "like I came from some kind of jungle" (p. 192). She made a distinction between school, which she hated, and her U.S. education, which she loved. She became an A student and found that her achievement gained her some invisibility, in that staff no longer focused on her, despite the fact that she was depressed. Mosselson pointed out that school success did not fit with the traditional psychosocial model of poor adjustment or depression, so the students' needs were ignored. In this case, the students were succeeding academically, but their psychosocial adjustment was poor.

Bankston and Zhou (2002) used a series of regression models to analyze data from the 1995 National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health for relationships between self-esteem, psychological health, and academic achievement of White, Black, Asian, and Latino students. They found that Asian students had the highest academic success but also exhibited the highest levels of depression and lowest levels of self-esteem. Like Mosselson (2002), the researchers concluded that "doing well is not the same as being well" (p. 408). Bankston and Zhou reported that immigrant status affected adolescents' sense of self-worth.

Language Acquisition

Entire journals are devoted to the topic of second language acquisition, and this section will not begin to cover all of the literature. I have chosen a sample of articles that relate to the themes found in research that addresses refugee (and immigrant) language learning needs. Most of the literature on language acquisition did not specifically address refugees; instead, most language research applied to all students coming from countries in which the host country's language was not the student's first language. All of the studies indicated that immigrant students with

good English language skills were better adjusted to their U.S. school environments. Studies also demonstrated that children who had heavy accents or who struggled with English were ridiculed, and some students who used their native languages were punished (Olsen, 1988, 2000).

In studying alienation in Vietnamese, Laotian, Hmong, and Cambodian refugees, Nicassio (1983) found a strong correlation between alienation and insufficient English skills. In his sample, the Laotian and Vietnamese participants, who demonstrated better English proficiency, tested lower on the alienation measures than Hmong and Cambodian participants. Pryor's (2001) study of Bosnian, Albanian, and other refugee and immigrant students in a Michigan city indicated that the children viewed English acquisition to be important to their future success in their new country. More than half of the children said that English acquisition was difficult for them, and more than 80% said they helped their parents with English skills. The parents reported ridicule, harassment, and embarrassment because they were not fluent in English. According to Portes and Rumbaut's segmented assimilation theory, this difference would contribute to cultural dissonance. However, the researchers did not comment on intergenerational strife.

Deem and Marshall (1980) discussed the problem of teaching a second language when there are insufficient numbers of students in a particular school to create a special program for language acquisition. In their theoretical article, the authors explained that culturally biased materials often presuppose familiarity with the host country's culture and history (see also Trueba et al., 1990). Deem and Marshall suggested the use of a language experience approach, which draws on the students' personal experiences to teach and increase vocabulary and reading/writing capabilities. Like Freire and Macedo's (1987) approaches, the language experience approach allows students to draw from their strengths and knowledge to acquire new information. It also indicates a posture of welcoming and respecting the newcomers' cultures. The authors stated that students may be reluctant, as many of their past experiences include painful memories that they prefer not to make public. Therefore, instructor sensitivity based on knowledge of refugee experiences is essential.

Cheng (1998) and Allen (2002) wrote about a language problem that people specializing in immigrant and refugee work quickly recognize but that many classroom teachers overlook. Children may be competent at spoken, colloquial English but considerably behind in academic English. As a result, some immigrant children are placed in special education classes, and others are put in low academic tracks despite high capabilities (see also Suárez-Orozco, 1989; Trueba et al., 1990). Students are often unfamiliar with the language of instruction, also called "academic English." For example, although they may be able to talk about the causes of a war, they may be at a loss if asked to "list the factors" that brought about a war (Allen, 2002, p. 6). In common with Deem and Marshall (1980), Cheng recognized numerous cultural differences, such as short response, unexpected nonverbal expressions, and embarrassment over praise, that teachers might misinterpret as deficiencies. Cheng called for teachers to learn about the cultures and experiences of their international students in order to facilitate their acquisition of language and academic skills.

Cummins (1981) explained that Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS) and Cognitive/Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) are qualitatively

different skills. BICS include skills such as pronunciation, basic vocabulary, and grammar that are required in everyday communication situations. Most immigrant students can develop these skills rapidly, with the result that "teachers prematurely assume that minority children have attained sufficient English proficiency to exit to an English-only program" (p. 27). In addition, Cummins criticized policymakers' demands for a quick transition to English-only instruction by stating that the policies are veneers for the xenophobic belief that minority languages threaten social cohesion. In contrast to BICS, which involve contextual processing of language, CALP is a cognitively demanding process that is not embedded in a meaningful interpersonal context. Cummins (1981, 1992) reviewed numerous research studies that pointed to the interdependence of native and second language learning in advancing CALP skills and indicated that second language CALP takes 5 years or more to develop.

Olsen (2000) discussed psychosocial consequences of the push by both U.S. schools and immigrant parents for non-native children to learn English. She explained that for these children English acquisition is a symbol of belonging to their new culture. However, all too often, families discover that "becoming English fluent usually is accompanied by a loss of home language use, fluency, and development" (p. 197). Teasing by U.S. peers causes many students learning English to feel shame and to become silent to avoid humiliation. ESL classes are frequently separated from mainstream classes, so newcomer students have few opportunities to learn the slang used by their peers, with the result that they are unable to communicate with U.S. students. Immigrant and refugee students may find themselves unable to communicate well in either their native language or in English.

Portes and Rumbaut (2001) examined language acquisition in context with psychosocial adjustment and identity. Like Olsen (2000), they discussed how children's language retention and acquisition related not only to academic achievement but also to their success with acculturation and a sense of continuity with their parents and others from their native country. Bilingual children had the highest test scores, lowest levels of depression, highest self-esteem, and highest education and career goals. They also had the fewest conflicts with their parents. The researchers criticized the tendency of U.S. school policies toward English immersion as it increases cultural dissonance and can cause children not only to lose their native language but also to fall short of acquiring full proficiency in English. The researchers also explained that the term "bilingual education" is a misnomer, as it is rarely intended to help children become fully fluent in two languages but, rather, uses the foreign language only until students have acquired English sufficient to place them in mainstream monolingual classrooms.

