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FILOZOFICKÁ FAKULTA

Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky

**The Multi-Cultural Classroom: Theory and Practice
A Look at John Marshall High School
in Los Angeles, California, USA**

Bakalářská práce

BARBORA FIALOVÁ
Česká filologie – Anglická filologie
3. ročník bakalářského studia

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Olomouc 2008

Prohlášení

Prohlašuji, že jsem tuto bakalářskou práci vypracovala samostatně a uvedla úplný seznam citované a použité literatury.

V Olomouci dne

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Vlastnoruční podpis

Appreciation

I would like to thank PhDr. Matthew Sweney, M.A. for supervision of my thesis, consultations and general support, and to Martha Atwell for providing me with the material and information for my thesis, as well as involving me in observation of her classes at John Marshall High School.

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Annotation

The subject of this thesis is to address the problems of educating immigrant children in the USA and to relate the theoretical background to my own observations of John Marshall High School in Los Angeles.

First, I will present three main issues of education of immigrants: the process of acculturation, high dropout rate and the classroom interaction based on several theoretical studies.

The next part introduces John Marshall High School, its history, system of education and policy as well as brings my own observations addressing each of the already mentioned problems.

In the fourth and the fifth part I will give conclusions and summary and the sixth part brings the bibliography.

Náplní této bakalářské práce je určit problémy týkající se vzdělávání imigrantů v USA a uvést do vztahu teoretické poznatky s mými vlastními, získanými při pobytu na John Marshall High School v Los Angeles.

Nejprve představím tři hlavní problémy spojené se vzděláváním imigrantů, což je proces kulturní asimilace, vysoký podíl studentů, kteří školu nedokončí a vzájemná interakce při vyučování.

Další část práce představí John Marshall High School, její historii, systém výuky a politiku a zároveň přinese moje poznatky vztahující se k jednotlivým již zmíněným problémům.

Část čtvrtou bude tvořit závěr a v páté části bude provedeno shrnutí. Část šestá podává bibliografické údaje.

1. Introduction

The number of immigrants in the United States is increasing year by year. Since 1998, the numbers of immigrants almost doubled, comparing 653, 206 newcomers in 1998 to 1, 052, 415 in 2007.¹ This brings along many problems of incorporating these people into the society in the USA. As for California, the majority of newcomers arrive from Central or Latin America, less frequent are immigrants from Asia, Europe and Africa. All these ethnic groups have their own customs, habits and patterns of interaction. What is for one ethnic community automatic and natural, for other is not and vice versa. The differences can occur for example in perceiving oneself in the society, in the way of communication and interaction with authorities. This represents the main problem for immigrant students, because they have to get used to the new way of school interaction. Also the teaching and learning patterns differ in various ethnic communities. In the USA, students tend to have more freedom, they usually are allowed to move around the classroom during the lessons and the atmosphere seems to be less formal than for example in Europe. American school system accentuates the development of analytical skills and individuality, while for example Hispanic communities prefer to be part of the society and students often have to memorize facts by heart.

These newly-arrived immigrant students are the most affected ones in the whole process of migration since they have to undergo the education in the USA. There are many factors which put them at risk of dropping out, in general we talk about social factors, language factors and individual factors. On the other hand, the USA schooling experience can be also very useful and often brings better career opportunities than those in the native country. It is very important for newly-arrived immigrant students to realize these opportunities and for the teachers to motivate their students and show them new possibilities.

In my thesis I would like to focus on the question of education of the immigrant children and its difficulties in general and also based on my personal experience. In summer of 2006 I spent two months at John Marshall High School in Los Angeles, observing the education of immigrants in ESL (English as a Second Language) classes. John Marshall High School is a senior high school situated in Los Feliz area, which is actually an Armenian neighborhood. Latinos create the most numerous ethnic group on the school, accounting for around 70% of overall enrollment. The

school provides ESL classes for newly arrived immigrant students as well as mainstream English classes for already English proficient children of immigrant parents. It also provides Magnet Program for gifted students and Special Education of slower students. For those who would like to become bilingual teachers the school offers Multilingual Teacher Career Academy, which involves also practical training. The students of the school can choose from the great variety of the elective subjects such as Animation Class, Music classes and classes of Industrial Arts or get involved in any kind of school club or small learning community programs such as Armenian Students Association (ASA), Math club, Chess club, Tree club, Design and Technology Small Learning Community (SLC), Performing Arts SLC, Humanitas SLC, Environmental Studies SLC and many others.

As one of the “side effects” of acculturation, especially in cases of involuntary migration, newly-arrived immigrant students tend to be more at risk of emotional, drug and sometimes even gang activity problems. There is a special service at John Marshall High School which offers help to those troubled students.

The theoretical studies I used for my thesis mostly deal with the problematic of acculturation, acquiring the tacit knowledge and how to make the whole process easier for students. The authors search for answers on such questions as: which factors put students at risk of dropping out the most and, on the other side, which of them have a positive impact on the school performance? How are interaction patterns different in various kinds of ethnic communities? How important is the teacher’s approach?

This thesis is aimed to relate the theoretical studies on the subject matter of acculturation, classroom interaction and dropout rate to my own observations of John Marshall High School.

2. The main problems of educating immigrant children

2.1 Acculturation

The number of immigrant schoolchildren or youth is increasing year by year. Nowadays almost one in five of all American students is an immigrant child.² These children have left their home country for various reasons, the thing they have in common is that they are stranded in a new country and new culture, in most cases without any or with minimal knowledge of English and very often also in a different home setting than the one in their country of origin.

They have to undergo the process of acculturation, which means to leave the habits from the old country behind and adapt to the rules of the new society. The main issue in this process is the language. Newly-arrived immigrant children tend to use their mother tongue as a display of national pride, and therefore refuse to adopt English as their primary language, which is the factor that slows the acculturation down. As a result, there is a pressure to teach immigrant children only in English and dismiss any kind of bilingual education.³ “At the national level, U.S. Representative Tom DeLay has introduced legislation to eliminate federal funding for bilingual education and to end all federal mandates on states with respect to providing instruction to immigrant children in their home language.”⁴

This was met with the disagreement of some of the childrens’ parents, who were disturbed by the pressure put on their children to abandon their original language so fast.⁵ The main problem was that the parents themselves were not able to acquire English skills as rapidly as the children so they did not help and support their children in the process of acculturation and learning the new language. At school children were allowed to use only English in communication with a teacher, while at home they were asked to communicate in the old way. As a result, the children suffered from the loss of identity, which again did not help their integration into a new environment. They either find themselves alienated from their home and native community or they get into conflicts with teachers and their American-born schoolmates.⁶ This approach when the students are pressured to leave behind their native language as quickly as possible is called “subtractive acculturation”.⁷

A considerably more successful approach was “additive acculturation – the acquisition of knowledge and skills in the new culture and language are viewed as an

additional set of tools to be incorporated into the child's cultural repertoire rather than as a rejection or replacement of old traits.”⁸

There were many studies carried out on the subject of acculturation, searching for answers to questions such as: How does acculturation affect the school performance of the immigrant children? What is the role of the school in the process of acculturation and in helping immigrants to be successful at school? Is acculturation the major issue?⁹

For illustration I will introduce three studies by Margaret A. Gibson (Gibson, 1998). She focused on three ethnic groups (West Indian, Punjabi and Mexican) in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s.

The first – West Indian case research was held in 1970s in St. Croix. During this period of time the number of immigrant children in local schools increased from 12% to 40%, and 30% of the school children were Puerto Rican. All the schoolchildren were of similar background as for race and class, which means black and poor, but the natives – called Crucians - were looking down at the immigrants, calling them “Down Islanders” or even “Aliens”. In spite of teachers’ and classmates’ disparaging remarks, prejudices and discrimination, the immigrant children did better at school than the natives. This was caused by the fact that in their home country the education was neither free nor available for all students and therefore immigrant parents supported their children very much at persisting at school, since they believed that with at least the high school diploma their children would get better opportunities to find a good job.¹⁰

The second research was held in 1980s in the area of Valleyside. Gibson focused on Indian immigrants from the state of Punjab, therefore she calls it the Punjabi case. As in the previous case, Punjabi children were exposed to discrimination and teasing at schools. They were criticized for everything connected with their home country and culture of India – the hairstyle, clothing, food. These children sensed that if they defended themselves, they would be punished and considered troublemakers. As a result, most of these children performed academically poorly and graduated without courses needed for college admission. An interesting fact is, however, that U.S. – born Punjabis and those, who arrived before the age of 10 did academically comparable at school to the Anglo Americans. The Punjabi parents were naturally annoyed by the devaluation of their culture and the prejudices; however, they supported their children to attend public schools. They wanted their children to accommodate themselves into

the new country, to become competitive and skillful, but not at expense of their Indian culture. Children, on the other hand, tended to drop their original culture and to acculturate to the American society.¹¹

The last research was focused on Mexican immigrants in 1990, again in the area of Valleyside. Gibson studied all students of Mexican descent in the ninth grade of Valleyside high. Two-thirds of them were children of immigrants; one-third had at least one parent a native American. The sample consisted of a total of 113 students. Only 54 of those graduated from Valleyside High. Students of Mexican descent usually tend to be bilingual and bicultural, since they have strong national feelings. A surprising fact in this study was, that most teachers claimed to support these students' wishes, but in reality the teachers insisted only on English as a spoken language in class, even when talking to schoolmates, and the students got the impression that Spanish was not a valued language. On the other hand, the parents were pressuring them to talk in Spanish, not to drop their original culture. All this negatively affected the immigrant students, who, as a result, were failing at school and were having identity problems.¹²

All these three cases are linked by the fact that immigrant children were always the targets of derision and discrimination. We can confidently say that acculturation definitely is an issue, but we have to consider acculturation not just as an individual process, but also as a collective process, because it does not involve just the schoolchild, but the whole newly-arrived family. As we could see in all those cases, children were not affected just by the environment at school, but also by their parents' approach towards education in general (the West Indian case) or integrating into the new society and leaving behind their old culture (Punjabi and Mexican case). The main clash is actually considered between children being pressured by the school to use just English and their parents making them keep their original language. This leads, as was already stated before, to the identity loss and moreover the loss of emotional support from the family.¹³

Alejandro Portes and Min Zhou (1993) came up with the term “segmented assimilation”, which describes patterns of immigrant adaptation.¹⁴ The first one is “upward mobility”, when the group makes fast progress and soon socially and politically integrates into the middle class.¹⁵

The next pattern varies in terminology – “selective acculturation” and “selective assimilation” (Portes and colleagues) or “accommodation and acculturation without

assimilation”(Gibson, 1988). This pattern is typical for the strong ethnical enclave which preserves the aspects of immigrant culture. Also this acculturation can lead to the fast integration into the middle class.¹⁶

The situation, when children acculturate almost at the same pace as their parents is called “consonant acculturation”(Portes and Rumbaut, 1996).¹⁷ This occurs mostly among middle-class immigrants and provides for children great promises of successful integration.

