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ABSTRACT

A discussion of English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) learning in Spanish-speaking migrant workers' children focuses on the relationship of language identification and achievement. The first chapter briefly tells the story of the education and ESL instruction of one migrant adolescent. Chapter 2 offers a demographic and historical overview of migrant labor in the United States, and its Latinization after World War II, and chapter 3 describes its culture as determined by distinct economic, social, and educational variables. The fourth chapter outlines past federal migrant education legislation. The discussion then turns, in chapter 5, to the relationship between language and identity and the conflicts that may arise when the student's first-language identity is challenged or denigrated in the second-language environment. The next two chapters review theories of academic underachievement among minority students, discuss the pedagogical implications for migrant children, and offer corresponding classroom techniques for work with this population. (Contains 134 references.) (MSE)

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The Development of Self-Concept and Language Identity  
in Spanish-Speaking Children of Migrant Farmworkers

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Date August 15, 1994

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Abstract:

This paper examines the premise that sound second language learning cannot take place at the expense of first language identifications. Part I considers migrant language minority students and the school's influence on their developing self-concepts, language identities, and subsequent learning potential. Part II presents an overview of migrant labor in the U.S., while Part III describes its culture, as determined by distinct economic, social, and educational variables. Part IV outlines past migrant education legislation. Part V establishes the crucial relationship between language and identity, and the conflicts which may arise when a student's first language identity is challenged or denigrated in the second language environment. Parts VI and VII review theories of academic underachievement among minority students, discuss the pedagogical implications for migrants, and offer corresponding classroom techniques. An extensive bibliography is included.

ERIC Descriptors:

Migrant Education; English (Second Language); Self Concept; Language Role; Identification (Psychological); Cultural Influences; Cultural Awareness

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### PART

I. INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
II. A DEMOGRAPHIC AND HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF MIGRANT LABOR . . . . .	6
Demographics . . . . .	8
A Brief History of Migrant Labor . . . . .	9
The Latinization of Migrant Labor . . . . .	11
The Future . . . . .	12
III. THE CULTURE OF MIGRANCY . . . . .	14
Life Before the Move . . . . .	15
Influential Factors . . . . .	17
Life During the Move . . . . .	19
Life After the Move . . . . .	20
Migrant Camps . . . . .	21
The Silva Family . . . . .	23
Health Concerns . . . . .	25
Conclusion . . . . .	26
IV. AN OVERVIEW OF MIGRANT EDUCATION LEGISLATION . . . . .	28
The Missing Factor . . . . .	33
V. SELF-CONCEPT, IDENTITY AND LANGUAGE . . . . .	36
Self-Concept . . . . .	36
Identity . . . . .	39
Language and Identity . . . . .	42
Language as a Symbol of Identity . . . . .	44
Language Ego . . . . .	46
Identity Conflict . . . . .	48
Children and Identity Conflict . . . . .	49
VI. ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT GAP THEORIES AND PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR MIGRANT STUDENTS . . . . .	52
The Deficit Theory . . . . .	53
The Penalty for Being Different . . . . .	55
Pull-Out Tutorials . . . . .	58
Implication #1: Incorporation of L1 into L2 Learning . . . . .	60
Avoiding Linguistic Imperialism . . . . .	61
The Cultural Clash Theory . . . . .	64
Negative Identity Formation . . . . .	66
Implication #2: Multicultural Curricula . . . . .	69
Migrant Student Strengths . . . . .	71

The Need for Relevancy . . . . .	73
The Economic and Social Reproduction	
Theory . . . . .	75
Economic World Views . . . . .	76
Implication #3: Parental and Community	
Involvement . . . . .	80
Successful Outreach Programs . . . . .	84
The Castelike Minority and Resistance	
Theories . . . . .	86
Resistance to Learning . . . . .	87
Implication #4: Redefinition of Teacher -	
Student Roles . . . . .	89
Humanistic Classroom Climate . . . . .	90
Variable vs. Attribute Grouping . . . . .	92
Teacher Expectations . . . . .	93
Conclusion . . . . .	95
VII. SUGGESTED TECHNIQUES FOR FOSTERING POSITIVE	
SELF-CONCEPTS AND EMERGING L2 IDENTITIES IN	
MIGRANT STUDENTS . . . . .	96
Bilingual Tutors . . . . .	97
Adult Tutors/Aides from the Community . . . . .	98
Peer Tutcrials . . . . .	99
Migrant Students as Language	
Resources . . . . .	100
Creative Dramatics . . . . .	101
Role-Play . . . . .	102
Masks . . . . .	104
Parent and Community Outreach . . . . .	105
Recruiters . . . . .	106
Encouragement of Family Apprenticeships . . . . .	106
Problem-Posing . . . . .	108
A Sample Lesson . . . . .	110
VIII. SUMMARY . . . . .	115
IX. BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	118



For Virgil

## PART I: INTRODUCTION

I have chosen to introduce this paper with the story of Guillermo, a fourteen year old migrant student. In the short time that I knew him, he came to embody and, as a result, help clarify my longstanding questions and concerns regarding the link between second language learning, self-concept and potential identity conflict.

Guillermo first traveled to the United States from Mexico in the late summer of 1991; squeezed into a truck with a dozen friends and family members, he rode nonstop for three days. Upon arrival in Rockingham County, Virginia, Guillermo's father, a migrant laborer, joined his work crew in the apple orchards, while his mother set up the family's new household in a small second-hand trailer. Guillermo watched over his younger siblings and prepared to attend school for the first time in his life.

Formal education had not been available in his remote rural village in Mexico, so he had had no opportunity to learn to read and write Spanish. He spoke no English. Yet, when I met him, several weeks into the school year, he appeared eager, open, and undaunted by the situation in which he found himself. He had been placed in seventh grade and had sat through almost three weeks of classes in patient

silence. There was no actual ESL program in his middle school so, as an ESL teacher with the regional Migrant Education Program, my job became twofold. In addition to providing several hours of tutoring each week, I was to advise and assist classroom teachers in adapting mainstream curriculum and formulating appropriate learning objectives for the one or two language minority migrant students in each class. Guillermo presented a particular challenge to the staff as he was among the first to arrive without first language literacy.

By spring, Guillermo was reading at approximately a kindergarten level and completing fourth grade mathematic exercises in English. His incremental yet consistent progress with written language, however, is not the point of this introduction; rather, it is what happened concurrently. Guillermo's development of basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS), the social language associated with school and a new peer group, slowed down considerably. In addition, I observed a subtle personality change -- a change which I now attribute to the gradual chipping away of his positive self-concept and confidence, as prescribed by his home language and culture during his first fourteen years of life.

This began on the very day Guillermo was enrolled. His name, it was decided, was difficult, so he was introduced to his classmates and recorded on class rosters as "Willie."

His fifteen year old uncle and best friend, Pedro, on the other hand, was allowed to keep his first name. This became a point of contention and consternation between the boys. Did the fault lie with Guillermo or Pedro? Was Guillermo dubbed "Willie" because there was something wrong with his given name or as a sign of acceptance into his new community, and, if this anglicized form was a sign of acceptance, why had Pedro been ignored? Either way, the boys assumed that they were somehow to blame.

The "simplifying" of Guillermo's name was the first and perhaps the most blatant in a pattern of often insensitive and ill-informed school practices that, in effect, delegitimized his cultural and linguistic heritage. There was an indifference and a maintained ignorance among many staff members as to the world in which migrant students lived. Guillermo's past, his life in Mexico, as well as his unique experiences as the child of a migrant farmworker, held little worth or relevance in the school environment; his first language was not so much frowned upon by teachers as it was tacitly devalued as a symbol of his inability to behave and participate in the manner of his English-speaking peers. At best, he was a peripheral element in most of his classes, his desk drawn aside, next to Pedro's, in order to work on specially designed assignments -- his self-concept slowly being redefined by his inability to speak English.

Not surprisingly, Guillermo soon came to prefer his new name, even among family, and was reluctant to share stories from home or to work on literacy in his first language. His relationship with Pedro grew increasingly competitive, especially in terms of their English learning, and several teachers reported disciplinary problems, rare among ESL students. Eventually, as mentioned earlier, Guillermo's acquisition of social language appeared to come to a virtual standstill, as did the incredible energy, focus and confidence that he had once exuded.

I believe that Guillermo developed no positive relationship with English precisely because he had not been allowed to maintain a positive relationship with Spanish. By continually challenging or denigrating identification with his first language, the school experience actually denigrated his identification with himself and, consequently, his self-concept. Hence, the change in his outward behavior and the suppression of his natural ability to learn. Add to this the already marginalized status of migrants in American society -- a status too often reinforced by society's institutions, including its public schools -- and one begins to appreciate the range of social and psychological barriers facing ESL students such as Guillermo.

The following chapters are the result of my research into these barriers, subsequent to my time with Guillermo;

they support my contention that sound second language learning cannot come at the expense of first language identity. Parts II, III and IV are intended as a general introduction to migrant labor in the U.S., its accompanying culture, as determined by distinct economic, social, and educational variables, and the government's response in terms of educational legislation. Part V goes on to establish the crucial relationship between first language and identity. Part VI links this relationship to theories of academic underachievement and the education of migrant students, then responds with four essential pedagogical implications. Finally, Part VII contains corresponding classroom techniques designed to enhance the self-concepts of migrant students, particularly in terms of first language identity, while, at the same time, promoting positive identification with English.

PART II: A DEMOGRAPHIC AND HISTORICAL  
OVERVIEW OF MIGRANT LABOR

For over thirty years, advocates of migrant students have been attempting to formulate equitable responses to the educational disadvantage and discontinuity associated with migrancy. However, migrant laborers and their families remain one of the most educationally deprived groups in the United States. The complexities involved in providing an education to an itinerant population are reiterated in numerous articles, books and films concerning migrant workers and their children. The National Association of State Directors of Migrant Education states it as well as any other in a 1992 publication:

Because migrant children move with their families following the seasonal crops and waterways, they must adjust to frequent changes in location, teachers, classmates, and curriculum. Just as their life is itinerant, so is their education. To be a child of migrant workers is to be caught up in the abuses and neglect of poverty and migration...[A] consistent finding is that the migrant lifestyle limits educational opportunities and growth (NASDME 1992, 4).

While educational reforms have met with some success, the economic and social realities which create and perpetuate the need for these reforms have not noticeably changed, leaving the academic gap between migrant and non-migrant students as great as ever. Data collected by the

Interstate Migrant Education Council (1987) reveals the extent of this disparity: (1) farmworkers' children have the lowest enrollment rate in the country; (2) migrant students often lag up to eighteen months behind their peers and may require up to three years to advance one grade level; (3) the dropout rate for migrant students is around fifty percent, twice the national average; and (4) the average level of education for migrant workers, in general, is sixth grade.

Too often, the target of blame for this academic gap has been the migrants themselves. Characteristics associated with their lifestyle -- frequent moves, early access to employment, limited English, limited parental involvement, and a perceived lack of motivation -- are repeatedly noted as deterrents to education (Studstill 1985). Given the conventions of the American educational system, characteristics such as these are undoubtedly detrimental, but to place blame on a lifestyle, without sufficient understanding of that lifestyle and the factors which influence it, is shortsighted.

The education of migrant students cannot be advanced, then, without a basic understanding of migrant life itself. Indeed, a recent ethnography found that the "ultimate success of migrant education programs depends on understanding migrants' lifestyles . . ." (Prewitt Diaz, Trotter, and Rivera 1990, 35). Without acknowledging the

very things which compel migrant families to migrate, the socioeconomic and cultural factors dominating migrant students' lives, instructional strategies will continue to fall short of stated goals.

#### Demographics

Migrant labor is crucial to the U.S. agricultural economy, yet no government office has sole responsibility to monitor this population's demographics (ERIC/CRESS 1991). Little definitive data exists regarding its numbers. Ethnographers put the migrant population at between 1-5 million (Prewitt Diaz, Trotter, and Rivera 1990), while other researchers are only a bit more precise: 317,000 to 1.5 million (Shotland, 1989); one million school-age and 2-4 million adults (Office of the Commissioner of Education, Florida 1985); or, a conservative 250,000 with the understanding that the factoring in of family members, unemployed and undocumented migrants could increase the total into the millions (Goldfarb 1981). The lack of conclusive data is not surprising; it stems from and reflects the relatively "unknown and ignored" condition of migrants in the U.S. (Studstill 1985, 43).

This condition shapes the general public's concept of migrants to stereotypical "illegal aliens" who somehow slip across the border and usurp work from more deserving citizens. In reality, the majority is made up of long-term legal residents (Mines, Boccalandro, and Gabbard 1992) who

generally earn U.S. citizenship, hold green cards in order to migrate seasonally, or maintain permanent visas in hopes of eventual return to their native countries. They are predominantly Spanish-speaking, from Mexico and Central America, but a good number travel to the U.S. from Canada, the Caribbean, and parts of Southeast Asia. It should be noted that not all migrant farmworkers are foreign-born; apparently, a considerable number are U.S. citizens by birth, but a discrepancy exists as to the size of this particular population. Prewitt Diaz, Trotter, and Rivera go so far as to claim that a "vast majority of migrant and seasonal farmworkers are United States citizens by birth" (1990, 32), while other researchers simply state that, if migrants are not born abroad, they are "almost all . . . U.S.-born Latinos" (Mines, Boccalandro, and Gabbard 1992, 43).

#### A Brief History of Migrant Labor

The phenomenon of this highly mobile work force began in the late 19th and early 20th centuries when industrialization began to influence agricultural practices. Goldfarb (1981) explains that advances in mechanization, along with a decline in sharecropping, reduced or eliminated many farm jobs in the south. He describes the plight of displaced rural residents who were forced to move in order to survive. Thousands migrated north to industrial urban

centers, but many sought out familiar agricultural labor in eastern states and as far west as California.

Farming was in transition to big business and, as a result, many small family farms were replaced by larger corporate operations. According to Goldfarb, the status of a farm worker gradually regressed from that of hired-hand, who often lived and worked side by side with the owner, to that of a faceless employee, just one of many, who had little negotiating power when it came to housing and wages. Over the years, more and more land came to be controlled by fewer hands. Agribusiness became the dominant force in U.S. agriculture, and the demand for bands of cheap mobile labor intensified. Transportation grew easier, especially due to the automobile, and Goldfarb credits that for the surge in the importation of workers.

Out of this emerged three distinct patterns, or streams, of migrant travel. They were based on seasonal crops and economics, with workers "drawn like human tributaries into areas of expanding work . . ." (Goldfarb 1981, 11), and each stream had its own ethnic and linguistic traits. At first, the East Coast stream, which covers the region east of the Appalachian Mountains, was made up mostly of European immigrants and their descendants, but African Americans eventually became the predominant population. The Mid-Continent stream, based in the Rio Grande Valley in Texas and running through the Mississippi River basin, was

almost entirely Mexican-American and Mexican. The West Coast stream, which runs from Arizona all the way north to Washington, ranged from Chinese workers in the 1880's to Filipino laborers in the 1920's to hundreds of Arkansas and Oklahoma dust bowl victims during the Depression. By the mid 1960's, the ethnic and linguistic distinctions between these streams were becoming less pronounced.

Today, almost every ethnic group of migrants has representatives in each of the streams (Prewitt Diaz, Trotter, and Rivera 1990). The East Coast stream consists primarily of Puerto Ricans, Mexican-Americans, Haitians, along with Canadian Indians, Anglos, and African Americans. The Mid-continent stream is comprised mainly of Mexicans, Mexican-Americans, African Americans and some Southeast Asians. And, finally, the West Coast stream is composed mostly of Mexicans, Central Americans, Vietnamese, and Western Pacific immigrants.

