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## Me perdía en la escuela: Latino newcomer youth in the U.S. school system

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### Abstract

Unaccompanied minors or “newcomer youth” come to the United States from Mexico and Central America to escape violence and persecution, and to seek financial and academic opportunities. Many newcomer youth arrive with gaps in their formal education due to the immigration process and the heterogeneity of their pre-U.S. lives. Once enrolled in the U.S. school system, many educators struggle to accommodate the academic needs of the newcomer students. Drawing on the framework of social and cultural capital, this article aimed to expand the current knowledge on the experiences of Latino unaccompanied youth in the U.S. school system. A thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews with 30 newcomer students and 10 key informants revealed six themes: *socializar con los demás compañeros* (to get along with the other students); *menos confianza* (little trust); *no se lo que decían* (I do not know what they said), *it’s a hard landing*; *education, interrupted*; and *estoy agradecido* (I am grateful). The article offers suggestions for school social workers and educators on how to promote academic success, student resilience, and school connectedness for a vulnerable youth population.

### Keywords

unaccompanied minors; Latino youth; public schools; social and cultural capital

### Latino Newcomer Youth in the United States

Since 2003, more than 237,000 unaccompanied youth have arrived in the United States. (Office of Refugee Resettlement, 2018). Unaccompanied youth migrate without their parents and enter the U.S. without lawful immigration status (Homeland Security Act, 2002; Office of Refugee Resettlement, 2018). Approximately three fourths of unaccompanied youth who

arrive in the U.S. come from the Northern Triangle countries (Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras) and Mexico (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR], 2014). Unaccompanied youth come to the U.S. to escape violence and poverty, to reunite with family, and to pursue academic opportunities (Berger Cardoso et al., 2017; UNHCR, 2014; Schmidt, 2017).

At the U.S. border, unaccompanied youth are apprehended by the Immigration and Customs Enforcement and referred to shelters across the country. While in shelters, unaccompanied youth attend school onsite as they are effectively in detention (Administration for Children and Families, 2018). This learning environment serves as the transition period before youth potentially enter the U.S. public school system. Yet, the classrooms tend to be overcrowded, curriculums repeat every month, and shelter programs do not always hire bilingual staff or have educational assessments completed by teachers (Diebold, Evans & Hornung, in press). Given the fluctuation in shelters' populations, these schools struggle to provide ideal educational services to these children (Diebold et al., in press).

School districts often categorize newly arrived unaccompanied youth as "newcomer youth"; yet, the duration of time in the U.S. can vary by school district and program (Friedlander, 1991). Many newcomer youth arrive to the U.S. with gaps in their formal education due to immigration, safety concerns and economic challenges in the home country, and mixed access to schooling (Chishti & Hipsman, 2014; Crea, Hasson III, Evans, Berger Cardoso, & Underwood, 2017). Therefore, newcomer youth's varying academic outcomes are often attributed to the heterogeneity in their pre-U.S. lives (Crea et al., 2017) and the lack of centralized and appropriate services in the U.S. (Sugarman, 2017). More information is needed on the resources that Latino newcomer youth currently have and those needed to excel within the U.S. school system.

### **Latino Newcomer Youth and School Integration**

Due to funding and ideological constraints, few school systems have the adequate resources to integrate and educate newcomer youth (Berger Cardoso, 2016; Crea, Lopez, Hasson, Evans, Palleschi & Underwood, 2018). Newcomer youth enter the U.S. school system with varying English and Spanish speaking /reading abilities, and educational experiences (Crea et al., 2017; Cranitch, 2010) and many school districts do not have formal policies for placing students who are below their age-appropriate grade level (Sugarman, 2017) and who are without transcripts or formal academic experience (Crea et al., 2018).

While there is growing research on the adversities newcomer youth face when entering the U.S. and enrolling in the school system (Berger Cardoso, 2018; Booi et al., 2016; Evans, Perez-Aponte & McRoy, in press; Fry & Passel, 2009), we know less about how these youth adapt and progress once attending school (Crea et al., 2017; Sibley & Brabeck, 2017). Consequently, identifying and implementing strategies for newcomer education are significant obstacles given funding limitations. As such, identifying the types of resources that newcomer youth have and require to excel in the U.S. school system may be one starting point for student integration (Monkman et al., 2005).