The least successful integration brings the “dissonant acculturation” or “downward assimilation” pattern (Portes and Rumbaut, 1996).¹⁸ This usually occurs when children are pressured to speak only English. After some time the second generation loses language and culture contact with the first generation. What follows is the already mentioned identity loss. There were documented some cases of Mexican American communities in California when immigrant students wanted to be accepted by native-born Mexicans and therefore adopted antischool attitudes.¹⁹ The last pattern of acculturation can, but does not have to bring the problem of poor school performances of immigrant children.²⁰

It is necessary for immigrants to integrate into the new society, to move forward. It was believed in the past, that if immigrant children only left their enclaves and acculturated to the new society as fast as possible, including also adopting English as their only language, they would be successful at school.²¹ Later studies showed completely the opposite. Those children who remain in their strong ethnic background and at the same time are adopting new culture do well in schools.²²

The process of acculturation goes hand in hand with the acquiring of “tacit knowledge” (Sternberg, 1998). Sternberg is a psychologist who focused his studies on the construct of tacit knowledge and how it can influence education of immigrants. He found that tacit knowledge is not explicitly taught; it is based on the everyday experience of the culture we live in. This includes habits, behavior in different everyday situations; it is part of our upbringing. We do not even realize having tacit knowledge. The problem occurs when the two cultures get in contact or when the host culture expects the immigrant culture to have the tacit knowledge of its culture or if the host culture actually takes advantages of immigrants because of their lack of tacit knowledge.²³

As Sternberg comments: “U.S. society is less tolerant of people’s lack of tacit knowledge than many other societies are of ours.”²⁴

We can also perceive similarities between tacit knowledge of some countries, such as Canada and the USA. That is why Canadians acculturate much faster and easier than for example Mexicans, whose cultural tacit knowledge is very different from the US one.²⁵

Therefore immigrant children often have to overcome the problem with tacit knowledge of the system of learning facts. In the USA, children are taught to memorize basic facts, but then use them in practice and relate them with some other knowledge. In some other cultures, the schoolchildren are asked to learn facts by heart.²⁶ Another problem may occur for example in an everyday situation – greeting the authorities. For example children in the USA are used to say Hello or Hi to their mates, but to the authorities only Hello is acceptable. Immigrant children missing this kind of tacit knowledge might easily get confused and find themselves in trouble.²⁷

Also the system of testing could be problematic for immigrant children, considering that the tacit knowledge in this case is acquired mainly through experience, not through any kind of instruction.²⁸

Sternberg also points out that tacit knowledge is actually practical knowledge; it is knowledge of how to do things. He differentiates three main kinds of tacit knowledge: tacit knowledge about interacting with oneself, about interacting with others and interacting with tasks.²⁹

Interacting with oneself is connected with understanding of yourself, which also differs in various countries. For example in countries of Latin America, children understand themselves more in the terms of the collective or society, while the USA it is mainly individualistic culture. Again, this leads to the problems of class interaction between native and immigrant children, because those from a collectivistic culture care more for the achievements of the group, while children from individualistic culture act just in their own interest.³⁰

“Tacit knowledge about others refers to tacit understanding about others and their role in one’s life.”³¹ Regarding school problems we can involve in this category for example perceiving the forms of punishment. For example children from some African tribes are used to be punished corporally as the worst form of punishment. When these children arrive to the USA, where corporal punishment is prohibited, they might not pay much attention to reprehending. As a result they are often considered problematic.³²

Tacit knowledge about tasks regards the abilities and preferences while accomplishing tasks. A very clear example is the role of perceiving time in different cultures. In “monochronic” culture, people consider the time precious and like to complete the task within a certain frame of time. On the other hand, in “polychronic” culture, people do not pay so much attention to the clock and their attitudes might be considered irresponsible or tardy by the monochronic culture.³³ This is a problem for example for Hispanic immigrants.

It is necessary for newly-arrived immigrant children to learn the tacit knowledge of the new culture. Sternberg suggests that there are three processes to the learning of tacit knowledge, he calls them selective coding, selective combination and selective comparison.³⁴

The first phase, the selective coding, is based on selecting the relevant and important information in the amount of received information. Then follows combining the pieces of information and putting them together so they make sense, and the last phase is actually the understanding of the context, relating the past information to understand the present.³⁵

Sternberg also introduced a special program for teaching the school tacit knowledge to immigrant children, which is focused on practical skills in doing homework, taking tests, reading and writing. He discovered that tacit knowledge could be taught if it is made explicit.³⁶

Sternberg and his colleagues were teaching the children the tacit knowledge through a story, where the main character was a child of the same age as them. The character was going through a problem or difficult situation and the immigrant children were encouraged to give their own opinions how the character should decide or react in the situation.³⁷

I noticed the same approach in Marshall High School. In the ESL classes, children are assigned to read various stories. Very often the characters of the stories find themselves in a different place, in a new country, a difficult life situation or are the victims of taunting or race minorities. Children then gather in a circle with a teacher and discuss the story. They talk in detail about their own opinions on the character’s feelings, the solution of the situation and the results that lead from the decisions. The teacher works in this discussion only as a person who gives questions to point out important features of the story. Children, without noticing, are actually revealing their own feelings and opinions, while acquiring the tacit knowledge of the new country.

They also learn to share problems, they find out that they are not alone, that everybody is going through the same or at least similar feelings.

Another problem of the tacit knowledge in the immigrant family can be the perception of intelligence. The conceptions of intelligence vary within different cultures, for example in Chinese there is not even a word that would have the same meaning.³⁸ Sternberg and Okagaki (1993) studied the conceptions of intelligence in three kinds of communities – Latino, Asian and Anglo. Latino parents tried to focus on social skills while bringing up an intelligent child, while Asian and Anglo parents preferred to emphasize cognitive skills.³⁹

According to Sternberg's study, it is very important to teach newly-arrived immigrant children the tacit knowledge of the USA in an explicit way. It cannot be learnt by heart, as for example history facts or vocabulary, but children need to acquire it in the situations. So the main role of teachers of immigrants is to simulate situations from which they could benefit.⁴⁰

Tacit knowledge also contributes to general intelligence and is an important part of the process of acculturation. Children can never completely acculturate without the tacit knowledge of the culture.⁴¹

It is very important for teachers to realize the fact that children in their class have different tacit knowledge, so they might react differently upon their demands and instructions. For example, while asking children for their opinion on the matter, the teacher should not express her/his own opinion first. Some of the students may get discouraged, because in their own culture, the teacher is considered to be always right, so expressing their own opinion, even though different from teacher's, for them means disagreeing with a teacher, which is something unacceptable in their culture.

2.2 High dropout rate

“Mexican Americans have been noted to have the highest school dropout rates in the United States (National Center for Educational Statistics, 1989).”⁴²

According to the statistics (2002)⁴³, Mexican immigrants accounted for more than one-quarter of the immigrant population in total and more than half of the immigrant population from Latin America. Mexican communities are concentrated especially in the Los Angeles area and in Texas, places which in the past used to be part of Mexico. In 2000, only 20% of Mexican Americans graduated from high school and 14% had

higher education (34% in total), comparable to 34 % of Natives, who graduated from high school and 52% who had higher education (86% in total). Mexicans were followed by immigrants from Latin America (50% in total), Other Central America (51% in total), Caribbean (68% in total) and surprisingly the immigrants of South America showed the highest rate – 68% in total, high school graduates 30% and higher education even 38%.

There have been many studies held to account for what causes especially Mexican immigrants to fail at school. Baca (University of Southern California), Bryan and McKinney (California State University Dominguez Hills) (1993) reviewed several studies regarding this problem. There are different opinions on what is the main cause of the high dropout rate. According to McCarthy and Valdez (1985) this high rate of dropouts is caused by newly-arrived Mexican immigrants, who, because of the lack of English knowledge, tend to drop out of school more frequently.⁴⁴

The opposite opinion is represented by Valverde (1987), who claims that those newly- arrived immigrants with limited English proficiency drop out less than English fluent Mexican Americans.⁴⁵ This approach is supported also by Matute-Bianchi (1986), who differentiates students of Mexican descent and Mexican immigrants. She points out that both groups show different approaches towards schooling and when successful, tend to achieve different goals. Mexican Americans (in other words of Mexican descent) tend to participate in mainstream school clubs and offices, while Mexican immigrants participate in Spanish speaking clubs and play soccer. On the other hand, she does not find any evidence that immigrants are more successful at school than Mexican Americans.⁴⁶

There are not only differences in approaches towards school between students, but also between Mexican immigrant and Mexican American parents as suggests Romo (1985) in her study of parents' orientation. Mexican immigrant parents tend to support their children to acquire English proficiency as fast as possible and to actively participate in school attendance, as they consider the education to be the most important for their future jobs and place in a new society. Mexican American parents on the other hand are more pessimistic, do not support their children at schooling, because they are sure that anyway there will not be any good job positions or salaries no matter how hard they try. This opinion is probably based on their own experience.⁴⁷

Another important factor that affects school performance are also socioeconomic conditions. Immigrants who live in low socioeconomic areas also attend schools, which are not able to provide high quality education.⁴⁸ According to the figures in 1999⁴⁹, 22% of Latino immigrants lived in poverty, 26% of those were Mexican Americans.

According to the statistics (2002)⁵⁰, only 6% of Mexican Americans are employed as managers or professional specialists compared to 83% employed as skilled workers and farmers.

Durán and Weffer (1992) again support the opinion that Mexican immigrants achieve better school results than Mexican Americans. They agree with Romo, that Mexican Americans are alienated and a little pessimistic about their future careers. Figures still show the higher dropout rate in Mexican immigrants than Mexican Americans, Durán and Weffer argue that this fact is caused by the increasing number of newly-arrived immigrants at schools. Lower rates of Mexican immigrants entering colleges and universities as they explain, are caused by the lack of their social knowledge rather than lack of English skills at the admission tests.⁵¹

Macías (1990) suggests, that there are considerable social differences between newly- arrived immigrants and Mexican Americans. He explains that since Mexicans are a social nation and they prefer utopian values, newly-arrived immigrants when transferred to the USA are having problems to adapt to the individualistic and competitive society. He considers this fact as the main problem of newly-arrived Mexican immigrants, while Durán and Weffer see the problem also in English proficiency.⁵²

In most of these studies, the authors focused on facts that caused immigrants' failure at school. Gonzalez and Padilla (1997) chose a different approach; they tried to name factors which contributed to their success.⁵³ They started from the studies of Gandara (1995), who assigns the family support and individual persistence as the most important factors of immigrants' school success, and Alva (1991), who also adds support of the teachers and the peers as well as the "sense of control over one's academic future"⁵⁴ among factors supporting high school performance. On basis of these studies Gonzalez and Padilla created a questionnaire, which included 2, 169 Mexican American students in three California high schools. The first one was an urban school; the Mexican population was about 25%, another non-Hispanic ethnic group accounted for 20% of the students. The second school was placed in a rural area

and the ethnicity is even higher – 60% of the students were of Mexican descent; other 20% of students were non-Hispanic white students. The last school was situated at the American – Mexican border, so the density of the students of Mexican descent is the highest of all schools mentioned – 95%. The specialty of this school is that some of the Mexican students cross to the United States everyday to attend the high school.