#### The Latinization of Migrant Labor

The predominance of Mexican and Central American migrants in all three streams is a direct result of both government and industry policy which began shortly after World War II. Researchers Mines, Boccalandro, and Gabbard (1992) describe the "Latinization" of farm labor:

...[I]mmigrants (especially Mexicans) began to fill the increasing demand for heavy hand tasks. Government policy was aimed at maintaining the "temporary" or "guest worker" status of these workers and at targeting them to harvest and do other field tasks in certain farm

industries. But, almost immediately, two mutually reinforcing trends took hold. The legal guest workers or "braceros"...were shadowed by large groups of undocumented workers...[who] systematically got access to legalization programs through their experience as U.S. workers. The legal workers created "beachheads" where their undocumented relatives and friends could land and often find job leads. As a result, job-seeking networks of mostly Mexican immigrants were given a quasi-legal status from the early postwar years. By the 1970s Mexican immigrants had come to dominate the farm labor force in California, Texas and other Southwestern states (1992, 44-45).

These trends "transformed the farm labor force," and, more recently, they have begun to do so again (1992, 46). Industries throughout the United States, once reliant upon local citizenry for labor, or too distant from urban centers to attract sufficient interest, are increasingly absorbing and, thus, encouraging, Mexican and Central American immigration. The mushroom industry in Pennsylvania, tobacco harvests in Virginia, and California's transported citrus industry in Arizona are just three examples of these developing markets which attract migrant, as well as permanent, Latino labor.

#### The Future

Although agribusiness continues to expand, gobbling up more and more small family farming operations, the overall demand for seasonal workers does not seem to be growing. This is due primarily, but not exclusively, to the saturated labor pool. With the continuous influx of immigrants, there are more workers than there are jobs. In Florida, for instance, a state heavily populated with Mexican,

Guatemalan, and El Salvadoran immigrants, there are commonly three people competing for every one agricultural job (Corporation for Public Broadcasting 1990). This keeps wages down and virtually guarantees the farming industry an immediate and inexhaustible labor pool from which to draw. Increased mechanization also contributes to the migrant labor surplus, for it supplants the need for certain forms of labor-intensive tasks (Harrington 1987; Studstill 1985). As one veteran migrant observes:

That is why education is so important for our children. It used to take 20 men to move irrigation pipes. Now, it's done by one man with a tractor. We can see the future (Harrington 1987, 36).

### PART III: THE CULTURE OF MIGRANCY

An Inuit fishing in Alaska, a white dairy worker in upstate New York, a Mississippi black picking cotton, a Chicano harvesting apples in Oregon, a Haitian working with produce in New Jersey -- these individuals may be as distinct from one another as you are from any of them (Harrington 1987, 37).

As distinct as one is from another, migrants do share a common bond: they all live and function within the migrant world. Their paths may not directly cross, animosity may exist between certain groups, but the distinct cultures, languages, and dialects of Haiti, Mexico, Texas, or even Mississippi, to name a few, all exist within the larger culture of migrancy. This umbrella culture has received little formal attention; it was not until 1990 that ethnographers felt compelled to label it as such, after they concluded that "there are behavioral patterns recurring throughout the three streams . . . among people from different ethno/cultural backgrounds" (Prewitt Diaz, Trotter, and Rivera 1990, 117).

In that same year, Pederson (1990), in the Journal of Counseling and Development, emphasized that educators must expand their definition of culture in order to effectively understand and empathize with their students' frames of reference. In addition to the usual ethnic, religious and

linguistic variables, economic, social and educational characteristics must be factored into the definition. This is important for it is precisely these -- the economic, social and educational variables -- which best define the umbrella culture common to migrants, regardless of their linguistic and ethnic backgrounds.

Key elements within an environment supply a framework for human growth (Bronfenbrenner 1979) and, in the instance of migrant culture, particularly in terms of socioeconomics and education, they are especially relevant and observable. The typical migrant environment is inherently stressful, and this stress manifests itself in several ways. Ethnographers (Prewitt Diaz, Trotter, and Rivera 1990) have found that the easiest means of reviewing this is from a migrant perspective: life before the move, life during the move, and life after the move.

#### Life Before the Move

Most migrants have a home-base -- a place which they consider their permanent residence, even if they live there only several weeks or months a year. In fact, over 50% of all migrants own their own homes or, at least, pieces of land on which they hope to build (Prewitt Diaz, Trotter, and Rivera 1990). Home-bases in the United States are most often located in Texas, California and Florida. For green card holders, who travel here annually, home-bases are usually found in Mexico. The ethnography stresses the

importance of the home-base for symbolic, as well as practical, reasons. First, the family and friends associated with a home-base help to maintain a sense of roots for the migrants. Secondly, a migrant who is a legal U.S. resident is entitled to all social services provided by home-base agencies.

The problem with the majority of home-bases is that they are located in rural and economically depressed regions. Employment is scarce; those fortunate enough to find work may face frequent lay-offs or subsistence level wages. In extreme cases, there is no work available at all. So, except for those who face war or political threat in their home countries, it is chronic poverty and lack of opportunity which compel people to leave their homes and join the migrant stream. These same factors make it almost impossible to leave the stream. Work is the number one means of survival and must take precedence over almost every other aspect of life (Prewitt Diaz, Trotter, and Rivera 1990). A typical example of this is a Mexican family who lives for twelve months off the money earned in just six months of seasonal labor in the United States each year. As one worker said, "We have to come here to work and maintain ourselves. If we stayed there [Mexico] we couldn't eat and clothe our children" (1990, 33).

Once the decision to move is made, the factors which influence where and when are seldom random. The ethnography

details a sophisticated selection process which begins with the first move and develops with each subsequent move. Economic factors remain foremost in the decision-making, but migrants soon find, either through experience or word-of-mouth, that a number of other considerations are vital to success, as well.

### Influential Factors

Decisive economic factors are fairly straightforward. Season lengths are balanced with pay scales. Often, short seasons offer higher pay but more frequent moves, while long seasons offer lower pay but more stability. Conditions "upstream" must be constantly monitored. Bumper crops may signal plenty of jobs, but that often means a saturated job market, lower wages, and completion of work sooner rather than later. Crop failures are, of course, a dead end. Housing is seldom free and rarely cheap. So, again, the season's length and rate of pay must be balanced with the cost of rent. The number of family members earning wages is also influential. One migrant father said it pays to move to a high-rent location if there are plenty of family members working and the pay is good. His wife, however, preferred a work site which offered limited jobs, but low rent and child care facilities.

In addition to the economic condition of each site, social and educational factors must be weighed. They can complicate the process considerably. Suitability and

availability of housing, access to social services, local ties to friends and relatives, as well as past experience with particular growers are all important considerations.

Ethnographers emphasize that, almost without exception, the migrant parents they interviewed realize the importance of education for their children. For Mexican families, access to American schools is often seen as a positive side-effect to the harsh realities of life in the migrant stream. Most parents concede that frequent moves handicap their children's progress, so more and more are trying to plan their season with a minimum number of schooling interruptions. Proof of this is found in a recent trend in the Southwest -- some fathers now follow the crops in April, as usual, but travel alone in order that their children may finish the school year. They then return to the family later in the summer.

Perhaps this process was not always so complicated. Guzman (1981) writes that the migration of entire families from Mexico is a relatively new phenomenon. For years, only male members of Mexican families traveled to and from the U.S., while the women and children stayed home. Guzman claims that those left behind were victimized by this practice and credits "new female attitudes plus the power of the Mexican idea of family" for the apparent new-found assertiveness of many Mexican women (1981, 17). Determined to keep their families together, many women now insist on

migrating with their husbands. This same assertiveness may also account for the growing number of women migrating on their own, as well.

So, whether it is the first move or just the first move of a new season, the decision is not taken lightly. Several painful years may pass before a migrant family establishes a pattern that provides adequate return for its upheaval.

#### Life During the Move

The process of moving is often as trying as the decision-making process which preceded it. It can be devastating in cost, lost time, and potential danger to both the novice and experienced migrants.

The following is taken directly from an ethnographer's notes, and describes the routine that develops for an experienced migrant family leaving its home-base:

Before leaving the five most important things they have to do are: packing the clothes, which takes about a full day; getting the truck ready, which involves an oil change, tune up, fixing minor things and maybe even buying new tires; getting the house in order, which means cleaning up, putting things away, and shutting off the utilities; and taking the kids out of school (1990: 50).

Once a trip is finally underway, it is usually non-stop. In the mid-continent stream, this can mean up to thirty-six straight hours on the road in tight quarters. Groups of family members travel together, by caravan, in vehicles that are filled to capacity, either with people or possessions. Car sickness is not uncommon. Mechanical

problems are anticipated, but the potential for serious breakdowns remains a constant worry, so each group is sure to include a key individual -- one familiar with the workings of a car and, if language is an obstacle, with English.

For the most part, travel for international migrants is quite similar to that of domestic migrants. They do, however, run slightly greater risks. En route north, they face little difficulty in Mexico, but the potential for negative encounters and discrimination by authorities and citizens increases once they cross the border. At season's end, their return trip is just the opposite. Travel in the U.S. poses only the usual risks of vehicle breakdown and fatigue, but they are easy targets for attack and robbery on the Mexican side of the border (Guzman 1981).

The pace of travel, combined with the crowding, heat, and trepidation brought on by elements of the unknown can make for a stressful and often draining experience. However, most families possess "discipline, a sense of unity, and a sophisticated division of responsibility" which enable them to overcome the hardships collectively (Guzman 1981, 18).

#### Life After the Move

"The living and working conditions of migrant families are a serious national health problem" (ERIC/CRESS 1991). Daily life for many migrant families is no better than it

was twenty or thirty years ago; in many ways, despite legislation concerning wages, housing, medical care, transportation and discriminatory practices, time has stood still for the migrant worker (Corporation for Public Broadcasting 1990).

### Migrant Camps

Quality of life is enhanced or depressed by the quality of housing, and, for migrants, it varies from state to state and grower to grower. Some states have strict laws which regulate and monitor migrant housing; others depend on the employers' sense of responsibility and fairness. Often, during peak harvest time, housing becomes most expensive and scarce. A Congressional subcommittee in 1982 heard testimony that some migrants were forced to pay up to eighty percent of their income for rent in the migrant camps (IMEC 1987).

Camps are usually established close to the work sites in rural areas, set apart from the year-round community. Unless there is an emergency, travel into town is kept to a minimum, due to the time, distance and cost involved. Large camps may house several different ethnic groups, but each group tends to be tacitly assigned to its own section, so there is little interaction. In smaller camps, it is possible for a family to find itself the sole representative of its particular language and culture (Prewitt Diaz, Trotter, and Rivera 1990). The familiar support system of

home-base friends and family is no longer available, and the very nature of migrancy restricts opportunity to forge new relationships or "become integrated into socially rich neighborhoods" (Cate, Ray, and Tan 1991, 86).

In addition to geographic barriers, migrants have historically been isolated by invisible barriers, as well.

Migrant families are under stress because they are neglected by all our societal institutions...For years, migrants have been exempted from general labor, health, and safety laws, or the statutes were not enforced on their behalf. Community attitudes ostracizing migrants and preventing them from receiving the same consideration as other members make it extremely difficult for them to receive adequate services (Larson, Larson, and Alvarez 1991, 87).

As U.S. citizens and legal residents, the majority of migrant workers are entitled to full access to social services wherever they live. Yet years of ill-treatment and inevitable language and cultural miscommunications have left migrants somewhat hesitant to approach these institutions; in fact, ethnographers find that most migrants strive to remain independent of social agencies. There are those who manage to apply for the services they deserve, mostly food stamps or the Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), however a general mistrust of "the system" remains.

The examples below offer first-hand accounts of migrant living conditions. They were recorded by ethnographers and represent the worst and best scenarios:

The farmer provided a one room house with no furniture, running water or electricity. They had to sleep...on

the dirt floor and were often infested with lice and bothered by all sorts of other bugs, rats, etc. For this, the rancher charged them \$250 a month rent, and they paid for all utilities separately. She [the mother] said that she was constantly tired...it seemed as if she was constantly washing clothes to "try and remove the soil from our clothes and our lives" (1990, 56).

Although most migrant camps are privately owned and operated by the growers, there are camps which operate on federal funds:

While in California, I lived in a Federally funded government camp for migrant workers. The operation of the camp was overseen by the county. The camp had houses for about 75 families and was well run by a competent, friendly, helpful staff. In the camp were child care facilities, which were open from 5:00 AM to 5:30 PM and a school for children 3 and 4 year old. Rents were low, and for a small four bedroom house the migrants paid \$120 a month, with utilities furnished. Laundry facilities and playgrounds were available for the families. The camp was a close community, even though most families did not live in the same communities downstream (1990, 55).

#### The Silva Family

Somewhere in between these two extremes lies the experience of the Silva family, as documented in an episode of Frontline (Corporation for Public Broadcasting 1990). This family's yearly migration starts in their Florida home-base, where they pick beans through the winter. In April, they head for the onion fields of Georgia, then to the cucumber and tomato fields of Indiana. In October, on their return south, they stop in South Carolina for another tomato harvest, and then begin the cycle anew in their home-base.

Housing in their home-base is bleak. Pedro, the head of this fifteen-member extended family, has been working in

the fields for over thirty years, but cannot afford permanent housing for his immediate family. They stay in a migrant camp of around four hundred trailers which are expected to house up to eight thousand people. The trailers are World War II vintage, unfurnished and rent for four hundred dollars per month. If the crop yields have been poor, the family's income decreases and a season of work may disappear in two or three months' worth of rent.

The Silvas much prefer the conditions upstream in Indiana. Housing there is provided by their employer, rent-free. Workers receive thirty-five cents for every bucket of tomatoes picked and earn an average of twenty-five dollars a day. Pedro's wife earns extra money cooking for other families, and both their teenage sons are in the fields, as well. Conditions are very crowded -- the couple shares a single room with the sons -- and the bath, laundry and kitchen sink facilities are all communal. But they feel that this spot is the best that the migrant life can offer.

Twenty-five dollars may be earned in a good day; a day which begins at sun-up and requires up to twelve or fourteen hours of extremely physical work in the fields. Women typically work even longer. In most Spanish-speaking families, while both males and females work in the fields, domestic duties are typically left solely to the females. An average day for a woman begins in the kitchen at 3:45 in the morning, cooking and packing a substantial noon meal for

the family. Next, she must transport the small children to day care, when it is available, or prepare the older ones for school. She will leave for the fields between 5:30 and 6:00, put in ten to twelve hours of work, and then return home in time to begin dinner and laundry (Prewitt Diaz, Trotter, and Rivera 1990).

### Health Concerns

Given these working and living conditions, it is not surprising that migrants suffer health problems associated with populations in developing countries. Agricultural work is recognized as one of the most hazardous occupations in the United States, even surpassing mining (ERIC/CRESS 1991), yet health insurance is a virtual impossibility for migrants, and workers' compensation does not even apply in twenty states (National Rural Health Care Association 1985). In addition to the dangers of field work, high infant mortality and a malnutrition rate at ten times the national average place the life expectancy for migrants at only forty-nine years, almost twenty-five years less than the national average (Office of the Commissioner of Education 1985).

The most common health problems cited by health care providers include dermatitis, respiratory ailments, gastrointestinal complications, hypertension, back problems, anemia, eye problems, and parasitic infections. Even usually preventable diseases, such as tuberculosis, are far

more common in migrants than in patients seen regularly by doctors (Mattera 1980). These problems are almost certainly a result of demanding manual labor combined with overcrowded conditions, poor sanitation, malnutrition, and frequent exposure to pesticides.

The extent of sickness due to pesticide and chemical fertilizer poisoning is especially disturbing, but has not been sufficiently researched (National Rural Health Care Association, 1985). However, as far back as 1970, a Senate committee had documentation that at least eight hundred migrant workers were killed and 800,000 injured each year due to pesticides (Goldfarb 1981).