Gebhard (2003) examined methods of second language instruction chosen by three schools in California. She criticized the lack of research and professional development used to determine ESL methods in two of the schools. In one school, teachers expected students to learn silently, through reading and writing. In another school, the approach was nearly the reverse, with teachers withholding substantial subject content until children developed oral language abilities through the use of games and songs. Gebhard found a better approach in a third school, which incorporated verbal and written activities along with group projects and facilitation by teachers and bilingual specialists. In addition, the school provided professional

development and research-based decision making that was based on local needs of the community. Gebhard also mentioned the differences between the typical approaches to limited English proficient (LEP) students, who are usually placed in areas far from the mainstream classes, and integrated approaches, in which LEP students have more opportunities to converse with and learn from native-born students. The latter approach creates a more welcoming environment. Similarly, when examining the education of Hmong children in northern U.S. states, Timm (1994) uncovered a poor use of English-as-a-second-language (ESL) instruction. The researcher recorded the comments of a frustrated elementary school teacher who said that her school used ESL classes to reward Hmong children who did well in their classwork. She noted that English instruction needed to be integral in the curriculum and not used as a reward.

In summary, psychosocial adjustment and language acquisition are affected by experiences of trauma and the availability of parental and social support. Recent researchers consider school settings that do not require rapid language and cultural acquisition to be the best settings for refugee children. They have also found that using cultural elements from the students' native countries facilitates language acquisition. Language is a major barrier to learning until children become competent in speaking, reading, and writing English. In the case of language acquisition, segmented assimilation depends on community resources as well as cognitive ability. To improve school resources, administrators need to look carefully at the recent research on language acquisition, and teachers must familiarize themselves with the refugee experience. Because adjustment, identity, and language learning are affected by discrimination, cultural dissonance, and the reception that refugees receive from their host society, some of these topics will be revisited and expanded in the next section.

What Are the Obstacles That Prevent Refugee Student Success?

The trauma experienced by refugee children can impede their ability to learn (Sinclair, 2001). Resettled infants can suffer from preverbal memories that surface in nightmares. Toddlers, relocated in their developmental period of rapid language acquisition and cultural socialization, are prone to language-related learning problems and social confusion (Rong & Preissle, 1998; Sokoloff, Carlin, & Pham, 1984). Trauma experienced during flight, in refugee camps, and during resettlement causes many refugees to become distrustful or fearful of people in authority (Hynes, 2003). For children, this group can include teachers (Igoa, 1995).

In an increasingly technological world, academic achievement and skills are vital to career success and satisfaction (Shanahan, Mortimer, & Kruger, 2002). Rong and Preissle (1998) reported that, according to 1990 U.S. Census figures, 18% of 17-year-old and 26% of 18-year-old immigrants were dropouts. According to data from the Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study, Portes and Rumbaut (2001) found an average of 3%–10% school attrition rate, depending on nationality, and 14%–25% "inactive" rate (this rate includes students who simply stopped going to school, although they may not have officially dropped out; it also includes those who may have moved to another district without officially transferring). School dropout of immigrant and refugee students results from a complex mixture of factors, including self-perceptions of their academic ability (House, 2001), antisocial behavior and rejection by peers (French & Conrad, 2001), lack

of psychological and academic preparation before entering U.S. schools (Rong & Preissle, 1998), and future goals (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). Portes and Rumbaut also reported that in spite of high educational expectations across diverse immigrant groups, some students drop out because of unsafe school conditions, dissonant acculturation (when children acquire the language and cultural norms of their new country faster than their parents), poverty, and hostile social environments.

Parents and parental involvement in their children's education are frequently cited as factors in student success. Data from the Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001) indicate that refugee and immigrant students are positively affected by parental support and interest in their children's education, even though that support is not necessarily manifest in typical U.S. ways, such as parental involvement in the schools. Zhou and Bankston (2000) found that Vietnamese parents tend to pressure their children to enter highly skilled professions such as medicine or law, and that Asian students achieved higher grades in school and on standardized achievement tests (Bankston & Zhou, 2002). The researchers also found that Vietnamese parental involvement in ethnic communities correlated negatively with youth involvement in underprivileged or deviant subcultures (Bankston & Zhou, 1997).

However, some parental factors were coded as obstacles to refugee children's success. For instance, because refugee parents frequently are victims of trauma, they are not always able to provide emotional support (Ascher, 1985). When adults do not acquire the new language as rapidly as children, parents are less able to help their children with homework. And because of different cultural beliefs, many parents may understand the concept of parent involvement differently from the way that U.S. parents do. These conditions increase cultural dissonance.

The other major obstacles that refugee students face are social and individual rejection. How a community receives refugees can be affected by governmental policies that reject newcomers. The rigidity of cultural stereotypes and prejudices held by members of the host society can lead to hostile discrimination. Students already in need of healing from pre-resettlement experiences can face additional trauma when isolated or treated cruelly by their new peers. Included in the literature addressing discrimination is a subset that looks specifically at treatment of Muslim students.

Parental Factors

When parents seemed to be hindrances to their children's acculturation, the reasons were related to factors affecting segmented assimilation: their situation (especially economically) and their differing rates of acculturation (in terms of language and beliefs). In her 2-year field-based qualitative study of Hmong living in Minnesota and Wisconsin, Timm (1994) found that Hmong parents had no frame of reference for understanding parent–teacher conferences (see also Blakely, 1983). Along with a Hmong research assistant, Timm interviewed 23 Hmong men and women aged 15 and older to learn their opinions on a variety of family and educational values. The Hmong that Timm studied viewed teachers as the experts regarding their children's education, and they were not used to participating in formal schooling. Other researchers explained that Southeast Asian refugee parents tend to view the teachers as the educational experts, and they did not expect to be involved in their children's education (Eisenbruch, 1988; Trueba et al., 1990). U.S.

school practices confused the Hmong parents whom Timm interviewed, because they expected school to be a strictly controlled environment in which memorization was equivalent to learning.