The questionnaire focused on three areas: supportive academic environment, sense of belonging to school and cultural loyalty; considering the last mentioned point very critical, because of the fact that Mexicans in general emphasize the sense of belonging to the society or family.⁵⁵

All these areas were involved in 314 questions, “composed of various subscales measuring self-esteem (general, academic, social), delinquency, stressful life events, psychosocial maturity, school bonding, parental involvement, peer values and peer conformity.”⁵⁶

They found that the only thing that really affects students’ grades is the sense of belonging to school. Family and peer support are other factors which determine students’ resilience (resilient students are according to Alva (1991) considered those, who achieve high grades and high school performance, even though they undergo stressful situations connected with immigration process).⁵⁷

As for cultural loyalty, the results varied considerably in particular schools. In general, the study did not show that cultural loyalty would directly influence resilience. However, the study proved cultural loyalty to be closely connected with a sense of belonging to the school.

For example students of the border high school showed greater sense of belonging to school than the students from other two studied schools. This is probably the result of the ethnic homogeneity at the border high school (95% students of Mexican descent).⁵⁸

This study also showed a surprising fact – the difference in cultural pride in rather homogenous and not much ethnically diverse school. Mexican descendant students of the border school showed less cultural pride than the students of remaining schools. This is also explained by ethnic density – at the schools where there are only about 20% of students of Mexican descent, they tend to stick together and show more cultural loyalty and pride.⁵⁹

The shortage of this study is, that the authors do not differentiate between Mexican American students and recently-arrived Mexican immigrants. The study even contains

a group of students who live in Mexico, but they attend a border American high school. Obviously, these students are less at risk, because they still live in their home country and keep their mother tongue. Moreover most of the students in the class are actually Mexicans, so the question of their sense of belonging to school is more the question of individual approach than of ethnicity.

On the other hand, the authors emphasize the fact that the process of acculturation is considerably difficult for students who arrive to the USA after the age of 12.⁶⁰

Baca, Bryan and McKinney (1993) focused their study mainly on the problematics of the school persistence on bases of the length of schooling in the USA and English knowledge. For their study they chose 150 Mexican immigrant students, in the Los Angeles school district – La Entrada. The students graduated from middle school in 1987 and the authors followed them through the high school.⁶¹

They divide the students into two groups, according to the length of their stay in American schools. The first group is called charters, and students in this group arrived and started to study at American schools in kindergarten or until the second grade of basic school. The second group – late entrants – contains students who started their American schooling from grade three and above. The main difference between these two groups is English proficiency. Charters are already English proficient, while late entrants are Spanish proficient and acquiring English skills. Even though not completely proficient, most of the late entrants were enrolled at high school in main stream English classes, while at middle school they were enrolled in English as a Second Language (ESL) track. This track is specially designed for newly-arrived immigrants.⁶²

As for graduation rate, the authors found that “those who completed less education in their home country are twice as likely to graduate from high school as compared to those who entered the La Entrada School District as late entrants.”⁶³

This result supports the Durán and Weffer and Macías studies who claim that the limited time of the USA schooling puts students at risk.

The authors detach six non-graduate immigrant statuses, on bases of the track placement (ESL, university preparation, etc.), students’ academic performance and the school treatment of problematic students.⁶⁴

The first status is called “DNE”(did not enter). Students who belong into this category are those who never entered the high school. The Second one is called “seceder” and contains students who secede from the high school education at grades

ten or eleven. The authors also point out that the term “seceder” is more proper than the popular dropout which is rather pejorative and basically implies student who is not capable of finishing education. Mexican immigrant students have many various reasons for leaving the school, also connected with their social status and family background. Moreover, most of the seceders either enrolled in vocational programs or completed a Graduation Equivalency Diploma (GED) in their adulthood.⁶⁵

The third status refers to “transfer student”, who transferred to another high school. The next one is “retainee” and students in this status are considered problematic, as for academic results or behavior and are placed in an alternative program. The fifth status is “delayed seceder” a student who stays at school until eleventh or twelfth grade, but does not graduate. The last status is called “persisters”, students who stay at school later than their graduation class.⁶⁶

In table 1, there are the percentages and numbers of the students in each status.

Table 1
High School Educational Career Stages:
Late Entrants and Charters

	DNE n=14	Early Seceders n=25	Transfers n=18	Retainees n=26	Delayed Seceders n=20	Persisters n=3	Grads n=44	Total n=150
Charters n=87	6%	15%	9%	14%	13%	3%	40%	100%
Lates n=45	18%	22%	9%	18%	16%	0%	18%	101%
Total n=150*	9%	17%	12%	17%	13%	2%	29%	99%

* Includes 18 middle school graduates whose educational experiences in Mexico are unknown.⁶⁷

There is a common opinion prevailing among teachers of the La Entrada school district that those academically unsuccessful students return to Mexico. Obviously, this is not the truth since only five of the students of the class of 1989 returned to Mexico and it was not connected with the school performance.⁶⁸

The study describes in detail the findings for each status.

DNE (did not enter) status – Students who never enrolled in the High school

The authors found that the DNE group included almost the same number of boys and girls. Only five of the charters did not enter the high school, comparing to thirteen late entrants. On the other hand, only two of the late entrants did not have sufficient English skills to enter regular English class and would be placed in the ESL track. This shows that limited English knowledge is not the reason for not entering the high school.

As for socializing, it was found that approximately the same number of charters and late entrants tend to get pregnant or get involved in the gangs at an early age. Both charters and late entrants tend to have the same experiences and tend to be equally at risk which again shows that late entrant status does not predetermine immigrant children to have negative experience connected with the acculturation.⁶⁹

Early Seceders

As for gender, results are similar as in DNE's group; the numbers of boys and girls are very similar. 10 of the 23 early seceders are late entrants; most of them (six) were placed in the ESL program. Only one charter student was in the grade nine placed in the ESL track.

The number of late entrants placed in the ESL class suggests that the lack of English skills can play a significant role in dropping out of school. Only one of the charter students was placed in the ESL class, which shows the presence of other influences which put students at risk. In general, early seceders were not students who fail only in English; they tend to fail in most of the subjects including the optional ones. They also tend to be truant and unprepared for the classes, forgetting homework, not bringing their physical education uniforms, etc.

In spite of having problems, early seceders did not ask for any kind of help, neither school counselors showed any interest in helping. Most of the early seceders were not considered to have any behavioral problems.

The study of early seceders suggests that the lack of English skills is not directly connected with the school failure. Early seceders were students failing most of the classes; they seem not to have school orientation.⁷⁰

Transfer students

This group consisted of equal number of boys and girls. Eight of the students were charters and four were late entrants. The transfer students had exactly the same preparation and abilities as their peers who persisted at La Entrada. Most of the late entrants were placed in the ESL track in their transfer schools.

None of the students transfer to acquire academically higher education. The reason of the transfer for some students was moving out of the area.

Most of these students were academically unsuccessful before the transfer and as a result none of them graduated.⁷¹

Retainees

Retainees are called the students with behavior problems such as a gang activity who were transferred to the alternative school. The number of retainees is comparable to early seceders. Twenty-six of the students were placed in this status. The number of boys is higher in this case, only seven of retainees were girls. Conversely, the numbers of charters and late entrants were almost the same.

Most of the retainees were transferred to alternative schools at grades ten or eleven. Most of the charters were placed in the regular English classes, most of the late entrants in the ESL tracks. Academically both groups were comparably unsuccessful. Most of them ended up as DNE's at alternative school, only a few of them left to community college and another one remained at the alternative school trying to graduate.⁷²

Late Seceders

Late seceders are called those students who persisted at the high school, but did not graduate in the spring of 1991. The number of seceders was just a little higher than retainees, there were 20 late seceders. Charters and late entrants compose almost the same percentage; there are more boys than girls.

These students were showing many efforts towards graduation despite their poor academic results. They were often enrolled in summer courses or vocational colleges and they did not have behavioral problems. All of the charters were enrolled in regular English classes; three of the late entrants were placed in ESL track. Their failure at school cannot be blamed on lack of English skills. All these three students were failing in several classes, not specifically in English.⁷³

Persisters

There were only three persister students, all of them were charter students and all of them did poorly at school. The difference between late seceders and persisters is that persisters entered the high school again in the school year of 1990/91. According to the study, none of them was expected to graduate soon due to their poor academic results.⁷⁴

Graduates

There were nineteen boys and twenty-six girls who graduated from the high school in 1991. Thirty-five of them were charters, only nine were late entrants. Three late entrants students were placed in the ESL classes.

Most of the graduates were enrolled in college preparatory courses; tending to select French rather than Spanish as the second language because of the future university studies. The most outstanding student was a late entrant. This student was among four students who entered a four-year college or university. Other graduates either entered community college or had to delay their further studies because of financial problems. Actually, many of Mexican immigrant students started to work already in their junior year.

The top students of the class of 1991 were late entrants, even though more charters than late entrants graduated from the high school.⁷⁵

The results of this study showed that entering middle school late and not acquiring English skills do not cause academic failure of immigrant students. Late entrants definitely are more at risk than charter students, but it does not seem to be only because of English. There was not found any connection between placing students into the ESL track and dropping out neither the case that “the fear” or “the shame” would prevent immigrant students from enrolling at high school (the study proves higher numbers of ESL students in early seceder status than in DNEs).⁷⁶

At first sight it might seem that lack of English skills is the reason for dropping out. In fact, early seceders fail mostly non-academic and non-English electives or they fail subjects on the whole, not specifically English. Also the charters who graduated and were placed in college preparatory track were not more successful than late entrants, even though they had more time to develop sufficient English skills.⁷⁷

In general, late entrants are academically more at risk than charters, but the authors of this study found that the main reason are not English skills but rather the factors “beyond language”.⁷⁸ Many sociologists and also Gonzalez and Padilla (1997) suggest the family support, peers support, the sense of belonging to school and culture loyalty to be the most important factors.

Baca, Bryan and McKinney in their study found that peer support, the sense of belonging to school neither parental support are attributed to the academic success of graduates. The graduates of La Entrada were not participating in any extracurricular activities or joining clubs, they did not have any special relationships with counselors. As for parents, they were no longer interested in their children’s studies, did not help them with homework, did not attend school events. The parents of La Entrada graduates were not necessarily of higher education, neither did the graduates have siblings who already graduated from the high school. Most of high school immigrant students also have to work during they high school studies, not to earn extra money for their hobbies, but to support their family.⁷⁹

The authors also suggest that those students who realize better education opportunities in the USA than in their home country and perceive their schooling as the way of incorporating into the new society and building a successful career persist at a high school.⁸⁰

It was proven that there are many factors which affect academic success of immigrant children. There are social factors (family background, peer support, sense of belonging to school), language factors (acquiring English skills) and also individual factors (one’s priorities in life and attitudes toward the school).