## Social and Cultural Capital and Education

The theories of social and cultural capital may inform how to assess and interpret the academic experiences and outcomes of newcomer youth (Monkman, 2005; Perreira, Mullan Harris & Lee, 2006). Youth need resourceful networks to navigate social and academic realities and the term social capital describes the access to valuable resources that result from social relationships (Stanton-Salazar, 2001). These resources include group membership to social networks and individual relationships (Bourdieu, 1986). The quality of social capital varies by types of relationships and the benefits they offer (Portes, 1998). For newcomer students, relationships with a teacher can provide access to new educational resources and support with coursework, while relationships with peers can enhance a sense of belonging (Monkman, 2005).

Cultural capital refers to values, beliefs, and knowledge that are available within a social network (Monkman, 2005; Perreira et al., 2006). Social connections with both immigrant and U.S.-born persons support cultural capital; types of cultural capital can also enhance a person's social capital (e.g., earning an educational degree) (Portes, 1998). Newcomer youth bring their own capital in the forms of language, and customs from their family and culture of origin to the U.S. school system (Monkman, 2005). Yet, the process of emigrating alone, reunifying with family members, and adjusting to a new country uniquely complicates the translation of existing capital to the new surroundings (Roth & Grace, 2015).

Research suggests that Latino immigrant students perform better academically when they have greater cultural (Perreira et al., 2006) and social capital (Monkman, 2005; Stanton-Salazar, 2001; Stanton Salazar & Dornbusch, 1995). Viewing newcomer students' realities through this theoretical lens can help to direct social workers and educators to the social and cultural structures that shape their educational trajectories (Monkman, 2005). This perspective redirects the burden of education outcomes from the newcomer youth and educator, and frames a student's academic performance as a multi-structural and ever-evolving effort that may improve youths' academic outcomes (Monkman, 2005). The newcomer youth's experience provides an under-studied example of the duality of cultural and social capital in the context of the U.S. school system.

## Current Study

This article intends to expand upon the current knowledge on the experiences of Latino unaccompanied youth in the U.S. school system and to illuminate these experiences in the context of the social and cultural capital framework. The current study has two aims:

- (a) To understand the state of newcomer youth's social and cultural capital upon entry to the U.S. school system through the voices of students, parents, and school staff.
- (b) To identify areas of student social and cultural capital to be nurtured in efforts to promote students' academic success.

## Methods

This study uses data from a mixed-method project to explore the migration and transitional experiences of Mexican and Central American newcomer youth ( $N = 30$ ) in U.S. schools. For the purpose of this study, we use only the qualitative data due to limited quantitative data about the school experiences of youth. The data for the study were collected during summer school, with permission and access to students granted by the school district. Longitudinal data collection was not feasible due to time constraints with participating schools. To adjust for limitations in time and the scheduling of students in groups, the researchers conducted mini focus groups (Krueger & Casey, 2015): eight focus groups with approximately three students each.

Communities in Schools (CIS), a national school-based organization that focuses on student mental health and academics, assisted in recruiting newcomer students during the 2016 summer school session at two middle schools and three high schools in a large, southwestern U.S. city. Students were eligible for the project if (a) they spoke English or Spanish, (b) were from Mexico or Central America, and (c) had traveled to the U.S. without a parent in the past three years. CIS recruited students through classroom announcements and screeners. CIS managers received written consent from the parent/guardian for student participation, and the students provided assent in Spanish and/or English.

Additionally, six adults agreed to participate in interviews to share their knowledge of newcomer youth. Adult key informants were also recruited by the research team and were selected based on stakeholders' knowledge of the population in the school context. Additionally, the research team recruited four parents of youth participants in order to triangulate the experiences of youth within the family context. All research protocols and consents forms (in Spanish and English) were approved by the principal investigator's Institutional Review Board and the research infrastructure at the local school districts.

## Study Sample

This study's sample included thirty youth ( $N=30$ ), with an equal proportion of female ( $n=15$ ) and male ( $n=15$ ) participants. The largest proportion of youth's ages fell between 14 to 17 years old. Most youth were from Honduras ( $n=10$ ), followed by Guatemala ( $n=8$ ). The majority of the youth in the sample were living with a parent(s) at the time of the study ( $n=26$ ).

The key informant sample included ten adults ( $n=10$ ). Six participants ( $n=6$ ) were biological parents of youth participants: four were from Honduras, one was from Guatemala, and one was from Mexico. The remaining key informants ( $n=4$ ) included a school principal (male), two teachers (male) and a CIS provider (female).