Smith-Hefner (1990) examined how spiritual beliefs of the Khmer—Cambodian refugees who fled their country during the Pol Pot regime—influenced parents' lack of involvement with their children's schooling. Smith-Hefner conducted a 10-month qualitative study in which she interviewed and observed 35 Khmer families in the Boston area. She triangulated these interviews with interviews of Khmer teachers, leaders of ethnic associations, and religious leaders, using both standardized questions to compare responses on key issues and open-ended questions to allow for individual responses and concerns.

Smith-Hefner (1990) found that Khmer parents believed that an individual's identity and personal qualities emerge from within the child, and it is the parents' job to discover, rather than direct, these qualities. They feared loss of face by pushing a child who subsequently failed. They also believed that through reincarnation, one's present position was determined by a life lived previously. Thus, because of their spiritual beliefs related to identity formation and reincarnation, parents tended not to push their children to attend bilingual classes, for instance, even though they favored bilingual education. For similar reasons, Khmer parents did not become involved in their children's education. Follow-up research conducted by Smith-Hefner (1999) reconfirmed her earlier findings. In addition, she pointed out that most Khmer adult refugees had not attended school in Cambodia, so they had little experience of school by which to guide their own children. In general, U.S. teachers viewed Khmer parents as uninvolved and uninterested in their children's education.

Ascher (1985, 1989) reviewed literature on adjustment difficulties for Southeast Asian refugee children. She noted that intergenerational stress created family conflict as children moved between their new culture in school and their family's native culture at home. The constant cultural crossings contributed to identity confusion in adolescents. Erikson (1968) viewed the search for identity as the major conflict in the lives of adolescents. However, all refugees encounter a crisis of identity when they leave behind their communities, lifestyles, livelihoods, and ancestral places of worship (Tollefson, 1989). Thus refugee teens may not have the traditional adult support on which to rely as they search for a sense of self, because adults with whom they live may be undergoing a similar search for self in their new host country. Because adults are anxious about finding jobs and housing and managing their own grief and cultural adjustment, they are often ill-equipped to provide their children with needed emotional support.

Refugee students tended to view their pre-U.S. schools as places of authoritarian rules and harsh punishments when they broke the rules. In comparison, refugee students often viewed American schools as places with no behavioral rules. As a result, some refugee students became discipline problems. Ascher (1989) explained that students' misbehaviors were likely to result from adjustment problems, along with survival behaviors learned in refugee camps. Added to these problems were acts of prejudice by U.S.-born classmates and the refugee students' attempts to assimilate rapidly. Refugee students' desires to fit in their new school cultures often resulted in alienation from their parents. The duel burden of discrimination by American peers and reproach from their Asian families caused

many refugee teens to turn to gangs, drugs, school dropout, and sexual promiscuity. Ascher concluded that bicultural integration was the most beneficial mode of acculturation for Southeast Asian refugee adolescents. She suggested that schools provide cultural training for teachers, intercultural activities for U.S.-born and refugee students, and an emphasis on bilingual education.

Intense conflicts with parents are also cited as an adjustment problem for immigrant and refugee children. In her study of Russian refugees, Delgado-Gaitan (1994) found that children became discontented with their fathers, whom they saw transformed from a strong role model to an "argumentative patriarch" who no longer worked for a living but, rather, worked at learning English (p. 147). In another study of Russian refugees, the highest percentage of disagreement between parents and children arose when parents felt that their children did not study enough (Simon, 1983). Hopkins (1996) found that some children blamed their parents for problems that they had in school. In analyzing data on Haitian refugees from the Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study, Stepick, Stepick, Eugene, Teed, and Labissiere (2001) contended that intergenerational conflict increases when rejection by the host society is high, as in the case of Haitians. Zhou and Bankston (2000) also found that differing viewpoints between Vietnamese parents and their children regarding authority, acceptable punishments, gender roles, and American culture contributed to intergenerational conflict.

Welcome Versus Rejection

Blakely (1983) used a 2-year case study research design to learn more about Southeast Asians in Oregon. Using a semi-structured interview format and bilingual translators, Blakely interviewed 45 refugee families who entered the United States from Cambodia, Laos, or Vietnam after 1979 and had children enrolled in public schools. Blakely explained differences in the refugees from different Southeast Asian countries but stated that most local citizens assumed that all of the refugees were Vietnamese. According to Blakely, local school administrators and teachers were often frustrated when parents did not seem to be involved in their children's education. The Southeast Asian families interviewed were preoccupied with economic survival and attempts to rebuild their lives (see also Pryor, 2001). As a result, the parents did not always attend parent–teacher meetings or respond to school notices sent home for their attention.

Blakely (1983) quoted school officials as saying that the refugee families did not care about their children's school progress and expected special treatment. In this case, stereotypes and prejudice may have caused teachers and administrators to hold mistaken opinions about the refugees. The negative assessments could also be due to accepted educational policies and practices of the time. Gorski (1999) explained that multicultural education theories were just emerging in the 1980s. Therefore, it is possible that the beliefs of teachers and administrators about cultural adjustment were considerably different from those common at the end of the 20th century, when acceptance of diverse cultures increased.

Goldstein (1988) conducted an ethnographic study of two U.S. high schools and a Hmong community to examine how education for Hmong girls was shaped by their educational and societal environments. She supplemented her interviews of the girls with observations and interviews of school staff, family members, and community leaders. Goldstein's research examined Hmong adolescent girls in an

academically demanding high school she named "Ashmont" and in a less competitive school, "Logan." Ironically, for different reasons, the Hmong girls were marginalized in both cases because of school policies. In Ashmont, the bilingual program separated the girls from the mainstream students; at Logan, a school that prided itself on racial/ethnic integration, the mainstreaming of low-English-proficient students kept them in low-level classes.