Baca, Bryan and McKinney shown that acquiring language is definitely not the main problem and the reason of high dropout rate of immigrant students.

Major factors are the social ones, especially in the case of Mexican immigrants who have to switch from the rather pro-social country to a very competitive and individualistic society of the USA. The approach of the counselors and the school staff as well as peer support and interaction are also considerable factors, especially for successful acculturation and acquiring of the tacit knowledge. Also financial situation of the family, living conditions and presence of one, both or no parent (Mexican immigrant children often live with their distant relatives for various reasons) have an impact on students’ school performance.

However, the most important factor seems to be an individual approach towards schooling and all the immigration process. This theory supports the most successful student of La Entrada class of 1991 who was late entrant. He did not have any parental support, neither did the school show any special interest in him. All he achieved was only his individual success.⁸¹

2.3 Classroom interaction

Losey (1995) in his study suggests that one of the main factors which predetermine immigrant student to succeed or fail, is the interaction between student and teacher. She reviewed studies covering Mexican American students class and home interaction to discover what is the most effective way of educating Mexican American children.

The entire concept of interaction in this article is based on Vygotsky theory of learning language (1978). Vygotsky points out that learning of language is above all a social process, based on interactions between at least two individuals.⁸²

Losey also suggests that there tend to be different usage of language at the home community of Mexican American immigrants and at the school community. The most frequent interaction pattern at school and at middle-class Anglo families is “initiation-response-evaluation” (I-R-E) pattern.⁸³ This pattern is not very often found in other working class or immigrant families. The children already familiar with the school interaction pattern tend to be less at risk than those who use different interaction pattern in their home community.⁸⁴ This refers to what Sternberg (1998) calls tacit knowledge.

It is important to study the teacher – student interaction, because sometimes the immigrant children are mistreated and suffer from different treatment than the rest of the class. In general, teachers tend to treat high achieving and low achieving students differently. Very often happens the misjudgment of the students’ abilities on the basis of lack of English skills. This can seriously influence their future school persistence and academic success.⁸⁵

Losey in her study does not differentiate any immigrant statuses of Mexican American immigrants. She studies Mexican American population on the whole regardless the length of their stay in the USA, their socioeconomic status, the length of education in their home country and in the USA or any other factors. There are different names used for population of Mexican descent such as “Mexican Americans,

Chicanos, Latino, Mexicano, of Mexican descent, Hispanic, of Spanish descent.”⁸⁶

Losey chooses in her study the term Mexican American considering it the most politically neutral and descriptive.

The author actually focuses her study on four areas: the interaction between mother and child and teacher and student, differential treatment of Mexican American students in the classrooms, bilinguals and code switching and successful class environment.

2.3.1 Culture mismatch

In this section Losey gathered the studies covering mother – child interaction and teacher – student interaction based on the culture mismatch which generally suggest that there are interaction and communication differences between Mexican American communities and the US school interaction.

Laosa (1981, 1982) chose for his study 43 Mexican American women, 40 Anglo women and their 5-year-old children in the Los Angeles area. He was trying to find what are the teaching methods that mothers use when teaching their children. He found that mothers with higher education used mainly inquiry and praise, while those with lower education tend to use modeling as a learning method. Considering inquiry and praising the method that most of the teachers use at schools, Laosa points out that it clearly shows influence of American schooling on the mother.⁸⁷

Steward and Steward (1973) focused their attention on language as a factor of mother – child interaction. They chose 12 Anglo American (6 middle class, 6 lower class), 18 Mexican American (6 English speaking, 6 Spanish speaking, 6 bilingual) and 12 Chinese American (6 English speaking, 6 Chinese speaking) women and their 3-year-old boys for their study. They taught a game to mothers and wanted them to teach it to their children.⁸⁸ “Steward and Steward (1973) found that Anglo Americans provided the largest number of “instructional loops” – a series of turns much like the I-R-E exchange found in classrooms – at the fastest pace, followed by the Spanish-speaking Mexican American mothers. The bilingual Mexican American mothers provided the fewest instructional loops and took much longer to complete each loop than any other group because they provided more corrections and clarifications than other mothers. Spanish – speaking Mexican American mothers were found to use more nonverbal instructions than any other group while the Spanish – English

bilingual mothers provided the least amount of verbal help. And Mexican American children were found to be most likely to “accept” a task, whereas Anglo Americans were least likely. The Spanish-speaking Mexican American children asked for the most help or support from their mothers.”⁸⁹

García and Carrasco (1981) focused their study on patterns of interaction between bilingual mother and child in English and in Spanish. They found that the most common pattern in Spanish was the I-R-E one, while in English interaction the most common pattern was very similar to normal conversation – mother says something, child replies, mother says something, child replies, without any evaluation. The authors explain that the difference in the interaction pattern in both languages is caused by the fact that children were English dominant and therefore mothers tried to improve their Spanish skills. That is why they were also using evaluation phase during the Spanish interaction.⁹⁰

Losey warns against generalizations while summing up these studies, because none of these experiments and observations took place in a natural setting. However, the results show that there are differences between teaching methods of mothers with higher education and lower education and also that the way of interaction differs according to the language used.⁹¹

As for teacher – student interaction, several studies found that there is a different atmosphere in the homes of Mexican Americans than in the classroom. The home setting seems to be cooperative, while the school one seems to be competitive. Losey again infirms these conclusions because of lack of information about the home setting.⁹²

McClure (1978) observed three teachers and 70 students (25 Mexican American and 45 Anglos) in the kindergarten and first grades. He found out that Mexican American children were interacting as Anglo American children when they were in bilingual classes and felt confident. Being in the mainstream classes lowered their confidence and they did not want to participate much, did not ask questions to the teacher and did not participate in “choral responses”.⁹³

Trueba (1983) was studying Mexican American students through classes 3 to 8 with behavior problems “such as frustration, anxiety, aggression, and avoidance”⁹⁴ and came to the conclusion that students were more at risk of maladjustment to the school environment when their parents were not literate enough. In other words, the less literate the parents were, the more at risk were their children. The author observed

13 Mexican and Mexican American students and in five months he appointed three patterns of maladjustment of these students. He named them “underparticipation”, “overparticipation” and “selective participation under protest”.⁹⁵ The students who were underparticipating tried to be invisible in the classes, were not willing to participate in any kind of class activity. The children in this group were either Spanish proficient or English-Spanish bilingual. Overparticipation is the term which describes those students who try to act like their successful schoolmates, but they never achieve the same results. They are trying to show off and seem to be very dedicated to the schoolwork. In this group were five bilingual Spanish dominant children.⁹⁶ Last maladjustment status is selective participation under protest, which describes students “with an aggressive attitude who tended to become disruptive and defensive.”⁹⁷

When interviewing school personnel, Trueba found that the reason of the adjustment problems was racism and socialization at home. The maladjustment was actually the reaction of those children to failed interaction with peers, family or teachers. Losey again notes here, that the information about parental education were based only on teachers’ reports and school records, so we should be aware of making generalizations.⁹⁸

Gumbiner, Knight and Kagan (1981) studied fifteen teachers of grades 3 to 5 and their 77 Anglo American and 30 Mexican American students. They tried to find out how does teacher attention affect “self-esteem”, “social orientation” (competitive vs. cooperative) and “classroom climate” (cohesion vs. frictions).⁹⁹ The authors found that in case of Mexican American students, the classroom composition determined their social orientation and the teacher’s attention affected their self-esteem. In case of Anglo Americans, their self-esteem was lowered by classroom environment and lack of teacher’s attention. According to authors this fact is caused by the natural Mexican American need to belong to a community (family, classroom...). Anglo American children tend to be more individualistic as a result of the smaller families, as the authors suggest.¹⁰⁰

Delgado-Gaitan (1987) carried out an 18-month long study of 7 Mexican American children in grades from 1 to 3. She was observing children’s interaction at home, at school and at the playground. She also confirms the opinion that Mexican American children tend to collaborative way of interaction while the Anglo American children soon develop rather individualistic approach. The author found differences between assigning tasks to Mexican American children at school and at home. At

home they were given a lot of freedom of how to do the task and when to do it, while at school they were told exactly how and when the task must be finished.¹⁰¹

We can conclude that there definitely are different interaction patterns between Mexican-American home setting and the school environment. Sternberg calls these different interaction patterns between two cultures a tacit knowledge of interacting with oneself and with others.

Losey again objects that most of the studies she reviewed lack some background social information about the family economic status or parental education.¹⁰²

2.3.2 Differential treatment

In 1973 the study of differential treatment of Mexican American students was published by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights and became one of the most important studies on this topic. This study found that teachers were interacting way less with Mexican American students than with Anglo Americans. They directed less questions at them, did not use or accept students' ideas and praised them less. As a result, Mexican American students talked and participated less in classes, it lowered their self-esteem and sense of belonging to the classroom.¹⁰³

The Commission found that the teacher asked 21% fewer questions to Mexican American students than to Anglo Americans. As a conclusion the Commission stated: "It is the responsibility of the school and the teacher to accept the child as he comes to school and to orient the program to his cultural and linguistic needs. This the schools of the Southwest have failed to do."¹⁰⁴ This study also showed a surprising fact – even the Mexican American teachers did not praise or support Mexican American students more.¹⁰⁵

Differences in treatment of Mexican American students observed also Parsons (1965) who focused on a small basic school in an agricultural village of central California. He found that the teacher was grouping children according to their abilities and Anglo children were placed in the higher groups while Mexican American children were in the lower groups. The groups had also different seating. While the "Fast American" group was sitting close to the teacher, the "Slow Mexican" group was seated further from the teacher's desk. When Anglos wanted to start communication with the teacher, they could just start talking, since the teacher was

right in front of them. If Mexican Americans wanted to start conversation with the teacher they had to raise their hands.¹⁰⁶

Losey (1995) devoted her study to the class interaction of Mexican Americans and Anglo Americans on the college of small Californian town with regard to the gender. As supposed, Mexican Americans participated less in the classroom interaction, most of the class communication was performed by Anglos (82%). The interesting fact is, however, that Mexican American men were participating in class communication almost with the same frequency as Anglo American students. The only problem was that there were not many of them in the examined class. On the other hand Mexican American women tended to remain unnoticed and avoided to initiate any kind of conversation with teachers. They tended to actively participate only while being fully sociably supported by their peers, teachers or tutors. On the other hand, Mexican American women tend to be more precise in terms of handing in the homework assignments etc.¹⁰⁷

