TRANSATLANTIC COUNCIL on MIGRATION

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A Discussion Guide

Education, Diversity, and the Second Generation

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Introduction

We begin this Guide with a brief demographic and statistical profile of the immigrant student population in the US, with comparison points drawn to Germany where the data permit. Then, after sketching the broad policy implications of the demographic data, we provide a set of policy and practice issues on which the Roundtable conversation might focus. The topics are drawn from the background papers[1] and our own work in the fields of immigrant integration and education.

We group the policy and practice issues that we discuss into two areas: those that bear on early childhood care and education, and those that are pertinent to secondary instruction of first- and second-generation students, with a focus on those whose proficiency in English or German lags.

Given the breadth of the field of education and the complex nature of issues involving students from immigrant families, this guide covers more issues than we will likely have time to cover in the Roundtable. We expect the conversation on June 17th to fall within the framework presented here, but emphasize specific concerns that are of greatest interest to the participants. It seems to us that the discussion around these issue areas should involve the following:

- What are the most effective policies and practices and what are the barriers to bringing them to scale?

- Where are the levers for change – at which levels of government do they lie?

- To what extent are critical issues involving students from immigrant families a subset of larger school reform challenges facing national and sub-national governments? What implications does this have for how they should be approached?

- How is the economic crisis affecting the range of possible actions in the near and intermediate term to improve the quality of educational services for immigrant students?

[1] The relevant background papers are: *The Second Generation in Europe: Education and the Transition to the Labor Market* by Maurice Crul and Jens Schneider; and two papers that were prepared for the Transatlantic Taskforce on Migration in 2007: *Early Education for Immigrant Children* by Paul Leseman; and *Language Policies and Practices for Helping Immigrants and Second-Generation Students Succeed,* by Gayle Christensen and Petra Stanat.

Background: A Demographic/Statistical Portrait of the Immigrant Student Population

Significant Share of All Students

More than one in five students in schools in the United States is the child of an immigrant (three-fourths of these children are citizens). One student in 10 is an English language learner (ELL). By 2030, over a quarter of all students in US schools will be children of immigrants. The immigrant student population is clearly a vulnerable one – roughly half of the children of immigrants live in low-income families, a share that has risen sharply over the past 30 years. Moreover, two-thirds of ELL children are low income. It remains to be seen whether the current economic downturn will lead to diminished flows and changed regional distributions of immigrant populations. To date, however, the patterns of change have been modest.

The shares of immigrant students in German schools approximate the ratio in the US. Fourteen percent of *15 and 16-year-olds* tested through the OECD PISA program in 2006 were the children of immigrants (compared to 15 percent in the US); 9 percent spoke a language other than German at home (compared to 10.7 percent of students of the same age in the US).

Predominance among Young Children

Children of immigrants are more highly concentrated among young children (0 to 5 years) versus those age 6 to 17. Children of immigrants under 6 are substantially less likely than children of natives to be in center-based care,[2] with use lowest among the children of immigrants who have little education and are limited English proficient (LEP). Almost all young children of immigrants age 0 to 5 (93 percent) are US citizens, which is evidence of the United States' strict adherence to *jus soli* citizenship standards.

The foreign born constitute a significantly larger share of secondary students than elementary or pre-kindergarten students in the US.

Rapid Pace of Change

The challenge of educating English language learners has increased due to the rapid rate of change in our societies. The ELL population in the US almost doubled between 1996 and 2006, while the overall student population remained unchanged. As with the immigrant population more generally, the children of immigrants and ELL students have dispersed widely. From 1996 to 2006, the school-age (K-12)[3] ELL population in the new growth states of Nebraska and North Carolina rose by 301 and 372 percent respectively, while the overall student population remained flat. Many of the states to which immigrants have recently migrated, especially in the Southeast, have comparatively poor records of on-time graduation rates by national standards.