Hmong female students generally exhibited docile behavior that teachers rewarded; however, they were not afforded advanced opportunities in academic classes. In both schools where Goldstein was an observer, the Hmong were relegated to classes that segregated them from their U.S. peers or placed them only in vocational classes. Goldstein (1988) observed that Hmong and U.S. students were ineffective in communicating with one another because the Hmong girls were not adept in the nuances of U. S. adolescent speech. Furthermore, U.S. students did not see that they had anything to gain from befriending Hmong. A weakness in the study was that teachers received a blanket indictment. Goldstein stated that they were more concerned with classroom order than with helping the Hmong in their acculturation process. She did not point out any exceptions among school staff, although the range of her study was extensive. Goldstein concluded that the girls were trying to challenge the boundaries of gender expectations within their cultural societies but that they also experienced restrictions because of language limitations and marginalization by the dominant society.

Pérez (2001) analyzed the data on Cuban refugees (1,242 respondents) from the Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study. It is especially interesting to compare these findings with Fernández-Kelly and Curran's (2001) analysis of the Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study data on Nicaraguan illegal aliens. Pérez explained that many Cuban refugees arriving since the Mariel exodus of 1980 were from low socioeconomic classes. However, because the U.S. government designated them as refugees, they received financial and social support. Because of the United States' political conflicts with communist Cuba, the first wave of Cuban refugees was welcomed by the government, which sympathized with their cause. Cuban Americans who arrived between 1959 and the mid 1970s built a large enclave in southern Florida, which was somewhat supportive for the less affluent Cubans arriving in the Mariel boatlift. Some Cuban children (about 15%) attended private bilingual schools staffed by earlier generations of Cuban refugees. As a result, the values of their culture were upheld, and they were protected from outside discrimination. Most Cuban children attended public schools where there were high concentrations of other students from Cuba. Thus they received psychosocial support through community resources rather than experiencing the stress of isolation.

In contrast, Nicaraguans who fled the communist Sandinista Revolution of the 1980s tended to have high levels of education and professional attainment when they sought asylum in the United States (Fernández-Kelly & Curran, 2001). Because their political situation was similar to that of Cubans escaping Castro's Cuba, the Nicaraguans expected to be welcomed. Instead, the U.S. government refused to recognize them as refugees. As a result, they were unable to build visible communities, and they had to accept low-paying employment where employers could exploit their undocumented status. Their children could not expect to go to universities, because they had no legal residence papers and could not apply for financial aid. Cubans could avail themselves of governmental assistance that

enabled parents to maintain a closer cultural consonance with their children. Nicaraguan parents, in comparison, fell behind their children in culture and language acquisition; the results were cultural dissonance and family conflicts. The earliest Nicaraguan refugee children preferred to define themselves with the panethnic term "Hispanic" rather than "Nicaraguan" in hopes of blending into the larger Latin culture of Cubans.

The fate of Haitians in America is similar to that of Nicaraguans, except that most Haitians do not bring high-level educational backgrounds or professional job skills with them. Analyzing data from the Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study, Stepick, Stepick, Eugene, Teed, and Labissiere (2001) stated that Haitians suffered from more prejudice and discrimination from the U.S. government during the 1970s and 1980s than any other migrant group. The researchers argued that Haitian students felt alienated from their cultural identity as a result of prejudice and were in frequent conflict with their parents. Stepick et al. reported instances of blatant prejudice in which students and adults taunted the Haitian students because of their accents, skin color, and poverty. As a group, Haitian students had lower GPAs than other southern Florida students in the Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study.

Gitlin, Buendía, Crosland, and Doumbia (2003) used qualitative methods to analyze ways in which Latino, Bosnian, Somali, and Sudanese students were at once welcomed and marginalized by structures and discourses in place at a western U.S. middle school. Policies and attitudes of school personnel indicated that languages and cultural practices outside the U.S. mainstreams were regarded as deficits to be overcome by assimilation. Gitlin et al. conducted interviews with students, past and present ESL teachers, school administrators, and community members. The authors also conducted observations in and outside the school. The researchers explained that there was opposition to the ESL program because of racial prejudice against Asians when the program was first put in place, but at the time of their study, Asian students were stereotyped as the "model minority." Administrators originally placed the program in a distant wing of the school, preventing interaction with U.S. students.

Although some of the obvious marginalizing practices—such as placement in the school, lack of sufficient and quality curricula, and lack of ESL-certified teachers—were no longer in place at the time of the study, subtle exclusionary practices remained (Gitlin et al., 2003). These practices included lack of late transportation that would allow immigrant and refugee children to participate in after-school activities, school assemblies dominated by White students, segregated lunchroom practices facilitated by lunchroom monitors, and disciplinary practices guided by cultural stereotypes. Through their interviews, the researchers found that immigrant parents were motivated to subscribe to the school's policies to avoid appearing to be "bad parents," and White families were motivated to maintain their privileged position economically and socially. White students who were interviewed indicated xenophobic beliefs that immigrant students would initiate violence. The authors concluded that not only attitudinal racism but also structural racism placed immigrant students on the margins, in spite of welcoming discourses in which students and administrators said they welcomed diversity. As Gitlin and colleagues pointed out, when a welcoming discourse is evident at the same time that exclusionary practices are in place, the

result is often that student success or failure is viewed as an individual, rather than a structural, issue.

Stereotypes, Prejudice, and Discrimination

Unwelcoming practices are closely related to stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination. The studies reviewed in the previous section were more structural in nature. I tried to reserve studies in which discrimination is directed specifically at students for this section.

Suárez-Orozco (1989) chose ethnography as the method for a year-long study of 50 recently arrived youth from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua. In addition to extensive field observations and interviews, Suárez-Orozco used the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT), collecting more than 400 TAT stories, to gather data on immigrant students' attitudes, motivation, and family concerns that would be difficult to request directly. Suárez-Orozco also spoke with teachers at the two high schools that the adolescents attended. He uncovered difficulties that the youth faced as they left violent, war-torn countries but were not accepted as refugees by the United States and resided illegally in the country. Like other refugees, the students left behind close family members and grieved over those who had been killed. Many of the students had been in advanced courses in their native countries, but they were placed in low-level classes in their U.S. schools. School counselors did not place the students in college preparation tracks, despite their ambitions and capabilities. Many of the students worked full-time jobs while attending high school. The students worked hard to succeed in school, but they were often discouraged by negative attitudes encountered at school and by exhaustion as they worked long hours to pay for food and shelter while they attempted to keep up with their school work.