Ortiz (1988) examined differential treatment of Mexican Americans in both mainstream and bilingual classes of several Californian elementary schools. The first thing she points out is that most of the “supposedly bilingual teachers” did not even speak Spanish, so the Spanish part of the teaching was left to the teacher’s aids. Therefore, Spanish proficient children did not receive the same teacher approach as those English proficient ones. Also the teaching in Spanish language resembled more drill than normal teaching style based on teacher – students’ discussions. In mainstream classrooms Ortiz also found differential treatment of Hispanic children. She perceived the teachers to avoid interaction with Hispanic children, as for physical closeness, eye contact, and verbal communication. Teachers were also often mispronouncing or forgetting Hispanic names, not letting those students read aloud or not including them into teams.¹⁰⁸

The same topic chose for their study also Townsend and Zamora (1975). They compared verbal and non-verbal interaction and teaching methods of 56 bilingual teachers and their assistants in bilingual classes. 53 of them were Mexican Americans. Significant differences were found in both verbal and non-verbal communications. Considering teachers more encouraging and benevolent as for students’ responses, while assistants tended to use lectures as their teaching methods and non-verbal communication as the instrument of disagreement and expressing negative emotions.¹⁰⁹

An important issue in the field of differential treatment is teachers' wrong evaluation of the student. The case that happens very often is, that because of the lack of English skills, the teacher considers the student a low achiever in general. Díaz, Moll, and Mehan (1986) studied third and fourth grade students in bilingual classes. They observed reading classes both in English and Spanish, performed by two different teachers. They noticed that some children who were very good at reading in Spanish were placed into the lower reading group in English because of their problems with pronunciation of certain words. According to authors, the teacher mistreated them, because their problem were not the reading skills, but pronunciation and acquiring English skills.¹¹⁰

It was proven that Mexican American children receive in many cases differential treatment, which is, as Losey (1995) suggests not only the result "of ethnic differences but also the result of language differences and ability grouping within the bilingual classroom."¹¹¹ In some cases, the differential treatment almost resembled racism (the avoidance of physical closeness and eye contact). For better classroom interaction in bilingual classes, a truly bilingual teacher is needed. In general, teachers should be more aware of Mexican American ethnicity, and realize that the teacher and the student affect each other. Student's behavior is a reaction to teacher's behavior and vice versa.¹¹²

2.3.3 The phenomena of code switching

Losey (1995) revised also studies regarding code switching among bilingual children.

As already Valdés (1988) suggests in his study, bilingualism is a natural reaction to adapting to the new society. The new language (English in this case) is mostly used in official and school conversations, while the old language (Spanish) is used in the home environment and when talking to Spanish proficient peers in an unofficial talk. Code switching Valdés (1988) describes as an ability of a person to switch from one language to another according to the situation.¹¹³

The purpose of the studies revised by Losey was to find out what makes bilingual students switch languages in bilingual classes.

McClure (1981, 1977, 1975) spent 90 hours observing 8 three and four-year-old bilinguals in the Southwest. The observation took place at school, at their homes and

also at the playground. She found that the children chose the language not according to the topic of the conversation, but according to other participants of the communication. They considered their language proficiency and social status. The ability of judging these factors increased with the age of children. In general, bilingual children were able to talk about any topic in both languages, some topics they tended to discuss more in Spanish (for example family). McClure also found that code switching was first learnt when the children needed attention or to explain the meaning of the words (around 3rd year of age). What followed was code switching of particular sentences (acquired around the age of 6 or 7).¹¹⁴

Sapiens (1982) was studying how the code switching works in bilingual classes. He studied seniors at the high school. All of the students except two were Mexican Americans and bilingual, even though their English and Spanish proficiencies differed. He found out that teacher used mainly English for instructions, and equally English and Spanish for social interaction. The situation among students was a little different – they used mostly English for any kind of communication with the teacher while when communicating with peers, Spanish was prevailing. Sapiens concluded that English was considered more proper for school and instructions. He also points out that students were code switching with the teachers less than the teacher with them, which is, according to the author, display of “solidarity between compañeros”¹¹⁵ and it also shows, that the students did not consider the teacher their peer, even though they acted friendly toward him.¹¹⁶

Similar findings also reveal the study of Vásquez (1993) who tried to simulate the bilingual atmosphere. She prepared after school program for Mexican American children in southern California and tried to find out which language would prevail. Surprisingly, most of the children chose English for the communication. Spanish was used only with counselors with limited English proficiency, and while talking and playing with each other. Vásquez points out that the environment which children considered school-like influenced their preference of English.¹¹⁷

We can definitely perceive the bilingualism as a benefit. The studies prove that the audience, their social position, the topic of the conversation and its supposed effect on the audience mostly influence the code switching. As Losey (1995) points out, teachers often fail to judge students’ linguistic skills, because they tend to evaluate only their performance in English.¹¹⁸

2.3.4 Successful classroom environment

In this part, Losey (1995) reviewed the studies that described successful classroom environment. The classroom environment is considered successful when the student – teacher interaction leads to academic success of Mexican American students.¹¹⁹

One such study is Ammon's (1985), who dedicated himself to describing successful classroom environment based on his observation of seven third-grade bilingual classrooms. Even though some students still had problems with writing in English, "this class brought about the most significant improvement in writing in areas such as cohesion, reference, elaboration, and conventional usage, as measured by student gains on writing samples taken by the researcher over the course of a year."¹²⁰ The author found that students in this class were allowed to move around the class, they could speak to each other both in English and Spanish, the teacher tried to understand them and did not pressure them to drop Spanish immediately. When assigned a writing task, they could choose from a variety interesting topics for them. Teacher seemed really interested in students and in their written and general achievements.¹²¹

Even other studies (Trueba, 1987; Díaz, 1986) confirm that students achieve better academic results when they are more engaged in classroom interaction and a group work, when having greater freedom in handling the tasks. Also, an informal and friendly relationship with the teacher helps the students do better at school, since the teacher mostly encourages them.¹²²

Gutierrez (1992) found and describes in his study two different interaction patterns. He says that the more common one is "recitation instruction" when teacher asks questions, students respond and then the evaluation follows. This pattern is actually very similar to earlier mentioned I-R-E pattern. Gutierrez calls the second pattern "responsive/collaborative instruction" which resembles normal discussion. The questions are not asked only by the teacher but also students actively participate in questioning, and there is no evaluation. Gutierrez found that the second pattern mentioned brings better results, as for students' communicative skills. He explains that in the first pattern, students are expected to give just simple answers, while in the second pattern they are more involved in the discussion.¹²³

To conclude, it was found that the more the students are involved in classroom participation and even class curriculum, the higher are their achievements. In other

words, the more they feel the part of the classroom environment, the more they care for their achievements. Also friendly and encouraging teacher approach and given freedom to acquire English skills step by step without immediately leaving their mother tongue behind has a positive effect on students' school performance.¹²⁴

3. John Marshall High School

3.1 History and General Facts

John Marshall High School is located about eight miles north of Downtown Los Angeles at 3939 Tracy Street, in Los Feliz area, and together with another sixty-seven high schools is operated by the Los Angeles Unified School District.¹²⁵

The school's enrollment is 4, 547 students, who attend grades from 9 to 12 and are educated by 195 certified teachers. Approximately 1, 058 students are considered limited English proficient and 72% of all students use another language in their homes. The students' racial ethnic composition would be: Native American – 0.3 %; Asian 5.8 %; Filipino 9.3 %; Pacific Islander 0.1 %; African-American 2.4 %; Hispanic 71%; White 11.1 %.¹²⁶

John Marshall High School was opened on January 26, 1931, enrolling around 1, 200 students and 48 teachers. The first principal was Joseph Sniffen, the first vice-principals were Hugh Boyd and Geraldine Keith. In their honor were named the football field (Mr. Boyd) and the library (Ms. Keith). The name for the school was chosen in honor of John Marshall, Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court from 1801 to 1835 and the principal author of the American system of constitutional law. The school motto is "Veritas Vincit / Truth Conquers" and the school official seal pictures the scales of justice with the inscription Veritas Vincit and an open book in front of the scales. The moonlight blue of midnight and the sunlight blue of dawn were picked to be the official colors, because the blue color is considered to be the color of truth. Alma Mater, the official school song, was composed by two students – John Montapert and Henry Suykida in 1939. The mascot of the school is Johnny Barrister, therefore the students are sometimes called "Barristers". John Marshall High School was titled Honorable Mention Finalist in the College Board 2005 Inspiration Awards and is accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges through 2009.¹²⁷

3.2 System of Education and Policy

In order to receive the high school diploma, students at John Marshall High School are required to acquire 230 credits in various subjects, pass the California High School Exit Exam and complete 20 hours of community service and a senior portfolio. The students receive 5 credits in each class per semester, no matter what grade they achieve, they only need to pass. The class takes approximately an hour (sometimes 64 minutes, sometimes 68 minutes) and the semester is four months long. They need to get 40 credits in English, 20 in math, 20 in history, 5 in economics, 5 in US government, 20 in physical education, 10 in fine arts, 10 in mechanical arts (now mostly computer), 5 in health, 5 in life skills, 10 in biology, 10 in chemistry and 70 in electives.¹²⁸

On top of the normal curriculum the school offers a great number of Advanced Placement and Honor classes. Advanced Placement (AP) classes are open for students who want to attempt college level study. Honor classes are for students selected according to the test scores and recommendations of the faculty.¹²⁹

The school also offers students the opportunity to get involved in over 30 clubs, city champion athletic squads, award-winning drama and music programs, a two-time national champion Academic Decathlon team and countless other activities and organizations.¹³⁰

To address the inequalities in education or segregation of immigrant students, the city of Los Angeles about 30 years ago developed the “Magnet program”. Most Magnets are not much different from the other schools, the only difference is in ethnic composition; 40% of the students have to be minority and 60% white. For gifted students interested in a college preparatory program, the school offers Gifted, Highly Gifted, and High Ability Magnet programs, which currently consist of 353 students. These students are taught to develop their analytical, independent and critical thinking skills and creative abilities that would be helpful for their later college studies.

The School for Advanced Studies (SAS) is a programme designed for students who would like to enter selective colleges and universities.¹³¹

Humanitas is for students interested in studies at the University of California, the courses are thematically linked to the core curriculum of this University.

One of the most popular and LAUSD-supported programs is the Multilingual Teacher Career Academy, which prepares students to become bilingual teachers. Students receive special service learning placements at local elementary schools and community service centers working with children.¹³²

For artistically-oriented students, the school offers the Performing Arts Academy, focused on Drama, Filmmaking, Technical Theatre, Orchestra and Guitar playing.

Last but not least would be the Carl Perkins Career Academy, which prepares students for different careers after high school.¹³³

The Marking system consists of letter grades A, B, C, D and Fail in all credit classes.