Children are more vulnerable to these conditions than their parents. As mentioned previously, the infant mortality rate is high. Babies of migrant mothers are born prematurely three times more often than non-migrants, and have a twenty-five percent greater chance of dying during their first year (Goldfarb 1981). The regular vaccinations and physical examinations, which so many U.S. children receive as a matter of course, are rare for migrant children.

#### Conclusion

The strain of migrant life, at each phase of its cycle, is incessant. Little security or predictability exists. Success or failure is contingent upon a continual flow of uncontrollable variables: weather, crop conditions, the

labor market, availability and cost of housing, transportation, schools, health concerns, quality and dependability of employment contacts, economic trends, and so on. This has superimposed a "situation-centeredness" and an orientation to the present time over the entire migrant culture (Condon and Shimahara 1984). It is not uncommon for members of a migrant family to appear distracted by the present or fatalistic if asked to plan for the future:

Because of their subjugation to external factors, migrant workers are denied both stability in their present lives and hope for it in the future. Men and women alike (often families with many children) "follow the sun"...One of the consequences of such itinerancy is the migrants' preoccupation with the present. Finding only temporary employment along their way, they cannot without great difficulty connect its unstable essence with the ultimate attainment of remote goals (1984, 9).

#### PART IV: AN OVERVIEW OF MIGRANT EDUCATION LEGISLATION

As the previous pages have shown, economic survival within the culture of migrancy often necessitates that education be postponed or interrupted, in order that the family may follow the harvests. This takes a terrible toll on migrant students; however, transiency is not the sole factor responsible for their academic difficulties. Educational neglect -- on the part of the schools, not just the families -- has been and remains a common occurrence. Teachers and administrators have often failed to "develop relationships with the family and to provide equivalent instruction to migrants because they required resources and expertise that local areas did not possess" (Larson, Larson, and Alvarez, 1987).

The quest to remedy this, to provide schools with vital resources and expertise, has a relatively brief history. In 1954, a mandate from the Supreme Court opened the door to improved educational opportunities for all minority groups. Although migrant students were not targeted specifically, the case of Brown vs. the Board of Education "changed the emphasis and intent of education in America" by outlawing racially segregated schools and mandating equal access to education for all students (Johnson and others 1986, 2). At

least on paper, if not in practice, schools had a responsibility to address the unique needs of their migrant students.

A more substantial and relevant catalyst for change was the 1960 film, Harvest of Shame. In this documentary, journalist Edward R. Murrow revealed the startling conditions in which most migrant laborers lived. Viewers were confronted with the extreme poverty, hunger and filth of the labor camps of the day -- conditions which many could not believe existed in the United States (Johnson and others 1986). An initial wave of public outcry resulted in stepped up lobbying for governmental action.

In 1964 the first National Conference on Migrant Education was held in Missouri and, although it is barely mentioned in resources today, surely this conference embodied the growing organized concern for migrant students. In the following year, the government finally passed the Federal Title I Elementary and Secondary Education Act, providing federal funding to states in order for local school systems to meet the needs of their economically or educationally disadvantaged students, through compensatory programs.

This act, commonly referred to as Title I, was written to address all disadvantaged students, in general. Unfortunately, due to its generality, it failed to provide adequate help to migrant students (Prewitt Diaz, Trotter,

and Rivera 1990). Compensatory programs, funded through Title I, were largely situated in urban areas and designed for use with students who were full-time residents. The unique problems of a mobile student population were not taken into account. There was no system, for example, created for the transfer of student academic and health records from one school to another. This type of logistical problem was often compounded by a general lack of acceptance or know-how, on the part of the school community, in dealing with students from varied language backgrounds (Chin 1984).

Whether the slight of the migrant population was intentional or not is unclear. Some researchers are reluctant to place blame on the school systems, citing the migrant lifestyle as the main reason children were not enrolled in special programs (Prewitt Diaz, Trotter, and Rivera 1990), while others state flatly that "schools were not using the funds to reach migrant children" (Johnson and others 1986, 3).

Several migrant advocacy groups are credited for the 1966 amendment to Title I which established the Migrant Education Program. Although most compensatory programs that followed were based on the familiar model provided by Title I (tutorials with teacher aides, support services in health, community and parent education), several provisions in the amendment ensured suitability for a mobile population: inter/intrastate school coordination, interagency

coordination, increased parent involvement, plus the critical stipulation that migrant program services remain supplemental to general services available to migrant children under the original Title I (Johnson and others 1986).

In 1972, a federally funded data bank was established in Arkansas to facilitate interstate coordination. The Migrant Student Record Transfer System (MSRTS) was designed to store and disseminate academic and health record information of enrolled migrant students. By tracking migrant students and passing on pertinent information in a timely manner, it was intended to allow on-site school staff to promptly focus on addressing the students' educational and health-related needs. Over the years, MSRTS has proven effective in the collection of such data, but its efficiency in transferring data has been and remains a problem.

In addition to government funding and the establishment of MSRTS, formal advocacy groups were slowly emerging in the field of migrant education. A report prepared by the Interstate Migrant Education Council (IMEC) goes into great detail about such organizations, counting itself among the top two. The IMEC, founded in 1976, along with the National Association of State Directors for Migrant Education (NASDME), founded in 1975, work to facilitate cooperation and communication between various state agencies, state and local school districts, administrators, educators and

migrant parents. In addition to this, IMEC and NASDME are credited with influencing congressional action on behalf of migrant students and promoting greater understanding among the general public about migrant contributions to the community.

In 1981, federal funding programs were reorganized with legislation of the Education Consolidation Act. Since then, Title I Migrant Education Programs have been covered under Chapter I of this act. Chapter I grants are awarded to eligible schools serving disadvantaged students, grades 1-12, who are academically at least one year behind their appropriate grade. In most cases, this funding is controlled at the local level, but not so with the Migrant Education Programs. In order to facilitate interstate cooperation and educational continuity, migrant funds are controlled at the state level:

Each state department of education determines the best ways to deliver services to eligible migrant children, from pre-school through the 12th grade. The program provides services that help educate migrant children and foster their well-being. Migrant children may receive supplementary basic skills instruction according to their needs. In addition, they may receive supportive health services...if such services are needed to improve their academic skills. Other special needs are met as they are identified, including career education, vocational training, ESL, bilingual instruction, and enrichment activities (Chin 1984, 14-15).

Overall, though, Migrant Education Programs are still to be regarded as a supplement to, not a substitute for, efforts of local school systems. They are not intended to replace

or excuse local educational agents' responsibilities for their migrant students.

The Program's rules and regulations have changed with the times. Migrant labor is no longer limited to traditional agricultural work. Fishing, forestry, dairy, even poultry processing industries now utilize migrant workers, and their children are eligible for special services. When migrant families decide to remain in one place year-round, their children are considered "formerly migratory" for several years. This allows them to continue receiving migrant education services in order to ease their academic transition. In addition, in 1988, age restrictions on eligibility were broadened from five through seventeen years to three through twenty-one years. This paralleled the growing awareness among educators of the efficacy of early intervention programs, such as Head Start, as well as the realization that severely disadvantaged students benefit from programs which extend beyond the usual high school cut-off point (NASDME 1990).

#### The Missing Factor

The last thirty years of legislation, funding, specialized programs and increased public awareness have had an impact on the costly neglect of migrant children. However, the achievement gap between migrant and mainstream students remains. A survey of experienced migrant educators strongly suggests that migrant students are still more

likely to fail than mainstream students. Or, more accurately, the "educational system is much more likely to fail migrant students than their more geographically stable peers [emphasis mine]" (IMEC 1987, 10).

It is not the intent of this writer to indict the sixteen thousand-plus school systems in the U.S. for the marginal educational success of migrant students; rather, the intent is to review the situation in a different light. Right now, migrant students are caught in an unending game of "cognitive catch-up," as they move from one school environment to the next. Even with the unquestionable commitment and quality of the many compensatory and support services provided by the Migrant Education Program, migrants play a losing game, judging by the fifty percent dropout rate. Migrant educators have long recognized a missing element. Their surveys indicate that, while cognitive needs may be blamed for the final failure of a migrant student, the root of the problem is most often found in the affective domain (Johnson and others 1986).

Within the affective domain, self-concept is of primary concern. It was ranked among the top three concerns in two separate assessments of migrant student needs and staff development training (Ockerman 1983; 1984). Unfortunately, as legitimate an issue as self-concept is, it has not been researched to any large degree nor received the attention that it might in the realm specific to migrant children.

The remainder of this paper is intended as a step toward an understanding of the role that schools play in self-concept development and, in turn, the significant influence that self-concept development has on second language acquisition.

## PART V: SELF-CONCEPT, IDENTITY AND LANGUAGE

In order to understand the impact which educational practices may have on the development of self-concept in migrant students, it is helpful to first review the relevant terminology. Therefore, this chapter begins with an overview of self-concept theory, followed by a brief discussion of related terms such as identity and ego. Once these are established, their special bond with language, as well as their application to second language learning, can be better explored.

### Self-Concept

Succinct definitions of self or self-concept vary from the sociological to the psychological sciences. Purkey reviewed various research dating from the first half of this century, and came up with a useful composite definition of self as a "complex and dynamic system of beliefs which an individual holds true about himself, each belief with a corresponding value" (1970, 7). Silvernail (1981), writing over a decade later, also reviewed existing theories and included Purkey's definition among several of the most useful examples, but admitted that other legitimate theories exist. He concluded that a writer's attempt to cite each

and every slightly modified definition would quickly become a "futile exercise" and recommended paying attention to the most distinctive and fundamental principles which emerge from accepted theories (1981, 9).

Most theories of the self maintain that who people perceive themselves to be is more powerful than who they actually are; and the foundation for who they perceive themselves to be is their interpretation of how others see them (Studstill 1985). Sociologist Cooley (1902) used the phrase "looking-glass self" to explain this phenomenon. He proposed that, as if looking in a mirror, individuals observe, interpret and adopt other people's impressions of them.

At first, recognition of this "reflection" simply allows for awareness of oneself as an entity separate from others in the environment. This self-realization occurs very early in life. Erikson (1980) traces its roots back to an infant's first exchange of smiles with a significant other. However, once the self has been established, ongoing recognition and interpretation of others' perceptions will guide children to develop a self-concept which, by adolescence, will be quite multifaceted. They will grow to view themselves in "different roles (child, student, parent) with different abilities (physical, mental) and different limitations" (Silvernail 1981, 9). Exactly how they define these roles, and their corresponding abilities or

limitations, will depend greatly on social interactions and their subsequent beliefs regarding others' perceptions of themselves.

Again, according to Purkey's composite, self-concept functions on a system of beliefs which an individual forms about her/himself. He intends this definition to emphasize two essential qualities of the self -- it is organized and dynamic. Organized in that, as an individual grows older, the belief system becomes fairly constant and categorized; this is vital to one's sense of stability and inner order. Numerous beliefs or perceptions are categorized according to significance and value; the more significant or fundamental a belief is, the less likely one is to let it go, even if it holds negative connotations. Secondly, the self is dynamic in that it constantly evaluates itself in terms of new concepts and social interactions and behaves accordingly. Purkey includes this for good reason. Nearly every modern theory of the self is based on this premise and, more importantly, the motivation behind it: all behavior is motivated by "maintenance and enhancement of the perceived self" (Snygg and Combs 1949; Rogers 1951). Therefore, an individual's assimilation or rejection of new concepts regarding her/himself is dependent upon their perceived relevancy to the self-perceptions already in place.

It must be noted that not all beliefs at the core of one's self-perception are necessarily accurate; however, by

the adolescent stage, they are so imbedded in the individual's belief system that they might as well be true. In other words, the "looking-glass" phenomenon, which is so instrumental to one's self-concept and emerging identity, carries risk. It is always a matter of interpretation. A person may misunderstand others' reactions, or grant others' behavior or beliefs more credence than they deserve. In time, if these misperceptions remain unchecked, legitimate feedback to the contrary may be filtered out because it does not mesh with the self-perceptions already secured (Studstill 1985). This filtering process may seem extreme, but it is in the nature of the self to resist change.

#### Identity

Erikson's theories of identity are perhaps the best known, yet even he concedes that identity is often difficult to distinguish from self-concept (1980). Historically, there have been two general views: sociologists have attributed identity to roles and statuses defined by society, while psychologists have asserted that identity begins inside the individual, as part of the unique personality. Any satisfactory view of identity, however, must incorporate both the social and personal aspects (Baumeister 1986); for they are both true yet cannot function separately.

In writing about the coexistence of both social and personal aspects, Liebkind believes that the content of

social identity stems from belonging to different social groups, while the content of personal identity derives from finding distinction between oneself and others in those same groups. Based on conclusions from previous studies, she points out the dual-nature of identity: "People try to balance their efforts to achieve a positive self-concept through group distinctiveness on the one hand and individual distinctiveness on the other" (1989, 52). Yet even individual distinction, the goal of one's personal identity, is incumbent upon group interaction; without knowledge of group, one could not distinguish oneself from it. So, interaction with a group(s) is required in order to define both one's social and personal identity. This is important, for, just as social interaction defines much of self-concept development, it is seen to play an equally critical role in identity development.

For Erikson, identity "connotes both a persistent sameness within oneself (selfsameness) and a persistent sharing of some kind of essential character with others" (1980, 109). The characteristic of selfsameness is understandable; it enhances continuity, stability and, thus, self-recognition. Erikson attributes the chore of maintaining this continuity to the ego. He views the ego as the "central organizing agency," responsible for synthesizing or discarding evolving self-perceptions traded between an individual and her/his group. As these

perceptions stabilize, usually concurrent with the late adolescent stage, the emerging individual gains greater social recognition and validation. This is vital to identity formation in order that the emerging individual "be given function and status as a person whose gradual growth and transformation make sense to those who begin to make sense to him" (1980, 120). In this way, it is really society's responsibility to "identify" its members so that, in turn, members mutually reinforce the society.

Baumeister goes a step further and states that "identities exist only in societies, which define and organize them" (1986, 7). He refers to the evolution of different "selves," which develop at different stages, in accordance with the defining influences of family and peers and the power of social groups and predetermined social roles.

This notion that identity is composed of different social "selves," which evolve and function simultaneously within an individual, is worth further exploration. Hart's "confederacy of selves" ties in especially well here. His research supports the finding that social contexts shape development, according to the various roles which they obligate the individual to fulfill:

Each social context exerts unique role demands: for instance, with parents, there may be expectations to be obedient, helpful, and polite; with friends, loyal, talkative, and active; and so on...Instead of a single self to be evaluated and thought about, there could be

multiple selves, each of which is evaluated and thought about in different ways (1988, 75).

It is not difficult to expand the roles offered by Hart, and imagine how many selves may be co-existing within a student at one time, for even pre-adolescent children have been found to demonstrate distinct "social selves" (Damon and Hart 1982). Labels derived from belonging to various social groups, "Catholic," "boy scout," or "Mexican-American," for example, contribute to the foundation of identity formation. Each conjures up certain expectations of the child and surfaces more or less in conjunction with the social setting.

The point of this ongoing process is the "gradual integration of self-images in anticipation of identity" (Erikson 1980, 159). With this in mind, the distinction between self-concept and identity becomes less elusive. Identity grows from and is a product of self-conceptualization. It does not arrive with the first self-defining experience of childhood, but unfolds, as Erikson (1980) says, through gradual cohesion of self-perceptions. In other words, identity requires a bit of history; its contents grow from experience in society (Weigert 1988).

#### Language and Identity

What happens to a child's developing self-concept or an adult's sense of identity when social contexts change? When the familiar roles which they have adopted are lost? When

even the most mundane of objects and human interactions can no longer be taken for granted? This can occur with the alteration of just one variable: language.