Trueba, Jacobs, and Kirton (1990) conducted a 2-year qualitative study of Hmong students attending "La Playa" Elementary School, which served a university community in Southern California. The researchers compiled systematic observations, interviews, tape recordings, and ethnographic analysis over 18 months. They discovered that half of the 591 children enrolled at the school spoke a first language other than English. Spanish was the primary minority language for 101 students; Hmong, for 77 students. Altogether 25 languages were represented. However, no Southeast Asian adults held jobs at the school, and the aides and counselors were not bilingual, nor did they have any multicultural training. Families reported that there were no translators at parent–teacher conferences.

Trueba and colleagues (1990) found that many teachers and administrators perceived the immigrant and refugee students as having low intelligence and learning disabilities, although the researchers noted that school personnel, including the school psychologist, could not diagnose the presumed disabilities. The researchers' analysis of school documents revealed that school personnel sometimes misdiagnosed students based on faulty information. Teachers in the school exhibited prejudice by believing that the Indochinese students were inferior in intelligence and culture to native-born students, rather than acknowledging that they had a different set of values which led to different cognitive styles. In their analysis of Hmong children who were labeled "most needy learning disabled," Trueba and colleagues found that one of the major criteria for the label was the children's inability to communicate well in English. The school operated under an "English-only" instructional

policy. The researchers observed that the children moved between deep depression and isolation, on the one hand, and panic, on the other. They reported that the students experienced trauma with psychological side effects because of teacher expectations that they perform complex skills and demonstrate understanding of cultural knowledge in a language still foreign to them. Children would refer to themselves as "dumb," and they talked about killing themselves. In addition, the researchers found that the children came to believe they were disabled, and they decreased or even stopped their attempts to learn, even though testing of their skills had been done in English and some students performed above average in subjects that were not English-intensive, such as mathematics.

Lee's (2002) examination of Hmong refugees in a Wisconsin high school indicated that the new students quickly learned that Whites were at the top of the social and academic hierarchy. Lee reported that mainstream teachers felt no responsibility for the Hmong students, allocating that duty to ESL teachers. She found that some educators at the school determined the Hmong to be not only educationally different but deficient and inferior to mainstream students. They described their culture as preliterate, clannish, and rural, and they described the practice of early marriage of girls as "backwards." Some teachers believed that the Hmong students lacked motivation. One teacher generalized that African American, Hispanic, and Hmong students and their families did not value education (see also Blakely, 1983; Smith-Hefner, 1999). In addition, some students also characterized Hmong students as culturally deficient. Hmong students tried to counter this unwelcoming posture by claiming their status as Americans and by separating themselves from more recent Hmong arrivals. Lee concluded that schools need to address the notion of what it is to be an American and must to challenge the notion that Whiteness is the means to being American. In similar findings, First (1988) quoted a young Vietnamese student who said, "You have to know English. . . . And it helps to be white" (p. 206).

My own research on discrimination and its relationship to academic motivation indicated that negative attitudes and experiences create short-term but not necessarily long-term consequences in refugee students' academic goals and career aspirations (McBrien, 2005). My 2-year study of 18 adolescent refugee girls from eight countries indicated that the girls were upset by teacher and peer discrimination to the point that they feigned illness to avoid school or threatened to drop out. However, in each case, the girls stayed in school, worked to receive high grades, and held high aspirations, such as careers in medicine, teaching, or law. Two of the girls had been offered college scholarships, and, since the time of my interviews, four have entered college. My research revealed that parental support (and student pride in their parents), refugee peer support, models at refugee agencies where the girls went for academic assistance, positive self-beliefs, and some positive teacher support enabled the girls to maintain their goals and academic standards.

Muslim Student Experiences

Most of the research literature on Muslim students in the United States has appeared since the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. In addition, media reports have documented hate crimes directed at Muslim students and other Muslim Americans (Asali, 2003; McMurtrie et al., 2001; Wingfield & Karaman, 2001).

In a description of best practices for counseling Muslim children, Carter (1999) explained that many U.S.-born citizens negatively stereotype Muslims as fanatics

and that U.S.-born schoolchildren often tease foreign-born peers about their Arab names. Based on his experiences as a school psychologist, Carter stated that U.S.-born students often bully Muslim students for displaying outward signs of their religion, such as wearing hijab and fasting during Ramadan. Carter reported that most Muslims consider terrorist activity as criminal, and Muslim children reported that they had to defend themselves against being called terrorists by U.S.-born children. The author explained that Muslims highly value education and educators. He stated that many Muslim parents wanted to be involved with their children's education, but they were often afraid of being misunderstood as a result of their culture and their language barriers.

Researchers conducted a needs assessment and provided recommendations regarding Somali youth in one Maryland community (Birman, Trickett, & Bacchus, 2001). Birman and colleagues interviewed 14 Somali middle school and high school students, 4 parents, and 20 school staff, including 15 ESL teachers from three high schools, two middle schools, and two elementary schools. Somali students said they were unprepared for the taunts and stereotypes of their U.S.-born peers. For instance, the U.S. students would tease the girls about their head coverings, and they would ask the Somalis if they went naked in Africa or lived in trees. Some Somali students reported negative treatment from students as a result of doing well in their classes. One student said that a U.S. student provoked a fight because the Somali student had scored higher on a math test than the U.S. student. Another Somali student said she was confused when U.S. students said that she was "acting White" for doing well in classes.

The students reported experiences of discrimination as a result of their religious practices, for example, their clothing, daily prayer, and refusal to date. The Somali girls related an incident in which school personnel expected them to remove their scarves for school ID photos, causing them to feel disrespected. The students spoke with researchers about dropping out of school, and all of them knew other Somali students who had left school before receiving high school diplomas (Birman et al., 2001). Some students cited the difficulties of understanding school subjects because of earlier gaps in their education created by their refugee experience. Other students mentioned inability to make friends in school and the unavailability of resources for help. Teachers who were interviewed remarked that they were afraid of saying anything that might raise traumatic feelings in the refugee students, and they expressed instances of cultural misunderstandings. Teachers were unhappy about the lack of involvement from Somali parents, and they saw that ESL students did not mingle with American students.