In order to sustain a high standard of performance in all kinds of school achievements, the students follow the “Barrister Code of Conduct”, which describes students’ responsibilities and behavior and also a dress code. Students do not have to wear any kind of uniforms, as the school claims to share with parents the responsibility of teaching the students how to dress appropriately. Students are not allowed to wear gloves (unless the temperature drops to 65 degrees of Fahrenheit or less), no kind of bandanas and hairnets, neither hats nor caps nor other headgear can be worn in the classrooms. No items of clothing that would advertise another high school than Marshall, alcohol, tobacco, drugs, obscenities, violence, illegal activities, gangs and prison life. Also clothing revealing undergarments or the naked body is prohibited. Pants must be of proper proportions and cannot have any kind of slits. Any kind of inappropriate items of clothing can be confiscated and returned, only with a parent or guardian present to pick them up.¹³⁴

To increase safety in the schools in California, the Los Angeles Unified School District has established a “wand” metal detector programme, which helps to find guns and metal objects that students bring to school. Randomly selected students and their backpacks and lockers are checked every day. When seeing somebody carrying gun on the campus, it is the students’ obligation to inform the school police, a teacher or any other member of the school staff.¹³⁵

LAUSD also reaffirms its policy that everybody at the school should be treated equally, without any kind of teasing or taunting any person on the basis of race, language spoken, color, sex, religion, handicap, national origin, immigrant status, sexual orientation, age or political belief.¹³⁶

It is also in the interest of LAUSD to maintain a campus free of narcotics, drugs, alcohol and tobacco and to provide help for the students who are having problems of this kind. A student who is under the influence of any kind of drugs or alcohol can be arrested, suspended, expelled or undergo any other kind of disciplinary action.¹³⁷

Students are not allowed to leave the campus unless they have passes issued by the Attendance office, Health office or parents/guardians. Students are also not allowed to leave the class during first ten minutes of the period, except in emergencies and then they can leave the class only with an authorized pass from the classroom, where the teacher indicates the name of the student, the time and the destination.¹³⁸

According to the Tardy and Truancy policy, the students who are tardy for the class are sent to the tardy room. At the beginning of each class, the teacher has to lock the door and sends the tardy students to the tardy room.¹³⁹

According to Los Angeles Municipal Code: 45, 04, any student under age the of 18, who is tardy for the class or out of the class without permission of parent/guardian or teaching staff or absent from 2 or more periods and does not bring a note from parent/guardian within the week, can get a truancy citation punishable with the fine of \$250 and hours of social service.¹⁴⁰

Students are also not allowed to use electronic devices such as a cell phone, CD player etc. during school hours, excluding the breaks and lunchtime.¹⁴¹

In order to protect the atmosphere of fairness and trust on the campus, the Student Honor Code was designed. Violations of this code include cheating of any kind and plagiarism. Students breaking this code can be punished in a number of ways, ranging from a reducing or failing grade to exclusion from school activities such as school trips, sporting events, dances, graduation activities and so on.¹⁴²

Because of most students' newly-arrived immigrant status, the school also provides help for parents so they in cooperation with the school can help their children to start a successful life and career in the USA. Parents can attend Distance-Learning English as a Second Language Class or Computer Class. Moreover the school offers "Parenting Class", which covers today's issues that concern their child's educational career. Parents are also welcome to take the "Gear up – Parents Educating Parents" classes focusing on steps towards graduation and post – secondary education, financial aid and drug prevention.¹⁴³

The process of immigration and following acculturation puts above all the students under a lot of pressure, which usually results in a number of emotional problems. It is

necessary for a student to be emotionally balanced to be able to concentrate on school and achieve good results. For students with any kind of such problems there is a service in room 620 through Project Impact, which cooperates with a number of agencies, which provide help for the students and their families in need.¹⁴⁴

3.3 ESL classes

The students who have just transferred from their home country to the USA and have limited English skills are placed to the ESL/bilingual classes. At Marshall High School, there are four levels of ESL: 1A, 1B, 2A, 2B, 3A, 3B (according to the term) and the fourth level equals to English Language Arts grade 9. Even though most of the students and even the teachers speak Spanish, the only language used in the class is English.

The general school learning goals as for English classes are: to be able to understand what the words mean and to use them in the right context, where they come from and what is their intention; to be able to express oneself in writing or in discussion, ask questions and discuss what has been read.¹⁴⁵

3.4 ESL class and acculturation

Newly-arrived immigrants at Marshall High School have the best assumptions to acculturate quickly and successfully into the classroom environment. In all the ESL classes, as well as at the school overall population, Latinos create the most numerous ethnic community (70%). The most common ethnic class compositions apart from Latinos are usually Asian students, African American students and several Armenian students. The numbers of their enrollment vary within every year. Ethnic minorities at Marshall High School are Pacific Islanders and Indian students, who do not enroll regularly every year and are enrolled in small numbers in general. This ethnic composition suggests that there is no possibility to use any other language than English for teaching purposes.

According to my observations, Hispanic students did not show any difficulties feeling the sense of belonging to the class; they usually act very loud and try to be the center of the teacher's attention most of the time. These students were able to communicate with the majority of their peers in Spanish and all of them came from a

similar culture background, therefore they often share similar life values, experiences and goals. Since they are the most numerous ethnic group, they seem to feel comfortable in this strong ethnic background. My observations agree with the assumptions of Gibson (1988) who points out that strong ethnic background positively affects the acculturation process. This conclusion is supported also by the dropout rate figures which put Latinos on the first place in dropout rate only once in 15 years. Based on Gibson's study (1988) and terminology, Latinos undergo "accommodation and acculturation without assimilation", which means that they integrate into the new society but also keep their home country culture. This fact is evident for example during the breaks at school. Some of the teachers allow the students to listen to music. Since the classes are mostly composed of Latinos (70%), the predominant music that is usually heard is typical Latino beats such as "Cumbia" or "Reggaeton". Another similar example takes place on September 15th when the Mexican Independence Day is celebrated. Mexicans commemorate gaining their independence in the Mexican revolution led by the revolutionary leader Miguel Hidalgo which led thousands of Mexicans to fight for their freedom from Spain. On this day they hold huge celebrations, and usually do not go to work after partying all night long. There are carnivals, parades and markets on the streets, people wear national costumes throughout the day and in the evening they gather to claim "Viva" to the united independent Mexican States and their heroes. Mexican students refuse to do any kind of schoolwork on this day, are very anxious and not focused in class. When they assimilate to the American culture, they adopt the national holidays of the USA, but also keep the festive days of their culture. As a result, Mexican Independence Day parties are also held in several areas of Los Angeles, for example in Huntington Park, South Gate, East Los Angeles and other typical Mexican places.

However, there are conflicts even among the homogenous Latino community. For example there is a tension between Mexican and Salvadorian citizens in general, not only at school grounds. Those conflicts are based on past rivalry in football tournaments, among gangs and to gain mafia control.

On the other hand, Asian students behaved quieter and they neither seem to like being the center of the teacher's attention nor they were invoking any kind of conflicts. This fact can be perceived as a result of being intimidated by the American society which represents more differences for the Asian culture than for example for the Latino culture. They also tended to stick together with other Asian schoolmates

and in general were hard working and high achieving students. Unlike many Hispanic students, Asians were always very polite with the teachers. Talking in general, Asians seem to assimilate to the American culture less than for example Latinos, due to the already mentioned cultural differences.

As for Armenian students, they normally competed against Latinos for the teacher's attention. Since John Marshall High School is actually situated in an Armenian neighborhood, these students also seem to feel confident and do not suffer from identity lost. They sometimes tend to have conflicts with Latinos, because they seem to like to be as a strong ethnic enclave as the Latinos are. The conflicts are more the question of pride and attention than a racial prejudice.

During the breaks and lunchtime, particular ethnic groups from various classes usually get together. They have a certain place on the campus where they gather. As I have already mentioned, some ethnic communities are less tolerant than others, so fights and gang activities can occur. For this reason, there are always security guards present on the campus at all times.

The teacher has to face not only the problem of teaching the students with a different tacit knowledge, but also has to create a friendly atmosphere and a cooperating collective of students from different ethnic backgrounds. In praxis, at Marshall high school, the teacher frequently uses a group work method. The groups are not created on basis of skills or abilities, but students seem to be selected randomly and the group composition often changes, so everybody gets a chance to cooperate with all the classmates. Group work varies mostly according to the English proficiency, or the level of the ESL class. The group work, which is mostly utilized in ESL classes, is the discussions of the books which students have to read. Students give opinions and react on the remarks of other peers within the group lead by the teacher. This way, through books and discussions students also acquire the tacit knowledge, as I have already commented in the chapter 2.1. When the students already acquire the ability to talk fluently on any topic, they are encouraged to prepare presentations in groups and present them in front of the class. Their presentation is later also evaluated by the rest of the classmates in a discussion according to the criteria which is previously set up by themselves with a little help from the teacher. Usually the oral and written component is evaluated. As for the oral component, the voice, demeanor, eye contact and visuals are rated, in the case of the written component the students judge the outline, primary sources and bibliography.

Newly-arrived immigrant students naturally tend to express patriotism to their native country. In many cases especially of the Mexican immigrant students, the children did not move to the USA voluntarily. There are numerous cases when these children actually came to the USA to live with their parents, who emigrated when their kids were little. These children spent most of their lives in their home country being brought up by some other relative and abruptly they have to get used to their natural parent who, in some cases, already has a new family. These students tend to be more at risk because they are having troubles with their own home setting and that negatively influences also their school achievements. All these family and home-setting problems also result, as I observed, in a problematic behavior in class, such as making distinctive noises, crying out loud, and demanding teacher's notice and ignoring his reprimanding. The teacher of such classes has to be very understandable; aware of the difficult process the students are undergoing, and careful with drawing conclusions about the students' performance.

Newly arrived immigrants do not hide their preference for their home country. I asked eight Latino students which country they preferred, if their own or the USA. All of them responded without hesitation that they preferred their country of origin. As for Asian students, the answer was the same but these students also seem to realize that they can benefit from the new society, if they work hard. As for Armenians, their responses differed from other ethnic groups and for them, with the exception of missing their friends or family left at the home country, are quite satisfied living in the USA.

3.5 ESL class and classroom interaction

What I have observed at Marshall High School in the ESL classes can definitely be called a successful classroom environment. As I already pointed out, the features of the successful classrooms are: students' active participation in the class, involvement in the class curriculum, friendly and encouraging teacher's approach and teaching through the form of discussion rather than a lecture.