In the introductory discussion of self-concept and identity, we saw the typical patterns of development. The hypothetical individuals described by so many theorists are usually assumed to exist within a consistent language environment; the language with which they name their world in early childhood remains the ambient language throughout life. The social roles they fulfill, the beliefs they hold are all conceived in one language. For many, this is the case. However, for a growing number, this is far from an accurate depiction. A July 21, 1993 USA Today article reports that over two million students in the United States, approximately one in twenty, live in a home where English is not the primary language. Within this population, lies the migrant student population, which is predominantly Hispanic. In the 1990-1991 school year, seventy-seven percent of the migrant students registered with the Migrant Student Record Transfer System were Mexican, Mexican-American, Puerto Rican or Central American; average that seventy-seven percent with Department of Labor statistics, and the result is that at least half of all migrant students come from families for whom English is the second language (NASDME 1992).

Given the social and economic hardships associated with the culture of migrancy, children of migrant workers are

considered "at risk" from the moment they enter school; even those whose first language is English are at a decided disadvantage. So, what added hurdle must be overcome by students whose home language is not English? The hurdle is affective, rather than cognitive, tied to self-concept, rather than academic aptitude, and inextricably linked to language learning.

#### Language as a Symbol of Identity

The notion that language serves a fundamental function in the creation of self-concept and identity is not new. Dilthey, writing at the end of the last century and the early part of this, believed identity to be an essentially linguistic product (Baumeister 1986). He maintained that knowledge of oneself comes from meaningful experiences which, spread across time, strengthen the sense of identity by providing it with continuity and stability. More to the point, however, because these meaningful experiences occur within the context of social relationships, and these relationships are surely conducted via language, it follows that "identity is a linguistic construction" (Baumeister 1986, 15).

Knowledge of oneself and knowledge of one's world are determined by language: "a child's conscience becomes awakened and broadened as he progresses in language learning, which little by little ushers him as an individual into society" (Grinberg and Grinberg 1989, 109). The

knowledge brought on by this language learning links the individual to meaningful objects; not objects in the inanimate sense, but objects in the form of significant others, social and cultural interactions, places, and even language itself. More than a mere method of communication, then, language is a fundamental symbol of one's identification with and belonging to a particular ethnic or social group (Edwards 1985; Mendelberg 1984; Schumann 1975). As a result, it is more resistant to change than any other component of one's cultural make up (Schaff 1969).

The Grinbergs (1989), psychoanalysts who specifically study identity in cases of migration and exile, consider relocation to a new or foreign environment a cause of enormous psychological upheaval, one which strains the continuity and stability of identity. The link between an individual and her/his most meaningful social objects -- not the least of which is language -- is threatened, so much so that identity is threatened at the same time:

Everything is new, it is all unknown, and the immigrant himself is a stranger to the environment...[He]loses most of the roles he once played in his community as family member (son, father, brother), member of a profession or the work force, member of a circle of friends, political activist, and so on...Disturbances in the social-integration component result in a feeling of not belonging to any group of people that confirms one's existence (1989, 133-134).

Ironically, it is often just at this point, as one first perceives loss or doubt regarding the different social-selves which comprise identity, that recognition of

this identity becomes its most conscious and tenacious. Change is imminent, and suddenly the ego, in charge of maintaining fluidity of self-perceptions, enters a stage of limited permeability in order to avoid change. Schumann (1975) writes of the trap this sometimes presents for language-learners. They must be flexible in order to learn a second language, but the act of learning creates anxiety which retards or blocks the process.

#### Language Ego

With this aspect of permeability and anxiety in mind, it is necessary to introduce the term "language ego," first coined by Guiora and his associates (1972). At its most basic, language ego "refers to the self-identity intricately involved with the risks of taking on a new language" (Richard-Amato 1988, 112). Its development is best explained as paralleling that of Freud's body ego:

Development of body ego is a maturational process in which the child gradually acquires a body image, becomes aware of his physical boundaries and is thus able to distinguish himself from the object world around him (Schumann 1975, 222).

Once the boundaries have been established, it is the ego's chore to maintain continuity and stability (Erikson 1980). Guiora believes that the language ego fulfills much the same role when it comes to an individual's sense of linguistic identity:

In a manner similar to the concept of body ego, language ego too is conceived as a maturation concept and refers to a self-representation with physical outlines and firm

boundaries. Grammar and syntax are the solid structure on which speech hangs, lexis the flesh that gives it body, and pronunciation its very core (Guiora, Brannon, and Dull 1972, 112).

In both cases, early years are characterized by great flexibility, or "empathic capacity," which keeps boundaries malleable, but adolescence and the transition to young adulthood signals their severe restriction. This helps to explain, for example, the apparent ease with which children "assimilate native-like speech" in a second language, while most adolescents and adults find this particular task exceedingly difficult and inhibiting (Guiora, Brannon, and Dull 1972, 112).

The concept of a sub-ego being encompassed by the larger ego parallels theories of sub-selves, or multiple social roles, being encompassed by the larger identity. Consequently, in order to successfully take on another language, the overall identity must adopt and incorporate another component, another role -- a second language-self:

[T]he task of learning a second language poses a challenge to the integrity of basic identifications. To engage in learning a second language is to step into a new world. This act of extending the self so as to take on a new identity is, we believe, an important factor in second language learning (Guiora, Brannon, and Dull 1972, 111-112).

The act of extending oneself in order to take on this new language identification would seem to be incumbent upon the language ego's ability to expand its perimeters in order to integrate the new language-self (L2 identity), without

compromise or risk to the original language-self (L1 identity).

### Identity Conflict

In the case of a language minority -- a population often obliged to learn the language of the dominant culture -- the process of learning another language has the potential to cause great internal conflict. Especially in the early stages of migration, there occurs a sort of inner tug of war between the desire to preserve oneself and one's past identifications, as symbolized by the L1 identity, and the desire to feel connected to the new environment, symbolized by the L2, which requires temporary suspension of inner stability and continuity. The Grinbergs present it as a rather winless battle between "the desire to assimilate with others so as not to feel left out or different and the desire to be different so as to continue feeling the same" (1989, 132).

This sets the stage for an identity crisis. Individuals wish to interact meaningfully with their new cultural and linguistic environment, yet naturally hope to retain primary allegiance to their L1 identity at the same time. Confrontations with the L2 may simultaneously cause feelings of resentment and dislike, as well as an intense desire to learn it so as to belong (Grinberg and Grinberg 1989). Often this crisis is left somewhat unresolved in mature adults; they adapt to their new environment as much

as is necessary, but feel "in disguise," as though "they have lost the language in which they feel 'authentic'" (1989, 112). It is not uncommon, therefore, to find the burden of identity conflict and its resolution passed down to the next generation (Sommers 1969).

### Children and Identity Conflict

Children are usually raised according to the social values and patterns of their parents. For immigrants and language minority migrant students, these values and patterns are associated with the L1 culture. When children attend school, however, they encounter something unfamiliar, for the "objects, social relationships and cultural attitudes" at the core of the school's curriculum come from a perspective outside the home experiences (National Educational Association, 1972, 60). Consequently, children face the same language identity conflict which their parents face, but to a more extreme degree. Their language egos are still flexible enough to assimilate a second language more readily than their parents', but they are also more vulnerable to assimilating negative perceptions about their L1 "home" identifications. Liebkind reminds us that while identities are "formed, developed, changed and preserved throughout life," it is the adults who have established strategies to protect the most valued and integral of these (1989, 53). Children and adolescents have not.

Children also experience the same type of mourning period which adults do upon being uprooted from a familiar environment; the "work of working through," as it has been described, requires the acceptance of losses and the recovery and reorganization of self in order to feel whole and connected again (Grinberg and Grinberg 1989, 96). The difference is that they had no voice in the decision to move and may be too young to understand their parents' motivations, no matter how simply and logically phrased. Secondly, they look to their family for reassurance and stability, yet older family members are almost certainly experiencing the same sense of disorientation, and this can be frightening. Lastly, the "looking-glass" phenomenon is evident among even the youngest of school-age children, and they have no wish to appear different from their peers. Therefore, being the new student at school is difficult; being the new student who speaks a different language, possibly looks different, wears different clothes, brings different food for lunch, etc. only magnifies their discomfort. For many migrant students who attend several schools every year, the discomfort of this transition period becomes the norm.

This is why the school setting is the best place to observe the effects of migration on young people (Grinberg and Grinberg 1989). The school represents the broader society, symbolized and socialized via its language, within

which language minority students are expected to function. Therefore, the manner in which schools manage this responsibility is crucial; it either enhances or degrades the quality of language minority students' self-concepts and, subsequently, their L1 and L2 identities.

PART VI: ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT GAP THEORIES AND  
PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR MIGRANT STUDENTS

In the past, the bulk of migrant education policy and practice has come from "the perspective of a static society" and, therefore, has often proven ineffectual (Prewitt Diaz 1991, 483). Even the most enlightened and well-meaning teachers and administrators still tend to function under the assumption that their values, behavior and "world views" are generally universal. When they encounter students who have been socialized differently, the risk of educational discrimination, however unintentional, is heightened (Stein 1990; Studstill 1985; National Educational Association 1972).

Yet by the year 2000, one-third of the United States' population will be comprised of minorities or persons of color (Commission on Minority Participation in Education and American Life 1988), and students of color will make up approximately 46% of the school-age population by 2020 (Pallas, Natriello, and McDill 1989, 19). Given these facts, it is no longer defensible for school systems to approach the educational needs of all students via one dominant perspective, with bilingual or ESL programs relegated to the side. The typical curriculum, monolingual

and monocultural in design, is not an equitable tool for educating the increasingly multicultural student body found in the United States. The reality of the "changing ethnic texture" of the population must finally be addressed (Banks 1991, 4).

The call for a more multicultural approach to education is not new; debate over the last several decades has resulted in a number of educational theories which associate the achievement gap between mainstream and minority students with ethnic, linguistic or economic disparities. In the book Affirming Diversity, Nieto (1992) provides an historical overview of these principal theories and places them into two categories: those which hold the students and the cultural and social make-up of their communities at fault, and those which maintain that the structure of the school system itself is discriminatory, limited in perspective, and reflective of society at large. Each of the theories presented, even the outdated or disproved, supplies insight into the unique challenges facing migrant students and their advocates. Each can be linked, to some degree, with the L1/L2 identity conflicts described previously and, thus, offers direction as to possible remedies.

#### THE DEFICIT THEORY

Deficit theories, which burgeoned in the 1960's, were based on the premise that minority children were culturally

deprived or somehow genetically inferior to dominant Anglo middle class children. Their lack of success at school was attributed to a cultural, linguistic or economic "deficit." In this scenario, schools were not at fault; students and their families were. As unacceptable as this premise seems today, Nieto makes a strong argument that its racist and classist legacy has yet to be eradicated. For example, the very idea of compensatory programs, which make up so much of the migrant education package, originated on the premise that certain students are lacking or somehow incomplete when they start school, "that children from 'deprived homes' need to be compensated for their deprivation, be it genetic, cultural, or linguistic, and brought up to the norm represented by the mainstream" (1992, 192). Whether a student is perceived as complete or incomplete, one of the "norm" or one to be "normalized," Spanish-speaking or non-English speaking is pivotal to the development of self-concept and language identity.

Take, for example, a somewhat dated but not atypical bulletin to migrant educators. The following passage, entitled "Characteristics of the Migrant Child," was designed to aid teachers by introducing them to their prospective students:

He comes from a patriarchal subculture. He is absent frequently, often because of lack of proper food and clothing. His concepts will be limited because his learning experiences at home have been restricted. He has experienced little success. He may be two or more years educationally retarded, due to his limited

knowledge of English and/or to absence from classes. He may be mature in the areas of travel and adult association but lack other experiences necessary for success in the classroom (Texas Education Agency 1966, 7).

In other words, do not expect great things. He is not like other children. He will be a burden to you, the teacher. He has been evaluated in terms of expectations for the mainstream student body and found wanting.

Today, years later, teachers sensitive to this still find themselves in a semantic bind when referring to their migrant students. Most school forms require that they choose from such labels as "not English proficient" (NEP), "limited English proficient" (LEP), and even "language-deficient." In truth, of course, it is not possible for students to be language deficient, but there is little room for any language, other than English, in which to demonstrate proficiency. Some school systems go so far as to categorize "limited English proficient" under "handicapping conditions."

#### The Penalty for Being Different

This Mexican-American boy started school with his twin sister at age seven:

I knew only Spanish when I first came to school. I was sitting there and I did not understand what was said or what was going on in general. I remember I felt like black clouds were around me. I tried to be as much unnoticed as possible...

One day I was sent to call my older sister. When she came, the teacher explained to her that I could not stay there [first grade] and that I had to go to

kindergarten. It will be better for me, she said. I remember this feeling of wanting to say something, of wanting to explain that I was doing better now, but I could not open my mouth and articulate those words.

Once in kindergarten I found a friend, also a Mexican. He used to help me very quietly and in secret. I remember feeling the responsibility for communicating to my sister, who was also transferred to kindergarten from first grade, everything new I learned...

Years were passing and school stayed a big place for me, and still I did not belong in there. I continued to see myself as not being appropriate to the place. Friends, teachers, everything was different...They had a picture in the classroom of a Mexican sleeping under a sombrero; I tried to stay away from it as much as I could (Mendelberg 1984, 180).

Placing the boy back in kindergarten was one of the worst things that his teacher could have done, yet it is one of the most frequent courses of action taken with migrant children in the misguided belief that they will somehow catch up and learn English faster in a lower grade. Being older than one's classmates has been cited as the highest dropout predictor for migrant students (Johnson and others 1986) and, according to the MSRTS figures for the 1990-1991 school year, approximately thirty-two percent of enrolled migrant students are one year behind their appropriate grade level, while eleven percent are two or more years behind (NASDME 1991). By third grade, just as peers begin to surpass parents in terms of importance to self-identification, half of all migrant students are at least one year older than their classmates (Levy 1989).

This age differentiation is not due solely to inappropriate grade placement; migrant children are retained

more than other student population, especially at kindergarten and even prekindergarten levels (Levy 1989). Migrant children tend to be physically smaller than their peers and the extra year or two are, again, presented as a positive period in which they will have time to mature physically, as well as linguistically and academically. However, a synthesis of research on grade retention finds that this is not generally true (Shepard and Smith 1990). The negative repercussions of retaining a child outweigh, if not cancel, any proposed benefit. Even young children associate being retained, or "flunking," with feelings of sadness, embarrassment, ostracism, and lowered self-esteem. In one survey, the only events that children considered more stressful were loss of eyesight or the death of a parent. Grade retention severely hampers the peer interaction and sense of belonging which are crucial to every stage of a young person's development.

Nowhere is the importance of such interaction and belonging more evident than in Guzman's description of the double-edged sword faced by international migrant students. They often find no solace on either side of the border. His explanation merits lengthy quotation due to its portrayal of students who may mature without a positive language identity in either Spanish or English:

Children who return to Mexico must re-establish peer relationships. Many experience distrust and outright rejection. Children with longer stays in the United States are ridiculed for errors committed in a language

they can no longer control with confidence. In the United States, the same scenario is repeated. Mexican children suffer ridicule for errors in pronunciation in a new language they have barely begun to study.

More intense conflict takes place in the schoolyard. Students from Mexico look like Chicanos and other Latinos but they have a different socialization: their values, customs, mores are Mexican and unfamiliar to Mexicans born or raised in the United States. Speech patterns, accents, modes of dress, style of hair and much more that is important to sensitive youngsters -- all serve to identify the new arrival, the "Tijuanero." Misunderstandings are common because the Spanish language, common to Chicanos and Mexicanos, differs. Idioms, colloquialisms and other language nuances can trigger laughter or anger -- at the wrong time (1981, 21).