In summary, parental factors of misunderstanding, conflicting cultural beliefs, and language difficulties amount to what Rumbaut and Portes (2001) term dissonant acculturation, in which parents lag behind their children's acquisition of the language and culture of their new country. Parents may feel a loss of control and may experience identity problems when their children must take on adult roles for them. Family conflicts increase, with an ensuing loss of the sense of safety and security on the part of the children. Students may feel that they do not belong anywhere, as they become alienated from their parents but are not truly accepted by their peers. Discriminatory practices on the part of teachers and peers increase the refugee students' isolation. Researchers found that discrimination often stemmed from a lack of accurate information and from cultural misunderstandings.

What Can Help Refugee Students to Overcome Obstacles to Their Success?

The answer to this question may seem obvious: Provide social services to facilitate refugee children's adjustment, provide language instruction for students and their parents, and combat discrimination. However, some proposed solutions have been unsuccessful. For example, of the three ESL programs that Gebhard (2003) researched, two were problematic. Because language is important to refugee students' acculturation, one might conclude that rapid English acquisition is necessary. However, many researchers, especially those whose work has been published since the late 1980s, have warned against rapid acculturation (Ascher, 1989; Eisenbruch, 1988; Olsen, 2000). Both parents and teachers draw mistaken conclusions about cultural cues (Trueba et al., 1990), another example of good intentions going awry. For example, in the study by Trueba and colleagues (1990), the parents were often without the benefit of interpreters at parent–teacher conferences, and the parents misunderstood what teachers were asking of them. In the same study, teachers misinterpreted the Asian custom of smiling and shaking one's head up and down as understanding and agreement, when, in fact, it was the parents' way of being polite.

In addition, cognitive norms in other countries are likely to strike U.S. educators as unusual. Using a sample of 150 Hmong students in three schools ranging from Grade 5 through Grade 12, Timm, Chiang, and Finn (1998) administered the Group Embedded Figures Test (GEFT) to assess Hmong students' learning styles. The researchers found that students with the least amount of time in U.S. schools were most likely to have scores indicating field-dependent learning styles. A field-dependent style is characterized by a student's preference for group work, the need for outside encouragement, and sensitivity toward others. In contrast, field-independent characteristics include the propensity to work independently, to be intrinsically motivated and self-directed, and to seek personal recognition for accomplishments. Timm and colleagues pointed out that the field-independent and -dependent learning styles are not indicative of high or low intelligence. However, according to Timm et al., U.S. teachers and administrators tend to associate field independence with higher intelligence. The researchers noted that characteristics of field-sensitive cognitive styles, such as attention to context and sensitivity to others, are valuable and that educators ought to consider ways to encourage both styles. The longer students had lived in the United States, the more likely they were to be field-independent learners, indicating cognitive acculturation patterns.

Hopkins (1996) found that field-dependent cultural and cognitive styles resulted in academic problems for Khmer refugee children, as well. In her 7-year ethnographic study of a community of Khmer refugees in a Midwestern city, she found that young Khmer students did well in their early years of school in the United States and that teachers liked these quiet, well-behaved children. However, as they entered adolescence, the competitive nature of secondary school was foreign to the students' values of cooperation and selflessness. Teachers became frustrated with their Khmer students' efforts, not realizing that, in Buddhist culture, doing good for others is more important than attaining good for oneself. Hopkins stressed numerous practical methods to help Khmer refugee students overcome cultural obstacles. They included placing maps of Cambodia and Khmer script on the classroom walls and making use of group projects, cooperative learning, group recitation, multi-age

classrooms, classes for parents, the establishment of relationships between schools and ethnic organizations, and flexible, extended day-class schedules.

The Immigrant Student Project was a 2-year investigation that included extensive interviews with immigrants and refugees as well as with policymakers and people who worked with immigrants in schools and social services (First, 1988). Researchers suggested numerous local strategies for improving the educational opportunities for immigrant and refugee children. These included informing parents about schools and about their rights through both print and electronic media, including native language publications, radio, and television stations. Not only teachers but also school staff in general should be instructed in cultural sensitivity and should model respect for all children. Districts should act on the research that demonstrates the success of heterogeneous grouping and multi-age classrooms. They should evaluate students using broad-based assessments rather than standardized exams. All students should receive multicultural education, with which immigrant children can assist by telling their own stories. English language teaching should supplement, but not replace, a child's first language and culture.

Zhou and Bankston's (2000) extensive report on Vietnamese refugees concluded with a number of recommendations for helping youth succeed. They suggested that school staff and advocates understand students in community contexts. To accomplish this goal, ties are needed between schools and ethnic community groups and between parents and teachers. Adults from ethnic communities can be employed to serve as a bridge between the communities and schools. In addition, children may need help to cope with parental pressure. The researchers also cautioned that children who seem to be well adjusted may need help too, as Masselson (2002) and Bankston and Zhou (2002) found with high-achieving but depressed refugee students.

Clearly, then, recognizing and respecting cultural differences is important to refugee students' academic success. Structural and individual efforts at welcoming are needed to prevent refugee students from becoming isolated. Even a segmented welcoming atmosphere in the school can contribute to positive adjustment for refugee students. All of the students interviewed in the Birman study (2001) said that their favorite class was ESL. One student said, "You could be yourself. No one looked at you differently because you had a scarf or an accent" (p. 8). On the other hand, some students commented that difficulties motivated them to try harder. One male said, "When you don't know the subject you'll try to fight with it so you can get it. That's what I did" (Birman et al., 2001, p. 9). A female participant said that when she wanted to give up, parental support and the realization of how hard her parents were working kept her motivated. I also found that positive teachers (who were often ESL teachers), parental support, refugee peer support, and a welcoming refugee youth center helped students to stay in school in spite of unwelcoming situations from school staff and U.S. peers (McBrien, 2005).