I have experienced the lowest level ESL class (1A, 1B) which I consider extremely successful. The teacher treated the students as his friends, yet he represented an authority for them. He did not use the interactive form of lecture; rather he focused on practical language. Since he was teaching the real beginners, the teaching form of

modeling was used during these classes, he was using flashcards of common objects while building up new vocabulary and also using other audiovisual aids for the class. The best quality I found about this classroom interaction was the flexibility of the teacher to adjust the class program to the situation. He was not reluctant to change the program if some unexpected and interesting topic of conversation occurred. For example when I was observing the class, the teacher introduced me and told the students I was from the Czech Republic. The students immediately became very interested in the Czech Republic, its culture, and even the language. We spent some time comparing English, Czech and Spanish vocabulary which was very convenient for realizing the differences between those languages and for a natural friendly discussion in order to motivate the students' feeling that they could also decide what the class program was going to be. As a result, students fully participate in all the classes, feeling that they are cooperating and each of them is valuable. All this resulted in their rapid improvement of English skills. In spite of the fact that the students still very often used Spanish even for a simple communication with the teacher, they were not reprimanded for it, the only thing the teacher did, was that he answered them in English only or helped them to formulate their question again and in English.

Most of the methods used at Marshall High School for teaching ESL classes are also very innovative and successful. In general, the teachers are not afraid to experiment and to become friends with their students. Very often they discuss particular and current problems of their home countries, involve illustrations of interesting work from other classes (for example little animation videos created by students in a film class) or imitate everyday life situations and ask about their opinions. For example the students were asked to write their ideas on what would they do if they were teachers. What would they like to teach, where and in which way. This also gives them the opportunity to take some time to think about the teacher's role and duties, and at the same time to bring new ideas up which can enrich the teacher – student interaction.

What is absolutely interesting about the Marshall High School system is the fact that it provides specialized education for students who would like to become teachers. This way, Marshall High School is training new professionals in the field of newly arrived-immigrant education. Who else could understand immigrant students more than a teacher who went through similar experiences?

Nowadays, the ESL teaching staff at Marshall High School is composed of six highly professional and trained teachers. Most of them are able to understand and speak Spanish, they continue to train themselves and on their vacation time some of them usually travel to get to know different cultures and places. They also usually take personal interest in their students' education and way of living, which is very important considering the fact that in some cases, not even students' parents provide this type of support for their own children.

3.6 John Marshall High School and the dropout rate

Even though the Marshall High School offers to the newly-arrived immigrants great conditions and environment to make the acculturation process easier, the main factors for dropping out, as it was already shown in various studies, are very individual and often depend on social factors, such as the economical background of the family, language factors, and above all on the individual goals and abilities of the students. Newly-arrived immigrants are more at risk especially because of all the changes that are happening in their lives and families. High school students very often have to work to support the family economical situation. In some cases, the parents fail to see to their children's schoolwork and attendance or they do not even attend parents meetings. All these factors put these students more at risk of dropping out.

The California Department of Education shows the report of drop out rates for each one of the Los Angeles Unified School District schools every year. The dropout numbers are organized according to the grade and ethnic background. A "dropout" is a student who was enrolled in the grades 9, 10, 11 or 12 (in case of senior high school) and who left before completing the school year, or a student who did not attend the following grade and was expected to. According to the exception of the rule, the "dropout" is not considered a student who moved out of the USA, enrolled again, transfer to another school, entered late due to family vacation or other reasons, has a long term absence due to illness or a student who has died.¹⁴⁶

As for Marshall High School, the statistics show very interesting facts. During the years of 1991 and 2006 the total enrolment of students raised from 3,153 (1991) to 4,760 (2006). The ethnic composition changed slightly – since 2004 there have not been enrolled any Pacific Islander students and also during the years 2003 and 2005

there was not any Indian enrolment. In previous years, only 10 to 20 students maximally represented both ethnic groups. The most numerous group have always been Latinos, the numbers of their enrolment are constantly rising, comparing 1,850 enrolled in 1991 to 3,150 enrolled in 2006.

The dropout figures are represented by “1 Year Derived Dropout Rate” which is a percentage of dropouts within one year, based on actual data.

As is visible in the table 2, during the years 1991 and 1996 the school total dropout rate always surpassed 10%, in 1994/95 reached almost 15%. Since then the highest dropout rate was 7.6% (2002/2003). The lowest rate was achieved in 2004/2005 counting for only 2.4%. It is possible to say in general that the dropout rate at Marshall High School is declining within the last 15 years.

Table 2

school year	School total dropout rate
1991/1992	13.40%
1992/1993	13.90%
1993/1994	11.90%
1994/1995	14.90%
1995/1996	11.40%
1996/1997	6.20%
1997/1998	5.70%
1998/1999	5%
1999/2000	5.20%
2000/2001	7%
2001/2002	5.30%
2002/2003	7.60%
2003/2004	5.70%
2004/2005	2.40%
2005/2006	3.30%

Data taken from the California Department of Education webpage¹⁴⁷

As for ethnic composition and the dropout rate, there is no possibility of generalizing, because the situation varies within every year. I expected Latinos to be the most “dropping out” ethnic group, since they are also the most numerous. Basing my opinion on the study of Padilla and Gonzalez (1989) who claimed that particularly

Mexicans only have the highest dropout rate within the USA. However, the Latinos occupied the first place only in 2005/2006 with the rate of 4.2%. The highest rate they achieved was 15.7% in 1991/1992, when they occupied the second place after African Americans with the rate of 28.8%. Assuming that one of the facts that positively affect students' persistence at school is the sense of belonging to the collective, it becomes very clear, why Latino community does not tend to be the one most at risk. As I found out, the ethnic group with the highest dropout rate are Indian immigrants. The reason is very simple. They are actually one of the ethnic minorities at school and they also represent a very different culture, regarding religion, food and other customs. Naturally, these students feel more pressured by integrating into the new society, since they have to change most of their habits and are very often the target of their peer's bullying. A similar situation is observable also with Pacific Islanders. During the years of 1992 and 1995 they represented the highest dropout rate, rising up to 50%. However the numbers of Pacific Islander enrollment are very low or null, as I have already mentioned, there has been no enrollment since 2004.

Lately, African Americans have been occupying the first places, as for dropout rates. In 2004/2005 their rate was 3.8% but during the years 1999 and 2004 over 10% of African American students were dropping out. During 1991 and 1996 the rate ranged from 20.6% to even 46.1% of dropouts in the school year 1994/1995. The results are the same also within the state of California and within Los Angeles Unified School district. African Americans have been the most dropping out ethnic group since the 1991/1992 school year.

The high school dropout rate represents a considerable problem not only among the immigrant community, but in the USA as a whole. This is quite interesting considering the fact that in the Czech republic, dropping out from the high school is not even an issue. The reason for such huge differences between dropout rates in the USA and in the Czech republic should not be blamed only on the ethnicity of the American society, but also on the educational system.

4. Conclusion

Acculturation is a demanding process that immigrant children have to undergo in order to adjust to the new society. Based on Gibson's study it was found that keeping the original culture and language and at the same time assimilating the new country brings better school achievements and protects these children from an identity loss or dropping out. At Marshall High School I did not find any kind of pressure for the children to drop their native language to the extent that they would think it is less valuable, nor any attempts to dismiss their culture. My observations agree with Gibson's conclusions regarding the influence of the strong ethnic background on the students' dropout rate. Latinos seldom accounted for the highest dropout rate, while the ethnic minorities such as Indian immigrants and Pacific Islander immigrants tend to drop out considerably more in percentage.

On the other hand, according to the Gonzalez and Padilla study (1989) based on National Center for Education Statistics, Mexican American students were the most dropping out ethnic community within the USA. I was not able to obtain particular dropout figures for Mexican immigrants at Marshall High School, but I worked with statistics for Latinos in general. Within the state of California, the Los Angeles Unified School District and John Marshall High School, African American immigrants have been the ones who have dropped out the most overall over the last fifteen years.

Baca, Bryan and McKinney (1993) describe three kinds of factors that affect academic failure leading to the dropping out: social, language and individual. The authors concluded that the language skills do not play a key role in the dropping out process. They did not find ESL students more at risk than those taking mainstream English classes. Individual factors are considered to be the most important ones in this case.

Sternberg introduced the term "tacit knowledge" for the general cultural awareness including interacting with oneself, with others and with the tasks. The main contribution of his research was the fact that the tacit knowledge can be taught if made explicit, which plays an important role in the education of immigrant children. At Marshall High School this tacit knowledge is taught through the form of reading of special literature and the following discussion. Also, the subject called Life Skills, which is not very common in other countries, represents an advantage for the

immigrant students, because it teaches children how to take care of themselves and become successful in their future and their everyday life in the USA.

The studies reviewing classroom interaction were basically focused on Mexican immigrant students in the Anglo American classroom. Since my observations derive from the ESL classes, the environment there was completely different. There was no sign of differential treatment, nor discrimination of any ethnic group in the classes. Assuming Latinos to be the ethnic majority, they tended also to be the most confident. Basically, other ethnic minorities were more in trouble, because they were not only trying to adopt the English language, but they also had to learn how to fit into the predominantly Hispanic class community. The fact that most of the ESL teachers also speak or at least understand Spanish represents another advantage for Latinos. I consider the ESL classes I had observed at Marshall High School successful for their friendly atmosphere, students' engagement in the class program and innovative, interactive methods such as imitating real life situations, using audiovisual aids and assigning students the presentations which leads to their active participation in the classes. The teachers have to follow the class curriculum which is set up by the LAUSD and does not allow many other additional activities. Also, the reading lists for the ESL and mainstream English classes are strictly assigned and controlled by the LAUSD. Basically, the books mentioning any kind of taboo topics are strictly forbidden. Controversial are considered such classic books as: *The Color Purple*, *Sophie's Choice*, *The Catcher in the Rye* and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*¹⁴⁸ – books that are in Europe highly rated and considered important as for their contents, style or historical background and are always present on suggested reading lists for students. Teacher who would give to the students a “controversial” book can get into serious trouble.

Even though still very restricted by curricula, the ESL teachers at John Marshall High School are already trying to bring up these “controversial” topics for discussions and talk reality with their students which is way more effective than to pretend that nothing of that kind exists, especially when these students are immigrants from different non-puritan backgrounds.

I have seen students coming to the teachers during the break time to discuss for example the political situation or current events in their home country. This definitely improves the teacher – student relationship when the student can really feel that his

teacher is interested and cares. And that is something that these newly-arrived children need very much and appreciate with love and respect.

As I have observed, among the ESL teachers at Marshall High School exists great communication. Each of the six members of the ESL staff has the particular class for a period of time, so the teachers get to know all the students. They share teaching tips that worked on particular problematic students or the difficulties and troubles which the students are going through. The results of their work are very obvious – successful and friendly classroom environment, students fast and effectively acquiring English skills and the lowering dropout rate.

5. Summary

The aim of my thesis was to address the main problems of the education of immigrant children in the USA based on the theoretical studies and to relate them to my observations of John Marshall High School.