Legal Status/Membership

The great majority (75 percent) of the children of immigrants are either US born (and hence citizens) or legal immigrants. Nonetheless, roughly 1.5 million children in the US are themselves

[2] In the US context this can be a child-care center, preschool, nursery school, or learning center, and also includes early childhood education.
[3] Kindergarten through 12th grade, or the equivalent of primary and secondary school.

unauthorized and another 4 million children of immigrants have one or more parents who are unauthorized. The unauthorized make up a larger share of secondary than elementary or preschool students. The best estimate to date has been that 65,000 unauthorized students graduate each year from US high schools and go on to very uncertain futures.

In Germany, children born to foreign parents can only gain citizenship if their parents have been legally resident for several years. Undocumented first- or second-generation children also do not have the right to education in public schools.[4] While the undocumented population is smaller in Germany[5] than in the US, the children in this population have fewer rights and are much more vulnerable than their US counterparts.

Segregation/Concentration

Beyond high numbers and rapid growth, several characteristics of the ELL student population also present tough challenges for educators. One is their concentration. Like minority students generally, ELL students increasingly appear to be concentrated in schools with other, mostly minority students, who are also ELL: 70 percent of ELL elementary school students go to 10 percent of schools in the United States. It should not be surprising that these high-ELL schools are often among those found "in need of improvement" and likely to be sanctioned under federal and state accountability regimes. They have historically had teachers who are less experienced and less likely to hold a teaching certificate.

PISA indicates that immigrant students face the highest level of segregation in US schools. In both Germany and the US, PISA 2006 data suggest that first- and second-generation students are more likely than the children of natives to be concentrated in schools with lower economic, social, and cultural status. In Germany, students with immigrant backgrounds remain more likely to be in schools with teacher shortages.

Generational Persistence of ELL Status

Another cause for concern and imperative for change is the persistence of ELL status. Over three-quarters of ELL elementary school students, and over one half of ELL secondary school students in the US are members of the second generation (US born with at least one native-born parent) and in some cases the third generation (US born with native-born parents). Thus, children born and presumably educated in schools in the United States are not learning the English language – pointing forcefully to the need for more effective instruction and underscoring the importance of sustaining accountability regimes.

As Maurice Crul's paper demonstrates, Turkish students' comparatively late entry into German schools makes language acquisition difficult for the second generation.

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[4] Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants, *Germany*, http://www.picum.org/?pid=46.

[5] Most estimates of the illegally resident population in Germany put the figure at less than one million, out of a total of approximately 7 million foreign nationals. See Hamburg Institute of International Economics, "Stocks of Irregular Migrants: Estimates for Germany", http://irregular-migration.hwwi.net/typo3_upload/groups/31/3.Database_on_IrregMig/3.2.Stock_Tables/Germany_Estimates_Irregular_Feb09.pdf

Diversity of English Language Learners (ELLs)

The diversity of the ELL population presents additional challenges. The ELL population is composed not just of recent arrivals but also of "long-term ELLs." Fifty-two percent of foreign-born children in grades K-5 (primary school) and 43 percent of foreign-born children in grades 6-12 (secondary school) arrived recently, having entered the US within the last three years. A significant share has had interrupted schooling in their home countries. At the same time, three-quarters of ELL students grades K-5 and 57 percent of ELL children grades 6-12 are native born. These distinct ELL populations present quite differing instructional challenges for schools. And together they make up a substantial share of "disconnected" youth age 17 to 24 who are neither working nor in school.

The challenge of providing language services in the US is mitigated in part by the fact that four out of five ELLs speak Spanish. By contrast, a greater diversity of second languages exists in Germany, which has a very substantial Turkish population (1.7 million, or 25 percent of the population of foreign nationals), but also large groups from Italy and Poland (8 percent and 5 percent of the foreign national population, respectively).

Linguistic Isolation

A further challenge for educators lies in the fact that the linguistic isolation ELLs encounter in schools is mirrored in their homes. Almost all ELL students live in households that are linguistically isolated – i.e. where no one over the age of 13 speaks English well. This linguistic isolation underscores the value of multigenerational approaches to immigrant families that focus on educating children and engaging their parents.