Unfortunately, the majority of compensatory activities designed to help migrant students are academic in nature and do little to alleviate the stressful cultural and linguistic conflicts outlined by Guzman. In many cases, they actually reinforce them by reinforcing the migrants' "separateness" from other students. This is often the case with pull-out tutorials.

#### Pull-out Tutorials

Pull-out tutorials have become a convenient and accepted means of administering compensatory instruction to migrant students. They provide students with the individualized attention and remedial help they deserve, without an "audience." Away from their mainstream peers, students may feel more comfortable giving voice to specific concerns and questions. If they are proficient in a language other than English, sessions with an ESL or

bilingual tutor are an efficient means of making order of the barrage of English that they hear throughout their school day. Nevertheless, pull-out situations can be overdone. Due to the transient quality of migrant attendance, teachers and administrators are prone to relinquish responsibility for their migrant students (Anderson 1991); too often, bogged down by large classes or limited resources, they rely upon supplemental staff and activities to address fundamental needs.

In a study of federally-funded programs in particularly troubled schools, Hispanic migrant students endured up to seven special tutorials per day, and those who required ESL instruction "typically spent half the school day in segregated situations" (Kimbrough and Hill 1981). Granted, this is an extreme example, but it typifies a prevalent attitude. When pull-outs replace, rather than complement, classroom interaction, they do more harm than good. A state-wide evaluation of migrant education programs in California finds a correlation between pull-out activities and disjointedness in migrant students' education -- teachers who favored pull-outs the most had the least awareness of their students' progress, and the goal of facilitating migrant students' transition into the mainstream curriculum was seriously impeded (Johnson 1987). From the student's viewpoint, it is often more stressful and humiliating to be continually singled out for special help

than to simply remain in the regular classroom and struggle (Purkey 1970). Educators run the risk of actually widening the academic and cultural gap with this practice (NASDME 1992).

The first pedagogical implication, then, for the improvement of migrant students' education is one which cannot be easily mandated for it is largely attitudinal in nature. Students must be recognized for what they have, not what they lack. The culture, experience, and unique perspective which are woven throughout each child's identification with her/his L1 must be valued by school personnel and incorporated into the L2 learning process. Nieto describes it as "affirming who students are rather than who we may want them to become" (1992, 299).

#### Implication #1: Incorporation of L1 into L2 Learning

[F]indings concerning use of the L1 are congruent with current theories of second language acquisition. They show that its use reduces anxiety and enhances the affective environment for learning, takes into account sociocultural factors, facilitates incorporation of learners' life experiences, and allows for learner-centered curriculum development (Auerbach 1993, 20).

Hemmindinger (1987) finds that use of students' L1 decreases anxiety and increases the rate of gain among nonschooled and nonliterate Hmong refugees by offsetting the strain of culture shock. Likewise, Shamash (1990) reports that use of the L1 provides students with a greater sense of security, thus easing them into the eventual experimentation and risk-taking associated with successful L2 study. And

D'Annunzio (1991) claims that noticeable progress was made by nonliterate Cambodian students when bilingual tutors were introduced to the classroom.

While it is true that these studies were conducted on mostly adult non-migrant populations, the implications are still valid for most migrant students; for, in general, it has been found that those who benefit most from inclusion of the L1 in early ESL instruction are those from "subordinated minority language groups and those with limited L1 literacy backgrounds" (Auerbach 1993, 16).

#### Avoiding Linguistic Imperialism

As the Grinbergs (1989) write, the school represents a microcosm of the broader L2 society, and its choice for primary language of instruction is reflective of the established dominant/subordinate structure of that society. In this sense, the choice is a political one. To remain exclusively true to the language of the dominant culture is to reinforce that culture at the expense of others. Phillipson, writing on linguistic imperialism, states that monolingual practice signals "the rejection of the experiences of other languages, meaning the exclusion of the child's most intense existential experience" (1992, 189).

Within the school, the ESL class functions as yet a smaller microcosm, and its format also serves to reinforce or challenge migrant students' L1 identifications. When teachers prohibit the use of the students' L1 they may

actually "impede language acquisition precisely because it mirrors disempowering relations" (Auerbach 1993, 16). This notion that the censoring of L1 impedes L2 acquisition runs counter to the foundation of many ESL teachers' training and subsequent classroom philosophies. Auerbach (1993) describes the lengths to which many ESL teachers go in order to assure that their classrooms are English-only zones, including the actual fining of students who "regress" into their L1 during class. Measures like this are taken with the best of intentions -- to expedite L2 acquisition -- but they beg to be reexamined, especially when they are imposed on students whose language status within the broader society is already considerably lower than that of their peers (Tucker 1980).

In a survey of effective teaching strategies for language minority students, Garcia (1991) identified L1 usage as a common denominator in successful classrooms. In general, "[i]n classes with Spanish speakers, lower grade teachers used both Spanish and English, whereas upper grade teachers utilized mostly English. However, students were allowed to use either language" (1991, 4). Because the students' L1 was never disallowed, the valuable role which meaningful communication plays in language learning was never lost. In reference to this study, Auerbach goes on to conclude that this early "use of both languages facilitated

the transition to English" at later stages in the students' successful academic lives (1993, 15).

Medina views the interjection of bits of students' native language into lessons as a logical form of extralinguistic support in the classroom. She sees it as a means of tapping into and tapping from their existing knowledge:

By using the first language, the teacher builds on background concepts that learners already have in their repertoires...This background information helps to establish a "schemata," a cognitive structure generated on the basis of previous experience...Consequently, new information...is more readily comprehended, since learners are able to call upon their knowledge of the world and formulate inferences...(1993, 10)

Because language is so tied to culture, incorporation of a student's L1 naturally leads to more meaningful incorporation of her/his life experiences. Not only is the L1 a valuable tool, but all that the students bring with them from their L1 culture is suddenly of worth, as well.

This can grow into an effective stimulus for student empowerment, according to Hemminger (1987). Her ESL classes encourage and elaborate upon full discussions in the L1 of students. Questions and/or problems that are foremost in their minds are shared, given the credence they deserve, and then addressed in English at the appropriate level of instruction. Language lessons take on a welcome immediacy because, no longer an end in themselves, they become legitimate communication and a means of reflection. The L1, rather than losing value in the midst of the L2, gains value

as a relevant "meaning-making tool" among the students and the teacher (Auerbach 1993, 20). Equally important, the parallel value of the student's identity as a L1 speaker is reinforced at the same time.

In positive classroom examples like these, the repercussions of ill-conceived student descriptors such as "language deficient" cannot prevail. In fact, the opposite, in terms of language acquisition, is made much more likely. As the L1 identity is reinforced, the language ego is strengthened and secured, as well. This can have great benefit to L2 acquisition. A less threatened language ego is a more adaptive one, with greater flexibility and permeability of boundaries -- rather than forging more protective barriers in an effort of self-preservation, an "adaptive language ego enables learners to lower the inhibitions that may impede success" (Brown 1988, 357). The fear of self-exposure and possible self-betrayal which is associated with extending the existing self in order to adopt a L2-self can, in effect, be neutralized. Targeted meaningful use of the L1 bolsters the L1 identity and its accompanying self-esteem, so that development of a healthy L2 identity may follow without risk.

#### THE CULTURAL CLASH THEORY

In the 1970's, a new theory emerged which Nieto believes to be a fairly accurate analysis of the perpetual achievement gap between minority and Anglo students.

Particularly applicable to the migrant situation, the cultural clash theory blames the underachievement of minority students on cultural mismatch or friction between the dominant L2 school culture and students' L1 home culture. Success is reliant upon the degree to which students' socialization, their means of interacting and reacting with others, corresponds to that of the school. If they correspond, there is recognition and approval; if they do not, conflict and confusion may arise (Stein 1990).

As early as kindergarten, when the circle of significant others extends to include teachers and peers, minority students discover that their behavior and language are somehow inappropriate. Much of the knowledge gained at home suddenly loses value in the new environment; if they feel unable to interact or compete with peers due to language or cultural differences, their overriding reaction may be one of consternation or shame, followed by increasing doubt as to what kind of person or behavior is good, bad, acceptable or unacceptable (Grinberg and Grinberg 1989). Any adjustment, however, will be expected of the child, not of the school; and, in order to do so, some element of the child's self will be jeopardized.

For example, as recently as 1989, the speaking of Spanish in some southern Texas schools was still being construed as a social problem which slowed down or prevented academic progress; students were "symbolically silenced" by

this devaluation of their L1, and in an extreme case a child's mouth was taped closed for speaking Spanish in class (Hurtado and Rodriguez 1989). Less dramatic but perhaps equally harmful is evidence that teachers, in general, still respond more positively to students who speak English than to students who do not (U.S. General Accounting Office 1987). This supports the supposition that language dominance is not the issue; rather, it is the way in which schools view language that is at the core of academic inequality (Nieto 1992).

#### Negative Identity Formation

In a study of L1/L2 usage and ego identity processes, Mendelberg (1984) confirms that students do suffer risk of negative identity formation when education is characterized by this cultural friction. Interviews with formerly migrant Mexican-American adolescents reveal that "[t]he meaning of their existence for others and for themselves seems to be influenced by their position in the system's social structure" (1984, 172). Many students recall conflicts at school which stemmed from their minority language group status:

[F]or me school, English, and Anglos were all the same. For many years I had the feeling I go there to learn their language and their stuff. Math class was learning English, Health class was learning English and so on, so that by the end of the day I had the feeling that all that I had there was English and all that I have been trying to do is understand their stuff (Mendelberg 1984, 178).

Perhaps the most telling of identity conflicts comes in the form of what should be the least of problems between teacher and student -- names. Hispanic migrant students often answer to two names, the one given to them at birth and the one given to them at school. Their Spanish names are anglicized or simply replaced during registration or the first day of school. This practice is not to be equated with the type of name change Lozanov advocates in his Suggestopedia techniques. In Suggestopedia, students choose their L2 names and create an entirely new identity to accompany them. The success of the premise relies on the clear distinction between the student-self and the L2 fictional-self created for class. But for migrant students who lose their given names at school, there is no such distinction. Their established selves are equated with the new names which, in time, often replace the originals all together.

This is a problem. Names are a basic feature of one's personal history and continuity of self. They are the linguistic and symbolic representation of an individual. Double names, as revealed in Mendelberg's interviews, can lead to a "conflict of double identity." She finds that students internalize the rejection of their Spanish names as rejection of their personal identities as members of their L1 group. They do not appear to harbor any resentment over this rejection; quite the contrary, they believe their new

names to be a matter of personal choice. This belief signals a shift in identity perception:

My name is Miguel (Megel). They couldn't say it right; they kept calling me Miguel (Megwel), until I started calling myself Miguel (Megwel).

My name is Ramona, but they call me Mona at school. They can't say Ra, you see Ra-mona, so they made it shorter, Mona. I like it better now because it was embarrassing before; they couldn't say Ra.

At school they call me Jesse but my real name is Jesus. I don't want them to call me Jesus, you know...let the man sleep in peace...no I don't want them be calling me Jesus (1984, 176).

What starts with a mere name change can eventually filter through to the core of one's belief system -- if Spanish is perceived to be a handicap, of little or no value in most daily social interaction, then the Spanish-speaking self may eventually come to hold little value, as well. Mendelberg writes that the "sense of goodness and appropriateness" which students naturally associated with their L1 selves came into question, and they eventually yielded to the dominant culture:

[Students] repeatedly reported feelings of shame in presenting themselves to outsiders with the Spanish name. They tended to believe that Anglos could not pronounce their names because something was wrong with their names, their background, and themselves (1984, 177).

As uncomfortable as it is to question the content of one's identity, it is far more distressing and potentially damaging to question the worth (Liebkind 1989). Self-esteem, the evaluative counterpart to self-concept, obviously suffers damage in the above circumstances. Should

these feelings of shame or inappropriateness persist, the likelihood of their ever being erased from a student's sense of identity is slim.

This leads to the common core of all the pedagogical implications to be discussed. In order to make any real progress in the education of migrant students, to ensure that language identities and self-concepts remain intact, the "ethnic illiteracy" behind so much of the policy and practice in American schools must be corrected. Banks (1991) has labeled a majority of Americans ethnically illiterate due to the limited perspective they develop living within their own cultural enclaves -- "people learn primarily about their own cultures and assume that their life-styles are the legitimate ones and that other cultures are invalid, strange, and different" (1991, 12) -- nowhere is this more evident than in the smaller rural school systems where most migrant students are enrolled. Banks believes it is the duty of education to help people mature beyond these cultural, sometimes xenophobic, biases. Teachers and administrators must be enlightened as to the benefits, if not the essentiality, of multicultural awareness in today's classrooms, and this awareness must be made tangible through modifications in all aspects of basic curricula.

#### Implication #2: Multicultural Curricula

If one supports the use of L1 in L2 school

environments, particularly with students from subordinated minority language groups, then, by the same token, one also supports use of the experience, perspective, and culture which accompany the L1. This cannot occur in isolated instances if it is to influence a migrant student's self-concept in any lasting and positive way; rather, it must be approached in a broad and organized manner. Studstill, in his work regarding program planning for migrant students, recognizes this:

[T]hose of us working to develop positive self-concept in students whose primary experience in school is negative and failure-ridden must deal with the organization of schools themselves as well as with the organization of particular learning experiences in the classroom (1985, 34-35).

Therefore, the curriculum, the "organized environment for learning in a classroom and school" (Nieto 1993, 74) must be remade, or at the very least reinterpreted, in a spirit which Nieto aptly refers to as mutual accommodation. It is simple in principle. If students are expected to respect the cultural components of the school environment, the school should do the same for its students. One viable starting point is recognition of the complexity of the migrant culture as an umbrella culture; students are not simply "migrant," they are Mexican, Haitian, Vietnamese, Mexican-American, Puerto Rican or African American, and so on. As a result of their combined migrant and ethnolinguistic backgrounds, they develop unique strengths and abilities. Active recognition of these strengths would

not only grant migrant students a more equitable and relevant environment in which to learn, but it would provide non-migrant students and staff with an opportunity to expand their world views, as well. In fact, Nieto wonders if students from the dominant culture might not benefit as much, if not more, "for they are often the most miseducated about diversity in our society" (1993, 214).

### Migrant Student Strengths

In 1988, professionals associated with the Migrant Education Secondary Assistance (MESA) Project met to examine and assess the unique strengths and potential of migrant students. Several sessions were held, including a panel discussion with migrant students and dropouts. Although participants admit to and caution against over-generalization, they agreed on the following list of traits often possessed by migrant students: maturity, responsibility, optimism, self-advocacy, resiliency, resourcefulness, cooperative skills, and humor (Morse 1989).

These attributes should not be surprising; those experienced in the field of migrant services are often impressed by migrant children's resilient, responsive and resourceful natures (Harrington 1987). However, it is only through the active recognition and use of such qualities that more teachers and administrators may be drawn away from their impression of migrant students as victims and classroom burdens. Negative repercussions from life in the

migrant stream are obvious, as well as easily and often enumerated, and their overstatement can sometimes leave a teacher feeling paralyzed; the more challenging and fruitful task for educators is to identify and act upon the positive by-products in each individual. One teacher has already discovered this:

It's a really different teaching experience. These children are exciting because they bring wholly new experiences to the classroom. There is so much a teacher can do by building on their life experiences (Harrington 1987, 38).

A good preface to this building process appears in an article by Frazier (1972). Although perhaps antiquated in its treatment of cultural diversity and "ethnic subcultures," the article provides readers with a useful overview of competencies associated with migrant students. Among them are: migrant children's early and almost continual exposure to scores of people, "the child who travels the year around . . . learns people the way other children may learn books" (1972, 137); migrant children's familiarity with the landscape and subtleties of the seasons; their strong oral culture, which values not only listening and speaking but observing as a learning tool; language resources which, when sufficiently cultivated in school, can lead to bilingualism, even trilingualism for some, and bolster self-expression as well as self-esteem; a spirit of adaptability and cooperation, which results from a hard working and highly mobile culture engendering

spontaneity, tenacity, and group priorities above those of the individual.

