



Learning a New Land: Immigrant Students in American Society

Carola Suárez-Orozco, Marcelo M. Suárez-Orozco, Irina Todorova

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One child in five in America is the child of immigrants, and their numbers increase each year. Very few will return to the country they barely remember. Who are they, and what America do they know?

Based on an extraordinary interdisciplinary study that followed 400 newly arrived children from the Caribbean, China, Central America, and Mexico for five years, this book provides a compelling account of the lives, dreams, and frustrations of these youngest immigrants. Richly told portraits of high and low achievers are packed with unexpected ironies. When they arrive, most children are full of optimism and a respect for education. But poor neighborhoods and dull--often dangerous--schools can corrode hopes. The vast majority learn English--but it is the English of video games and the neighborhood, not that of standardized tests.

For some of these children, those heading off to college, America promises to be a land of dreams. These lucky ones have often benefited from caring mentors, supportive teachers, or savvy parents. For others, the first five years are marked by disappointments, frustrations, and disenchantment. How can we explain their varied academic journeys?

The children of immigrants, here to stay, are the future--and how they adapt will determine the nature of America in the twenty-first century.

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