Performance of ELLs on Standardized National Tests

Worrisome trends in ELL student performance also reinforce the need for developing a deeper understanding of the elements of reform. Our own analysis of new data from the US National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reveals that ELL students' scores in math and reading substantially lag behind those of non-limited English proficient (LEP) fourth and eighth graders, and that the gap remained largely unchanged between 2000 and 2005. On a promising note, "former" ELLs performed about as well as their native peers on the NAEP in math and reading.

In Germany, children of immigrants age 15 to 16 have a deficit of two years' schooling in math and just over two years in reading. The gap in science is about two to three years. These gaps are large relative to most other OECD countries.

Graduation Rates

The graduation rates of immigrant students in general and ELLs in particular are especially troubling. Nineteen percent of immigrant youth age 16 to 24 who had ever enrolled in US schools were out of school and had not received a high school degree according to the 2007 American Community Survey. This is double the rate of natives. The drop-out rates of ELL youth stood at 30 percent versus 8 percent for non-ELLs.

Issue Guide: Early Childhood Education

The research and education policy communities in the US and Europe are in general agreement with regard to the beneficial effects of quality early childhood care and schooling on children's cognitive development and future school achievement and socio-economic outcomes. As Paul Leseman notes in his paper, most industrialized countries now seek to prepare low-income and minority children for success in school through preschool education programs. Questions of how to expand the capacity, quality, and use of these early care and education programs by immigrant families have grown more urgent as the share of immigrant children age 0 to 6 has increased in many countries and the language and literacy development challenges facing many of these children have become more apparent.

Addressing these questions is not an easy matter, since in many countries the "system" of care and education for young children is a patchwork of formal and informal care and education providers, ranging from family members or nonrelatives providing care in a home-based setting, to more formal center- and school-based programs. In the US, it is estimated that 60 percent of children under six regularly receive care from someone other than their parent in these settings; as in other countries, many of these children are in more than one arrangement at a time, and many families experience sharp discontinuity in programs and providers as their child grows.

Policymakers and practitioners working to improve the scale and quality of early childhood care and education must address a range of policy and practice issues within each setting, along with a complex set of factors that influences immigrant parents' ability or willingness to access services, regardless of their quality. Leseman mentions cultural belief systems as a barrier in this regard; others may include the affordability of services, the ability of working parents to reliably obtain service coverage during their work hours, and the availability of basic information about program services provided in a language that parents can understand.

Fortunately, as Leseman's review demonstrates, much is already known about effective practices for providing early childhood care and education services that support the integration and success of children from immigrant families. However, the challenges of expanding the capacity of existing systems are considerable: based on recent growth trends in the US system for example, researchers estimate that it will take 20 years to create sufficient capacity to serve all four-year-olds, and 150 years to serve all three-year-olds.

Our conversation takes place at a time when many countries are keen to formalize, expand, and invest in early childhood care and education, despite the difficulties posed by the scale and complexity of the undertaking and the extreme nature of the recession. While the history of early care and education programs is different from country to country, and governance challenges or the potential for expanded funding may differ from place to place, many of the most serious challenges facing policymakers in this field are quite similar. Comparisons of effective policy levers and practices can be most profitably discussed by Roundtable participants in the following five areas.

Teacher Quality

Until recently, there was little political will in some countries to expand formal schooling to young children or to require increased levels of training and/or certification for providers of such care and education. For example, the 1998 law that re-authorized the US Head Start program sought only to

ensure that half of Head Start teachers would obtain an associate's degree; the 2007 re-authorizing legislation now seeks to ensure that half have a bachelor's degree by 2013.

- Beyond broad policies that provide incentives or penalties to promote teacher credentialing, what effective approaches are being used by state and local governments, teachers colleges, and others to dramatically increase the number of well-trained professionals that will be required to expand quality services to three- and four-year-olds (at a minimum)?

- Given that a diverse teaching force is critical to meeting the needs of immigrant students and families, is there a danger that the move toward professionalizing this workforce will drive immigrant personnel from the field? What approaches are proving effective in addressing this concern?