While this list by no means exhausts the positive cultural traits that migrant students bring with them to school, it does illustrate the variety of areas a mutually accommodating curriculum might address in order to better enhance student self-concept and become more relevant to their lives.

#### The Need for Relevancy

Recent research shows that school still holds little relevance to the home and community lives of Mexican American students (Commins 1989). Although many are all too familiar with the consequences of "undocumented workers, poverty, and discrimination, the school reflect[s] an almost total lack of awareness of these problems or at least an unwillingness to reflect them in the curriculum" (Nieto 1993, 217). Yet it is these issues -- or the myriad of smaller, more pressing, day to day problems which accompany them -- that account for the most meaningful and consuming experiences of many migrant students. As such, they merit attention as a legitimate foundation for exploring the development of relevant and motivational curricula. At first glance, household duties may seem too mundane an example to be included in any curricular review; however, in the context of poverty within migrant culture, they become a significant factor. A migrant student's fulfillment of such

responsibilities adds to the family's well-being, both emotionally and economically:

Even at the ages of six and seven he [the migrant student] is likely to be responsible for the care of younger children, for making meals, for doing laundry, and for other household chores. Can we not include some experiences that will help him to care for younger brothers and sisters?...Are there not practical kinds of simple homemaking experiences we can provide for migrant children that will not only help them to perform these home tasks more effectively but also give status and dignity to the performance of these home responsibilities? The answers are, of course, a patent "yes" (Sutton 1972, 113-114).

Not all the immediate concerns and experiences of migrant students are as easily applicable as this one, but that does not excuse teachers and policy-makers from attempting to address deeper areas of relevance in students' lives. Nor does it excuse the widespread acceptance of classroom materials that also serve to alienate such students by limiting their representation to vapid or stereotypical roles, dismissing their cultural heritage, and/or promoting essentially white mainstream dominance (Sleeter and Grant, 1991).

Textbook units on the civil rights movement are one case in point. They have become a dry presentation of discrimination in the 1960's, as though racism is a thing of the past. Nieto (1992) likens the textbook transformation of Martin Luther King, Jr. to "milquetoast," devoid of any passion or pointed criticism of the status quo; in short, a figure with whom the mainstream can feel at ease. Even ESL/American culture texts tend to wrap up this period of

history in a one-dimensional package, a single lesson to be taught in commemoration of King's birthday. As an alternative, teachers might open up the discussion by inviting students to share their impressions of racism in the U.S. The Chicano Movement of the 1960's and 1970's might be explored for comparison, and Cesar Chavez included on the list of influential leaders in social reform (Banks 1991).

These are just two examples of exercises which invite a migrant perspective into existing curricula. They do not require a great deal of imagination -- they do require adequate research, sensitivity, and follow-through on the part of the teacher, if they are to have more than a superficial impact. The pursuit of relevant perspectives in curriculum reform does not mean that the mainstream perspective is suddenly erased or dispensable; it simply means that its status is diminished. Rather than the sole viewpoint from which to study language, literature, history, sciences, the arts and so on, it becomes one of several and "in no way superior or inferior to other perspectives" (Banks 1991, 18). Likewise, it communicates to students that no one's language or cultural background is superior or inferior to another's.

#### THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL REPRODUCTION THEORY

Out of the 1970's came another theory which distinctly shifted responsibility for the academic success or failure

of minorities away from the students to the very structure of the schools. Under the economic and social reproduction theory, several scholars proposed that the role of schools was to maintain the greater socioeconomic status quo. Rather than serving as an "equalizer," schools were designed to teach children from the dominant classes how to manage, while children from the dominated classes learned the "proper attitudes and behaviors for becoming good workers" (Nieto 1992, 195). High drop out rates in the poorer inner city schools were not a by-product but a desired result of the educational system, meant to guarantee a malleable undereducated labor pool (1992, 196). This theory was eventually found wanting due to its narrow economic slant, yet it raised questions regarding distribution of power and resources which continue to this day. For migrant families, who live and work in a cycle of poverty on the margins of American society -- a society virtually dependent upon them for its food (Studstill 1985) -- where education and economic survival are often incompatible, the theory of social and economic reproduction is not necessarily outdated.

#### Economic World Views

Stein contends that, for Mexican-Americans in particular, the drop out crisis and academic achievement gap continue to stem not from a cultural conflict of world views but from an economic conflict of "worlds viewed:"

There is a tremendous difference between being born into a world of opportunity where formal education is not only valued but assumed to be just another step in the child's development, where dropping out is hard to even imagine, where parents have had success in schools, read to their children and encourage or even help them with their homework and being born into a world where parents have experienced failure and rejection at the hands of the educational system, where survival has nothing to do with a diploma, where parents, though no doubt pleased when their children do well, do not encourage academic pursuits, where dropping out cannot only be imagined but is almost expected (1990, 416).

This is worth further exploration in order to better understand its relationship to migrant culture and, more importantly, to diffuse the myth that migrant students are not as motivated as their mainstream peers and, thereby, restrict themselves to a life of wage labor by opting to work rather than to attend school.

By the early teenage years, and sometimes as early as eight or nine, a migrant child can become an important contributor to the family's financial survival. This may come in the form of actual field work or child care for younger children which, in turn, frees the mother to work. Either way, the additional income has a significant effect on the family's economic well-being. As the child grows older, so does the pressure to contribute to the family, and the "reality of the world of work frequently competes with the world of school" (Prewitt Diaz 1991, 485):

If your family has financial problems, they may need you to drop out. You can see your family growing and little brothers and sisters running around all over the place, and there's pressure to help out (Prewitt Diaz, Rivera, and Trotter 1990, 83).

In many migrant families, the children grow up serving as the crucial link between parents or older extended family members and the surrounding culture; as the children's language skills develop in school, so does their familiarity with the workings of the "upstream" environment. They serve as linguistic and social translators in all sorts of situations. By the age of fifteen or so, they have taken on many other adult-like roles and have a fair amount of responsibility. Most notably, ethnographers find that the "ultimate decision to stay in school or drop out is made by the children themselves," not the parents (Prewitt Diaz, Trotter, and Rivera 1990, 94).

This is difficult for many teachers and administrators to accept or respect. However, unlike the Anglo-American culture, which socializes its members to achieve individually from an early age, the Mexican-American culture socializes its members to achieve in terms of the group (Price-Williams and Ramirez 1976). Individual motivation for achievement is rooted within identification with the family. A personal sense of value or usefulness is derived more from activities which benefit everyone, rather than those which garner individual reward. If a student works, much of the money earned will be shared with the family, and this is a more tangible and certain contribution than staying in school.

This access to money is made even more attractive when school, the alternative, is associated with feelings of failure or futility. In school, the unsuccessful student often feels patronized, alienated, unfairly penalized or simply incompetent. As one student explains:

One of our teachers gave a lot of attention to the other students but none to us, the migrants. It was in a class of English. We felt bad and so sometimes we didn't go to classes. They never gave us sufficient attention. It is better not to go (Prewitt Diaz, Trotter, and Rivera 1990, 89).

And, like many others, she eventually dropped out completely. Another student puts it this way:

Of course, some migrant kids are corrupted...because they don't like moving around all the time a lot, and it's hard to make friends and to adjust...A lot of kids just can't deal with this... 'cause school is just such an awful place for 'em, just a place where they're the new kid in town over and over again, and they get no peace. It just gets too hard to keep up the effort to adjust after a while (Prewitt Diaz, Trotter, and Rivera 1990, 91).

In the fields, however, these same students are treated as capable young adults, paid for equal work as adults, and respected by family and community as productive individuals. In addition to the economic boost, then, dropping out of school can actually be motivated by its boost, albeit short-lived, to self-esteem.

The decision to drop out, therefore, is not selfish or immature, nor does it stem from a lack of motivation (students never lack motivation, they simply "may not be motivated to do what we would prefer they do" [Combs 1962,

85]); rather, it is a logical consequence of a combination of factors.

How should schools respond? They have no direct influence over the structure of the U.S. agricultural economy, nor the marginal status allotted its workers by the larger society. According to Stein, public schools are in no position to change the world, for they are not intended to be "agents of revolution but . . . agents of socialisation" (1990, 412). What, then, can teachers and advocates of migrant students do when economics is so clearly an impediment to education? If they cannot change the world, they can work to change themselves and the nature of their interactions with the world. Increased parental and community involvement in school affairs -- with the goal of truly shared decision-making -- is the first step. It is also the third pedagogical implication for building positive self-concepts through empowerment of migrant students and their families.

### Implication #3: Parental and Community Involvement

The atmosphere of mistrust toward social institutions, identified earlier as a frequent characteristic of the migrant culture, has grown to include the school in many instances. Although education is held in high esteem, ethnographers find that the actual educational institution is often "seen in a negative light" by parents (Prewitt Diaz, Trotter, and Rivera 1990, 85). Parents have been

excluded from meaningful participation in their children's schooling due to a number of factors: inability to miss work in order to attend inappropriately scheduled parent-teacher meetings; limited transportation options; lack of child care; absence of translators at school functions; or school correspondence entirely in English and, therefore, inaccessible to many parents. These are concrete and fairly easily addressed roadblocks to active migrant parent participation. With some forethought and effort by the school, they can be overcome. But there are more subtle and potentially more restrictive barriers to parental involvement -- those based on both the parents' and the schools' interpretations of their mutual roles and subsequent definitions of what constitutes appropriate parental input.

A majority of language minority parents do not believe that it is their place to become involved in their children's school affairs, indeed, some equate involvement with interference in their child's progress (ERIC/CAL 1986). This notion has no doubt been reinforced by educators' commonly held belief that parental L1 interaction with children at home impedes achievement and L2 progress at school (Cummins 1984). It is not an uncommon practice for schools to send newsletters to parents which urge them to use English, as opposed to the family's L1, in the home (Nieto 1992). In addition, language minority parents who

had no opportunity to complete their own education, or those not literate in their L1 or English, are often regarded as part of their children's academic problem (Cummins 1984). Nothing could be further from the truth.

Just as the incorporation of L1 into the L2 learning environment promotes L2 acquisition, so does encouragement of consistent L1 use and enrichment at home. Although many language minority parents may feel inadequate when it comes to traditional demonstrations of involvement in their children's school work which usually call for English -- proofing homework, reading aloud, following up on tests and/or class schedules, attending PTA meetings, etc. -- they are able to provide essential and equally effective support, in their own right. Nieto (1992), after conducting a series of case studies of successful students, finds this to be so, as well:

In the case of students who come from different language backgrounds, parents and other family members have maintained native language use in the home...They have done so in spite of messages to the contrary from school and from society in general...[They] have insisted on native language use in the home as an important means of maintaining their culture and emotional attachment to their children through family values. Such language use has also proven to be crucial in students' development of literacy and preparation for school life. The more they were able to use language in a variety of ways and in diverse contexts, the more they were replicating the kinds of literacy skills necessary for successful schoolwork (1992, 239-240).

So, the definition of effective parental involvement, as conventionally promoted by schools, needs to be broadened and made more multicultural.

The connection between the home and academic success is borne out by others, as well. A study conducted by the Center for Educational Planning (1989) finds that migrant students of high academic achievement generally have communicative parents who, although not able to help with homework, demonstrate an active interest and positive attitude regarding learning. On the other hand, migrant students of low achievement often have parents who hold negative feelings about school and spend no time discussing school activities or attempting to provide educational experiences at home. Similarly, among the migrant students interviewed for Prewitt Diaz, Trotter and Rivera's ethnography (1990), all those who successfully completed their schooling credit the encouragement and support of at least one family member:

See my dad, he's the kind of dad who, I don't know how to say it in English, pero le da el apoyo, sabes? He really gives you a lot. He says, 'You wanna go to college? Go! If you have time for this, then you have time for that. Just take it slow and do it right, don't hurry with it or you might mess up and get frustrated, or you might miss something.' He really helps out a lot..

My Mom and Dad never asked too much from us. The only thing was to finish school and make the best of our lives...The key to getting an education is the parents. Mom and Dad could have done like everybody else and put us to work, but they didn't.

And one Migrant Education Staff Member adds:

The influence of relatives is very strong when it comes to children's attitudes about school. If an uncle tells them, 'you can weld and not know how to read,' they believe him. Children look up to the adults because

family ties are very important among Hispanics (1990, 92-93).

Most of these cases hinge on the parent or relative's perceptions of the school but, more to the point, their perceptions of the school's ability or willingness to better their children's lives.

#### Successful Outreach Programs

One exemplary attempt to alter these perceptions, for the better, by involving parents in their children's learning occurred in Britain in the early 1980's. The Haringey project set out to study and compare the reading progress of two groups of multiethnic children; one group was instructed to read aloud to parents at home, while the other group received specialized reading instruction from a professional at school.

Parental cooperation was not a problem for the researchers. Although many of parents were not literate and/or spoke very little English, they welcomed the opportunity to listen to their children read and to engage in related educational activities. Their involvement had marked results. The children who read to their parents on a regular basis "made significantly greater progress" than those who did not (Cummins 1986, 27). Furthermore, teachers found these children to be better behaved and more interested in their class work than before. This prompted

teachers to continue with the home collaboration after the project was concluded.

Another powerful example of the strides that can be made when language minority parents are invited to collaborate with schools is reflected in the work of Alma Flor Ada (1988). Ada conducted a series of monthly meetings with Mexican American parents; discussion centered on children's literature, poems and stories written by the students, and sometimes personal writings by the parents. Nieto explains the program's success, and credits it to its founding premise that parents are the primary teachers of children and educators must respect and explore their strengths as a resource:

Although most of them [parents] had very little schooling, the impact on them has been as great as on their children. In the process of dialogue, reading and writing, they have developed both confidence and greater abilities in using the resources at their command, particularly their language and culture, to promote the literacy of their children. As one mother said, "Ever since I know I have no need to feel ashamed of speaking Spanish, I have become strong" (1990, 264).

According to Cummins (1986), the degree to which students are empowered in school is directly related to the empowerment allotted their communities by the school. Next to the students themselves, parents are the schools' most direct line to these communities. The mother quoted above is one indication that this line deserves increased attention -- her empowerment helps to create greater opportunities and potential success for her child.

Ada's program and the Haringey project are positive examples of what occurs when the relationship between parent and school is equalized, when the dominant culture's misconstrued and sometimes condescending views regarding another culture's ability to provide educational support for its children are set aside, when teachers operate creatively on "the collaborative end of the continuum [and] actively encourage minority parents to participate" (Cummins 1986, 27).

#### THE CASTELIKE MINORITY AND RESISTANCE THEORIES

One perceived weakness in the theories of cultural clash and, to some extent, economic and social reproduction is that neither explains how, against such odds, many "at risk" language minority students manage to excel in school. For this, Nieto cites a study by Ogbu (1986) which makes a clear distinction between immigrant minorities and castelike minorities and their positions within the host society. Ogbu's theory maintains that the more recently arrived immigrant minorities may still view the United States as a land of opportunity, and are willing to undergo economic, cultural or even psychological hardships in order to succeed. Identification with their L1 and its most fundamental cultural counterparts is abandoned, or at least put on hold, in order to function within the dominant society's structure. Castelike, or involuntary minorities as Ogbu refers to them, such as Mexican Americans, Native

Americans, Puerto Ricans, and African Americans have a much longer and decidedly less rosy relationship with the dominant society. They are reluctant to make those same sacrifices:

[Ogbu] claims that the major problem in the academic performance of children from castelike minorities is not that they possess a different language, culture, or cognitive or communication style. Rather, the problem lies in the nature of the history, subjugation, and exploitation that they have experienced together with their own responses to their treatment. Castelike minorities in the United States...perceive schooling as providing unequal returns (Nieto 1992, 198).