In the theoretical part I worked with various studies. I chose the studies which reviewed and explored how the ethnic minorities deal with acculturation, what are the issues that lead to the high dropout rates of newly-arrived immigrants and how can the teacher – student interaction influence their academic success. The main disadvantage of the theoretical background of this thesis is that some of the studies explore ethnic communities in general, while other focus only on Mexican immigrant students or the overall Mexican American population. I did not find this fact objectionable, since in the case of Marshall High School, Latinos represent the ethnic majority with the average enrollment of 70% of all students; moreover Mexicans are the prevailing nationality within the Latino population at John Marshall High School and in Los Angeles in general.

The second part dedicated to John Marshall High School and its organization scheme also reflects my observations. It was at John Marshall High School where my first contact with the multicultural society environment took place. I spent two months visiting the school, participating in the classes while taking videos, talking to the teachers, and occasionally, talking to students. In my thesis I write my perceptions of the school environment and classroom interaction, based on what I have seen in the classes or what I was told by the teachers. The American school system differs from the European and also, in the Czech Republic there are no similar education programs

for newly-arrived immigrants yet, so my judgments were drawn on basis of my European school experiences and the lack of contact with multiethnic societies, which can possibly make the statements a little superficial and generalized. I also need to note that I could not interview students directly but only observe their environment in a non-participative way.

Czech society is still relatively closed to the ethnicity. This situation is caused by predominantly homogenous Czech population, the lack of multicultural experience of older generation and also by the fact that Czech people tend to be a little xenophobic. Nowadays, the situation is slowly changing, the numbers of foreign immigrants are increasing and the new problems arise. In near future the basic and high schools will have to develop special educational programs for these young immigrants without knowledge of Czech. The American ESL classes can serve as models for the future similar programs here. One of the most important things while teaching immigrant children is not to devaluate their culture and home country and to let them acquire new language skills without pressuring them to drop their native language immediately. Bilingualism is considered an advantage; not a problem that slows the acculturation down. Teachers of such classes also should try to make the Czech school system patterns and interaction as understandable as possible, which means make explicit what exactly is the student supposed to do and how. The American multiethnic community will be a great source of information and experience for the future “CZESL” classes.

The thesis deals with the immigrant education problematic mainly from the sociological point of view, since my first contact with the multicultural environment was by socializing.

The purpose of this thesis was to outline the introduction into the problematic of the immigrant education in the USA. For my future studies I would like to focus predominantly on Mexican immigrant students, I will also pay attention to the ESL class curriculum, teaching methods and the pedagogical approaches on John Marshall High School in general.

Shrnutí

Cílem mé bakalářské práce bylo poukázat na problémy vzdělávání mladých imigrantů v USA na základě teoretických studií a uvedení těchto poznatků do vztahu s vlastní zkušeností získanou na John Marshall High School v Los Angeles.

Pro část teoretickou jsem vybrala studie, které se zabývají zkoumáním nově příchozích imigrantů a procesu kulturní asimilace a hlavními příčinami vedoucí děti k nedokončení studia. Dále jsem se využila studie, které přinášely odpověď na otázku jak může vztah mezi žákem a učitelem ovlivnit jejich studijní úspěchy. Hlavním nedostatkem teoretické části této bakalářské práce je skutečnost, že některé ze zmíněných studií zkoumají etnické komunity všeobecně, zatímco jiné se zaměřují pouze na mexické imigranty nebo mexicko-americkou populaci celkově. Já nepovažuji tento fakt za problematický, protože, v případě John Marshall High School, imigranti z Latinské Ameriky představují většinové etnikum. Každý rok průměrně 80% všech studentů zapsaných do studia tvoří právě Hispánci, navíc Mexičané národnostně převažují i uvnitř homogenní latinsko-americké komunity na John Marshall High School stejně jako v Los Angeles všeobecně.

Druhá část práce, věnovaná John Marshall High School a systému jejího uspořádání, přináší také moje vlastní poznatky získané na této škole, která byla zároveň místem mého prvního kontaktu s multikulturální společností. Po dobu dvou měsíců jsem tuto školu navštěvovala, účastnila se vyučování, pořizovala videozáznamy, komunikovala s učiteli a příležitostně také se studenty. V této své bakalářské práci komentuji dojmy z multikulturálního školního prostředí a interakci studentů při vyučování. Je nutné podotknout, že já jsem se vyučování aktivně neúčastnila, ale pouze pozorovala třídní prostředí. Systém amerického a evropského školství je značně rozdílný. V České republice také neexistují žádné podobné speciální vzdělávací programy pro nově příchozí imigranty. Z těchto důvodů jsou moje názory založeny na vlastním pozorování a dále na komentářích učitelů bilingvních tříd. Vzhledem k nedostatku zkušeností s americkým školstvím a multikulturální společností mohou být některé moje poznatky a komentáře poněkud obecné a povrchní.

Česká společnost je etnikům poměrně uzavřená. Tato skutečnost je způsobena především faktem, že česká společnost je převážně homogenní a často také xenofobní. Dalším z důvodů je nedostatek kontaktu starší generace s multikulturálním prostředím.

V současnosti se situace začíná pozvolna měnit, počet přistěhovalců se zvyšuje, což s sebou přináší nové problémy. V blízké budoucnosti budou muset základní a střední školy vytvořit speciální vzdělávací program pro tyto mladé imigranty bez znalosti češtiny. Americký vzdělávací program ESL bude moci sloužit jako vzor pro podobné budoucí programy v České republice. Jednou z nejdůležitějších věcí při výuce imigrantů je dát jim pocit, že jejich rodný jazyk má stejnou hodnotu jako jazyk český, nedevalvovat jejich zemi původu a kulturu a nevyvíjet nátlak, aby přestali svůj rodný jazyk používat co nejdříve. Bilingvismus je považován za výhodu, ne za problematický faktor, který by zpomaloval začlenění mladých imigrantů do společnosti. Učitelé těchto bilingvních tříd by se dále měli snažit, aby jejich požadavky na studenty byly co nejjasnější a aby jim dokázali vysvětlit co přesně a jakým způsobem mají dělat. Americká multikulturní společnost a ESL program bude výborným zdrojem informací a zkušeností pro budoucí „CZESL“ programy v České republice.

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá problematikou vzdělávání imigrantů především z hlediska sociologického, protože také můj první kontakt s multikulturní komunitou byl realizován formou socializace.

Předkládaná bakalářská práce je úvodem do problematiky vzdělávání imigrantů v USA. Ve svých dalších pracích bych se chtěla zaměřit především na mexické imigranty, kteří, jak už jsem dříve zmiňovala, tvoří národností většinu na John Marshall High School. Dále bych se ráda zaměřila na metody a osnovy bilingvních tříd, a na problematiku vzdělávání imigrantů z pedagogického hlediska.

Notes:

1. U.S. Department of Homeland Security. 17 July 2008
<<http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/statistics/yearbook/2007/table03d.xls>>.
2. see Gibson, Margaret. "Promoting academic success among immigrant students: Is acculturation the issue?" Educational Policy 12.6 (1998): 616.
3. see Gibson 616.
4. Gibson 616.
5. see Gibson 623.
6. see Gibson 623.
7. Gibson 623.
8. Gibson 623.
9. see Gibson 617.
10. see Gibson 618-621.
11. see Gibson 621-623.
12. see Gibson 624-625.
13. see Gibson 625.
14. see Gibson 627.
15. see Gibson 627.
16. see Gibson 627.
17. see Gibson 628.
18. see Gibson 628.
19. see Gibson 628.
20. see Gibson 628.
21. see Gibson 629.
22. see Gibson 629.
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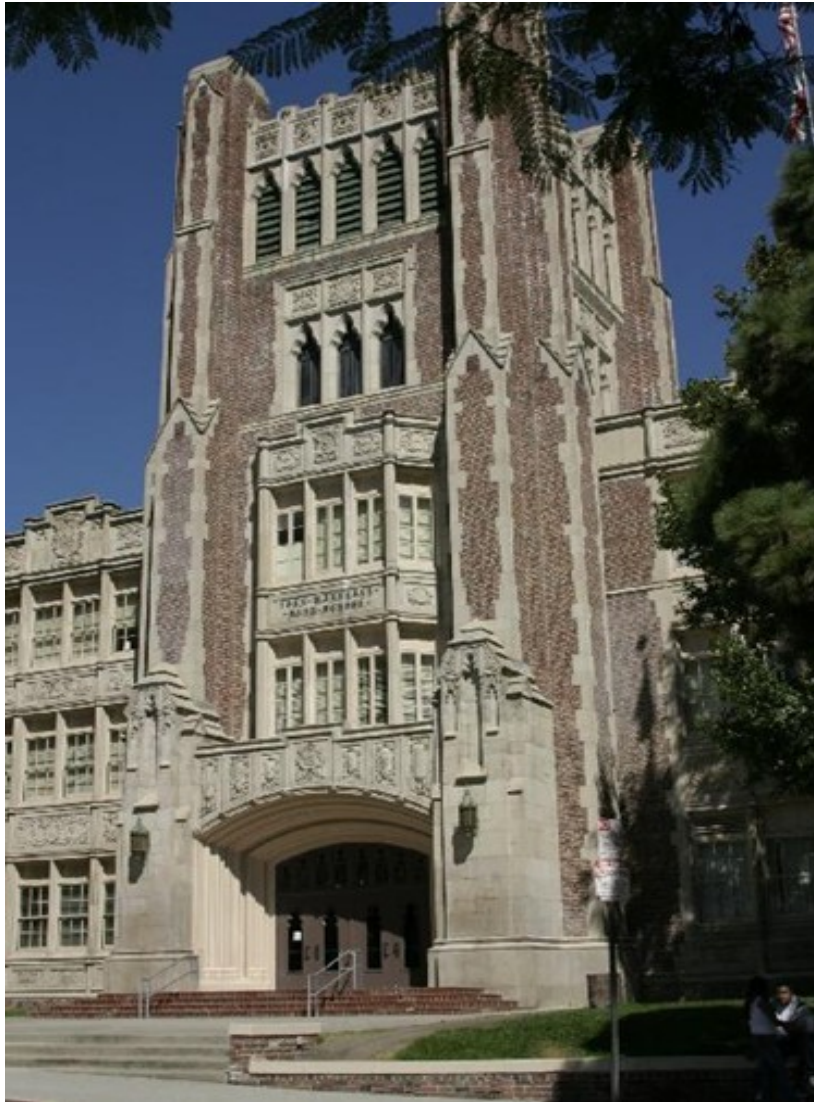
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APPENDIX



John Marshall High School



John Marshall High School detail





The stadium



The schoolyard

Alma Mater

To Marshall High we sing our praises,
Our Alma Mater dear we love.
The memories here will last forever,
The tower of truth stands high above.

A guide to right and high endeavor,
A mighty symbol in the sky,
Around it, comrades, gather,
Loyal sons of Marshall High.

United we will be victorious
For that tower in the sky;
Our spirits bound in friendship glorious,
We'll ever keep our banners high!

United we will be victorious
For the blue that waves on high;
Our spirits bound in friendship glorious
We are for thee, Marshall High