- To what extent and how are teacher colleges preparing their students to work with second-language acquisition issues? Are their efforts being evaluated and successful strategies shared?

System Coherence

The current universe of childcare providers – formal and informal – in most cases was not conceived of, nor designed, to serve as a coherent system for age 0-6 care and education. This patchwork poses serious and obvious challenges to those charged with creating and bringing to scale a coherent and effective system. In addition, the large and growing share of children from immigrant families in this age cohort, their unique needs, and the poor record of many programs in reaching and serving them, add a great deal of complexity to the reform agenda – programmatically, financially, and politically.

- What are the key elements of major national or sub-national efforts to improve the quality and coherence of early childhood care and education programs? What is known of their success in improving services and outcomes for immigrant children?

- How do these efforts either address or overlook the needs of children from immigrant families? To what extent do quality, program design, or accountability standards explicitly take the needs and outcomes of immigrant children (and parents, where appropriate) into account?

Instructional Programs

Paul Leseman writes of the difficulties some children experience if they develop bilingualism successively rather than simultaneously and the cognitive and academic skill advantages of being a "balanced bilingual" – i.e. a child whose proficiency in a home or first language (L1) and a second or host country language (L2) have reached the same mature, age-appropriate level. His discussion of this issue finds a strong echo in the United States, where many leading education experts and community leaders urge greater systemic support for instructional programs and strategies that build immigrant children's native language skills as a means of supporting development of their English proficiency. Debate on these issues during the 2007 reauthorization of the US Head Start program highlighted the lack of reliable and/or relevant data on the program's interventions for limited-English students and their scale, quality, or effects.

- It appears that questions of effective practice with regard to the balance between development of L1 and L2 skills are unsettled. Are they likely to be settled within the education research world soon? To what extent is their resolution a relevant question, since classroom practice is so often dictated by other factors, such as teacher quality or broader resource issues?

- For effective instructional practice to be widely adopted, an education system must be able to deliver relevant, expert professional development services to teachers and administrators on a large scale. What policy or program administration levers have been used to successfully drive the widespread adoption of effective instructional practice for this student population?

Immigrant Parent and Community Engagement

As noted earlier, some immigrant parents experience a "culture gap" that prevents them from promoting early literacy with their children or embracing formal educational opportunities available to their children prior to kindergarten. However, evidence from the US, Mexico, and other countries indicates that barriers to enrollment for many immigrant families include: knowledge about their program options, the availability of high quality and affordable programs, and program offerings that are aligned and offer working parents full day care.

- What strategies have been shown to reduce the "knowledge gap" experienced by immigrant parents about early care and education opportunities? Are there examples of such strategies being incorporated into program standards, contracting measures, training materials, or accountability standards?

- In order to dramatically expand quality childcare services, countries will likely find that they need immigrant adults to staff that expansion. Where have states or localities been successful in engaging immigrant communities as providers of care, and what strategies have they used to accomplish this?

Recession Effects

In the US, state governments have been in the lead when it comes to acknowledging and responding to the need for a dramatic expansion of quality early childhood education services. However, most of the investments states have made have come from discretionary funds, which means they are easy to eliminate when budgets are constrained, as they are today. Given the severity of the financial crisis and its impact on government budgets, it is unclear in the US and elsewhere whether the momentum built in recent years to expand the scale and quality of early childhood education services will be lost.

- To what extent have national or sub-national governments enacted actual cuts to enrollment in early education services, reductions in program standards, or delays in planned expansions?

- Are these actions having a disproportionate effect on children from immigrant families?

- What strategies, resources (e.g., stimulus spending), or legal mandates might maintain progress in this important area?