As previously cited research has indicated, the school can be viewed as a major source of security for students when teachers are willing and well-trained to detect refugee students' needs (Ascher, 1989; Eisenbruch, 1984; Pérez, 2001). Theilheimer's (2001) description of one teacher-preparation program stressed the need for teachers to educate themselves about the experiences that refugees have endured in order to be helpful and nonjudgmental (see also Trueba et al., 1990). In the program, preservice teachers tutored immigrant and refugee children by reading

books with them and by discussing the readings with the parents. The work helped the teachers in training to replace their stereotypes with accurate images based on relationships that they had built. Teachers also came to view themselves less as experts and more as team members working with the newcomers. In addition, parents reported feeling empowered as a result of their work with the teachers.

Hones (2002) reported on research in which his students, who were teachers completing graduate work, used ethnographic research methods to understand the political, social, and cultural backgrounds of a refugee or immigrant family in their school or town. The teachers chose families from Laos, Mexico, Kurdistan, and Kosovo. As a result of their research, the teachers reported transformations in their own attitudes, in terms of their empathy with and respect for the families with whom they became acquainted.

Hones' (2002) recommendation of teacher dialogic research shows promise in extending teacher empathy toward immigrant and refugee students. However, his description of the research needs to include precautionary measures to insure care for participants' mental well-being. There is potential for interviewees to experience trauma during interviews, and Hones does not indicate that the teacher interviewers were prepared to minimize or manage trauma.

Discussion

Overall, the literature that is reviewed here emphasizes several important points that apply to refugees from a range of cultures and time periods since 1980. Premigration and acculturation stresses contribute to the ability of refugees to cope with and succeed in their new surroundings. Distress and economic struggles endured by adults have repercussions for refugee children in terms of emotional difficulties and school-related issues. When refugees must settle in high-poverty urban areas, the youth often end up in a negative, subtractive assimilation pattern, rejecting their family and cultural ties in hopes of being accepted by American peers. Refugee students who can acquire the academic language of their new country and be accepted by their teachers and new peers fare the best in school. In this section, I will review recommendations offered in the research reviewed, followed by omissions in current literature that suggest directions for important future research.

Implications for Practice

Researchers suggested that refugee students, to acculturate successfully, must merge new and native cultures in an additive assimilation strategy, or what Portes and Zhou (1993) term upward mobility and ethnic solidarity. Political, social, and educational supports can help them to do this without alienating their family members. Especially since the 1990s, language acquisition research supports slow, bilingual approaches to second language learning. In addition, researchers find that retaining one's native language helps to maintain family and cultural ties that are important to psychosocial well-being.

Refugee parental beliefs and the parents' confusion in their own quest for social integration can become obstacles to the children. Therefore, social support is important for refugee parents as well as for youth. Researchers have suggested that parents be welcomed and informed by school personnel. Refugee adults can be important links between schools and ethnic communities. To overcome prejudice and discrimination, refugee youth need support at the structural and personal

levels. In addition, teachers need to confront their own attitudes toward immigrant and refugee children and create classrooms in which there is multicultural education and respect for all children.

Cumulative research results point to the importance of teachers' and administrators' understanding the refugee experience. Misunderstanding the dire situations of parents, the role of trauma in refugees' behaviors, cultural differences, and best practices in language acquisition has caused many school personnel to hold prejudiced attitudes that lead to discrimination (Birman et al., 2001; Blakely, 1983; Nguyen & Henkin, 1980; Timm, 1994; Trueba et al., 1990). A more subtle and insidious practice to be faced by communities and by the nation as a whole is that of White power and privilege (Fernández-Kelly & Curran, 2001; Gitlin et al., 2003; Goldstein, 1988; Hones, 2002; Lee, 2002; Stepick et al., 2001).

Limitations in the Research

There are several gaps in the literature where future research can provide suggestions for better supporting refugee students. One area that requires more research is that of legal advocacy. In his review of acculturation theories, Rudmin (2003) remarked that more interdisciplinary work between law and acculturation researchers needs to occur, especially regarding minority rights, refugee rights, and immigration law. International agreements such as the Geneva Convention (Article 22 requires States to provide equal schooling opportunities to refugee children) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, to which the United States is a signatory (Article 13 echoes Article 22 of the Geneva Convention) can be cited to mandate more research on helping refugee students succeed. In addition, the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation of 2002 calling for improvement across all categories of students should be used to increase educational support for refugee students. Unfortunately, the NCLB guidelines ignore research about best practices for language minority children. The word "bilingual" has been expunged from the legislation, and programs for LEP students are required to meet only two requirements: (a) teach English, and (b) teach the state content standards (Wright, 2005). Instruction in native languages is optional. The new legislation does not recognize benefits of bilingual education, cultural diversity, the need for understanding diverse cultures, or "factors which have negatively impacted the education of LEP students" (p. 23), such as segregated instruction, improper placement in special education classes, or shortages of bilingual education teachers.

Aside from stressing language acquisition and the need for teachers to be patient and sympathetic, the literature on refugee children and adolescents does not specify ways to boost refugee students' achievement in required school subjects. Whereas one can find numerous articles discussing academic achievement in math, science, and language arts for the general population of students and for larger minority groups (such as African Americans and Hispanics), this kind of research is not available for refugee populations. This area, too, would benefit from new research.

There is insufficient literature separating the needs of immigrant students in general from the needs of refugee students. I found no literature that systematically compared differences between groups of immigrants and refugees in schools. As I have demonstrated, there are considerable differences between refugees and immigrants. Without comparative studies, teachers, administrators, and policymakers

have no valid or reliable information to differentiate teaching and services to provide best practices for these groups.