## Focus Group and Interview Guides

Focus groups were structured around a fictional case based on the principal investigator's clinical practice with this population (see Addendum for redacted case scenario). The research staff conducted focus groups in Spanish, starting with the fictional case and follow-up questions. Students were told they could talk about the case or similar experiences. The

format was elected to protect students' privacy. Most students did share personal experiences. Focus groups lasted about 45 minutes and were conducted separately by sex.

The ten key informants participated in individual, semi-structured interviews and were probed about students' post-migration challenges and coping strategies and was used to triangulate the narratives obtained from the youth. An example of questions asked to school personnel included: "What social, emotional, and academic needs do these students have?" Parents/guardians were asked questions, such as "Since arriving to the U.S., have you been worried your child/family member has experienced heightened sadness, anxiety, irritability?" Interviews were conducted on the campus and lasted approximately 45 minutes. More information about the methods and specific questions can be found in Berger Cardoso, 2018.

## Data Analysis

Focus groups and key informant interviews were transcribed and analyzed in the preferred language of the interviewee(s). Three bicultural and bilingual research assistants conducted initial coding of the transcripts using a web-based software program called Dedoose (Sociocultural Research Consultants, LLC, 2016). Thematic analysis informed an iterative process of codebook refinement conducted with each member of the research group (Braun and Clark, 2006).

For this study specifically, transcripts with school-related codes were re-coded by an additional bilingual qualitative researcher to examine the state of students' social and cultural capital. The researcher used applied thematic analysis (ATA) to identify and interpret themes of related to social and cultural capital across the interview texts. ATA is a flexible approach that is applied to various epistemological and theoretical approaches (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The researcher generated initial codes and then revised emerging themes to describe the students' experience of social and cultural capital (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Continuing review from the full research team and an external expert on newcomer youth enhanced the rigor and credibility of initial codes and final themes (Morse, 2015).

## Results

The following findings on newcomer Latino students' initial experiences in the U.S. school system are organized by the framework of social and cultural capital. Two themes emerged in the area of social capital: *socializar con los demás compañeros* (to get along with the other students) and *menos confianza* (little trust). The theme, *no se lo que decían* (I do not know what they said), linked students' access to both social and cultural capital. The remaining themes, *it's a hard landing*, *education, interrupted*, and *estoy agradecido* (I am grateful), illuminated students' cultural capital. The themes describe the duality of social and cultural resources that the students already possess and areas that are less developed when initially adjusting to the U.S. school system.

## Social Capital

**Theme #1: Socializar con los demás compañeros.**—Building relationships with peers seemed to be a complex issue for the participants. While Latino newcomer students

came from different countries in the Northern Triangle, many felt united by their shared experiences of immigration and of learning a new language, English. The Spanish language, as a form of cultural capital, allowed students to grow their social network at school, be it with Spanish-only speakers or Spanish/English bilingual speakers. For example, one male student described:

Almost all my friends were either born here or brought here when they were very small. They actually do know English... They speak to me in English and Spanish. They mix both, so that I can learn.”<sup>1</sup>

Another male student observed that despite differences in English proficiency, “[immigrant] students always stick together and they help each other.”<sup>2</sup>

While some students could bond over their shared experiences of migration and learning English, differences in culture and nationality could also complicate developing social capital with peers. A parent observed that the biggest challenge for her child was to, “get along with fellow students because of their different cultural backgrounds” (*socializar con los demás compañeros porque son culturas muy diferentes*). A male student shared that differences in manners of communication could result in confrontation, as behaviors or ways of speaking in one country may come across as aggressive in another. He shared, “if I am joking around with someone from Honduras I know I can be rough; however, playing like this with someone from Mexico can be perceived as ...picking a fight.”<sup>3</sup> As a result, differences in social and cultural norms could deter newcomer students from becoming friends.