Issue Guide: Secondary Schools

Viewed through an institutional lens, there are many challenges to immigrant students' success in secondary versus elementary schools. It is expected that most literacy and language learning will have been completed in the elementary years. As a consequence, middle and high schools are not structured to teach both language and "content," as teachers at these higher levels are focused on teaching courses and not individual students. Outside the classroom, principals, counselors, and librarians have not been trained in ways that serve immigrants and students who are L2 language learners. Language proficiency tests are often inconsistent with content standards. At least in the US, teacher supply has been a serious problem, with 60 percent of urban schools reporting shortages of English as a second language (ESL) and bilingual teachers. Maintaining teacher quality is also difficult since credentialing standards and relevant professional development offerings vary widely.

Another abiding challenge is also highlighted by Christensen and Stanat, who note the limits of the research base regarding effective practices – particularly when viewed in the light of the complexity of the task. Tests given in L2 invariably mask students' content knowledge in L1, while tests in the native language are equally problematic because they do not match the language of instruction. There is little understanding of the effectiveness of differing testing accommodations – which are reliable, valid, and fair.

The high leverage point in US policy for improving instruction for immigrant students is the federal requirement embedded in the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) that ELL students be tested alongside their non-ELL peers, that their results be separately reported, and that schools be held accountable for their progress – or lack thereof. Thus, the NCLB law can seen to represent a revolution not just in *education* but in *integration* policy, since it requires schools to improve the performance of ELL students.

Instructional Quality

Two facts drive reform needs in this area. First, language learners in secondary schools need to master both language and content – whether in academic courses or in vocational track courses – but they must do so quickly, as their learning takes place against a rapidly running clock. Second, much innovation and failure occurs behind the closed doors of classrooms in schools, which means that many successes go unreplicated and failures go unaddressed.

The TIES and PISA studies reveal that one critical ingredient of success is simple exposure to the language of the host country. Expanded exposure requires not just early entry into formal education, but at the secondary level it can require: expanded school periods; and expanded day, year, and even school career for immigrant students. Each raises issues not just of political will but also of funding that need to be examined.

- Have programs that expand hours of instruction been singled out for cuts in the current recession?

- Stanat and Christensen make clear that teaching strategies and curricula that integrate language and "content" instruction are crucial to success – independent of whether instruction is delivered in the native language or not. They also make clear that curriculum frameworks and progress benchmarks that guide progress and are broadly implemented are

tied to successful instruction of language learners. One challenge then is the development and implementation of curricula that align language and content instruction. Has this problem been more effectively addressed in the more successful OECD countries? What policy or other levers have driven successful efforts?

- We also learn from PISA that two unremarkable if often overlooked elements of success are: (1) increased cooperation between language and content teachers, and (2) expanded planning time for teachers. In the US, cooperation often has to take place across comparatively rigid departmental boundaries within US secondary schools. Where are the levers for adoption of these rather straightforward practices - teacher contracts, accountability systems, and simple school-level scheduling? What barriers prevent their broader adoption?

- Improved learning may also result from more systematic engagement of school personnel other than teachers: most importantly from principals, but also on the part of counselors, who serve as gatekeepers to the curriculum, and librarians, who order books and software. Are there examples of particular policies or practices that support more effective engagement of these actors in improving the education of children from immigrant families?

- Finally, immigrant and language students may benefit disproportionately from classroom technology such as "smartboards." Has there been a push to increase classroom technology that is adapted to the needs of newcomer students, and what are the lessons to be learned in how to shape and ensure the classroom-level success of such initiatives?

Teacher Quality

The PISA study also makes clear that successful programs of instruction are linked to strong professional development of language and content teachers. The findings raise a number of issues that bear on the recruitment and preparation of teachers, their training, and the rewards provided to retain them. At least in the US, the shortage of trained, licensed bilingual teachers and subject area teachers has been identified as a central, abiding problem for school districts.

- A number of critical comparative issues present themselves with regard to the recruitment and training of new teachers: What teacher preparation programs and practices are proving most effective in helping new teachers succeed with children from immigrant families? Should teacher-preparing institutions be held accountable for the classroom success of their graduates (one direction of the Obama Administration's education reform plan)? To what degree should apprenticeships with master teachers - along the lines of medical school residencies - be adopted by districts as teacher training (or certification) strategies? What approaches might be adopted to expand the number of bilingual paraprofessionals who come from immigrant communities into teacher positions?