They are not willing to adopt the behaviors and habits associated with the dominant group because it has not proven to create equitable opportunities. In fact, many who do perform well in school experience "internal ambivalence and external pressures not to manifest such behaviors and attitudes" (Nieto 1992, 199).

#### Resistance to Learning

The development of actual resistance to academic success, which stems from a drive to disassociate oneself from the mainstream culture, leads to the last of Nieto's underachievement theories. This theory supports the premise that the academic difficulties of many minority students can be traced to cultural differences, but only in the initial stages. It is when these differences persist unchecked over time, leaving students continually at odds with the dominant culture, that resistance to learning becomes the sole

product of learning and, thus, provokes poor academic performance.

Nieto includes this theory because it helps to clarify the relationship between "disempowered communities and their schools" (1992, 200). Resistance to learning what the dominant culture has to offer is equated with resistance to all that the dominant group represents and, as such, is a political gesture of self-preservation. With this gesture, the student attempts to transform her/himself from a victim to an actor; it is one of several "coping strategies [which] may in the long run be self-defeating and counterproductive" (1992, 200). Refusing to practice English, retreating into the L1 as "protection against a hostile world" (Mendelberg 1984, 179), distancing themselves from peers, or simply dropping out entirely are examples of actions taken by migrant students in hopes of regaining some element of control and continuity in their lives.

This phenomenon calls for the redefinition of conventional dominant-minority/teacher-student roles. Cummins (1986) maintains that educational reforms, principally compensatory programs, continue to meet with limited success because they fail to address the fundamental issue -- the relationship between teacher and minority student. Nieto agrees, likening typical schools to "benign dictatorships," where students have little control over their own learning and "pedagogy is conceived of as a one-

way street" (1992, 80). Teachers of migrant students must work to create a classroom climate which welcomes diversity and solicits cooperation and input from all its members; in order to do so, they must explore their own personal biases and make the effort to educate themselves accordingly.

#### Implication #4: Redefinition of Teacher-Student Roles

Granting students even a modicum of control over their experiences at school can have a profound effect. Studies have shown that language minority students fare far better when they have a voice in the direction of their own learning and goal-setting (Garcia 1988). In particular, students of Hispanic background have been found to learn significantly more English in settings that promote collaboration, rather than in traditional classes where the teacher governs all the action (Wong-Fillmore 1983).

Unfortunately, persuading teachers to adopt a more collaborative approach is not easy, even when they are presented with proof of its efficacy. Those who are open to trying something different, on behalf of their students, still struggle to break ingrained habits. There are essentially two modes of classroom orientation, the transmission model and the reciprocal model, and most teachers' styles lean heavily toward the former:

The basic premise of the transmission model is that the teacher's task is to impart knowledge or skills that she or he possesses to students who do not yet have these skills. This implies that the teacher initiates and controls the interaction...[The reciprocal model]

requires a genuine dialogue between student and teacher...guidance and facilitation rather than control of student learning by the teacher, and the encouragement of student/student talk in a collaborative learning context (Cummins 1986, 28).

Readers familiar with the work of Freire can equate the transmission model with his banking model, and the reciprocal model with his most fundamental tenet that "education consists in acts of cognition, not transferrals of information" (1972, 67).

Why should teachers be better convinced to reconcile their relationship with migrant students -- to act in the spirit of Freire and the proposition that student and teacher play the same roles interchangeably? Answers will be explored in three sections, each focusing on a topic borrowed from Beane and Lipka (1984) who identify key characteristics of the ideal "self enhancing" school.

#### Humanistic Classroom Climate

Of primary concern here is what is commonly referred to as locus of control, "the self as internally motivated and controlled or the self as reliant on an external authority for guidance" (Studstill 1985, 5). In the classroom, it comes down to the teacher's willingness to share control and, more importantly, to trust in students' powers of cognition. Moll profiles several leading teachers of Hispanic students, and credits much of their success to the fact that they allow "themselves and their students to act as thinkers, not passive givers and receivers of packaged

curriculum" (1988, 470). Their teaching styles clearly follow the reciprocal framework.

This is valuable to all students, but particularly to those belonging to a group conferred little status or power by the dominant culture, such as migrants. By allowing the interaction to become a two-way street, and challenging students to take the initiative to control the flow of thoughts and ideas, teachers no longer mirror the disempowering authority of the broader society, they begin to chip away at it.

Auerbach (1993) illustrates this principle in a very suitable example of a common L1 dilemma faced by ESL teachers. She describes the tension that can occur, especially in multi-level classes, when some students favor the use of L1 but other students regard it as a waste of time or a roadblock to L2 acquisition. Usually, teachers settle the matter, which leaves some students feeling appeased and others possibly resentful or alienated. Instead, Auerbach suggests that teachers take advantage of the meaningful language practice generated by such a conflict, and turn the question over to the class for discussion:

After considering the advantages and disadvantages of L1 versus L2 use...students can establish their own rules for the classroom. Certainly, teachers can contribute their own knowledge and opinions in this exchange, but what is important is a shift toward shared authority. The teacher moves from being a problem solver or arbiter of tensions to a problem poser or facilitator of critical reflection (1993, 24).

And, as the teacher's role moves from one end of the spectrum to another, the once passive role of students does as well.

#### Variable vs. Attribute Grouping

Grouping students according to attributes or perceived ability has been and remains a divisive issue among educators. Despite research casting serious doubt on the fairness or efficiency of this practice, "tracking" remains a prevalent practice in U.S. schools (Nieto 1992).

On the surface, it often seems the most expedient way to provide the remedial help students need in order to catch up with the rest of the class. In the long run, it has little influence on academic achievement and magnifies students' negative feelings about themselves and school (Oakes 1985), making it barely distinguishable from the pull-out tutorials described earlier. Furthermore, it is poor and minority children who make up the majority of students tracked at low ability levels, and this sets the tone for the remainder of their school experience (Goodlad 1984). It may set the tone for the remainder of their lives, as well. Tracking in school tends to parallel the class and cultural stratification in society (Nieto 1992).

Of course, when it comes to language instruction, there are times when separation is unavoidable. Many migrant families live in districts with a low concentration of language minority students and, thus, no school-wide ESL or

bilingual programs. They typically comprise a very small portion of a class, perhaps as little as 3-4 students out of twenty or twenty-five, so it is unrealistic to expect that the entirety of their ESL instruction take place with a tutor inside the mainstream classroom. Pull-out tutorials can be critical in the initial stages of L2 study. Still, teachers must be very clear in their distinction between tracking and supplemental instruction, and be able to articulate a sound pedagogical intent behind any routine separation of migrant students from their peers.

#### Teacher Expectations

Beane and Lipka write that "it is unfortunate that many teachers expect some learners to fail" (1984, 183). The question is, do teachers expect that some learners, in general, will fail, or do they believe that particular types of individuals are prone to failure? Many school districts operate under the belief that migrant students are not interested in high school graduation (Oglestree 1984); can this lack of expectations influence academic achievement? Again, Cummins cites several studies which suggest that when students are designated "at risk" or "learning-disabled" the ensuing action of their teachers actually "confines them to a passive role and induces a form of 'learned helplessness'" (1986, 27).

In an attempt to circumvent this phenomenon, migrant advocates offer teachers a very simple maxim: "limited

English proficient" does not mean "limited thinking proficient" (Virginia Department of Education 1991). Classroom procedures and materials certainly require modification in order to suit various linguistic and academic needs, but they do not need to be watered down or reduced to inappropriately low levels. Students are as smart as the teacher and the curriculum allow them to be (Moll 1988).

Most teachers instinctively make minor adjustments in their techniques throughout the day, based on verbal and nonverbal feedback from students. While this is valuable, it is not enough due to the fact that the teacher is still the principal actor. Student potential is best realized when teacher intuition is teamed with 1) knowledge of the basic cultural and economic variables which shape student feedback and 2) a working repertoire of suitable alternative activities.

Cooperative learning once again surfaces as the definitive example. When a conventional mainstream classroom contains students from both the dominant and migrant cultures, the distribution of power and success is likely to be one-sided, since convention calls for a "highly competitive and individualistic instructional mode," sanctioning the learning style of the dominant group (Nieto 1992, 119). Conversely, a teacher aware of this disparity and skilled enough to adapt her/his teaching style towards

more collaboration, can simultaneously complement the learning style of migrant students and equalize their potential for success.

#### Conclusion

Purkey (1970) maintains that the first step in education is the prevention of negative self concepts; if so, migrant students seem to have quite a few factors working against them. It is ironic that their "at risk" status stems not from anything innate in themselves, but from their schools' monocultural perspective and general unwillingness to adapt (Nieto 1992). The grey area between the cognitive and affective domains is made even more so when students are expected to perform within an environment solely indicative of the dominant culture.

Alternatively, as we have seen, a multicultural perspective in education recognizes and respects differences in students. It "transform[s] the challenges of ethnic, cultural and racial diversity into educational and societal opportunities" (Banks 1991, 5). This means that all aspects of a student -- all the social selves that make up a sense of identity -- are utilized as a base from which to build. The enriched yet secure identity that can emerge when an individual is allowed to integrate an L2 self into the existing self has not been denied.

PART VII: SUGGESTED TECHNIQUES FOR FOSTERING  
POSITIVE SELF-CONCEPTS AND EMERGING L2  
IDENTITIES IN MIGRANT STUDENTS

The choice of techniques for this chapter was made with several criteria in mind. First, activities had to be geared specifically for building the self-concept of migrant students, especially in regard to L1 and L2 components. Second, based on the subordinate status allotted most migrant students by schools echoing the broader L2 society, the activities had to embody a reciprocal orientation to teaching. Third, as it is desirable to integrate migrant students with their non-migrant peers as much as possible, the majority of activities not only had to work in purely ESL settings but be adaptable to mainstream classrooms. Lastly, the suggestions had to be grounded in what teachers can do, rather than how teachers should feel. The attitudes which disparage multicultural accommodation and language acceptance cannot be changed overnight; teachers who are frustrated with or resentful of their migrant students do not want to hear how enriching an experience teaching them can be; they want concrete means of beginning to address their educational needs.

The number of potential responses to this criteria was eventually narrowed down to four promising courses of action. The incorporation of L1 into the L2 learning process is looked at in terms of bilingual tutors; creative dramatics is used to explore students' cultural and individual strengths and perspectives; increased parental involvement is facilitated with a new model of L1 support in the home; and redefinition of teacher-students roles is practiced by means of problem-posing. The chapter ends with a sample lesson plan.

#### BILINGUAL TUTORS

Recognition that the inclusion of migrant students' L1 into the classroom routine is necessary for positive self-concept and language identity does not require that all teachers of migrant students be bilingual or members of the migrant culture; it does suggest, however, that they coordinate their efforts with those who are. Language resources come in many forms; some are easier to locate than others, but even the smallest of communities usually has individuals who can be of service. Teachers from the foreign language department, compensatory staff from migrant education programs and Chapter I, or, as was the case in a particular school in rural Virginia, the guidance counselor with a college minor in Spanish, as well as resources within the student body should not be overlooked. Since roughly 75% of the migrant student population is Hispanic (NASDME

1992), from largely Spanish-dominant households, the examples provided assume Spanish as the L1, but any language may be substituted.

#### Adult Tutors, Aides from the Community

Bilingual adults from the migrant community or the broader Spanish-speaking community constitute a valuable, yet usually untapped, resource. They bring to the tutorial situation not only a shared language but reinforcement of the cultural identity which accompanies it. Formerly migrant adults, in particular, have a mature knowledge of the unique needs and concerns of the students which cannot be learned from any book. Auerbach asks and answers the pertinent question, "who is better qualified to draw out, understand, and utilize learners' experiences than those who themselves have had similar experiences?" (1992, 26). She goes on to cite several projects which support the proposal that bilingual adults such as these, even those lacking college credentials and considered "pedagogically unsophisticated" (D'Annunzio 1991), can become highly effective tutors.

By directly involving the migrant community in the schooling of its children in this way, the school affirms the migrant culture and provides a foundation for more than just academic gain. This is exemplified in a Headstart program for Mexican-American families which trained migrant adults as paraprofessionals for the classroom. This process

was neither easy nor quick, but, with training and supervision, it was successful. Within five years, the students' academic scores went from below to above the national average. In addition, significant gains were recorded in the "[s]elf-esteem and coping skills of parents, children, and entire families" (Tan, Ray, and Cate 1991, 88).

A project of this scope is not practical for every community or school system; nevertheless, it serves as an example of what can occur when school and community truly collaborate.

#### Peer-Tutorials

Peer-tutorials can be even more advantageous than adult-led tutorials due to the potential benefit they hold for both the tutor and the learner. This type of cooperative learning experience not only encourages both participants to react to and initiate action, allowing shared control over the situation, it also relies on largely responsive rather than corrective feedback. This lowers barriers and increases the potential for reciprocal academic gain (Taverner and Glynn 1989). Both parties benefit. In addition, teachers need not search for only the most academically competent of students to act as tutors; average students who, themselves, encounter difficulty in school produce "a better balance of power" than a carbon copy of the usual scenario "in which 'expert' instructs 'novice'"

(1989, 49). Given these facts, regular ESL peer-tutorials go far in addressing both the academic and affective needs of migrant students.

#### Migrant Students as Language Resources

Migrant students can serve as tutors, as well. One avenue in which to do this is the typical high school Spanish language class. Teachers often utilize student-assistants during one or two periods of the day; however, due to perceived linguistic or academic shortcomings, migrant students are rarely considered for such responsibilities. This is unfortunate, for it is a waste of a mutually beneficial opportunity.

Communication between a Spanish language teacher and migrant student-assistants can be conducted entirely in Spanish, thus offering the class an immediate and contextualized example of the language. Migrant students can be challenged to create targeted language tapes or mini-lessons for the class or for one-on-one tutorials. The risk of one-sided stereotyped discussions regarding the cultures of Spanish-speaking communities can be avoided, as migrant students from different Spanish-speaking communities, ranging from southern California to Central America, are invited to share what they know best. In return, the migrant students can have daily contact with their L1; spend time in a classroom by virtue of what they have, rather than what they lack; interact with non-migrant peers whom they

might not otherwise encounter; and, possibly, strengthen their L1 proficiency in the process.

This suggestion does come with one potential drawback or caveat, however. Teachers must be careful that it does not reinforce the misconstrued notion of Spanish as a "foreign" language and, thus, migrant students as foreigners or outsiders within the U.S. (Hurtado and Rodriguez 1989). From the onset, the underlying message of such a cooperative learning venture must be one which celebrates bilingualism and the extensive, often overlooked, history of Spanish and Spanish-speaking people in North America.

#### CREATIVE DRAMATICS

Creative dramatics denotes a variety of spontaneous non-performance-based drama activities, such as improvisation, movement, mime, role play, dramatization, puppets or masks, to name a few. Its validity in education is no longer in question:

[O]bjectives centre around language development, personal awareness, group co-operation, sensory awareness, imaginative growth, problem solving and exploring of issues...drama experiences change participants, both cognitively and affectively, leading them to new understandings (Early and Tarlington 1982, 41-42).

By virtue of its group nature, creative dramatics promotes meaningful communication among students, aided in part by the non-threatening atmosphere which develops when students are free to interact within the imaginative world of the exercise via the characters or roles that they

choose. Teachers frequently note improvement in students' communication skills, as well as their self-perceptions (Early and Tarlington 1982). Observations such as these hold true in ESL settings, as well.

Stern (1980) was one of the first to hypothesize about the distinct psychological factors justifying the use of drama in L2 study. She proposed and went on to prove that dramatic activities "heightened self-esteem, motivation, and spontaneity; increased capacity for empathy, [and] lowered sensitivity to rejection" (1980, 95), thus facilitating communicative competence in the L2.