**Theme #2: Menos confianza.**—Both student and key informant responses shed more light on why newcomer students have difficulty increasing their social capital within the U.S. school system. A central theme from the focus groups was *menos confianza* (little trust). Students shared that they had difficulty trusting both school staff and peers in a new country. One male student described the uneasiness of living in the U.S.:

The [newcomer students] say they are far away from their parents and when they arrive [in the U.S.] they feel uncomfortable. They don’t have the same trust that they had before, when they were in their home countries.<sup>4</sup>

Many female students shared histories of having “two-faced” or deceitful classmates, and had trouble trusting new peers. Rather than tell a peer who could eventually be hurtful, one female student described her new criteria for confidants: “They have to be adults, people that are not going to be childish.”<sup>5</sup> Yet, some students were anxious to confide in teachers about classroom-related problems. One female student recounted that a newcomer peer neglected

<sup>1</sup>“Casi todas mis amigas, mis amigos, son: unos son nacidos aquí y otros los han traídos desde pequeños... sí saben inglés. Y [inaudible] me dice, cuando hablábamos entre [inaudible] me hablan inglés y español. Mezclan las dos cosas, pero me dicen para que yo aprenda.”

<sup>2</sup>“Pero siempre pasan juntos, y se apoyan mutuamente.”

<sup>3</sup>“Entonces pero el aspecto si yo estoy jugando con otra persona que es de Honduras, nosotros hablamos bien fuerte, pero alguien de México, si ve ese tipo de conversación, dice – ‘picking a fight.’”

<sup>4</sup>“Como dicen ellos, cuenta que están lejos de sus papas y cuando llegan aquí se sienten incomodos. No tiene la misma confianza de antes, como lo que tenían allá en sus países.

<sup>5</sup>“Tienen que ser adultos, gentes que yo sé que no van a hacer una niñería.”



to seek help at school for a bullying incident that lasted over two years. A school staff member observed a similar pattern with his students: “[The students are] very good with reporting incidents [of physical bullying] to their reading teacher. Outside of that, they don’t really trust a lot of people.”<sup>6</sup>

### Cultural Capital

**Theme #3: No sé lo que decían.**—The theme of *no se lo que decían* (I did not understand what was said) was the cornerstone of difficulty for gaining additional cultural and social capital at school. Most newcomer students did not speak English and many staff members were not bilingual in Spanish and English. Therefore, students struggled to learn lessons, build relationships with peers and staff, and to navigate school and classroom rules. One female newcomer student described her experience of disconnection during the first days at her school in the U.S.:

When I first came to school, I didn’t have anyone to talk to. Sometimes, I didn’t go to lunch because I was afraid, as I didn’t speak English or maybe someone would say something to me. I didn’t know anyone.<sup>7</sup>

Having (or lacking) the cultural capital of the English language greatly impacted the newcomer students’ development of social capital. Students who were not proficient in English were targets for bullying. Varying proficiency in English among Spanish-speaking peers provided the opportunity for teasing or for mistranslation of words into English. These incidents exacerbated newcomer students’ feelings of shame and insecurity surrounding their developing language skills. Parents’ observations echoed their children’s struggle to endure an entire school day surrounded by English. As one mother of a male student witnessed, because of their challenges learning English, “[the newcomer students] are afraid to come to school!”<sup>8</sup>

**Theme #4: It’s a hard landing.**—Teachers described the students’ introduction to the U.S. school culture as a “hard landing,” as newcomer students were often enrolled in large, multi-storied schools and required to participate for several hours each school day. Most newcomer students were not acquainted with the cultural practices of U.S. schools, such as receiving a student handbook filled with guidelines or completing timed exams. A male student concisely summed up the newcomer student perspective of school orientation: “When I came here, [there were] 3,600 students... and I got lost in the school- it was a big change.”<sup>9</sup>

At times, the students’ development of cultural knowledge of the U.S. school system did not match what staff and administrators expected of them. Teachers realized that the assimilation to the school culture and structure would take longer for the newcomer students as compared to students who had grown up within the U.S. school system. One teacher acknowledged a

<sup>6</sup>“They’re very good with reporting incidents like this to their reading teacher. Outside of that, they don’t really trust a lot of people.”

<sup>7</sup>“Cuando yo inicié la escuela aquí, no tenía con quien hablar. A veces, ni al lunche iba porque me daba miedo, pena, quizás de no hablar inglés o que me fueran a decir algo. Uno no conoce a nadie.”

<sup>8</sup>“Eso es algo que ellos sí -tenían miedo entrar a la escuela!”

<sup>9</sup>“Cuando vengo aquí, 3,600 estudiantes, y andaba aquí, y me perdía en la escuela - es un gran cambio.”



change in perspective on the newcomer experience: “Maybe I expected too much too fast from [the newcomer students].”