The works reviewed, and my own introduction, are limited by the use of generalizations. This review includes some valuable studies that concentrate on refugees from specific cultures (Birman et al., 2001; Delgado-Gaitan, 1994; Lee, 2002; Rumbaut & Portes, 2001; Smith-Hefner, 1990, 1999; Timm, 1994; Zhou, 2001). However, most of the studies look at panethnic composites, such as Asians, Southeast Asians, and Indochinese, or broader categories, such as refugees or immigrants. The general studies are important: They offer an introduction to the importance of understanding refugee populations, and they reveal parallels in psychosocial adjustment, language acquisition needs, and discrimination. However, the few noted differences indicate the need to research specific refugee groups to discover their particular needs, especially refugee groups arriving in the United States since 1990. Indeed, as Pedraza-Bailey (1985) pointed out in her examination of the Cuban migration, there is great diversity even among refugees from the same country, which produces differences in their experiences and acculturation processes. The theoretical framework of Portes and Rumbaut (2001) recognizes that refugees arrive in diverse circumstances and are received in differing ways, depending on the political climate of the country. These differences must be recognized in order to confront unique needs and conflicts encountered by refugee students.

Although refugee admissions declined after September 11, 2001 (U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, 2002), the United States still accepts far more refugees for permanent resettlement than any other country in the world. An annual quota of 50,000 refugees resettled in the United States means that approximately 25,000 new refugee children could enter U.S. schools in the next year. Spread over the country's vast size and 95,000 public K–12 schools (National Center for Education Statistics, 2002), the number may seem insignificant. Noddings (1984/1997) exhorts us to look beyond the depersonalized structures and curriculum objectives and begin, instead, by caring for our individual students. Taking the time to understand the unique characteristics of refugee students and the factors that increase their academic achievement can contribute to more effective school programs and teaching strategies to support the students' success (McBrien, 2003).

Surviving the turmoil of war and the violence of refugee camps indicates refugees' determination to live and succeed. Although the dangers of starting a new life in America clearly do not match those that refugee students have previously faced, the prejudice and unfamiliar customs that they encounter in the host country create bewilderment, depression, and a sense of defeat for many (Trueba, et al., 1990). To thrive, they need the help of educators.

Education in the United States, particularly in relation to immigrant, migrant, and refugee students, too frequently becomes an issue of politics. Historically, a major role of any society's education system is to pass on the culture of the society to its youth. But the tenets of American culture, given the country's unique history of immigration, continue to be debated. Will we teach our children to be welcoming to newcomers by accepting the diversity of international cultures that they bring with them, or will we expect new Americans to cast off their heritage and assimilate into a distinctively "American culture"?

Portes and Rumbaut (2001) suggested that the English language itself has come to symbolize commitment to the United States. Rong and Preissle (1998)

agreed, stating that the "acquisition of nonaccented English and dropping of native languages represent the test of an immigrant's patriotism." (p. 36). It is of interest to note, however, that the early years of the United States were characterized by a bilingual tradition in schools, and Congress considered John Adam's proposal to make English the official language to be undemocratic (Banks, 1988). English-only laws became popular during the nativist movement in the late 19th century, and there is currently strong sentiment against bilingual education, as evidenced by federal and some state laws to abolish it. Banks argued that native languages are inextricable from a group's culture, and although he advocated for English literacy as a goal in American schools, he also argued that linguistically different students should be accommodated with materials and teaching that allow them equal opportunities to learn. Banks' beliefs are supported by the Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study data. First (1988) and other researchers advocated for educational support to help children retain their native language as they learn English.

When teachers and teacher aides are not trained to understand the issues faced by refugee children in their classrooms, they are prone to speaking or behaving in insensitive ways that bring about embarrassment, shame, or depression in the students (Trueba et al., 1990). Delgado-Gaitan and Trueba (1991) stated that educational leaders from research institutions must become involved in issues of immigrant, refugee, and other minority children's education, warning that ethnically and linguistically diverse children who are pressured to assimilate turn their anger and frustration inward, endangering themselves, or outward toward society. If not for the sake of the individual refugee child, then for the stability of society as a whole, helping refugee children to succeed in school should be of importance to educators, administrators, and policymakers.

Notes

[1] The U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants 2004 World Refugee Survey (paragraph 9) stated, "In Fiscal Year 2003 (ending September 30), the United States admitted 28,400 refugees, far below the 70,000 that were authorized. The admission figures for FYs 2002 (27,100) and 2003 [the 2003 figure was not provided here] were the lowest in the history of the U.S. resettlement program" (U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, 2004).

[2] Rudman (2003) pointed out that Zangwill (1909) was not advocating successful integration as a process in which immigrants sever ties with their linguistic and cultural past to embrace completely the language, culture, and values of the new country. Rather, the main character in the play, David, speaks of America as "God's Crucible, the great Melting-Pot where all the races of Europe are melting and re-forming! . . . Germans and Frenchmen, Irishmen and Englishmen, Jews and Russians—into the Crucible with you all! God is making the American" (Zangwill, p. 33). Rather than envisioning acculturation as acceptance of the culture established by earlier generations of American immigrants, Zangwill described the acculturation process more in terms of Nietzsche's superman.

[3] It is likely that the large number of Cubans already settled in Miami made it easier for subsequent Cuban refugees. However, it is important to recognize that Cuban refugees are a diverse group. Pedraza-Bailey (1985) pointed out that the first group of Cuban refugees were wealthy and highly educated. This group sent 14,000 children to

the United States unaccompanied out of fear that the new Communist state of Cuba would hand them over to the state for indoctrination. Pedraza-Bailey stated that during the Mariel boatlift, approximately half of the refugees were blue-collar workers, and many were "social undesirables" placed on the boats by angry Cuban officials, whether they wanted to leave or not (p. 20). In addition, many of the latter group were Black. Pedraza-Bailey commented that in Cuba, perhaps even more than in the United States, there is considerable prejudice based on skin color. Because of these distinctions, she claimed that the established Cuban Americans were not happy to receive this group of new refugees into their enclave.

[4] In particular, Wright (2005) noted that the 1984 reauthorization of the Bilingual Language Act increased the population that could be served by the law to include adults, included funding for alternative literacy programs, and recognized the value of second-language literacy. Wright stated that the 1994 reauthorization included wording that expanded services to migrant youth and their families. The bill's "official list of purposes" included the development of multicultural understanding as well as bilingual competencies (Wright, p. 18).

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