If one goes back to the list of common migrant student strengths -- resourceful and cooperative nature, strong oral culture, spontaneity, keen observation skills, familiarity with a variety of people and places -- and views it in light of the cognitive and affective gains associated with drama activities, the two perfectly complement one another.

#### Role-Play

Role-play, at its simplest, is a group problem-solving activity involving two or more participants and a conflict in need of resolution. It is a great tool for teachers concerned with highlighting the individuality of each student for two basic reasons: students draw from their own unique personal experiences for inspiration in their roles and there are no right or wrong answers.

Shaftel and Shaftel (1982) claim that role playing can be expressly targeted to improve a child's self-concept by improving the way she/he is perceived by the peer group. In other words, the phenomenon of the "looking-glass self" can be manipulated. Their example is one of a boy whose abilities and creativity are limited due to the weak underappreciated status assigned to him by his peer group. The teacher observes this and provides him with opportunities to play "roles in which he can demonstrate a wider range of skills and perceptions and qualities than the group ever permitted him to exhibit" (1982, 25); over time, the group comes to think better of him and, consequently, he feels better about himself.

Teachers of classes with migrant students would do well to follow this example. Observe students' interactions, or lack of them, in the classroom, cafeteria, gymnasium, or on the playground. If the social stratification among students appears to imitate that of the adult world, design cooperative role play situations to serve as a counterbalance. Create an arena in which migrant students may share their perspectives and knowledge through their assumed role. In the long run, everybody benefits because the "looking-glass" influences not only the perceptions of the migrant students and their all-important peers but those of their teachers who also need to be reminded of the

qualities and resources of their migrant students in order to help them reach their full potential.

### Masks

Role-play can be intimidating at first, especially for students who are noticeably shy, silent or socially distanced from the rest of the class. In this case, an alternative drama activity might be introduced, such as mask work. Masks are really just an extension of role-play but, by providing students with an actual physical representation of the role, they help them to more fully take on the identity of another. In this way, masks have the special ability to "liberate behavior that is normally inhibited and restrained" (Zimbardo 1978, 254). For Spanish-speaking migrant students, this liberation can have a profound effect.

The identity conflict which arises when students desire to both remain loyal to their L1 and accumulate a L2 can be alleviated by the symbol of the mask. In ESL sessions, let the mask represent the L2 self, something to be put on and taken off as needed without compromising the original L1 self in any way. This act heightens and makes useful the previously uncomfortable feeling of being "in disguise" or somehow unauthentic when communicating in the L2 (Grinberg and Grinberg 1989). Part of the learning experience can involve the design and construction of different masks by the group -- each one representing a different English-

speaking persona: the student, the tutor, the "jock," the best friend, whoever the students want to include. This exercise can be expanded to create various masks from the wider English-speaking society, as well, as interpreted by the students. Different masks are worn for different role-playing scenarios which target distinct practice in the L2.

In time, masks become less and less necessary as students internalize their understanding that they can communicate successfully in English without betraying their Spanish-speaking selves; thus, language learning becomes a truly additive, rather than subtractive, experience. The symbolic element of disguise may remain enjoyable, but it is no longer essential, as the L2 identity is incorporated permanently into students' self-concepts.

#### PARENT AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Working with migrant parents is not easy. Their schedules are full, their homes may be a considerable distance away, language barriers are likely and, as outlined earlier, they may feel unwelcome, inadequate or simply unnecessary in the school setting. Still, the influence they have over their children's education cannot be ignored. Parents represent the most natural source of continuity in migrant children's lives and, as such, an effort should be made to include them whenever possible (Stockburger 1980). The following recommendations are intended to facilitate this.

### Recruiters

One bilingual resource with whom teachers and administrators should acquaint themselves from the very start is the recruiter or migrant education home-school coordinator. Prewitt Diaz, Trotter and Rivera (1990) repeatedly stress the importance of the recruiter as the connection between migrant families and the school. As employees of migrant education programs, the primary goal of recruiters is to keep program planners up to date with fluctuating migrant student populations; however, their responsibilities typically extend beyond this. Once students are enrolled, the recruiter often aids school personnel in assessing the health and academic needs of the students. Then she/he frequently becomes the "key communicator between the school and the parent" in issues regarding the meeting of those needs (1990, 115).

Recruiters know the migrant community well and represent a non-threatening intermediary between the two cultures. Teachers who are sincere about establishing relationships with migrant parents would do well to contact their local or regional migrant education office in order to coordinate efforts with recruiters, at least in the introductory stages of parent outreach.

### Encouragement of "Family Apprenticeships"

Nieto compares the home life of language minority students to apprenticeships, where the knowledge gained from

parents regarding culture and L1 serves as "a significant way in which children receive and internalize the message that they are important and worthwhile" (1992, 240). In case studies of successful language minority students, parents appear to share several key characteristics which add to their childrens' success. These characteristics merit attention as they represent an alternative parent involvement model, one which promotes affective, rather than academic, support and allows every parent to feel a part of her/his child's learning.

The first component of the model involves the quality of communication in the home. Successful students report an open line of communication with their parents. Thus, when their parents stress the importance of school, or their desire for their children to do better than they have done, the comments are taken seriously.

Of equal importance is the students' perceptions of their parents as loving and supportive. Nieto writes that even when students find their parents strict or somehow lacking, they respect them and want to succeed for them. In this sense, parents provide an example, not of "educational achievement but rather of strength and resilience, something their children want to emulate" (1992, 263).

Lastly, these parents do display an active interest in their children's school work. When their own schooling and English language backgrounds are limited, they still make an

effort to monitor homework assignments, ask questions, listen and, consequently, communicate their confidence that their children will do their best.

Surely, communication, support and an interest in school -- all expressed in the L1 of the home -- are three traits which teachers can consistently and explicitly encourage and praise in migrant parents. The same holds true for students who come from households without parents. Guardians or older siblings and extended family members can have the same positive influence (Simich-Dudgeon 1986).

#### PROBLEM-POSING

Problem-posing in education relies on dialogue and critical thinking; it was central to Freire's (1972) approach to literacy education and empowerment in his native Brazil. The curriculum of problem-posing is created from common conflicts in the lives of students and prompts reflection on both the causes and possible solutions. As mentioned earlier, the teacher's task is to provide guidance, not control, in this three step process comprised of listening, dialogue, and action:

Problem-posing...begins by listening for students' issues. Based on the listening, teachers then select and present the familiar situations back to the students in a codified form: a photograph, a written dialogue, a story, or a drawing...Teachers ask a series of inductive questions which move the discussion of the situation from the concrete to a more analytic level. The... process directs students to name the problem, generalize to others, and finally, suggest alternatives or solutions to the problem (Wallerstein 1983, 17).

Problem-posing has been adapted for use in a number of educational contexts, including ESL, but ordinarily with adult students in mind. However, it presents an unusually wide array of options for use with migrant students on the grounds that, in addition to balancing teacher-student roles, it can encompass every other pedagogical implication presented in this paper.

To begin with, problem-posing centers on issues taken directly from the lives and culture of the students and cannot succeed without their input and insight, making it at once relevant and motivating. In order for meaningful issues to be turned into relevant lessons, however, teachers must effectively listen to their students. This listening is the first stage of problem-posing and, according to Wallerstein (1983), it is a prerequisite for any true cross-cultural understanding.

The dialogue, or exchange of ideas, central to problem-posing, can take place entirely in the students' L1 or as an adjunct to L2 study. Bilingual tutors or aides from the migrant or wider Spanish-speaking community can be trained to lead the sessions. As students' proficiency in their L2 increases, the sessions can be adjusted accordingly. If no bilingual help is available, a capable ESL teacher can still create the problem-posing environment described by Wallerstein (1983). She found that even her beginning students could follow most of the introductory English

needed when issues were first acted out in front of the group -- "The physical movements of the acting gave a context to the new vocabulary and reinforced the students' learning" (1983, vi). They were then able to work with one another, practice their vocabulary, ask and answer questions, and, yet, were still free to shift into their L1 if the frustration or emotion generated by the codification grew too much for their limited English.

Finally, successful problem-posing culminates in some course of action. Wallerstein (1983) stresses that this action can begin on a very small level, perhaps in the form of earnest reflection on the social conditions which shape students' lives. In any event, the process leads students to think critically about an issue, to relate the issue to their home and community, and to work together to effect some degree of change.

#### A SAMPLE LESSON

As closure to this chapter, a problem-posing lesson is offered which draws on all the above techniques. It is not intended as any sort of prescription for working with migrant students; instead, it is simply meant to illustrate one person's interpretation of how various techniques might be applied within a designated context.

Content:            Problem-posing regarding stereotypes in  
                         school; group and individual identity  
                         building

**Materials:** Student copies of lesson, "How to Study a Geography Picture" (Silver 1988); newsprint pad, markers, masking tape; drawing paper; scissors; old magazines for cutting; glue; teachers new to problem-posing should refer to Wallerstein (1983) Language and Culture in Conflict: Problem-Posing in the ESL Classroom

**Level:** middle and high school migrant students

**Procedure:** Lesson can occur in students' L1, with bilingual aide as teacher, or as ESL session conducted primarily in English -- suit to students' needs

- 1). Hand each student a copy of "How to Study a Geography Picture," (see page 114) and explain that it is a lesson from a typical textbook, designed for students in grades 4-8. Allow students time to look it over thoroughly. Stress that the writing on the page is not important at this point, especially if group includes students who are not yet literate.
- 2). Begin the dialogue with the question, "What do you see?" Ask for specifics. List the particulars of the picture on the board or paper.
- 3). Students' reactions usually trigger discussion of the conflict or negative feelings connected to the picture right away; however, if they do not, take the discussion to the next level with the question, "Is there a problem with this picture?" or "What do you think of this picture?" List the students' responses regarding the problems next to the first list on the board, or on a separate piece of newsprint.
- 4). Next, encourage students to relate the picture/conflict to their personal lives. Ask for examples of their own experiences. In this instance, the discussion will be related to assumptions, generalizations or stereotypes of the students based on their migrant status. This might make an interesting list, as well, and will reveal how students believe the school sees them.
- 5). Go on to ask students if they carry their own stereotypes of others, or if they had preconceived notions of life in the States, or in the North, South, West Coast, etc. This leads in to the next question, "Why?" "Why do we have stereotypes?" Or "Why do you think Spanish-speaking students are often equated with the boy in the picture, where did it come from?"

6). As an aid to "why?," look over the three lists that have been created: parts of the picture, problems associated with the picture, and common stereotypes of migrant or Spanish-speaking students. Read them over together. Take a moment to summarize the students' discussion to this point, or solicit summary from students.

7). The next question for group brainstorming, then, is "What can you do about this?" Problem-posing always leads to proposed solutions, but keep the scope of the problem manageable for students. Instead of taking on the entire issue of stereotypes in society, tell students that they will be creating a list of ways in which they might effect change in their own school. Start by asking them to generate ideas for a positive list, one which will off-balance the negative traits associated with stereotypes, in answer to the question, "What would you like people in your school to know about you, about migrant students?"

Use any of the following to help generate ideas:

a). Students choose partners, then have five minutes to interview one another. In addition to the usual biographical information, each one must discover something special about the partner -- a talent, a favorite class, a particular interest. At the end of the five minutes, pairs report their findings to the rest of the group.

b). Promote unabashed group boasting (Johnson C. 1987). Take the time for students to contemplate and then share accomplishments or abilities of which they are proud. These may be on an individual, family, peer-group, or cultural level.

c). Set up a role-play situation. Students play parents and/or recruiter, school counselor, secretary, teacher and student on enrollment day. Use the following questions for preparation: How do you feel on your first day in a new school? What actions do you observe in the school staff? What important things do you want to communicate to the school staff before they place you in a class? What do you want out of the situation that you have not realized in the past?

d). Refer again to the picture which started this discussion, "How to Study a Geography Picture." Ask students to redesign and elaborate upon the lesson according to whatever regional area they consider their home-base. They may illustrate it themselves or cut pictures from old magazines. Encourage them to share this activity with a parent or older family member -- find out how the environment has changed over the years or, perhaps, how

their impressions compare with their parents'. The final result should reflect the physical environment as well as the human interaction with it, without relying on generalizations or stereotypes.

## HOW TO STUDY A GEOGRAPHY PICTURE



**FARMING IN HOT, DRY NORTHERN MEXICO:** Mexican families work together to supply enough food. Corn is the important crop. The goats supply milk, which is made into cheese. This family is very lucky to have a stream on their property.

1. What things does the picture show that were not made by people? Look at the
  - a. plants: \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. wildlife: \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. land: \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. water: \_\_\_\_\_
  - e. weather: \_\_\_\_\_
  - f. climate: \_\_\_\_\_
2. What things have people done to help them live in the area shown in the picture? Look at the
  - a. land changes: \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. water changes: \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. animals: \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. plants: \_\_\_\_\_
  - e. houses and other buildings: \_\_\_\_\_
  - f. aids to transportation and communication: \_\_\_\_\_
  - g. clothing: \_\_\_\_\_
3. What are some other things that you notice in the picture? \_\_\_\_\_

Fig. 1. From Geography Skills Activities Kit (Silver 1988)

## PART VIII: SUMMARY

If one looks closely, the change to satisfactory relationships comes at the precise moment when the sojourner is not just accepted, but most importantly, accepted for who he or she is -- when the uniqueness of the self-identity is validated (Zaharna 1989, 513).

This paper was written in hopes of clarifying "the uniqueness of the self-identity" inside each migrant student and the critical role that educators play in validating its cultural and linguistic components. Clearly, the school environment has a profound influence on the relationship between a migrant student and her/his first language and culture. The quality of this relationship often, in turn, serves as an indicator of the degree of success to come in second language acquisition.

We have seen how students' knowledge of themselves and their world is linked to language, how this link is tested and strained within a L2 environment, and how easily identity crises and/or affective barriers to learning can develop when original identifications with the L1 are disputed or devalued. Yet we have also seen how a concentrated effort to develop teaching strategies which welcome and draw from students' L1 and cultural backgrounds can offset these negative repercussions and create a richer learning environment for all involved.

For Guillermo, the young student introduced in Part I, it took only a few months in school to effectively undo fourteen years of positive self-concept building at home. It is unrealistic to expect that any dramatic change will occur during the remainder of his schooling, if, indeed, he is still in school. The prevalent attitudes and policies that deem his status as a Spanish-speaking migrant an identity "deficit" will not be changed in so short a time. This simply underscores the immediacy of our responsibility to educate ourselves and, by example, our peers, in order to counteract the limitations imposed on future students by virtue of their migrancy.

One final anecdote is offered as an encouraging sign that change of this nature is possible, perhaps one person at a time. Recently, a teacher attended a lecture on the benefits of L1 usage in ESL settings. This was a new idea to her and, initially, she became defensive. She resented the suggestion that she might rethink her teaching style. Yet, despite this discomfort, she decided to take a chance and went on to invite and incorporate her students' first languages into the classroom. She reports:

Has my classroom changed...? Definitely. It's become a much more democratic place where power is shared and where the vibes are usually very good. Although I am not bilingual, nor do I have the same cultural background as my students, I demonstrated through my new approach that I respect their culture and language. English no longer seemed so foreign, enigmatic, and threatening to them once they realized that they too are possessors of knowledge which they can teach to the teacher (Propp 1993).

Yet, even as we begin to come to terms with our obligations and attitudes as educators, migrant students continue to face numerous other obstacles beyond our immediate control. Educational reform, though essential, is not enough. The extreme poverty, social invisibility, and lack of political voice indicative of life in the migrant stream cannot be erased by our efforts in the classroom, nor can we reverse the dominant culture's pattern of inertia when it has come to advocating for change. Until these issues are resolved equitably, the self-concept and language identity within all children of migrant farmworkers will remain at risk.

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