**Theme #5: Education, Interrupted.**—The theme, *education, interrupted*, explained why students took longer to develop cultural knowledge about the school system and why students struggled to remain engaged at school. The process of emigrating to the U.S. had disrupted schooling for most students, and, previously, some youth had never had a formal school experience. Thus, newcomer students were often school years behind their peers of the same age. One teacher described how this classroom dynamic could lead to dropout: “They’re going to be bored, they’re going to be lost, they’re going to lose motivation, and then they’re going to just go out and do something else.”

Students’ desire to work was another cause of *education, interrupted*, post-migration. For some, they had been the adult in the family pre-migration and the knowledge assigned to that role conflicted with the “child” role of attending school and doing homework. Many families expected that the young adult children would begin earning money for the family rather than finish high school or pursue higher education. Teenage daughters would often remain in high school longer, as the sons would leave prematurely for the workforce.

**Theme #6: Estoy agradecido.**—Despite challenges, students valued the cultural resource of learning, as captured in the theme, *estoy agradecido* (I am grateful). Students discussed their aspirations to earn money for their families in the U.S. and abroad because of this education. One male student recognized that he could be a financial investment for his family, if he ever returned to his home country: “I am grateful because here you can get a great education, and you can become someone big...My dad tells me, ‘You have to learn English... so if you ever come back to Mexico, they will pay you more.’”<sup>10</sup>

Teachers also observed this dedication to learning, especially to mastering English. One teacher recalled a conversation with a male student who was very eager to learn English and was told it would take him three years to be proficient:

I reminded [the student upon graduation] of that conversation we had and I said ‘I told you three years. It’s only been a year and a half and you’re already speaking very good English.’ ...he said he does everything in English.

## Discussion

Framed within the lens of social and cultural capital, the study’s findings demonstrate that both the U.S. school system and newcomer youth have strengths and limitations regarding their available resources. Themes related to social capital illustrated dual outcomes for students. Newcomer students found common ground in their immigration stories; yet, differences in the dialect of language and interpretation, and culture of origin complicated new friendships. Similarly, students described a hesitation to trust school staff and peers in a new country, but this reluctance also aided students in selecting reliable confidants. This is

<sup>10</sup>“Estoy agradecido porque aquí puede recibir mucha, mucha educación, y puedes llegar a ser alguien muy grande. Me dice mi papa, ‘Tienes que aprender el inglés...para que vengas para acá en México, y te paguen más.’”

consistent with other studies that show immigrant students preferring friendships with other first and second-generation youth who have had similar experiences (Reynolds & Crea, 2017; Rude & Herda 2010).

Themes related to cultural capital suggested a disparity between the newcomer students' current academic skills and experience and the U.S. school system's expectations. Participants reported that the students' English language ability was a major barrier to understanding coursework and establishing trust at school, which was heightened by minimal bilingual staff. Literature stresses the importance of bilingual and bicultural staff, as it enhances trust and provides strong role models for newcomers (Crea et al., 2018). Additionally, the various school rules and the size of U.S. schools overwhelmed students. Despite these challenges, students were motivated to make the most of their education in the U.S. as a strategy to find work and improve their family's quality of life. Jani, Underwood and Ranweiler (2016) describe this motivational effect as a sign of resilience that propels newcomers through the multiple stressors of integration into their new communities.

Our findings support recent studies on newcomer youth and academic experiences by highlighting why schools must address more than students' English language skills (Crea et al., 2017; Sugarman, 2017). Newcomer and U.S.-born students have contrasting cultural capital; thus, newcomer students require centralized and tailored academic programs that can both assess their current academic skills and support them at the appropriate level of coursework (Sugarman, 2017). The findings also demonstrate that newcomer students' social capital is tenuous, and students may benefit from specialized classroom environments that support peer collaboration and trust (Frankel, Brabeck & Rendon-Garcia., under review). Teachers can further promote supportive classroom environments by incorporating aspects of the newcomer student's cultural capital (e.g. songs, food) into daily lessons (Frankel et al., under review; Reynolds & Bacon, 2018).

Methodological limitations to the study are noted. The findings are specific to a small sample of youth from the North Triangle and Mexico and their experiences in a single school district and city/region of the U.S. Therefore, findings are not generalizable to all newcomer youth living and attending U.S. public schools, nor to all unaccompanied youth in the city where the data were collected. The qualitative data are cross-sectional and cannot answer questions related to causality. The small sample size of parents and teachers is not likely a saturated sample of these subgroups. Additionally, the variation in student experiences by country of origin and other demographic factors may mean that the sample of 30 youth is also not a saturated sample of youth of that geographical area.