- To what extent have visas for temporary language teachers been employed as a means to provide effective instruction? What are the prospects for such visa programs in meeting the need for effective instruction while giving schools flexibility in meeting what can be fluctuating demand for language instruction tied to immigrant flows?

Another set of issues applies to post-licensing training and teacher retention and reward structures:

- What professional development policies and practices are proving most effective in improving the skills of teachers working with children from immigrant families? What are the barriers to bringing these practices to scale?

- To what degree are content area teachers at the secondary school level required to be trained in instructing L2 learners? Does this training address sensitive issues of discrimination and school climate, along the lines raised by the Crul paper?

- How have national and sub-national governments adapted their formal reward structure for teachers (for example, tuition reimbursement programs, salary and benefit contracts, and seniority rules) in order to promote more effective instruction for children from immigrant families?

Accountability and Assessment

As we have indicated, a major policy innovation in the US that has forced greater attention to issues of immigrant student education is the introduction of school accountability for performance of immigrant and English language learners. Although the implementation and funding of the new paradigm have been extraordinarily controversial, the changed policy framework has brought increased attention to the quality and coherence of educational services provided to children from immigrant families. But the direction raises a host of philosophical and technical questions, not the least of which is the challenge of disentangling a student's language from his or her academic skills. Several issues participants may want to discuss include:

- What types of performance and/or accountability measures are in place at the national and sub-national levels for student performance, and how have the particular issues surrounding the inclusion of immigrant students been addressed in those systems?

- Where schools or districts are being held accountable for the performance of immigrant students and language learners, what balance has been set to ensure that sufficient "inputs" have been provided to support the "outcomes" expected of students and their schools?

Parental Engagement

Three critical issues present themselves here. One is the degree to which schools are mandated or encouraged to promote an inclusionary school climate along the lines suggested by Maurice Crul. Strategies might include welcoming centers and outreach to immigrant parent communities. A second related issue is state or federal mandates or encouragement to make the critical documents of schooling – report cards, parent-teacher meeting notes, sports schedules, etc. - available in foreign languages.

A third issue is the degree to which parents are made aware of postsecondary options that are available to their children. In the US, this will typically involve broadening understanding of college and other vocational choices, the availability of financial aid, and the testing and other requirements that determine admission. Finally, family literacy programs have typically been directed to parents of younger children, but it may make sense to consider expanding the reach of those programs to secondary school students.

- Most of the programs and activities suggested above are not treated as essential school activities and are therefore not funded, regulated, or tracked in ways similar to core instructional practices. Where school systems have sought to value these programs and activities more highly, what policy levers or program models have they used to do so, and to what extent have these efforts resulted in better outcomes for children from immigrant families?

Systemic and Antidiscrimination Issues

A strong common theme that emerges from the Crul paper and from the demographic portrait of US schools above is the segregation of immigrant language minority students. This means that immigrant students attend schools that are not only segregated on the basis of race and income, but also language. We know that these schools have fewer well-trained teachers and principals and that their student outcomes lag behind other schools. Crul not only points to the negative long-term effects of segregation, but to patterns of apparent discrimination against immigrants making the transition from apprenticeships to the labor force.

- Although it may be taken up in the first session of the conference, there are comparatively few policy levers in the post-civil rights era in the US to promote the movement of immigrant and minority students to less segregated schools. Housing-based solutions are largely out of reach. Is this also the case in other OECD countries? Is the US approach of improving instruction *in situ* viable (for example, providing incentives for master teachers to take positions at low achieving, heavily minority, and immigrant schools)? Is it widely adopted?

- Another important dynamic is the movement of immigrants to new destinations and school systems that have not served appreciable numbers of immigrant students in the past, and in some cases have histories of school segregation. To what extent are the political and capacity-building challenges of these school systems different from more traditional immigrant destinations? Are there examples of effective mentoring or sharing of practices across traditional and new destination systems, or between new destination systems?