## Conclusion

Schools are often the first, and perhaps only, point of service intervention for newcomer students (Birman, Weinstein, Chan & Beehler, 2007). Thus, school social workers are necessary partners for supporting newcomer students and can serve as an important advocate for students' academic and social-emotional needs. Advocacy can be done for faster enrollment (Evans, Diebold & Calvo, in press), for participation in services such (e.g. tutoring and after school programs) (Nathan et al., 2013), or help with navigating the school system (e.g. effective communication with school staff, additional support for homework,

and assistance with the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) process) (Beatson, 2013). Social workers may serve as the liaison amongst school staff, students, and family members in identifying the types of capital that all parties offer such as resiliency (Jani, Underwood, & Ranweiler, 2016), immigrant optimism (Bartlett, Mendenhall & Ghaffar-Kucher, 2017; Kao, & Tienda, 1995), and experience navigating complex situations and relationships (Children's Bureau, n.d.; UNHCR, 2014). Additionally, social workers can provide expertise about how resources should be allocated for the benefit of the newcomer student (e.g. orientation to the school system) (Crea et al., 2018).

Additionally, social workers can assist schools in highlighting the progress students make in developing social and cultural capital during the transition to U.S. schools. While school districts collect data on student outcomes (e.g. enrollment, testing, grade completion, and premature termination) (Sugarman, 2017), they often overlook measures of educational resilience, such as peer and teacher relationships and behavioral integration in schools. School social workers should consider adding standardized measures of these topics to their programming. The Academic Engagement measure (Suarez-Orozco, Suarez-Orozco & Todova, 2009) specifically examines the cognitive, behavioral, and relational aspects of a newcomer youth's academic experience. Programs that measure these important educational outcomes are critical in demonstrating the overall educational and socio-emotional growth of the students. Social workers can advocate for both the implementation of models of centralized tailored educational programs for newcomer youth that are emerging across the U.S. and for evidenced-based tools that more accurately assess performance and progress and take in to account cultural diversity (Olsen, 2010; Short & Boyson, 2012; Zinth, 2013).

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## Addendum

### Focus Group Example for Male Students

Martin is 14. He lived near San Salvador, El Salvador. Martin is the oldest male in his family; he has four younger siblings ranging from 3–10 years old. Martin's father migrated to Houston, Texas when he was 10. The maras began recruiting him when he was 12. Martin did not want to join the maras. At 13, Martin stopped going to school due to gang violence. His mother was afraid that the gangs would retaliate against him because he would not join, or he would be hurt in the crossfire of gang violence. He would spend most of the day in his two-bedroom house. One day, Martin was assaulted by gang members while trying to buy groceries, leaving him with bruises and a broken arm.

After Martin's 14<sup>th</sup> birthday, he spoke with his father about sending money so he could escape to the U.S. His father was worried about the violence he would face on the journey, but he agreed. Martin left El Salvador with a few other migrants trying to get to the U.S. On the El Salvador-Guatemala border, Martin was separated from the coyote and had no money. He stayed in a safe house for a few weeks, where he met a few others who were moving towards Mexico. He traveled to the Guatemala-Mexico border with the migrants, but did not have a way to get through Mexico to the U.S. He decided to join the migrants on the train.

Martin jumped the train and began his journey to the U.S. He realized that the same gangs he was trying to escape in El Salvador controlled the journey. He tried to remain invisible, but the gang members stole his shoes and made him witness the murder of another boy. Martin also saw a man jump off the train to escape the gang members and who was crushed on the train tracks. He hid for most of the journey and he could not eat for 4 days. He only drank rainwater.

A month into his journey, he arrived at the U.S.-Mexico border. He had no identification and memorized only his father's number. Martin stayed in a shelter for 2 weeks until he could be reunited with his father. Since reuniting with his father, Martin is very sad, as he misses his mother and other siblings. He feels stressed about the pressure at school and he is trying to live with his father—someone he has not seen since he was 10.

**Table 1.**

Demographics of student participants (N=30)

	n	%
<b>Age</b>		
11–13 years old	6	20
14–15 years old	12	40
16–17 years old	12	40
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	15	50
<b>Home Country</b>		
El Salvador	6	20
Guatemala	8	27
Honduras	10	33
Mexico	6	20